

The Effects of the Presence and Absence of Suprasegmentals on the Intelligibility and Assessment of an Expanding-Circle English Speaker according to other Expanding-Circle English Listeners

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Abstract

This study attempted to explicate the relationship between suprasegmentals and intelligibility in the speech of non-native speakers of English during communication with other non-native speakers of English. Although a number of scholars have demonstrated that the usage of suprasegmentals has a beneficial effect on intelligibility in communication between native-speakers of English and non-native speakers of English, no research has yet demonstrated the same phenomenon in communication between non-native speakers of English and other non-native speakers of English—until now. The results of this study indicate that the intelligibility of speech between non-native English speakers increases, sometimes only slightly, sometimes significantly, when suprasegmentals are used. Furthermore, the results of this study demonstrate that non-native speakers of English positively assess other non-native speakers of English who utilize suprasegmentals more than non-native speakers of English who did not.

Keywords: Suprasegmentals, Segmentals, Intelligibility, Assessment, Native speakers, Non-native speakers

1 Introduction

The history of the pedagogy of English pronunciation—how it is taught or whether it is taught at all—is replete with bi-polar extremes. During and after World War 2, the advent of the audio-lingual method catapulted pronunciation, in particular the pronunciation of segmentals, to its historical pinnacle of importance. The audio-lingual method herded students through repetitious choral pronunciation drills and pragmatically vacuous dialogues in an effort to mimic native-like phonological accuracy. Later, however, the beginning of the cognitive movement, the authenticity movement, and the early communicative language learning movement challenged the theoretical underpinnings of the audio-lingual method

and relegated pronunciation pedagogy to categories that can best be described through uncharitable synonyms of “unimportant.” These newer methodologies trumpeted the importance of interaction over precision and dethroned phonological accuracy in language pedagogy.

Until Anderson-Hsieh, Johnson, and Koehlers’(1992) seminal article in the early 1990’s, pronunciation education remained a low priority for English teachers. Yet the revival of interest and research in pronunciation pedagogy catalyzed by Anderson-Hsieh et al.’s (1992) seminal article was of a different caliber than previous renditions: the focus had moved away from segmentals and had moved to suprasegmentals. With some notable exceptions, the recent corpus of research on pronunciation pedagogy has focused on almost entirely on elements of suprasegmentals and prosody—two words used interchangeably throughout this article to collectively indicate spoken stress, rhythm and intonation.

Recent research concerning the relationship between suprasegmentals and the intelligibility of non-native speakers (hereafter, NNS) have revealed a number of important things: Correct suprasegmental usage can increase the intelligibility of NNS (Hahn 2004; Pickering 2001); correct suprasegmental usage attenuates or ameliorates the adverse effects of misarticulated segmentals, thereby indirectly increasing intelligibility (Kjellin 1999); NNSs derive a greater benefit from suprasegmentals instruction than segmentals instruction (Derwing & Rossiter 2003). Accordingly, recent pronunciation syllabi encourage a primary, though not an exclusive, focus on suprasegmentals (Levis & Grant 2003).

However, each of these research findings and the pronunciation syllabi derived from them have one major pitfall that calls into question their applicability to non-ESL contexts: they all only attempt to explicate the relationship between suprasegmentals and NNS intelligibility vis-à-vis native speakers (hereafter, NS). For teachers engaged in English language pedagogy in English as a Foreign Language (hereafter EFL) settings, in which students are much less likely to have contact with NSs, and are more likely to have contact with other NNS, the validity and applicability of the above-mention research is in serious doubt. In fact, one could reasonably claim that suprasegmentals have not been demonstrated to contribute anything to communication between NNS and other NNS.

One researcher engaged in designing pronunciation syllabi for English as an international language, Jennifer Jenkins, did exactly that. Although Jenkins (2000; 2002) admits that suprasegmentals have a positive influence on the efficacy of NS-NNS communication, she denies almost any importance at all to suprasegmental usage in NNS-NNS communication. Jenkins proposes a pronunciation syllabus designed specifically for NNS-NNS communication via English that is devoid of almost any suprasegmental features—the *Lingua Franca Core* model of pronunciation instruction. The *Lingua Franca Core* model of pronunciation instruction advocates a segmental-centered approach to pronunciation instruction (Jenkins 2000; 2002). This is because the *Lingua Franca Core* model of pronunciation instruction is partially based on the assumption that the suprasegmental features of NS English have little to add to the communicativeness or intelligibility of NNS-

NNS communication.

However, one of the core assumptions of the *Lingua Franca Core* model of pronunciation instruction has yet to be empirically established: the suprasegmental features of NS English do not contribute to the intelligibility of NNS English in NNS-NNS communication. Is this true? The assumptions of the *Lingua Franca Core* model of pronunciation instruction have yet to be validated. In a word, if the suprasegmental features of NS English contribute to the intelligibility of a NNS when in contact with another NNS, shouldn't the suprasegmental features of NS English be added to the pronunciation syllabus? If the suprasegmental features of NS English contribute to communication between NNS and other NNS, then they should be added, as Hahn (2004) and Derwing & Rossiter (2003) imply; if they do not, they should not be, as Jenkins (2000; 2002) claims.

This article attempts to directly answer the following question: although it is an established fact that correct suprasegmental usage increases the intelligibility of a NNS when in contact with a NS interlocutor, does correct suprasegmental usage increase the intelligibility of a NNS when in contact with another NNS in a similar way?

2 Previous Studies

Before we launch into any discussion of suprasegmentals and their relationship with intelligibility, it is necessary to make a distinction between different types of speakers of English. This is because the suprasegmental features of English manifest in the speech of different English speakers in different ways. Not all speakers of English are qualitatively the same. This fact warrants some form of categorization; however, they should not be simplistically divided into two dichotomous and deterministic categories: NS and NNS. As Krachu (1992) has shown, this dualistic categorization implies a hierarchy between perfection and deficiency that is no longer tenable. Accordingly, a categorization that allows a more minute distinction is required. Accordingly, this paper adopts the tripartite division advocated by Krachu (1992) to distinguish between alternate types of English speakers: Inner-circle English speakers, Outer-circle English speakers, and Expanding-circle English speakers.

