



# Discourse Intonation Newsletter

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DISCOURSE INTONATION NEWSLETTER

Volume 4 Issue 1

## Welcome and apologies

Welcome to number 4 of the current series of Discourse Intonation Newsletters. Apologies for the late arrival of this edition which is (at least) one year late. The delay is all the more culpable because there has been a great deal of DI activity, as you will see from what follows: there are reports from Hong Kong, Japan, Iran, Iraq and (of course) the UK. Also, it has been an important couple of years for publications - with wonderful books at theoretical (Linda Shockey), teacher training (Martin Hewings), and classroom (Mark Hancock) levels - for news of which see page 3. Please read, enjoy, and above all - write to the editors (the addresses are given on page 4) to give us news of yourself.

## Streaming Speech wins an ELTON

Richard Cauldwell's 'Streaming Speech' has won an ELTON! An ELTON is a British Council award for Innovation in English Language Teaching, and one of the perks for the winners is the right to use the logo which is shown on the top left of this page. You may not have heard of this award, because this competition is fairly new - the first awards were made in 2003. Each year, three awards are given. Another major development to report is the publication of the American/Canadian version of Streaming Speech. Read more about both issues on page 2.



## Streaming Speech goes online

From March 2005, Streaming Speech products will be available online at [www.speechinaction.com](http://www.speechinaction.com). The launch of the online service is a major step forward for Streaming Speech. Up to now, online provision has only been available to institutions. Now it is available for individuals to purchase, at one third of the cost of purchasing the CDROM version. Purchasers subscribe for a three month period (which can be extended to six months for a small extra fee) and they are able to access their account as many times as they wish, from any appropriately equipped computer, from anywhere in the world. This is done via a unique username and password which is selected on initial registration. The launch of the online shop coincides with the publication of the American/Canadian version of Streaming Speech, in honor of which I try to adopt American spelling. For more, see page 2.

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## Professors Ido and Taniguchi visit Birmingham



Professor Yoshio Ido and Professor Masaki Taniguchi visited Birmingham in mid August 2004, after the University College London summer school in Phonetics. Professor Ido is a long-time fan and exponent of Discourse Intonation, having worked with David Brazil in the late 1980s at the University of Birmingham. He works at Kio University in Nara, Japan. His recent papers include 'Analysis of the Discourse Intonation of English Read by Freshmen at Kio University'.

Professor Masaki Taniguchi is Professor of English Phonetics and Speech in the Graduate School of Education at the University of Kochi in Shikoku. He is also Vice President of the English Phonetic Society of Japan. Professor Taniguchi is a great fan of the UCL summer school: he has been attending, and taking students there, for many years. In one year, he took sixteen students to this summer school.

They visited **speechinaction** to find out the latest news of developments and publications. They also spent time visiting Martin Hewings at the University of Birmingham to find out about his latest projects and publications.

## Streaming Speech wins an ELTON

In the two years since its publication Streaming Speech has been shortlisted for two prizes, and as reported on the front page, won one of them. First, it was (astonishingly in my view) shortlisted for the BAAL (British Association for Applied Linguists) book prize at the end of 2003. It didn't win, but to get onto a shortlist of four books, from a long list of twenty-seven odd entries was a great achievement. Even more so because the BAAL book prize is what it says it is, a book prize. But the shortlisting judges clearly liked it: their comments included: it 'covers a great amount of the kind of detail that features in ordinary rapid colloquial spoken English ... I highly commend it'; and '...brilliant...it will set a standard for any rivals ... well-designed ... attractively presented ... a pleasure to use ... a brilliant piece of innovative non-book publication ...'. After such praise how could Streaming Speech not win? Well, it didn't - but it did go on to be shortlisted for, and win, an ELTON in March 2004. The ELTONs are awards made by the British Council for Innovations in English Language teaching. Their judges said: it was 'innovative on many counts, friendly, accessible, effective and practical...very stimulating and impressive'. It was a fantastic honour to win an ELTON - the other winners were Macmillan Education for their dictionary, and Oxford University Press for Scott Thornbury's 'Natural Grammar'.

