

Intonation as a Cohesive Device in English with Reference to Arabic

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Introduction

It is a common truth that the way we say something can be just as important in conveying a message as the words we use to say it. Intonation means "the melody of speech, the changing pitch of the voice" (Allen, 1954: 39). It is 'the term commonly given to variations in the pitch of the voice (Malmkjar and Anderson, 1995: 230).

This study aims to show that various types of tones are used in both English and Arabic newsreadings and that intonation can work as a cohesive device in discourse, especially when it helps in keeping the text coherent despite the absence of cohesive ties in the texts.

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The study is limited to the analysis of the primary and complex tones and excludes other types of tones such as compound ones. The study is not meant to be contrastive as it is based on exploring how intonation acts as a cohesive device in English with reference to Arabic where appropriate.

The data on which the study is based are recordings of the news in English taken from the BBC T.V Channel, while the news in Arabic is taken from various Arabic-speaking Channels.

There is more than one approach to intonation. Chief among them are the British approach and American approach. The British approach studies intonation mostly pedagogically; this means that this approach focuses on introducing and presenting intonation objectively which helps to clarify the way that intonation makes utterance more understood. Among those who follow this approach are (Sweet, 1892; Palmer, 1922; Kingdon, 1958; Gimson, 1970 and Roach 2000).

On the other hand, the American approach is more theoretically oriented. Scholars dealing with this approach are: (Bloomfield, 1933; Pike, 1945; Trager and Smith, 1951 and Stockwell 1960).

In Arabic, it seems that finding a distinctive framework for the Arabic intonation is not crystallized yet.. Therefore, Anees (1975: 176)

states that "we would rather leave talking about Arabic intonation .We hope that researchers in the future will achieve this mission". Despite this, there are some works by (Anees, 1975; Al-Ani, 1970; Bishr, 1969) in addition to some unpublished dissertations which deal with intonation like those by (Ghalib, 1977; Ahmed, 1987; Gatta, 1988; El-Hassan, 1988 and Al-Azzawi, 2002).

The analysis is auditory-based and adopts the model proposed by Roach (2000), in which intonation has five basic tones: falling, rising, level, falling-rising, and rising-falling. These five tones have an essential role in shaping the meaning of utterances. The falling tone is that type of tone which descends from a higher to a lower pitch and this fall gives an impression of "finality". The rising tone is "a tone movement from a lower pitch to a higher one which is generally used to state non-finality". The level tone can be produced when the pitch remains at a constant level; it means that there is no pitch change that accompanies the production of utterances. In addition to these simple tones, there are two complex tones which are the falling-rising tone which "consists of two pitch movements fall and then rise. It may occur on a single syllable in the case of a tail after the tonic-syllable", and the rising-falling tone which "consists of a rise followed by a fall and it

may occur on a single syllable or may extend over more syllables if the tonic-syllable is followed by a tail" Roach (2000: 170-172).

Intonation serves some basic functions, namely: attitudinal, accentual, grammatical, and discourse functions. According to Collins and Mess (2003: 125) the attitudinal function is " what allows speakers constantly to superimpose an attitude on top of the bare semantic content of what is being said", while the accentual function is to a certain extent controlled by stress, for important changes of pitch occur only on stressed syllables "(Allens, 1954: 39). Collins and Mess (2003: 125) state that the grammatical function "permits speakers to distinguish certain syntactic relationships, e.g. phrase and clause boundaries, question versus statement". The discourse function covers such diverse matters as the organization of conversation between two or more speakers and the indication of new versus old information".

For the purpose of analyzing intonation, it is useful to shedlight on the structure of the tone unit as it is the unit of intonation. Roach (2000: 123) states that the tone unit structure consists of pre-head, head, tonic-syllable and tail. The tonic-syllable is an obligatory element which carries a high degree of prominence and refers to the information that the speaker wishes to emphasize. While the other elements of the

tone unit are optional ones. It is worth-mentioning that these forms of intonation together with these various functions play a great role in helping the speaker to highlight the information which the speaker wants to convey to the listener. This suprasegmental feature acts successfully to link utterances together in the text despite the lack of cohesive markers. Thus, the text remains coherent and this is due to the significant role of intonation as a cohesive device to group the tone units into a sequence.

Cohesion is that feature of language which plays a central role in writing as well as in speaking. For Halliday and Hasan (1976: 26) the term cohesion refers to "the semantic relations in a text which they claim make the text cohere, although cohesion is not a matter of content or textual meaning". Moreover, they define two general categories of cohesion; grammatical cohesion which includes 4 types of cohesive chains: substitution, ellipsis, reference, and conjunction. The lexical cohesion includes: reiteration, repetition, synonymy, near-synonymy, and superordinate.

