

BMA–ANGD–A2 Linguistic theory

An overview of English prosody

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outline

- ▶ usually research on accent differences focus on **segmental** phonological aspects
- ▶ e.g. E *man* – *men* have different vowels;
based, *kissed*, etc. have a voiceless /t/
word-final deletion of /b g/ after nasals: *tomb*, *bomb*; *sing*, *ringing*, etc., etc.
- ▶ **suprasegmental** level, the **prosody** is often ignored, even though this gives the “baseline” of the pronunciation, mistakes in it give away “foreign” accent, too
- ▶ overview of prosody, its components, basic regularities, with some mentions how English and Hungarian prosody may be different, and they are very different!

prosody /prɒsədi/

- ▶ examination of units **larger than the word**: in phrases and in sentences
- ▶ the elements of prosody are also called **suprasegmentals**: they appear in units 'above' the segments: e.g., the syllable
- ▶ prosody = the study of **stress**, **rhythm** and **intonation**
- ▶ other suprasegmentals: speed (or speech rate or tempo) and key (or voice height or pitch) – these are extralinguistic features, not used for contrast, they accompany language behaviour

stress

- ▶ stress = the **relative prominence of a syllable** over another
- ▶ 'prominence' = basically, **loudness**
- ▶ *da-da-DA-da-da-DA-da*
- ▶ prominence cannot only be signalled by loudness but it can be enhanced by other features, too (e.g., length)

rhythm

- ▶ rhythm/beat = the way stressed syllables follow each other, forming (rhythmic) **feet**

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- ▶ underline the **syllables**

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- ▶ *Jéremy pláyed the guitár.*

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- ▶ *Jeremy played the guitar.*
- ▶ mark the **stressed syllables** with an accent
- ▶ *Jérémy pláyed thé guitár.*
- ▶ *Jérémy pláyed thé guitár.* – 3 stressed syllables, number of **feet** = 3

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- ▶ *Jérémy pláyed thé guitár.*
- ▶ *Jérémy | pláyed thé gui | tár.*

rhythm, prosodic feet

- ▶ each sentence has a particular **rhythm**: the sequence of the stressed syllables = beats
- ▶ the beats follow each other more or less regularly = isochronicity
- ▶ English is **stressed-timed**, it has stressed-timed rhythm
- ▶ a sentence in pronunciation will be as long as many stresses there are in it and not as long as many syllables there are in it
- ▶ **syllable-timed** languages (e.g. Hu): a sentence with 6 syllables is half as long as a sentence with 12 syllables
- ▶ stressed-timed: a sent. with 6 syllables may be exactly as long as a sent. with 12 syllables if the number of stresses is the same
- ▶ **reduction**

intonation

- ▶ intonation = the changes in the height of the voice (the **pitch**)
- ▶ *da-da ↗-da-da-da- ↗-da-da*
- ▶ intonation is like melody
- ▶ loudness (stress) + pitch (intonation) combine together to create the most prominent syllable in a sentence/phrase/word: the **tonic**
- ▶ *DA-da-da-DA-da-da- ↘ **DA***
- ▶ *Jéremy | pláyed the gui | ↘ **tár.***
- ▶ *da-DA-da-da-DA-da-da- ↗ **DA***
- ▶ *Did | Jéremy | pláyed the gui | ↗ **tár?***

The End-Weight Principle/Rule

- ▶ If there is a sequence of equal stresses, the **last** must become the strongest = the most prominent. = The prosodic “weight” of an utterance must be at the end.
- ▶ this last stressed syllable is the **tonic**:

néw \↘ **bóok**

Amánda \↘ **Cólinder** *sít* \↘ **dówn**

consíderable ex \↘ **pénses** *útterly de* \↘ **strúctive** *He críticized* \↘ **éverything.**

The chíldren mánaged to cárry the súiťcases to the édge of the \↘ **róundabout.**

únbe \↘ **líevable**

- ▶ thus, the tonic is the **only primary stress in the word/phrase/sentence, everything else is downgraded to secondary**

primary stress vs. secondary stress

- ▶ **primary stress of a word/phrase/sentence** = a stressed syllable where – when the word is used in a sentence – the pitch may change, i.e., **the stressed syllable which may potentially become the tonic when put in a sentence**
- ▶ **secondary stress of a word/phrase/sentence** = a stressed syllable, which is always before the primary-stressed syllable and which does not become a tonic when used in a sentence
- ▶ INPUT: *Her new film is unbelievable.*
- ▶ STRESS PLACEMENT: *Her **n**ew film is únbelievable.* 0 1 1 0 10100
- ▶ TONIC PLACEMENT: *Her **n**ew film is únbe- ↘ **l**ievable.* 0 2 2 0 20100

primary stress vs. secondary stress

- ▶ *Ráchel + was + háppy + to + cýcle + hóme* →
- ▶ *Ráchel was háppy to cýcle **hóme**.* = 20 0 20 0 20 **1**