## Extract from a review of Streaming Speech

Andrew Lian (Professor of Humanities and Director of the Center for the Study of Languages at Rice University, Houston, Texas) wrote of Streaming Speech: 'We no longer have simplified, "sanitised" language as the basis for study ... the program ... steers away from the impossible Krashenian task of adapting input to the learners' level in a mass market context. Rather, it offers the following statement/question: "This is what you've got, how do we deal with it?" ... the reality is that natural speech is fast, complex, and fuzzy whereas teachers often tend to focus, in a commonsensical ... way, on the slow, simple, and clear, to the detriment of their learners ... [r]ather than providing learners with comprehensible input, the approach ... is to provide learners with the tools which will enable them to develop internal mechanisms for making ordinary, everyday, language comprehensible. These mechanisms ... should help learners to become self-managing in due course.'

You can read the full review at <http://www.speechinaction.com>, following the links to British English>Reviews

## The American/Canadian edition of Streaming Speech is published

The American/Canadian version of Streaming Speech was published in early March. It contains eight entirely new recordings from Americans and Canadians in their early twenties. They speak spontaneously and naturally about topics as diverse as sports injuries, travelling across Canada, and advising clothing retailers on teenage fashion trends. Four male, and four female voices from all across the North American continent provide the eight recordings that form the backbone of the publication. The inventory of speech sounds has been changed (American English does of course sound different from British English), but the overall structure is the same: there is the general progression through the vowels, consonants, and clusters; as well as the same discourse syllabus which starts with linking and dropped sounds, proceeds through issues of rhythm and intonation, and provides many illustrations of real-time speaking strategies. You can try the American/Canadian version of Streaming Speech online at <http://www.speechinaction.com>

## BBC World Service records Streaming Speech

Warrill Grindrod of the BBC World Service visited **speechinaction** and the University of Birmingham in July 2004, in order to record a lesson, and to interview, a teacher (Almut Koester) and two students (Motoko Maeda and Hiroshi Kinami) who had used Streaming Speech. This visit came about as a result of the BBC World Service's doing a series of programmes on innovations in English Language Teaching. You can hear the programme by going to <http://www.speechinaction.com> and clicking on the link to the news page, and again clicking on the link in the news item for October 2004. The photograph shows Almut Koester and Warrill Grindrod together in the July sunshine after making the recording.



## Martin Warren and Winnie Cheng

As reported in the last issue, Martin Warren and Winnie Cheng at the Hong Kong Polytechnic University have been using DI in the analysis of their corpus of Hong Kong English. The corpus includes speech styles as diverse as hotel-staff/guest interactions and public speeches, and question and answer sessions by leading political figures in Hong Kong. They have been very busy with their analysis and publishing their results: five papers appeared in 2004 - an astonishing rate of publication by any standards - and (at least) one is due for 2005 in the International Journal of Corpus Linguistics (Volume 10:1) on the use of rise and rise-fall tones. It is great to see that DI can be used in such a thorough analysis of a corpus, and in such insightful ways in the analysis and subsequent publications.

**Martin Hewings** Martin Hewings has recently published 'Pronunciation Practice Activities: A resource book for teaching English pronunciation' - 2004, Cambridge University Press. It comes with an audio CD, and includes an activity and a sound-track from Streaming Speech, the British and Irish version (thanks Martin!). It is early days yet for reviews, but Alistair Dickinson of the wonderful [developingteachers.com](http://developingteachers.com) is clearly a fan. He says that PPA is 'full of imaginative activities ... [which would result in] ... greater awareness & improvement for the students & a much better understanding of phonology for the teacher'.



