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## ON PHONOSTYLISTIC STUDY OF UNIVERSITY LECTURE

### *Abstract*

*The article discusses the features of phonostylistic approach to describing prosody of the sounding text. The focus of the article is on the prosodic characteristics of a university lecture as one of the genres of academic public speech. First of all, extralinguistic factors that determine the nature of prosodic variation in academic public speech are highlighted. Second of all, the stylistic heterogeneity of university lecture is described. The length of syntagms varies from short to super-long intonation groups between the pauses. Such variability of syntagm's length observed in a university lecture is an indicator of the interpenetration of academic and conversational styles. The segments are characterized by the following tonal features: narrow tonal range, smooth middle and low descending terminal tones, smooth tone in pre-nuclear parts of syntagm, smooth terminal tone in repetitions, creating the effect of "stringing". Another indicator of stylistic heterogeneity is the use of tone markers characteristic of the conversational style (low terminal descending tone), as well as change of speech tempo.*

***Keywords:** phonostylistics, phonetic style, extralinguistic factors, prosodic characteristics, university lecture.*

### **1. Introduction.**

One of the current problems of modern linguistics is the study of specificity and systematic functioning of language means of all language levels in real linguistic environment. Thus, the study of the laws of the phonetic and prosodic levels' units functioning and their collaboration in various forms and types of speech, conditioned by extralinguistic factors, became the subject of interest of modern linguists.

The study of functional-stylistic differentiation of sounding speech continues to be an urgent task of communicative phonetics and phonostylistics. Nowadays a special attention is given to the issues on language functioning in the process of communication, the study of a variety of factors that control the speech process and influence the implementation of language means, the structural-linguistic features of styles, the laws of their implementation and a number of other issues.

As R.K. Potapova notes, «особое значение приобретает расширение диапазона и методик речевых исследований, «выход» за пределы традиционной коммуникативной модели, учет интенции говорящего, ситуации, сверхзадачи, опыта, знаний и т.д., принятие во внимание психологических и интеллектуальных особенностей коммуникантов» (the expansion of the range of research techniques and speech is particularly important, "way out" beyond the traditional communicative model, taking into account the intentions of the speaker, the situation, super-objective, experience, knowledge, etc., taking into account the psychological and intellectual characteristics of the communicants) (Р.К. Потапова, Г. Линднер, 1991, с. 3). Thus, one of the main tasks of phonostylistic researches is the accurate determination of extralinguistic factors influencing the choice of phonetic language means while stylistic organization of a particular utterance.

There is no doubt about the relevance of phonostylistic study of academic public speech, lecture-style where the speech of a lecturer should be built in the best way for the perception contained therein scientific information. Phonostylistics on suprasegmental level in academic public

style is of particular importance when it comes to a foreign language performances, not only in the classroom, but also at conferences, seminars, symposia, etc.

The present research is dedicated to the study of phonostylistic markers of heterogeneity of academic public speech on suprasegmental level on an example of university lecture. Lecture genre plays an important role in modern scientific and educational communication, however, its prosodic characteristics is studied not enough. Despite the fact that some prosodic characteristics of public lecture have been discussed by various authors, a comprehensive description of university lecture's phonetic style does not exist at the present moment.

In this regard, this study is aimed at *determining the most relevant prosodic characteristics of lecturer's speech* (academic lecture), which could characterize this style. Academic lecture stands out as one of the genres of academic public speech and represents an explanatory monologue.

