

Prosody for all the skills:

How to integrate the “music” of language into any lesson

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This Webinar: Aims

To raise awareness of the importance of prosody in language processing

To share ideas for integrating prosody into your classroom

This Webinar: Outline

- What is prosody?
- Why does prosody matter?
 - Speaking/listening
 - Reading/writing
 - Questions?
- Ideas to integrate prosody into skills lessons
 - Questions?

What is Prosody?



Rhythm

Stress

Pitch

Speed

Intonation

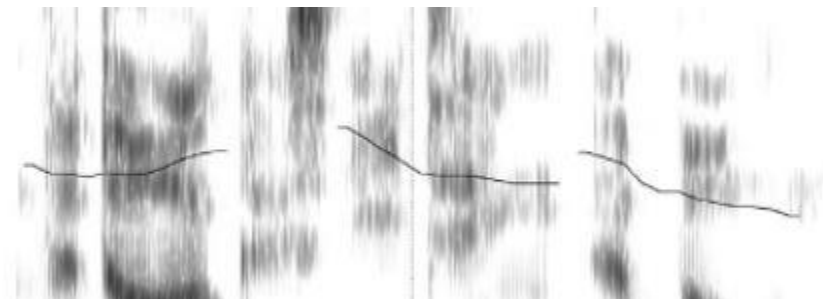
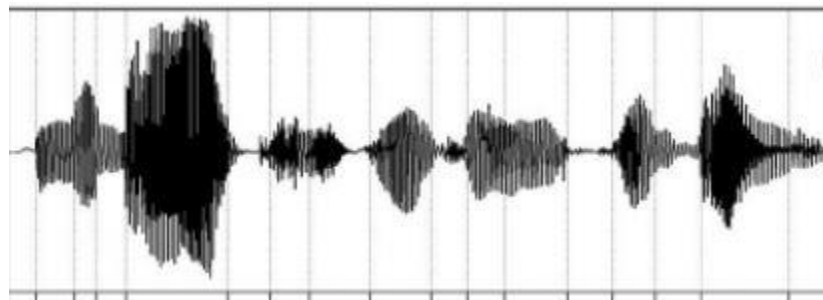


Image credit: https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Example-of-segmented-sentence-in-Praat-based-on-the-waveform-pitch-track-and_fig1_26008977

Why does prosody matter?

Fluency!

Prosody is a predictor of **fluency** across skills.

If it's so important, why don't we know about it?

- Lack of self-awareness
- Difficult to isolate

Why does prosody matter? - Speaking & Listening

- **Comprehensibility**

- **Disambiguation:**
 - real-world disambiguation
 - complex sentence processing.

(Jackson & O'Brien 2011)

Why does prosody matter? - Reading & Writing

Writing:

- Prosody: The origin of Punctuation!

Reading prosody (explicit and implicit) is linked with comprehension

- L1 reading: children
- L1 reading: teenagers and reading comprehension
- L2 reading: appears to be different



Questions?

Applications: CONTEXT

By including context you are more likely to expose learners to prosody, and learners are more likely to learn prosody when it is presented in context (Hardison, 2005) .

Including communicative purpose is also more likely to elicit correct prosody!

Applications: Caution

Be careful of “teaching correct prosody”

- Careful Speech Model (Cauldwell, 2018) - tempting but dangerous!
 - For example: WH-questions go down, yes/no questions go up

Instead: raise awareness

- Use authentic materials wherever possible
- Give exposure, practice and feedback on prosodic features

Applications: Caution

Remember, Prosody is *hard*.

- Research has shown that L1 interference still exists even in very advanced speakers.
- It can be difficult for learners to identify their own prosodic mistakes.

Idea for activities:

These are not about:

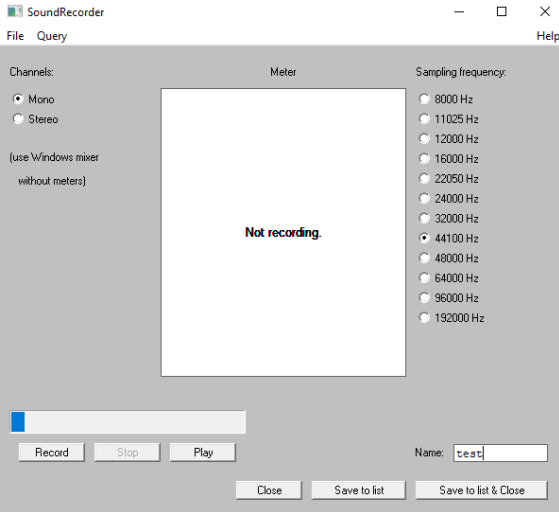
- Lexical stress (teaching the stress of individual words)
- Lexical tones (in tonal languages like Chinese)
- Emotional expression

These are aimed at:

