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## **Intonational meaning and the representation of prenuclear melodies**

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A long line of research documents the meaning function of the English nuclear pitch melody. Though less studied, prenuclear pitch melodies are described as serving a purely phonological function expressing phrasal rhythm, or as “ornamental” prosody. These claims raise questions about the status of the prenuclear pitch melody in phonological and phonetic encoding, which I explore in a series of studies on prosody production, perception, and imitation. Our perception and imitation studies support a hybrid model of intonational encoding that specifies categorical distinctions among prenuclear melodies and phonetic detail of the melody spanning the entire prenuclear region. Our production studies show prenuclear melodies are associated with meaning related to information status at the (acoustic) phonetic level, but not at the level of the categorical pitch accent feature. Overall, we observe a remarkable dissociation between the phonological specification of a prenuclear melody and its meaning function as reflected in acoustic-prosodic measures.