MAX PLANCK INSTITUTE
FOR PSYCHOLINGUISTICS

Prosody Cluster Group

Launch & Trajectory

2 October 2025

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Multimodal Language Department

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Who Are We

We are a team of 50 researchers from multiple institutes, united by our passion for prosody research

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Radboud Universiteit

DONDERS INSTITUTE

Universiteit Leiden

Utrecht University

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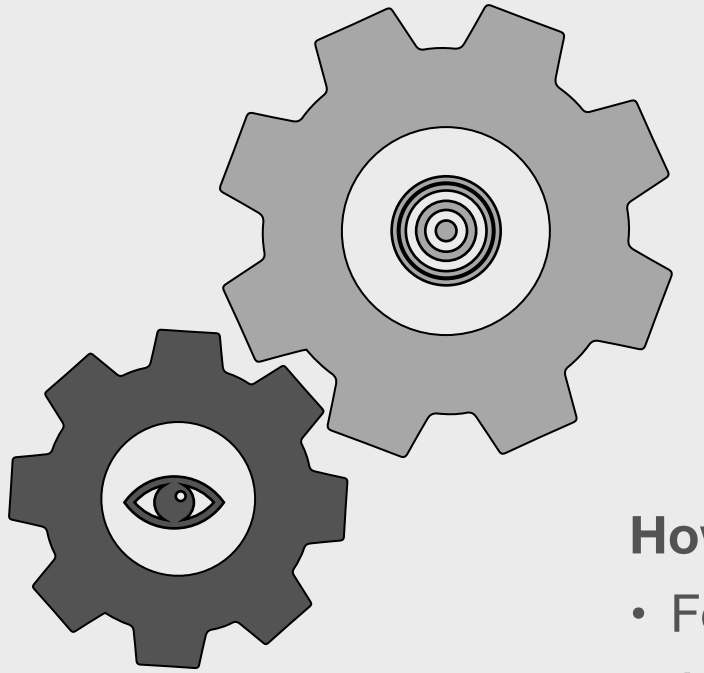

Vision

Where we want to be

A leading hub for prosody research

- Bridging languages, modalities, and research traditions
- Promoting shared knowledge
- Advancing the field

Mission

How we will get there

- Foster collaboration
- Address central research challenges
- Explore diverse methods
- Develop theoretical frameworks

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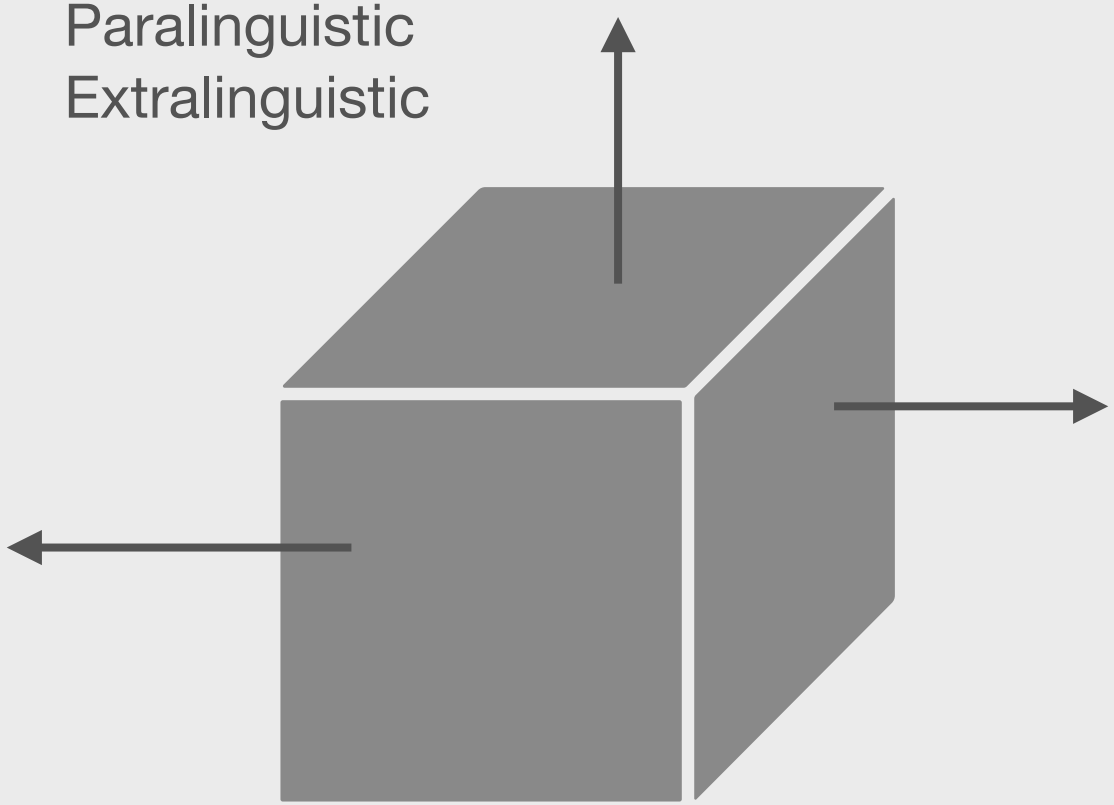
The Starting Point

