

# "East Fife, four... Forfar, five": Intonation of the Classified Football Results

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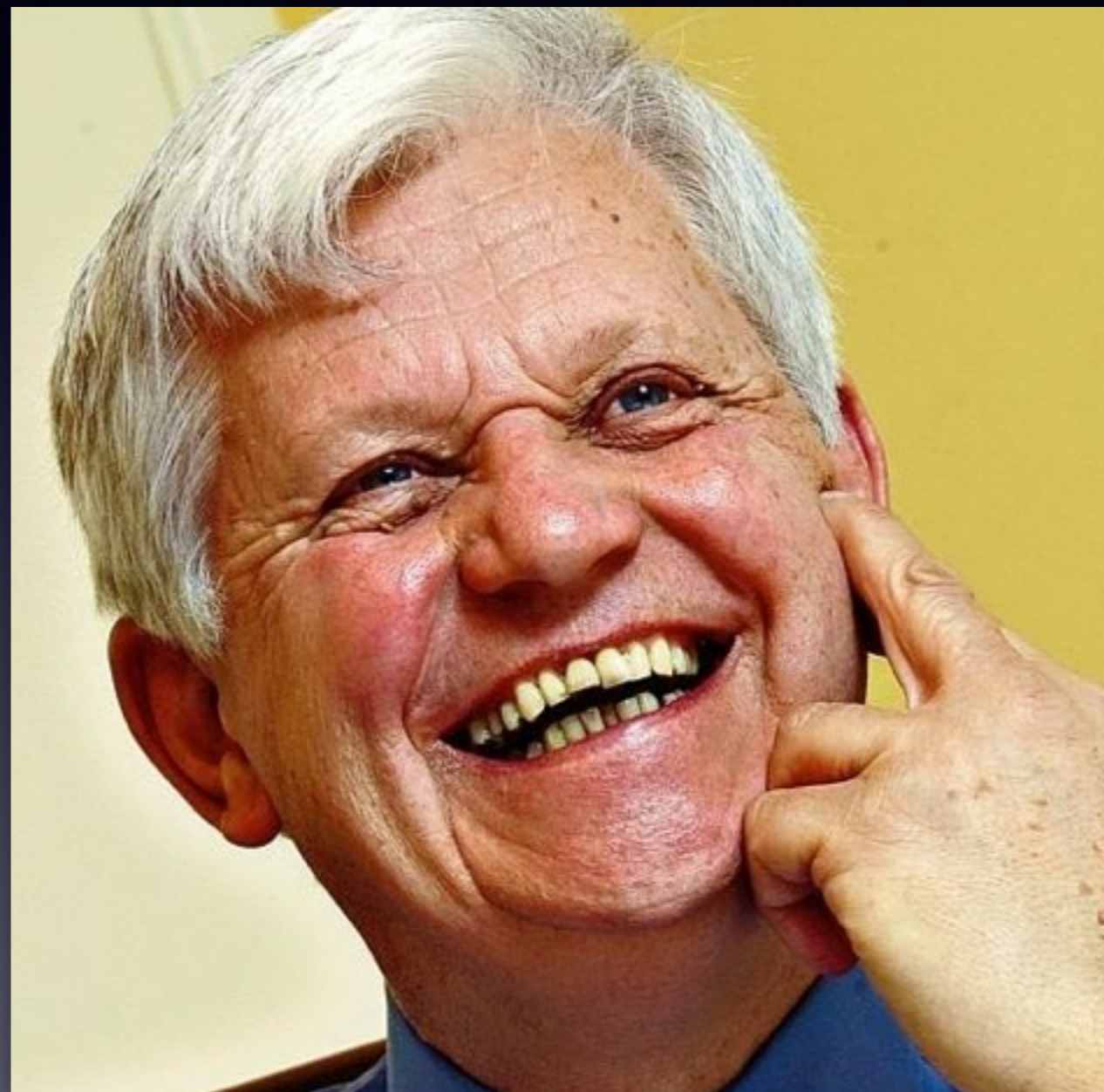
Manchester Forum in Linguistics  
13 November 2014

# Outline

- Introduction to the classified results
- Methodology
- Introduction to the British School transcription model
- Results and discussion
- Conclusion

# The classified results

- Originally part of BBC's radio coverage: 'Sports Report'
- James Alexander Gordon - reader of the classified results from 1974 to 2013
- Widely-discussed use of intonation to convey meaning



- Classified Results take the form:

[home team] [their score] - [away team] [their score]

e.g. Crawley Town 3 - Chelmsford City 0

Ebbsfleet United 1 - Grimsby Town 1

“*Manchester United*, he would say with an eager upwards inflection suggesting the home side had won, before adding *five*. Then he lowered his voice to indicate bad news for the next team: *Liverpool, nil.*”

– **The Guardian, 2014**

“He pioneered the much-mimicked technique of raising his tone for the winning side's score, and dropping it in sympathy for the loser's.”

– **BBC News, 2013**

“Such was James's unique style of reading the classifieds, his wonderful inflections and stresses, that even non-believers of the sport knew the result after the home team's score.”

– **The Mirror, 2013**

“Sportingly, he [Tim Gudgin] indulges me with a quick sample of the special intonation that is handed down like a Masonic ritual from one Final Score man to the next.”

