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Exploring Croatian intonation: The higher-level prosodic constituents and intonation

The Croatian language is a pitch-accent language. It differs in rising and falling pitch accents, which have long and short versions. Within the AM theory, they are represented as a bitonal sequence. A more phonological approach uses only high (H) tones: H* for falling accents and H*+H for rising accents. On the other hand, in a more phonetic approach, falling accents are represented as an H*+L sequence and rising accents as an L*+H sequence. Falling accents are characterised by early alignment and rising accents by late alignment. Besides the two pitch accents, the inventory of Serbo-Croatian tones also possesses at least five accents and boundary tones. Furthermore, two prosodic constituents were defined intonationally: the phonological word and the intonational phrase. On the other hand, the universal prosodic hierarchy includes the intonational phrase, phonological phrase, and prosodic word. In multiple languages, the intonational phrase is a domain of the downstep, which is phonetically realised as H tones lowering in succeeding words. Based on several grammatically and prosodically detailed sentences and participants, I analysed F0 maxima and minima of bitonal pitch accents across phonological and intonational phrases. The preliminary results might indicate the presence of an additional constituent, i.e., the phonological phrase in Croatian, by using the downstep as an analytical device. Additional evidence (e.g. sentences with a narrow focus) must be tested further.