

III. NUOMONĖ / OPINIE I POGLĄDY

Helen Oleinik

Minsk State Linguistic University

Zakharov Street 21, 220034 Minsk, Belarus

Tel.: (175-17) 288 25 71

E-mail: ole-helen@yandex.ru

INTONATION TRENDS IN NEWS BROADCAST

The suggested article is concerned with the mass media communication. The prosodic level of the Russian mass media speech is exposed to the substantial influence of the English intonation.

The aim of the research is to compare the prosodic features of the English and the Russian mass media broadcast. The findings of the experiment enable us to state that 1) the variety of the mass media communication undergoes the process of unification 2) the definite type of the English intonation loans is found in the Russian media discourse.

The research singled out 1) the intonation parameters that provide the Russian media speech with English like sounding 2) the genres of broadcasting where the referred phenomena occur.

KEY WORDS: *mass media communication, mass media discourse, modern tendencies in the mass media discourse, intonation loans, media intonation innovations, English like sounding of the Russian mass media texts.*

Mass communication has certain special properties, which distinguish it from other forms of communication, and which are partly attributable to the nature of the technologies, which it deploys. Satellite technology and the associated globalization of mass media, and the global domination of North American and European media conglomerates give a further twist to the temporal and spatial aggregation of the media – for instance, material produced in the USA or Europe may be seen by audiences in Asia and India. Mass communication differs from other forms of communication in the technologies it draws upon which make possible its temporal and spatial joining up.

Mass media communication has recently come into close view of scholars specialized in different humanities-related studies; it is ap-

proached and investigated on a multidisciplinary basis. The notion of the mass media communication does not include any mass message, it implies only the mass messages emitted via electronic equipment. According to M. Janovits¹, mass communication embraces institutions, which provide information through media means (print, radio, cinema, computer etc.), and distribute symbolic contents among the enormous heterogeneous and dispersed audiences.

Media communication as a type of human intercourse has become an object of the purely scholarly study outlined against its omnipotent influence on society, public opinion formation, factors of social power and establishing social stability. Mass media discourse, which is the synthesis of the contents and formal elements, is considered at large the most effective instrument of

¹ JANOVITZ, M. *The study of Mass Media Communication*. Prague, 1989.

audience persuasion. Media techniques widely used in the broadcast and print texts have much in store for discourse researchers and educators developing mass media theoretical and practical courses.

My view is that we need to analyze the media language in comparison in the variety of the national media texts. Only the analysis of a particular media language is capable of making a contribution into media communication study.

The envisaged article is directed at further exploration of mass communication with a view of singling out international and national peculiarities. It presents the findings obtained as a result of the mass media discourse investigation.

The objectives of the present research are to distinguish the modern trends in the mass media language on the phonetic level and to find out the English intonation features penetrating into Russian media discourse.

The material for research comprises the comments, interviews of reporters and correspondents, television journalists and newscasters. The bulk of the experimental analysis constituted the recorded samples of broadcast discourse produced by 60 TV journalists in different genres. The amount of experimental material makes up 10 hours of recorded speech in English and Russian.

In light of the aims of the investigation the experimental material was liable to proven methods of study: auditive and acoustic analysis. It is expedient to outline the specifics of the mass media discourse by means of the listening examination of the phoneticians. The valid findings can be gained through the further acoustic examination of the recorded sampling, highlighting trustworthy facts.

The informants were to identify the pragmatic goals of the speakers under study. The auditive analysis intends to elicit the phonetic parameters of the speech under consideration on the percep-

tion level, i. e. melody (pitch), temp, loudness and rhythm. The acoustic analysis included investigation of the intonation parameters of the fundamental frequency and intensity configuration, location of their peaks, and duration on the acoustic level.

As a case in point the examined speech samples of the NTV newsreaders can be considered.

Native speakers designate the speech intention unanimously as informative. Since the speech samples are read from the monitor, speech patterns show all the prosodic signs inherent in reading. Utterances are segmented into long intonation groups, including on average nine words, by the pauses that are of physiological nature and of short duration and pronounced in fast tempo (102 m/s). Therefore, the phonation length is five times as long as pausation. The usage of the falling-rising and rising-falling-rising tones in English makes speech sound livelier, help to avoid monotony and gives an additional implicit meaning from the semantic point of view.

The speech samples are uttered within a high wide pitch range, while the intensity range tends to be narrow. The pitch and intensity peaks are located on the first stressed syllable in the phrase. The utterances start with the high irregular prehead that is usually actualized in emotional speech. The further movement of the pitch is as follows: the pitch line is gradually descending down to the nuclear syllable. The scale manifests itself as a high descending one that is followed by the falling-rising or rising-falling-rising tones on the last stressed syllable.

The nuclear syllable is in sharp contrast with the attached unstressed ones. The prominence is produced by one of the parameters – pitch, intensity and duration or their combination. It gives the nuclear syllable a high degree of prominence. The length of the syllable plays an important part in this effect (its vowel first of all, and even conso-

nants). The duration of the nuclear syllable exceeds the duration of the preceding one in 1, 8 times and of the following one in 1, 9.