– **The Telegraph, 2011**



# Aims of the study

- Discover the intonation patterns assigned to each type of match result
  - Investigate the extent to which English can convey meaning through intonation
- Investigate perceptual ability
  - Testing the claim that match results are predictable based on the preceding intonation

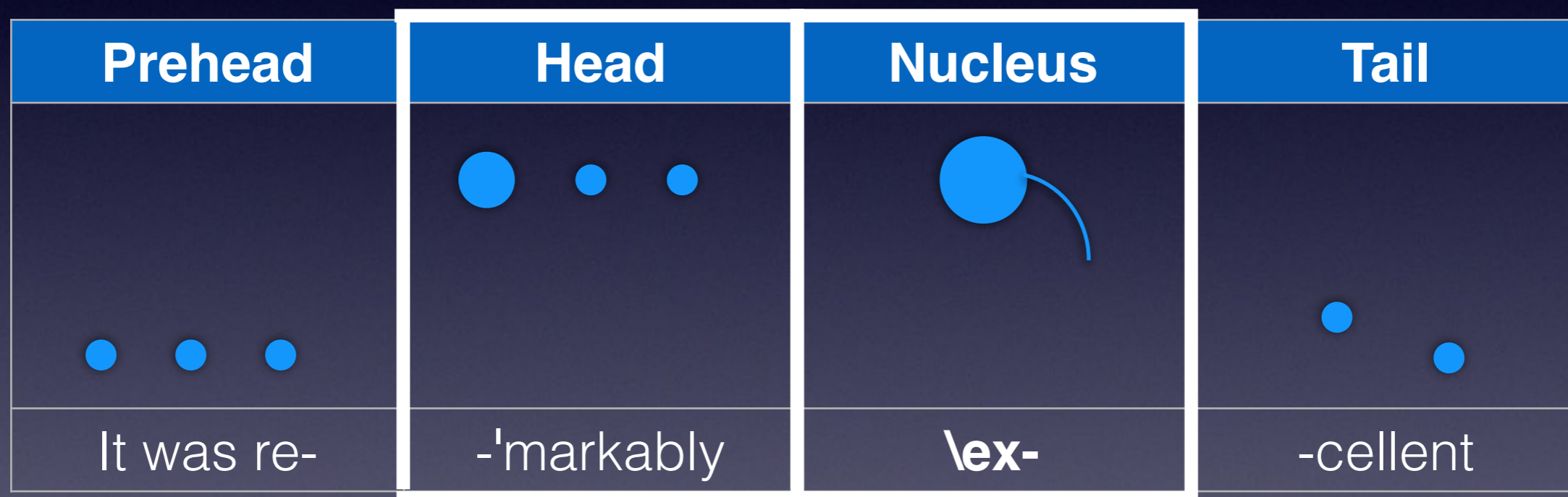
# Methodology

# The matches

- Audio recordings taken from BBC Final Score
- Fifteen matches between December 2012 to April 2013
- Measures taken to limit external influence on predictions
- Fourteen from lower leagues of English football, one from the Scottish league

# The intonational analysis

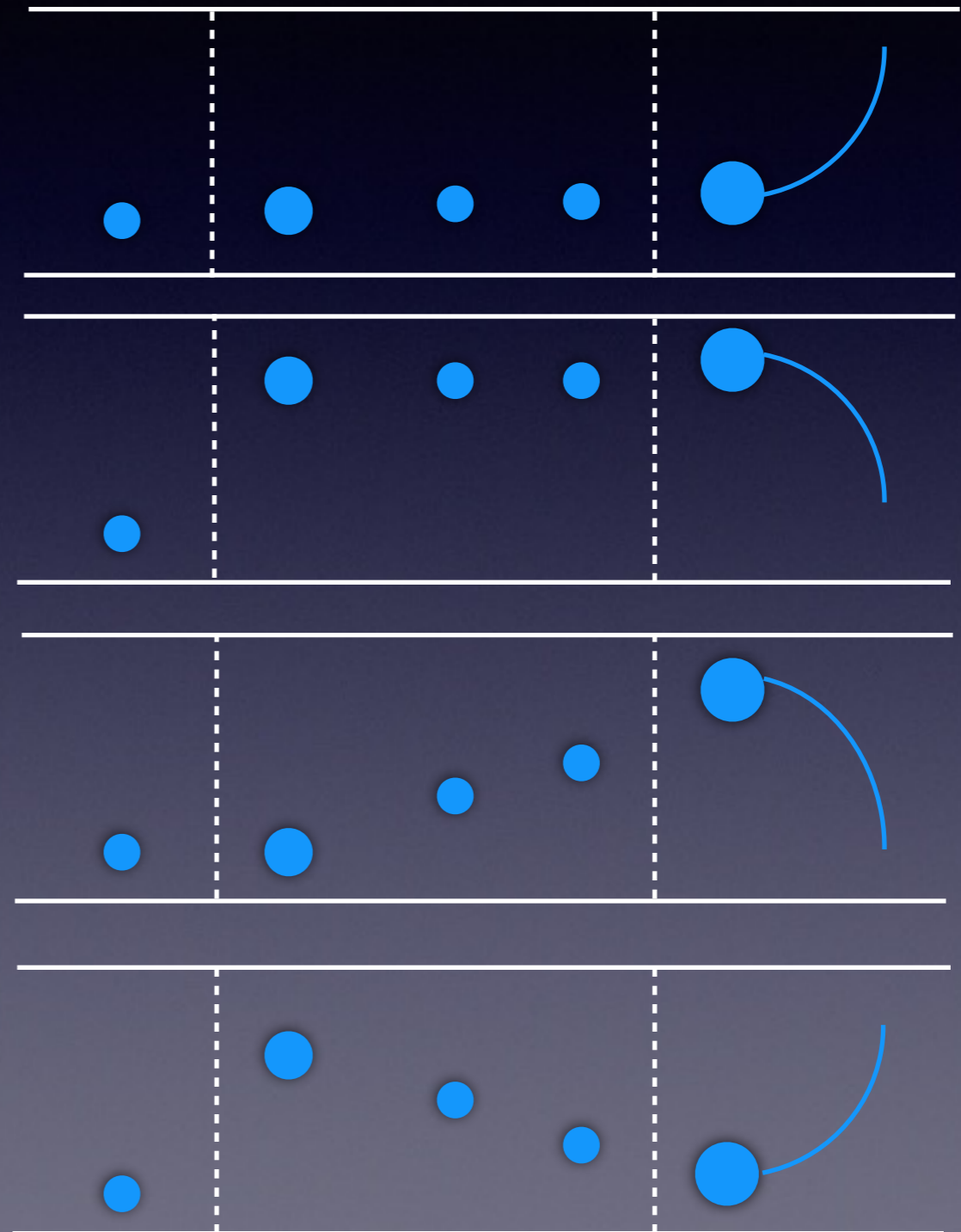
- Qualitative analysis of intonational contours in Praat using the British School transcription model



