

# The Art of Imitation: How to Use Outlines to Teach Rhetorical Prosody and Structure

**N**onnative speakers of a language are often at a disadvantage in producing extended speech, as they have differing native (L1) phonological systems and rhetorical traditions or little experience in giving talks. Prosody in the form of stress, rhythm, and intonation is a difficult but crucial area needed to master extended speech because prosody interacts with structure to play a key role in conveying meaning (i.e., intelligibility) and easing understanding (i.e., comprehensibility) (see Munro and Derwing 1995 for discussion on intelligibility, comprehensibility, and pronunciation).

However, second-language (L2) speakers of English might not effectively produce this rhetorical prosody. For example, they may not fully utilize pitch range to signal a shift in topics (Wennerstrom 1998), potentially resulting in lower comprehension levels (Munro and Derwing 1995; Wennerstrom 1998).

This difficulty appears to arise from a lack of understanding and/or effective practice, as gauged from our teaching experience.

While the mechanics of academic writing and grammar are taught to L2 English learners, the rhetorical elements of prosody do not appear to be commonly taught. We also sense that many instructors are not very familiar with the role of prosody at the level of discourse, nor are they confident in how they might teach it; that seems to be a common situation in pronunciation teaching in general (Baker 2014; Darcy 2018).

In response, we created a technique centered on imitation of talks as a means for teaching

rhetorical prosody and structure: namely, putting the focus on using outlines. This article serves as a primer for practitioners of English as a second or foreign language (ESL/EFL), describing how to use outlines as an effective technique to teach rhetorical prosody and structure to learners at the level of high school, university, and beyond. This article covers the following:

1. a simple overview of prosody and structure in English, described with concrete features and rules
2. the motivation behind the use of outlining
3. a broad framework with step-by-step guidelines to using outlines
4. potential issues, along with possible remedies

## PROSODY IN ENGLISH RHETORIC

*Prosody* broadly refers to stress, intonation, and rhythm and is key in shaping information in discourse as part of communicative competence (Chun 1988), helping listeners to understand spoken English (see Levis 2018 for an extensive detailed description of intonation and intelligibility). Additionally, fluency, another key component of extended speech, intertwines with prosody, being defined as “native-like use of pausing, rhythm, intonation, stress, [and] rate of speaking” (Richards, Platt, and Weber 1985, 107). Thus, prosody represents a type of “phonological fluency,” which parallels rhetorical structure and conveys meaning and intent.

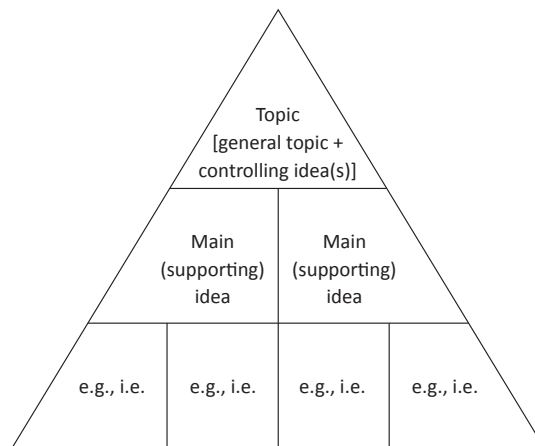
As such, learners require an awareness of prosody and its role in rhetoric. Specifically, learners need to have knowledge of and practice the physical characteristics of stress, its rules in phrasing and structuring extended speech, intonational paragraphs, and prosodic rhetorical devices (see the Appendix for a detailed description of prosody).

## STRUCTURING A TALK

Structure is another key to mastering rhetoric. We construct a simple pyramid like that in Figure 1 as a visual to aid students in structuring and deconstructing talks: general topic [plus controlling idea(s)], main supporting ideas, and development with supporting examples and explanations. By following this simple template, students learn to build their arguments by offering examples and explanations to support ideas that in turn support the topic of a paragraph and/or the entire talk. For example, in a talk about ways to better our world, the following could be one supporting idea:

I support entomophagy as one means to save the planet. **That is**, eating insects as a food source can lessen the stress on our environment while feeding larger populations more cost effectively. **For example**, eating grasshoppers would create less CO<sub>2</sub> than raising livestock,

while the protein and iron content of insects can equal or outweigh that of beef. (Based on Bryce 2014)



