

INTONATION IN DISCOURSE AND ITS IMPORTANCE IN COMMUNICATION

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The nature of intonation in discourse is investigated in this paper. The importance of the intonation in communication is analyzed. The functions of the intonation are given.

Keywords: discourse, phonostylistics , intrapersonal and interpersonal communication.

The progress of the human development of the past century has influenced the development of new paradigms in linguistics, intergrading it with history, sociology, social ethics, culture and public speaking.

With the development of the international relations and politics, the importance of public speaking has grown and has been investigated by linguists of different countries. Language has always existed to stimulate human interaction, to help to exchange different cultural aspects, thoughts and behavior. Linguistics and other language sciences have indicated that powerful communication, winning your audience and successfully communicating your message across, has more to it than simply the language used to achieve communication. This has encouraged that development of new trends in the study of phonetics, one of which is phonostylistics.

honosstylistics investigates peculiarities of the speech organization from the stylistic point of view. It is closely related to phonetics, grammar, sociolinguistics, psychology, dialectology and rhetoric. Phonostylistics deals with how a person talks about something rather than what he talks about.

Phonostylistics aims at analyzing different kinds of spoken utterances with the purpose to identify the phonetic features, to explain why these phonetic features are used and to classify them into groups or categories according to their function.

Rhetorical phonetics is a fairly new linguistic discipline that investigates both: the paralinguistic and the prosodic features used by the speaker and works out recommendations for the efficiency of different types of human speech activities. It focuses on the study of language potential for influencing people and establishing contacts between them by means of prosody.

Being a successful public speaker is an important part of communication of a linguist, a politician, a teacher or professor and anyone else who would address a big audience in order to communicate. This matter has been researched and studied by many linguists of different countries over the years, and has become even more popular in the recent years.

Intonation is a language universal of particular importance in human communication. Every language in the world is spoken with some intonation. The matter is that some languages are so different, that their intonational patterns will differ greatly, but each of them will have intonation as a part of the process of communication. In its turn, intonation has its components. They are: rhythm, melody, pauses, tones. Each of these fulfills its function to make communication work. Therefore, intonation with its complex is a rich stylistic and rhetorical means of speech communication and carries a considerable part of information, which is not expressed verbally.

In this work we aim at analyzing the prosodic and structural components of intonation.

For the sake of reaching the aim of this paper we have outlined the following tasks:

- 1) To make an overview of the theoretical and experimental data dealing with intonation.
- 2) To identify main prosodic parameters used for the expression of it in conversational style.

3) To investigate the structural organization of conversation.

The object of the investigation is the structural and rhetorical organizational paradigm of using the intonation in communication.

The subject is the intonation in discourse and its importance in communication.

The theoretical value of this paper is in establishing the main rhetoric and prosodic factors that influence the interpretation and understanding of the message in the process of communication.

Practical value consists in providing some theoretical and experimental data, which can be used in courses of practical and theoretical phonetics of English optional courses in phonostylistics, rhetoric in speech communication, intonational styles in communication.

This search provides strategies for further phonetic experimental study of prosody in discourse. It is open for further investigation. Under the general outline of the new tendency in modern Phonetic studies – communicative Phonetics, that aims at linguistic analysis of different socio-cultural situations of communication, and their prosodic peculiarities in particular. It goes side by side with the idea of functioning of various communicative styles and their interaction in social communication. Thus it will entail the investigation of new and new aspects of prosodic arrangement of socio-cultural communication.

The intonation is one of the most important features in the whole act of communication, which does not only improve the way we get our thoughts across, but adds emotional coloring and interest both to the speaker, and to the listener or to the audience which is being addressed as well.

It is not always what is being said, but rather how it is being said that makes the listener either interested or not interested in something that is being communicated across. Often one does not even need to know the language in order to understand what the speakers' attitude is toward each other. It is not what we say sometimes that can hurt or encourage other people, but rather how we say it. Intonation is what would give it away.

L. K. Tseplitis names *the semantic, syntactic and stylistic functions* with the former being the primary and the two latter being the secondary functions [1, p. 40].

