

Morphological alternations at the intonational phrase edge

The case of K'ichee'

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Abstract This article develops an analysis of a pair of morphological alternations in K'ichee' (Mayan) that are conditioned at the right edge of intonational phrase boundaries. I propose a syntax-prosody mapping algorithm that derives intonational phrase boundaries from the surface syntax, and then argue that each alternation can be understood in terms of output optimization (Mascaró 2007; Mester 1994). The important fact is that K'ichee' requires a prominence peak rightmost in the intonational phrase, and so the morphological alternations occur in order to ensure an optimal host for this prominence peak. Finally, I consider the wider implications of the analysis for the architecture of the syntax-phonology interface, especially as it concerns late-insertion theories of morphology (Anderson 1982, 1992; Embick and Noyer 2001; Halle and Marantz 1993; Hayes 1990, among others). The primary result is that late lexical insertion must occur at least as late as the construction of intonational phrases.

Keywords Syntax-prosody interface · Morphology · Prosody

1 Introduction

The principal concern for theories of the syntax-phonology interface is to determine what information from one module is available to the other. For instance, classic work in prosody shows that phonological rules do not reference syntax, but only appear to do so through prosody, which acts as an intermediary (Nespor and Vogel 1986; Selkirk 1980, 1984, among many others, though see Pak 2008 for a recent dissenting view). On the opposite side of the interface, Zwicky and Pullum (1988) conclude that the syntax proper has no access to phonological information.

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