- Head** - from the first accented syllable up to (but not including) the nuclear accent
- Nucleus** - the final, and most prominent accented syllable

# Types of head

- Low level
- High level
- Low rising
- High falling

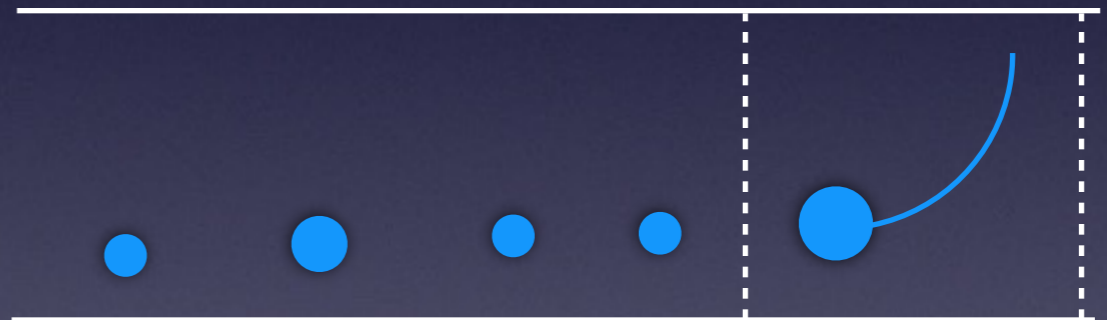


# Types of nuclear accent

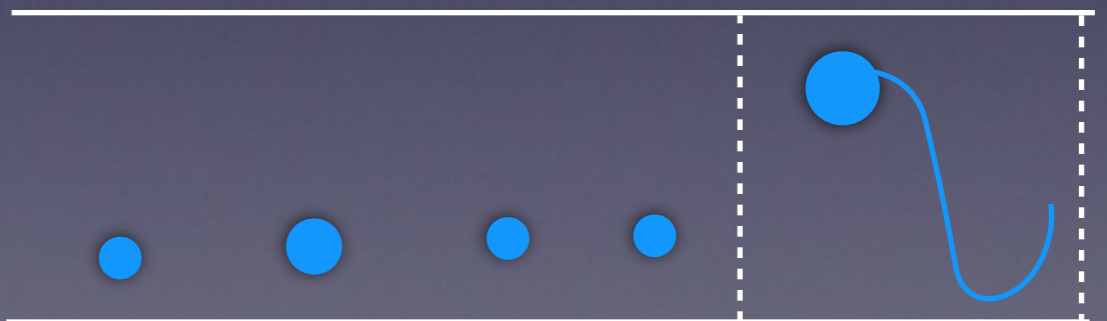
- Fall



- Rise



- Fall-rise



# The questionnaire

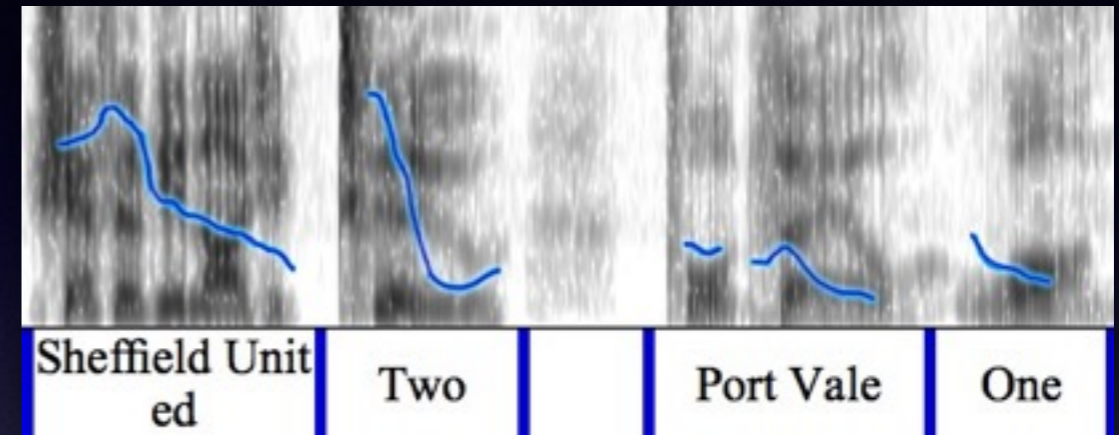
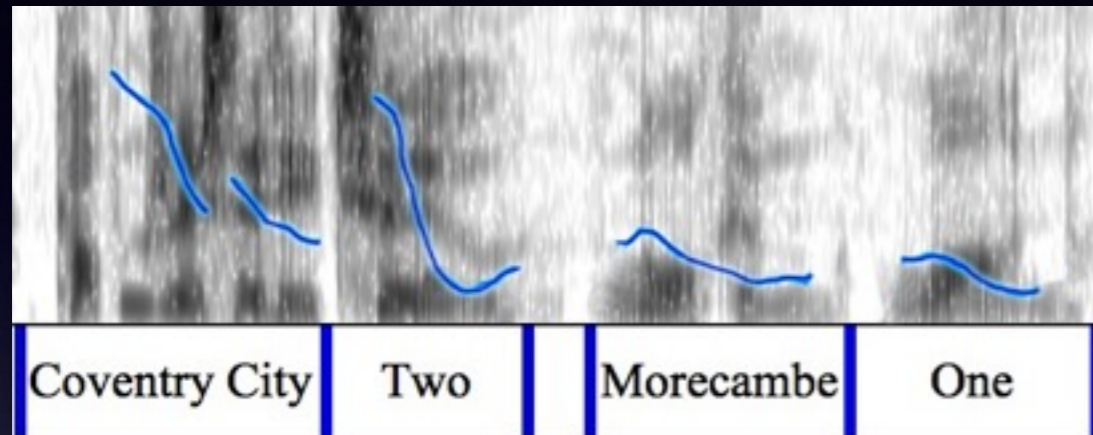
- Audio clips trimmed to exclude the away team's score
- Distributed via a questionnaire to 30 males and 30 females
- Respondents asked to predict match result
- Attitude towards football
  - Scale from 1 (not at all interested) to 5 (extremely interested)
- Degree of exposure to classified results
  - Never - Rarely - Occasionally - Most weeks - Every week

