2nd Cyprus International Conference on Educational Research, (CY-ICER 2013)

A Survey of Intonation in Kordi

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Abstract

Intonation is one of the super segmental features in speech. Changing the intonation in many languages causes conveying different meaning. In these languages two identical phonological sequences have different meanings just for the sake of their different intonation. This article examines this phenomena in Kordi which is a language spoken in the west of Iran.

Keywords: Intonation, super segmental features, phonological sequences;

1. Introduction

Vowels and consonants are like chains that make speech. Syllables are made of consonants and vowels. Syllables have some features. Among them we can mention super segmental features. Accent, lengthening, intonation and pitch are some examples (Ladefoged, 2006:23). "Intonation" is the pitch that occurs during speech. This speech may consist of a sentence, phrase or even a word (ibid: 293). Different intonations convey different meanings in many languages. Declarative sentences are pronounced with falling intonation and questions with rising intonation (Gholamalizade, 1999:159). Investigating of intonation on word is called "tone" (Homayunfar, 2001:269).

The intonation of speech is the pattern of changing pitch. Pitch is made by many factors. The most important problem is the vocal tension. If the vocal cords are stretched, voice pitch goes up. Common causes of stress changes in vocal pitch changes in speech production mostly take place. Another factor that will be increase the pitch to increase airflow out of the lungs. So that it can be voices of the voiceless. Pitch at the level of linguistic units, there is a lot of data transfer. One of them features a speaker (male or female, age, etc.); his emotional states (happy or sad, calm or angry) cited so there are universalities in applying intonation. Almost in all languages when a speaker hasn’t finished his speech, this incompleteness is shown through rising intonation and after a complete speech falling intonation is used. In most Indo-European languages syntactic information is conveyed through pitch (Ladefoged, 2006:24,247-249).

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Gholamalizade (1996:301) believes that the amount of pitch and the direction of change are the most important factors in describing the intonation of speech. Eslami (1384) regards intonation as supervising element of pitch changes in a way the speaker and addressee use that unconsciously to convey meaning and understanding that. He quoted from Ladefoged that in international languages pitch changes on word cause the difference in meaning. So we can conclude that intonation acts like phonemes in these languages.

Like the intonation in the English and for changing the pitch, does not change the meaning of words. This change only makes sense to change the texture "part of speech" is. For example, changing the pitch to produce the word "pencil" which is the part of speech or of the press as a noun phrase or question. The word may be new information or in specific tissues is in contrast with other words. Such as:
What to buy? Pencil (new information)
what to buy? Books or pencils (mean contrast)
what to buy? Pencil? (Question)

Pay attention to the following sentences and notice how the changes in intonation can inspire us to different concepts:
"Kambiz wanted to buy sweets."
In the following sentences pronouncing the highlighted words with rising intonation convey different meaning.

Kambiz wanted to buy sweets: another one would not buy sweets.
Kambiz wanted to buy sweets: Kambiz would not buy anything else.
Kambiz wanted to buy sweets: Kambiz does not want to eat sweets (Safavi, 2005: 33).

As it was mentioned before "tone" is described as pitch on syllables. This super segmental feature doesn’t make any different meaning in English. But in some languages such as Tai and Chinese it causes differences in meaning. If "tone" remains the same on a syllable it is called "level tone language". Abrahamsan (1979) divides tone in tone languages into two groups: static one which includes high tone, low tone and middle tone and dynamic one which includes rising tone and falling tone (Chomphan and Kobayashu, 2007:393-395).

Stress
Stress is one of the super segmental features. I is applied on whole syllables not just vowels or consonants. A stressee syllable is pronounced with more energy and is more prominent in the flow of speech. English and Germanic languages make use of differences in stress than do most of the languages .in some languages stress has a fixed position for example Czech usually puts stress on the first syllable. Variations in the use of stress cause different languages to take different rhythms, but stress is only one factor in making such differences. English is called syllable-timed language in which syllable tend to recur at regular interval of time (Ladefoged, 2006:243)

Hghshenas (1996:122) regards stress as a super segmental feature that is heard with more sonority and the stressed syllable is lengthened.

Kahnemuipur (2003:333-339) introduces Chadzkoo (1852) as the first person to investigate stress in Persian.

METHOD

Applied method was used in this study. This research was carried in Kermanshah. It is a city located in the west of Iran. People speak Kordi as their mother tongue. They were asked to speak about the last book they have read. They were aware of existing a recorder but they didn’t know anything about the purpose of the study.

DISCUSSION

The intonation of declarative sentences in Kordi is falling. In negative interrogative ones it is falling too. Sentences by which a question is asked are divided into two kinds: the first one is Yes/No question. According to intonation we can understand that this is a declarative sentence or it is a question. The other one is questions by which the speaker looks for special information. In this questions the main stress is on the word by which we ask our addressee to give us special information. As why-questions don’t have a fixed position in kordi so the position of stress varies. Here are some examples:
Atena chi (Atena went): if we pronounce that with falling intonation, it is a declarative sentence and rising intonation makes it a question.

Atena key chi (when did Atena go): the intonation is falling but the position of stress is different. Italic shows it:

Atena key chi?
key Atena chi?

Both of them mean "when did Atena go?"

Intonation of tag-questions is falling for example:

Atena farshe gerani san.nasan? (Atena bought an expensive carpet. didn’t she?)
The intonation of Coordinated sentences which are consist of two sentences relating to each other by coordinator is in a way that the main sentence is rising and the other one is falling. for example:

Aga dimey va pi damey. (If I see her I will give it to her)
The first sentence has rising intonation and the second one has falling intonation.

CONCLUSION
Kordi is an intonational language and changing the pitch of sentences changes their meaning. When a sentence is pronounced with falling intonation, it shows that it is a declarative sentence and if it is uttered by rising intonation it conveys that it is a question. The intonation of Coordinated sentences is in a way that the main sentence is pronounced with rising and the other one is pronounced with falling intonation. Intonations of tag-questions are falling. Intonation is an interesting discussion and it revealed important facts in languages. So it is recommended to discuss that in other languages too.

REFERENCES