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Tone in Saxwe

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Stellingen
behorende bij het proefschrift
Tone in Saxwe
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1. In Saxwe, asymmetry in the paradigms of noun and verb tone patterns attest to historical language contact between speakers of a two-tone Gbe language and speakers of a three-tone Yoruboid language.
2. The right edge high tone phonological word boundary has a probable historic link to a surface high tone, and this is supported by cross-dialectal cognates where one sees this high tone realized at the surface level.
3. In terms of phonetic F_0 , some Saxwe speakers favor a relatively fixed threshold between alternating [+Upper] and [-Upper] values, while others have no specific F_0 range associated with these values, but will instead repeatedly lower the F_0 realization of [+Upper] tones within an utterance.
4. In the study of tone, the distinction between phonological rules and gradient-level phonetic implementation can be very hard to discern because (unlike with segmental phonological and phonetic processes), the changes involved are all necessarily effected within the same auditory parameter, which is F_0 production.
5. While most tone descriptions make an assumption that underlying tones, tone patterns, and tonal operations are uniform throughout a speech population, there is a great need for methodology and studies which address linguistic variation in tone—variation which could include dialectal variation, variation due to age, interspeaker variation within a single dialect, and even intra-speaker variation.
6. Given the current sophistication of instrumental and computational tools for measuring F_0 , discussions of tonal downstep should be formulated in terms of measurable criteria with clear points of reference, such as tone baseline levels established in utterances composed entirely of a single underlying tone.
7. Although there is much literature addressing reasons for the historical derivation of tone in general, there is relatively little literature addressing how specific types of tone systems (such as a two-tone *vs.* a four-tone system) may have evolved or what might be expected to happen in cases of language contact involving differing types of tone systems (such as the contact between language A that has a simple inventory of tones and a complex suite of tonal operations and language B that has a complex inventory of tones and relatively few tonal operations).
8. Historical studies may one day help to clarify the question of whether the absence in Kwa languages of significant noun class and verbal morphology is a result of gradual change from the more complex morphology typically seen in Niger-Congo languages, or rather a result of language contact or extensive adult acquisition.
9. "It is a capital mistake to theorize before one has data. Insensibly one begins to twist facts to suit theories, instead of theories to suit facts." Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (1891), *A Scandal in Bohemia*.
10. Saxwe oral wisdom attests to the fact that preparation and confidence must accompany any large endeavour: *ovi xeni nyɔ alɔ kikkɔ wɛ nɔ ɖu onu kpodo emehyɛn* (it is the child who knows how to wash his hands who will eat with the adults), and *oxe xeni kpɛn abɔjame etɔn wɛ nɔ je do otin xuxu ji* (it is the bird who has observed his own wings who will alight on a dried-out branch).