

MEETING 5 — OVERVIEW

- Review homework 4
- Downstep, and !H* and H+!H* accents
- Labeler agreement and tone confusions

WHAT IS DOWNSTEP?

- “... compression of pitch range that lowers the F0 targets for any H tones subsequent to a downstep trigger.” (English ToBI Guide, p.24)
- In Pierrehumbert’s system, the downstep trigger is phonological: any bitonal pitch accent (H^*+L , $H+L^*$, L^*+H , $L+H^*$) will trigger.
- In the ToBI system, the trigger for downstep is not defined, but may in fact be related to discourse salience.

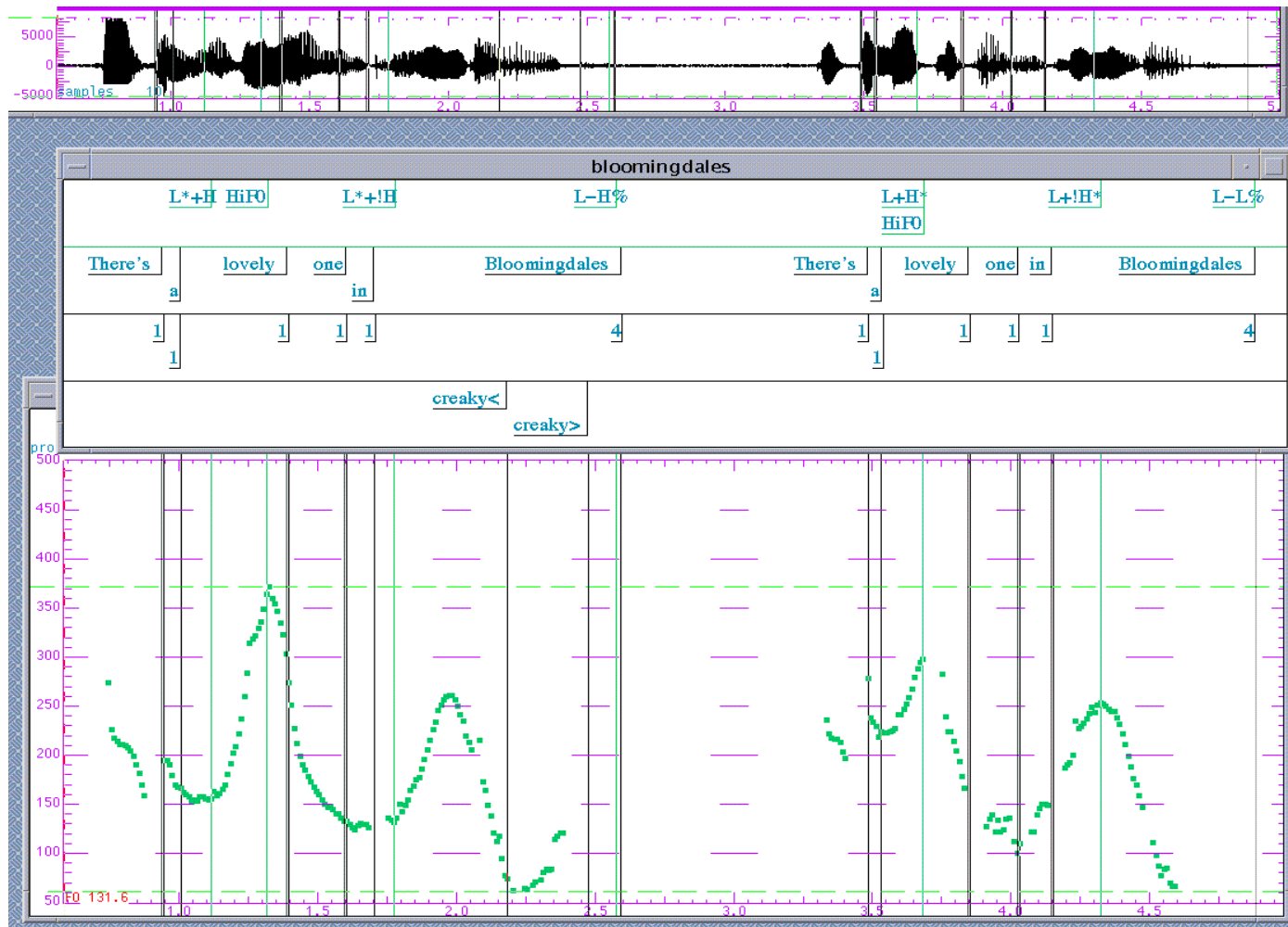


Figure 1: Non-downstepped then downstepped L*+H and L+H* accents.

