

## FEATURES OF INTONATION VARIABILITY OF REGIONAL ENGLISH PHONEMES IN MODERN LINGUISTICS

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**Abstract:** The article aims to identify and describe the intonation features of the southern version of modern English in comparison with the general English pronunciation norm through a sociohistorical analysis of the formative period of the English language as well as an investigation of communication differences in regional and supra-territorial norms. The future development of the English language as a national language is, to a large extent, formed by its southern and eastern-central dialects. The period from the 7th to the 9th century was characterized by a growth in land ownership and the establishment of a class system as the tribal system decomposed and the English isles entered the stage of feudalism. The difference between dialects increased due to both geographical and economic changes: communities became less connected to one another as mountains, rivers, forests, and other natural obstacles acted as dialect boundaries by impeding the communication of different communities. In addition to these two reasons, it is also necessary to pay attention to the sociohistorical conditions affecting the variability of language. The Norman conquest of 1066 led not only to the final establishment of feudalism and the formation of a feudal state, which strengthened regional and sociolinguistic differences, but also had a particular impact on the southern dialects and on the speech of the upper classes.

**Keywords:** Culture, Dialect, English language, Intonation, Meaning.

### 1 Introduction

Historically, a decisive influence on the development of English dialects was exerted by the settlement of Germans in the territory; Jutes and Frisians occupied the southeastern part of the island, the Saxons occupied the Thames River valley (modern-day counties of Middlesex, Essex, Wessex and Sussex). By this time, the Celtic tribes of Britons and Belgians, who lived in the south of England from the 5th century BC, were significantly Romanized due to the long domination of the Romans (especially on the upper strata of the population).

The formation of the English national language began in the Middle English period (8th-15th centuries), when the London dialect began to occupy a special place among other dialects. The very understanding of the literary norm and the associated ideas about certain forms in the language as "correct" or "incorrect" would appear much later. However, according to V. N. Yartseva [24, p. 32], the language of London was opposed to other dialects already from the end of the fourteenth century, creating inequality between English dialects; namely from this time we can talk about the language of London as the basis of the emerging literary language. In the 15th-16th centuries, the forms of the literary language are defined, although their conscious codification occurs later. The 17th-18th centuries see the development of orthoepists' activities, as they try to describe and select the rules of pronunciation, consolidating, and codifying pronunciation norms. According to many linguists (V. D. Arakin, A. I. Smirnitky, V. N. Yartseva), the norm of the English national literary language was fully established by the end of the 18th-beginning of the 19th centuries. Namely from this period we can speak about the formation of a single pronouncing standard – received pronunciation (RP).

While studying this type of pronunciation, it should be noted that for a long time RP was perceived as a phonetic norm – the pronunciation that foreign orthoepists and linguists were trying to imitate and teach. RP has since been defined very precisely and described as possessing a number of distinctive features and a pronounced solidity (See, for example, the works of D. Jones (1973), P. Roach (1983), J. Brown (1977) and others). It was also considered the only phonetic norm in teaching English in many countries, with phoneticians arguing that RP is easily understood in all English-speaking countries and is widely represented in tape recordings.

However, in the last decade, it has become increasingly obvious that the homogeneity of this RP is being violated, and this normative emphasis is undergoing significant changes. On this

issue, one cannot but agree with Yu. A. Zhluktenko [25, p. 6], who argues that many researchers proceed from the illusive notions that the British version is a completely homogeneous, monolithic linguistic state. Even those who are directly involved in the study of how the English language functions in the UK tend to exaggerate its uniformity. Even when deviations from the general system of the language are taken into account, researchers tend to view them as considered secondary and subject to elimination [1, 5, 8]. Meanwhile, the deeper we learn the laws of the functioning and development of language, the more we become entrenched in the idea that the variation of the language system, its means and relations in the process of its interaction with the environment as its everyday and organic state. Consequently, the study of the pronunciation norm should be carried out both in synchronicity and in development over time (diachrony). Linguistic norms are historical by nature, and an inherent part of certain conditions of a particular era. We should here agree with the point of view of M. V. Ganykina, who emphasizes that the language norm, in particular the intonation norm, changes along with the entire language system and has a dynamic character; describing the varying features of the intonation norms, it sheds light on the current state of the language, trends and ways of its development [7, p.25].