According to Krachu's tripartite division, Inner-circle English speakers comprise a category that includes anybody who learned English in a context in which the language of the general public is English. Krachu calls these varieties of English "norm-providing," in the sense that they provide model upon which a large swath of English language pedagogy is based. The varieties of English found in countries such as America, England, New Zealand, Australia, and Canada can be considered Inner-Circle English. Outer-circle English speakers comprise a category that entails anybody who learned English in a context in which the English language is the language of government and academia, but not the general public. Krachu dubs these varieties of English "norm-developing" because the standards upon which English is based are not derived solely from Inner-Circle countries. For example,

Outer-Circle varieties of English can be found in many former colonies of England: India, Kenya, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and Singapore. Expanding-Circle English speakers comprise a category of speakers who learned English in a context in which the English language is neither the language of the public, the government, nor academia. Krachu designates these varieties “norm-dependent” because their norms are based on factors external to the society. The varieties of English found in China, Korea, and Japan can be considered to be part of the Expanding-Circle English category (Krachu 1992).

Krachu advocated this tripartite division partly because it attenuates the distinction between native-speaker and non-native speaker. However, none of this should imply that Krachu’s tripartite division is devoid of value judgments—it emphatically is not. In fact, the multivariate differences between all English speakers are far more diaphanous than even Krachu seems to suggest. One could even go as far as to say that Krachu replaced a deterministic dipartite distinction with a deterministic tripartite distinction. Yet, leaving aside the problems inherent in Krachu’s categorization, this study adopts the division first proposed by Krachu.

2.1 Suprasegmentals in the speech of Inner-Circle English Speakers

The idea that Inner-Circle speakers of English utilize prosody to manipulate the information structure of discourse is now an old one. Although not the first to claim that prosody plays an important role in English discourse, Halliday (1967) seems to be the first scholar to posit a relationship between “given/old information” in discourse and English prosody. Essentially, Halliday claimed that Inner-Circle speakers of English tend to prosodically highlight new information in discourse through pitch-movements, which are increased pitch ranges on select stressed syllables in speech. According to this theory, Inner-Circle speakers of English use pitch-movements on prominent information in order to indicate relative discourse saliency. That is, Inner-Circle English speakers prosodically “highlight” important and/or new information in discourse to make it more salient to the interlocutor.

Many other scholars focused on English phonology have concluded that Halliday’s initial observations of Inner-Circle speech are largely valid although subject to some revision and expansion (Pierrehumbert & Hirschberg 1990; Kondo 2001; Okazaki 1998; Chafe 1994; Hahn 2004; Ladd 2008). However, researchers from the conversation analytic school of thought claim that pitch-movements are more a manifestation of the speaker’s intent to yield the turn to the interlocutor than of any discourse information highlighting function (Schegloff 1998). Of course, there are also researchers who claim pitch-movements are used to realize a combination of the two; that is, pitch movements signal discourse information saliency as well as a willingness to yield the floor (Wennerstrom 2001). Furthermore, Brazil (1997) maintains that pitch-movements are related to the emotive structure of discourse, although other researchers have tried to tease apart emotive prosody and discourse informative prosody, claiming that they are separate phenomenon (Ladd 2008). Another

school of thought, proposed mostly by scholars engaged in the research into English language pedagogy, while recognizing the importance of pitch-movements on lexical items containing new information, claims that Inner-Circle English speakers use pitch-movements to highlight contrasts in discourse (Celce-Murcia, Brinton, & Goodwin 1996), which one could argue is simply a subcategory of new information salience-raising pitch movements.

On the other hand, other scholars have noted the tendency of Inner Circle speakers of English to deaccent—essentially, to forego the use of pitch-movements on stressed syllables—discourse information that is assumed to be already known or available to the interlocutor, i.e., old information (Ladd 1980; Wennerstrom 2001, 2000), although there are detractors to this view (Bard & Aylett 1999) and some research based on intuitive evidence that seems to indicate that this view is not as cut and dry as it might seem (Faber 1987). Overall, however, five decades of research into the phonological aspects of English discourse has revealed the following: Inner-Circle speakers of English utilize the suprasegmental features of English to make discourse relevant information more salient and prominent, highlight discourse contrasts, create emphatic and emotive effects, and signal the end of a turn of talk. However, do students of English as a foreign language in countries in which English is not commonly spoken utilize the suprasegmental features of Inner-Circle English in the same way? That is, do Expanding-Circle English speakers utilize the Inner-Circle English prosody in the same way? That is the question to which we direct our attention in the next section.

2.2 Suprasegmentals in the speech of Expanding-Circle English Speakers

English prosody can be difficult for Expanding-Circle English speakers to grasp; in fact, there is a famed scholar who claimed that the characteristics of Inner-Circle English prosody are entirely idiomatic and unpredictable, and therefore, by insinuation, unteachable (Bolinger 1972). Accordingly, one should not be surprised to find that Expanding-Circle English speakers have an imperfect knowledge of the vagaries of English suprasegmentals—their English teachers didn't even have empirical evidence upon which they could make adequate decisions to address the situation until very recently! On the whole, most scholars engaged in research that attempts to elucidate the prosodic aspects of Expanding-Circle English speakers' English have concluded that Expanding-Circle English speakers do not utilize English prosody in the same way as Inner-Circle English speakers, if they use it at all—and that's a big "if."