# Results

## Part I - Intonational Analysis

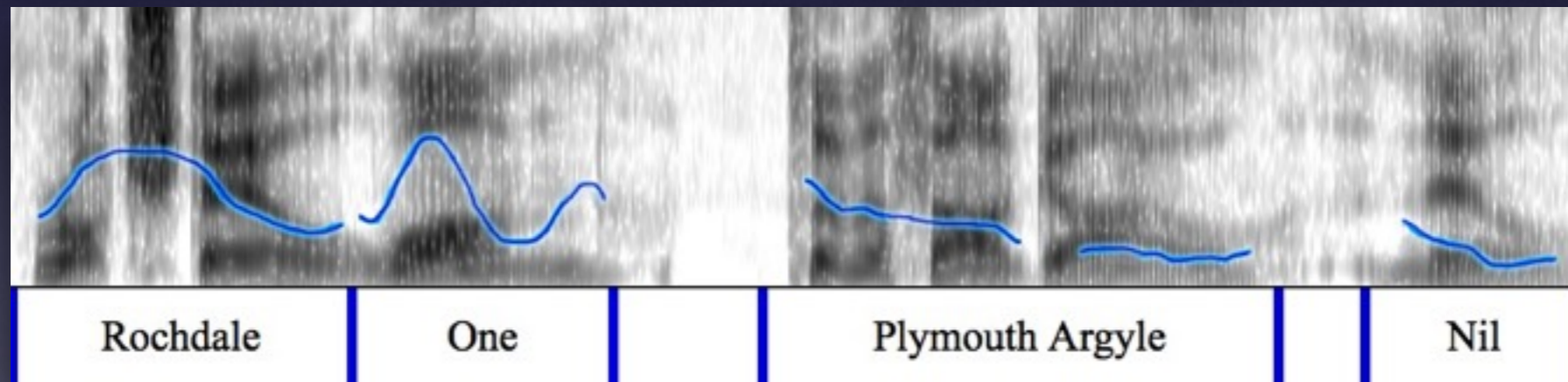
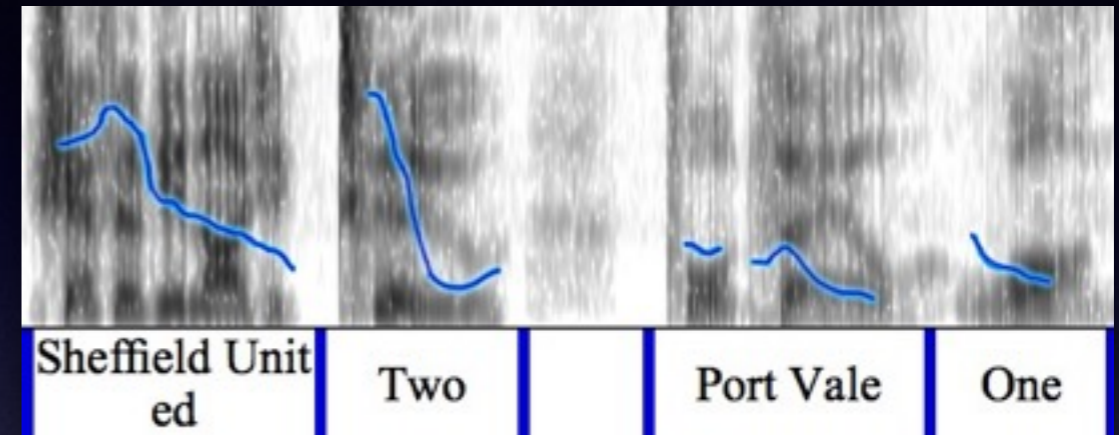
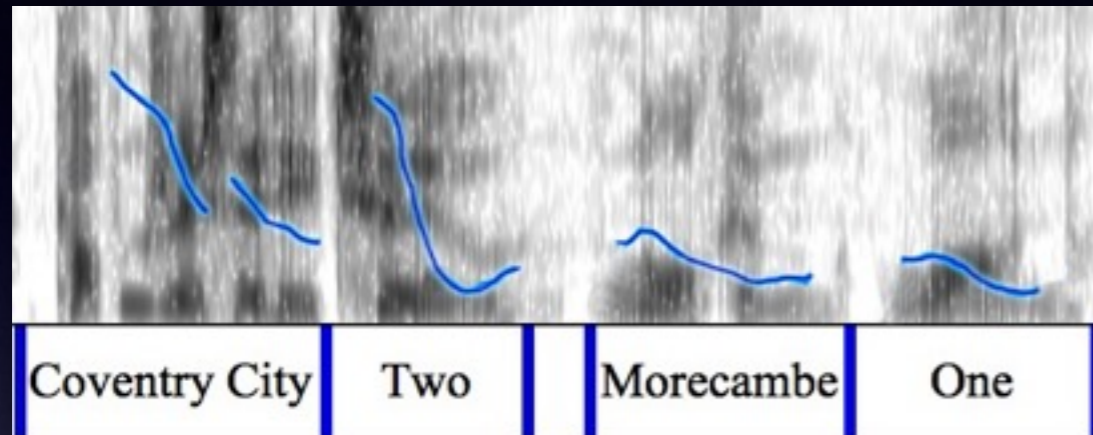


