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Research Article

A Phono-pragmatic Analysis of Emotive Language in Trump's Political Speeches

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ABSTRACT

The problem of the study lies in that the phonological realizations of utterances can influence the expression of emotions; however, their misuse can mask and distort the speaker's communicative intention. Therefore, the present study is devoted to examine the phono-pragmatic strategies which Trump employs to deliver the emotive language in his political speeches. The researchers follow a set of procedures: presenting an overview of phono-pragmatics, emotive language and related concepts, selecting audio recordings, using Audacity and PRAAT software, adapting an eclectic model and ultimately, adopting a qualitative approach to validate the finding and arrive at conclusions.

Keywords: phono-pragmatics, emotive language, prosody, political speec

Introduction

According to Walton and Macagno (2014), the phrase "emotive language" refers to the use of particular expressions that have specific argumentative effects. Specifically, they have the power to influence the interlocutor's feelings and influence him or her to accept or see a particular policy or point of view more favorably. Cuddon (1998, p. 257) asserts that emotive language is "the language intended to express or arouse emotional reactions towards the subject." It involves the strategic modification of affective signals to influence the behavior of others. It proceeds through signs of emotion as well as by subtle shifts of verbal directness and intensity, prosodic emphasis, intonation, and voice quality, ect. (Arndt and Janney, 1987). Although it shares similarities with spontaneous signs of emotion, it is intentionally performed, and aims to produce particular effect such as eliciting supportiveness, determination, trust, distrust, dominance.

The prerequisite for interpreting emotive activities, according to Frijda (1982, p. 112, as cited in Caffi and Janney, 1994)) lies in the the ability to see a particular piece of linguistic or behavior expression as "the possible starting-point of its continuation." for instance, one might interpret 'positive behavior' as a potential starting point for agreement or cooperativeness, while 'negative' behavior as a possible starting point for disagreement or conflict. Based on this, emotive language appears to be more closely associated with concepts of dramatic performance (role performance) and rhetoric (persuasion) than with conventional notions of emotional expressiveness.

In 2000, Wichmann draws a distinction between attitude and emotion. He proposes that only the latter is likely to be reflected directly in the speech signals, while attitude is reflected indirectly and can be explained by a process of linguistic analysis. He suggests that while there are clearly prosodic cues in speech which contribute to the impression of attitude, this perceived meaning should be treated as a pragmatic implicature or a pragmatic inference. This means that it can only be explained by taking into account contextual features such as a speaker-hearer relationship and the text itself.

However, the speaker employs prosodic strategies in natural speech by modulating pitch, rhythm, duration, accent, and intensity that can substantially affect the expressing viewpoints during political speeches. These strategies are deliberately utilized to strengthen the construction of discourse. Specific prosodic features are systematically selected and grammaticalized, serving to convey pragmatic meanings (Braga & Marques, 2004).

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The convergence of phonology which studies "how sounds are used systematically in different languages to form words and utterances" (Katamba, 1989, p. 1), and pragmatics, which investigates how language is used in context, particularly regarding speaker intention, implicature, politeness, and speech acts (Yule, 1996, pp. 126-127) has led in 2017 to the development of a new interdisciplinary subfield known as phono-pragmatics. Phono-pragmatics, as Sperti (2017, p. 66) defines it, is the study of the relationship between phonological elements; specifically prosody, and the pragmatic aspects of communication. It focuses on understanding how the phonological features influenced by pragmatics and how they affect the perception and interpretation of messages across different context.

Huang (2014, p. 2) denotes that one of the central topics of inquiry in pragmatics is the speech act theory (henceforth SAT), accordingly, this study will examine SAT. Austin (1962) argues that language is not only a tool for informing rather a means for performing actions. Build in this view, Searle (1969) refined the SAT by categorizing illocutionary acts into five basic types: representatives (Statements that commit the speaker to the truth of a proposition), directives (Attempts by the speaker to persuade the listener to take action), commissives (Acts where the speaker commits to a future course of action), expressives (Expressions of the speaker's feelings or psychological states) and declarations (utterances that bring about a change in the external world, contingent upon the speaker's authority).