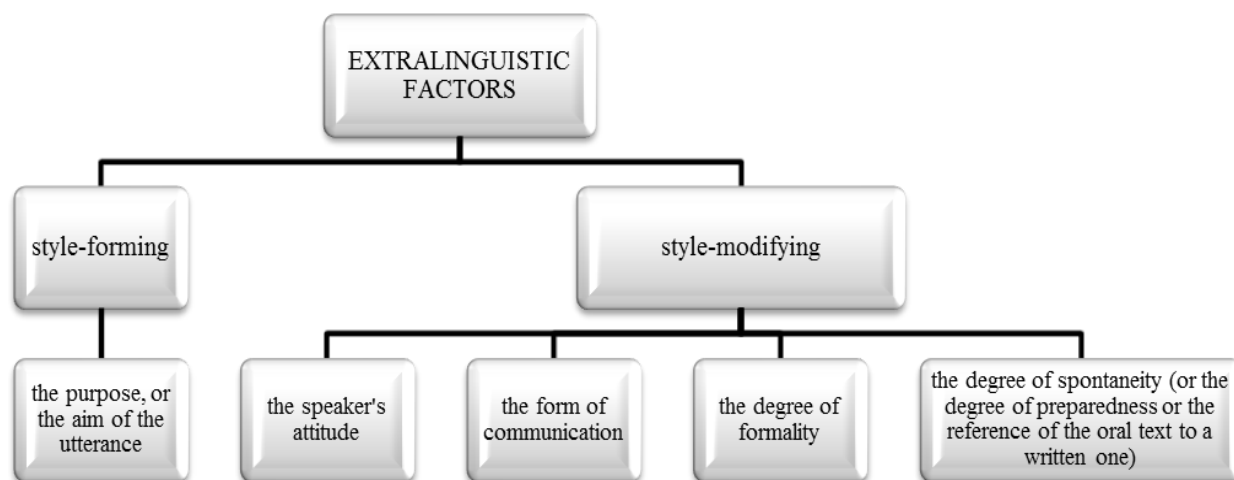
## 2. Materials and Methods.

The research was conducted *on the material of sounding monologues* – the samples of modern academic lectures in Humanities conducted by English native-speakers – university lecturers, available at Youtube.com.

The total volume of the material covers 300 minutes of sounding text. All recorded material was considered as a large body of empirical evidence, and underwent linguo-rhetoric analysis. A narrow body of empirical evidence, represented by fragments from each sample for a total of 120 minutes was allocated for audio (слуховой анализ) and auditory (аудиторский) analyses.

## 3. Results.

Before considering phonostylistic characteristics of university lecture as a genre of academic public speech, it is necessary to describe extra-linguistic factors that determine its phonostylistic originality (see Picture 1).



Picture 1 – Classification of extralinguistic factors

Describing the target content of academic public speech, it should be noted that this type of discourse can be described as goal-oriented: its purpose is to persuade through active informing. Implementation of the speaker's main objective, consisting in the transfer of knowledge, implies a certain rhetorical pressure on students. At the same time orientation on communicative cooperation with the audience, which is characteristic of modern public speech, it is shown in a relaxed, informal communication between the speaker and the audience.

As part of the same genre or register of public speech specific implementations may differ significantly in terms of styling. «University lecture can be very formal, when it is manuscript read, formal greeting, a large number of passive constructions and the technical terms are used. However, in accordance with the preferences of the lecturer, University traditions, the size of the audience a lecture can be spontaneous and presented in a free manner with jokes or puns, anecdotes from personal experience, individual appeals to present students, and other markers of informal discourse

may be present in it» (M. Gregory, S. Carroll, 1981, p. 60). Indeed, the specific implementation of the academic public speech is directly dependent on the dynamics of socially determined interaction of the speaker and the audience.

Assessing the prosodic features of the organization of public speaking, you must take into account such factors as a way of execution or presentation of the material. There are the following ways of phonation:

- unprepared speech;
- extemporization (impromptu method of delivery);
- manuscript reading;
- presentation of the memorized by heart text (memorized method);
- improvisational method, or the method of presentation of free text (extemporaneous method).

In each case, the speaker chooses one or the other method of execution in accordance with the rhetorical objectives, the theme, the peculiarities of the audience and his/her own abilities.

Appearance in the public speech of factors related to the category of «modus» (preparedness – spontaneity, monologue - dialogue, oral speech – written speech), are caused by the specifics of the rhetorical discourse and are often contradictory. Thus, the impression of «spontaneity» that is created in the audience, except in very rare cases of a truly spontaneous speech, is deliberately planned speaker: «quasi-spontaneous elements» are incorporated into a prepared text in order to give it a lively and natural character and optimize the interaction with the audience. Therefore it is not always possible to positively identify truly spontaneous speech and its imitation. Moreover, the interactive nature of the rhetorical discourse gives a certain proportion of spontaneity even to prepared statements.

Public speech is a verbal form of communication, at the same time it is based on a written text. The shape of the academic public speech is «presented orally text written in such a way as to be the spoken» (M. Gregory, S. Carroll, 1981, p. 42). Such texts are considered to be the most effective from a historical perspective.