The revival of English suprasegmental research that has lasted to today can be traced to Anderson-Hsieh et al.'s seminal article. Anderson-Hsieh et al. (1992) discovered that a number of Outer-Circle and Expanding-Circle English speakers frequently underused English suprasegmentals to highlight discourse information and contrasts. Although the Outer-Circle and Expanding-Circle English speakers discussed in Anderson-Hsieh et al.'s research made other pronunciation errors—such as segmental errors and syllable structure errors—the researchers concluded that the lack of suprasegmental awareness and usage

was the most detrimental factor to intelligibility. Wennerstrom, in a series of articles, concludes much the same thing: Outer-Circle and Expanding-Circle English speakers do not make use of English prosody in the same way as Inner-Circle English speakers, and this has an appreciable adverse effect on intelligibility because misplaced or absent prosodic signals can violate the expectations of the interlocutor (1994; 1998; 2000; 2001). Mochizuki-Sudo & Kiritani (1991) investigated Japanese NNS production of English rhythm and concluded that linguistic transfer from the L1 interfered with the ability of the Japanese learners to master the rhythm patterns of English. Pickering (2001) studied the prosody of international teacher assistants at an American university and found that certain Expanding-Circle English speakers over-utilized sentence final falling intonation, which created the impression of unnecessary interpersonal distance and emotive deficiency.

Furthermore, the lack of suprasegmental features doesn't have deleterious effects only on inter-speaker intelligibility; in fact, many researchers have also discovered that misused prosodic cues lead to the decreased personal assessment of the Expanding-Circle English speaker—even if actual intelligibility has not been affected! That is, as Munro & Derwing (1995) have discovered, intelligibility and perceived comprehensibility are actually two different things: Intelligibility is the measure of the amount of information the interlocutor is able to process; Comprehensibility is the perception of the interlocutor as to how easy or difficult the speaker is to understand. Many Inner-Circle English speakers seem to equate suprasegmental usage with assessments of accent; accordingly—whether fairly or not is a separate issue—many Inner-Circle English speakers usually downgrade the personal assessments of those who speak without prosodic variation on the assumption that the lack of prosodic shifts has a direct correlation to accent (Mulac, Hanley, & Prigge 1974; Raisler 1976; Hahn 2004). Therefore, it is warranted to claim that a lack of prosodic variety in the speech of Expanding-Circle English speakers can lead to the downgraded assessments of the speaker. This is in spite of evidence that suggests that accent and intelligibility are not actually as highly correlated—if at all—as is commonly believed.

2.3 Pedagogical Claims about Suprasegmentals and Pronunciation Instruction

For the past 20 years, pronunciation education has been heavily weighted in favor of the suprasegmental features of English speech over its segmental features. A glance through the major pronunciation textbooks available on the market now will reveal the same phenomenon. *Clear Speech* begins with lessons focusing on suprasegmentals and consigns lessons on segmentals to the back of the book. *Well Said* follows a similar pattern. The same could be said for many others. This shift in priorities is a reflection of McNerny & Mendelsohn's (1992) claim that “a pronunciation course should focus first and foremost on suprasegmentals as they have the greatest impact on the [intelligibility] of the learner's English...[G]iving a priority to the suprasegmental aspects of English not only improves learner's [intelligibility] but is also less frustrating for students because greater change can be affected” (132). Many other researchers have trumpeted similar ideas (Brown 1995;

Celce-Murcia et al. 1996; Levis & Grant 2003; Hahn 2004). In a word, there is a general consensus—with the exception of one major scholar—that greater suprasegmental precision correlates to greater intelligibility, at least in communication between Inner-Circle speakers and Expanding-Circle speakers.

However, until very recently, there was very little empirical evidence to support such claims. Studies that demonstrated a correlation between intelligibility and suprasegmentals can be traced back to Anderson-Hsieh et al. (1992), but the first study to empirically demonstrate a link—not just a correlation—between the suprasegmental features of English speech and intelligibility is very recent: Hahn (2004). Hahn's results indicate that there is a direct link between the maintenance of suprasegmental precision and the intelligibility of Expanding-Circle English speakers. This is evidenced by the fact that suprasegmentally dissimilar but segmentally nearly identical speeches were assessed and comprehended differently by Inner-Circle speakers of English. That is, Hahn exposed Inner-Circle English speaker test subjects to one Expanding-Circle English speaker speech modified in one of three ways: one with suprasegmental features correctly distributed throughout the speech, one with suprasegmental features incorrectly placed throughout the speech, and one with few suprasegmental features at all—in a word, a prosodically dead speech. Hahn's results indicate that the correct placement of suprasegmental features throughout the speech slightly increased the intelligibility of the speaker and greatly increased the listeners' assessment of the speaker. On the other hand, Hahn's study also demonstrates that incorrect placement of suprasegmental features or the complete absence of suprasegmental features can attenuate the effectiveness of a speaker and lead to a lower assessment of the speaker. In fact, Hahn's results indicate that the misplacement of suprasegmental cues is more detrimental to intelligibility than no suprasegmental cues at all!

Furthermore, Derwing & Rossiter (2003) demonstrated that pronunciation instruction in suprasegmentals increased the intelligibility of Expanding-Circle speakers of English in ESL contexts far more than segmental instruction did. Derwing & Rossiter studied the ability of students from three classes to utilize the suprasegmental features of English. Each class was given different pronunciation instruction: one class was taught suprasegmentals; another class was taught segmentals; the last class was the control group and therefore was given no pronunciation instruction. Derwing & Rossiter report that the students given suprasegmental instruction greatly increased their overall spoken intelligibility. The control group unsurprisingly demonstrated no increase in overall spoken intelligibility. However, the class given segmental instruction actually demonstrated a slight decrease in overall intelligibility. That is, pronunciation instruction based on suprasegmentals increased students' overall intelligibility far more than pronunciation instruction based on segmentals.

However, the problem with all of the studies enumerated above is that each one of them takes the NS—Inner-Circle English speakers—as the model with which the NNS—Outer-Circle and Expanding-Circle speakers—are compared and inevitably found lacking in some regard. To use an old American metaphor to describe this situation, one could say, “This is

not a fair fight” . Although all of these findings are based on empirical research, the recommendations that they insinuate are of dubious value in EFL. As of yet, there is no research of which this researcher knows of that has demonstrated whether Expanding-Circle speakers make the same judgments of other Expanding-Circle speakers as Inner-Circle speakers do with regard to the presence or absence of suprasegmentals in the speech of Expanding-Circle English speakers.