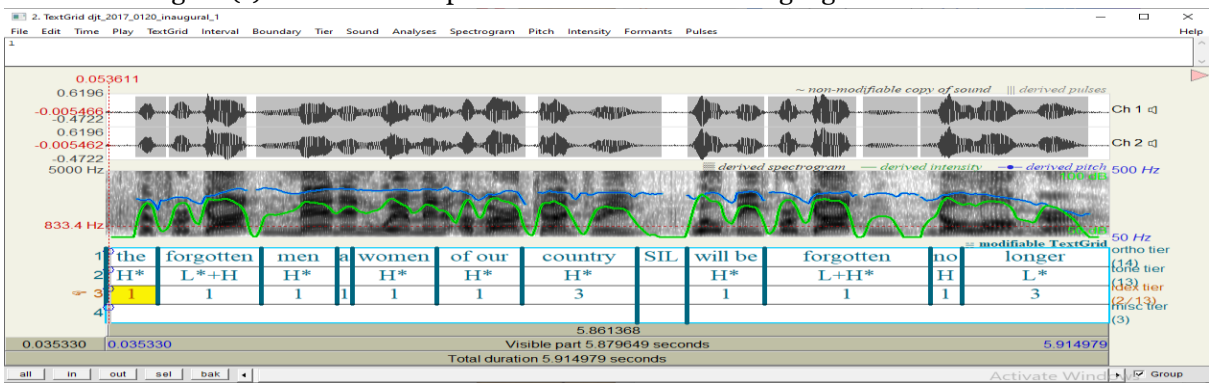
Methodology

To examine Trump's use of emotive language from phono-pragmatic angle, the present study integrates and adapts Wennerstrom's (2001) model of the discoursal functions of intonation alongside Braga and Marques' (2004) prosodic maxims and variables by modifying them to the context of political speech analysis. The integrated framework outlines six prosodic maxims, each associated with specific prosodic variables. The first maxim is the pitch/Fo ton that includes the variables of high and low pitch. The second is the pitch maxim that involves the variables of rising and falling pitch patterns. The third maxim is emphasis and focus, it is linked to the variables of H*, L*, L+H*, and L+H* pitch accents, which are further depend on increasing or decreasing in Fo, intensity, and duration of particular segments within an utterance. The fourth maxim is pitch range, it encompasses the variables of wide and narrow pitch ranges. The fifth is the phrasing maxim, including the variables of low-rise, plateau, partially falling, and low boundaries. The sixth and final maxim is silence, it distinguishes between the variables of intentional and unintentional pauses.

Data Analysis

Utterance No. 1

Figure (1) The acoustic representations of emotive language in utterance No. 1



It is clear that Trump divides his utterance into two intonational phrases. Prosodically, The entire utterance is produced with a high pitch average of 215.80 H and a falling pitch contour as it falls at 13.59% to the end to sound more assertive, dominant and authoritative as he has the power of change. The maxim of emphasis and focus is adhered to. The word "forgotten" is emphasized with a L*+H pitch accent because he is unsure whether it is appropriate or not to call this group as forgotten. .

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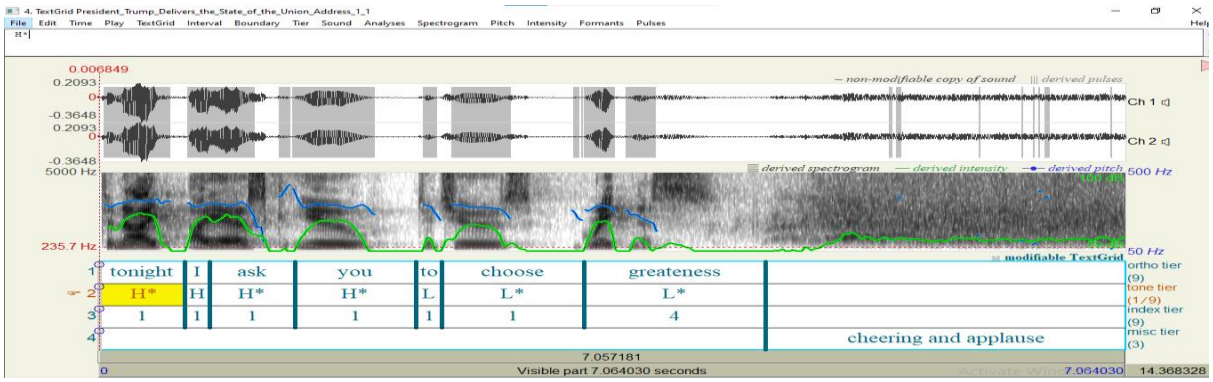
The phrase “men and women” is pronounced with a H* pitch accent by increasing the mean F0, intensity, and duration to be recognized as new information. The verb “will be” in the second phrase is emphasized with a H* pitch accent because it carries the new information. The word "forgotten" is produced with a L+H* pitch accent by increasing its F0, intensity, and duration. It implies the meaning of contrast, refuting the reality of forgetting. The negative adverb "no" is pronounced with a H* pitch accent, receiving increased F0, intensity, and duration. Lastly, the word “longer” has a L* pitch accent to communicate the finality of the utterance and implies the finality of forgetting.