**Figure 1. Structure of a talk (Note that “e.g., i.e.” in the bottom row refers to examples and explanations.)**

In our teaching, we discuss other details of structure and content, including these main elements: (1) types of *hooks* used to introduce a talk and capture the audience’s attention, such as sayings, quotes, information, rhetorical questions, and anecdotes; (2) rhetorical styles, such as informative, persuasive, descriptive, narrative, and sequenced speech; (3) visuals, such as charts and graphs; (4) rhetorical devices, such as rhetorical questions; and (5) transition words and phrases. We also demonstrate how these elements of structure can be combined to create a talk. For example, one talk may feature several elements, such as using descriptions of a chart and sequenced information along with an anecdote, in an attempt to persuade listeners to a particular viewpoint.

We contrast the basic structure in Figure 1 against other rhetorical structures students may have learned in their home countries. Our intention is not to comment on the similarities and differences between the basic structure in Figure 1 and those mentioned by learners, whether from their L1 or from English. Indeed, we are aware that discourse in other languages—like Japanese—may actually be structured along similar lines to English discourse (Kubota 1997). Rather,

our aim is to use any discussion about cross-linguistic comparisons (see Kaplan 1966 and Connor 2002 for details) to emphasize that some form of rhetorical structure should be used and then offer the simple, straightforward structure in Figure 1. In other words, we do not aim to prescribe rhetorical structures and features, but rather to boost learners' passive comprehension of talks and perhaps instill in learners the incentive to use some form of structure in creating talks.

Moreover, individual differences in terms of background should be considered. We note that native speakers of English may also have difficulty in commanding rhetorical skills. As such, learners' education and exposure to media may influence what they know about rhetoric, while their L1 may potentially shape their perception and production of rhetorical prosody. In response, we address difficulties by again offering learners possible rhetorical structures and features, along with the rules governing them as used in English.

### **MOTIVATION FOR USING OUTLINING TO MASTER RHETORIC**

Research on L2 learning informs the use of outlines to teach rhetoric. Explicit knowledge may transform into implicit knowledge through practice and can enhance *noticing* (Ellis and Shintani 2014), which in turn can promote acquisition (Schmidt 1990). Learning occurs when learners process input and output in meaningful interactions, so we also encourage a focus on form transitioning to a focus on meaning (i.e., controlled/guided practice; Celce-Murcia, Brinton, and Goodwin 2010). This adheres to three of the principles of instructed language learning from Ellis and Shintani (2014, 24–25), which indicate that extensive L2 input, opportunities for output, and interaction are needed to develop proficiency.

Specifically, Pickering (2004, 2018) notes the need to boost awareness of rhetorical prosody and structure and offers suggestions to more effectively practice discourse intonation. These suggestions include creating opportunities

for practice; using a range of speech types (such as read speech vs. prepared speech vs. spontaneous speech), as intonation varies by speech type; avoiding scripted/rehearsed talks that may result in memorization; promoting preparation such as whiteboard use and organization; and using outlines “to reduce the hesitations and stumbling that result from completely unplanned oral production” (Pickering 2018, 114).

Practice must be pitched beyond the level of the sentence and at the level of discourse in order to stimulate learners to become aware of rhetorical prosody (Levis and Pickering 2004) and to boost comprehensibility and fluency (Derwing, Munro, and Wiebe 1998). Moreover, classical training advocates imitation as a means of mastering the art of rhetoric. Imitation enables a learner to build a foundation, potentially resulting in eventual innovation.

Prompted and guided by these recommendations, we expanded upon the simple idea of outlining, making it the focus for teaching rhetoric, as it (1) avoids scripting while allowing limited preparation and promoting communication over merely reading prepared speeches or regurgitating memorized speeches; (2) raises awareness of rhetorical prosody by offering explicit rules and features; and (3) offers practice of stress at the discourse level with guidance. Outlining allows learners to do the following:

- concentrate on prosody and structure and less so on content
- work on fluency—a natural rhythm/speech rate
- strengthen awareness of rhetorical prosody and structure
- model how to structure a talk
- employ transition words and phrases and language commonly used in talks (e.g., “I will discuss the following . . .”; “The main point is . . .”)