Academic public speech is a monologue, but at the same time it differs by obvious features of «dialogness» as an appeal to the audience and the need to maintain the feedback are important and integral characteristics of rhetorical communication.

Table 1 presents summarized factors that determine the character of stylization of the academic public speech. The table does not consider those parameters, which are among the immanent characteristics of public speech: spoken monologue form of speech, direct appeal to the recipient, as well as the sphere of communication.

*Table 1 – Extralinguistic characteristics of academic public speech*

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Speaker</b>	<b>Audience</b>	<b>Message</b>	<b>Method of phonation</b>
The main – persuasive informing Related – motivation of professional activity, discussion of scientific ideas, entertainment Superobjective – education	Psycho-physiological features: temperament, structure of the vocal apparatus Social characteristics: gender, age, status The level of competence (scientific, dialogic, rhetorical) Attitude to message: involvement / detachment Attitude to the audience: open nature / closed	The size of the audience Social characteristics: gender, age, status Ethno-cultural characteristics Cognitive factors: the volume of knowledge and level of preparedness Psychological factors: motivation, voluntary attendance	Field of knowledge (humanities / linguistic science) Theme / topic	Unprepared speech Impromptu method of delivery Manuscript reading Extemporaneous method

	nature, contact / distance	Attitude to speaker: friendly / unfriendly		
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Thus, during the study of phonostylistic features of the academic public speech the following factors must be considered:

1. Academic public speech lies at the intersection of the spheres of scientific and pedagogical communication that defines speaker's objective (who can be a scientist and a teacher at the same time), the methods of presentation and language features. Objective scientific information acquires subjectivized character due to a number of factors associated not with the scientific knowledge itself but with communication participants. Thus, scientific knowledge as an object of reflection is included in the context of interpersonal relations and in the context of the interaction between the speaker and the audience.

2. Academic public speech is usually realized on basis of a written text created for oral presentation. The degree of difference between the written basis and the oral realization may vary depending on the speaker's preferences, the composition of the audience, the situation of communication, speech topics.

3. Academic performance represents public monologue. However, public speech is realized as a «detailed conversation» of the speaker and the audience and represents dialogized discourse focused on the listener.

4. Academic public speech is based on a pre-prepared text, while at the same time the speaker creates the impression of spontaneity on the audience either by incorporating appropriate elements in the «script» of speech or by «improvisational» method of presentation.

5. The nature of relations between the speaker and the audience is shown in the tone of communication. Interpersonal tone is realized in connection with the requirements of ethos as the friendly relations of the communicative cooperation.

6. Academic public speech represents unique combination of creativity, and stereotypes. On the one hand, it can be attributed to the ritual forms of speech activity, on the other – it is a unique work of verbal creativity.

Under the influence of extralinguistic factors described above, university lecture, as a genre of the academic public speech, takes on special styling: along with prosodic features of scientific style of sounding text prosodic markers of conversational style are present. However, this is a special kind of conversation, which cannot be equated with every-day conversational speech. «The predominance of colloquial tone does not mean that public speech merges with conversational speech <...> Students are unlikely to expect that public speech will sound like ordinary everyday conversation. When informal conversation, most people speak softly, taking a relaxed pose, often use pauses to find the next word or thought. At the same time, effective orators adapt their voice so that it was clearly audible throughout the auditorium, watch their posture and avoid such behavior voice that could distract the listeners» (T. Sloane, 2001, p. 642). Therefore, depending on the individual characteristics of the speaker, as well as his educational and oratorical competence a lecture is on some of its parameters to approach in one case text to the spontaneous, in the other - to reading; such heterogeneous nature of lecturing speech is not only possible, but is regarded as an integral component of oratory.

In this connection the style of academic lecture can be characterized as quasi spontaneous. That is why it is difficult to fit it into the rigid framework of phonostylistics, offering a given set of intonational parameters for each style. In this case one can speak not only about stylistic in general, but also phonostylistic heterogeneity of academic public lecture. This property of sounding text is primarily manifested in its tempo-rhythmic and melodic features. Studies of recent decades in the field of textual prosody have shown, that among the most important phonostylistics characteristics include specificity of text articulation and speech tempo. In the university lecture these characteristics may be indicative of stylistic heterogeneity.