T. M. Nikolayeva suggests the three functions of intonation, which are the following: *delimitating, integrating, and semantic functions* [2, p.56].

N. V. Cheremisina singles out the following main functions of intonation: *communicative, delimitating, expressive, appellative, aesthetic, distinctive, integrating* [3, p. 30].

The following are most common functions of intonation:

Intonation enables us to express emotions and attitudes as we speak, which adds a special kind of meaning to the spoken language. This is *the attitudinal function*.

The listener is better able to recognize the grammar and syntactic structure of what is being said by using the information contained in the intonation. This is the *grammatical function* of intonation.

Intonation helps to produce the effect of prominence on syllables that need to be perceived as stressed, and in particular placing of tonic stress on a particular syllable marks out the word to which it belongs as the most important in the tone-unit. This is the *accentual function* of intonation.

Taking into consideration the act of speaking itself, it is possible to see that intonation can signal to the listener what is to be taken into consideration as “new” information and what is already “given”. It can suggest when the speaker is indicating some sort of contrast or link with material in another tone unit and, in conversation. It can also convey to the listener what kind of response is expected. Such functions are examples of intonation’s *discourse function* [4, p. 33].

“The Cambridge Encyclopedia of the English language” suggests the six functions of intonation distinguished by David Crystal. They are the following:

Emotional. Intonation’s most obvious role is to express attitudinal meaning - surprise, sarcasm, anger, shock, delight, interest, and thousands of other semantic nuances.

Grammatical. Intonation helps to identify grammatical structure in speech, performing a role similar to punctuation. Units such as clause and sentence often depend on intonation for their spoken identity, and several specific contrasts, such as question/statement, and make a systematic use of it.

Informational. Intonation helps to draw attention to what meaning is given and what is new in an utterance. The word carrying the most prominent tone in a contour signals the part of an utterance that the speaker is treating as new information.

Textual. Intonation helps larger units of meaning than the sentence to contrast and cohere.

Psychological Intonation helps us organize speech into units that are easier to perceive and memorize.

Indexical. Intonation, along with other prosodic features, is an important marker of personal or social identity. Lawyers, preachers, newscasters, sports commentators, army sergeants, and several other occupations are readily identified through their distinctive prosody [5, p. 175].

Obviously for any communication to take place, the two or more parties need to share a common linguistic code (i.e. to speak the same language), which is the English language in our case. Equally they have to be willing, and able to draw upon the act of communication in accordance with normal communicative conventions. For us it is that both or more parties were conforming to the semantic convention of English as their common code, and also to certain pragmatic conventions which regulate the way the code is used.

All languages and dialects involve at least some international variation in all three aspects: style, class and gender [6, p. 103]. In all languages and in the English language in particular, there will be varying styles of intonation appropriate to different situations. Depending on the situation, whether it is the two friends talking or a director talking to his employee, not only the intonation will change, but also the language used.

If we compare the way men talk and express their thoughts to the way women communicate, we might find some difference not only in the verbal aspect of their speech communication, but also in their mental phrase, word or sentence forming aspects. Psychologists say that majority of men are usually straight forward when it comes to expressing their opinions or decision making. It is the majority of them not all of them, though, who are this way [7, p. 71].

Communication is a complicated process of sending and receiving messages in order to achieve understanding. It does not only include words, but body movements, facial expressions, and voice tones. These are all symbols that people choose to transmit information, which is the meaning in their mind in the process of transmitting it to the minds of those who are receiving this information. There are various means that people use in order to communicate.

The two main forms of human communication are:

-verbal communication, which is the process of exchanging the meaning through the use of words;

-non-verbal communication - the process of exchanging meaning through all of the non-verbal means of communication. They are facial expressions, posture, appearance, voice, gestures and some others.

The two ways through which people usually communicate the best are: **speaking and writing.**

Speech Communication is the process of transmitting the information which is in the mind (thoughts) of one human being into the mind of another human being as clearly and as accurately as possible through the usage of words and voices (orally).

