

# Some Prosodic Aspects in Kannada\*

MANDINI, H. M.

Speech is defined as the concurrent motor functions of respiration, phonation, resonance and articulation prosody. Prosody has been viewed as decorative ornamentation, functioning to make speech more aesthetically pleasing. Intonation is one aspect of prosody, other aspects being stress and rhythm.

Intonation like everything else in a language is one instrument in an orchestra.

The literature of communicative disorder is filled with diagnostic descriptive of dysprosodic speech. Abnormal prosody is a characteristic of deaf children and is also affected in language disordered children and adults.

Successful treatment procedures to establish natural prosody requires understanding of its normal process.

The purpose of the study was to find out the kind of intonation patterns that are being used by the speakers of Kannada language, in expressing various emotions and to establish a procedure for analysis of Intonation.

Thirty sentences from 3 Kannada films audio recorded cassettes were selected randomly. It was decided to use these cassettes as :

- (1) The emotions are expressed in the conversation/speech as naturally as possible.
- (2) The emotions are conveyed by speakers to the listeners only through speech, *i.e.*, without any visual cues.

In the present study both instrumental and perceptual analysis were done. Instrumental or objective analysis was done using the Pitch Analyzer (PM 100). Perceptual analysis was done with the help of three trained listeners as judges to note the intonation patterns and to identify the emotions.

Analysis of these sentences showed the following results :

- (1) In Kannada different intonation patterns are used in expressing different types of sentences.
- (2) Terminal contours are important in determining the type of sentences or the terminal contours can be used to identify different types of sentences.
- (3) The perception of pitch variations depend upon the fundamental frequency variation.
- (4) Pitch is important for the perception of Intonation.
- (5) Intensity variations do not show difference between different types of sentences.

---

\* Master's Dissertation, University of Mysore, 1985.

- (6) The intonation permits the identification of emotion/type of sentences even when the context sentences are not present.
- (7) Trained judges can identify the pitch contours occurring in sentences, reliably and validly.
- (8) The instrumental analysis provides the minor details of frequency and intensity variations.

### **Implications of the Study**

- (1) This study provides information regarding intonation in Kannada language.
- (2) The procedure developed by this study can be used to study the intonation in different languages.
- (3) The intonation patterns, identified by this study, can be used in teaching language to deaf and other speech and language disorder cases.
- (4) Similar analysis procedure can be used to study other aspects of prosody in Kannada.

### **Limitations of the Study**

- (1) Only randomly selected sentences have been taken, the number of sentences are not equal.

- (2) Only the audio-tapes of film stories have been taken. These samples may not be equal to natural speech.
- (3) Speech samples as spoken by only one individual have been taken.
- (4) Generalization of the results, at least, some types of sentences is limit as only one sentence has been considered for some types of sentences.

### **Recommendations**

- (1) Now, as the procedure for analysis of intonation has been developed, a more detailed study with more speech sample may be taken up.
- (2) More speech sample representing other types of sentences may be taken up.
- (3) Application of theories of intonation can be tried, with reference to Kannada language.
- (4) Using natural speech, with procedure presently developed, the intonation pattern in Kannada may be studied.
- (5) Using the procedure developed by this study the intonation in other languages may be studied.