

DISCOURSE COHERENCE: THE PITCH SEQUENCE

- **Role of prosodic boundaries at higher levels.**
 - **How prosody contributes to the organization of a text as a whole.**
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- **Paratone (prosodic boundaries) as a discourse marker**
 - **Relationship between prosody and organizational structure.**
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- **Paratone: prosodic equivalent to a written paragraph.**
 - **Speakers manipulate pitch, volume, tempo and pause at transition points between topical constituents to indicate the relationships among those topics.**
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- **Brown and Yule (1983)**
- **The ‘speech paragraph’, or paratone, like the orthographic paragraph, is identified by its boundary markers.. At the beginning of a paratone, the speaker typically uses an introductory expression to announce what he specifically intends to talk about.**

- **This introductory expression is made phonologically prominent and the whole of the first clause or sentence in a paratone may be uttered with raised pitch. The end of a paratone... can be marked by very low pitch, loss of amplitude, and a lengthy pause. (p.101).**

- **Association between intonation and topic structure.**
- **Brazil, Brown, Couper-Kuhlen, Wennerstrom, Tench, Pierrehumbert among others.**
- **New topics are marked by high pitch.**
- **Pitch range is expanded at the topic change..**

- **It is possible to have a high paratone in the absence of a lexical marker to topic transition.**
 - **(Wennerstrom 1992).**
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- **Low paratone: compressed pitch range associated with the onset of constituents that are subordinate to the main topic.**

(parentheticals)

- **Interlocutors appear to be sensitive about the speaker's intention to insert parenthetical segments, because they generally do not attempt to take the floor during the self interrupting talk. (they did not confuse the associated cues with those of turn relinquishment).**
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- **Low paratones can extend to several phrases.**
 - **Other authors: major paratones: one or more intonation groups.**
 - **minor paratones: one or more intonational phrases that coincide with a subtopic in the discourse (Brazil's pitch sequence)**
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- The concept of embedded paratones is consistent with the view that spoken discourse is organized hierarchically and that prosodic cues mark the levels of the hierarchy.

- **Low paratone:**
 - **Compressed pitch range associated with the onset of constituents that are subordinate to the main topic. (parentheticals)**
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