- improve listening skills through familiarity with rhetorical structure and prosody, including both top-down and bottom-up processing
- reinforce writing skills, including essay writing and note-taking, as the structures are similar
- enhance critical thinking through analysis of talks
- boost confidence in oratory skill

### GENERAL FRAMEWORK OF OUTLINING

We advocate both intensive and extensive listening to talks by learners and increased opportunity for the production of short talks and/or parts of talks by learners using outlines. We use TED (<https://www.ted.com/#/>) and TED-Ed (<https://ed.ted.com/>) videos, as they offer short three- to five-minute talks on an array of topics. TED offers the advantage of transcripts in English and usually the L1 of the learner, reducing the time and effort needed to look up words and understand talks and providing more time to focus on the mechanics of rhetoric. TED-Ed does not generally have transcripts, preventing overreliance on the written form and thus enhancing listening skills. Also, TED features speakers using a variety of Englishes, including many speakers of English as a second language. Listening to other ESL speakers can be motivating to learners and provides them with greater exposure and practice listening to world Englishes.

Additionally, we encourage teachers to re-create and model these talks themselves for the class and/or create their own talks for students to imitate. This is particularly recommended when access to the Internet is limited; when content is too difficult for the learners; when there are constraints on teaching such as limited time; or when the teacher wishes to coordinate the talk with grammar, vocabulary, or topics being taught in the lesson or course.

Finally, we promote imitation of talks in both spoken and written work. We suggest that

learners write essays on the same topic of the targeted talk(s), or on a closely related topic, using words and phrases (i.e., lecture language), structures, and ideas from the talk(s). Learners do this in conjunction with listening to and analyzing a given talk and then orally imitating and reproducing the talk to promote learning of rhetorical structure and prosody. Thus, oracy and literacy skills should ideally be taught together when teaching rhetoric in order to reinforce each other and create a more stimulating lesson. This is particularly crucial in aiding learners in closing any perceived unbalanced proficiency gap between oracy and literacy skills. Incidentally, using an imitation method as a means to master rhetoric provides an opportunity to discuss plagiarism and any related cultural differences and issues.

In sum, informed by research, teaching tradition, and experience, we recommend the following:

1. Promote imitation as a means to master rhetoric.
2. Use outlining to aid imitation, as it provides learners with ideas to talk about, enabling them to concentrate on prosody and structure.
3. Give tangible features and rules for prosody and structuring to provide learners with something concrete to learn and instructors to assess.
4. Provide extensive input and opportunities for output.
5. Supplement talks with supporting activities to enhance different aspects of rhetoric (e.g., pronunciation, structuring, and fluency).
6. Reinforce oracy skills with literacy skills (and vice versa).
7. Reflect upon teaching practices and experiment with methods.

## STEP-BY-STEP GUIDELINES FOR USING OUTLINING AS A TEACHING METHOD

Instructors can implement the step-by-step process of using outlines shown in Table 1. Our

approach takes suggestions from the revised Bloom’s taxonomy of a simple-to-complex hierarchy of cognitive processes for learning: remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating, and creating (Krathwohl 2002).

