Horne

Prosody: Theory and Experiment

Studies Presented to Gösta Bruce

The study of prosody is perhaps the area of speech research which has undergone the most noticeable development during the past ten to fifteen years. As an indication of this, one can note, for example, that at the latest International Conference on Spoken Language Processing in Philadelphia (October 1996), there were more sessions devoted to prosody than to any other area. Not only that, but within other sessions, in particular those dealing with dialogue, several of the presentations dealt specifically with prosodic aspects of dialogue research. Even at the latest Eurospeech meeting in Rhodes (September 1997), prosody, together with speech recognition (where several contributions dealt with how prosodic cues can be exploited to improve recognition processes) were the most frequent session topics, despite the fact that th'ere was a separate ESCA satellite workshop on intonation in conjunction with the main Eurospeech meeting which included over 80 contributions. This focus on prosodic research is partly due to the fact that developments in speech technology have made it possible to examine the acoustic parameters associated with prosodic phenomena (in particular fundamental frequency and duration) to an extent which has not been possible in other domains of speech research. It is also due to the fact that significant theoretical advances in linguistics and phonetics have been made during this time which have made it possible to obtain a better understanding of how prosodic parameters function in expressing different kinds of meaning in the languages of the world.

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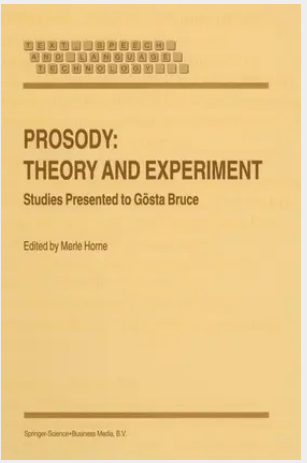

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