PRINCIPLES OF INTONATIONAL STRUCTURING OF THE SPONTANEOUS MONOLOGUE

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ABSTRACT

The spontaneous speech intonation has generally been viewed as a modification, or a version of the intonational structure of an audible written text. In actual fact, being of different nature, these systems possess intrinsic properties enabling them to regulate their elements' structuring and functioning capability.

INTRODUCTION

The 20th century linguistics has focused upon language as a system of historically evolved means of communication. Modelling language stratificationally has proved, however, to be imperfect and perfunctory in a great number of aspects, with the worked-out model failing to incorporate all facts of authentic human communication.

Attempts to make linguistics' subject matter more expanded and comprehensive, which brought about the emergence of speechology and psycholinguistics in particular, ought to be given credit to as constructive and generative.

On the other hand, it should be noted that an approach to subsystems dissimilar both qualitatively and functionally will call for diversity of the research method applied. An element of a system cannot be forcibly transposed into a different system wherein it is likely to acquire new qualities. Such ecclectics could lead to an inadequate analysis of the object under study as its integrity, structure and dynamism are supposed to be reflected by each element analysed.

A series of experiments carried out by the Experimental Phonetics Laboratory, University of Odessa, made it possible to establish specific features of spontaneous speech which manifest themselves through a direct conjugation of mental continuum and discrete language means.

The monologue seems to be the most spontaneous in this respect, being distinguished on the precept of independence of motivation and stability of concept, as well as its tendency toward informational adequacy alongside with the programme's simultaneous composition and implementation.

PSYCHOLINGUISTIC PRINCIPLES OF INTONATION DIVISION IN SPONTANEOUS MONOLOGUE

The basic divergence of the spontaneous monologue from other types of speech subsystems lies in its intonational structuring. In an extemporaneous speech its intonation functions as a means of conveying expression along with other language units, thereby reflecting the mode in which semantic categories within a described extralinguistic situation are being grouped in a speech/thought stream. It has been established experimentally that, on being represented graphically, i.e. deprived og its intonation, a spontaneously generated utterance is often perceived as inconsistent and meaningless even by the speaker himself.

In reading, intonation patterns "wander over the grammatical surface of language" /1/, thus effectuating a mediated segmentation of sense pointed out and included in the text by the author. Figuratively speaking, the difference between the spontaneous speech intonation and reading intonation is similar to that between a living bear's skin which is essential for keeping the animal alive and enables one to make judgement concerning the condition of the whole of the animal's body – and a fur-coat made from this skin just to be sold. In fact, intonational segmentation of a spontaneous monologue points to the "apportioned" character of text composition.

In all existing speech generating models the function of intonation stands in need of a clear definition, being wrongly treated as identical to functioning of purely articulatory means. At the same time, an analysis of authentic monologues has suggested that communicative and expressive components of intonation emerge at different levels of speech generation and are subject to diverse psycholinguistic phenomena.

A generalized communicative and intonational model of a phrase is issued as far back as the communication level where a generally subjective sense is modelled. For instance, an individual wishing to obtain information conceives a notion of a question which is normally followed by the emergence of an intonational question marker preceding the utterance of an undetermined "a-a-a..." type with a rising tone, whereupon the question is modelled into an articulated language form.

In the process of semantic and grammatical programming based on the primary semantic pattern including separate words and their potential correlations /2/, intonation acts as a part of an operational unit belonging to this level, i.e. a syntagma. Effecting the same expressive function, the intonational and semantic aspects of the syntagma become interdependent and interfacial within a system. It is the syntagmas that provide the transposition of a semantically implicit pattern into an explicitly continuous text.

The psycholinguistic significance of the syntagma has been displayed by L.A.Chistovich and A.A.Leontiev, whereas this unit's intonational and syntactic dualism has been neglected only to lead to identification of the syntagma with C.Osgood's functional class or a UC of a sentence. As both grammatical and semantic programming, as well as motor programming occur within a syntagma /3/, with intonation being far more variable than syntactic and lexical units, it is only through a complex analysis of a speech unit or "block" that some thought-formation functions of language could be observed "at the output".

FUNCTIONAL TYPES OF INTONATIONAL-SEMANTIC UNITS

Intonational and semantic variability of these "blocks" having been analysed, their functional heterogeneity has been established. The spontaneous speech creative components acting as both linear and motor programming units, i.e. syntagmas per se, are opposed by certain conjunctions, linking words and cliches whose form diversity is provided by the diversity of psycholinguistic values of intonation-sense complexes being created and reproduced, as well as the diversity of their correlations with the utterance generation levels. Emerging at the articulatory level only, linking words adhere to syntagmas, thus providing their rhythmic completion, filling in hesitation pauses and relieving the speaker's operative memory. In this case a certain disagreement between mental and speaking activities of man is observed — used in authentic spontaneous speech, linking words ("of course", "certainly", "first of all", "generally", etc.) possess

considerable automatism and often convey no modality into the utterance; while they are being uttered, the speaker is busy planning the following utterance which results in a noticeable change of intonation characteristics, such as tempo abatement, a shorter fundamental frequency range and intensity range, as well as undivided tone contour and dynamic structure. As a rule, linking words overlay syntagmatic borders making them diffusive, as the operational unit's junction line lies, in fact, "under" the linking words which make no part of either syntagma: для меня это было, в общем, неожиданно; я пробыл, скажем, двадцать лет.