MORE ABOUT DOWNSTEP IN ToBI ...

- Any pitch accent (containing a high) or high phrase accent can be downstepped, and this is marked by a “!” before the main HIGH tone component: for example, !H*, L+!H*, L*+!H, !H-, etc.
- The effect of downstep is cumulative within the intermediate phrase.
- Downstep is blocked by an intermediate phrase (or higher) boundary. That is, a new pitch range which is independent of the previous specification is chosen at each new iP.
- MEANING: Downstepped accents tend to mark information which is already in, or inferable from, the discourse context (see Pierrehumbert & Hirschberg (1990) for a related discussion of H*+L).

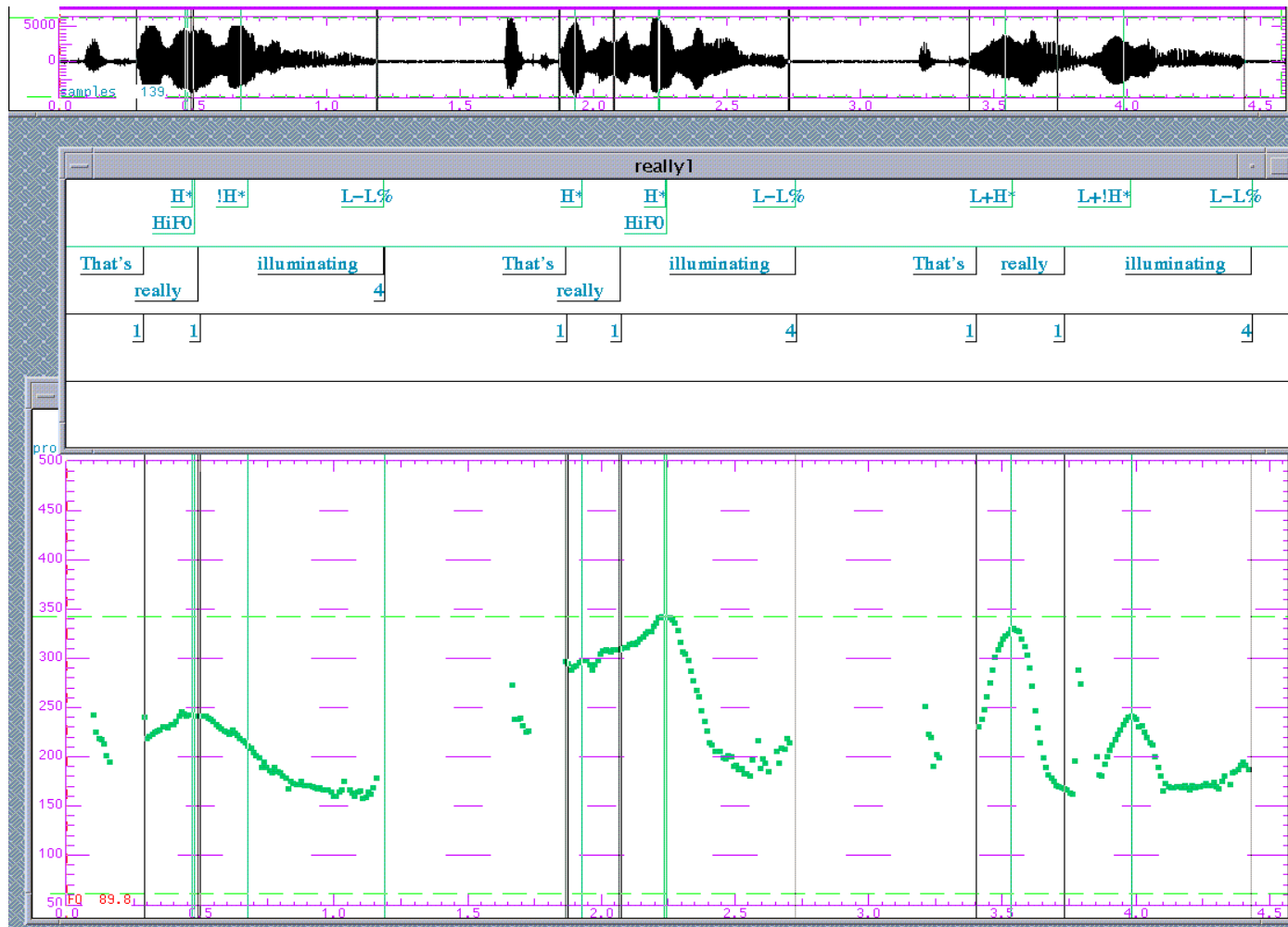


Figure 2: Downstepped nuclear !H* vs. non-downstepped nuclear H* vs. downstepped nuclear L+H*.