According to our observations, made during the speech sample analysis of contemporary academic lectures, the length of groups between the pauses, measured by the number of syllables, varies greatly at all the speakers. Along with short (1-2 syllables) and medium groups between the pauses (6-7 syllables) there are long groups (up to 14 syllables), and even extra-long (28-31 syllables).

*Em | and || the | result of this debate was | that | liberal and | scientific education were split from one another | in | the English system. |*

*So || the Cambridge year | and the best place to start | begins | when | schoolchildren in their final year at school start thinking whether or not they want to go to University at all. |*

Long and extra-long groups between the pauses differ, as a rule, by the highest information richness. In short groups those components of dicteme, that implement speech planning, metacommunication and contact are organized. Medium groups between the pauses that predominate in the text, often contain a thematic component.

A high percentage of short intonation groups is, undoubtedly, a characteristic feature of the academic public speech. Obviously, the desire of the speaker to achieve an optimal understanding while auditory perception of the sounding text, leads to a strong compartmentalization of the speech stream. Moreover, frequent breaks are caused by the need to harmonize external speech with the internal.

It is known that this phenomenon is especially true of the spontaneous speech, which is partitioned into small segments due to its synchronous planning. Although public speech being prepared is quite different from the spontaneous by the amount of planning; its characteristic element of spontaneity is expressed in the presence of a significant amount of short text syntagms.

At the same time long between-the-pauses groups, in contrast, represent speech preparedness. Variability of length of these groups, observed in academic lecture-speech, i.e. the division of a text into units of different dimensions, is one of the indicators of the interpenetration of academic and conversational styles.

Another indicator of stylistic heterogeneity is the variation of speech tempo. Fast tempo, mostly distinguishing conversational style, alternates with medium, typical for academic style. Slow tempo is observed on the most information-rich areas of the text, as well as the signal of a high degree of rhetorical pressure on the listeners.

In the text there are segments, melodic design of which differs by «smoothness» characteristic of spontaneous speech. The segments are characterized by the following tonal features: narrow tonal range, smooth middle and low descending terminal tones, smooth tone in pre-nuclear parts of syntagm, smooth terminal tone in repetitions, creating the effect of “stringing”.

Colloquial stylization is associated with the frequency of use of low terminal descending tone. It is explained by the fact that colloquial speech, as a rule, is divided into short intonational groups, «so it is not surprising that there are a large number of descending tones; they are the most common and the most neutral in terms of emotional-modal shades of tones in independent statements» (A. Cruttenden, 1986, p. 135).

Melodic markers of colloquial stylization are observed in the following parts of presentation: organization of collaborative activities in the introduction, justifying examples, examples from personal experience, direct appeal to the audience, explanation, commentary. The number of «conversational inclusions» depends on the degree of formality of public speech, topics of presentation, speaker's individual style:

*I used to have a box by the door | and instead of throwing away all my junk mail without opening it | I used to put it into the box | so it could go into the corpus. || Language of the e-mails. || We've got a small e-mail corpus. |||*

*As | 've said already | I am not an English language teacher and so | um | I will not talk about English | I'll talk mainly about | er | the | er | organisation | of higher education in England | in Britain | um | European work in Great Britain. | So I'll talk about our involvement in European programmes and that's the main thing today. |||*

Outside the context of entire public presentation, the given passages could be perceived as a part of an unprepared conversational monologue. However, such intonational stylization, as we have noted, is a characteristic feature of contemporary academic discourse.

Since academic lecture represents spoken monologue, which purpose is not only communication of new knowledge, but also a certain impact on the audience, it requires active involvement in the process of communication both the speaker and listeners. High information richness of the message and its rhetorical focus are provided by the following intonation techniques:

1. Word-by-word and syllable-by-syllable accentuation in statements containing important in the context of the performance information:

➤But since the middle of the century we have become a consumer society||  
✓Everybody reads thrillers||

2. Sudden change of tempo, a clear increase in the duration of pauses. This technique is especially characteristic for those cases when something unexpected or unusual is informed:

➤English has been a stress-timed language|| Until now||

Stressing the importance of the message containing the paradoxical and unexpected fact, the lecturer slows down the tempo in the first statement and precedes the second with an extra-long pause, which acquired the status of rhetoric. Such marked increase in the duration of the pause within the utterances promotes allocation of the most significant elements:

✓Prose|| is supposed to be the simplest thing||

3. Contrastive tones in use of comparisons and contrasts. When reporting new knowledge orators use the method of comparison of objects and phenomena that activates mental activity of students and involves them in rhetorical communication:

And you can't pile up adverbs in the way you can pile up adjectives||

The conducted study shows that modern academic public speech on the example of university lecture is rich in stylistic shades.

