

# REALISATION OF EXPRESSIVE FUNCTION OF INTONATION IN DIFFERENT NATIONAL VARIETIES OF ENGLISH

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## I. INTRODUCTION

I.1. General Considerations on the Problems of Stability and Variability of English Intonation System.

Opposition "stability-variability" is one of the most essential in the study of the movement of any particular language in space and time. Although a comparatively large number of studies have been dedicated to this problem, some of its aspects remain, however, unclear.

I.2. Territorial Variability of Intonation System.

Constant and variable features of the prosodic system of English intonation in its different national varieties have been, in large part, looked at and investigated at the phrasal level, which, understandably, could not have resulted in giving us a full, clear picture of national, territorial variability of intonation. Moreover, some national intonational varieties (e.g. Canadian) have not been adequately described even at the level of phrasal units, though, as many authors point out (2, 7, 9), it is the peculiarities in intonation that make CanEng different from AmE. Therefore, the experimental study that we undertook deals with some constant

and variable features of English, Scottish, American and Canadian national varieties of English intonation system at the text level.

I.3. Style

Samples of national intonational varieties were represented by short monologue texts, realised in two kinds of speech activity: reading and speaking. Stylistically, all texts represent informational formal style. Emotional neutrality of this style serves as a reliable basis for singling out even slightly marked emotional and attitudinal meanings and provides safe ground for further comparisons.

I.4. Emotional-attitudinal and Intellectual Levels.

The largest number of variable features is recorded at the emotional level. At the so-called intellectual level we seem to observe a greater degree of stability. Statistically, it seems quite possible, therefore, to approximately define and compare the amount of both, emotional-attitudinal and intellectual information in the overall semantic structure of texts, realised by native speakers of the above-mentioned national varieties of English. It seems also possible to find out which prosodic features

are responsible for conveying certain attitudinal meanings.

## 2. EXPRESSIVE (EMOTIONAL-ATTITUDINAL) FUNCTION OF INTONATION

2.1. Linguistic Status

The question of linguistic status of this function of intonation has been traditionally a hotly debated one. Some authors distinguished between the communicative and emotional aspects (10), associating the latter with modality, or between the logical and attitudinal (emotional) functions of intonation (1). On the other hand, some linguists consistently excluded the emotional (attitudinal) function of intonation from the scope of linguistic analysis (4).

2.2. Reasons for Different Approaches to Linguistic Status of Attitudinal Function of Intonation.

- a) dichotomy: attitudinal (emotional) function - grammatical function;
- b) structural approach (2, 3). Some advocates of this approach, however, do not deny the fact that intonation can perform attitudinal (modal) function, but consciously exclude it from the scope of their study (4).
- c) opposition: "intellectual" - "emotional" information, frequently used in the theory of communication and in psycholinguistics (5).

Obviously, such dichotomies and oppositions are rather artificial and a little too far-fetched, since one can hardly find enough evidence for "absolutely neutral" contours in most sentences in speech (8). To overcome the above-mentioned scholastic dichotomies,

D. Crystal suggested the use of scales with minimum and maximum values of attitudinal function at the extremities. Such scales seem to give a much more adequate picture of the real process of expressing various attitudinal meanings in speech. Dichotomies should be seen only as a means of analysis. They are obviously very relative, since in the course of the communication intellectual and emotional information is conveyed simultaneously. Besides, in terms of psychology, there are no clear-cut boundaries between logical and emotional spheres, which, on the one hand, results in the fact that certain expressive, emotional, attitudinal elements penetrate the logical structure of an utterance, and on the other hand, explains why attitudes happen to be basic elements in the individual's cognitive activity. Hence, there seems to be a great deal of overlap and interaction between the intellectual and expressive (emotional, attitudinal) levels.

2.3. Integrated Approach. Analysing the above-mentioned approaches, Ladd et al. (6) quite rightly point out that the aim of the first approach (approach A) is to "produce quantifiable descriptions of both the medium (the non-segmental part of the speech signal) and the message (the various types of affective information conveyed), and to attempt to state correlations between the two". Within the framework of the second approach (approach B) "acoustic measurements should not be correlated

directly with attitude judgements, but should be taken as evidence about the phonetic correlates of the intonational contrasts posited in the linguistic description". They also note that although "shortcomings and methodological difficulties in both approaches to "intonation and attitude" are quite apparent even to enthusiastic proponents of one view or the other, ... insofar we find evidence both for categorical distinctions in intonation and for the direct expression of attitude." Ladd et al. (6) nonetheless conclude that an approach that carefully distinguishes intonation from paralinguistic cues and designs its studies with that distinction in mind will be the most productive way to investigate the role of intonation in expressing attitude"

### 3. CONCLUSION

#### 3.1. Approach

In the present study we primarily adopted the first approach (approach A) with the above-mentioned distinction in mind).

#### 3.2. Parameters

For convenience, we grouped the attitudinal, emotional, modal meanings, studied in the course of the comparative analysis into five scales:

- certain - uncertain;
- surprised - not surprised;
- approvingly-disapprovingly;
- friendly - not friendly;
- concerned - uninvolved.

Secondly, the task was to determine which audible prosodic characteristics correlate with the above-

mentioned modal meanings. Therefore, the following measurements were taken: delimitation, placement of communicative centres (logical and emphatic); contours (type of head, pitch and range), type of nuclear tone (its final section, angle, pitch and range characteristics, in particular) loudness, tempo, rhythm, timbre colouring (esp. on the emphatic segments of the texts).

Thirdly, comparative analysis of national intonational varieties of English is carried out (in two kinds of speech activity: spontaneous reading and speaking, both male and female versions)

#### 3.3. Results.

a). Constant features: the given national varieties of English exhibit a great deal of stability primarily in expressing more "intellectual", logical information.

b). Variable features: the given national varieties of English reveal a certain amount of variability of intonation system in expressing attitudinal, emotional, modal meanings (see supplement).

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