# Home Wins



- **High falling head** on home team name
- **Falling nucleus** on home team score
- **High falling head** on away team name
- **Falling nucleus** on away team score

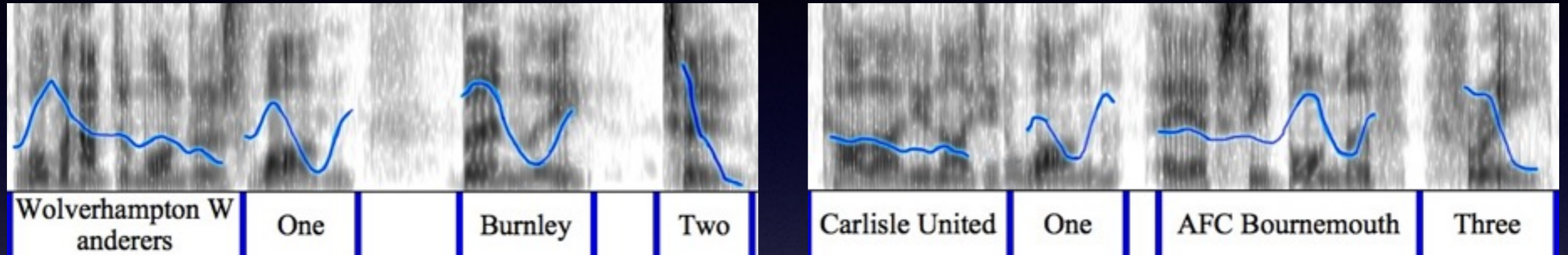
# Home Wins



Home team: 252Hz ~ Away team: 134Hz

**Absolute pitch level**

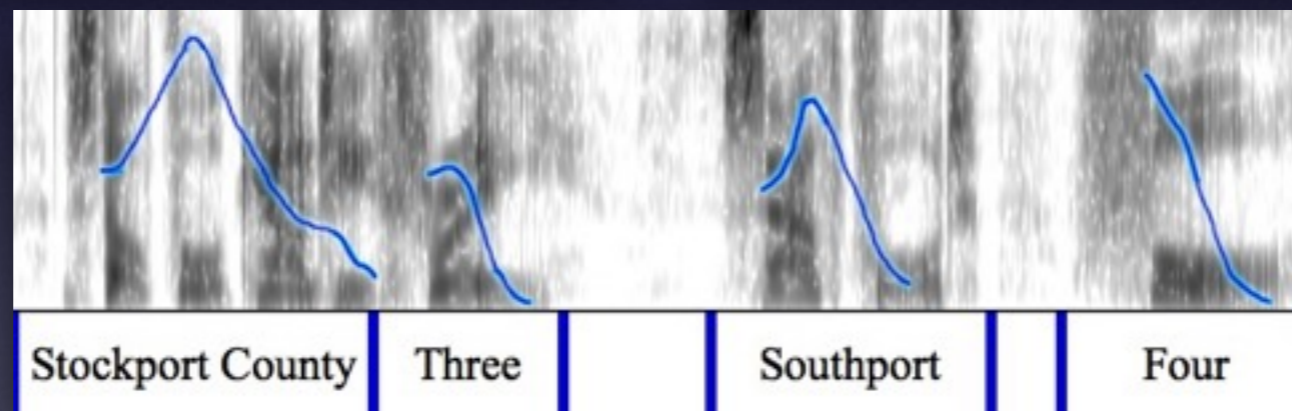
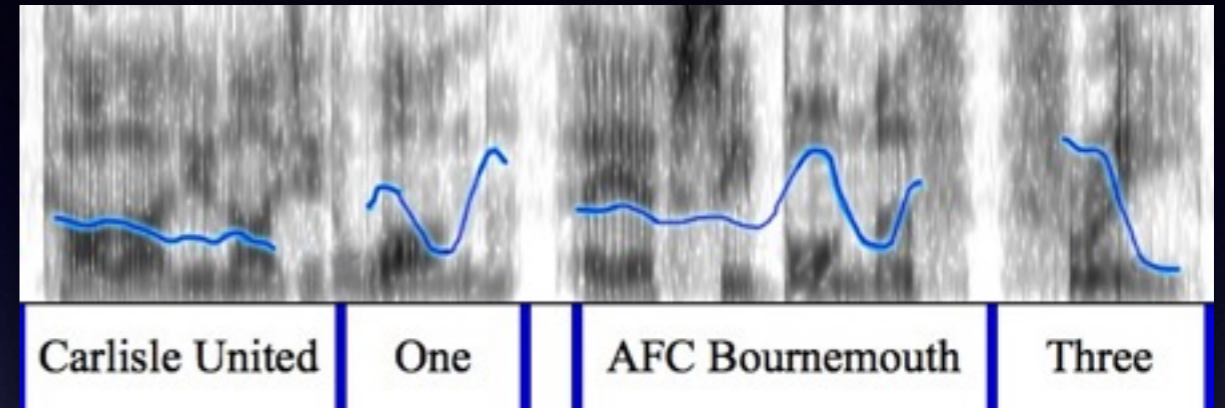
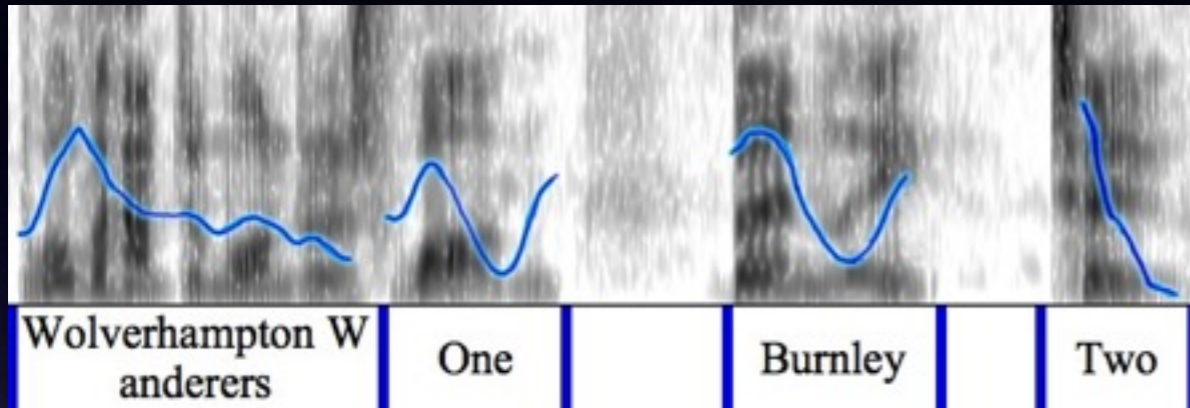
# Away Wins



- **High falling / Low level head** on home team name
- **Fall-rise nucleus** on home team score
- **Fall-rise nucleus** on away team name
- **Falling nucleus** on away team score

