

SWL 3, Berlin 25-28 Sept. 2008

# Clause order change in Beja (North Cushitic):

Information structure and prosody in  
temporal and conditional clauses

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# Beja

- North-Cushitic (Afroasiatic)
- Sudan (Eastern)
- 1,000,000 speakers
- SOV
- Dependent - matrix clause
- Polysemous conditional suffix -eek

# Outline

- 1. The morphosyntax and functions of -eek
  - 1.1. Conditional marker
  - 1.2. Concessive marker
  - 1.3. Temporal marker
  - 1.4. Indirect interrogation marker

# Outline

- 2. Clause order change
  - 2.1. Syntax / prosody mismatch
  - 2.2. Pragmatics
  - 2.3. Modality
  - 2.4. From dependent to independent clause

# The data

- Fieldwork in 2005, 2006, 2007
- 120 spontaneous oral narratives
- Duration: 4 hours
- Male and female speakers

# 1. Morphosyntax and functions of -eek

- 1.1. Conditional marker

(1) *aree heyaay-t-wa naa-t harriw-eek*

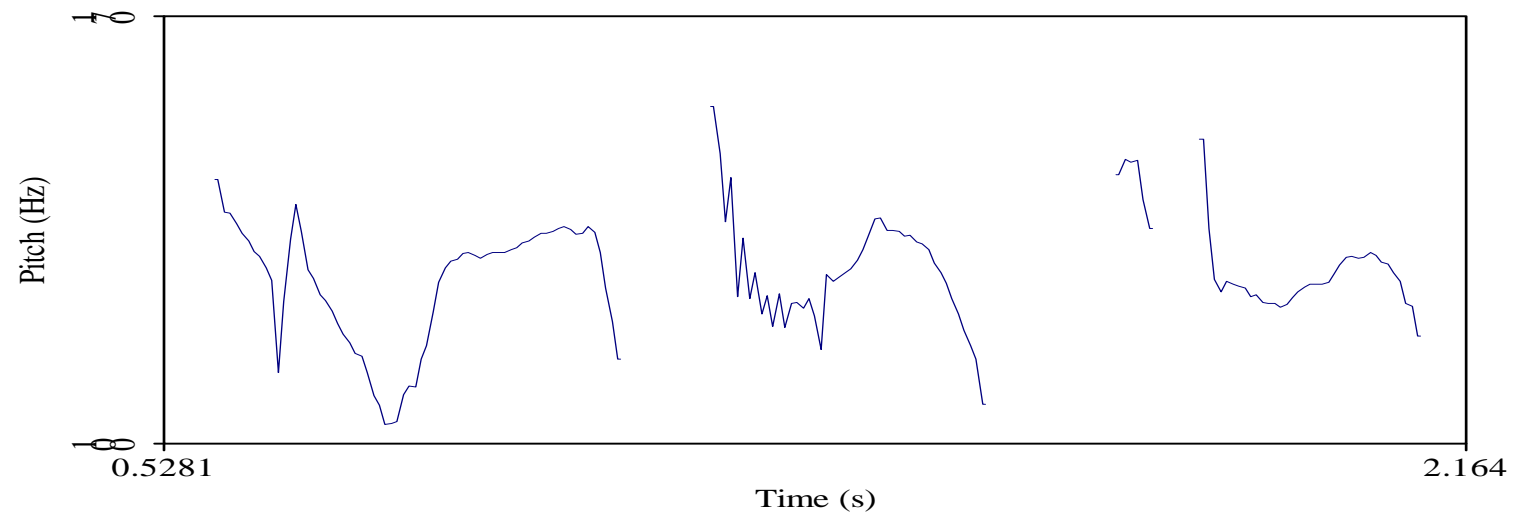
then wish-F-COOR thing-F want\IPFV3SG-if

*t-hiyaay-t-ook sakana-yaa-ya /*

DEF.F-wish-F-2M.SG.ACC inform-IMP.M.SG-COOR /

'then, if you wish anything, ask them  
whatever you want!'





*aree heyaaay-t-wa naa-t harriw-eek*

# 1. Morphosyntax and functions of -eek

- 1.2. Concessive marker (logical)

