

RESEARCH ARTICLE

The Role of Phonetic-Phonological Means in Expressing Dominance in Eristic Discourse

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Abstract

The means used to express linguistic dominance in each language are determined by that language's typological nature, genealogical background, and pragmatic characteristics. However, phonetic and phonological units are regarded as one of the principal means across all languages of the world. The relative freedom of word order and the diversity of intonational patterns further elevate the importance of these means in the communicative and pragmatic structure of an utterance.

KEY WORDS

Intonational structure, neutral intonation, stress, imperative intonation, phonetic realization, eristic discourse, communicative dominance, phonetic and phonological means, prosodic means.

INTRODUCTION

A particular lexical or grammatical form may convey entirely different meanings and attitudes when realized through different intonational structures. For instance, a sentence uttered with neutral intonation may simply function as a means of transmitting information; however, when pronounced with a raised voice, strong stress, or imperative intonation, it may acquire connotations of dominance, pressure, or control. Therefore, certain manifestations of dominance are reflected not in the linguistic units themselves, but rather in their phonetic realization.

The role of phonetic and phonological means in eristic discourse is particularly significant. In situations of debate and confrontation, communicative dominance is often expressed through vocal performance. An increase in voice intensity, stronger stress, a faster speech rate, or, conversely, a slow and firm manner of articulation may indicate the speaker's confidence in their position, emotional state, and claim to superiority over an opponent. From this perspective, phonetic and phonological means represent one of the most influential

and readily perceived manifestations of dominance in eristic discourse. This feature necessitates the study of the phonetic-phonological level as a distinct and independent form of linguistic dominance within eristic discourse. As D. Crystal notes, prosodic means-intonation, stress, and rhythm-serve as the primary mechanisms for expressing the emotional and attitudinal content of speech. Phonetic dominance belongs to the most ancient and fundamental layer of language, as it is rooted in paralinguistic signals that existed even before the emergence of words and grammatical structures.

The analysis of phonetic and phonological means in literary texts naturally differs from the direct observation of spoken discourse, since sound is not presented directly in written texts. Literary discourse encodes phonetic information indirectly through various means: authorial remarks and descriptive expressions (e.g., "he shouted," "she said sarcastically," "barely audible"); punctuation marks (exclamation marks, question marks, ellipses, and dashes, which function as graphic indicators of intonation and pauses);

phonetic spelling reflecting pronunciation; typographical devices used to indicate stress (italics, capitalization); as well as onomatopoeic words and interjections.

This approach has also gained broad recognition in contemporary stylistics and text analysis. A skilled writer individualizes the speech of characters not only semantically but also phonetically. Through authorial remarks and descriptive devices, the writer demonstrates the volume, intonation, and manner of pronunciation characteristic of each character, thereby creating a distinctive vocal and communicative profile for them.

Intonation expresses the semantic and grammatical completeness of an utterance, the various relationships among its constituents, groups, phrases, and individual clauses. It also conveys different nuances of meaning within the utterance, indicates its communicative type, determines its segmentation into constituent parts, and highlights the prominence or separation of particular elements within it. Intonation serves as a marker that indicates the degree of informational load carried by an utterance and reflects the speaker's communicative intention, emotional state, the content of the message, and attitude toward the listener. The speaker's emotional condition is largely distinguished through intonation. Scholars who have investigated this issue have proposed various views regarding the communicative functions of intonation. In particular, according to J. D. Wells, the functions performed by intonation include the following:

1. The attitudinal function is one of the most fundamental characteristics of intonation and is realized through the tone of speech, enabling the speaker to convey attitudes, feelings, and evaluative meanings.
2. The grammatical function involves marking the boundaries of an utterance and its constituent elements, indicating their points of beginning and completion through intonational patterns.
3. It performs the function of dividing a sentence into "given" and "new" information, thereby actualizing its constituents.
4. The discourse function is primarily characteristic of conversational style and plays a role in ensuring the progression and cohesion of speech (for instance, by placing emphasis on certain discourse markers).
5. The psychological function ensures that speech is delivered in a manner that facilitates easier comprehension and

memorization by the listener.

6. The indexical function refers to the role of pronunciation features (such as dialect, idiolect, and style) as markers that characterize the speaker's personal identity and social status, as well as their individual distinctiveness.