**Implicational fall-rise**

# Away Wins



238Hz

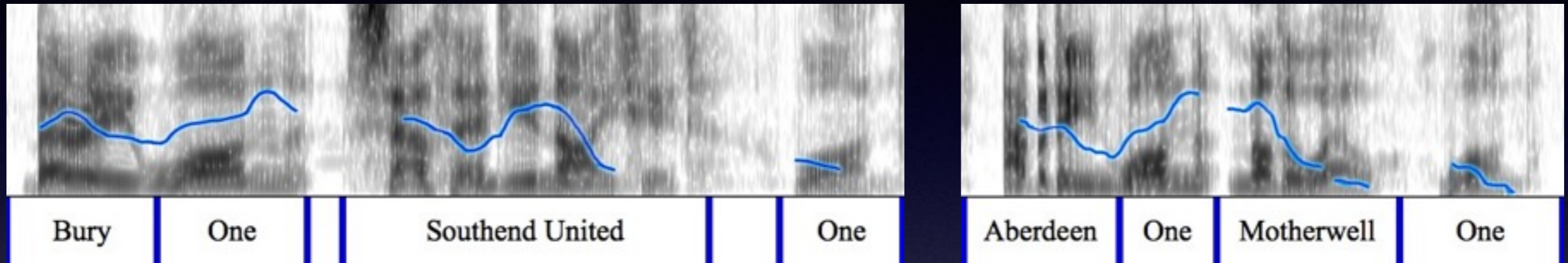
178Hz

220Hz

Average elsewhere: 137Hz

**Effort code**

# Draws



- **High falling / Low level head** on home team name
- **Rise / Fall-rise nucleus** on home team score
- **Fall nucleus** on away team name
- **De-accented** away team score

**Information structure**

# Summary

	Home		Away	
	Name	Score	Name	Score
Home Win	High falling head	<b>Fall</b> Fall-rise	High falling head*	<b>Fall*</b>
Away Win	High falling head Low level head	<b>Fall-rise</b> Fall	<b>Fall-rise</b> Fall	<b>Fall</b>
Draw	High falling head Low level head	<b>Rise</b> Fall-rise	<b>Fall</b>	--

