

**The University of Pittsburgh ~ Department of Linguistics
Colloquium Series *Presents:***

**“Language Contact and Creole Language Prosodic
Typology”**

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Caribbean Creoles are contact language varieties that exhibit variation in their prosodic systems and as such (some) have been described as having hybrid prosodic systems, combining elements of both intonation and tone systems. However, attributing prosodic variation to language contact can be challenging. These putative hybrid prosodic systems raise important issues for typologies that make a strict distinction between “intonation languages” and “tone languages” or between “stress” and “pitch-accent” languages. I argue that a more fine-grained and better analysis can be achieved if we focus analyses on the alignment of the F0 contour with the structure of utterances, (i.e. tune-to-text alignment,) and on the nature of tonal distinctions in the language. I will review data from several non-creole languages that show (similar) variation in their prosodic systems but crucially where that variation cannot be attributed to language contact. I also review data from Caribbean Creoles and show that the prosodic variation is unequivocally attributable to language contact only in some cases. Thus, the main issue to be resolved is how to make sense of prosodic variation in contact language varieties.

**Friday, September 14, 2007 at 3:00 p.m.
Room 144 ~ Cathedral of Learning**