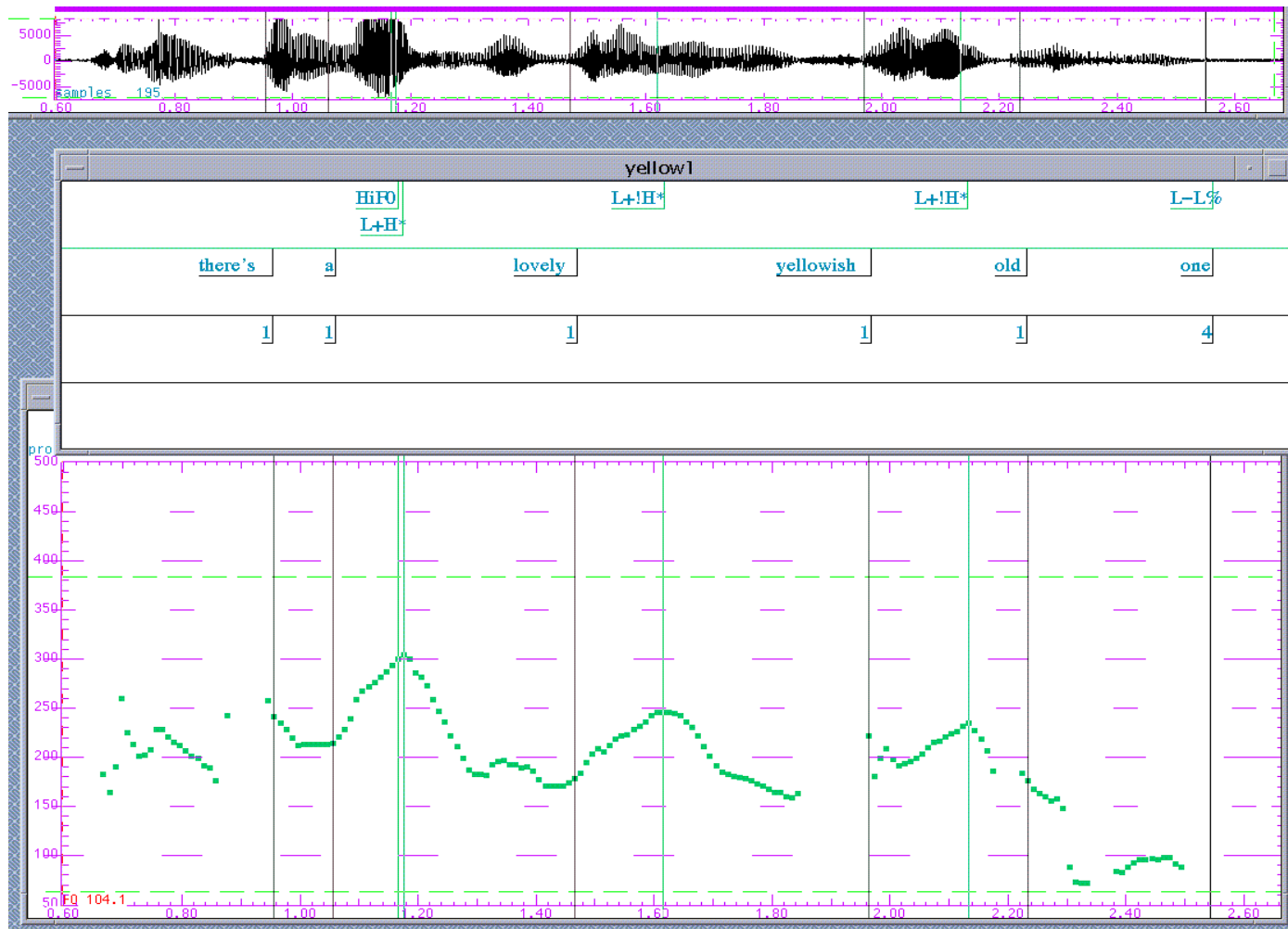


Figure 3: Downstepping of accents within the intermediate phrase.