(2) *uun*                      *ani* /                      *w-haaš-ib*

DEM.M.SG.NOM 1SG.NOM / DEF.M.SG-earth-LOC.SG

*girba tak akati-yeek* /                      *naay-iyi*

foreign man be\IPFV1SG-if / spend\_the\_night-REL

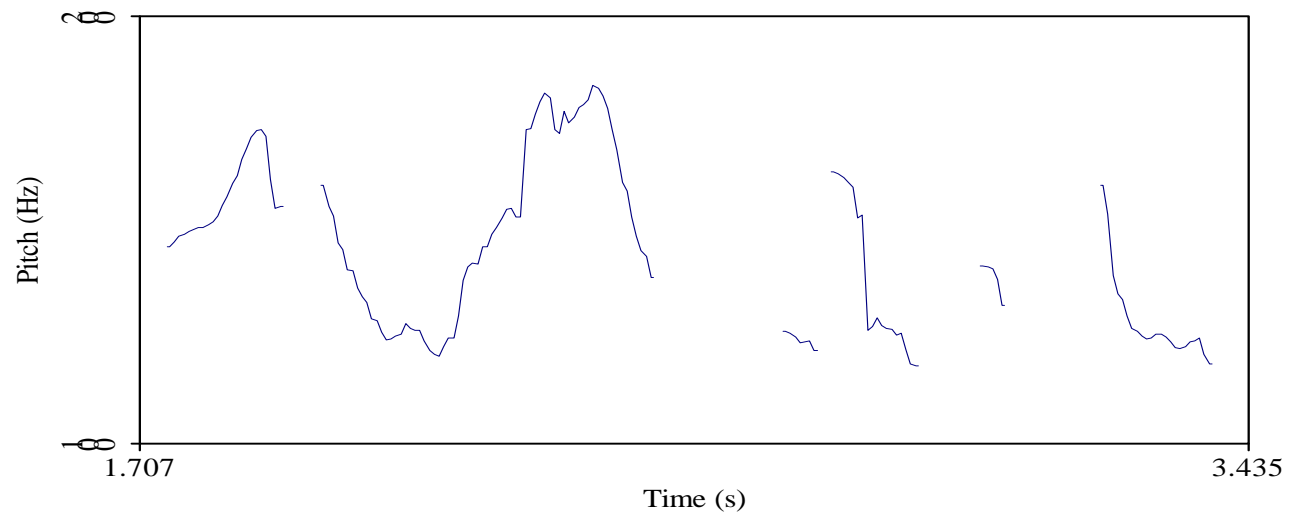
*mhiin aharriw* /

place want\IPFV1SG /

'Since I am a foreigner in this country, I am looking for a place to sleep.'







*w-haaš-ib girba tak akati-yeek /*

# 1. Morphosyntax and functions of -eek

- 1.2. Concessive marker (logical)

(3) *yhaa kilit ?oor w-hiiwaa-yook*

VOC Kilit boy DEF.M.SG-young\_camel-2M.SG

*titkwakw-eek-ni /*

finish\PFV2M.SG-if-CONTRAST /



*aa-kam yiwee-t ikatiin-eek*

DEF.F.PL.NOM-camel\PL thirsty-F be\IPFV3PL-if

'Kilit son, you finish your young camel  
whereas your she-camels are thirsty!'

# 1. Morphosyntax and functions of -eek

- 1.2. Concessive marker (argumentative)

(4) *tuu-na* *yhee / khi-t* *tikati-yeek*

DEF.F.SG.NOM-thing VOC / on-REL.F be\IPFV2F.SG-if

*whi-it / dʒarrab-hook andi*

under-REL.F / try-2SG.ACC say\IPFV1SG

*indi een /*

say\IPFV3M.SG say\PFV3PL /

'He says: - Whoever you are up there, I want to fight with you!'



# 1. Morphosyntax and functions of -eek

- 1.3. Temporal marker

(5) *tuu-tiyi* *t-asarama girm-a-ayi*

DEF.F.SG.NOM-snake DEF.F-seven head-PL-GEN.SG

*tisini-yeek* [...] *tidi* *een*

wait\PFV3F.SG-if [...] say\PFV3M.SG say\PFV3PL

'When she found the snake with seven heads, she said: [- 'Hammad Hummad, you hold on, I jump and I trample on some people's heads.]'





# 1. Morphosyntax and functions of -eek

- 1.4. Indirect interrogation marker

(6) *diyar-an-eek*      *ka-akan*      *dabal-had* /

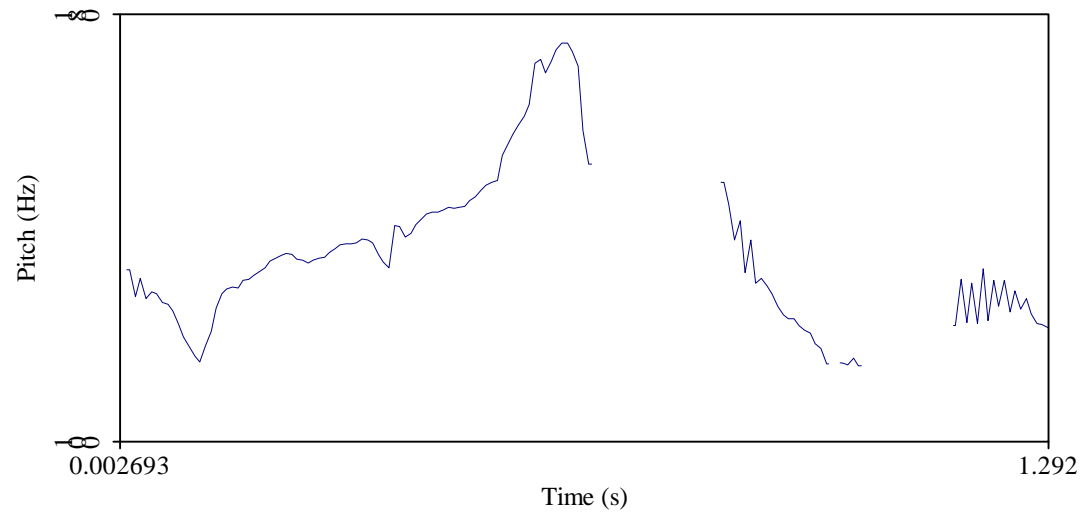
be\_tired-PFV1SG-if NEG-know\PFV1SG small-until /

*fiin-at-ey*      *indi*      *een* /

rest-POT1SG-so say\IPFV3M.SG say\PFV3PL /

'I don't know if I am tired, I am going to rest a bit, he said.'