The accentual structure is realized through the rare occurrence of the stresses, the prominence of them is realized mainly through the intensity increase, apart from the last nuclear syllables. The ratio between unstressed and stressed syllables in the utterance is 1, 5, i. e. the duration of the prominent syllables exceeds that of the unstressed entities. Accentual structure is actualized via polysyllabic accentual groups: trisyllable (45%), tetrasyllable (27%), pentasyllable (10%), six-syllable (9%), and nine-syllable (9%).

The registered phonetic facts give grounds for the following linguistic interpretation and conclusions. The pitch peaks position on the first stressed syllables, the gradually descending head, and the complex nuclear tones falling-rising or rising-falling-rising typical of English along with steep falling nuclear tone demonstrate the atypical prosodic characteristics of the Russian intonation patterns. Thus, the delivery is striking in rhythm, melody and stress.

– Час назад мировые агентства передали срочное сообщение из Мексики / ‘здесь произошло мощное землетрясение

These intonation patterns are borrowed from English and can be named as prosodic loans.

The media reception research has suggested that texts do not have the unitary meaning, but are quite variously interpreted by different audiences and may be quite various in their effect. The carried out auditory analyses ascertain that the prosodic loans make the Russian media texts sound aggressive. All the native language listeners marked the texts under study as impertinent and aggressive (100%). Variations within all the described prosodic features are responsible for modifications of the basic patterns and do not serve meaningful purposes, but they can change

the essential nature of the basic intonation patterns and their implications.

Another sample for study was chosen amidst the entertaining programs novel in Russian mass media both in style and in format – disk jockey discourse of musical programs:

It shows unambiguous prosodic features. The utterances delimitation is vague, and the discourse turns into a continuous stretch of speech with a rare occurrence of pauses, it is proved with the ratio between the pause and speech duration, that is 0, 05. The utterances are embedded into strict rhythmic frame. The prominence of the stressed syllables is achieved by intensity increase, pitch change and duration extension of the stressed syllables. The incidence and the distribution of the stress form the speech rhythmic organization. Every third lexical unit is longer than the two consecutive ones; the tempo slows down on the stressed ones.

*Коллекция Армани довольно точно соответствует вышеуказанным идеям
Правда иногда / создается впечатление
некоторой эклектичности /*

The utterances are pronounced in the mid narrow pitch zone; the pitch contrast between the first and the last stressed syllables of the utterance is comparatively slight. The tune consists of the regular prehead, followed by the stepping descending head and mostly combined with the wide fall (80%) and the rising nuclear tone (20%); it occupies a relatively fixed position in a phrase on the last stressed syllable.

The high rate of the pitch variation on the nuclear syllable results in steep pitch falling, i. e. the wide fall. This type of the falling tone also adds to the prominence of the nuclear syllable. The tail is marked not only with a pitch fall but with a substantial intensity fall. In English, according to the phoneticians, the wide fall alongside with completeness and finality mostly con-

veys additional connotations such as insistence, protest, participation, etc. These specific features deviate from the Russian intonation norm. The prevailing pitch configuration would have given the effect of prosodic monotony, but for the rhythmic effect.

According to the obtained records, the major prosodic component of the disk jockey speech is rhythm, which makes an impact on the prosodic organization of the whole utterance. It functions independently of the semantic meaning of the phrase.

The other case where the definite English intonation traits are evidently present is the disk jockeys' intonation on the Russian channels. The way they use intonation reveals English prosodic patterns in Russian speech. Their speech patterns display rhythm as a major factor that becomes an apparent and independent element of utterance semantics. It splits the utterances into rhythmic units meeting the rhythmic demands of English, contrary to the semantics tendency, according to which the Russian rhythmic units exist. The trend to alternate stressed and unstressed syllables reflects the peculiarity of composition of the English intonation, its rhythmic structure. In the Russian disk jockey speech, the excessive rhythmic tendency introduces the modifications into the indigenous accentual structure of Russian disrupting it, yet not hampering comprehension of the contents by the audience.

Analyzing the English speaking news channels BBC, Sky news, CNN that are considered by the wide public as the model and best example of proficiency and professionalism, we face the facts of imitating their manner of presenting news and verbal and non-verbal texts by the Russian speaking broadcasters. Congeniality actually concerns intonation patterns used by the anchors and reporters speaking the Russian and English languages. The basic conclusions derived from the analyses can be summed up and presented in the following way:

1. Language loans are observed not only on the lexical, but on the phonetic level as well. They are indicative of both new and traditional broadcast types. Prosodic loans modify the media style and the language. On the phonetic level the English intonation patterns are imposed on the Russian lexical units and grammatical structures. In this case the English intonation is embodied in the Russian patterns of speech. It is characteristic of female newscasters or reporters and young people, engaged in musical entertaining programs as disk jockeys.

The loans of the English intonation patterns in the Russian TV discourse determine English like sounding of Russian texts and alter their implications. The Russian discourses under study attain aggressive connotation, not transmitted by the lexical meaning and semantics of the texts.