### 2 Materials and Methods

One of the main features of a language norm is its dynamic development. British scientists believe that the change in the norm is best seen by how BBC announcers who read radio and television news speak [21]. The RP was originally chosen for news reading because namely the speech is easiest to understand for all native English speakers and does not draw criticism from native speakers of regional pronunciation [4]. This is why RP is sometimes called "BBC English" – the English language of the BBC. In the 1930-40s, radio news was read with strict adherence to the orthoepic norm, deviations from which, as G. Leitner writes, were practically excluded [14, p. 67].

In the 1960s, RP became stratified into two branches: conservative (correlated with representatives of the elite and the older generation) and general English ("General RP") – the pronunciation of the middle classes, taught in public high schools, that is, the use of less regulated speech forms is noticeably expanding through conversations, interviews and radio performances of native speakers of regional pronunciation, dialects of vernacular, and youth jargon.

In the 1970s, the process of democratizing the language of BBC broadcasts continued. The desire of radio and television stations to involve more broadcasters with regional and social accents became increasingly more obvious. According to the famous British linguist D. Crystal (1980), this can be explained by the fact that the official pronunciation requirements for announcers reading BBC news have become much less stringent than they were in the 1930s. Nowadays, the speech of BBC announcers, while remaining the standard of speech of educated people, demonstrates significant regional variability (as shown by a preliminary analysis of our research, this primarily concerns the news, educational, entertainment programs of the BBC, which are created in a certain region of the UK or are broadcast specifically to this region), and many existing modified forms of RP. One of the possible approaches to studying the reasons for the diminishing prestige of the pronunciation standard is to consider the social and psychological foundations of this phenomenon.

First of all, let us remember that the issue pertains to the social changes taking place in modern English society. As J. Wells (1982) notes, the growth of social consciousness of the middle and lower classes, the strengthening of the role of the working class, and intensive immigration processes have led to the fact that the former standard of pronunciation, historically associated with the upper strata of English society, is increasingly seen as

archaism and something which we ought to replace with a more democratic pronunciation standard.

An analysis of research in the field of social psychology (Giles, 1970) [9] showed that due to historically established ideas, the British endow the speakers of the RP pronunciation with character traits of vanity, purposefulness, high intellectual abilities, and self-confidence. At the same time, from the British point of view, speakers of RP are considered to be less good-natured, sincere, open and having a less developed sense of humor than carriers of other accents. Even the well-known British linguists J. Honey and D. Crystal hold these views. Thus, according to J. Honey, RP carriers are characterized by intelligence, ambition, leadership, self-confidence, wealth, and occupational status, while speakers of a regional variant of pronunciation are characterized by their friendliness, good-naturedness, generosity, kind-heartedness, honesty, integrity, and sense of humor [11, p. 60]. D. Crystal argues that "pure RP" can arouse hostility or suspicion, especially in those regions of Great Britain where there are territorial literary norms [4, p. 65]. Moreover, some news stories are read in dialects, with preference given to southern regional dialects such as the Cornish, Bristol and Hampshire accents, which, according to a poll, sound the most "pleasant" and understandable, while being similar to the RP.

At the same time, RP remains the norm for the royal family, the British parliament, the English church, the High Court and other government institutions. According to English linguists, the number of speakers with the pronunciation of RP has recently dropped significantly. Opinions differ as to the exact figure that reflects the real state of affairs. Some linguists believe that only 3% of the English population are carriers of the RP variant (Hughes, Trudgill, 1979). Others believe that 10% of English people adhere to the old pronunciation norm (Wells, 1982). The vast majority of educated people use one of the RP variants or the regional variant of the literary language (a regional standard).

### 3 Results

Only a few decades ago, describing different types of pronunciation was limited to segment-level analysis in the vast majority of research, and the question of the different variants of the English intonation remained unanswered. This problem is currently under intense scrutiny; there are increasingly more works devoted to the analysis of territorial and social variation in intonation. Linguists such as J. Brown, K. Currie, J. Kenworthy (1980) [2] speak about the socio-territorial features of Edinburgh's intonation, while G. M. Skulanova (1987) [22] considers the whole Scottish region, and T. I. Shevchenko (1990) considers other socio-territorial types of pronunciation. Further, the work of M. V. Ganykina (1991) [7] presents the results of a study of the intonation features of the RP, southern and London pronunciation standards.