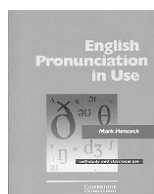
**Na'il Sadiq Wakir** Na'il Sadiq Wakir writes from Basra, Iraq, that on August 2nd 2003 he successfully defended his MA thesis. He says that 'I shocked them with the late David Brazil's theory, and finally they know that there is such a thing as Discourse Intonation, and the name of Brazil starts to have an opportunity to flourish in Iraq. He is now teaching English Phonetics and Phonology, in addition to conversation, at the English Department of the College of Education at the University of Basra. Congratulations to Na'il both on his MA, and on the recent birth of twins.

**Jane Setter** Jane is Director of the English Pronunciation Unit at the University of Reading, and became joint co-ordinator (along with Barbara Bradford) of the IATEFL Pronunciation SIG in 2003. She and Barbara have been very active organising events, and energising debate in online discussion groups. There is a pre-conference workshop (PCE) at the IATEFL conference this year in Cardiff (April 5th-9th) 'Teaching Intonation: ways and meanings'. The event will offer opportunities to help teachers develop materials, identify priority areas, to examine existing materials, and practise listening and identifying patterns. There is a further one-day event at the University of Reading on Saturday 11th June entitled 'Pronunciation in Practice'. The keynote speech, by Martin Hewings, is entitled 'Teaching pronunciation as communication: how far have we come?' and presentations based on "what's worked well for me in class" are invited. Further details can be found at [http://www.rdg.ac.uk/epu/iatefl\\_event.htm](http://www.rdg.ac.uk/epu/iatefl_event.htm). Jane is also organising an INSET course for teachers of AS/A2 Level English Language.



**Neide Cesar Cruz** In February 2004 Neide had her PhD viva in Florianopolis, Brazil. Her PhD concerned the intelligibility of Brazilian Portuguese learners of English, and she spent 12 months in Birmingham getting native speaker judgements of her learners' English. Neide says her viva was a stressful experience particularly as there was intense questioning about her statistics. She nevertheless came through with flying colours, getting a mark of 9.8 out of 10. Congratulations!

**Mark Hancock** In 2003, Mark Hancock published a pronunciation book in the famous 'In Use' series from CUP. 'English Pronunciation in Use' follows the well-established pattern of two page units with explanation and examples on the left, and exercises on the right hand page. There are sixty units in all. In addition there is a fabulous reference section which includes a pronunciation test, and a set of 50 sound-pair exercises. These exercises have the same pattern of listening and deciding whether you have heard the same or different sounds, and then identifying the word you hear from a set of minimal pairs. Users are invited to self-assess (this is a feature I really like). 'English Pronunciation in Use' comes with either audio cassette tapes or CD. Mark tells me that at first he thought it would be an impossible task to shoehorn pronunciation into the 'In Use' format but he found that this constraint was 'a surprisingly fruitful discipline ... and there are successful aspects of the book which would never have emerged without it'. I think it's a wonderful publication.



**Linda Shockey** Linda Shockey, a colleague of Jane Setter's at The University of Reading, has recently published 'Sound Patterns of Spoken English' which is a major addition to the list of books that teacher trainers should read. A section I am particularly fond of is in Chapter 3, pp. 67 onwards - where Linda describes 'trace/event' theory. The reason I am fond of it is that it proposes a theory of perception that is not dependent on the idealised abstraction of the phoneme. I have written a full review of Linda's book in the Journal of the International Phonetic Association (June 2004, Volume 34 No.1). My main criticism of it is that it is too short - the topic is worth a much longer treatment. For those of you who are familiar with the fundamentals of phonetics, I cannot recommend it too highly. It gives you a systematic way of becoming sensitive to what happens to the soundshapes of words in real speech.



**Elaheh Almoussavi** Elaheh Almoussavi reports from Tehran, Iran that she used Discourse Intonation in her MA thesis 'The Effect of Proficiency on Intonation Function and Illocutionary Meaning Detection in Iranian EFL learners.' She chose DI because at the time she was doing her research, she found it facilitated the description of pragmatic meaning and, in addition, it helped with issues of authenticity in her discourse oriented research. In a very well-written, hugely impressive thesis (she says that her thesis was described as 'the best research of the university') she establishes a statistically significant correlation between the level of proficiency of Iranian EFL students, and their ability to identify accurately the illocutionary force of utterances. In her acknowledgements, she thanks colleagues from around the world who sent her copies of published and unpublished articles. It is also clear from her reference list that she made good use of online resources. Well done Elaheh.