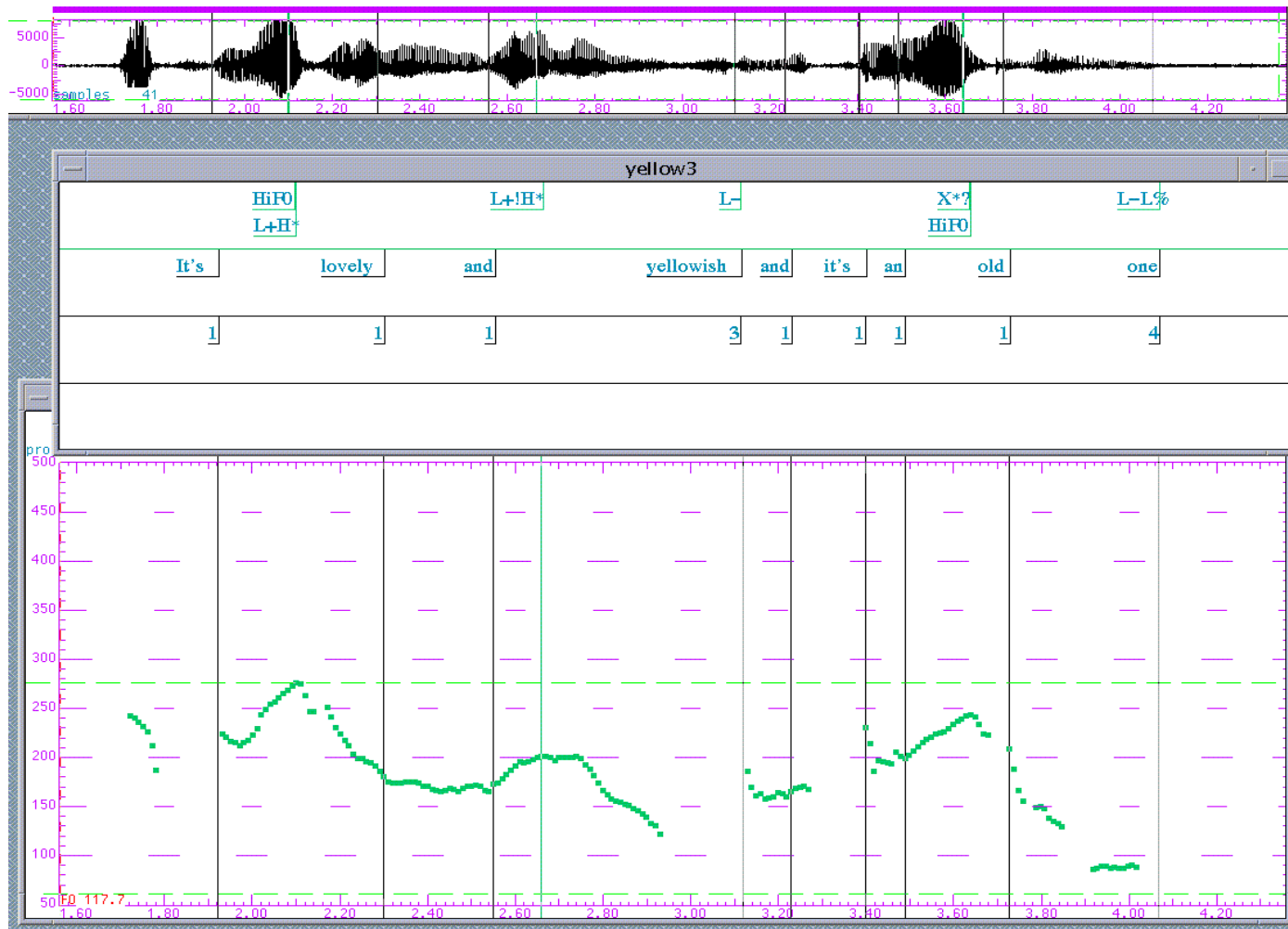


Figure 4: Downstep ‘resetting’ at an intermediate phrase boundary.

THE H+!H* ACCENT, OR IS IT H+L*?

- A fall from a high pitch to a lower pitch level on the accented syllable.

A: What's up with the baby? Why is she crying so much?