Multifunctional
Linguistic
Paralinguistic
Extralinguistic



Multimodal
Auditory
Visual
Tactile

Multidimensional
Tone
Stress
Intonation
Rhythm

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Challenges

Epistemological

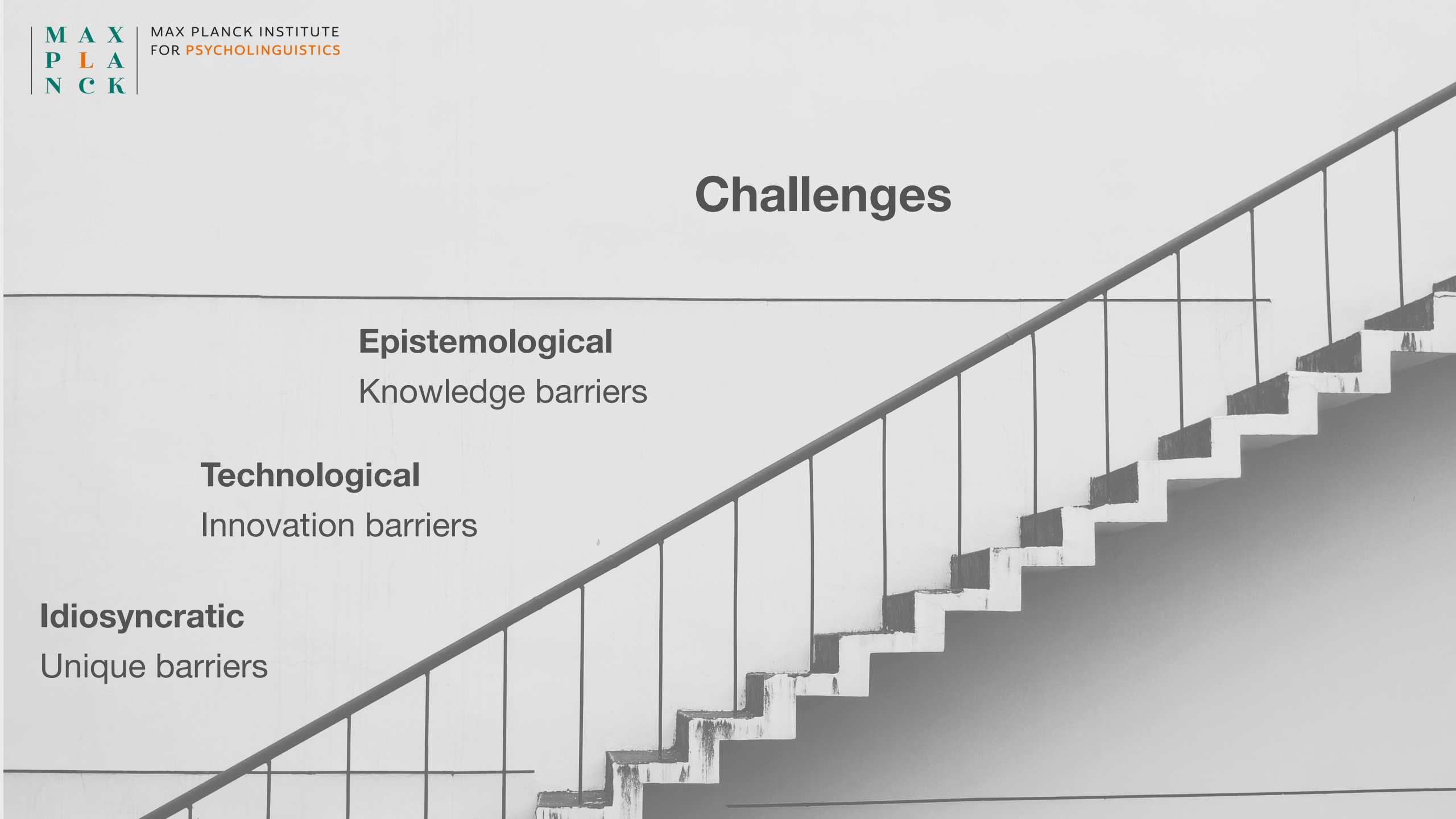
Knowledge barriers

Technological

Innovation barriers

Idiosyncratic

Unique barriers



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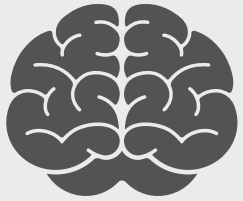
Epistemological Challenges

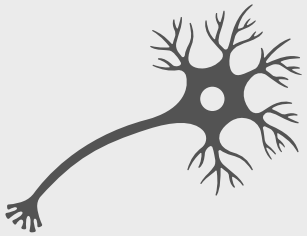
Philology

Poetic forms, metrical structures, and rhetorical devices

Psychology

Cognitive processes underlying the perception, interpretation and production of prosody





Neuroscience

Brain mechanisms that encode and support diverse functions of prosody

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Epistemological Challenges

Idiographic approach

Tendency to specify

Concrete approach

Instrumental & Experimental

Abstract approach

Descriptive & Theoretical

Nomothetic approach

Tendency to generalize

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Technological Challenges

Continuum Challenge

Categorical vs Continuous

Analytical Tools

Progress in slow motion

Analytical Framework

Quantification of prosodic movements

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Idiosyncratic Challenges

Variability

Individual & Cross-linguistic, Cultural variation

Simultaneity

Intertwined functions (Sensory & Cognitive)

Versatility

Common mechanisms & Varied roles

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Opportunities

Epistemological

Cross-disciplinary work

Technological

Drive for innovation

Idiosyncratic

Creative breakthroughs

Roadmap

Architecture

- Architectural Composition: Parallelisms in Form and Function
- Terminological Precision: Mapping between diverse measures
- Relative Informational Value: Interaction & Interference

Neurobiology

- Prosody Data Gap: Limited empirical evidence
- Ill-defined Neuroscience Status: Not searchable in meta-analytic platforms
- Current Neural Models: Limited scope & Specialised for specific function

Call to Action

Support

Suggest new research topics, discussions, presenters and directions

Collaboration

Help one another (students) with expertise and resources

Engagement

Stay active in discussions and groups activities

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Discussions

- Meeting format
- Meeting time
- Future events

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What Is Next

Next meeting: November 6

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Questions/Feedback: Hatice.Zora@mpi.nl

Thank You