- ▶ *véry + níce + péople* → *véry níce **péople*** = 20 2 **10**

your turn: give the stress levels

- ▶ *Amanda spent a year in the forest.*

your turn: give the stress levels

- ▶ *Amanda spent a year in the forest.*
- ▶ *Amánda spént a yéar in the **fó**rest.* = 020 2 0 2 00 10

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- ▶ *Amanda spent a year in the forest.*
- ▶ *Amánda spént a yéar in the **fó**rest.* = 020 2 0 2 00 10
- ▶ *Jim was interested in international law.*

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- ▶ *Amanda spent a year in the forest.*
- ▶ *Amánda spént a yéar in the **fó**rest.* = 020 2 0 2 00 10
- ▶ *Jim was interested in international law.*
- ▶ *Jím was ínterested in ínternáational **láu**.* = 2 0 200 0 20200 1

The Rhythm Rule

- ▶ as we have seen, each stressed syllable begins a foot:

| *Jím* | *pláyed* | ***ténnis***.

- ▶ often the stressed syllable in the middle is deleted:

| *Jím* _o*played* | ***ténnis***.

- ▶ when three stresses come too closely together, English tends to delete the middle one
- ▶ the stress is deleted but the vowel remains full – thus, the syllable becomes tertiary “stressed”
- ▶ *níce óld **lády** 221* → *níce old **lády** 231*
- ▶ *Jápanése **gárden** 20210* → *Jápanese **gárden** 20310*
- ▶ the Rhythm Rule has two applications depending on the position of the middle, deleted stress: 1. between words or 2. within a (longer) word

Rhythmic medial stress deletion (“nice old lady” rule)

- ▶ when three words with main stresses come closely together, with maximally one unstressed syllable between them, the stressed syllable in the middle may optionally be deleted (= reduced to 3ry: vowel quality does not change, the vowel remains a “full” vowel)
- ▶ instead of 3 feet there are 2 now:

Foot 1	Foot 2	Foot 3
<i>níce</i>	<i>óld</i>	<i>lády</i>
<i>níce</i> ◦ <i>old</i>	<i>lády</i>	

- ▶ this reduction is purely a rhythmic rule and is not connected to meaning or emphasis or grammatical role of the word
- ▶ other examples:
 - ▶ *véry nice* ***péople*** → *véry* ◦ *nice* ***péople***
 - ▶ *my són spéaks* ***Híndi*** → *my són* ◦ *speaks* ***Híndi***
 - ▶ *we stóod ríght* ***thére*** → *we stóod* ◦ *right* ***thére***

Rhythmic stress shift (“afternoon tea” rule)

- ▶ if a longer word, with two stresses, is immediately (or with just one unstressed syllable between them) followed by a stressed word, the middle stress may optionally be deleted (= reduced to 3ry)
- ▶ *áfternóon* 201
but: *áfter*₀*noon* *téa* 203 1
- ▶ the stress in the longer word basically “shifts”: 2 1 → 2 3
- ▶ other examples:
 - ▶ *Jápanése* → *Jápa*₀*ese* *gárden*
 - ▶ *fiftéen* → *fif*₀*teen* *gírls*
 - ▶ *sárdíne* → *sár*₀*dine* *sándwich*
 - ▶ *démocrátic* → *démo*₀*cratic* *cóuntry*

nice old lady = afternoon tea

Foot 1	Foot 2	Foot 3
<i>níce</i>	<i>óld</i>	<i>lády</i>
<i>níce</i> ◦ <i>old</i>	<i>lády</i>	
<i>áfter</i>	<i>nóon</i>	<i>téa</i>
<i>áfter</i> ◦ <i>noon</i>	<i>téa</i>	

your turn: give the stress levels

- ▶ *Ann's two dogs ran wild.*

your turn: give the stress levels

- ▶ *Ann's two dogs ran wild.*
- ▶ *Ánn's twó dógs rán **wild.*** = 2 2 2 2 1 →

your turn: give the stress levels

- ▶ *Ann's two dogs ran wild.*
- ▶ *Ánn's twó dógs rán **wild.*** = 2 2 2 2 1 →
- ▶ *Ánn's _otwo dógs _oran **wíld.*** = 2 3 2 3 1

locating phrase/sentence stress

- ▶ in connected speech, the general rule is to **stress every content-word**, and leave **function-words unstressed**
- ▶ *I think Amanda should write Jennifer a letter.*
- ▶ *I thínk Amánda should wríte Jénnifer a létter.*
- ▶ **content-words:** N, V, Adj, Adv (including adverb particles: *get up*, *sit down*, numerals, interrogative & demonstrative pronouns (*who*, *this*, *that*), negative words (*not*, *won't*)
- ▶ **function-words:** auxiliaries, pronouns, articles, conjunctions, prepositions

your turn: which words are stressed?