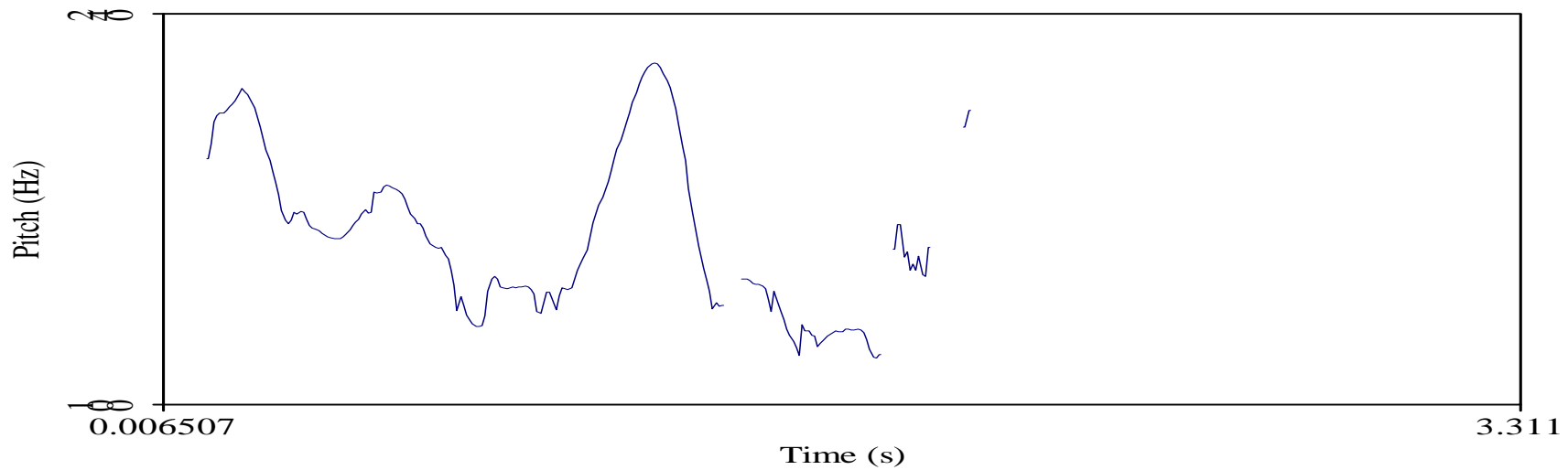


*diyar-an-eek*

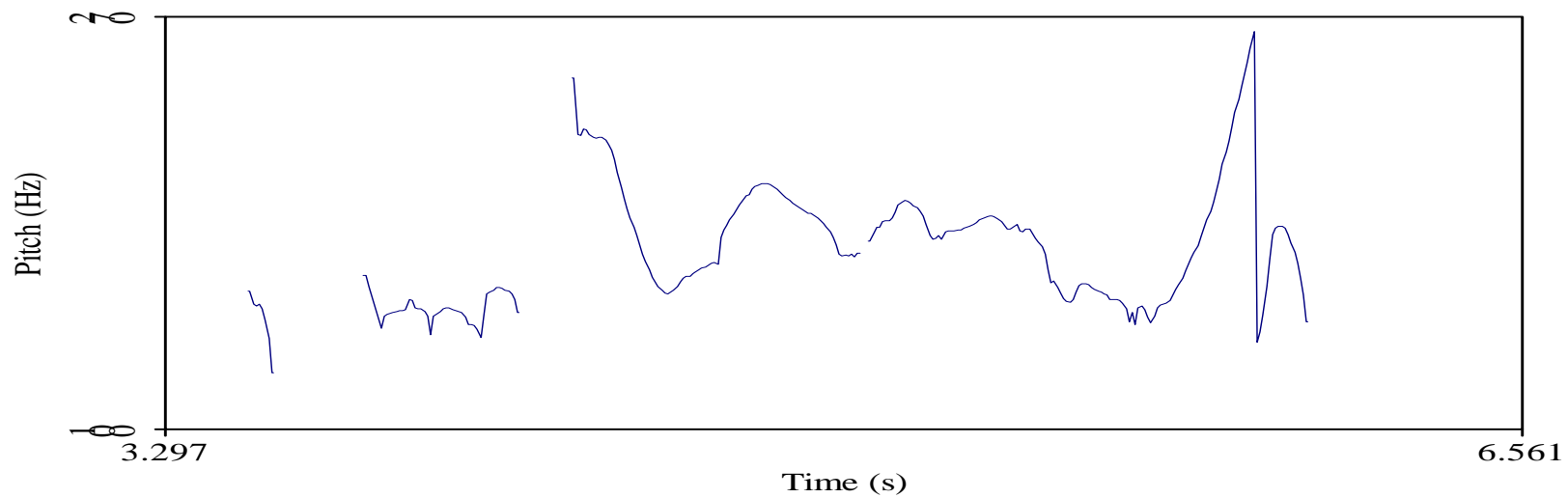
*ka-akan*







*umbaruuk darri-yeek id-heeb ini /*



*ti-... ti-mendikwiyaay aniw-hook umbawuuk darri-yeek /*



## 2. Clause order change

- 2.2. Pragmatics: Afterthought (recto tono)