However, there are those who claim that the suprasegmental features of English are at best of subordinate importance compared to segmental features. In fact, Jenkins (2000; 2002) has gone as far as to claim that the only suprasegmental features worthy of any attempt to impart on students are pitch movements that highlight contrasts. Jenkins (2002) insists that reduced vowels, phonological assimilation, are unimportant to intelligibility—indeed, may be harmful—when Expanding-Circle English speakers communicate with other Expanding-Circle English speakers (99). Moreover, Jenkins (2002) claims that pitch movements that indicate attitudes or pragmatic relationships are unteachable (99). All other elements of Jenkins’proposed *Lingua Franca Core* concentrate on certain segmental features deemed more necessary to the comprehension of English between Outer-Circle and Expanding-Circle English speakers.

Yet, there are noticeable problems in the *Lingua Franca Core*. As Dauer (2005) implicitly points out, Jenkins seems to make the assumption that Outer-Circle English speakers and Expanding-Circle English speakers will have very little contact with Inner-Circle English speakers. This is doubly surprising because all of the students upon which Jenkins bases her suggestions were studying English in England. One would assume the choice of venue for language study would imply at least some amount of desire for contact with Inner-Circle English speakers. Furthermore, the data upon which Jenkins bases her pedagogical decisions are all gleaned from direct interviews with the students. However, as Conversation Analysts have long pointed out, data based on direct interviews rather than recorded material can be inadvertently manipulated: students might just tell the teacher what they think the teacher wants to hear. Further, Jenkins attempts to make no distinction between intelligibility and comprehensibility when adducing the cause for student intelligibility errors. As Derwing & Rossiter (2003) have demonstrated, these two categories do not encompass the same thing. It is entirely possible that what the students believed caused them intelligibility problems and what actually caused them intelligibility problems were two different things. Moreover, Jenkin’s decision to exclude nearly all suprasegmental instruction from the *Lingua France Core* pronunciation syllabus is not based on any empirical evidence; that is, Jenkin’s evidence does not satisfactorily answer the following question: If Expanding-Circle English speakers use suprasegmental features in their speech when communicating with other Expanding-Circle English speakers, does this increase the speaker’s intelligibility? Until that question is empirically answered, it is impossible to know if the prosody portion of Jenkin’s pronunciation syllabus is actually warranted or not.

3 The Current Study

Research regarding the relationship between Outer-Circle and Expanding-Circle English speakers and prosody is fairly clear: Outer-Circle and Expanding-Circle English speakers frequently misuse English suprasegmentals—at least from the point of view of Inner-Circle English speakers—and this can lead to decreased intelligibility and miscommunication. Although a large body of evidence and research seems to indicate that in dialogues between Outer/Expanding-Circle English speakers and Inner-Circle English speakers misused suprasegmental signals hinder communication, it is less than clear as to if misused prosodic signals hinder dialogue between Expanding-Circle English speakers and other Expanding-Circle English speakers. Therefore, a very practical question emerges, especially for teachers engaged in teaching English as an international language: Do suprasegmental signals aid communication between Expanding-Circle English speakers?

The current study represents an attempt to answer this question. This study attempts to determine and assess the impact of the presence of suprasegmental signals in Expanding-Circle English speakers'speech on Expanding-Circle English listeners. Furthermore, this study attempts to determine and assess the impact of the absence of suprasegmental signals in Expanding-Circle English speech on Expanding-Circle English listeners. In order to control for a multiplicity of linguistic variables, one Expanding-Circle English speaker's speech was recorded via sound recorder software. This became speech sample 1. Next, an exact copy of speech sample 1 was created and prosodically flattened—that is, all pitch-movements were decreased or increased to the speech's pitch range average—by means of the prosodic manipulation tools available in PRAAT software. With the sole exception of pitch-movement variation, two identical Expanding-Circle English speaker speech samples were created:

Speech Sample 1: the original version of the Expanding-Circle English speaker's speech, replete with pitch-movements signaling new information and contrasts.

Speech Sample 2: the suprasegmentally flattened version of speech sample 1.

This study investigated the following questions: Would Expanding-Circle English listeners understand Expanding-Circle English speaker discourse more easily when the Expanding-Circle English speaker utilized suprasegmental signals? Would Expanding-Circle English listeners subjectively evaluate Expanding-Circle English speech more or less favorably with or without suprasegmental signals present?

4 Method

An experimental study was designed utilizing two Expanding-Circle English speeches,

one of which was rich with prosodic vicissitudes, and one which was devoid of prosodic variation, and Expanding-Circle English listeners were asked to respond to two tasks, each corresponding to one of the research questions.

4.1 Subjects

The study had 74 subjects, all of whom were technically Expanding-Circle English speakers enrolled in an Advanced English course at a large public university in Japan. 66 of the subjects were native speakers of Japanese, the grand majority of whom were college sophomores taking the course to fulfill a graduation requirement. 5 of the subjects were native speakers of Mandarin Chinese who were exchange students. 1 subject was a native speaker of Indonesian who was a fully enrolled student. 2 of the subjects were native speakers of French who were exchange students. However, the native speakers of French were much more proficient speakers of English than the other subjects; their proficiency levels removed them from the Expanding-Circle category completely. Accordingly, their responses were removed from analysis due to their greater degree of exposure to English.

The experiment was conducted on a voluntary basis in between class periods during the first week of classes of the spring semester in 2010. The researcher recruited subjects after the Advanced English class introduction. Subjects who did not want to participate were free to opt out. Subjects were not compensated in any way for their participation.