The information obtained from listeners' reports upon hearing these diffusive syntagmatic border audio strips seems to be rather contradictory: disjunction areas were detected either before or after linking words, or both. Some listeners deemed it necessary to call attention to the ambiguous status of these words. In the process of reading the same excerpts, the informants qualified linking words as parenthetical and expressing the speaker's personal estimations of the utterance. This is what determined the relevant intonational expression.

The use of linking words is supported by the speaker-listener antinomy: within a syntagma, the essential sense is marked by discrete language means, whereas the introduction of words conveying new information obscures the message being perceived. Hence, the spontaneous speech is characterized by rhythmization of senses, i.e. an alternation of more and less significant units within a syntagma or phrase framework.

The second type of the spontaneous monologue automatized units includes conjunctions used in complex and compound sentences of disjunctive class /4/: и, или, но, если, когда (and, or, but, if, when) etc. This automatization is not caused, however, by the same provisions as motivate the use of linking words. The conjunctions listed above seem to emerge in an individual's conscience as far back as at the primary record level. Their emergence marks junctions between the principal syntagmas, i.e. microthematic units. As for the linking words, they function as articulatory units only and thus belong to a more "superficial" level than conjunctions and syntagmas. In a spontaneous monologue, conjunctions effectuate "direct" connections of inner and motor programming levels, which is similar in effect to the function of linking words, i.e. relieving the linear expansion level, overlaying syntagmatic border lines and filling in hesitation pauses. Intonationwise, conjunctions are characterized by a wider melody range as well as a notice-

able rise in the acoustic force of the utterance. Thus, an increased loudness along with an abated tempo of the conjunction "и" ("and") in a narrative monologue act as a marker for spontaneous speech.

The third type of operational units opposed to syntagmas is the cliche, i.e. an intonational/lexical/grammatical phraseological unit belonging to the motor level. These may be both general and idiolectal units created by frequent repetitions or habitual word combinations used by the speaker. Occasionally, cliches may enfold syntagmas positionally, covering up to 80 per cent of units in some microthematic unities; yet they do not equal syntagmas functionally since they are not fashioned in an actual speech act.

Cliches are determined by distinct intonation characteristics, i.e. a short fundamental frequency range, a tone contour with distinguishable termination tone modifications, a short intensity range, a faster tempo, etc. Since equal characteristics are possessed by syntagmas containing familiar, or thematic information at the whole text level, one can assert that the familiar/novel opposition in the spontaneous monologue is also associated with a partial discharge of the linear programming process as well as an accent shift to the articulatory level.

In the event of multisyllable cliche units, these may parcel out melodically into 3 to 4 phonetic-word segments, the latter fact being caused by the isochronism of intonational segments. This parcellation is of superficial, or motor nature, the cliche's dynamic integrity pointing to its intactness as a separate operational unit. Consequently, the spontaneous monologue's intonational variability is caused, primarily, by the functional heterogeneity of its formative units along with the value disparity of the motor programming and linear prognostication units.

SEMANTIC AND SYNTACTIC FACTORS OF INTONATIONAL STRUCTURING

Along with the abovesaid features common for all spontaneous monologues, their intonational structuring is determined by the peculiar component grouping for the described situation in the speaker's conscience. The syntagma's capacity and content as well as minimum and maximum melodical and dynamic distribution within it are determined by the semantic and syntactic aspects of the utterance; the syntagma's general tone model depends on how independent semantically and syntactically it is, e.g. the tone used for autosemantic units will be falling and falling-rising while the rising and rising-level tone will convey synsemantic units.

