

## Connecting prosody and duality of patterning in typology, ontogeny, and phylogeny

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In their introduction to a special issue of *Language and Cognition* on "New perspectives on duality of patterning", de Boer, Sandler, and Kirby (2012) suggest that there is important new counter-evidence to Hockett's (1960) designation of duality of patterning as the single most definitive design feature of human language. Specifically, they cite recent work on emerging rural signed languages and on vocal communication systems in non-human primates such as putty-nosed monkeys as evidence that duality of patterning is neither universal to human languages nor unique to human language. This talk first compares the definitions of the design feature in recent work (such as the articles in this special issue) to Hockett's original definitions, to suggest that most recent authors have mistakenly conflated "duality of patterning" with the notion of "double articulation" as defined by Martinet. This conflation stems from a view of human language phonology that axiomatically assumes the phoneme-sized segment as a universal, innate unit. An alternative view recognizes prosody as an autonomous and richly hierarchical organizational structure, which is as compositional in relationship to phonetics as syntactic structure is in relationship to semantics. This alternative view allows for a richer typology of potential leaf nodes in the prosodic hierarchies of spoken languages as well as of signed languages. It also could lead to more explanatory models of how segments might emerge in the vocalizations of babies as they interact with their caregivers, as well as to a better understanding of how human spoken languages differ from the vocal communication systems of other primate species such as marmosets, white gibbons, and chimpanzees.