- ▶ *They offered to pay but I don't want them to.*

your turn: which words are stressed?

- ▶ *They offered to pay but I don't want them to.*
- ▶ *They offered to pay but I don't want them to.*

your turn: which words are stressed?

- ▶ *They offered to pay but I don't want them to.*
- ▶ *They offered to pay but I don't want them to.*
- ▶ *They offered to pay but I don't **want** them to.*

the tone unit

We decided to come back in October.

elements of the tone-unit

elements of the tone-unit

- ▶ incomplete foot/silent beat (upbeat): **pre-head** = has no stress, indicated by the caret (^)
- ▶ body/**head**
- ▶ **tonic foot** has the **tonic**, in English the strongest stress due to the EWR; after the tonic: **tail**

the tone-unit and its rhythm

<i>Pre-head</i>	Head	<u>Tonic</u>	<i>Tail</i>
<i>We de-</i>	cided to come back in Oc-	↘ <u>tó-</u>	<i>ber.</i>
	Jérémy played the gui-	↘ <u>tár.</u>	
<i>I re-</i>		↘ <u>mém-</u>	<i>ber.</i>
		↘ <u>Nó.</u>	
	Únbe-	↘ <u>líe-</u>	<i>vable!</i>
<i>He</i>	wrote a grammar of Jápa-	↘ <u>nése.</u>	
<i>In</i>	front of the Swán	↘ <u>Thé-</u>	<i>atre,</i>
<i>there's an in-</i>	crédibly úgly	↘ <u>pé-</u>	<i>trol station.</i>

compounds

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- ▶ *We sáw an increíblely úgly **pétrol** station.*

compounds

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- ▶ stress in ***pétrol** station* is 10 30

compounds

- ▶ *We sáw an increíblely úgly **pétrol** station.*
- ▶ stress in ***pétrol** station* is 10 30
- ▶ but based on the End-Weight Rule, shouldn't it be *pétrol **státion*** 20 10?

compounds

- ▶ *We saw an incredibly ugly **pétrol** station.*
- ▶ stress in ***pétrol** station* is 10 30
- ▶ but based on the End-Weight Rule, shouldn't it be *pétrol **státion*** 20 10?
- ▶ no, because it is a **compound**

what are compounds?

- ▶ lexical(ized) units made up of two or more free stems (= words), they are not created “online”, like phrases
- ▶ compounds often have something special in their meaning, something beyond the mere sum of their parts
- ▶ *He bought a new car. Have you seen the black car?*
- ▶ *blackboard, blackbird, mousepad, paperback, railway, hard disk, coffee shop*

spelling of compounds

- ▶ not consistent. . .
- ▶ one word: *greenhouse, schoolboy, dishwasher, egghead, screensaver*
- ▶ with a hyphen: *word-final, write-off, can-opener, fun-loving, hair-raising*
- ▶ most are written as two words: *car ferry, geography teacher, Fifth Street, brick wall, fire alarm*
- ▶ similar in Hungarian: *rézdrót* ‘copper wire’, *jószívű* ‘kind-hearted’; *káposzta-savanyító* ‘cabbage-sourer’; *mérges kígyó* ‘venomous snake’, *bakot lő* ‘blunder’

stressing of compounds

- ▶ 2 types of compounds with respect to stress
- ▶ **initially-stressed compounds, pattern: [[1] [3]]**: *gréenhouse*, *cár ferry*, *compúter virus*, *Fíft^h Street*
- ▶ **finally-stressed compounds, pattern: [[2] [1]]**: *tráde únion*, *frúit sálad*, *Victória Státion*, *Fíft^h Ávenue*
- ▶ which compound has which stress pattern is mostly lexical (has to be learnt)

stress in phrases and compounds

- ▶ stress in phrases: End-Weight Rule: tonic on the last content word
- ▶ *(We are using a) new book.*
- ▶ *(We are úsing a) néw \bóok. 2 1*

