

Microparametric approach to prosodic variation: case studies from Algonquian

Overview: Although the Algonquian family has a rich history of linguistic analysis aimed at historical reconstruction, there is less research on synchronic phonology. We address this gap in an organized session focusing on prosodic structure in five languages: Blackfoot, Plains Cree, Ojibwe, Cheyenne, and Arapaho.

Methods: We examine phonological generalizations at the edges of the position classes of the traditional morphological template (Bloomfield 1946; Goddard 1990) by using *annotated textual resources* derived from dictionaries and grammars. We also use *speech corpora* to more accurately determine pronunciation. These methods could be replicated for other languages.

Empirical findings: In all languages, the phonological generalizations at the initial-final boundary differ from those at the preverb-stem boundary, confirming that initials and preverbs are parsed into prosodic structure in different ways (cf. Russell 1999 for Plains Cree; Newell & Piggott 2014 for Ojibwe). However, we find that the phonological generalizations differ across languages, which we demonstrate with structured datasets.

Theoretical contribution: Following the methods and discussion in Weber (in press), this research moves us towards a typologically-driven theory of the syntax-phonology interface in polysynthetic languages, as we determine which properties of prosodic and morphosyntactic structure vary parametrically across the family.

Organization: The session is organized into three 20-minute blocks, which could be structured as two 10-minute talks or a single 20-minute talk. The blocks are: (1) a general overview of the research project, followed by a discussion of Blackfoot, (2) Central Algonquian languages (Ojibwe, Plains Cree), and (3) other Plains Algonquian languages (Cheyenne, Arapaho).

References

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- Russell, Kevin. 1999. "The 'word' in two polysynthetic languages." *Amsterdam Studies In The Theory And History Of Linguistic Science Series 4*: 203-222.
- Weber, Natalie. *In press*. Phonological domains in Blackfoot: structures shared with Algonquian and the misbehavior of preverbs. In *Papers of the 52nd Algonquian Conference*. East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press.