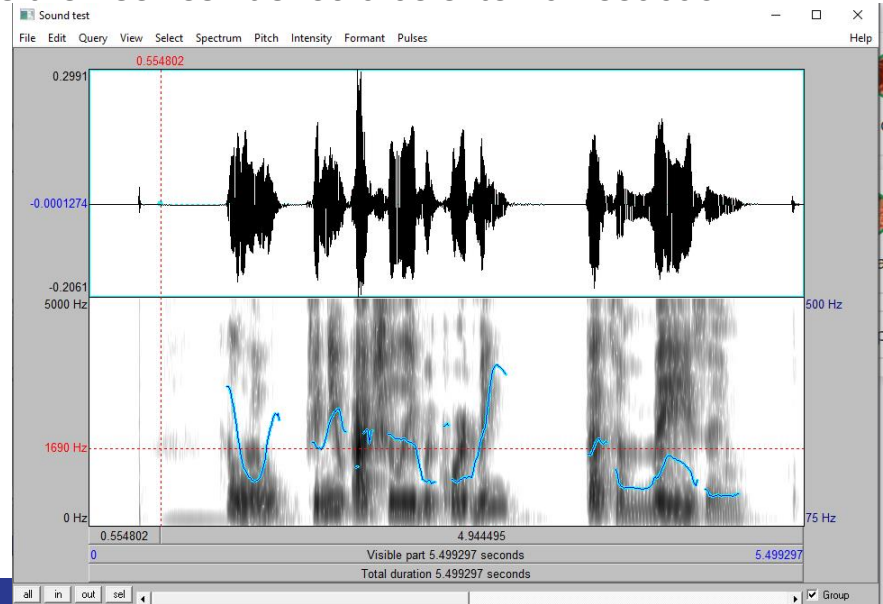
- Sentence processing
- Fluency and comprehension
- Parsing

Ideas for activities: Speaking

- Visual Feedback: Electronic (using [Praat](#) or other free software) or even the teacher drawing what they hear.
 - Note: learners are often not able to hear this themselves. It should be external feedback.
 - See Lengeris (2012) for a review

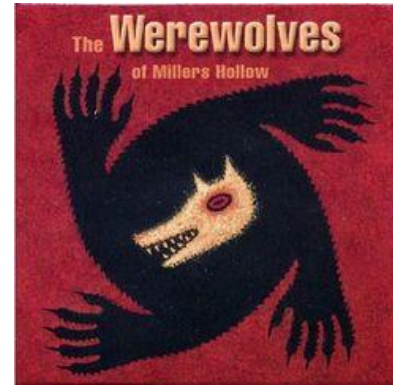


Hello, can you
actually record me?
That's amazing.



Ideas for activities: Speaking

- Social deduction games:
 - Spyfall, Werewolf
- Sentence-level drilling
- Imitating conversations without words

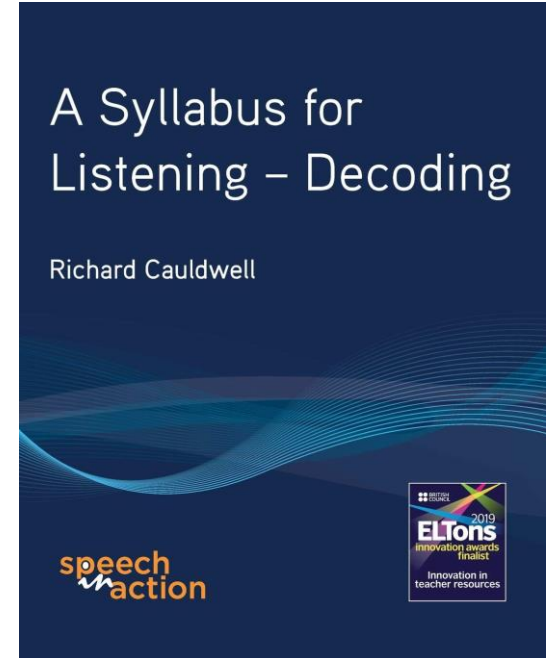


Ideas for activities: Listening

A Syllabus for Listening- Decoding by Richard Cauldwell

- “Botanic Walk:” Greenhouse, Garden and Jungle
- “Word Crusher:” teaching new soundscapes
- Gap fill from the jungle

And many others. Highly recommended!



Ideas for activities: Reading

Silent reading:

Assisted Reading: Combining timed silent reading with audio, and repeating the same texts.

Reading aloud:

Vocabulary in context: pair reading

note: this should be communicative, NOT performative!

Vocab in context activity

This was what Leeds City Council said about Moose's work: 'Leeds **residents** want to live in clean and attractive neighbourhoods. We view this kind of advertising as environmental **damage** and will take strong action against any advertisers carrying out such campaigns.' It seems that no **action** was taken against the advertisers – no fines nor any other **punishment** – but Moose himself was ordered to 'clean up his act'

From: National Geographic Life: Upper Intermediate

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Ideas for activities: Writing

- Speak first, write second
 - Using recording devices, listen to themselves and write what they said!
 - Helps strengthen the connection between prosody/sentence structure.

- Out-loud editing:
 - Have students work in pairs and edit writing out loud - listen for what doesn't SOUND right, including punctuation.
 - Alternatively, the teacher reads out loud and the class corrects.

Summary

Prosody is an important part of language processing, but many students and teachers don't incorporate it into language learning practice. Raising awareness, both for students and for teachers, will lead to improvements in fluency and comprehension outcomes in the future.

The conversation isn't over! Experiment and share ideas and feedback here:

https://padlet.com/joy_mills/ozn3juor089i

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Questions?

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