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Phonological representation of negation in Sakizaya

Wen-Chi Shen and Wen-Yu Chiang
Grad. Inst. of Linguistics, National Taiwan Univ., 1, Roosevelt Rd. Sec. 4, 106 Taipei, Taiwan

This paper aims at investigating phonological representation of negation in Sakizaya, an endangered Formosan language in Taiwan. Defying Yaeger-Dror’s "Cognitive prominence principles" (2003), Chiang (2006) examines negators in Saisiyat, a SVO language as English, and finds the sentential subjects are more prominent acoustically rather than negators. Thus, I will adopt Chiang’s modal (2006) and analyze phonological representation of six negators in Sakizaya to see where the pitch accent falls. Besides, if falling on the negators, I will see whether it is because of either cognitive prominence properties or its sentence-initial position? Six informants (3 male & 3 female), from 50-74 years old, participated in the experiment, recorded by DAT, analyzed by Praat and digitized at a 22050-Hz sampling rate. Affirmative and negative sentences are asked in Mandarin while the informants are instructed to translate them into Sakizaya. Besides, they are asked to produce iterative -ay sentences since the negator ca’ay is the most frequently used negator with higher prominent syllable -ay. The results show negators are more prominent in Sakizaya compared to sentential subjects. I conclude it is word order that influences the prominence of pitch contour since Saisiyat is an SVO language and Sakizaya a VSO one.