

ACOUSTICS2008/2689
**How prosody correlates with syntax -An observation on Sakizaya,
an endangered Formosan language**

Sally Chen, Wen-Chi Shen, Li-May Sung and Janice Fon
Grad. Inst. of Linguistics, National Taiwan Univ., 1, Roosevelt Rd. Sec. 4, 106 Taipei, Taiwan

This pioneering study investigates the relationship between prosody and syntax of Sakizaya, an endangered Formosan language in eastern Taiwan. Both elicitation data and spontaneous data were collected from five informants (aged 48 to 74), in order to provide a more thorough sketch on this VSO language with clear case marking and voice systems. Preliminary results showed that in descriptive sentences, prosodic units and syntactic units do correlate with each other, depending on which of the four voices is used. (The four voices in Sakizaya: agent-, patient-, instrumental, and locative voices) However, once specific functions are imposed onto a sentence, they will override this "default" setting, and adopt corresponding prosodic patterns for the ease of communication. For example, in this language, the default position to receive a nuclear accent should be the ultimate syllable of a sentence; however, we observed an accent shift onto the penultimate syllable for yes/no questions, exclamations, as well as continuously progressive sentences. In negation sentences, pitch peaks are distinctively higher in the accented syllable of the negator (which posited sentence-initially), instead of the ultimate syllable in sentence-final position. Lastly, case markers and voice markers were found as preferred positions for speech planning and repair.