(8) *ḡaḡib-t-EEK*     *warit hariw-a*     *naa-t*

work-F-2SG.ACC others look\_for-IMP.M.SG thing-F

*teedgiim-EEK* /     *i-tak-i*

ignore\REFL.IPFV2M.SG-if / DEF.M-man-GEN.SG

*ginha-eeb*     *tibari-yee-na*

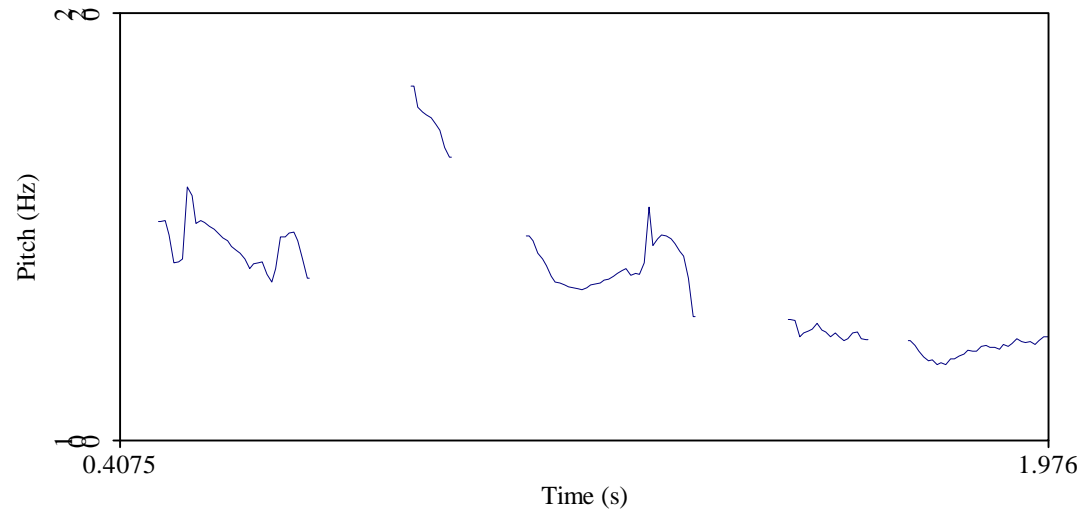
chest-LOC.PL have\IPFV3F.SG-REL-thing

*baa-hariw-a* /

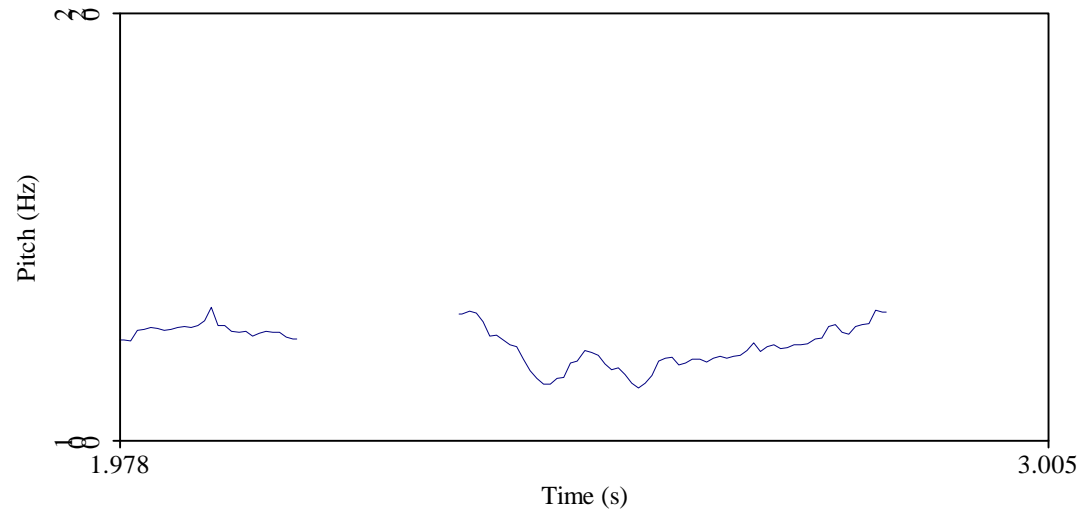
NEG-look\_for-IMP.M.SG#

'Look for another job if/since you can't do anything. Don't try to get anything back from this man.'





