Theoretical Approaches and Models of Intonation - A study

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There have been many theoretical approaches to the study of intonation. Apart from other models, the history of intonational studies presents two fundamental approaches developed since 1900: the British school of intonation and the American school of intonation. The British school scholars focused on the change of pitch direction as a whole contour on a tone group, whereas the American approach analysts gave importance to pitch levels on different syllables. Halliday asserts that the importance of intonation is in its ability to give different meanings for the same utterance by changing the intonation. He proposed three systems: Tonality, Tonicity and Tone in his book *Intonation and Grammar in British English* (1967) and he described the three systems after analyzing as the three recites. These play different roles in English grammar but in any given utterance they operate in interaction with one another so that, it cannot always give a clear account of the meaning of a particular selection in one system in isolation from the others.

Roopa Suzane Theodore, *A Study of the Intonation Patterns in the Sub-regional Varieties of Telugu-English Spoken in A.P*, Ph.D thesis, CIEFL, Hyderabad (2005) described Intonation patterns of English in the sub-regional varieties of Telugu. The researcher has selected 10 formants from each region (Telangana, Rayalaseema and Coastal Andhra) of A.P. The informants had not acquired any formal training in 'Phonetics and Spoken English'. The researcher selected twenty-five samples of sentences in isolation; a short conversation and a free conversation with the informants on certain topics were the material.

Some of the Findings:

- All the group of the study deviates from the RP pattern of tonicity in statements, commands, wh-questions, requests and exclamations. Question tags that are used by the entire group deviate from the RP pattern of tonicity. All the groups used the correct intonation pattern in the sentences rather than in the passage. The group performance was bad in the reading of correct intonation patterns when compared to their performance in the normal reading of the sentences.

- All the informants mostly used a falling tone. A rising tone is used to a large extent and a falling tone is very rarely used.

Surabhi Bharathi, *A Study of the Intonation Patterns in English spoken by B.A First-year students of Vikram University*, CIEFL, unpublished M.Litt. Thesis, 1983, exemplified Intonation patterns in English of non- native speakers who studied B.A First year at Vikram University. The researcher has selected two groups which consist of ten students each. The two groups are from different backgrounds; the students are from Hindi and English medium schools. Free conversation, isolated sentences and passage were used as test material.

Some of the Findings:

- There is no remarkable difference in using intonation patterns of the students from schools with different mediums of instruction. The performance of all the informants is varied to a large extent from the native variety of English. All the informants had a large amount of deviation from native English in tonicity. Pointing the correct location of the nucleus is not done by the informants.

- The major deviations were in the order of frequency-wise for the subsystems of Tonality, Tonicity and Tone.

NVSN Lakshmi's work, *A Phonetic Study of English Spoken by the Students of Engineering and Technology* (2004) describes the segmental and suprasegmental features of English as spoken by the first-year students of Bachelor of Technology in Colleges of Engineering and Technology affiliated to Jawaharlal Nehru Technological University (JNTU) in the state of Andhra Pradesh, India. The study also aims at finding out the phonetic differences between the students of English medium background and the students of Telugu medium background. She recorded data for twenty speakers who were at the end of the first-year course of B.Tech (ten from English medium background and ten from Telugu medium background).

Some of the findings:

A majority of the speakers realised /Iə/ as /i:r/ in the word 'engineer'. /eə/ was deviated as [e:r] and [eir] in 'air' and as [e:r] in 'software'. The responses indicate that the spelling had misled them while rendering these words. Vocalic endings of the word-final consonants were found in the speech of seven speakers. This is an indication of mother tongue influence in their spoken English. Most Telugu words end with a vowel. The vocalic ending of the word-final consonants was more in the speech of Telugu medium background students compared to the speakers of English medium background.

Chaudari, S.K, in his dissertation *Rhythm and Intonation in Maithili and Maithili English: A Study Based on Halliday's Approach* (2002) examines rhythm and intonation in Maithili based on Halliday's approach. This is supplemented by a sample of recorded data. The analysis of the sample of Maithili and Maithili English is stress-timed or syllable-timed; comparison between the rhythmic patterns of these two. He gave a brief discussion on Halliday's description on tonality. The acoustic analysis of the data suggests that Halliday's criteria for identifying tonic syllables need to be modified if they have to be used in Maithili. In his findings the number of tones remains the same, there is a difference in nature. For example, Rising and falling tones are interchangeable in Maithili but they are independent tones in Maithili English. The analysis of Maithili data indicates the use of Rising-falling tone, but this is not found in Maithili English. Bansal R.K. in *An Outline of General Phonetics* (1972) says that "English spoken in India does not differ radically from native English in vocabulary and grammar, though there are some well-known differences. In pronunciation, a large number of people deviate from both British and American English in several ways" (Bansal). He further says that, "As language is primarily a means of communication, we must ensure that we retain at least those features not only phonological and phonetic but also those related to clear, articulate speech in the absence of which mutual intelligibility is likely to be affected" (Bansal). There are several factors which can hinder intelligibility from the point of view of the speaker namely: pronunciation, voice-quality, tempo, intonation etc., which include segmental and supra-segmental barriers. There is a lot of research done on the linguistic aspects of