- ▶ initially-stressed compound: **the Compound Stress Rule** “bleeds” the End-Weight Rule (= once two words have been compounded, the position of the tonic stays fixed):
- ▶ *(I'll make some) orange juice.*
- ▶ Compound Stress R.: *(I'll máke some) \órange juice. 1 3*
- ▶ End-Weight R.: — doesn't apply —
- ▶ **órange \júice (2 1)*

your turn: give the stress pattern

- ▶ *Some people have red skin.*

your turn: give the stress pattern

- ▶ *Some people have red skin.*
- ▶ *Some péople háve réd skín.* (phrase: 2 1)

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- ▶ *Some people have red skin.*
- ▶ *Some péople háve réd skín.* (phrase: 2 1)
- ▶ *That man is a red skin.*

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- ▶ *Some people have red skin.*
- ▶ *Some péople háve réd **skín**.* (phrase: 2 1)
- ▶ *That man is a red skin.*
- ▶ *That mán is a réd skin.* (compound: 1 3)

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- ▶ *Some péople háve réd skín.* (phrase: 2 1)
- ▶ *That man is a red skin.*
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- ▶ *I met an English teacher.*

your turn: give the stress pattern

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- ▶ *Some péople háve réd **skín**.* (phrase: 2 1)
- ▶ *That man is a red skin.*
- ▶ *That mán is a **ré**d skin.* (compound: 1 3)
- ▶ *I met an English teacher.*
- ▶ as a phrase: *I mét an Énglish **té**acher.* 2 1

your turn: give the stress pattern

- ▶ *Some people have red skin.*
- ▶ *Some péo^{le} há^{ve} ré^d skín. (phrase: 2 1)*
- ▶ *That man is a red skin.*
- ▶ *That mán is a ré^d skin. (compound: 1 3)*
- ▶ *I met an English teacher.*
- ▶ *as a phrase: I mét an Énglish **té**acher. 2 1*
- ▶ *as a compound: I mét an **É**nglish teacher. 1 3*

finally-stressed compounds

- ▶ prosodically they are like phrases (but not syntactically/semantically!), stress pattern: 2 1
- ▶ *That's a néw wáll.* (phrase) = *That's a bríck wáll.* (compound)
- ▶ *The wrestler had a very cómpact bódy.* (phrase)
= *Very few people use a cómpact dísk.* (compound)

finally-stressed compounds: nouns

- ▶ ‘2 is/is made of 1’: *brick **w**áll, frúit **s**álád, potátó **ch**íps*
- ▶ ‘2 is (a) 1’: *tóy **s**óldier, chíld **á**ctor, Lórd **M**áyor, júnk **f**óod*
- ▶ names of places (except *Street*): *Fíft^h **A**venue, Cént^ral **P**árk, Victó^ria **S**tátion, Hé^roes’ **S**quáre, Cróm^well **R**óad, Lónd^on **B**rídge,
— but: **F**íft^h *Street**
- ▶ initials: *DJ /d^íj d^ʒéj/, OK /ów kéj/, BBC /b^íj b^íj s^íj/, MTV /émt^íj víj/*
- ▶ others: *Sócial **D**émocrat, bláck **m**árket, Cóca-**C**óla, wéekénd
(AmE: **w**éekend)*

tonic placement: neutral tonic/neutral tonicity

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- ▶ Pát's fáther is an extrémely rích \↘mán.
- ▶ Tím's áunt is a níce old \↘lády. – Laci nagynénje \↘helyes öreg néni.
- ▶ The óthers wéren't \↘lístening. – A többiek \↘nem figyeltek.

neutral tonic and auxiliaries

- ▶ an auxiliary has the tonic if there is no further stressable word in the sentence
- ▶ Yés, we ↘ máy. Jím álways ↘ dóes.
- ▶ BUT: when a sentence-final auxiliary is preceded by its own stressed subject, the tonic falls on the subject and the auxiliary is unstressed
- ▶ You pláy bétter than ↘ Jím does.
I wónder whén the **e** ↘ xám will be.
- ▶ note: auxiliaries are usually stressed at the beginning of a sentence:
Cóuld you cáll me ↘ láter?

neutral tonic and adverbial particles

- ▶ the adverb particle in phrasal verbs is usually stressed
- ▶ She tried **ón** the \ hát.

- ▶ it is tonic-bearing after a verb or after an unstressed pronoun
- ▶ Gét \ úp! She tried it \ ón. What did she try \ ón?

- ▶ BUT: it is unstressed after a noun
- ▶ She tried the \ hát on.

neutral tonic and prepositions

- ▶ prepositions never receive the neutral tonic

- ▶ [try on] [NP]

She tréid ón the _ hát.

She tréid the _ hát on.

She tréid it _ ón.

Whát did she trý _ ón?

- ▶ [depend] [on NP]

A lót depénds on the _ wéather.

*A lot depends the weather on.

