

Prosodic prominence: discreteness, gradience, and a dynamical systems account

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Prosody has been characterised as a ‘half-tamed savage’ (Bolinger 1978; Gussenhoven 2004) being shaped by both discrete, categorical aspects as well as gradient, continuous phenomena. This talk is devoted to the ‘wild’ and the ‘civilised’ sides of prosodic prominence. It presents a controlled corpus of 27 native speakers of German marking focus structures prosodically (acoustic and articulatory EMA recordings). Our study shows that categorical and continuous aspects of prosody live in symbiosis. Sketching a dynamical model of prosodic prominence we question the validity of the assumption of a strict division between what has been described as phonological, grammaticalised on the one hand and what has been termed phonetic, implementation-based phenomena on the other. In addition, our analysis combines tonal and articulatory aspects of prosodic focus marking to contribute to our understanding of prominence as multi-dimensional bundle of prosodic cues.

References

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