4.2 Materials

The stimuli for the experiment consisted of two lexically and segmentally consistent recorded oral texts (see Appendix A). First, a female native-speaker of Korean, who was highly proficient in oral English and had been taught to utilize suprasegmentals to signal new information and contrasts in an Advanced English class the previous semester, recorded three speech samples on Sound Recorder, a recording program standard on any Windows operating system. Second, one of the three samples was chosen to be speech sample 1 because it was judged to be slightly more prosodically consistent, and was then saved as a .wav format sound file. The speech file was 3 minutes 11 seconds long (see Appendix B). The other two samples were discarded. The female native-speaker of Korean was paid 3000 yen for her work. Third, a copy of speech sample 1 was loaded into PRAAT, a free sound manipulation software program available online. Using PRAAT's sound manipulation tools, the researcher flattened all the pitch-movements punctuating speech sample 1 to within 7Hz of 234Hz, the average pitch range of the female native speaker of Korean in speech sample 1, which is well within the average pitch range for female speakers (Hart't, Collier, & Cohen 1990). Last, the prosodically flattened version of speech sample 1 was renamed speech sample 2 and saved as a separate .wav format sound file (see Appendix C). Accordingly, two speech samples were created: one with many suprasegmental signals peppered throughout the text, and one that was devoid of any suprasegmental variation. However, aside from the presence or absence of suprasegmental signals, the two speech samples are exact lexical and

segmental copies of each other. During the actual testing, the speech sample .wav sound files were played on a MacBook via QuickTime, an audio file player software program, and projected throughout the classrooms in which the experiment was conducted via Sanwa Supply USB Speakers at maximum volume.

4.3 Measure of the Intelligibility of Discourse

The study measured overall speaker intelligibility through a comprehension quiz, designed to elicit how well the subjects understood and remembered particular information in the speech samples (see Appendix D). Essentially, this study equates intelligibility with the ability to answer the comprehension quiz questions. That is, this definition assumes that if the subject was better able to answer a question, the speaker was more intelligible. Each question elicited one of the main ideas of the speech samples. Answers to the quiz were assigned a maximum value of 2 points each. Answers were assigned 2 points for a completely correct answer, 1 point for a partially correct answer, and 0 points for an incorrect answer or no answer at all.

4.4 Measure of Evaluative Reactions to the Speaker

The study measured the overall evaluation of the speaker through a series of attitudinal questions, each of which was answered on a five-point Likert scale (see Appendix E). Subjects responded to the attitudinal questions by choosing one option on the five-point Likert scale that best represented their opinion. Positive evaluations were consistently located high on the Likert scales, and negative evaluations were consistently located low on the Likert scales. The questions utilized in this study are adapted from the attitudinal questions present in Hahn's (2004) study. Half of the questions focused on the listeners' assessment of the speaker's prosody patterns and speaking abilities (Questions 1, 4, 8, 9, and 10). Other questions queried subjects about the content of the speech sample (Questions 2 and 3), and requested the listener's subjective assessment of the speech delivery (Questions 5, 6, and 7).

4.5 Procedure

The 72 subjects were divided into two groups: Group one listened to speech sample 1; Group two listened to speech sample 2. There were 34 subjects in group one, which was composed of students from three separate Advanced English classes, and 38 subjects in group two, which was also composed of three separate Advanced English classes. All of the non-Japanese native speakers were in group two, including the two native speakers of French whose responses were removed from the analysis. The researcher explained the instructions and the format of the experiment to the subjects. Furthermore, the researcher informed the subjects that they would be listening to a three-minute speech recorded by an English-speaking native speaker of Korean. Neither group was informed that the purpose of the study was to ascertain the effects of the presence or absence of suprasegmentals. Group two

was not informed that speech sample 2 was prosodically leveled. All subjects were allowed to look at the comprehension quiz questions for one minute before the listening began so that they would know what information to be looking for in the speech sample. The subjects were also asked to complete a comprehension task and a speaker evaluation task after the speech recording had ended, but the subjects were specifically told that they had the option of writing nothing at all if they did not know how to answer the questions. The subjects were given as much time as they needed after the listening to complete both the comprehension task and the speaker evaluation task.

5 Results

5.1 Intelligibility Data

Statistics for the 10 intelligibility quiz questions are reported in table 1 and 2. A comparison of the data from both groups reveals that, with the exception of questions 5, 7, and 9, group one scored slightly to considerably better on all comprehension quiz questions. Even when group 2 scored better on questions 5, 7, and 9, the score averages are nearly the same.

Table 1: Group 1's Answers to the Comprehension Quiz Questions

The number of the subject (S) is in the leftmost vertical column. The number of the comprehension quiz question (CQQ) is in the second topmost horizontal column. The score accorded by the researcher to the subject's comprehension quiz question answer is located at the coordinate box between the two. The average score (AVE) for group 1 is located in the last horizontal column.

Table 1: Group 1 Answers to the Comprehension Quiz Questions										
	CQQ 1	CQQ 2	CQQ 3	CQQ 4	CQQ 5	CQQ 6	CQQ 7	CQQ 8	CQQ 9	CQQ 10
S1	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	2	2
S2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
S3	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
S4	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	0
S5	0	2	0	0	2	0	2	0	0	0
S6	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	0	0	0
S7	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	2	0
S8	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	2	2	0
S9	0	0	2	0	0	0	2	0	2	2
S10	0	2	2	2	0	0	2	0	0	2
S11	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
S12	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	2
S13	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

S14	0	2	0	2	0	0	0	2	0	2
S15	0	2	2	0	0	0	2	0	0	2
S16	0	2	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	0
S17	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0
S18	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
S19	2	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	2
S20	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	0
S21	0	0	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
S22	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
S23	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	1	0	0
S24	0	0	2	0	0	2	1	0	0	2
S25	2	2	2	2	2	0	1	2	2	2
S26	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	0
S27	0	2	0	2	0	0	1	2	2	2
S28	0	1	0	0	2	0	1	2	2	2
S29	0	2	2	2	0	0	1	0	2	2
S30	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0
S31	0	2	2	2	2	0	1	0	2	2
S32	0	0	2	2	2	0	0	2	0	2
S33	2	0	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	2
S34	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	0	0
AVE	0.176	0.765	0.765	0.6471	0.588	0.206	0.941	0.647	0.706	1

Table 2: Group 2's Answers to the Comprehension Quiz Questions

The number of the subject (S) is in the leftmost vertical column. The number of the comprehension quiz question (CQQ) is in the second topmost horizontal column. The score accorded by the researcher to the subject's comprehension quiz question answer is located at the coordinate box between the two. The average score (AVE) for group 2 is located in the last horizontal column.