From an intonational perspective, conversational speech style may appear "running" or "jumping," and therefore it is not characterized by a uniform rhythmic-intonational flow. This spontaneity and lack of fully structured intonation patterns serve as indicators of the naturalness of speech. For this reason, in conversational style, sentence types—based on communicative purpose, emotionality, and modality - are largely determined through intonational differences. In Uzbek and English conversational styles, intonational patterns are highly multifaceted and diverse. Their various manifestations cannot always be adequately represented in written discourse through punctuation marks alone.

We consider it appropriate to analyze phonetic-phonological means of dominance along two major lines: suprasegmental, i.e., prosodic means and their role in the realization of dominance (the functional-pragmatic features of loudness, intonation and tone, stress, speech tempo, and pauses in eristic discourse); and segmental and socio-phonetic means (the role of pronunciation and accent as indicators of social status, phonetic imitation used for mocking pronunciation, sound symbolism, and the potential of interjections in expressing dominance).

In the analysis of phonetic-phonological means of dominance, several theoretical approaches play an important role. In studies within the field of prosody, it is particularly emphasized that such features as loudness, speech rate, timbre, and intonation play a significant role not only in expressing emotional states but also in conveying communicative relations. D. Brazil's discourse intonation theory emphasizes the importance of intonation in shaping relations of control, power, and dominance in communication.

In sociolinguistic studies, W. Labov demonstrated that certain pronunciation forms are perceived as symbols of social prestige and thus function as a means of determining communicative status. H. Giles's Communication Accommodation Theory also introduces a new perspective on this issue. The scholar distinguishes between convergence and divergence in speech; in particular, the deliberate maintenance or emphasis of one's prestigious pronunciation in

order to create distance from the interlocutor is interpreted as one of the phonetic manifestations of dominance.

M.Mirtojijev and Sh.Shoabdurahmonov H. Giles's Communication Accommodation Theory also introduces a new perspective on this issue. The scholar distinguishes between convergence and divergence in speech; in particular, the deliberate maintenance or emphasis of one's prestigious pronunciation in order to create distance from the interlocutor is interpreted as one of the phonetic manifestations of dominance. These features, unlike the intonational and stress systems of English, in fact determine the national character of phonetic dominance in the Uzbek language.

According to H. Giles's theory, participants in communication adjust their speech (pronunciation, tempo, and vocal characteristics) to their interlocutor. This accommodation has three main types: convergence—moving closer to the interlocutor and seeking social proximity; divergence—deliberately emphasizing difference from the interlocutor; and maintenance—preserving one's own speech style without modification. Divergence, especially upward divergence, i.e., the deliberate contrast of one's prestigious, "cultured" speech against the interlocutor's "ordinary" speech, is a direct means of demonstrating superiority and dominance.

Another important aspect is the primacy of prosodic and paralinguistic means in oral communication; a significant portion of information is conveyed not through the lexical content of words, but through voice, intonation, and other paralinguistic features. When the semantic content of an utterance conflicts with the manner in which it is spoken (its tone), the listener typically relies on the manner of expression, i.e., intonation.

Suprasegmental, or prosodic, features are phonetic means that operate above and across individual segments (sounds). They include loudness, intonation, stress, speech rate, and pauses. The most important characteristic of these features is that they can function independently of lexical meaning, expressing attitude and emotion separately from the words themselves. For this reason, they are considered the most flexible and powerful tools for conveying dominance: the same phrase, when delivered with different prosodic "shading," can express entirely different relations—respect or contempt, request or command, friendliness or threat.

One of the most direct and effective manifestations of prosodic dominance is loudness, i.e., speech intensity. In

communicative interaction, a sharp increase in voice volume or speaking in a raised tone often serves not so much the purpose of transmitting information as that of demonstrating communicative superiority. Particularly in eristic discourse, a loud voice functions as one of the most explicit means of limiting the interlocutor's speech activity, suppressing objections, and gaining control over the interaction.

Speech acoustic intensity, as a paralinguistic signal, is relatively consistently interpreted across different cultures. A loud voice is generally associated with strength, assertiveness, control, and authority, whereas a softer voice is linked to caution, submissiveness, or limited communicative activity. Of course, this relationship is not absolute, but in communicative practice this tendency is predominant.

In the context of eristic discourse, an increase in vocal loudness often enhances the speaker's communicative pressure rather than the logical strength of the argument, and dominance is expressed not through semantic content but through the acoustic parameters of speech.

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