MAS+: an adapted methodology in the context of Frisian-Dutch prosody

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For many languages, prosody in contact linguistics is a relatively under-explored topic. Hardly any research has been published on the prosodic traits of the minority language Frisian. In this light, this study will briefly compare Frisian and Dutch sentence intonation patterns in declarative, polar interrogative and imperative constructions. It uses the Melodic Analysis of Speech (MAS) method to describe these patterns, and will then address a weakness in the existing method; the inability to investigate variation at utterance onset.

This study describes the subsequent implementation and validation of an adapted method, MAS+, which, in combination with the original method, allows for more fine-grained analysis. In MAS+, a balanced application of the original normalisation method does allow for analysis at onset by normalising across the entire utterance instead of only at onset. This new method is validated as application to the same dataset yields the same general results.

The main differences can still be found between speaker groups, i.e. Frisian-Dutch bilinguals on the one hand and local Dutch monolinguals on the other hand, instead of between the two languages. Additionally, some results still hint at divergence, instead of the often-expected convergence of a minority language towards a majority language.