

CURRICULUM VITAE

NAME:

Mara E. Breen

CONTACT INFORMATION:

University of Massachusetts Amherst, Department of Psychology
522 Tobin Hall
Amherst, MA 01003
mbreen@psych.umass.edu

EDUCATION:

September, 2002-2007

Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, MA
PhD in Cognitive Science

Thesis: The identification and function of English prosodic features

Advisor: Edward Gibson

May, 2002

BA, Cognitive Science
Hampshire College, Amherst, MA

Thesis: The role of phonological mediation in word recognition

Advisor: Joanna Morris

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

September 2007-present

Postdoctoral Fellow, Psychology Department, *UMass Amherst*

September, 2005-December, 2006

Teaching Fellow, Psychology Department, *Harvard University*

September, 2002-August, 2007

Research Assistant, Teaching Assistant, and Graduate Fellow
Department of Brain and Cognitive Sciences, *MIT*

January-August, 2002:

EEG (Electro-encephalogram) Laboratory Manager, *Hampshire College*

HONORS:

2005 CUE Award; Certificate for Excellence in Teaching; *Harvard University*

2003 Howard Hughes Medical Institute Pre-doctoral Fellowship in Biological Sciences;
Alternate

2003 National Science Foundation Graduate Fellowship, Honorable Mention

RESEARCH INTERESTS:

My work is focused on discovering the critical features of prosody in English using the tools of psychology in order to inform models of language processing.

PAPERS IN REFEREED JOURNALS:

Watson, D., **Breen, M.**, & Gibson, E. (2006). The role of syntactic obligatoriness in the production of intonational boundaries. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Learning, Memory and Cognition*, 32(5), 1045-1056.

Breen, M., Fedorenko, E., Wagner, M., Gibson, E., (under revision). Acoustic correlates

of information structure. *Language and Cognitive Processes*.

Breen, M., Gibson, E. and Watson, D (submitted). Intonational phrasing is dependent on the length of semantic dependency.

Gibson, E. and **Breen, M.** (submitted). Processing crossed dependencies in English.

Breen, M., Kraemer, J., Dilley, L., Bolivar, M., and Gibson, E. (in preparation). *Advances in prosodic annotation*.

INVITED TALKS:

Experimental investigations of the acoustics of information structure. *Experimental Studies on Intonation: Phonetic, Phonological and Psycholinguistic Aspects of Sentence Prosody*; Potsdam University, January 5th-7th, 2009.

Experimental investigations of the acoustics of information structure. Department of Experimental Psychology, Ghent University, Ghent, Belgium, January 8th, 2009.

REFEREED CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS:

Breen, M. and Clifton, C. Eye-tracking Limericks: Lexical stress effects in silent reading. Poster to be presented at the 22nd *CUNY Conference on Human Sentence Processing*, Davis, CA. March, 2009.

Breen, M. and Clifton, C. Lexical stress effects in silent reading. Poster presented at the 49th *Annual Meeting of the Psychonomic Society*, Chicago, IL. November, 2008.

Breen, M., Wagner, M., Fedorenko, E., and Gibson, E. Prosody signals focus location, not focus type. Talk at the *Conference on Experimental and Theoretical Advances in Prosody*, Ithaca, NY. April, 2008.

Breen, M., Wagner, M., Fedorenko, E., and Gibson, E. An Empirical Investigation of the Acoustic Features Associated with Markers of Information Structure. Poster presented at the 21st *CUNY Conference on Human Sentence Processing*, Chapel Hill, NC. March, 2008.

Breen, M., Dilley, L., Gibson, E., Bolivar, M., and Kraemer, J. Advances in prosodic annotation: A test of inter-coder reliability for the RaP (Rhythm and Pitch) and ToBI (Tones and Break Indices) transcription systems. Poster presented at the 19th *CUNY Conference on Human Sentence Processing*, New York, NY. March, 2006.

Gibson, E., Fedorenko, E., & **Breen, M.** Processing extraposed structures in English: grammatical and processing factors. Poster presented at the 19th *CUNY Conference on Human Sentence Processing*, New York, NY. March, 2006.

Gibson, E., **Breen, M.**, Rozen, S., & Rohde, D. (2006) Language processing in children as measured using self-paced reading and listening. Talk presented at the *Online Methods in Children's Language Processing* workshop, New York, NY. March, 2006.

Breen, M., Gibson, E., & Watson, D. Two factors predicting intonational boundary production in sentence production. Talk presented at the 11th *Conference on*

Architectures and Mechanisms for Language Processing, Ghent, Belgium. September, 2005.

Gibson, E. and **M. Breen**. Processing crossed dependencies in English. Poster presented at the 17th *CUNY Conference on Sentence Processing*, Univ. of Maryland, March, 2004.

Johnson, S., Clifton, C., **Breen, M.**, Martin, A., & Morris, J. ERP Investigation of Prosodic and Semantic Focus. Poster presented at the *Annual Meeting of the Cognitive Neuroscience Society*, New York, NY. April, 2003.

Breen, M., Morris, J., & Stillings, N. Constraint, phonology and visual word recognition: An ERP investigation. Poster presented at the 14th *Annual Convention of the American Psychological Society*. New Orleans, LA. June, 2002.

PROCEEDINGS OF REFEREED CONFERENCES:

Brugos, A., Veilleux, N., **Breen, M.**, & Shattuck-Hufnagel, S. (2008) The Alternatives (Alt) Tier for ToBI: Advantages of capturing prosodic ambiguity. In *Proceedings of Speech Prosody 2008*, Campinas, Brazil.

Dilley, L., **Breen, M.**, Bolivar, M., Kraemer, J. and Gibson, E. (2006) A comparison of inter-coder reliability for two systems of prosodic transcriptions: RaP (Rhythm and Pitch) and ToBI (Tones and Break Indices). *Proceedings of the International Conference on Spoken Language Processing*, Pittsburgh, PA.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE:

Undergraduate supervision (*MIT*):

2004-2005: Trained and supervised five undergraduates on a year-long prosodic annotation study. Students learned two separate systems of prosodic annotation, and then applied both systems to over 60 minutes of speech (~60 hours of annotation). I facilitated training, testing, and biweekly meetings on the project, and provided annotations of several hours of speech.

Supervisor, MIT Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program (UROP)
2002-2007

MIT:

Fall, 2006; Fall, 2005; Fall, 2004: Guest Lecturer, BCS 9.951: Language Processing

Topic: Prosody and Sentence Processing

Spring 2006: Head Teaching Assistant, BCS 9.00: Introduction to Psychology

Fall, 2004: Head Teaching Assistant, BCS 9.00: Introduction to Psychology

Fall, 2003: Teaching Assistant, BCS 9.00: Introduction to Psychology

Harvard University:

Fall, 2006: Head Teaching Fellow, Psychology 1: Introduction to Psychology

CUE award: Certificate for excellence in teaching

Fall, 2005: Head Teaching Fellow, Psychology 1: Introduction to Psychology

Hampshire College:

Fall, 2001: Teaching Assistant, Cognitive Science 210: Psychology of Language,

Spring, 2001: Teaching Assistant, Cognitive Science 246: Cognitive Psychology

SERVICE:

Ad-hoc reviewer: *Conference on Experimental and Theoretical Advances in Prosody*, Ithaca, NY. April, 2008.

March, 2004:

Brain and Cognitive Sciences Interview Weekend Committee, *MIT*

March, 2003:

Student Organizer, 16th annual CUNY Conference on Human Sentence Processing, *MIT*