Data Analysis

As stated earlier, this study is an attempt to investigate the importance of intonation as an essential factor to a successful communication where speech plays a significant role. This can be greatly true of the news-broadcast community of news readers

From the (5) transcripts of BBC News and the (5) transcripts of Arabic News, the data show that the tone-unit in Arabic texts are longer than those in English since Arabic texts have units containing more than (13) syllables, while the English texts show tone-units containing (8) syllables, (10) syllables and the longest one consists of (12) syllables, e.g.

| Is con'tinuing in the 'worst 'hit /region |

| Ttibâran 'minal 'yawmis 'sâdisi'ashara min 'yunju |

(From 16th of June)

Thus, the tone-units in Arabic texts are longer than those in English and this may be due to the intensive use of weak forms in English readings which are mostly monosyllabic words.

However, it is obvious from the data that the number of "given" information existing in the data is greater than that of "new" one. This

is because the "new" information is that unit which is independent and is not connected to the next unit, however, the "new" information is almost always on the last unit of a sequence which carries the pitch change ,e.g.

|Are 'being destroyed | (complete\independent)

| In 'almost 'four decades | (complete\independent)

| Min 'arâdhîhimizzira'iyya | (complete\independent)

(From their cultivated lands)

The "given" information, on the other hand, occurs on the initial and mid sequence units and it is incomplete and always depends on the following unit. This is because the usual sequence for "given" information is to precede "new" information and it is not independent. Besides, the "given" information always carries the rising tone which gives the impression on "non-finality" and inform the listeners that there is more to be added. e.g

| On to the US dollar | (incomplete\dependent)

| Wa 'qâlatil ma'sâdirus siya/siyya | (incomplete\dependent)

(Political sources mentioned)

A look at the data reveals that each tone-unit consists only of one tonic-syllable which is the most prominent element in the tone-unit and carries the pitch variation. This is due to the fact that the newsreader makes certain words prominent since he/she believes them to be the most important and informative units at the moment of speaking.e.g.

| On to the US \dollar |

| We 'have a 'global ho'tel 'chain \Hilton |

| Ikhti'jari ma'dînatin 'thanija 'ghayri Maqa\dishu |

(Choosing a second city other than Mogadishu)

Still, we have some exceptions:

| Where the 'dollar is 'still 'anguishing a'gainst the \Euro |

| 'Hilton 'has 'also an\nounced |

| Bi maqa'dîshu ka ma\qarrin lil hu'kûma |

(In Mogadishu as the head quarters of the government)

Here, the newsreader does not make the words 'Hilton', 'dollar', and\ ' Mogadishu\ prominent because these become uninformative since they have been mentioned previously in the text. Bearing in mind the

fact that the grammatical words like: articles, conjuncts, and pronouns are unstressed and non-prominent words, still we have exceptions':

| Let's head to the markets /and we can have a look at the currency market |

| itla'qâtin na'riyya /wa qa'nâbilil 'ghaz |

(The gun bullets and gas bombs)

The conjunct \wa\, 'and' are made prominent and marked by the rising tone as they tell the listeners that there are other important points to mention. Here, the newsreader tries to bring the listeners' attention to certain words as he/she judges them to be more informative than the other words in the text.

Another significant factor which contributes in the process of building a text is the existence of pauses. In newsreading styles, two kinds of pauses are distinguished; long pauses and short pauses. Long pauses are frequently perceived at sentence and clause boundaries entirely and listeners can observe in newsreading styles that long pauses are perceived before the reader say a new theme 'information' in the text, e.g.

| In almost four decades | ... | more than two hundred thirty people
are feared dead |

| Ji'darul 'fasl |...| wa qam'al mutadhahiruna |

(the separating ... wall and suppressing the demonstrators)

Here, the newsreader has ended the first utterance by a long pause in order to give a sense that he/she finished the previous utterance and that he/she is going to present a new one. The use of a long pause before a tone-unit is to mark a change in topic. Short pauses are also used by the newsreader when he/she wants to breathe within the tone-unit boundary. e.g

| The minutes from the latest ... meeting of the federal reserves |

| Allathîna stakhdamu ...talaqâtin nâriyya |

(Those who fired bullets)

It is important to say that the newsreader is a professional person who is aware of the way of making use of pauses to separate tone-units and to signal new theme or information in the discourse (Megyise and Capcova, 2003: 14).

