Integrating Prosody : Clefts and Direct Objects in Kabyle (Berber)

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One of the frequently broached topics in the analysis of intonational prosody is that of its interaction with other levels of linguistic analysis. Already, phrasing the question in those terms unveils the general assumption – that there should be interacting levels. A typical instance of that view is the prosody/syntax interfacing, in approaches that project syntactic structure onto the prosodic level (Scheer 2011; Selkirk 2009; Vogel 2006…). This is not limited to generative approaches, as in pragmatics also, the perspective may imply mapping of, say, illocutionary type, onto intonation units (Cresti & Moneglia 2005). Even when prosodic units are defined using strictly prosodic cues (Tao 1996, among others), the question arises of the extent to which those units correspond to clauses, phrases etc., and the fact that there is no one-to-one mapping between syntactic and prosodic units gives rise to a treatment of 'mismatches' in terms of 'fragmentary', 'elliptical' etc. units. This general notion of interfacing or mapping is also at play for the treatment of prosodic prominences, and of prosodic contours.

All those perspectives, because they construe prosody and other domains in terms of layers, generally prevent the inclusion of prosodic forms in the very definition of linguistic constructions. In this talk, I would like to propose a much more integrated view of prosody by :
(a) considering prosodic (clusters of) cues as formal devices of the same kind as morphological markers or linear ordering,
(b) focussing on their close interaction with other formal devices, and their necessary inclusion in the analysis of language-internal constructions.

I will base my proposal on the empirical analysis of a spoken corpus of Kabyle (Berber), prosodically segmented into intonation units, and show that the definition of the construction « direct object », and of the construction « cleft » include an inseparable prosodic component, in the sense that those constructions (and others) do not exist (= are not automatically retrievable / strictly defined in scientific terms) without their prosodic component.

Examples

(1) d   lħadʒ   Rabaħ   i=dd   j-uɣ-n   səbʕa //
COP   pilgrim Rabah   REL.REAL=PROX   RELSBJ-take\PFV-RELSBJ   seven
It's Rabah the pilgrim who married seven women.

(2) ur=dd   zwiğ-ɣ /   BI-363/
NEG=PROX   marry\NEGPFV-SBJ.1SG /   breath intake 363ms /

alamma   t-əkks=dd /   faṭima tuħṛiʃt / 326 /
until   SBJ.3SG.F-take_away\PFV=PROX /   Faṭima clever / silent pause 326ms /

aɣrum   g   udəkk°an //
bread\ABSL.SG.M   LOC   shelf\ANN.SG.M //

I won't marry / … / until she grabs / clever Fatima / … / the bread on the shelf //
(I won't marry until Clever Fatima grabs the bread on the shelf)

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