There are two types of speech communication that can be singled out:

- **intrapersonal communication** – when a person communicates alone in the process of an inward talking to himself or herself;

- **interpersonal communication** – when talking takes place between two or more people.

The latter can be divided into four different types:

- One-to-one communication is the process of two people talking. Here belong face-to-face conversations, telephone conversations, and interviews. Many times in the process of communication the sender and the receiver switch roles during the talk.

- Group discussion is a second type of interpersonal communication. It involves three or more people with a common topic or the subject of conversation, which maybe solving a problem, making a decision, or answering a question that interests all the members of the group. Here, each member of the group, or team should and usually gets a chance to communicate his thought across. It is up to the group or team to decide how the actual process of intervening and exchanging of thoughts will happen. Committee meetings, conferences, workshops, panel, symposiums, round table talks, and conferences can all be classified as the group discussions.

Most of the group discussions usually take place in fairly small groups, or groups that contain less than fifteen members. Group discussions are very common and are widely used, because it offers one of the most effective ways of making decisions and coming to a conclusion.

- Public communication is a type of interpersonal communication in which one or more people communicate with an audience. A typical example of public communication is realized in *public speaking*. It is people like: teachers, lawyers, preachers, politicians, and others who use this form of interpersonal communication not only to get the attention, but to reach large numbers of people through the spoken word.

- Mass communication is the type in which one or perhaps several senders communicate with a large number of listeners at a distance. Television and radio broadcasting belong to this group. Mass communication differs from the other types of communication, because in this case the audience can "switch off" the sender when they feel like it by pressing the "switch" button.

As we can see, communication is a very necessary part of learning and decision making. It does not only add coloring and excitement to our lives, but it can also help anyone achieve success in his or her career.

It is the process of communication that helps the people understand each other, be understood, give and receive ideas and encourage each other to come up with new ideas.

When we come to look at the intonation that is used in the English language for promotion of communication, this is what we find.

The four tones which are most typical of sentence non-final intonation groups in English are: the low-rise, the high-rise, the fall-rise, and the mid-level. The low-rise and the fall-rise are more typical of formal styles. Of the two informal, high-rise is the particularly "casual" one: it is, for example, typical of a number of teenage groups, particularly in Australia and America.

The non-final tone in conversation is also common in the speeches of politicians who pride themselves on possessing the common touch.

The two more formal sentence non-final tones: the low-rise and the fall-rise are particularly common in reading. Indeed the intonation of reading, as might be expected, exhibits other features of a formal style.

e.g. *Intonation groups are more clearly delineated (partly because there are fewer false starts and hesitations).*

The intonation groups here are generally longer. Conversation, on the other hand, is the archetypal informal style, which involves a very high proportion of short intonation-groups and, moreover, a high proportion of cases of intonation group per short sentence. Many of such short sentences are, of course, response utterances. Therefore, the sentence non-final intonation-groups constitute only a small proportion of the total number of intonation-groups.

Depending on the relationship between the speakers not only the language used for their communication changes, but also the intonation that they use in their speech.

Communication is one of the most complex forms of the human behavior. It is an affair of give and take, a complex interplay between the sender and receiver that is used by the vast majority of people every day.

Any conversation, whether formal or informal, consists of more, than verbal language. In a conversation the meaning consciously or unconsciously is derived not only from words, but also from a number of nonverbal cues, that is, from facial expression, gestures, body movements and intonation. Sometimes a lift of an eyebrow, glance towards the interlocutor, or a silence can tell more than a dozen sentences. Undoubtedly, the verbal part of the conversation plays a very important role and has its own cues too but only linked with other effective ways contributed by the speaker – the so-called “non-verbal cues”.

Conversational style is the most commonly used type of intonational style. It is also called familiar because this kind of English is more familiar to the vast majority of English-speaking people than any other. It serves for everyday communication, heard in natural conversational interaction between the speakers.

Some scholars also can call it informal because this style occurs mainly in informal internal and external relationships in the speech of friends, relatives or well-acquainted people. In informal situations they monitor their linguistic behavior, perhaps sometimes unconsciously. In everyday life a more natural and spontaneous style is used.