Table 2: Group 2 Answers to the Comprehension Quiz Questions										
	CQQ 1	CQQ 2	CQQ 3	CQQ 4	CQQ 5	CQQ 6	CQQ 7	CQQ 8	CQQ 9	CQQ10
S1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
S2	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
S3	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
S4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
S5	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0
S6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	0
S7	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	2	0
S8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0
S9	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	0	0

S10	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
S11	0	2	2	0	0	2	1	0	2	2
S12	0	0	2	0	2	0	2	0	2	2
S13	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	2	2	0
S14	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	0
S15	0	2	2	0	2	0	1	0	0	0
S16	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	2	2	0
S17	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0
S18	0	1	0	0	2	0	1	1	2	0
S19	0	2	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	2
S20	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	0
S21	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	1	0	0
S22	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
S23	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
S24	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	1	2	0
S25	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	0	0
S26	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	2
S27	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
S28	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
S29	2	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	2
S30	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	0	2	2
S31	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	0
S32	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
S33	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	0
S34	2	0	2	2	2	1	1	0	2	2
S35	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	0	0
S36	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
S37	0	2	2	0	0	0	2	2	2	0
S38	0	0	2	2	1	0	1	2	2	0
AVE	0.105	0.474	0.474	0.158	0.605	0.079	0.947	0.474	0.842	0.39474

5.2 Speaker Evaluative Data

Statistics for the 10 speaker evaluation questions are reported in table 3 and 4. The average score of the assessment of the speaker is higher in group 1 than in group 2 across the board. This comparison of the data reveals that group 1 consistently assessed the speaker more positively than group 2. Furthermore, the standard deviation for all evaluation questions was 1 or less than 1, which indicates that the listeners made consistent evaluations of the speaker.

Table 3: Group 1 Speaker Assessment Scores

The number of the subject (S) is in the leftmost vertical column. The number of the speaker assessment question (AQ) is in the top horizontal column. The assessment scores accorded by the subjects to the speaker are located at the coordinate box between the two. The standard deviations (ST-DEV) for each assessment question are located in the second to last horizontal column. The average scores (AVE) for each assessment question for group 1 are located in the last horizontal column.

Table 3: Group 1 Speaker Assessment Scores										
	AQ 1	AQ 2	AQ 3	AQ 4	AQ 5	AQ 6	AQ 7	AQ 8	AQ 9	AQ10
S1	5	5	3	4	4	3	4	4	5	3
S2	3	4	3	4	3	4	4	3	3	4
S3	2	3	2	4	2	3	5	3	1	3
S4	2	2	2	2	1	3	1	3	2	2
S5	4	4	3	4	3	3	4	3	3	3
S6	4	4	5	4	4	3	5	4	3	3
S7	3	3	2	4	2	3	3	2	2	2
S8	4	4	3	5	3	3	4	3	3	3
S9	3	3	4	3	4	3	3	3	2	3
S10	4	5	4	5	3	5	5	5	5	4
S11	4	5	3	4	2	2	5	4	5	1
S12	5	5	4	4	3	3	3	3	4	3
S13	2	4	3	5	2	3	4	3	3	3
S14	4	4	2	5	2	5	4	3	3	4
S15	3	3	2	4	3	3	4	3	3	2
S16	4	4	2	3	3	3	4	3	4	2
S17	5	5	5	5	4	3	5	5	5	4
S18	3	4	4	2	1	3	2	3	3	2
S19	4	4	4	4	4	5	4	5	4	4
S20	3	2	3	3	1	2	2	3	1	1
S21	4	4	3	3	3	4	4	3	4	4
S22	4	4	3	5	3	3	5	5	3	3
S23	4	5	4	5	4	4	5	5	4	4
S24	4	4	3	5	4	5	4	3	4	5
S25	3	3	4	5	3	3	4	3	3	3
S26	4	4	3	4	4	5	4	3	4	4
S27	5	5	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	4
S28	3	3	2	3	2	3	2	3	3	2
S29	2	3	4	4	3	2	4	3	3	2
S30	3	3	2	3	2	3	3	3	5	3
S31	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3

S32	3	3	4	2	2	4	2	4	2	2
S33	2	2	4	4	3	3	4	4	4	4
S34	4	4	2	5	2	4	4	4	3	2
ST-DEV	0.896	0.898	0.904	0.933	0.936	0.853	1.024	0.788	1.06	0.96876
AVE	3.5	3.735	3.176	3.912	2.824	3.382	3.735	3.471	3.294	2.97059

Table 4: Group 2's evaluation of the speaker

The number of the subject (S) is in the leftmost vertical column. The number of the speaker assessment question (AQ) is in the top horizontal column. The assessment scores accorded by the subjects to the speaker are located at the coordinate box between the two. The standard deviations (ST-DEV) for each assessment question are located in the second to last horizontal column. The average scores (AVE) for each assessment question for group 2 are located in the last horizontal column.

