

Introduction to Prosody

A Course at the 2019 LSA Linguistics Institute

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Class Time Mondays and Thursdays, 11:10 - 12:35, Olson 217
June 24 – July 18, but meeting July 3 for July 4

Office Hours generally during Social Hour (Tu Fr 4:10 – 5:40) and by appointment

Course Description and Scope

Prosody, broadly defined as the aspects of spoken utterances that are not governed by segmental contrasts, is challenging to analyze because it operates close to the limits of conscious introspection, and because most spoken utterances involve multiple prosodic dimensions simultaneously serving multiple communicative functions.

This course will help participants learn to identify, discover, and describe meaningful prosodic properties and patterns in spoken utterances. The approach will be theory-neutral and descriptively eclectic. The focus will be on primary observation, preliminary analysis and ideation, rather than theory-driven hypothesis formation and testing. The course will include lectures, ear and voice training exercises, discussions of readings, qualitative and quantitative analysis of data with Praat and other tools, and possibly the development and presentation of student research proposals.

The course is designed to be broadly accessible, with knowledge of phonetics not required. As an introductory course, coverage will not be exhaustive or deep on any single topic. Rather we will survey prosody widely, including computational methods, cross-language and cross-cultural phenomena, and topics in sociolinguistics, pragmatics, interactional linguistics.

Course Website: <http://www.cs.utep.edu/nigel/intro-to-prosody/>

Course Policies

Each student is to prepare 2-3 discussion questions for each major assigned reading and bring them to class to hand in at the end of class.

Assignments may be done individually or in pairs, or in groups with permission. Assignments are to be submitted in hardcopy; handwritten submissions are welcome if legible.

You will need access to a computer with Praat installed for some of the assignments. You will also need a way to record and play audio clips for class discussion, such as a phone.

Target Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Perceive subtle prosodic properties of utterances in any language
2. Produce exemplars of a wide range of meaningful prosodic features and patterns
3. Describe prosodic observations using common terminology and notations and relate them to common theories and models
4. Explain the articulatory, acoustic, and perceptual bases of prosodic features and how they vary among individuals
5. Use Praat for visualization and measurement
6. Describe how prosody serves various paralinguistic, phonological and pragmatic functions across diverse languages
7. Understand and critically evaluate new research
8. Chose and apply research methods appropriate for a specific question, for discovery, ideation, hypothesis formation, and experiment design
9. Tell their own stories of discovery
10. Describe the limits of our current knowledge and the research challenges involved in extending it
11. Discuss how to exploit prosody for various engineering and other practical applications

Readings

An Introduction to English Phonetics, 2nd Edition., Richard A. Ogden, Edinburgh, 2017. Chapter 4, for session 2.

Analysing Conversation: An introduction to prosody. Beatrice Szczepek Reed. Palgrave Macmillan, 2010. Chapter 2, for session 3.

The Geneva Minimalistic Acoustic Parameter Set ... Florian Eyben, Klaus Scherrer *et al.* *IEEE Transactions on Affective Computing* 7:2, sections 3.1 and 3.2, pp 193-194, 2016

Prosody in Context: A review. Jennifer Cole. *Language, Cognition and Neuroscience*, 30:1-2, 1-31, 2015, for session 4.

Speech Prosody: theories, models and analysis. Yi Xu. In *Courses on Speech Prosody*, A. R. Meireles (ed), Cambridge Scholars Press, 2015 pp 146-177, for session 6.

Prosodic Patterns in English Conversation. Nigel G. Ward. Cambridge University Press, 2019. Chapter 8, for session 6.

Speech and Language Processing, 2nd Edition. Dan Jurafsky and James H. Martin. Pearson, 2009. Section 8.3, for session 7.

Assignments

- A. Shadowing, Difference Spotting. due in Session 2 (1 hour)
- B. Praat, Microprosody. due in Session 3 (1-2 hours)
- C. Paralinguistics, Nuances. due in Session 4 (1-2 hours)
- D. Speech Synthesis. Due in Session 7 (1 hour)
- Z. A Small Original Study of a Phenomenon of Interest. due in Sessions 6 and 8 (4-8 hours)