## Richard Stibbard moves to Surrey University

Newsletter Editor:

Richard T. Cauldwell

Phone: 44-121-427-5056

Fax: 44-(0)121-240-9804

Email:

richard@speechinaction.com

Richard Stibbard is now at the Applied Linguistics Research Group, at the University of Surrey in Guildford, where he teaches on masters programmes and supervises students at Masters and PhD level. His research now focuses on two areas: international intelligibility among non-native speakers of English, and the nature of emotional speech. Richard and his student Jeong-In Lee, who recently completed her Masters at Surrey ([http://www.surrey.ac.uk/ALRG/dissertations/indexes/index\\_phon.html](http://www.surrey.ac.uk/ALRG/dissertations/indexes/index_phon.html)), investigated the intelligibility of non-native speakers and found that intelligibility is not a matter of the phonetics of the speaker's utterance alone, but depends on the listener's L1. It indicates that learners may face the greatest problems in communicating with

other non-natives because of a combined production/perception transfer effect and lack of awareness of the others' accent. The other aspect of Richard's work is emotion in speech. It used to be thought that one could tell from a speaker's voice alone when that person is angry, happy, sad, *etc.* The Reading/Leeds Emotion in Speech Project, on which Richard worked for his PhD, sought to match a Crystal & Quirk style annotations of paralinguistic features (Crystal/Quirk style) and an intonation transcription with listeners' impressions of the emotions portrayed. Richard's analysis found no correlations at all between the prosodic and paralinguistic annotations and the emotional ones, and he argues that a phonetics-only research paradigm to emotions is flawed, again because the knowledge, expectations, and active input of listeners are all crucially important in deciding how a given speech signal is interpreted.

### 'Sort of like Biological Science ...' Favorite tone units no. 3

The extract is taken from Chapter 7 of the American/Canadian version of *Streaming Speech*, a young student of Sports and Exercise Science, called Travis. If you were asked to explain the meaning of the word 'like' you would probably think of using 'enjoy' and 'is similar to' in your explanation. But 'like' has many other meanings, some of them difficult to pin down. In the extract opposite, Travis uses 'like' six times. None of them mean 'enjoy' but one is of them is close to 'is similar to'. Look at these lines, and as you read them, consider ways of describing the meaning of 'like' in each line, and try to identify the line which contains the 'is similar to' meaning. In speech unit 10 'like' can be reworded as 'is similar to' - but nowhere else. The others, in order to make sense, have to be reworded as 'things such as' (01, 03, 05) or 'such as' (06 & 13). 'Like' is a function word with many vague meanings. Travis illustrates that it is very useful, in situations such as this, when you are constructing a list. If you want to hear this extract, there are two places that you can find it online. First, in the online research centre, the Centre for Discourse Intonation Studies (CDIS), Favorite Speech Unit no. 3 (<http://www.speechinaction.com>) or there is a fuller treatment in the MED online magazine at

<http://www.macmillandictionary.com/med-magazine/january2005/26-Feature-Not-Funny.htm>

```
01 // we cover like //
02 // SPoRT psychology //
03 // we cover like BIomechanics //
04 // which is er //
05 // the sTudy of like //
06 // you kNOw like //
07 // ANgles and tHiNGs //
08 // you got geometry //
09 // PHysiology //
10 // which is lIke //
11 // you kNOw //
12 // your cHEmistry //
13 // and things like tHaT //
14 // and sTuFF //
```

### Do get in touch!

**If you are using Discourse Intonation in your field of work, whether it be in research, teacher training or teaching, let us know what you are doing by contacting the editor whose address is given in the top left hand corner of this page. If you have a favourite tone unit that you would like to write about, please consider sharing it with others by writing a short commentary.**