*daqib-t-eek warit hariw-a*



*naa-t teedgiim-eek /*

## 2. Clause order change

- 2.2. Pragmatics: Afterthought (end of tale)

(9) *tʔa mhas-aana yifeeth-aan suur*

now lunch-IMP.PL break\_fast-IMP.PL before

*mhaas-a-b bi-tkaay-n-eek*

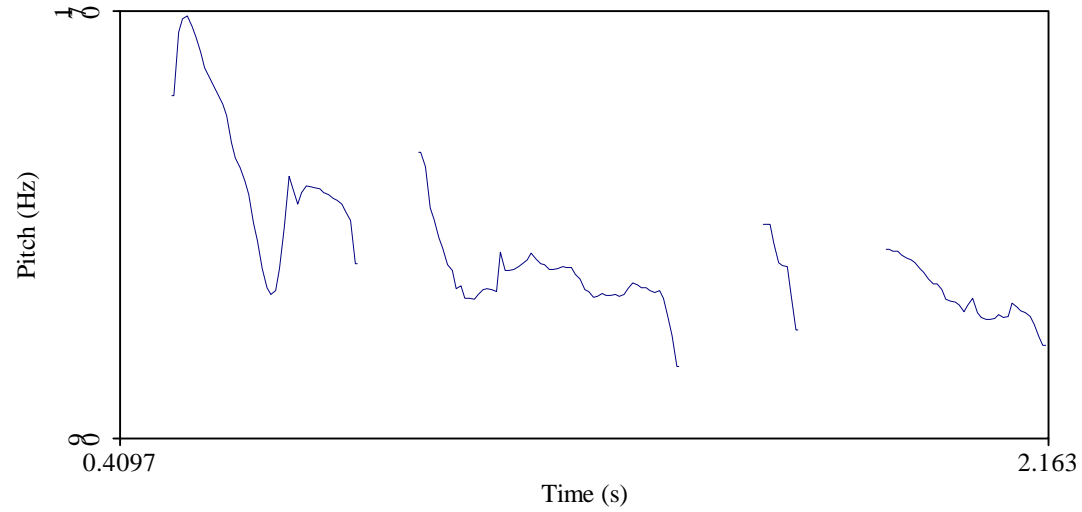
have\_lunch-GER-M NEG-be\IPFV3F.SG-LINK-if

*indi een /*

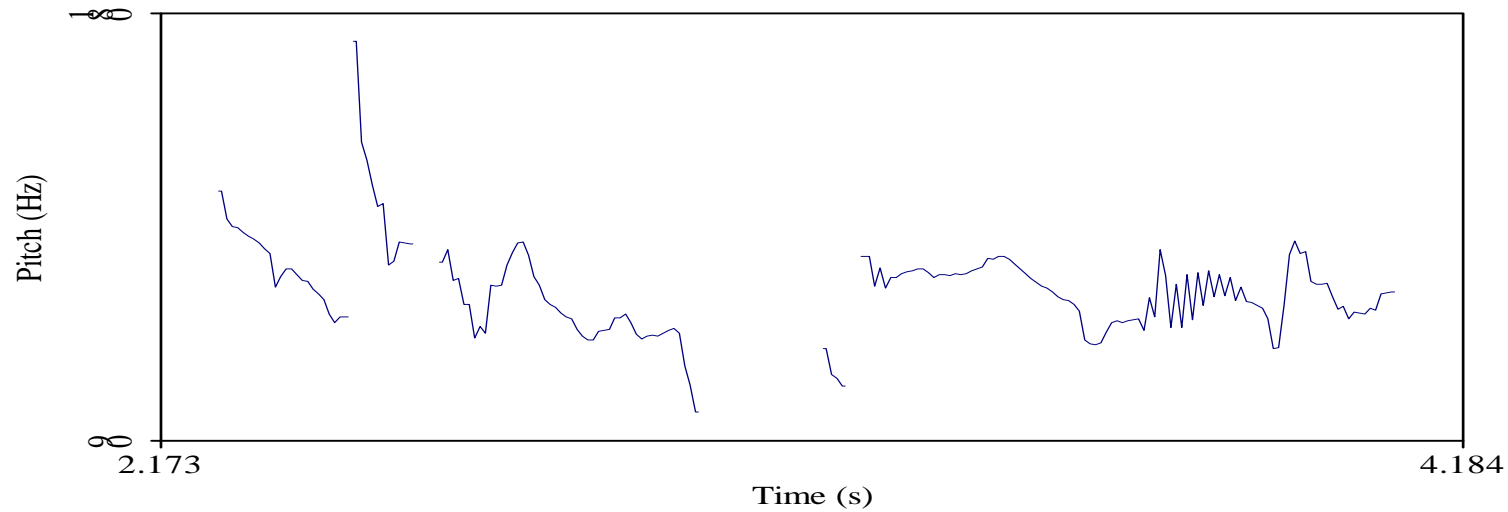
say\IPFV3M.SG say\PFV3PL /



'Then, have lunch, have breakfast, if/since you could not have lunch before, he said.' 20



*tʔa mhas-aana yifeeth-aan*



*suur mhaas-a-b bi-tkaay-n-eek indi een*

## 2. Clause order change

- 2.3. Modality

(9) *tuut*                      *tuu-na*                      *tifir?i-yeet /*

DEM.F.SG.NOM DEF.F.SG.NOM-thing go\_out\PFV3F.SG-REL.F/

*alf-ii*                      *baa-mraayna /*                      *ti-diyaa-t-ib*