There are intonation features specific to each national language. The works of the well-known foreign linguists J. Gampertz, L. Loveay, R. Skollon and S. Skollon present data that clearly demonstrates the proper linguistic features of intonation parameters [12, 15, 18]. Their research indicates that the degree of pitch modulation, which is characteristic of the normal speech of an educated Briton, is socially marked in other cultures – it is perceived as affective or "feminine". In European languages, especially important information is emphasized with contrasting stress. In South Asian languages, on the other hand, new information is communicated more quietly than what is already known. Furthermore, in the cultures of the Middle East, just as among American Jews, the norm is to have practically no pauses between segments of speech, while in the Native American cultures of the Northwest a pause lasting several minutes within a single speech message is the norm.

Increased interest in the study of intonation as a carrier of national and cultural characteristics can be explained by the increased interest in the problems of intercultural communication (ICC). Ignorance, and, therefore, the substitution of various intonation models for expressing one or another meaning, can

lead to problems in the ICC. An interesting example of this type of conflict is offered by J. Gampertz (1982) [10], who describes contradictions that arose in a canteen between local British employees at Heathrow Airport and attendants from India and Pakistan. The reason for the conflict was a complaint by British employees about the constant unfriendliness of the South Asian staff. According to the linguist who analyzed the situation, it became clear that the non-verbal behavior of the South Asian women was not remarkable; they were silent when they laid the tables. However, it was their linguistic behavior that the British perceived as unfriendly. The reason for this impression was the difference in the paralinguistic features of the communicative style: when communicating in English, the South Asians used intonation from their native languages, that is, when asking a question they used a downward intonation. For example, by simply stating "Sauce?" in the meaning of "Would you like some sauce?", their intonation went downward rather than upwards. However, such an intonation in one-word statements in European languages means "This is a sauce" and sounds like a statement, a statement of fact. If such a statement is repeated several times, then at the level of relations it is perceived as a challenge.

The data presented in the works of L. G. Fomichenko (1998) [6], gives a deeper understanding about the differences in prosodic and mental characteristics of Russians, British, and Americans, and attempts to explain the results obtained taking into account the ethnocultural characteristics of the speakers of these languages. According to Fomichenko, the absence of personality autonomy in the mental characteristics of Russians, their assertion in speech, expression of one's "Self" and individualism, that is notable in the mental characteristics of the British, presents certain difficulties for Russians to correctly formulate speech messages and use a tone decrease on the nuclear syllable in the final position in a phrase when speaking English in accordance with the English equivalent. The generosity of the soul and the openness of character seem to require the continuation of the melodic contour of the phrase, therefore, the nuclear tone and components at the final completion are expressed by a smooth decrease in the nuclear tone within the middle register of the high-pitched tonal range of the human voice. The listed characteristics are inherent in Americans, but their pronounced quality of "friendliness to everyone", as well as the predominance of the extroversion factor in the language (that is, the desire to communicate) is, as it were, superimposed on the rest of the mental characteristics, thereby replacing the descending scale with a low decrease in tone by the nuclear syllable with an even scale and decrease or increase on the nuclear syllable.

All the examples described above give an idea of the nature of the relationship between the national mentality and the national language, or the variant of the national language (for example, Irish or American variants of modern English). In this article, we attempt to compare two variants of the language belonging to the same nation, where RP is a norm that is supra-territorial in nature and SE is the norm of the south of Great Britain. The historical factors that create a sense of national unity are very diverse: political, cultural, linguistic, geographic, sometimes specifically religious. Within the limits of the territory where the common national feeling prevails, both language and culture become increasingly more homogeneous and specific, so that linguistic and cultural boundaries show at least a tendency to coincide. Thus, a nation can be defined as "a historical community of people characterized by a stable commonality of economic life, language, territory and national character, manifested in the peculiarities of culture and everyday life" [13]. However, taking into account the multifaceted nature of the concept of a "nation", it can be assumed that its linguistic content (national language) cannot be homogeneous. This point of view is confirmed in the works of E. Sapir [19, p 189]. As this outstanding linguist justly remarked, "... and in the most favorable cases, linguistic unification is never absolute, and cultural unification is generally superficial, so to speak, of a political nature, without penetrating deep and wide". This is not

absolute linguistic unification is what we observe when we talk about RP and SE.

