Measuring and Modeling Prosodic Prominence

The technical term *prominence* has been used to denote a plethora of related but nevertheless distinct phenomena such as the presence of (phonological) stress, the presence of a pitch accent, the degree of pitch excursion, an increase in subglottal pressure or accentual lengthening. Central to this terminological vagueness appears to be the multifaceted nature of prominence, manifesting itself in the phonetic signal, in language-specific expectations, on various linguistic units and being influenced by communicative context and perceptual constraints (attention processes, auditory filters). Furthermore, it seems to be characterized by both relational, categorical as well as absolute, gradual properties.

Despite the difficulties to pinpoint its exact meaning, the topic of prominence has recently received an increasing amount of attention in our community, probably due to its relevance in much applied research such as speech recognition, computer assisted pronunciation teaching, clinical phonetics, but also in theoretical linguistics and general phonetics. The obvious popularity of the term shows its general usefulness to treat and explore a plethora of related issues, which are under investigation across various research communities.

In my talk, I will give an overview about our current understanding of the term prominence, its diverging usages, its various cues and correlates, its measurement, its modeling and its potential for applied research. I will also try to provide a preliminary set of methodological guidelines for a better understanding of its nature across disciplines.