

# Mayan Prosody Meeting

Friday, April 20, 2012

room D3-121

University of Bielefeld

organized by Markus Greif, Stavros Skopeteas, and Henrike Wanke

## Summary

The prosody of Mayan languages has attracted significant attention in recent years. Some issues in the focus of current research are (a) the interaction between tone and intonation – especially in those languages that have developed lexical tones and (b) the interface between prosody and syntax. An intriguing issue is the interaction of intonation with lexical tones, since tonogenesis is attested in some languages of the family, i.e., Yucatec (Fisher 1976), Uspantec (Bennett and Henderson 2011), and at least a dialect of Tzotzil (Salovesh 1996). The presentations by Frank K  gler and Carlos Gussenhoven will shed light on the tonal realization in Yucatec Maya. In particular for Yucatec Maya, a number of recent studies examine the impact of information structure on the tonal realization and show that there are very marginal effects of focus on the tonal realization, see Gussenhoven 2006, Gussenhoven & Teeuw 2007, K  gler & Skopeteas 2006, 2007, K  gler, Skopeteas and Verhoeven 2007. The presentation by Murat Yasavul in this meeting is particularly relevant for this discussion, since it shows that the absence of intonational effects of focus is also attested in the non-tonal languages of this family. Another class of prosodic phenomena relates to the phonological and – interestingly also – morphological delimitation of intonational phrases mapping syntactic configurations. Many languages of the family display a class of enclitics that are aligned with intonational phrase boundaries, as already described in grammars, see, e.g., Grinevald Craig 1977 on Jacalteco, Aissen 1987 on Tzotzil, see also Aissen 1992 for a theoretical account. Stavros Skopeteas will present experimental evidence about the alignment of enclitics with intonational phrases in Yucatec Maya. The meeting opens with a talk by Elisabeth Verhoeven who gives an outline of the grammar in order to put the audience in the Mayan context.

12:00-12:30

## The Grammar of Mayan

*Elisabeth Verhoeven, Humboldt University Berlin*

This talk establishes the relevant grammatical background in order to follow the prosodic phenomena that are discussed in this meeting. After a general outline of the grammatical categories and the syntactic structures that are recurrent in this family, special emphasis will be given to the syntactic and morphological reflexes of information structure which are the potential locus of interactions with intonational phonology.

12:30-13:30

## On the phonetic realization of lexical tones in Yucatec Maya

*Frank K  gler, University of Potsdam*

This talk will investigate the phonetic realisation of lexical tones in Yucatec Maya. Phonetic evidence will be presented for a three way distinction between High and Low tones as well as toneless syllables. In addition, the influence of tones on each other will be discussed analysing assimilatory and dissimilatory effects.

13:30-14:30

Lunch Break

14:30-15:30

## Prosody of topic and focus in Joyabaj K'iche'

*Murat Yasavul, Ohio State University*

In this talk, I present the results of a production experiment on the prosody of Joyabaj K'iche'. The study compares the prosody of string-identical utterances realized in different discourse contexts, with the goal of identifying the contribution of prosody to conveying different discourse relations, namely focus and contrastive topic, which are realized in the preverbal position. In particular, the data suggest that the prosody of the preverbal element does not distinguish these discourse relations in Joyabaj K'iche'.

15:30-16:30

## Clitics and intonational phrases in Yucatec Maya

*Stavros Skopeteas, University of Bielefeld*

Yucatec Maya displays a class of enclitics that do not always occur in the syntactic domain of their licensing head. This talk presents evidence from field experiments that these elements (a) are associated with a high tonal target in the intonational contour – which is not a lexical tone – and (b) obligatorily align with the right boundary of an intonational phrase, which accounts for their peculiar linearization properties.

16:30-17:00

Coffee break

17:00-18:00

## The sentence and word prosody of Yucatec Maya

*Carlos Gussenhoven, Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen*

The contrast between re-articulated (glottalized) vowels and plain long vowels of Yucatec Maya is analyzed as a tonal distinction. Assuming a default L-tone on stressed syllables, H-toned plain long vowels have a H associated with the syllable, while re-articulated long vowels have a H-tone associated with the first mora. The two arguments for this analysis are that (1) glottalization is restricted to IP-final syllables, where both syllables have a pitch fall, and (2) that in IP-internal syllables 'glottalized' vowels have a fall, while H-toned long vowels have a rise IP-initially and a level high IP-medially. A post-lexical default L and a choice of boundary tone complete the tonal structure of the sentence. No effect of focus is found on the organization or realization of the tones.