Table 4: Group 2 Speaker Assessments Scores										
	AQ 1	AQ 2	AQ 3	AQ 4	AQ 5	AQ 6	AQ 7	AQ 8	AQ 9	AQ10
S1	1	1	2	2	1	3	2	3	3	3
S2	2	3	2	2	2	3	2	3	3	2
S3	3	4	2	2	2	4	2	3	3	4
S4	1	2	1	1	1	3	1	3	1	1
S5	4	3	3	3	4	3	2	3	4	4
S6	2	3	3	2	1	3	4	8	4	3
S7	2	3	3	3	2	3	3	3	2	3
S8	4	4	3	2	2	3	3	3	3	3
S9	2	3	2	2	2	3	2	3	2	3
S10	2	3	3	2	1	3	1	3	3	2
S11	2	3	3	2	2	3	1	3	3	3
S12	3	4	3	5	1	3	5	4	4	3
S13	2	2	2	4	3	3	2	2	3	2
S14	1	4	2	1	1	2	1	3	2	2
S15	2	4	3	2	2	4	2	3	2	3
S16	2	3	4	2	2	2	1	3	4	2
S17	3	4	4	2	2	3	2	3	3	2
S18	2	3	4	2	1	3	4	3	4	2
S19	3	3	3	2	3	4	2	4	3	3
S20	1	2	1	1	1	5	1	3	2	1
S21	2	4	2	2	1	3	1	3	4	3
S22	2	2	3	2	2	3	1	3	2	2
S23	3	2	3	2	2	4	1	3	1	3
S24	3	3	3	2	2	3	2	3	3	2
S25	2	2	2	1	2	3	1	2	2	1

S26	2	2	2	1	2	3	1	2	2	2
S27	1	3	3	4	1	3	1	1	1	1
S28	2	3	3	2	2	3	2	3	3	2
S29	2	2	2	4	2	4	2	3	3	3
S30	1	2	2	1	1	4	1	3	2	1
S31	2	4	3	2	1	3	3	3	4	1
S32	2	3	3	3	2	3	2	3	3	3
S33	2	2	2	2	2	3	2	3	3	3
S34	4	4	3	2	2	5	2	3	4	4
S35	3	4	2	5	2	4	2	3	3	2
S36	2	2	3	3	2	3	2	3	3	2
S37	1	2	2	1	1	3	1	2	1	1
S38	3	3	2	2	2	3	2	3	2	2
ST-DEV	0.834	0.831	0.722	1.025	0.675	0.634	0.953	0.972	0.921	0.87846
AVE	2.184	2.895	2.579	1	1.763	3.237	1.895	3.026	2.737	2.34211

6 Discussion

6.1 Interpretation of the Data

The results of this study demonstrate that Expanding-Circle English speaker subjects consistently understood and assessed the Expanding-Circle English speaker better when she made use of suprasegmental signals to prosodically highlight important information than when she did not. First, subjects listening to speech sample 1, which contained suprasegmental signals indicating discourse contrasts and information saliency, scored better on 7 of the 10 comprehension questions, sometimes significantly so. This seems to suggest that the presence of suprasegmental signals is not just a prosodic flourish or superfluous intonation. In fact, suprasegmental signals peppered throughout speech seem to aid, sometimes slightly, sometimes significantly, an interlocutor's comprehension processes. Again, when suprasegmental signals were present in the speech of the Expanding-Circle speaker, the speaker's intelligibility seems to have increased; the interlocutors' comprehension seems to have concomitantly increased as a result. In a word, utilizing the prosodic system of English to highlight information saliency increases the intelligibility of an Expanding-Circle English speaker when in communication with another Expanding-Circle English speaker.

On the other hand, when suprasegmental signals were riven from the Expanding-Circle English speaker's English, the subjects were less able to correctly answer the comprehension questions. That is, when all speech variables are maintained in discourse between two Expanding-Circle English speakers, but prosody is manipulated to a level pitch, subjects comprehended less information. Subjects listening to speech sample 2, which maintained a very flat prosodic pattern throughout the speech, were only able to better

answer 3 of the 10 comprehension quiz questions (Questions 5, 7 and 9). Furthermore, even though subjects were better able to answer those 3 questions, the average scores are only slightly higher than the scores of the subjects that listened to speech sample 1, sometimes negligibly so.

Furthermore, the subjects listening to speech sample 1 assessed the speaker better than subjects listening to speech sample 2 in all categories. Accordingly, it can be said that utilizing prosodic tools in English does more than just highlight salient information: suprasegmental signals also seem to better convey a positive impression of the speaker. That is, when the Expanding-Circle English speaker utilized suprasegmental signals, interlocutors had a better impression of the speaker. This is in spite of the fact that the lexical and segmental information in each speech sample was exactly the same. Therefore, it is warranted to claim that prosodic variation can help convey a better impression of the speaker. In a word, prosodic vicissitudes seem to do more than simply increase speaker intelligibility; it also increases speaker gravitas.

6.2 Implications for English Pronunciation Pedagogy

The results of this study indicate that suprasegmental signals aid Expanding-Circle English speakers to better communicate with other Expanding-Circle English speakers. Accordingly, the findings and pedagogic recommendations of Anderson-Hsieh et al. (1992), Wennerstrom (1994, 1998, 2000, 2001), Hahn (2004), Pickering (2001), Derwing & Rossiter (2003), all of which only examined communication between Inner-Circle English speakers and Outer/Expanding-Circle English speakers, could be equally applied to communication between Expanding-Circle English speakers and other Expanding-Circle English speakers. If all of the previously enumerated research demonstrated the efficacy of suprasegmentals in increasing the intelligibility of Outer/Expanding-Circle English speakers when communicating with Inner-Circle English speakers, this research demonstrates something similar for the efficacy of suprasegmental signals in communication between Expanding-Circle English speakers and other Expanding-Circle English speakers. Accordingly, it seems warranted to claim that suprasegmentals should be part of pronunciation syllabi for even classes that are intended to teach only “International English,” i.e., English for communication between non-native speakers.

The results of this study are also simultaneously a rebuke of Jenkin’s (2000, 2002) research on communication between Outer/Expanding-Circle English speakers and other Outer/Expanding-Circle English speakers. Jenkin’s research downplays the role and value of suprasegmentals in pronunciation instruction because her research seems to indicate that segmentals play a much more significant role in increasing speaker intelligibility. However, Jenkins does not completely deny the efficacy of suprasegmentals; according to Jenkins, prosodically highlighted contrasts warrant the teaching of suprasegmentals for that purpose. But that is as far as the *Lingua Franca Core* pronunciation syllabus goes with regard to suprasegmentals. Yet, this research seems to indicate that suprasegmentals increase overall

speaker intelligibility and convey a better impression of the speaker, a finding in contradiction with Jenkin's research.

