

## **Exploring the factors underlying L2 prosody acquisition: The role of learning direction and the interplay of prosodic cues**

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One of the areas that remains a persistent challenge for adult foreign language (L2) learners is the use of prosody. It encompasses the suprasegmental aspects of speech, such as intonation, rhythm, and word stress, which vary significantly across languages. These cross-linguistic differences complicate prosody production for L2 speakers. Even if they have a high general L2 proficiency, learners still tend to transfer prosodic patterns from their native language (L1) to their L2. Moreover, the relationship between prosodic features and linguistic meaning is complex and multifaceted, with one feature performing various linguistic functions and vice versa. Due to this complexity and the fact that teachers tend to lack both the time for pronunciation practice in class and the necessary instruction materials to do so, prosody is seldom explicitly taught.

In my talk, I will first discuss the general conclusions that can be drawn from my work on the acquisition of different prosodic features regarding the factors that influence L2 development, such as learning direction. Second, I will present perception study results on the relative contribution of L2 intonation, rhythm, and speech rate to L1 perceptions of accentedness and comprehensibility. These results show that improving the prosody of L2 speakers positively affects L1 perceptions of L2 speech, but not to the same extent for both measures. Hence, this study reaffirms the importance of differentiating between different aspects of perception and provides insight into those features that are most likely to affect each L1 perception type.

Finally, if there is time, I will present collaborative research on the coupling between hand gestures and L2 speech, which from several perspectives (e.g., biomechanics, embodied cognition) appears a promising avenue for further research and applications in L2 prosody teaching.