



# IMPROVING PREKINDERGARTEN CHILDREN'S COMPREHENSION OF STORYBOOKS

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# THE BACKGROUND: PROSODY

- Refers to the rhythmic and tonal features of speech
- Made up of pitch (intonation), stress (loudness), and duration (timing)
- Part of fluency along with rate and accuracy



# PSYCHOLINGUISTIC EFFECTS OF PROSODY

- Provides natural breakpoints in speech
- These breaks allow parsing, or chunking, of text that breaks information up into meaningful units
- These chunks allow a person to hold an auditory sequence in working memory while the information is being processed (Frazier, Carlson, & Clifton, 2006)



# DIRECTION OF RESEARCH ON PROSODY

- Prosody seems to be related to comprehension for the reader, however, directionality is unknown.
- Does prosodic reading improve comprehension? Does comprehension during reading result in prosodic reading? Or is the relationship reciprocal?
- What about for the listener?



# THE PROBLEM

- Parents and teachers are always encouraged to read with expression, but there has been no research to determine whether this practice improves comprehension.
- Does prosodic reading, reading with expression, improve prekindergarten children's comprehension of storybooks?



# THE STUDY

- 92 four and five year olds.
- Two similar stories
- Two recordings of each story, one expressive and one inexpressive
- First half got natural prosody, second half got time controlled prosody



# RESULTS

○ Found several effects:

1. **Effect of prosody**

2. Effect of order: practice effect

3. Effect of natural prosody vs. time controlled prosody



### Effect of Prosodic Reading as a Function of Study

