

## **On the correspondence between prosodic and morphosyntactic constituents in Inuktitut**

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This paper provides a first account of prosodic structure and the correspondence between prosodic and morphosyntactic constituents in South Baffin Inuktitut. Analyzing scripted dialogues between two speakers, we found that orthographic words were consistently marked by an f0 fall, while some prosodic variation occurred in utterance-final position.

**Background:** The Inuit language is a dialect continuum stretching from Alaska, through the Canadian Arctic, to Greenland. Although its morphosyntactic properties have received attention in the literature, its prosody is largely unstudied. A notable exception is Kalaallisut (West Greenlandic), which differs from the rest of the continuum in a number of ways (see, e.g., Rischel 1974, Fortescue 1984, Nagano-Madsen 1993, Arnhold 2014). Kalaallisut has neither lexical stress (Jacobsen 2000) nor lexical tones or pitch accents. Instead, most words carry either HLH or HL tones associated with the last two or three moras. Fortescue (1983) gives an overview of dialectal variation in Inuit prosody, considering the tone-bearing unit, direction of final f0 movements and the marking of questions. He describes the variety we investigated here as characterised by a fall on the final syllable for statements and by a rise for yes-no questions. His qualitative observations, based on tape recordings of at least one speaker per dialect, are so far the only descriptions of the prosody of Eastern Canadian Inuit dialects that we are aware of.

**Data:** Our data come from a website for learning Inuktitut (Pirurvik Centre 2015), which includes short dialogues between a male and a female speaker of South Baffin Inuktitut with (orthographic) transcriptions and English translations. Here, we analyze the first 20 dialogues (about 5.5 minutes total). They contained 297 orthographic words and 164 stretches of speech delimited by pauses, which we here identify as intonational phrases (IPs). IPs contained between one and six words (median: 2). The data further included 64 instances of noun incorporation.

**Results:** Almost all orthographic words in our data carried a pitch fall (99%, with 4 deviating words), which we analyse as HL tones (see Figure 1). While the L tone was always realized close to the end of the word, the location of the H was more variable. It sometimes appeared close to the end of the word and sometimes closer to its beginning (e.g., *Ivvilli* ‘and you’ versus other words in the figure). In IP-final position, 68% of the words were realized with an earlier fall followed by a low plateau, while the fall continued to the end of the word in 21% and was followed by a rise in 11% (111, 35 and 18 words, respectively). We interpret the low plateau as due to an additional low boundary tone associated with the IP (labelled *Li* in the figure) and the rise as due to a high boundary tone.

We propose that our intonational analysis shows evidence for two prosodic units: a smaller one corresponding to orthographic words and a larger one delimited by pauses. These two prosodic units exhibit remarkable regularity with respect to their tonal marking, with words regularly being marked by HL tones and IPs mostly being demarcated by an additional L tone. This finding suggests that there is a robust prosodic correlate for the notion of "wordhood" in

Inuktitut: orthographic words, whether or not they exhibit polysynthetic properties such as noun incorporation, behave uniformly with respect to their prosodic demarcation.

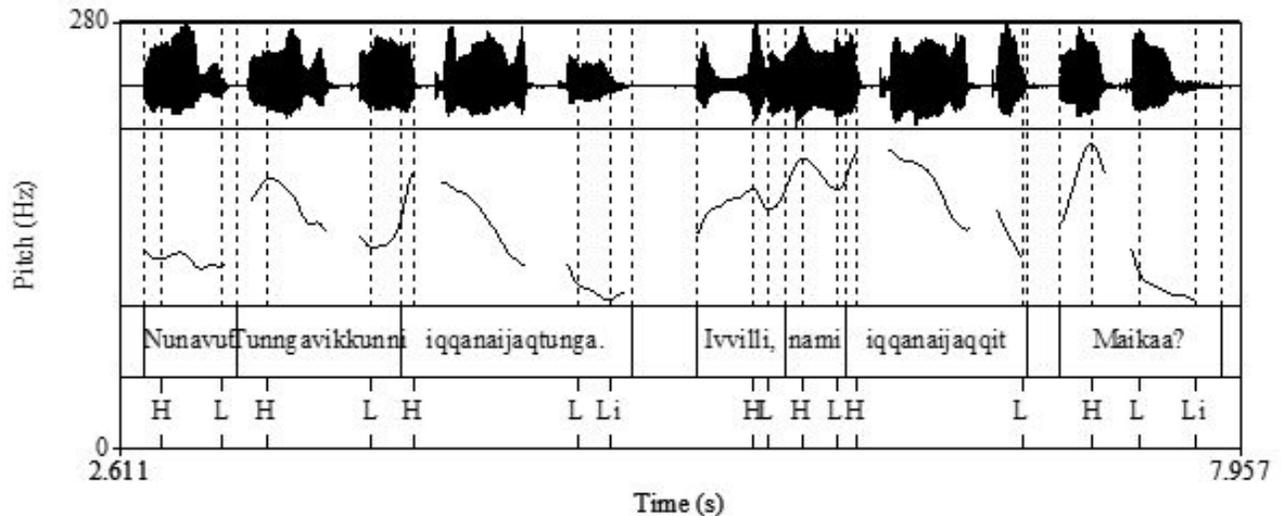


Figure 1. Pitch track of the utterance in example (1) (male speaker).

- (1) Nunavut Tunngavik-kkut-ni iqqanaijaq-tunga.  
 Nunavut Tunngavik-group-LOC.SG work-DEC.1SG  
 Ivvit=li, nami iqqanaijaq-qit Maikaa?  
 2SG=and where work-INTER.2SG Maika.INTER  
 ‘I work at Nunavut Tunngavik. And where do you work Maika?’

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