A lót de _ pénds on it.

Whát does it de _ pénd on?

dislocated tonic

- ▶ the tonic is placed on some other word than where it would normally fall in order to express some communicative surplus by highlighting some element; you deviate from the neutral pattern – but even here there are rules!



Jáne bóught thrée rábbits in the \ márket. – neutral tonic placement

Jáne \ BÓUGHT three rabbits in the market.

(... she didn't just see them.)

– dislocated tonic pl.

dislocated tonic for lexical contrast

dislocated tonic for lexical contrast

- ▶ (Why don't you throw away this old dictionary?) — We ↘ ÚSE it!
- ▶ **lexical contrast/“emphasis”**
- ▶ Tim was so drunk he literally ↘ CRÁWLED on the floor. (instead of walking)
- ▶ (She sounds Welsh to me.) — That's because she ↘ ÍS Welsh.
- ▶ (Is it under the desk?) — No, it is ↘ ÓN the desk.

dislocated tonic for verbal modality contrast

- ▶ (When will the boys write the application?) — They ↘ ÁRE writing it.
(tense contrast: future vs. present)
- ▶ *They are ↘ WRÍTING it.
- ▶ (You ought to use this dictionary.) — We ↘ DÓ use it.
(mood contrast: conditional vs. indicative)
- ▶ tense and mood — modality
- ▶ (Shouldn't Joe study classical music?) — He ↘ DÓES study classical music.
- ▶ in modality contrast, the dislocated tonic always falls on an auxiliary, if there is no auxiliary, it falls on dummy *do* (*do*-support)

dislocated tonic for polarity contrast

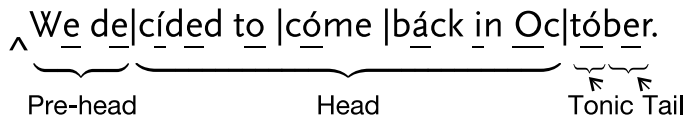
- ▶ (I suppose you're not members.) — We ↘ ÁRE members.
- ▶ Hu.: Dehogynem, ↘ tagok vagyunk.
- ▶ (You don't use this dictionary, I suppose.) — We ↘ DÓ use it.
- ▶ polarity: positive vs. negative, yes/no
- ▶ (Tim wasn't so drunk he didn't crawl on the floor.) — Oh, yes, he ↘ DÍD crawl the floor.

dislocated tonic for old vs. new information

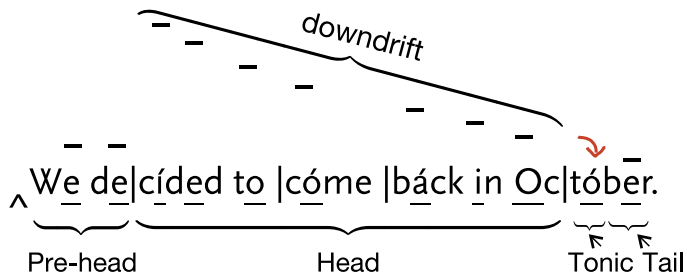
- ▶ (We only serve Indian food here.) — That's fine, I ↘ WÁNT Indian.
(Rendben van, én ↘ indiait akarok.)
- ▶ (They had a holiday on the Bahamas.) — How interesting, I was
↘ BORN on the Bahamas.
(Milyen érdekes, én a ↘ Bahamákon születtem.)

intonation





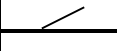
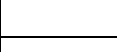
intonation



downdrift



intonation: the four English tones

<i>Type</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Diagram</i>	<i>Examples</i>
<i>Falling</i>	<i>Fall</i>		↘Joe ↘Orange
			
<i>Rising</i>	<i>Fall-rise</i>		↘Joe ↘Orange
			
	<i>Low rise</i>		↗Joe ↗Orange
			↗Joe ↗Orange

falling tone

- ▶ statements: There isn't enough time.
- ▶ commands: Kéep you dóors sáfely lócked.
- ▶ wh-questions: Whát's her néw a ddréss?

fall-rise tone

- ▶ implication of something unsaid:
(Shall we go by car?) — √↗Fine. (... but I won't drive.)
- ▶ We háven't héard them √↗ónce. (but we heard them many times)

low rise tone

- ▶ indifference:
(What's your favourite colour?) — ↗ Blúe.
- ▶ That's ↗ interesting.
- ▶ greetings:
Góod ↗ mórning.

high rise tone

- ▶ yes/no questions:
Díd you párk the ↗cár?
- ▶ echo questions ('please repeat'):
(Jennifer is in Kuala Lumpur.) — ↗WHÉRE'S Jennifer?!!