

## **”That’s what she said”: The effect of emotional prosody on the interpretation of intent.**

**Jennifer M. Roche**  
The University of Memphis

**Rick Dale**  
The University of Memphis

**Abstract:** Nygaard and Lunders (2002) have shown that emotional prosody impacts the resolution of lexical ambiguity during spoken language, yet sentential meaning is often ignored (Snedecker, 2008). The integration of linguistic and non-linguistic cues to speech is vital for successful interpretation of intent. Experiment 1 evaluated the perception of sentential contexts with emotional prosody (e.g., irritation, disgust, neutral, compassion, sarcasm and innuendo). Results suggested that listeners have the ability to differentially categorize the intent behind statements, based on emotional prosody. Experiment 2 evaluated the online process of categorizing sentences with emotional prosody, via systematic curvatures in the arm using the Wii remote. Results of Experiment 2 suggest that a perceiver’s arm curvatures are reflective of the differentially interpreted categorized emotional information when the sentences remained stable. This supports the notion that emotional information plays a large role in the interpretation of sentential meaning, as it sharply influences the interpretation of intent.