Trump also utilizes the maxim of pitch range for the information structure. The two phrases have wide pitch ranges of 138.66 Hz and 145.51 Hz respectively. The second is wider the first at 2.70% because it carries the weight of the commissive. Regarding the maxim of phrasing, The first phrase ends with a low-rise boundary to anticipate the next constituent, and the second phrase is closed with a low boundary to indicate finality. The maxim of silence is also followed. An intentional silence is used to attract the public's attention and maintain their interest while postponing the next sentence, provide rhythm for speech and give him time for preparing and organizing the next phrase.

Utterance No. 2

Figure (2) The acoustic representations of emotive language in utterance No. 2



The utterance is divided into two intonational phrases. A directive SA is utilized. The analysis has revealed the employment of various prosodic maxims. Regarding the maxim of pitch/F0 tone, the entire utterance is articulated with a high pitch average of 179.71 Hz to communicate his agitated emotion of joy. Considering the maxim of pitch, the overall utterance is uttered with a falling pitch contour, it falls at 18.61% to make his command assertive and authoritative as if it is non-negotiable. he exploits the maxim of emphasis and focus. He accentuates and deaccentuates certain words to carry out the directive SA. In the first phrase, the words "tonight," “I,” “you” an “choose” are accented with H* pitch accents to catch the public attention and be realized as new. He implies to hinder that the audience have the choice either to be great or not. The adjective "greatness" is de-emphasized with a L *pitch accent to assert his previous slogan "Make America great again” which is known.

When it comes to the maxim of pitch range, the two phrases have wide pitch ranges of 278.36 Hz and 192.68 Hz correspondingly. When compare the two phrases, the first is wider than the second at about 63.10%, the first has new information while the second adds given information since he refers to his election slogan. Trump has traced the maxim of phrasing, the first phrase ends with a partially falling boundary to indicate that there is something to follow, the second phrase is terminated with a low boundary to communicate the finality. The maxim of silence has also recognized by Trump to convey the directive SA. There is one silence at the end of the second phrase for giving the audience time to react by cheering and applauding. It indicates that Trump' utterance get its purpose by affecting perception of the audience.

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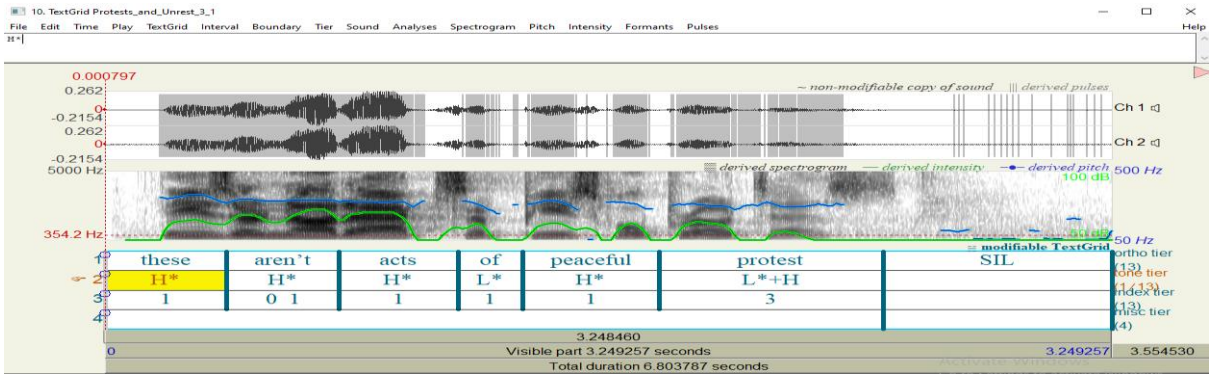
Utterance 3

