LIDILEM Université Grenoble Alpes

Call for Papers

International conference

"Prosody at the crossroads of disciplinary pathways"

Thursday 21 and Friday 22 May, 2026, Université Grenoble Alpes, France (Saint-Martin-d'Hères campus, IMAG building)

Over the past decades, the enthusiasm generated by prosodic studies has spread well outside the boundaries of the traditional subfields of linguistics (phonetics, phonology, syntax, semantics and pragmatics) and reached the related disciplines of psycholinguistics, neurolinguistics, clinical and forensic practice as well as language processing (cf. Di Cristo, 2004).

Whereas prosody has traditionally been used as an umbrella term covering the interconnected phenomena of stress, rhythm and intonation (whose phonetic expressions mainly involve changes in fundamental frequency, intensity and duration and their perceptual correlates [Lehiste, 1970; Arvaniti, 2020]), we also aim to include voice quality in the program alongside the established categories of stress and intonation, to encourage discussion on the nature of prosodic features.

Intonation is a supralexical phenomenon consisting in variations in fundamental frequency and their perceptual correlates observed at sentence or constituent level (Ladd, 1996; Cruttenden, 1997). It can fulfil all three essential functions of speech: linguistic, paralinguistic and extralinguistic (Abercrombie, 1967).

The ***rhythm*** of languages or varieties of languages relates to the hierarchical organisation of variably salient speech units in the temporal development of the production of the speech chain (Dellwo, 2003). The nature of these units varies depending on languages or language varieties.

Along with Laver (1968, 1980, 1994), Sharpe (1970) and Mackenzie-Beck (2005), we consider that ***voice quality*** – which also conveys linguistic, paralinguistic and extralinguistic information – does not only result from speakers' biologically-derived differences in vocal apparatus, but also from *articulatory* (or *supralaryngeal*) as well as *phonatory* (or *laryngeal*) settings.

Articulatory setting consists in the overall positioning of the articulatory organs. Wilson (2006) defines it as the "underlying or default posture of the articulators (i.e., the tongue, jaw, and lips)", whereas Honikman (1964) considers that it consists in "the gross oral posture and mechanics [requisite as a framework for the integrating of the isolated sounds into that whole] which constitutes the pronunciation of a language". This also applies to every idiolect.

Phonatory settings consist in the way the vocal folds are made to vibrate. Stuart-Smith (2004) describes them as "glottal configurations" or "stricture types"; that is, the potential combination of specific types of tensions that can be brought to bear on the vocal folds. Laver (1994) established a typology of the various phonatory settings that can be achieved through these means.

Prosody is traditionally defined as a set of elements whose function is superimposed upon that of the intrinsic features of segments (Lehiste, 1970). However, the growing literature establishing that children's acquisition of prosodic structure far predates that of discrete units like phonemes and words (cf. e.g., Davis et al., 2000; Polzehl et al., 2024) suggests that it is preferable to conceive of it as an underlying matrix into which the segments are embedded.

The main aim of this conference is to promote and enhance collaborations between researchers from different subdomains in order to review and discuss the applications of prosodic research to such fields as language acquisition, foreign language teaching, forensic and clinical phonetics, voice recognition, speech synthesis and sociolinguistics.

Despite the existence of a growing literature on the subject, voice quality remains by far the most under-investigated of the elements listed above, especially as it has not conventionally been recognised

as a component of prosody. Hence our desire to lay particular emphasis on its structural makeup and description as well as on existing assessment protocols (cf. e.g., San Segundo and Mompean, 2017, San Segundo, 2021).

Participants are invited to submit proposals for both oral and poster presentations on the following issues and other related topics:

- In what way can the study of voice quality influence our conception of prosodic models?
- How can voice quality be measured and described?
- How do auditory impressions and instrumental measurements compare in assessing voice quality?
- How do auditory and instrumental evaluations compare in measuring intonation? Or rhythm?
- How do the components of prosody respectively or conjointly contribute to informing accent studies and surveying language variation and change?
- What are the evidential values of voice quality, intonation and rhythm acoustics in forensic voice analysis?
- How can voice quality, intonation and rhythm be integrated into models of speech synthesis?
- In what manner can prosodic research be useful to speech therapists in clinical situations?
- To what extent could the study of voice quality, intonation and rhythm help us gain a better understanding of the prosody-syntax and prosody-discourse interfaces?
- Could an in-depth analysis of these three prosodic components benefit the study of prosody in spoken interaction?
- Should the precedence of prosody over lexicon and syntax in child language acquisition inform the debate over the directionality of the prosody-syntax interface?
- More generally, to what extent can language acquisition research shape our understanding of the role and status of prosody?
- How far could foreign language teaching benefit from a prosody-based approach? And how can this be implemented practically?

Even though the talks will be given in English, they may bear on any language(s).

Submissions must include a title and a one-page anonymous abstract (excluding references), and be submitted through SciencesConf at: https://ugaprosody2026.sciencesconf.org/submission/submit, by 31 Marcg 2026 (extended deadline).

Oral Presentations will consist of 30-minute presentations followed by 10-minute question and discussion sessions. Posters should be prepared in Portrait format with a maximum size of A0.

Instructions for submission can be found here: https://doc.sciencesconf.org/en/deposer/soumettre.html.

Keynote speakers:

Eugenia San Segundo, Materials Science Institute of Madrid – CSIC

Felix Schaeffler, Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh

Radek Skarnitzl, Charles University, Prague

Jane Stuart-Smith, University of Glasgow

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