Spelling out syntactic constituents as prosodic domains:
Match constraints and the syntax-prosodic structure interface

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Domain-sensitive phenomena of sentence phonology provide evidence for a parsing of phonological representation into three basic levels of constituency above the foot: intonational phrase (ι), phonological phrase (φ) and prosodic word (ω), as shown, for example, in the Kisseberth 1994 study of the tonal phonology of the Bantu language Tsonga. On the basis of data from Tsonga and other languages it will be argued that the relation between syntactic constituency and phonological domain structure should be captured in terms of syntactic structure faithfulness constraints calling for syntactic clauses, phrases and words to match up with corresponding constituents of an independent prosodic structure representation (namely ι, φ and ω, respectively). Fully satisfying these interface Match constraints would produce a prosodic constituent structure that is isomorphic to the syntactic constituency and at variance with the so-called Strict Layer Hypothesis, creating systematic violations of the alleged prosodic markedness constraints Exhaustivity and Nonrecursivity (contra Selkirk 1986, 1995, Truckenbrodt 1999). This paper argues that the evidence supports a theory of the interface which takes an isomorphism between syntactic and prosodic constituency as an ideal. But the evidence also shows that this ideal may fail to be met, due to the role for prosodic structure markedness constraints like Exhaustivity, Nonrecursivity, prosodic minimality and so on, which may force the domain structure to conform to the (potentially conflicting) ideal of a phonological organization that is appropriate for pronunciation. Indeed, it is the role prosodic markedness constraints play in the characterization of phonological domain structure that makes the case that domain-sensitive phenomena are sensitive to an independent prosodic structure and not directly to syntactic structure. The working hypothesis is that the prosodic structure realization component of a grammar consists of an optimality theoretic ranking of interface Match constraints and prosodic structure markedness constraints. The claim is that such a grammar allows for a descriptively accurate account of the range of attested phonological domain structures in individual languages, and for a characterization of typological differences in domain organization found cross-linguistically.

Any theory of constraints on the relation between syntactic constituency and prosodic constituency must specify which types of syntactic constituency are relevant to phonology. It will be argued that Match Phrase and Match Clause each stand for a family of constraints. Match Phrase includes Match constraints distinguishing between phrases that are specifiers and those that are complement of the phasal heads ν (Chomky 2001) and Top^0 (Kratzer and Selkirk 2007); the Match Clause constraints distinguish between comma phrases (Potts 2005) and those that are the complement of the phasal head C

(Chomsky 2001, Pak 2008). Motivation for distinguishing subtypes of Match constraints comes from differences in their interaction with prosodic structure markedness constraints in different languages, expressible in terms of distinct constraint rankings.