

Phonetics Colloquium
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Building C7.2, Room 5.09

Reported Dialogue in the oral reading performance of third-graders – a perception experiment concerning the prosodic marking of (pseudo) turn-switches

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The oral reading performance of primary school students has received increasing attention in the past years. It appears to be an important predictor of the development of reading comprehension and educational success in general. Basic parameters of oral reading performance are accuracy, rate, and fluency, the latter including “expressive” or “prosodic” reading. The problem with studies asking raters to judge expressiveness is the vagueness of this term, resulting in unsatisfactory inter-rater-reliability. Our explorative approach is to ask raters a more precise question, using stimuli in which one reader reads both “voices” of a dialogue: How clear does the reader mark turn-switching prosodically? The perception experiment presented involves 144 short audio samples from the “Der Hase und der Schneemann”-corpus, each sample containing two utterances separated by turn-switching (e.g. [Hase:] /Kannst du mir vielleicht deine Nase geben?/ [Schneemann:] /Du spinnst wohl!/). Using the praat ExperimentMFC-environment, 96 raters were asked to rate the clearness of the turn-switch on a 4-level scale, ranging from “very unclear” to “very clear”. Every rater was confronted with a selection of 12 out of the 144 samples with each sample being played three times in the course of the session. First results deal with intra- and inter-rater-reliability and the question whether the “turn-marking-competency” of individual readers represents a meaningful indicator of prosodic skill in general. A question to be discussed is which possible acoustic correlates of turn-marking should be taken into account in the forthcoming phonetic analysis of the audio samples.