

Language Contact and Intonation: Evidence From Contrastive Focus Marking and Loanwords in Yucatecan Spanish and Yucatec Maya

Melanie Uth

Universität zu Köln

Rodrigo Gutiérrez-Bravo

El Colegio de México

In this talk we investigate the language contact between Yucatecan Spanish and Yucatec Maya in the Yucatén Peninsula, Mexico, at the level of the intonational realization of contrastive focus, and by means of the prosody of Spanish loanwords in Yucatec Maya. Yucatecan Spanish is known for its peculiar intonation, which is often attributed to language contact with Yucatec Maya (e.g. Suárez 1996). Based on data from two elicitation experiments, Uth (2016) shows that Yucatecan Spanish contrastive foci are signaled by means of a high tone at the left edge of the Intonational Phrase containing the contrasted constituent, which is generally followed by falling pitch accents. In this respect, Yucatecan Spanish differs importantly from standard Mexican Spanish, where the stressed syllable of a contrastive constituent is generally associated with a rising pitch accent (De la Mota 2010). Yucatec Maya has recently been analyzed as an edge language where the maximally prominent constituent of an utterance is generally located at the leftmost part of the Intonational Phrase that contains the predicate (Verhoeven & Skopeteas 2015). The leftmost part of the Intonational Phrase is the region with the highest pitch in Yucatec Maya, and subsequent lexical high tones are downstepped within the same Intonational Phrase (*ibid.*, Gussenhoven & Teeuw 2008). Since focused phrases are obligatorily fronted to a position in the left periphery in this language (Gutiérrez-Bravo & Monforte 2011), which in turn is aligned with the left edge of an Intonational Phrase (Verhoeven & Skopeteas 2015), chances are high that the particular pitch contour of Yucatecan Spanish contrastive focus utterances is due to close contact with Yucatec Maya.