Lorentz Workshop: Prosodic complexity of Language, Emotion and Thought

2-6 November 2026
Lorentz Centre, Leiden, The Netherlands
Programme

MONDAY 2nd Nov: Introductions

9.30: Arrival & Registration (coffee)

10.00 Opening: Introduction to the Lorentz Centre
Welcome to the workshop and Lorentz Centre facilities

10.30 *Nancy convening*

10.30 – 11.45 Introductions and positionalities

11.45 – 12.00 Goal of the workshop

12.00 – 12.15 Harry van der Hulst
Vocabulary and terminology in prosody studies

12.15 – 12.30 Discussion

12.30 – 2.00 Lunch

2.00 What is complexity? Understanding complexity from different perspectives *(Yiya convening)*

2.00 – 2.15 Hatice Zora – Neuro-cognitive representational complexity

2.15 – 2.30 Nancy C. Kula – Tonal complexity in African languages

2.30 – 2.45 Yiya Chen – Chinese tonal complexity

Coffee/comfort break (15mins)

3.00 – 3.15 Silke Paulman – Complexity in emotional studies

3.15 – 3.30 Pius Mosima – Complexity in Philosophy

3.30 – 4.30 Final discussion of the day:
Discussion: What 5 central points on complexity will carry throughout the workshop?

Opening Evening RECEPTION

TUESDAY 3rd Nov: Deeper dive into prosodic systems - Lexical tone systems

10.00 - Sinitic lexical tone patterns (*Yiya convening*)

- Yiya Chen: Contextual tonal variation
- Jiahong Yuan: Speaker normalization in tone recognition
- Xiuyuan Liang **:** TBC

11.15 – 11.30 Tea /coffee break

11.30 - African Language tone (*Nancy convening*)

11.30 -11.45 Jane Oduor: Tone in Dholuo (Nilotic)

11.45 – 12.00 Lotta Aunio: EjiIkhoma and IgiHa tone systems (Bantu)

12.00 – 12.15 Maria Konoshenko: Mande tone: lexical, grammatical and surface tone interactions

Lunch: 12.30 – 2.00

Afternoon

2.00 Break out groups: 4 groups (*Pius convening*)

Leading questions:

- How does African philosophy articulate the complexity of language, emotion and thought?
- How do emotions (vital force), rhythm express African ways of being, knowing and communal values?
- Could these embodied oral narratives be treated as (re)sources for philosophical reflection or are they philosophies in themselves?
- What are the main similarities and differences between African and Sinitic tonal systems? How does the meaning of complexity in each case interact with understandings on philosophy and psychology

3.45: Each group to present and share their hypotheses or thoughts with the wider/plenary group

WEDNESDAY 4th Nov: non-tonal accentual/stress systems/other systems

10.00 *Stress (Harry convening)*

- Hatice Zora: Relative importance of stress at the lexical level and beyond
- Carlos Gussenhoven – Word prosodic contrast in Nigerian English
- Azeb Amha – tone and accent interaction (TBC)
- Harry van der Hulst – Stress-accent

11.20 - 1130: Coffee/tea break

11.30: *How is prosody used in psychology and philosophy?* (*Pius convening*)

- Silke Paulmann
- Pius Mosima
- Lucky Ogbannaya
- Azeb Amha (TBC)

12.00: Discussion

Lunch: 12.30 – 2.00

2.00 - 4.00: How can/has prosody been modelled computationally and experimentally? (*Silke convening*)

- Kevin Tang
- Stan van der Burght
- Carlos Gussenhoven
- Bettina Braun

3.45: End with group discussion

18.00 – 19.00: BOAT RIDE
19.00 DINNER AT VERBODEN TOEGANG

THURSDAY 5th Nov: Creating models of complexity

10.00 (*Nancy convening*)

How is prosody used in information structure? How does prosody help us to package information? At what levels is this used and what interaction do we see? Is there an intersection set?

10:00 – 10.15 Silke Paulmann - Information structure from a Psychology perspective: how is emotion structured/packaged

10.15 – 10.30 Lucky Ogbannaya & Pius Mosima - Information structure from a Philosophy perspective: How do prosody and culture interact?

10.30 – 11.15 Stan van der Burght - Information structure and prominence

Martine Grice - ??

11.15 – 11.30 Tea /coffee break

11.30 – 11.45 Nancy C. Kula & Lotta Aunio – Conjoint-disjoint in Bantu w. examples from Bemba, IgiHa, and Nguni

11.45 –12.00 Carlos Gussenhoven (Stress)

12.00 – 12.15 Aoju Chen (Chinese Tone)

Lunch: 12.30 – 2.00

2.00: *Harry convening*

2.00 -3.00 Break out groups: 4 Groups

Leading questions: What would a model of prosodic interaction involve?

How can the different types/characteristics of prosody identified be tested? Can predictions be made on impossible interactions? How can the different uses be modelled computationally? What are possible/feasible experimental designs/stimuli?

3.00 – 3.15 Coffee/comfort break

3.15: *Nancy convening*

3.15 – 4.30 Break out groups: 4 Groups

Practical session: How can we physically construct the models we have discussed?

FRIDAY 6th Nov: Experimental Designs & Next steps

10.00 – 11.15 *(Yiya & Bettina convening)*

Group presentations of model proposals and/or experimental designs.

Plenary discussion:

What models seem to best capture the complexity of prosodic interaction? What language and culture specifics are significant and need to emerge from the different systems? Where are the important symmetries and asymmetries?

11.15 – 11.30: Tea/coffee break

11.30 – 12.30 *(Nancy convening)*

What are the next steps?

Consider future questions and map out some clear remaining questions that can feed future research. Consider also dissemination of findings:

Some possibilities:

a) creating a platform to share experimental designs and testing methods with the academic community?

b) writing a methodological practice paper?

c) planning, in the longer term, a special journal issue or an open-access edited volume?

d) funding options?

Evaluation and final reflections: What and how have we learnt?

12.30: CLOSE