B: She's teething.

H+!H* L-L%

- MEANING: Cues that the information should already be in the mutual belief space (see Pierrehumbert & Hirschberg (1990) for a related discussion of H+L*).
- Is the ToBI H+!H* equivalent in meaning and form to H+L*? [Read more: Grice (1995) describes a systematic difference between the two accents.]

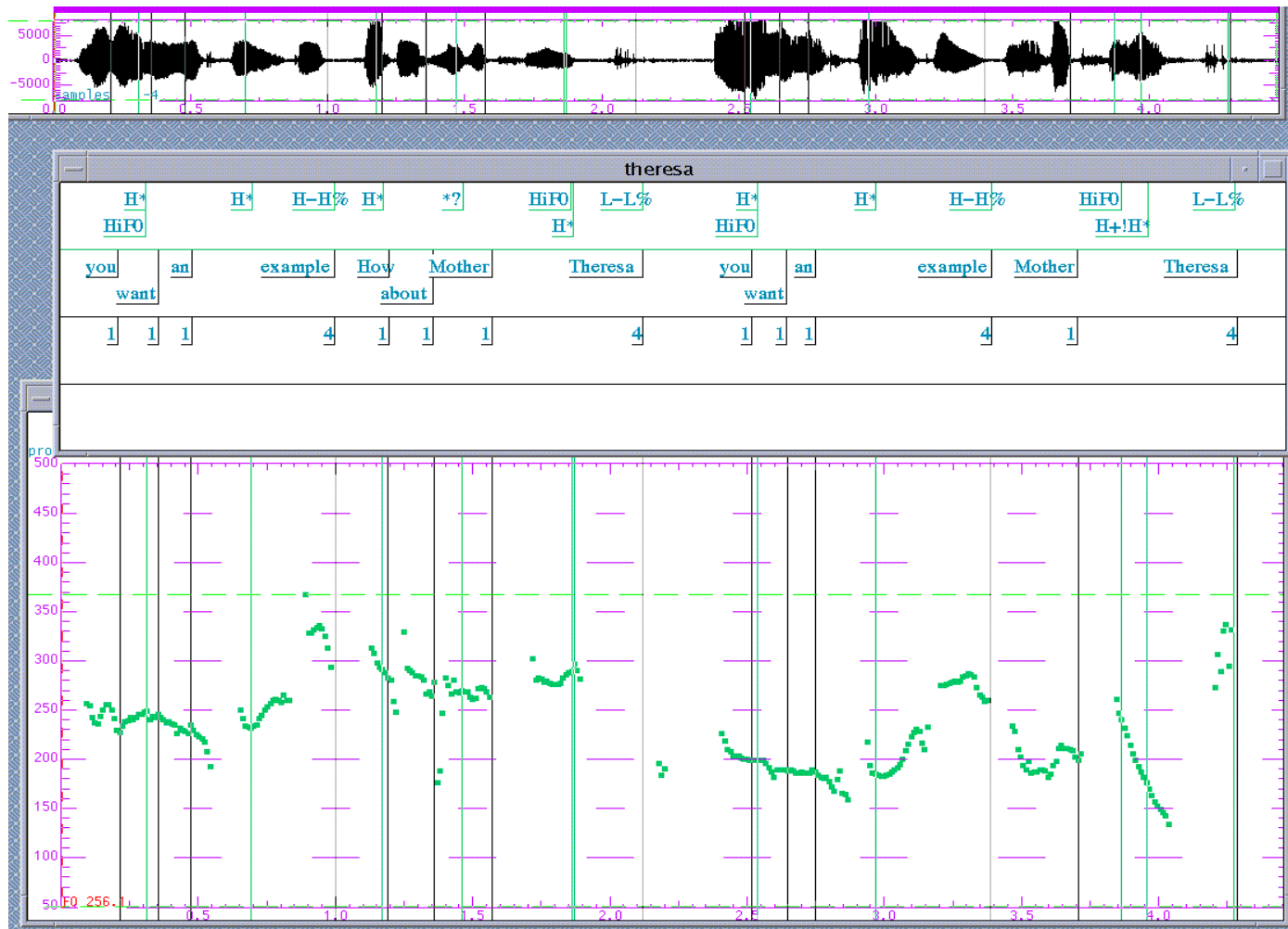


Figure 5: Example of H+!H* accent on *Mother Theresa* in the second utterance.