\*slight pitch movement

# Results

## Part II - Perception Test

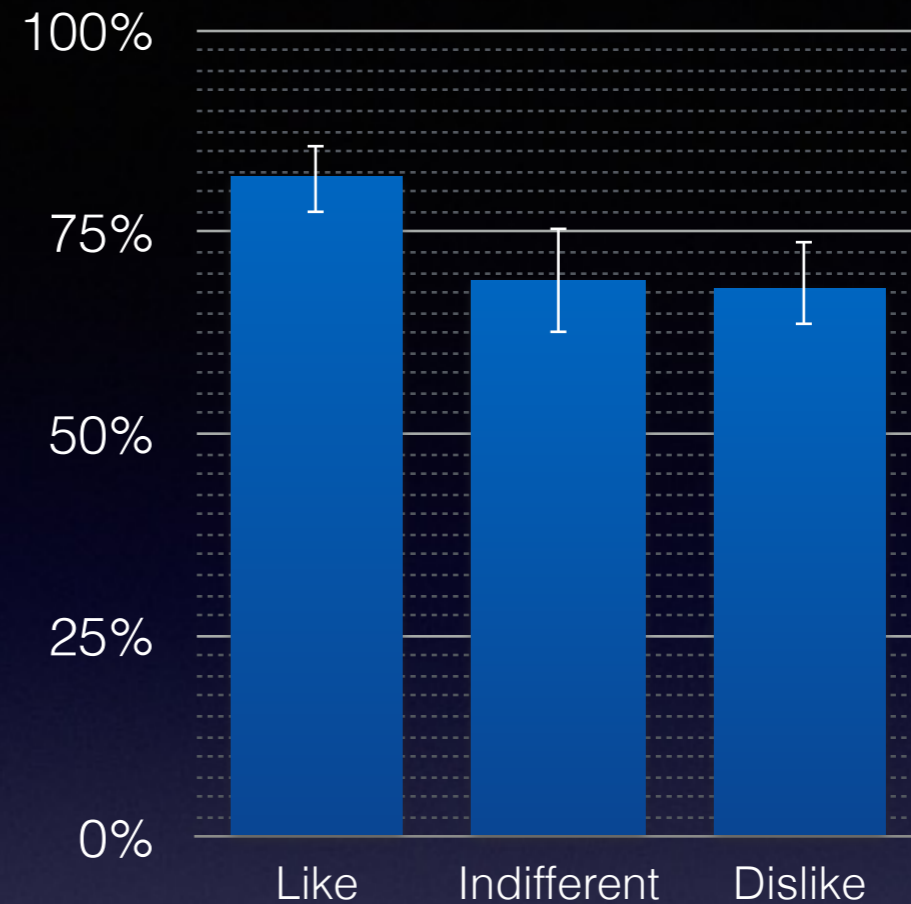
# Yes!

Overall 74% prediction success rate



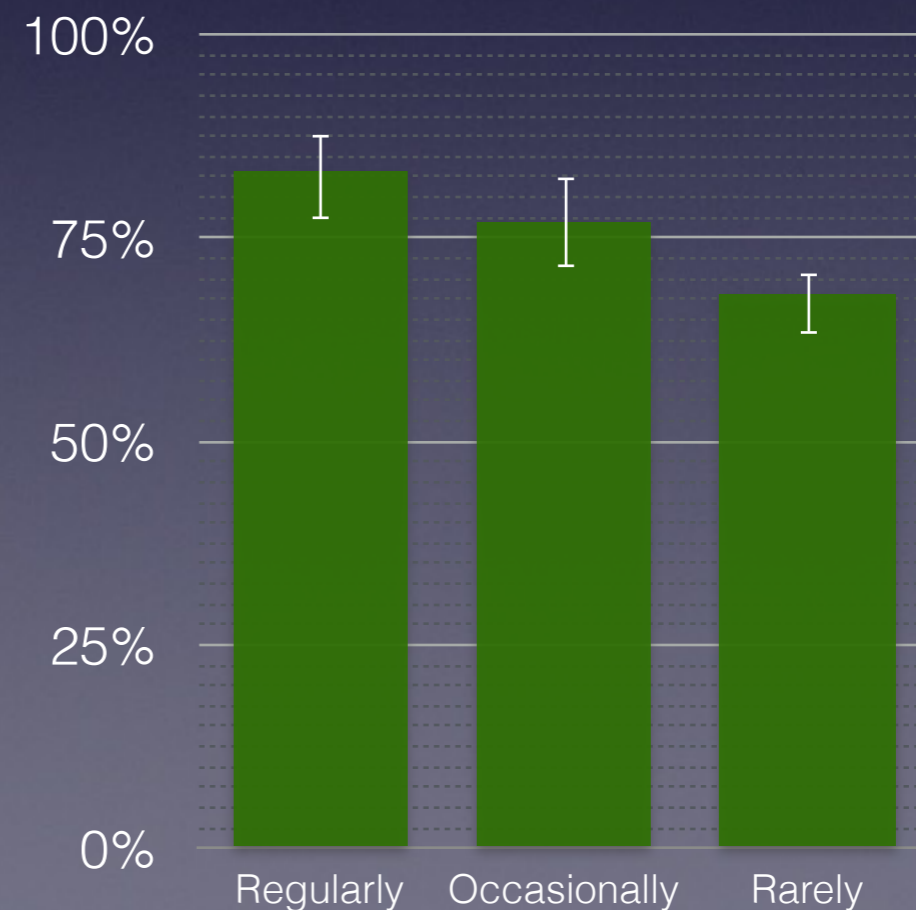
- *Interest in football as a significant factor* ( $p = 0.006$ )

	Coefficient	Tokens	Mean
<b>Like</b>	0.087	25	<b>0.82</b>
<b>Indifferent</b>	-0.040	14	<b>0.69</b>
<b>Dislike</b>	-0.047	21	<b>0.68</b>



- *Exposure to results as a significant factor* ( $p = 0.008$ )

	Coefficient	Tokens	Mean
<b>Regularly</b>	0.067	15	<b>0.83</b>
<b>Occasionally</b>	0.014	15	<b>0.77</b>
<b>Rarely</b>	-0.080	30	<b>0.68</b>



