Prosody and Intonation  
(Spring 2020, CUNY GC)

Course Listing: LING 79500 & SPCH *****
Instructor: J. Bishop
Meeting Time: Tuesdays, 11:45pm – 1:45pm
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Office Hours: TBA

Course Description:
This course is an introduction to the Autosegmental-Metrical (AM) framework for studying sentence-level prosody and intonation. We will first concentrate on the AM modeling of American English intonation, and on use of the corresponding ToBI (Tones and Break Indices) transcription conventions. We will then expand to other languages (e.g., Japanese, Korean, Bengali, and French) and discuss a broader prosodic typology. The course will provide students with the tools for sophisticated prosodic analysis that can be applied to the study of phenomena in segmental phonetics/phonology, syntax, semantics, information structure, sentence processing, computational linguistics, sociolinguistics, disordered speech and language, and L1/L2 language acquisition. Relating our phonological model of prosodic and intonational structure to these other areas of inquiry will be an emphasis of the course.

Prerequisites:
Phonology I (LING 71300) is recommended; Speech Science (SPCH 70500, or an equivalent course in acoustic phonetics) would be extremely useful.

Texts:
—Other readings will be provided.

Course requirements:
• Several homework/lab assignments, mostly related to ToBI annotation training.
• 1-2 page written summaries of/reflections on each reading.
• Occasional presentation (or co-presentation) of readings.
• Term project (required for students in the Linguistics PhD program; optional for others): fully design a research project utilizing the prosodic theory and analytical tools developed in class. This is an especially good opportunity to explore the interface between prosody and another linguistic subfield. Students will be required to discuss their project topics with me before the 9th class meeting.
Some possible project topics (general areas):

1. The role of prosody in conditioning articulatory dynamics, coarticulatory timing, or other phonetic phenomena; the extent to which higher-level prosodic structure serves as a relevant domain for segmental phonological alternations/processes.

2. Any of the many interactions between prosody and the interpretation of focus, topic, quantifier scope; the relation between intonational phrasing and syntactic phrasing; prosodic properties of children’s speech or Motherese (i.e., infant-directed speech); L2 speech; disordered speech.

3. The role of prosody in the (on-line) processing of linguistic information, including (but not limited to) lexical access, syntactic parsing, and reference resolution.

4. A (sketch of a) phonological model of the intonation of a dialect of any language for which the “standard” variety has already been described in intonational phonology.

5. A (sketch of a) phonological model of the intonation of any language for which there is no current description in the AM framework.

6. Describe and analyze prosody associated with a special discourse meaning or sociolinguistic function. This could include, but is not limited to, political speech, announcement/newscaster or read speech, advertisements, or the speech of some particular social group.

Tentative Schedule
Subject to change somewhat, depending on the composition of the class (in terms of linguistic subfields) and any unexpected but interesting issues that arise during the course.

Week 1: Prosody & Intonation: Introduction to Representation & Interpretation
—Readings: Büring (Chapter 1); Beckman & Edwards (1994) (non-phoneticians and non-laboratory phonologists can stop at section 2.5 if they wish)

Week 2: Intonational Phonology / Autosegmental Metrical Theory
—Assignment: Preliminaries to transcription: presence of accent; simple pitch accents
—Readings: Beckman & Pierrehumbert (1986); Arvaniti (in press)

Week 3: AM Theory and Prosodic Transcription: The ToBI system
—Assignment: Complex pitch accents I
—Readings: Beckman, Hirschberg, & Shattuck-Hufnagel (2005); Jun (in press)

Weeks 4-5: The ToBI system: Pitch Accents
—Assignment: ToBI transcriptions each week
—Readings: Readings from the ToBI manual (Beckman & Ayers, 1997) and the MIT ToBI course materials each week
Weeks 6-7: The ToBI System: Phrasing (Phrase Accents, Boundary Tones, Break Indices)
—Assignment: ToBI transcriptions each week
—Readings: Readings from the ToBI manual (Beckman & Ayers, 1997) and the MIT ToBI course materials each week

Weeks 8-9: Prosodic Typology

Weeks 10-11: Prosody and Syntax
—Likely readings: Nespor & Vogel (1986); Truckenbrodt (1999); Büring (Chapter 6)

Weeks 12-14: Prosody and Meaning (and wrapping up)
—Likely readings: Pierrehumbert (in press); Pierrehumbert & Hirschberg (1990); Selkirk (1995); Büring (Chapters 3 and 7); Beaver & Velleman (2011); time-permitting, possibly Gussenhoven (2016) as well
—Brief presentation of student projects on the last day

References