ACOUSTICS2008/1697 The prosody of second position clitic placement and focus in Croatian

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Since Browne 1974, the placement of second position clitics in Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian has inspired debate about interaction at the syntax-phonology interface. The placement of these clitics can alternate quite freely: either after the first phonological word or after the first syntactic constituent. While it's generally agreed that prosodic phonology, in addition to morphosyntax, plays a role in clitic placement in Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian, the prosodic patterns for the different placements have not been studied acoustically. In addition, it has been suggested that clitic placement and pragmatic focus may interact (Bošković 2001), but this has not been systematically studied.

We recorded adult Zagreb Croatian speakers producing subject noun phrases with initially stressed trisyllabic adjectives and nouns in transitive sentences. We varied clitic placement (after the first word or first constituent) and focus domain (broad focus, and narrow focus on adjective, noun, both the adjective and the noun, or the entire noun phrase) and controlled for dialect and pitch accents. Preliminary results from three speakers indicate that gross differences in prosodic patterns occur only as a function of focus domain but not clitic placement. Further work will confirm if these patterns hold for more speakers and if clitic placement is correlated with finer-grained prosodic differences.