#### 4. Conclusions.

Thus, a distinctive feature of a university lecture as a genre of academic public speech is its rhetorical orientation. The key factors of such rhetorical orientation are the harmonization of speaker-audience relations, the presence of feedback, the «dialogized» form of presentation, the mixture of elements of various phonological styles in one speech performance.

Prosody along with other language means of different levels is involved in the implementation of the rhetorical orientation of modern university lecture. Thus, on the prosodic level the indicators of university lecture stylistic heterogeneity are the following parameters: the division of the text into units of different dimensions (length), a marked variation of speech tempo, particular qualities of the melody. Along with prosodic markers of academic style the markers of colloquial tonality are present in a spoken text.

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### **ДЫБЫСТЫ БЕЙНЕЛЕЙТІН УНИВЕРСИТЕТТІЛ ДӘРІСТЕРДІ ЗЕРТТЕУ ТУРАЛЫ**

Мақалада фоноликалық талқылаудың ерекшеліктері дыбысталған мәтіннің просодияларын қарастырылады. Негізгі назарда университет дәрістерінің просодикалық мінездемелері – академиялық жалпы- халықтық сөйлеу тілі ретінде болуы. Біріншіден, экстралингвистикалық факторлар академиялық – жалпы халықтық сөйлеу тілінің просодикалық кедергілері ретінде ерекшеленген. Екіншіден, университет дәрістерінің стилистикалық әртектігі сипатталады. Синтагма өлшемі кіші дауыс кідірісі топтарынан өте ұзақ синтагмаларға дейін. Мұндай синтагма ұзындығының өзгергіштігі университет дәрістерінде байқалады және академиялық және сөйлеу стильдерінің өзара араласуының көрсеткіші болып табылады. Сегменттердің мелодикасы келесі тональді ерекшеліктермен сипатталады: тар тональді диапазон, тегіс-орташа және төмен терминальді сәйкес келмейтін тон, тегіс тон ядроға дейінгі бөлімдегі синтагмалар, қайталаулардағы тегіс терминальді тон. Стилистикалық әртектіктің басқа көрсеткіштері болып табылады: ауызекі сөйлеу тіліне тән тональді маркерлерді қолдану және сөйлеудің қарқынының өзгеруі.

**Мақаланың мәнін ашатын сөздер:** фоностилистика, фонетикалық стиль, экстралингвистикалық факторлар, просодикалық мінездемелер, университет дәрістері.

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### **ИССЛЕДОВАНИЕ О ЗВУКОВОЙ СТИЛИСТИКЕ УНИВЕРСИТЕТСКИХ ЛЕКЦИЙ**

В статье рассматриваются особенности фоностилистического подхода к описанию просодии звучащего текста. В центре внимания просодические характеристики университетской лекции как одного из жанров академической публичной речи. Также в статье выделены экстралингвистические факторы, определяющие характер просодического варьирования в академической публичной речи, описывается стилистическая неоднородность университетской лекции. Авторы отмечают, что длина синтагм в университетской лекции варьируется от коротких межпаузальных групп до сверхдлинных синтагм. Такая изменчивость длины синтагм является одним из показателей взаимопроникновения академического и разговорного стилей. Мелодика сегментов характеризуется следующими тональными особенностями: узкий тональный диапазон, гладкие средние и низкие терминальные нисходящие тоны, ровный тон в даядерной части синтагмы, гладкий терминальный тон в повторах. Другим показателем стилистической неоднородности является использование тональных маркеров, характерных для разговорного стиля, а также изменение темпа речи.

**Ключевые слова:** фоностилистика, фонетический стиль, экстралингвистические факторы, просодические характеристики, университетская лекция.