STEPS	DESCRIPTION
<b>1. Listen</b>	Students listen to the talk, noting structure, prosody, and other targeted rhetorical features.
<b>2. Deconstruct</b>	Students analyze the talk and deconstruct it into its structural and prosodic components.
<b>3. Outline</b>	Students write a basic outline according to the pyramid, adding other features such as hooks. The instructor looks over the outlines and may provide a sample outline for students as a model after discussion and attempts at outlining.
<b>4. Re-create</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students re-create the entire short talk or parts of the talk in small groups, based on their outline or the model outline that the instructor provides.</li> <li>• Students re-create the talk in class in front of their peers, adding body language and audience interaction.</li> <li>• As homework, students may also audio-record the talk.</li> <li>• The instructor should allow creativity as long as the original intent and style are faithfully maintained in the re-created talk. That is, students can add examples or hooks and/or change the length. This can help students be creative and still master rhetorical structure.</li> </ul>
<b>5. Evaluate</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students and instructor evaluate each student’s talk according to a set of targeted features, preferably on a handout.</li> <li>• Students and instructor compare evaluations, looking for discrepancies in order to boost awareness and understanding.</li> <li>• The instructor provides feedback to the evaluations by students.</li> </ul>
<b>6. Reinforce</b>	Students complete other activities to support aspects of giving a talk, such as writing hooks and completing pronunciation exercises.
<b>7. Repeat</b>	The above process—from “1. Listen” to “6. Reinforce”—is repeated step-by-step for another talk.
<b>8. Perform</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students take a weekly or biweekly cumulative oral quiz. They practice a set of three to five talks that they have recently studied. For the quiz, one of the talks is randomly chosen for the student to re-create. The student has one minute to look over the outline and gather his or her thoughts before using the outline to give the talk. Making students responsible for several talks means that it is difficult for them to memorize any given talk and thereby requires more reliance on an outline, resulting in more spontaneous speech.</li> <li>• Other students evaluate the talk and hand in an evaluation to the instructor, who assesses these evaluations. Again, this is to boost awareness among learners. The instructor evaluates the talk as well.</li> <li>• The talk should ideally be videotaped using a video recorder (or iPad with special equipment, e.g., robotic platform) with a motion detector to assess stress-timed body movement, eye contact, audience engagement, and excessive movement. The recording is uploaded and sent to the student. The student evaluates the talk and then compares his or her evaluation with the peers’ and instructor’s.</li> </ul>
<b>9. Experiment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students might experiment in creating original talks on topics of their choice, similar topics to previous talks, or topics assigned by the instructor.</li> <li>• This step may be a great leap forward, but it is the ultimate objective of learners in mastering public speaking. As such, this step may be reserved for the end of a course, or it can be cut. To scaffold between the previous steps and this potentially “final” step, the instructor might assign topics that are similar to the talks assigned as models. This allows learners to make minor adjustments, such as changing the examples and rewording explanations.</li> </ul>

**Table 1. Step-by-step process of using outlines**

Students are required to turn in fairly concise, precise outlines that might look similar to the one in Table 2. This talk by Cutts (2011) is short (3 minutes, 12 seconds) and generally follows the simple pyramid structure shown in Figure 1.

<b>Outline of TED Talk: Try something new for 30 days (Cutts 2011) (3:12)</b>	
<a href="http://www.ted.com/talks/matt_cutts_try_something_new_for_30_days?language=en">http://www.ted.com/talks/matt_cutts_try_something_new_for_30_days?language=en</a>	
I. Introduction	A. Hook: Stuck in a rut
II. Background info	A. I tried something new for 30 days. B. Thesis statement: You should try something new for 30 days.
III. What I learned	A. Time was more memorable. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Taking a photo every day               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Remembered where I was and what I did</li> </ol> </li> </ol>
	B. Gained self-confidence <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. From computer nerd to guy who bikes to work</li> <li>2. Hiked Mt. Kilimanjaro               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Would not have done it without the 30-day challenge</li> </ol> </li> </ol>
	C. Do what you really want. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Write a novel.               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. It was awful, though.</li> <li>b. I can say I'm a novelist.</li> </ol> </li> </ol>
IV. Conclusion	A. Small changes = sustainable (big achievement) B. 30 days is short, but fun C. Why don't you try?

**Table 2. TED Talk sample outline**

<b>TED and TED-Ed Talks for Outlining</b>	
<b>TED Talks</b>	1. Graham Hill: “Why I’m a weekday vegetarian” (3:57) <a href="http://www.ted.com/talks/graham_hill_weekday_vegetarian">http://www.ted.com/talks/graham_hill_weekday_vegetarian</a> Lists the cons of eating meat, explains a compromise for reducing meat consumption, and enumerates the positive results  2. Graham Hill: “Less stuff, more happiness” (5:34) <a href="http://www.ted.com/talks/graham_hill_less_stuff_more_happiness">http://www.ted.com/talks/graham_hill_less_stuff_more_happiness</a> Discusses the disadvantages of having too many possessions and offers tips for “editing” one’s life or possessions
<b>TED-Ed Talks</b>	1. Emma Bryce: “Should we eat bugs?” (4:51) <a href="http://ed.ted.com/lessons/should-we-eat-bugs-emma-bryce">http://ed.ted.com/lessons/should-we-eat-bugs-emma-bryce</a> Outlines the history and culture of why parts of the world stopped eating bugs, how some parts of the world currently eat bugs, and why we should eat bugs in modern times  2. Leah Lagos and Jaspal Ricky Singh: “How playing sports benefits your body ... and your brain” (3:46) <a href="http://ed.ted.com/lessons/how-playing-sports-benefits-your-body-and-your-brain-leah-lagos-and-jaspal-ricky-singh">http://ed.ted.com/lessons/how-playing-sports-benefits-your-body-and-your-brain-leah-lagos-and-jaspal-ricky-singh</a> Discusses the reasons why sports are good for the body and for the mind