# Perceptual Cues

- Home wins were predicted with most success

	Home Win	Draw	Away Win
Prediction Success	82%	73%	68%
N	300	300	300

$p < 0.01$

$p = 0.18$

$p < 0.01$

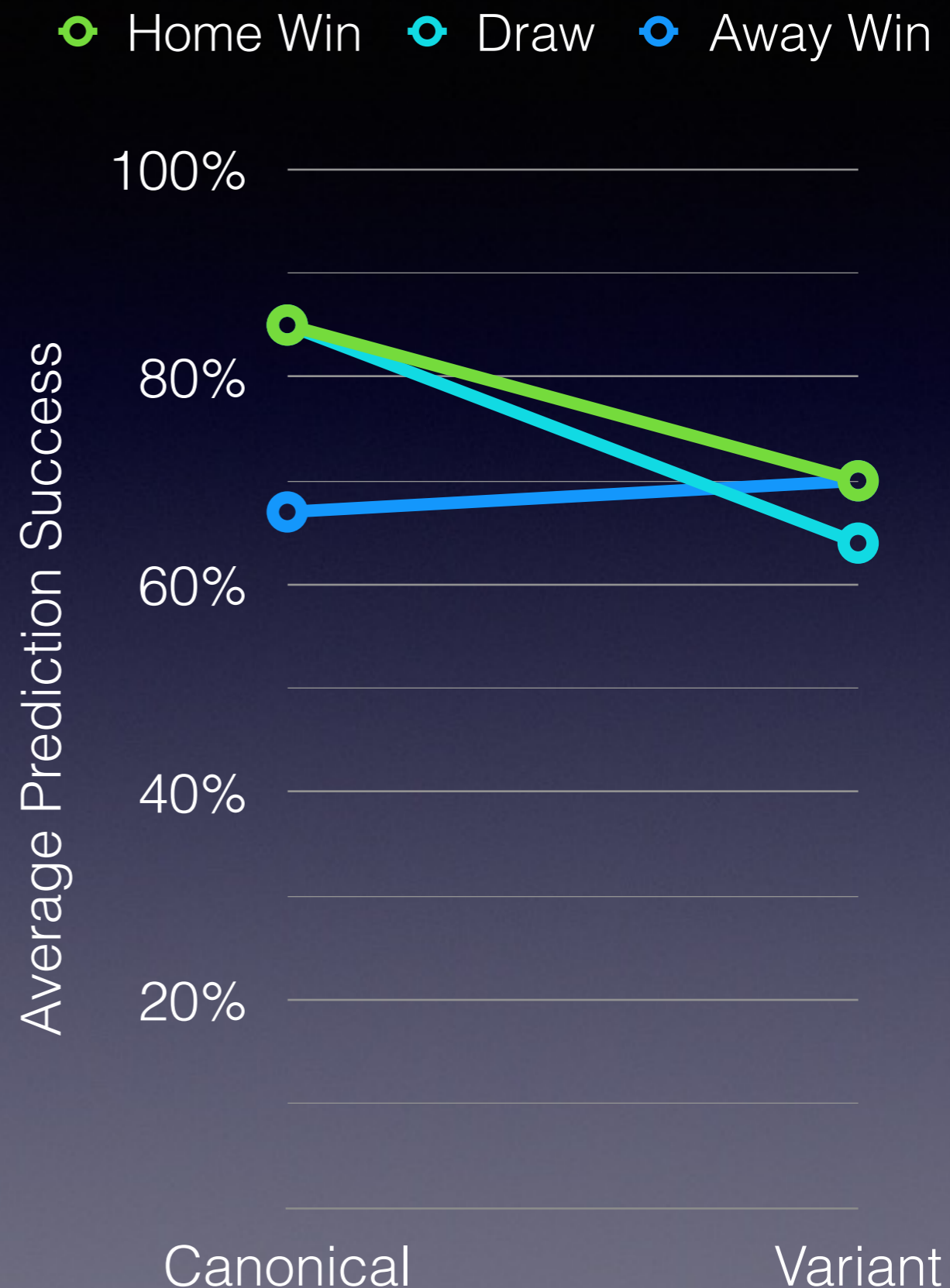
## 4.2 Results - Perception Test

	Home		Away	
	Name	Score	Name	Score
Home Win	High falling head	<b>Fall</b> Fall-rise	High falling head*	-
Away Win	High falling head Low level head	<b>Fall-rise</b> Fall	<b>Fall-rise</b> Fall	-
Draw	High falling head Low level head	<b>Rise</b> Fall-rise	<b>Fall</b>	-

\*slight pitch movement

- Possible perceptual cues for home wins:
  - Absence of a nuclear accent on away team name
  - General lack of variation within home win intonation

- Are variant intonational patterns more difficult to perceive and associate with a particular match outcome?
- The only variant home win - 70% prediction success (cf. canonical 85% prediction success)
- The variant draws - 64% prediction success (cf. canonical 85% prediction success)



# Conclusion

- Relationship between intonation and meaning
- Iconic choice of contours and accentuation:
  - information structure
  - effort code
  - implicational fall-rise
- Match results **are** predictable based on intonation
  - motivated by *interest* and *exposure* to the classified results
  - perceptual ability suffers when variant patterns are used

# References

- Cruttenden, A. 1974. An experiment involving comprehension of intonation in children from 7 to 10. *Journal of Child Language* 1, 221-231.
- Gussenhoven, C. 2004. *The phonology of tone and intonation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Gussenhoven, C., & T. Rietveld. 2000. The behaviour of H\* and L\* under variations in pitch range in Dutch rising contours. *Language and Speech* 43(2), 183-203.