2. Of particular interest is the phonetic structure of the Russian discourse conveying the features typical of the English language. They are presented by the following phonetic parameters: pitch peak localization on the first stressed syllable in an utterance, drawing on the descending scale, oft-recurring falling-rising tones, and terminal steep falling tone. Moreover, stress-timed rhythm is clearly observed in speech under consideration, i. e. occurrence of stressed syllables in an equal period of time, and an essential difference between stressed and unstressed syllables. Generally these prosodic traits are distinctive in English where the accentual structure is strict and the prosodic contrast between stressed and unstressed syllables on the utterance level is rather substantial.

3. The broadcast discourse of national television gives the ground for making a conclusion about the present-day tendency – mass media language unification. Intonation kinship is brought in the mass media discourse, and portrays the worldwide processes of globalization, proving English to be the primary mass media language

of today. The best samples of English-speaking mass media discourse are emulated and multiplied in various broadcasts. This typological tendency is unveiled on the phonetic level, the one that can be characterized as an extremely resistant to outer influences. Nowadays the alien intonation features can be traced only in the mass media discourse, TV and radio speech of different genres.

4. In the modern Russian language we witness the broadening of the prosodic norm. The auditive analyses revealed that the native speakers considered the recorded media samples to remain within the language norm. They were perceived as belonging to the language norm and not contradicting it. This fact shows the listeners' inclination to accept innovative the prosodic phenomenon in the language. It is supposed to be placed on the periphery of the nation-wide language, as it is not regularly spread in Russian.

The special role of the American and European media does not arouse any doubts; both linguists and journalists admit it. E. G. Berezin² indicates that English appears to be the dominant, transforming Russian speaking informative space and changing Russian TV discourse. The TV language as a codified system using new me-

dia opportunities acquired the supranational transnational character. English is the linguistic basis of this metasystem. Hence, in the Russian TV discourse, English modes are apparently frequent in occurrence; they determine the present day intonation tendencies in the Russian broadcast language.

The comparative assessment of the broadcasts disclosed the fact that their information selection and the topics of leading stories vary considerably as well as the contents of packages and emphasis of reports: the media factual profile is indicative of indigenous priorities and implications. Nevertheless, the structure of the newscasts, the style of presenting information, the TV language, as a composite of oral and written speech has a lot in common. In fact, similarity spreads over intonation patterns used by anchors and reporters speaking the Russian and English languages.

The evaluation of the English speaking news channels BBC, Sky news, CNN that are generally viewed as the paragon of effective journalism reveals the simulation of the so-called exemplary manner of presenting news and verbal and non-verbal constituents by non-English speaking broadcasters.

Helen Oleinik

Minsko valstybinis lingvistikos universitetas

INTONACIJOS TENDENCIJOS ŽINIŲ PROGRAMOSE

Santrauka

Straipsnyje nagrinėjamas masinės komunikacijos priemonių diskursas, kuris pastaruoju metu yra stipriai veikiamas angliškiosios masinės komunikacijos priemonių.

Helen Oleinik

Państwowy Uniwersytet Lingwistyczny w Mińsku

TENDENCJE INTONACYJNE W PROGRAMACH INFORMACYJNYCH

Streszczenie

Artykuł jest poświęcony dyskursowi medialnemu, który ulega obecnie silnym wpływom anglojęzycznych środków masowego przekazu.

² БЕРЕЗИН, Е. Г. Тенденции обеднения русской речи в электронных СМИ России. In *Язык и социум*. Минск, 2000, с. 127–130.

Tyrimo tikslas yra palyginti angliškus ir rusiškus masinių informavimo priemonių prozodinius požymius. Eksperimentinio tyrimo rezultatai parodė, kad 1) šiuolaikinei masinei informavimo priemonių kalbai yra būdinga prozodinė unifikacijos tendencija, 2) tam tikri angliški skoliniai yra aptinkami rusiškame masinės informacijos priemonių diskurso prozodiniame lygmenyje.

Tyrimo metu buvo išskirti: 1) intonacijos parametrai, kurie suteikia netipinį skambėjimą rusiškam diskursui; 2) žanrai, kuriuose aptinkami prozodiniai skoliniai.

REIKŠMINIAI ŽODŽIAI: masinė komunikacija, masinės komunikacijos priemonių diskursas, prozodiniai skoliniai, angliškas rusiškų informacinių tekstų skambesys.

Celem badania jest porównanie cech prozodycznych wypowiedzi w angielskich i rosyjskich programach informacyjnych. Wyniki badania wykazały, że: 1) język współczesnych mass mediów ulega procesowi unifikacji prozodycznej; 2) w rosyjskim dyskursie medialnym zapożyczenia angielskie znajdujemy na poziomie prozodycznym.

W wyniku badania wyróżniono: 1) parametry intonacyjne, które nadają rosyjskiemu dyskursowi nietypowe brzmienie; 2) gatunki, w których spotykamy zapożyczenia prozodyczne.

SŁOWA KLUCZE: komunikacja masowa, dyskurs medialny, zapożyczenia prozodyczne, angielskie brzmienie rosyjskich tekstów medialnych.

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