**Table 3. TED and TED-Ed talks for outlining**

Table 3 contains a sampling of similar TED and TED-Ed talks instructors might use for outlining.

### ACTIVITIES TO SUPPORT ORAL DISCOURSE

The following supporting activities can be used to reinforce perceived deficiencies in rhetorical structure, prosody, or other issues.

1. *Writing essays or parts of an essay.* Students write an essay on the same or similar topic as an assigned talk to reinforce both understanding and oral production. They write out the development of one supporting idea of a topic or opinion. For example, students can write out an activity that they might do in a 30-day period under Part III in the TED talk outlined in Table 2.
2. *Marking scripts for thought groups, content words vs. function words, and focus words.* Students mark all or part of a transcript of a talk to demonstrate a metalinguistic understanding of rhetorical prosody and structure. For example, students can mark the introduction of the TED talk outlined in Table 2 by dividing sentences into thought groups with a backward slash, circling the content words, and putting a dot or X-mark over the focus words.
3. *Reading scripts out loud.* Students read the script of a talk out loud to practice the rhetorical prosody and structure. They can use a marked script at first and progress to using an unmarked script.
4. *Paraphrasing and summarizing information of part or all of a talk.* Students paraphrase or summarize the key points of all or part of a talk to practice outlining. This is basically an oral outline. Adding a time limit may encourage fluency.
5. *Extensive listening of talks.* Students listen to easy-to-understand, longer talks to boost their awareness of rhetorical prosody and structure. They can also

listen nonstop to all the talks practiced in past classes.

6. *Giving short in-class or recorded responses to prompts.* Students give short, impromptu, structured responses to prompts in class, such as “Describe the strangest food you have ever eaten” and “Why should people learn a foreign language?” They can also record their responses on their phone and upload them onto the course website for evaluation by both the instructor and student.
7. *Selecting the picture, graph, or other image that the instructor describes.* The instructor describes one chart of data among a set of three or more charts. Students listen and choose which chart the instructor has described. This allows students to hear the modeling of how to describe visual data.
8. *Practicing short, focused structured speech or mini-talks.* Students describe a picture; explain a chart or graph; tell the steps of how to make something; tell a story based on a comic strip, movie, or fairy tale; or list reasons to support an idea.
9. *Shadowing talks.* Students shadow the talks.
10. *Practicing key phrases.* Students practice key phrases in a game of telephone or filling in the blanks of a talk.
11. *Doing pronunciation exercises.* Students do jazz chants (Graham 1978) to practice stress and stress timing.

Feedback on students’ oral discourse is a means to raise awareness and an important aspect of training students (see Table 4). We use a simple three-point scale reflecting Japanese grading practices (o / △ / x or corresponding smiley faces: ☺ = okay / ☹ = needs some work / ☹☹ = needs much work). This system allows for easy, quick, broad assessment, as there are many criteria that can be subjective.

Target Discourse Features	😊	😐	😞	Comments
<b>Structure</b>				
Hook				
Thesis statement				
Topic sentences				
Support (i.e., e.g.)				
Transition words				
Thought groups				
<b>Prosody</b>				
Word stress (vowel length, schwa, placement)				
Contrastive stress				
Content vs. function words				
Focus words				
Intonational paragraphs (increased/decreased pitch/speed)				
<b>Other issues</b>				
Voice				
Body movement/gestures (timed with stress)				
Segments (vowels, consonants)				
Enunciation				
Interaction (eye contact, rhetorical questions)				
Vocabulary (lecture language, relevant terms)				
Outline (structure, concise/precise wording, economy of language, comprehensiveness—main ideas, explanations, examples)				
<b>Content</b>				
<b>Holistic impression</b>				

**Table 4. Evaluation of students' oral discourse**

Also, it may be more effective to focus in stages on only a few criteria for a given recording or performance. For example, depending on the instructor's assessment, features that greatly impede intelligibility may be the focus in early talks, with a move toward less critical features in later talks.