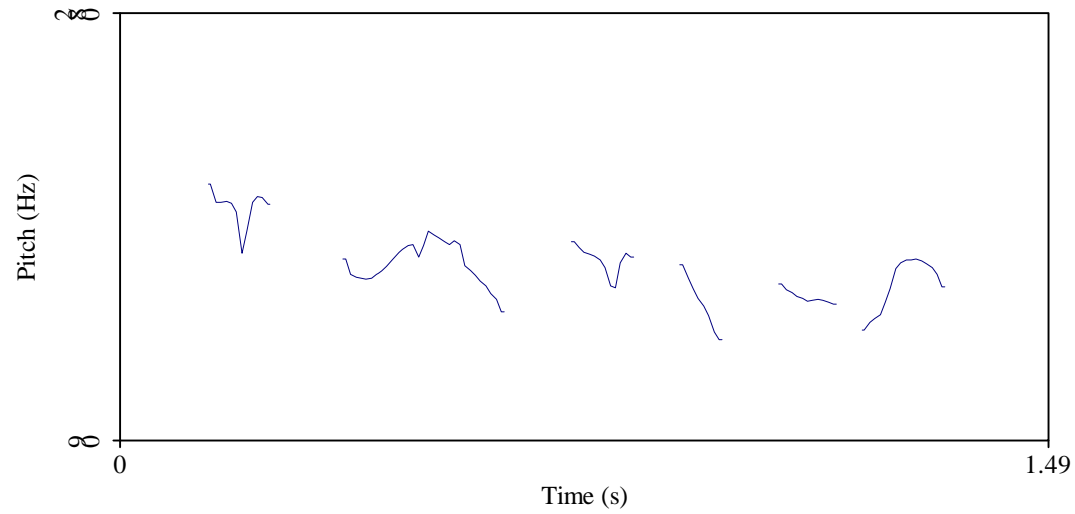
thousand-by NEG-find\OPT.2PL / DEF.F-world-F-LOC.SG

*tikati-yeek /*

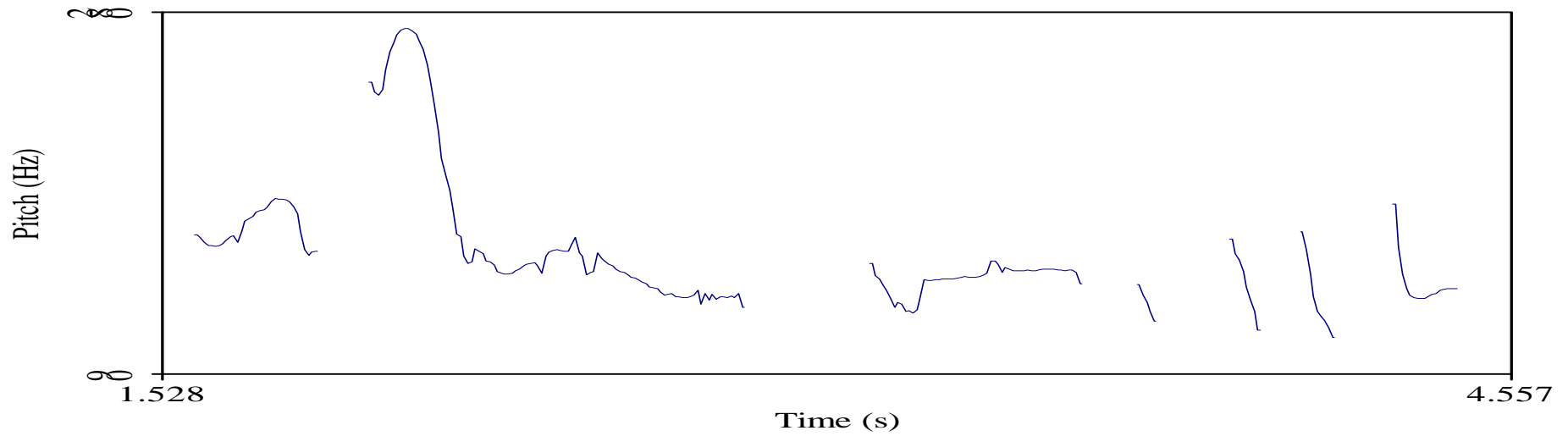
be\IPFV2M.SG-if /



'What you gave for a thousand dirham, you would not find in this world'