The way a correlative semantic category is

formed into a separate syntagma depends, above all, on whether the speaker's conscience is focused on it or not and whether other semantic categories are relevant or irrelevant for the utterance. An experimental investigation of the spontaneous monologue's syntagmatic structuring has brought about conclusions concerning two essential issues, i.e. intonational and semantic structures' symmetry within a syntagma and the syntagma's intonational variability determined by its semantic and syntactic purport. It was established that a disjunctive intonational presentation of the described situation's components is determined by these categories' semantic types as well as their informativeness. Thus, a neutral, or standard intonation similar to the like units in reading is typical for syntagma situations including all the necessary components of the semantic structure arranged neutrally. The purport of this type of syntagmas lies in the nomination of a complete situation or event which results, in the majority of cases, in the fact that these syntagmas are previously contrived and initiate a microthematic unity acting as a kind of antecedent, or follow a protracted pause. All syntagma situations operate on a falling or level melody scale with a rise-fall termination alternated by a falling termination (full stop) in reading. Separate words carry no accentuated stress. The whole dynamic structure attenuating with the maximum emphasis laid on the initial syllables, the final stressed vowel stands longest. The subject-predicate syntagmas may include a varied number of principal,or elementary and auxiliary, or non-elementary categories. A distinctive feature allowing to oppose this type of syntagmas to other types is the imperative accentuation of the subject and the predicate which obviously points to the speaker's conscience focusing on these principal situational components. As a rule, the subject in this type of syntagmas is expressed by a semantically autonomous word, while the predicate's content is presented by qualificative relations: /жизнь ведь настолько сложна/, /программа очень интересная/. All syntagmas of this type possess a double-peak intonational structure, with the melodical and dynamic curves being isomorphous. In reading, the segments reproducing qualificative syntagmas do not hold a specific intonation structure. Words like очень, настолько ("very", "so") etc. expressing a higher degree of attributed quality, are accentuated on a regular basis. This points out the fact that the lexical meaning of a separate word is realized more distinctly in reading, while this word, along with the syntactic arrangement of the utterance, determines the choice of an intonational structure, with

with the semantic and syntactic factor retreating to the secondary plane.

The intonational prominence of action verbs in short stories disguises the absence of norm-premeditated dependent word-forms. The rising-falling termination tone used to shape up a vacant-valence verb syntagma provides an opportunity to allege that this type of predicate could operate as an autosemantic unit in the speaker's conscience.

The logical and intonational division of the predicate may stand out as a specific feature of the spontaneous speech, the two-component predicate including a modal element like можно, нужно, необходимо ("possible", "necessary") plus an infinitive.

An expanded subject in the spontaneous speech prevails as an independent sense-intonation unity. Apparently this may be determined by the fact that the subject or object attribute acts, in effect, as a disguised predicate while a syntagma is capable of including a single vectorial (predicative) element only, with the programme unfolding extemporaneously.

In a number of cases, an insufficiently informative subject "attracts" the various predicate elements like auxiliary verbs, linking verbs with modal, phase and emotional meaning, adverbial modifiers, demonstrative pronouns, etc. In the vector syntagmas thus formed, it is the predicative elements that carry the maximum sense, with the subject's position being optional and determined, for the most part, by the tendency toward phonetic and sense rhythmisation.

The data obtained in the process of our investigation revealed the syntagma being center-oriented in extemporaneous conceptual speech. This is caused by the fact that sense accentuation is expressed by intonational accentuation in a progressively unfolding speech. Consequently, an informatively prominent object is generally represented by a separate syntagma.

It should be noted that the predicate-object division and subject-predicate syntagmization are ensued by the same phenomena, i.e., provided the emergence of an object expressed by an explanatory clause be rather indeterminate, the predicate syntagma is adjoined by the "object index" -- the conjunction ("that"): /представляла, что/ считаю, что/ думаю, что/. Based on the regularity of this peculiarity of intonational segmentation, one can assume that explanatory verbs are recognized by the speaker not only as lexemes but as syntaxemes as well; in other words, the verbs' semantics includes their valences in the mind of the speaker. Therefore, the dialectic unity of the speech stream's discreteness and continuity brings about the emergence of assym-

metric syntagmas wherein the intonation value is shifted to the right of syntactic structures.

The tendency of the spontaneous monologue toward continuity is materialized in the conduct of the acoustic constituents. In extemporaneous speech, the opposition of logical and hesitation pauses appears to be practically obliterated, as it is these types of pauses that mark the junctions of psycholinguistic units. The purely synvactic pauses observed in reading appear to be non-existent in spontaneous speech. If the speaker relates some facts that he is well aware of and convinced in ("communication of events"), neglectful of whether these facts are to be correctly apprehended, it is only physiological pauses that he is likely to make in the speaking process. The use of linking verbs, conjunctions and "superfluous" pronouns reduces the number of hesitation pauses considerably.

Fundamental frequency variation depends on the syntagmas' autosemantics/synsemantics and their modality as well as indicates the significance of the semantic categories in utterance generation and compensates for grammatically inadequate structures.

The type of dynamic curve is called forth by the reproducibility of the intonation-sense unities in the text.

The spontaneous syntagma's tempo arrangement depends on the probability of the subsequent unit's emergence, whereas in reading it is the isochronal factor that is more operative.

CONCLUSION

Generally speaking, the spontaneous monologue's intonational structure is modelled by the direct thought-formation and extralinguistic apprehension process whereas a usage-bound interface of lexical, grammatical and intonational means can be observed in reading.

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