Additionally, an instructor could focus on each student's needs by having each work on only the features that need the most work, as determined by the instructor and student in consultation. Also, during practice and/or when evaluating the performance of other students or their own performance,



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## Prosody is a crucial element of rhetoric, structuring information and thereby enabling speakers to clearly convey meaning and intent.

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different groups of students can focus on separate sets of criteria or even just one criterion. For example, a few students might assess nonlinguistic features such as body movement, gestures, and eye contact, while other students might focus on features of the structure such as the hook, thesis statement, and supporting ideas. Another group might focus on prosody. As such, students can rotate, assessing different sets of criteria and working with different students who have varying strengths and weaknesses.

Assessment aims for intelligibility and not nativeness (Munro and Derwing 1995). We acknowledge Englishes around the world, including international/regional/L2 varieties, where prosody may factor less in influencing intelligibility (Deterding 2012; Jenkins 2000). We temper our assessment accordingly by considering learners' needs for both global (possibly stress-timed) and local (possibly syllable-timed) English varieties (Low 2015).

Lastly, we employ both oral and written assessment tools to determine intelligibility issues and identify their possible causes. One assessment entails giving a few written quizzes eliciting metalinguistic knowledge of the elements of rhetorical structure and even prosody—for example, instructors could ask students the following: “What is a possible hook for the following topic?”; “What are the features of stress?”; “What is the focus word in each of the following phrases?” However, given the spoken nature of talks, we emphasize the ultimate need for oral assessment in teaching rhetoric through oral presentations of entire short talks or parts of talks, either live or recorded.

To reinforce the evaluation criteria, we set clear, measurable learning outcomes, as in the

following sample, to guide practice, evaluation, and the creation of supplemental activities.

By the end of the course, students will be able to do the following:

1. Pronounce stressed syllables with longer, louder, higher-pitched, unreduced vowels.
2. Pronounce unstressed syllables with shorter, quieter, lower-pitched, possibly reduced vowels.
3. Speak in thought groups.
4. Identify function, content, and focus words.
5. Introduce new topics with higher pitch, increased rate of speech, and louder voice.
6. Structure (i.e., outline) talks into supporting topics with relevant examples and/or explanations.
7. Create on-target thesis statements, topic sentences, and hooks.

Finally, we recommend that instructors reflect upon the teaching of rhetoric by experimenting on their own with outlining and additional supporting methods and activities.

### REFLECTION AND FUTURE PEDAGOGICAL DIRECTIONS

Overall, the use of outlining, combined with providing explicit descriptions of the features of rhetorical prosody and structure, allows students to concentrate on and practice these features and to increase their confidence

Remaining Issues	Potential Countermeasures
1. Learners sometimes memorize parts of speeches.	Oral quizzes could test learners on one talk randomly chosen from four or five talks. A short question-and-answer session after each talk could elicit spontaneous speech samples.
2. Students need work on using slide presentations with the talks.	Instructors create guiding principles and activities for making and using slide presentations and incorporate talks using PowerPoint-like visuals, which are often used in TED talks, to serve as models.
3. Students improve usage of prosody but have remaining issues with segments and enunciation.	Instructors increase emphasis on and practice of segments and enunciation or any aspect of pronunciation to address students' needs.
4. When students are asked to create original talks, there is still a lack of creativity, possibly due to factors such as lack of exposure to certain topics and limited research skills.	Instructors set aside time to provide guidance and practice for learners to create original talks, particularly at the end of a course after much guided practice.

**Table 5. Remaining issues and potential countermeasures**

as they can point to and practice concrete features.

Writing essays in tandem reinforces rhetorical skills, as they generally employ the same structure (including such features as hooks and topic development), transition words, and rhetorical language (e.g., lecture language). When the topics for essays or writing exercises are similar to those of the talks, learners are also able to recycle vocabulary and ideas. There are, however, remaining issues with potential countermeasures, as summarized in Table 5.

