

TOWARDS THE AUTOMATIC EVALUATION OF FLUENCY

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Abstract

Although not everyone agrees on its definition, fluency is commonly accepted as one of the most important goals in foreign language instruction . The automatic evaluation of fluency would be useful as a tool to facilitate the testing of large numbers of students and to enhance language learning software by providing students with feedback.

In order to evaluate fluency, an Automatic speech recognition system is configured to output duration data of speech segments. The duration data are used to calculate measures such as the rate of speech, articulation rate, and phonation rate. Previous studies have shown that these measures of speaker fluency correlate well with expert ratings. This paper reports on baseline results for native Mandarin Chinese syllable onsets and rhymes. Informal results comparing the application of the fluency measures to a small set of non-native speech with the native baseline are presented. A project for implementing fluency measures into software for foreign language learning is also outlined.

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