The difference between Jenkin's results and this research's results probably lies in the difference between the evidence utilized to warrant their claims: Jenkin's results are based on either intuitive evidence or interviews with students, who may or may not have been accurately interpreting the causes of decreased intelligibility—Munro & Derwing (1995) have demonstrated that perceived comprehensibility and actual intelligibility are two different things! It seems likely that Jenkin's failure to differentiate between intelligibility and comprehensibility led her to associate comprehensibility for intelligibility. However, this research is based on empirical evidence derived from a comparison of two data sets in which all variables in the stimuli except prosody were controlled. Accordingly, one of the key aspects of the *Lingua Franca Core* pronunciation syllabus—in communication between Outer/Expanding-Circle English speakers and other Outer/Expanding-Circle English speakers, suprasegmentals are only important for indicating contrasts—is in serious doubt. It seems that suprasegmental signals that indicate discourse information saliency also increase the intelligibility of Expanding-Circle English speakers. Therefore, the *Lingua Franca Core* pronunciation syllabus is in need of some revision.

7 Conclusion

The results of this study provide evidence for the efficacy of the usage of suprasegmental features in communication between Expanding-Circle English speakers and other Expanding-Circle English speakers. Essentially, this research has demonstrated two things: when Expanding-Circle English speakers utilize the suprasegmental features of English to highlight discourse salient information, the Expanding-Circle interlocutors better comprehended the information present in the discourse; also, when Expanding-Circle English speakers utilize the suprasegmental features of English, they are more positively assessed by their interlocutors. However, further research is required. This study does not address the issue of misplaced suprasegmental cues, as Hahn (2004) does. This study just simply demonstrates that Expanding-Circle English speakers who use suprasegmental cues in their speech will likely be better understood and more positively assessed. Whether the gain in intelligibility and personal assessment warrants a change in the pronunciation syllabi of EFL classes is a separate issue, which will hopefully be taken up later.

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9 Appendix

9.1 The Expanding-Circle English speaker's speech:

I have arrived in 2008 for 2008 for my university life. And I do my part time job as soon as enter this school because I have to earn my school fees and living expenses. You may think it's natural, but in East Asia, many university students don't work for their school fees and living expenses. Independence time is different East Asia and America. Well, in my case, it was a condition for study abroad. When I was high school third year, I told my plan of studying abroad to my parents. They are firmly opposed. Especially my mother. They said, "No" because it's too late and you are an under-aged girl. We can't send you alone. You know, it was too late to start studying for a college abroad. Many students preparing for study abroad start studying at least during the first year of high school. Anyway, for that reason, I argued with my parents a long time. And unable to stand by, my parents said "we will agree to it on some conditions." Earn money is a condition among them. So, my part-

time job is working as a teacher for English, Korean and Japanese. I teach many Japanese students. Well, I was surprised by two things. I couldn't understand my students' commonsense. First, they use friendly terms to teacher and parents. Korean and Japanese have special polite expressions. It is called Jongdimmai and Keigo. It is used for high position people, for example, aged person. This is shows respect. Nevertheless, they don't use this expression. Second, they even call their teacher and parents with their first names. When I was taught one junior high school student, I called his mother to ask something: "Excuse me." But his mother didn't response. At the time, my student opened the door and call his mother loudly, "MISAE!" I was shocked. What? Oh my God! How? "Miss Jang has some talk! Come here!" Maybe many people think, "How about you?" Me? Of course, I use Jongdimmai. If I don't use it, my parents would kill me. It is absolute moral rule.

9.2 Speech sample 1 can be heard at the following website:

<http://www.youtube.com/user/sarcasmcheck#p/a/u/1/30Kl0akq5UM>

9.3 Speech sample 2 can be heard at the following website:

<http://www.youtube.com/user/sarcasmcheck#p/a/u/2/VkqmBOu5my0>

9.4 Comprehension Quiz Questions

理解

1. When did she arrive in Japan?話し手はいつ日本に到着しましたか？
2. Why does she work?どうして話し手が働いていますか？
3. Do many students pay for their own tuition and other college expenses?話し手によると、多くの学生は自分の学費や生活費などを自分で負担しますか？
4. Why did her parents oppose her plans to study abroad?どうして話し手の両親は話し手の留学計画に反対しましたか？
5. When do students in Korea start to study for college exams?韓国の学生はいつから受験勉強を始めますか？
6. Under what conditions did her parents agree to let her study abroad?どのような条件の下で、話し手の両親は話し手に留学をさせましたか？
7. What languages does she teach?話し手はどの言語を教えていますか？
8. What surprised her about her students?話し手が教えている学生の何をビックリしましたか？
9. Do her students use 敬語?話し手の学生は敬語を使いますか？
10. What would happen if she didn't use 敬語 with her parents?もし話し手は両親に対して敬語を使わなければ、どうなりますか？

9.5 Speaker Evaluation Questions

話し手への評価

1. Is the speaker a good speaker?話し手はよい英語話者ですか？

1	2	3	4	5
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2. How would you characterize the speaker's ability to speak?話し手の話す英語能力をどう評価しますか？

1	2	3	4	5
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3. How interesting was the speaker's talk?話し手のスピーチは面白かったですか？

1	2	3	4	5
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4. The speaker emphasized important points by raising their voice.話し手は抑揚を使って、大切なところを強調しましたか？

1	2	3	4	5
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5. It was easy to hear and understand the speaker話し手は分かりやすかったですか？

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

6. The speaker seemed to ramble話し手は回りくどい話し方でしたか？

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

7. The speaker spoke in a monotone voice話し手の声には抑揚がありましたか？

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

8. Was the speaker's voice pleasant or irritating to listen to?話し手の声は陽気でしたか？それとも、うるさかったですか？

1	2	3	4	5
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9. The speaker's lack of facility with English hindered communication of ideas.話し手の英語力の不足はアイデアの伝達を妨げたと思いませんか？

1	2	3	4	5
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10. The speaker's topic was easy to understand.話し手が伝えようとしたことは分かりやすかったですか？

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---