*tuut tuu-na tafir'i-yeet /*



*alf-ii baa-mraayna / ti-diyaa-t-ib tikati-yeek /*

## 2. Clause order change

- 2.4. From dependent to independent clause

(11) *malya muuna-y geeb gw?-aa*

then Muna-GEN.SG with drink-IMP.M.SG

*indi een / oo-buun*

say\IPFV3M.SG say\PFV3PL / DEF.M.SG.ACC-coffee

*oon / t?a / i-t?a gw?a-taan-eeb*

DEM.M.SG.ACC / now / DEF.M-now drink-PFV3F.SG-REL.M

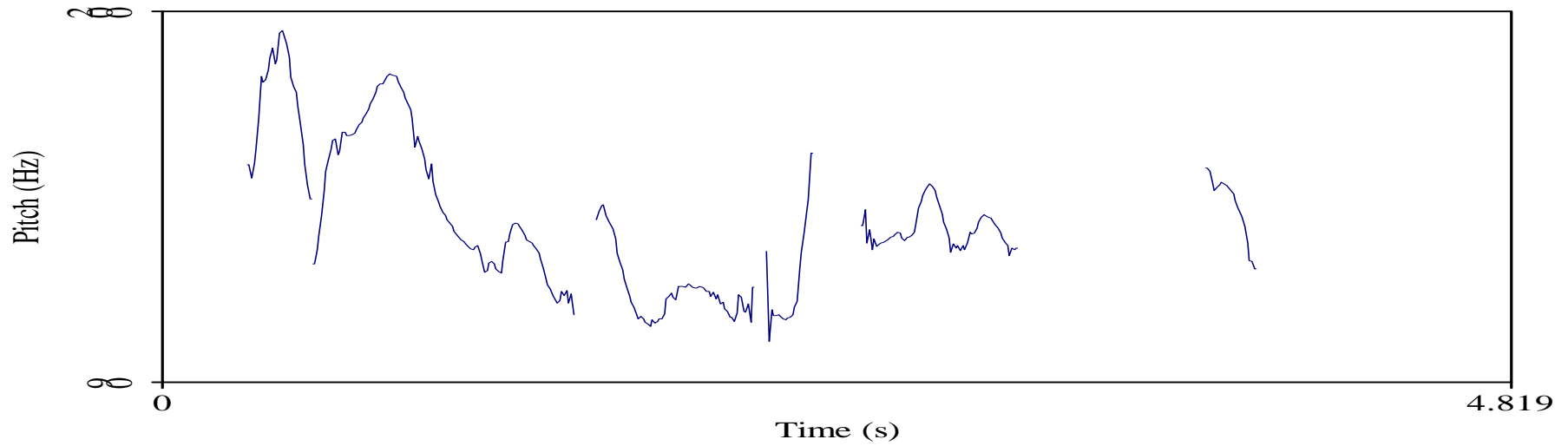
*ikati-yeek /*

be\IPFV3M.SG-if /

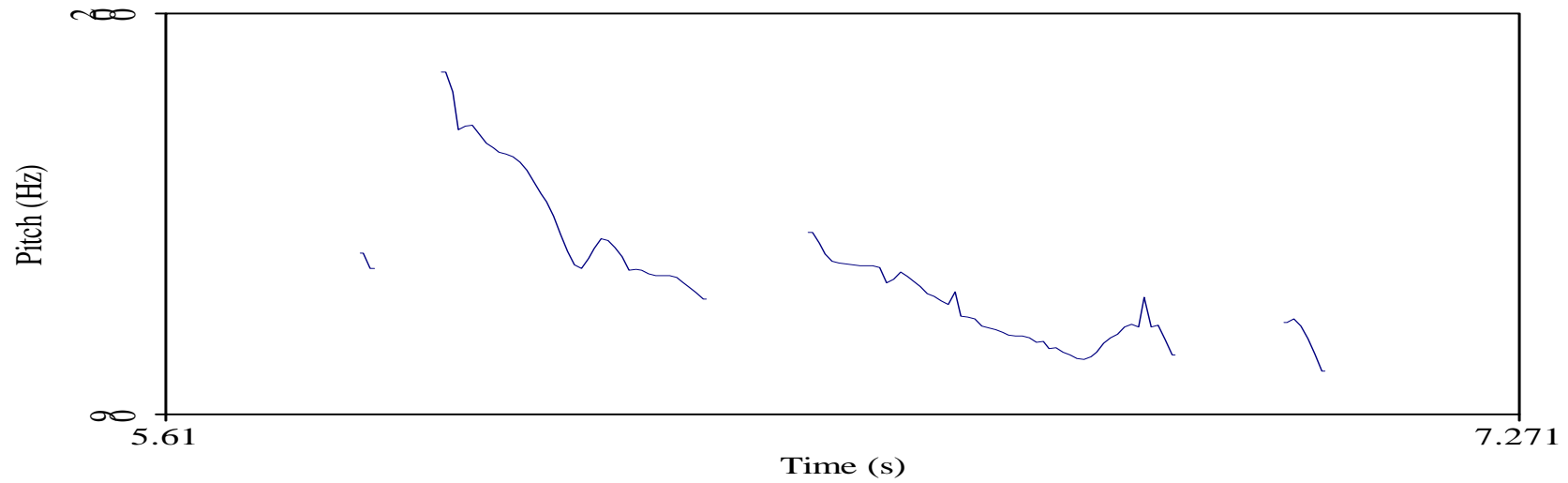
'He said: - next time go and drink with Muna !  
they said. So. If this is what you think of the  
coffee you've drunk.'