Telugu, but most of the work is based on the syntactic aspects of language. Regarding the phonological aspects, especially intonation, there is some work on Telugu-English intonation, but not many on the intonation of Telugu as such. The comparison between English intonation and Telugu intonation is also attempted till date. Some related works on Telugu intonation and Telugu linguistics are referred below.

Prakasam, V. *A Systemic Treatment of certain Aspects of Telugu Phonology* (1972), studied the syntactic operations in Telugu in contrast with that of English using SFL framework. He also looked into the phonological aspects of Telugu and described Telugu phonological aspects both at segmental and suprasegmental levels. He studied the three components of intonation of Telugu. He described neutral tone group as an equivalent one to a clause. The cases of more than one clause or less than one clause which are realized as one tone group were treated under marked tonality (Prakasam 49.) Regarding the operation of tonicity, unmarked tonicity is explained as having the tonic accent on the final word (i.e. content word) of a tone group and marked tonicity is explained as having the tonic accent on the non-final word in a tone group (Prakasam 69.) Coming to the system of tone in Telugu, he identified the tone patterns associating with certain functions. They were categorized into tones for generalized functions, tones at the rank of utterance and tones for speech functions. They are given below.

Tones for Generalized Functions: Tone Function- High fall-rise (Causality) High rise-fall (Conditionality) Low rise- fall (Aspectuality) Level Identification (Narrativity) Low fall-rise (Complementation)

Tones at the Rank of Utterance: Tone Function- Sharp rise- fall Conjunct coordination Rise-fall curve disjunct coordination

Tones for Speech Functions: Tone Function- Level Identifier Rise Questions and Doubts Fall Imperatives, Statements and Questions not expecting answers Rise – fall Exclamations and Vocatives Fall-rise Echo (statements), Questions and Presuppositions Concerning intonation, the Mood in Telugu was also described by Prakasam in his work *Meta Functional Profile of the Grammar of Telugu* (2004.) He analyzed the MOOD system and its realization in intonation. As he explained, in Telugu, the word order of subject and finite is not found; and the language is rich in verbless clauses also. He derived the mood system as follows.

• In verbless clauses, finiteness is phonologised in terms of tone. In the clauses which contain a verb, the PNG marker is treated as finite. In interrogative clauses (especially Yes/no type), interrogative particle (a) reflects finiteness. Though some other Telugu linguistic issues are also discussed in Prakasam (2004), the points which are particularly relevant to the present research have been mentioned here.

Regarding another important research on intonation of Telugu, Babu in his article *Intonation of Colloquial Telugu* (1978), described the intonation of Telugu. This paper was based on his M.Phil research. The framework that he used for his study is Connor and Arnold's *Intonation of Colloquial English* (1973.) He claimed that the difference in meaning is operated through intonation at the level of phrase or sentence. He postulated that a Telugu tone group generally contains one nuclear word and in some cases, there is a possibility of two nuclear words. He also discussed the tonicity and tone aspects of Telugu language. Babu in his work, *Emphasis in Telugu* (1977) pointed out some phonological features (such as prolongation of some nasal sounds, longer pause before plosives etc) that contribute to emphasis in the Telugu language.

Badriraju Krishnamurthi analyzed many aspects of Telugu language. He worked almost on all linguistic characteristics of Telugu along with other Dravidian languages, but less work was done on the aspect of intonation. Krishnamurthi, Bh in his book *The Dravidian Languages* (2003), gave a generalized survey type description about supra-segmental features of Dravidian languages. Vowel length is said to be "the only stable supra-segmental feature in all Dravidian languages" (Krishnamurthi 58). In his book, it is mentioned that there is not enough work attempted on the aspect of intonation of Dravidian languages.

In Subrahmanyam's *An Introduction to Modern Telugu* (1974), grammatical aspects and some intonation aspects of Telugu language were discussed. He attempted to cover both morphology and syntax of Telugu. His analysis of grammar was based on the dialect of the West and East Godavari districts of Andhra Pradesh. He gave a very brief description of intonation, wherein he discussed that the variation in the pitch movement immediately before a pause, is of great importance in understanding the sentences. He suggested two kinds of pauses: 1) sentence-final pause which is indicated by a full stop or a question mark, 2) non-final pause which is indicated by a comma. The above studies used theoretical approaches to the study of intonation but they didn't give importance to the perception of English native speaker.

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