Figure (3) The acoustic representations of emotive language in utterance No. 3

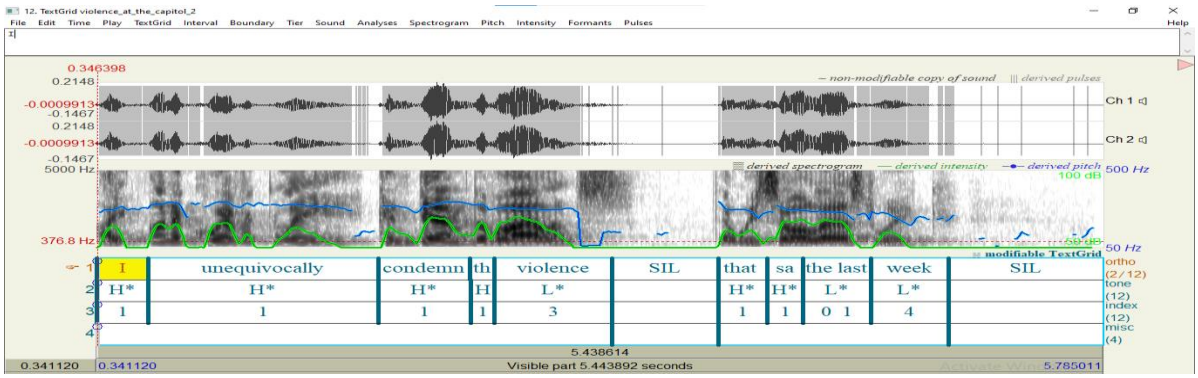


Trump divides the utterance into two intonational phrases. He feels sad because the protest has transformed its direction from being peaceful into violent therefore he uses the representative. Prosodically, The entire utterance is delivered with a low pitch average of 134.62 Hz reinforcing a sense of assertiveness and authority. for the maxim of pitch, the whole utterance is articulated with a falling pitch contour. it falls at about 21.58% to project confidence and certainty. Furthermore, the words "these," "aren't" and "peaceful" are accented with H* pitch accents, marked by increased mean F0, intensity and duration as they contain new information. In contrast, the word "protest" is uttered with a L*+H pitch accent to communicate the meaning of uncertainty; Trump hesitates whether to call this chaos as protest or not.

Considering the maxim of pitch range The first has a much wider pitch that ranges from 227.43 Hz to 121.71 Hz to introduce new information, while the second is produced with a narrower range extended from 188.13 Hz to 51.44 Hz to convey known information. The first is about 15.02% wider than the second. Employing the maxim of phrasing, The first phrase concludes with a partially falling boundary to anticipate the next constituent. Conversely, the second phrase terminates with a low boundary as it is independent from the next constituent. a 0.740 sec. Silence, forming 22.74 of total time follows the utterance to delay the next delivery, ass rhythm and help the audience process the message.

Utterance 4

Figure (4) The acoustic representations of emotive language in utterance No. 4



Utterance No. 4 is divided into two intonational phrases. Furthermore, based on the context, Trump expresses the emotion of sadness. The manifested speech act is expressive. Prosodically, the whole utterance is pronounced with a low pitch level of 140.95 Hz to express sadness regard the

violence. Observing the maxim of pitch, the utterance is articulated with a falling pitch, it drops at 14.74% He uses the falling pitch contour to sound more certain and assertive. The maxim of emphasis and focus is manipulated in the utterance; the word "unequivocally" and “condemn” are accented with H* pitch accent to sound more serious and determined in expressing his intention. The word "violence" is de-emphasized with a L* pitch accent.

Following the maxim of pitch range, the whole utterance has a wide pitch range of 143.96 Hz. the pitch ranges of the intonational phrases are 143.77 Hz and 141 Hz correspondingly. The first phrase is wider than the second at about 1.91% because it adds new information. The maxim of phrasing is recognized, The first phrase has a partially falling boundary for anticipating the next constitute, whereas the second phrase ends with a low boundary to signal finality of the utterance and for assertiveness. The maxim of silence is observed twice deliberately to delay the next contribution and give the audience more time to process the information. The second phrase ends with a silence forming 14.53% of the total duration. It indicates finality and to sound more affective by the violence.

Conclusions

On the basis of the analysis conducted previously, the following conclusions can be introduced: Trump employs various prosodic maxims and variables to perform different speech acts which in turn support his communicative intention. Furthermore, Trump avoids declarations because he sees himself as a populist outsider. Intonation is exploited to convey numerous functions. It is manipulated in different context to show assertiveness, authority and dominance, emphasize the words which carry new and given information, organize the topic structure of utterances, anticipate next constituents, indicate finality, delay subsequent delivery, give audience time for processing the information presented and finally provide rhythmic effect for the speech. These functions increase the expressed emotions and their effect on the audience. Trump adheres to the prosodic maxims and variables most frequently for communicating the intended emotive message. Through the intentional manipulation of prosodic maxims and variables, Trump influences the emotional responses of the audience according to his intended emotive meaning.

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