## CONCLUSION

A strong command of rhetoric allows one to orally express oneself clearly, informatively, and persuasively in order to tell “a story, with a shape and logic intended to stir its audience” when pitching ideas for new policies, products, or companies (Bruni 2018). It also enables learners to explain concepts and information in an academic course or on the speaking sections of high-stakes English proficiency exams. Prosody is a crucial element of rhetoric, structuring information and thereby enabling speakers to clearly convey meaning and intent. Yet rhetorical prosody is difficult for L2 learners to understand and practice and for

instructors to teach. We hope that other ESL/EFL practitioners benefit from our experience and suggestions in using outlines to focus practice on rhetorical prosody and structure—and in this manner boost the rhetorical skills of foreign/second language learners of English, particularly those who must use English in their academic courses and professional careers.

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# APPENDIX

## The Mechanics of Prosody in English Rhetoric

1. <b>Physical Characteristics</b>	Stressed syllables are pronounced longer, louder, and higher in pitch while maintaining vowel quality. Unstressed syllables are shorter, quieter, and lower in pitch with vowel quality generally reduced to a schwa [ə] (e.g., “a” in <i>about</i> ) or another lax vowel (e.g., [ɛ] as in <i>bet</i> or [ɪ] as in <i>hit</i> ) (Fry 1958). We see a shift between these features in the same syllable when stressed and unstressed in “eCOonomy” to “ecoNOmic” (with primary stress marked by capitalization).
2. <b>Word Types</b>	Function words such as determiners, pronouns, prepositions, conjunctions, helping verbs, and the <i>be-</i> verb indicate grammar. All other words are considered content words. Function words are generally less stressed than content words. We see this difference in stress in sentences such as “the GIRL and the BOY have GONE to SCHOOL” (where the content words are capitalized). The stressing of content words aids comprehension and is analogous to writing a text message using only content words, as in, “Watch movie tonight?”
3. <b>Contrastive Stress</b>	Words, whether function or content words, may be more stressed if they are emphasized: “The book is UNDER the desk, not ON the desk,” with increased stress indicated by capitalization.
4. <b>Thought Groups and Focus Words</b>	Words are grouped into phrases called thought groups, reflecting structure and making speech comprehensible. The last content word in a thought group is by default the most stressed (i.e., the focus word). For example: “This morning, we discussed DINOSAURS. Now, we will discuss the EVOLUTION of dinosaurs.” The focus of the second utterance shifts from the default last content word <i>dinosaurs</i> to the new information of <i>evolution</i> (see Ladefoged 2006; Sardegna, Chiang, and Ghosh 2016 for greater details).
5. <b>Intonational Paragraphs</b>	Topics are organized into intonational paragraphs, which are in a sense the counterpart to written paragraphs. New topics are marked by higher pitch, accelerated rates, and increased volume, whereas the end of a topic is marked by the inverse features of lower pitch, slower rates, decreased volume, and narrowing range of pitch (Brown, Currie, and Kenworthy 1980). Longer pauses mark shifts between major topics than between minor topics (Brown, Currie, and Kenworthy 1980; Cutler, Dahan, and van Donselaar 1997; see Pickering [2004, 2018] and Wichmann [2015] for an overview).
6. <b>Transition Words and Phrases</b>	Transition words and phrases such as <i>therefore</i> and <i>as a result</i> are usually stressed, being the focus word or phrase in a thought group or using contrastive stress. They mark the structure of a talk, just as traffic signs guide drivers on a road.
7. <b>Phonological Rhetorical Devices</b>	Stress with other features such as rhyme, repetition, and alliteration is exploited to create rhythm and effect, as in slogans, sayings, and wordplay (Schaefer, Darcy, and Abe 2019).
8. <b>Body Language</b>	Body language may reinforce prosody; movement of the hands and body is generally done on stressed syllables. Body language may coincide with stressed words such as content words, transition words, and focus words: speakers might step to another place or move the direction of their gaze when shifting topics or making a point.
9. <b>Pausing</b>	Pausing is a rhetorical device related to prosody in the sense that it is the lack of sound and interacts with rhythm. This lack of sound calls the attention of the listeners, allowing effective rhetorical use. It has been shown that although generally viewed negatively as an indication of disfluency, in fact some <i>fillers</i> —such as “uh”—may benefit listeners by drawing attention to what follows (Fox Tree 2001).