It is a common fact that the use of cohesive ties between the tone-units is significant in linking information. Besides, the existence of cohesive ties has, somehow, reduced the role of intonation presenting it as a helping element to hold the tone-units together and to succeed in making the text into one continuous stretch. In this study, the data show various examples which support the fact that despite the absence of the cohesive markers from the text, the latter remains coherent and this is ascribed to the significant role of intonation as a cohesive device to group the tone-units together. Furthermore, the use of intonation enables the listeners to interpret and understand the information since there is no written text before them and no textual features like punctuation marks to help them interpret the text. e.g.

| There was 'much 'talk of 'Asian 'Central 'Bank...'selling some
re'serves |

| 'Yathhabu 'qismun 'thanin... ila wu'jûbit ta'massuki bi
maqa'dishu |

(Some others believe that they should stick to Mogadishu)

In these examples, the words 'bank' and 'thanin', carry the rising tones which give the impression of 'non-finality' and that something is needed to complete the information.

The use of the falling-rising tone has been interpreted as a signal for the listeners that more is yet to come that the utterance is not yet over. (Lieberman, 1967: 113).

| is con'tinuing in the 'worst 'hit 're^vgion ... 'south of 'Shonigar |

| an yat'tasima li'qâul 'qâdal ôruppi'yina ... bi 'hiddatin ni'qâshi |

(The meeting of the European leaders is going to be marked with heated discussion)

By the use of the falling- rising tone on these two words 'region' and \oruppiyin\ 'European' the newsreader makes the audience expect more to follow in order to complete the chunk of information.

A close look at the data reveals that although the rising tone gives the impression of non-finality Roach (2000: 152), there are some instances in our data where the falling tone is used to indicate non-finality .e.g.

| the 'federal re'seves in the U'nited 'States | re'leased on 'Wednesday con'firmed | that the U'nited 'States 'Central 'Bank | would 'meet to 'keep on 'raising \rates | to con'trol in'flation |

| alla'thîna 'kanu yahtaj'jûna \ ala i'qâmati ji'dâril 'fasl |

(those who protested against establishing the separating wall)

Here, the newsreader has used the falling tone on the words confirmed, and \yahtajjuna\, 'protested' in order to assert certain information. Such words are made assertive by the reader who judges them to be informative at the moment of the utterance. Besides, the falling tone, in such a case, gives a sense of incompleteness. It is obvious that the existence of the conjuncts that and \ala\, 'against' immediately after the words confirmed, and \yahtajjuna\, 'protested' reinforce the fact that the newsreader has not finished his\her utterance yet and this makes the audience seek more information.

Bearing in mind the absence of the cohesive ties immediately after these words asserts the ability of the newsreader to make use of various types of tones to organize information in the text. In this case, the use of the falling tone to give a sense of non-finality about the utterances which means that the reader is going to add to what he/she has said.

It is clear that intonation has a great role in making the spoken text sound natural and meaningful since intonation is able to stand alone as a cohesive device in connecting the tone-units and keeping the successive information chunks despite the lack of the cohesive markers within the text.

Conclusion

This study comes up with the following concluding remarks:

- The use of various tones in English and Arabic-texts as cohesive devices.
- the tone-unit boundaries are used to divide the spoken discourse into manageable information units which enable the audience to interpret the information as given by the newsreader accordingly.
- the concept of new/given information is used to signify the relationship between the information and the audience.
- Pauses appear between the tone-unit boundaries or even the same tone-unit boundary. Long pauses are used by the newsreader to signal that a new piece of information is introduced and also to indicate the end of the tone-unit.
- the significant role of intonation as a cohesive device in discourse, especially within the absence of the cohesive markers from the texts.

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ملخص

التنغيم كعامل ربط للنص في اللغة الإنكليزية مع الإشارة إلى ما يقابله في اللغة العربية

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يشار إلى التنغيم على أنه الاختلاف في نبرة الصوت من ارتفاع وانخفاض. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى بيان أن نغمات مختلفة تستخدم في قراءة الأخبار في اللغتين العربية والإنكليزية وأن هذه النغمات المختلفة تعمل كأدوات ربط في النص اللغوي وأن لها وظيفة ربط أو تماسك النص برغم غياب أدوات الربط التقليدية في النص. اعتمدت الدراسة على مقتطفات من الأخبار من القنوات الفضائية الإنكليزية والعربية. كما أنها اعتمدت على التقاليد والمفاهيم التي قدمتها المدرسة البريطانية ممثلة بروادها أوكونر و آرنولد كندون، كرسنال و روتج.

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