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Prosodic systems across languages and their varieties

Keywords: Prosody; metrical structures; intonational systems; prosodic variability; cross-linguistic comparisons; cross-variety variations

Overview

This workshop will bring together researchers—both within the French-speaking community and internationally—who investigate prosody across a wide range of languages and speech varieties. It aims to foster dialogue among scholars working on cross-linguistic and cross-variety comparisons. Contributions may focus on well-studied languages such as English, French, Dutch, and Spanish, as well as less commonly studied languages, for instance African languages like Bantu languages (e.g., Shingazidja or Zulu) and Austronesian languages such as Kanak languages (e.g., Drehu or Paicĩ). The workshop is expected to feature around twenty presentations (five oral talks and fifteen posters), providing a platform for exchange among researchers working on diverse languages and linguistic contexts. The overarching goal is to promote cross-linguistic and cross-disciplinary discussion on how prosodic systems are structured, used, and acquired in relation to social, regional, and interactional variation.

Scope and Motivation

Although prosodic systems exhibit recurrent structural patterns (Gussenhoven 2004; Ladd 2008), they are also highly diverse across languages (Hirst & Di Cristo 1998; Jun 2006, 2012), language varieties (Armstrong et al. 2022), and social contexts (Cole 2015). Understanding these systems raises key questions about variability, representation, and processing. The workshop will bring together data and analyses from multiple linguistic traditions. It will combine experimental approaches (see Cole 2015; Wagner & Watson 2010 for overviews of experimental advances in prosody) with corpus-based perspectives (see Durand et al. 2009; Durand & Przewozny, 2015 for the PFC and PAC corpora, respectively) to advance our understanding of prosodic systems. In particular, it will foster dialogue between laboratory-based experimental approaches in phonetics and phonology and descriptive, corpus-oriented studies, promoting iterative feedback between experimental findings and naturalistic language data. This integrated approach aims to provide a comprehensive, comparative understanding of prosodic systems across languages and varieties.

Thematic Domains

We particularly welcome contributions that address:

- Rhythmic organization: What are the cross-linguistic differences in speech timing and coordination, and what new metrics are available to assess rhythmic similarity and distance between languages?
- Intonational structure: how tones, pitch accents, and prosodic hierarchies interact to encode meaning across languages and varieties?
- Multimodal prosody: How to conceive and model the coordination of intonation with gesture, gaze, and other visual cues, and how these multimodal configurations vary across languages, varieties and social contexts?
- Developmental aspects: How to study the emergence of prosodic competence in first and second language acquisition, including the role of linguistic input, age-related factors, as well as the impact of learners' proficiency level and the effects of targeted prosodic training.
- Sociophonetic variation: How social, regional, and contextual factors shape prosodic patterns, and how prosody interacts with identity, social meaning, and variation across speakers and communities.

By bringing together French and international scholars, diverse languages, and complementary methodological approaches, the workshop aims to promote comparative insight and advance an integrated understanding of prosodic systems worldwide.

Organization

The workshop will be conducted in English. It will feature five oral presentations (20 min + 5 min for questions), each representing one of the five proposed thematic areas. Posters will complement the five oral presentations, covering the five thematic areas and providing additional opportunities to showcase ongoing research and preliminary results.

Please note that, like the LLcD2026 conference, the workshop will be held exclusively in person.

Venue

The workshop will take place at the faculty of Arts of Aix-Marseille University in Aix-en-Provence, at the Cube, 29 av. Robert Schuman, 13100 Aix-en-Provence, France.

Submission modalities

We invite you to submit by May, 17, 2026, an anonymous abstract of no more than 500 words (including examples but excluding references) which clearly outlines the research questions, approach, methodology, data, and results. Submissions will be made via EasyChair and will follow the same review process as those for the general session. It is therefore important that authors select the correct title of the workshop when submitting their proposal.

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