*malya muuna-y geeb gw<sup>?</sup>-aa indi een / oo-buun oon / t<sup>?</sup>a /*



*i-t<sup>?</sup>a gw<sup>?</sup>a-taan-eeb ikati-yeek /*

## 2. Clause order change

- 2.4. From dependent to independent clause

(10) *ʔišaa-t ʔooš-a diit yʔ-ii-yeek /*

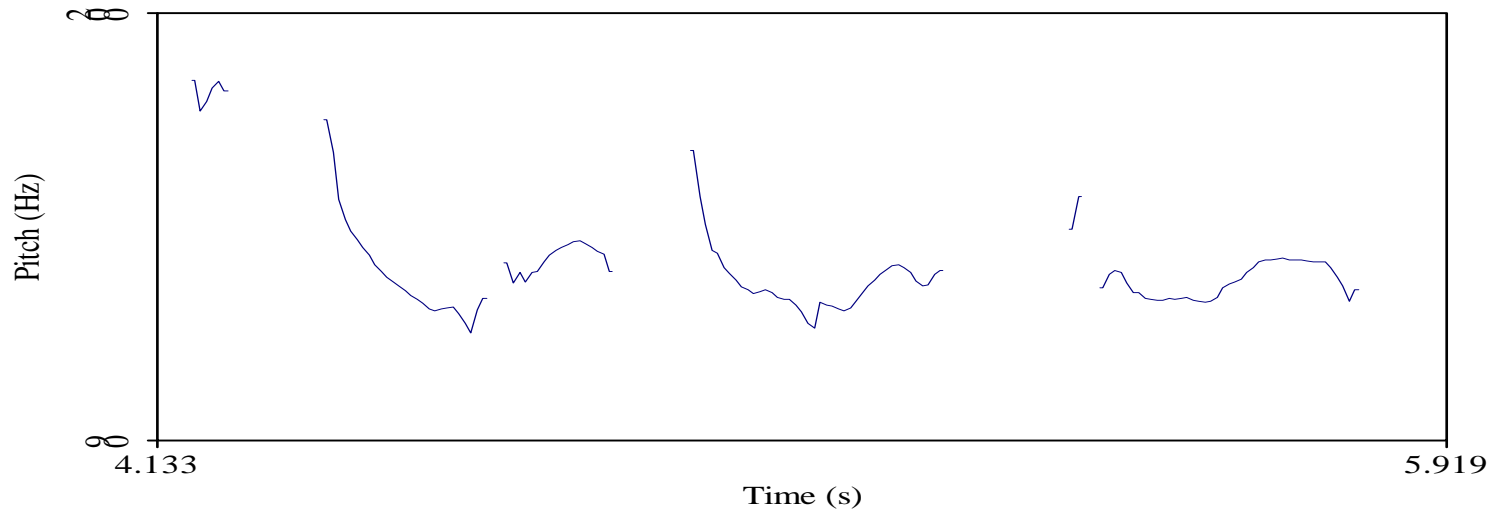
urine-F urinate-GER say\CNV2 come-NAR3M.SG-if /

*na-t gaa-naa-t-i-dha baruu een /*

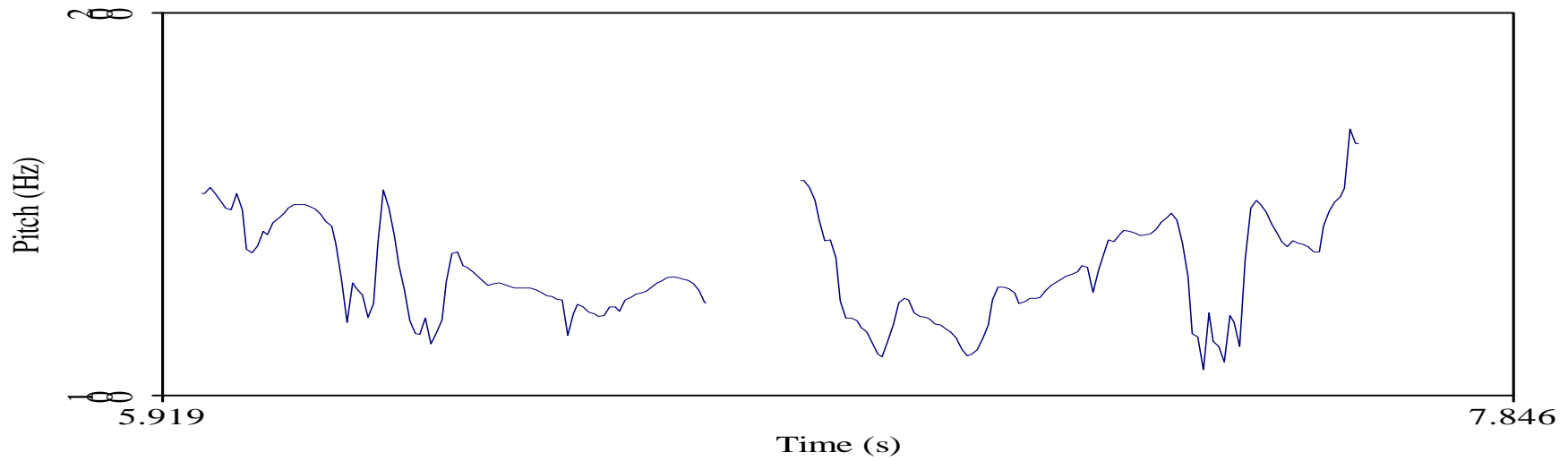
thing-F one-thing-F-GEN.SG-DIR 3M.SG.NOM say\PFV3PL /

'May be he came to piss or do something else,  
that guy, they said.'





*ʔiʂaa-t ʔooʂ-a diit yʔ-ii-yeek /*



*naa-t gaa-naa-t-i-dha baruu een /*

# Conclusion

- Canonical clause order: falling pitch on -eek
- Hesitation: prosodic change, high pitch on end of conditional
- Clause order change: pragmatics, flat pitch
- Epistemic modality: falling - flat pitch
- Independent: -eek = marks end of speech