



INDIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY GUWAHATI
SHORT ABSTRACT OF THESIS

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SHORT ABSTRACT

This dissertation evaluates the relationship between tonal and intonational pitch variations in connection with Boro, a two-tone language spoken in the north-eastern part of India. Results show that alignment of lexical tones in Boro follows a minimal disyllabic Prosodic Word (PrWd) domain. Lexical tones surface right aligned within this domain adhering to the processes of tone shift, tone spreading and tone deletion. A detailed examination of pitch contours of sentences of various lengths and types is presented to show that initial and final boundary tones, downstepping, declination and phrasing constitute the post-lexical component of a tone language like Boro. Acoustic results have shown that both the lexical and a monotonal boundary tones align to the rhyme of the IP final syllable. It is also shown that right edge boundary tones for IPs can have a global effect in addition to local impact in terms of alignment. Results have shown that ex-situ focus in Boro is expressed by ip boundary insertion. Focus marking with emphatic particles associates an H* pitch accent to the particle itself and the pitch register of the whole IP is raised. Register of the whole IP is lowered for contrastive and corrective focus. Based on these results, it is also argued that focus prosody in Boro necessitates a relook at the prosody-focus correlation. These features of the prosody of focus in Boro are not replicated in the intonation of Assamese produced by Boro speakers. Compression of duration of all the syllables is found to be the dominant phonetic cue for both L2 Assamese corrective and narrow focus marking.