Both stress and intonation are very important in both speaking (saying) and comprehending. The other aspect that is also important here is *the rhythm of the language*. In the English language we can observe that stressed syllables alternate with unstressed syllables in regular patterns. This is easy to illustrate with nursery rhymes: HICKory DICKory DOCK the MOUSE ran UP the CLOCK

In English, utterances tend to have one or more “peaks” of stressed syllables interspersed with unstressed syllables. The time between peaks tends to be roughly constant regardless of the number of syllables that intervene. You can try this out by saying the following utterances while tapping on “fax” and “now” each time:

fax	now
fax it	now
fax it right	now
fax it to me right	now

In this respect English is different from many other languages, such as Spanish, Finnish and Japanese, in which syllables last a similar amount of time, and no vowels are reduced. Languages like English are called *stress-timed*, and languages like Spanish are called *syllable-timed*. One result of this difference is that students of English often say that English speakers “swallow half of their words”. Conversely, learners of Spanish complain that Spanish speakers speak incredibly fast, and learners of Finnish sometimes say that Finnish “sounds like a machine gun: rat-tat-tat-tat-tat [9, p. 149].

Finally, in the realm of sound, when we consider the issue of intonation, or variations of pitch in utterances. In the following example, the request for milk ends in a rising intonation, whereas the response has a falling intonation on both parts .

A: Can I have some milk, please?

B: Sure, just a second.

It is interesting that the first utterance is perceived as one unit (tone unit), and the second as two. We can say the first utterance also as two units, like this:

A: Can I have some milk? Please?

in which case the request obtains a pleading, begging quality. It is clear that intonation is used to convey a speaker’s attitude to what is said. In general, a rising intonation is perceived as being more polite than a falling one which, especially in requests, will be perceived as boss, or even rude.

The sociolinguist John Gumperz found, when doing research in London, that native-English speaking bus conductors tended to say utterances like the following with a kind of sing-song intonation: Exact change, please! Whereas Indian and Pakistani conductors tended to use a falling intonation as follows: Exact change, please!

The latter may be perceived as pushy and rude by passengers, and can lead to fiction or arguments. The above example shows how important minute differences in language use can be benefit in everyday situations [8, p. 49].

Intonation can also create differences in meaning that go beyond attitudinal information. Depending on what or who is important in the following example, the stress and intonation will differ:

A: I didn't get the job because of my husband.

B: I didn't get the job because of my husband.

In the first case, the speaker did not get the job, because her husband messed things up. In the second case – she did not get the job, but her husband could not claim any credit for the achievement.

Some conversations often refuse to flow as a result of a clash of the conversational style of the two people:

A: Do you live in London?

B: Er, yes...

A: I've lived in London all my life. Born and bred here. Where were you brought up?

B: Wales.

A: Oh, I adore Wales! Marvellous place. You must have been sad to leave it. I should have been, I am sure.

B: Well, no, not really...

Here "A" is full of enthusiasm and sympathy while "B's" style is quieter and more private. Being very anxious for a close involvement with those she is talking to, "A" plunges in with comments and questions about "B", who finds her interrogation intrusive and rather overwhelming. As a result, he backs off.

The opposite problem is when someone is not interested enough in the other person:

A: Do you live in London?

B: Yes, I do now. I was born and bred in Wales, and left there ten years ago...

A: Oh, I adore Wales...

B: That was when I joined the army. I couldn't wait to get out of Wales. Travelled the world... Middle East, Europe. Marvelous time. Um... Have you travelled?

A: Not a great deal...

B: Then I came to London and got this job I'm doing in the City. Get back to Wales very little.

A: Oh.

In the first conversation "A" leads and her conversational style was dominant, while in the second conversation "B" was dominant. Conversation works best when the role of leader passes from one person to the other [10, p. 234].

Therefore, it is often the intonation and the stress that tell us more about what is being said and meant than the words (language) used for communication, which makes the above mentioned factors of communication important in the process of learning and teaching the English language.

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