



**Der Sonderforschungsbereich 991 "Die Struktur von Repräsentationen
 in Sprache, Kognition und Wissenschaft" lädt herzlich ein zum Vortrag
 von**

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Postverbal NPs in Alaskan Athabascan: A micro-typology

In the Alaskan Athabascan languages Dena'ina, Ahtna, Lower Tanana, and Upper Tanana, noun phrases end to precede the verb. However, a high number of noun phrases do follow the verb. This talk explores syntactic status, information status, and prosody of postverbal NPs in Ahtna, Dena'ina, Lower Tanana, and Upper Tanana.

(1) Ahtna: "*Copper Story*", by Jim McKinley, recorded and translated by James Kari.

	Hwts'en	xu	more	'ootnes	de	<pause>	tsedi.
Duration	610	87	404	555	150	253	517
Pitch	104-160	133-136	108-127	95-146	96-129		101-145
	from-it	there	<English>	it-was-obtained	place		copper

'From that side it was obtained, the copper.'

Tsedi 'copper', the discourse topic, is postposed as a resumptive topic. It follows a significant pause. The pitch range is great, and the word is elongated to over half a second. This is in contrast to the following example from Dena'ina:

(2) Dena'ina: *Dlin'a Sukdu*, by Mary Hobson, recorded and translated by Olga Lovick

	Ey gu	zdun	qilan	degkh'isen	ch'q'aynighenhdi	digheltał
Duration	824	682	513	797	1138	665
Pitch	110-120	114-133	108-131	99-100	104-125	91-110
	there	sitting	was	woman	child	she was holding

'Sitting there was a woman, holding a child.'

The noun *degkh'isen* is the first mention of this referent. There is no pause preceding or following *degkh'isen*. This phrase is intonationally flat and does not seem elongated or rushed. This intonation is markedly different from that of topics as illustrated in (1). The examples show that information structure is mirrored in the prosody of Alaskan Athabascan languages. Preliminary analysis suggests that we can distinguish several types of post-verbal NPs, with different functional, syntactic and prosodic characteristics. Also, and strikingly, it appears that the most frequent and varied use of postverbal NPs occurs in the Southern Alaskan languages Ahtna and Dena'ina (as exemplified above), with other Alaskan Athabascan languages showing far less evidence of these patterns.