Investigating the reasons for the appearance of intonational differences in two versions of modern English (RP and SE), we consider it necessary to make some historical explanation. As noted above, the formation of the national English language, and later, the linguistic norm, was carried out on the basis of the London dialect in the 15th-16th centuries. The choice of this particular option as the basis for the emerging national language can be explained by the following reasons: the London dialect was a dialect of the largest economic and political-administrative center of England, from where various directives, orders, and regulations emanated to other more remote parts of the country. Thus the London dialect began to be spread to other regions, with many literary works beginning to appear in this dialect. Already in the 14th century, it was noted that the London dialect was considered neutral and understandable to both northerners and southerners (the London dialect absorbed mainly the features of the east-central and southern dialects). Namely at this time RP became the accepted pronunciation type in high society; RP became a certain social marker which was considered prestigious and necessary in certain circles despite not being the norm of any region but supra-territorial.

The rest of the population spoke one of the many territorial variants. In the south of Great Britain, a large number of dialects coexisted, which were a means of communication between rural and urban populations. Later, namely they served as the basis for the formation of the modern pronunciation norm of the southern region, SE. This type of pronunciation, as noted above, has more in common with RP than other dialects and variants of modern English. This circumstance can be explained by the geographical proximity and the use of southern dialects as one of the foundations for the formation of the future pronunciation norm of the English language. At the same time, it should be emphasized that SE also has certain intonation features that are characteristic only of the southern region.

There is no doubt that these people are carriers of this is the pronunciation norm of this region. The popularity of such news programs and the increase in the number of announcers using different regional types of pronunciation can be explained by at least two trends. On the one hand, in England, people tend to take an argument more seriously when it is expressed in standard English, and on the other hand, they are more ready to take it into action when it is pronounced with the accent in which they themselves speak. According to T. I. Shevchenko [20, p. 12], this is how ethnic, social, and group solidarity is manifested.

Thus, it can be stated that the speaker's intonation reflects such characteristics as social status in a particular situation and cultural level. Modern linguistic works indicate that intonation is a valuable source of information about national and territorial affiliation. Consequently, the intonation system is directly related to concepts such as national character and national mentality, which is expressed in certain pronunciation characteristics of speakers of different languages.

Hypothetically, it can be assumed that the existing intonation features of SE can also be explained by the fact that residents of the southern regions of Great Britain unconsciously use their own intonation models to convey different meanings, which can differ significantly from the intonation models existing in the general English pronunciation norm. Meanwhile, it should be noted that the choice of a particular model will also be largely determined by the syntactic position of the speech unit in the text and the nature of the semantic content.

#### 4 Discussion

Until recently, it was customary to speak only about the syntactic function of intonation as depending on the syntactic structure of the sentence, which, in turn, makes the intonation design of the utterance dependent on other language means that form the utterance. However, the analysis of more recent linguistic works indicates that intonation has its own actualizing

force, which, superimposed on the lexico-syntactic component, gives a certain semantic effect and also significantly modifies, if not the syntactic structure, then at least the division of the verbal sequence [3, p. 77]. In this regard, we need to consider the intonational component not as a post-syntactic factor, but as an equal text and sense-forming means, which, along and in active interaction with the verbal component, participates in the creation of both the material form and the meaning of oral communicants.

The advantage of this approach to the study of intonation is, according to V. I. Petryankina (1988) [17], expressed in the manifestation of its connection with reality, the enrichment of the philosophical, epistemological aspects of intonation, the transition to the study of the meaningful purpose of intonation forms, and, consequently, the improvement of the theory of intonation. Without reliance on semantics, it is impossible to describe intonation units, to systematize the variability of units, or to describe the types of intonation interference. Part of the tasks of intonation research is the quest for intonation and other linguistic meanings, the identification of the question of what are the possibilities of intonation to express a certain meaning, i.e., what are the regular correspondences between certain acoustic signs and meanings correlated with a given intonation form, the regularities of the transition from meaning to form, as well as from form to meaning, the connection between the content plan and the expression plan.

While we in principle agree with Petryankina, it is crucial to note that since the condition for the formation of the general semantic meaning of an utterance is the complex participation of various means of language, the study of intonational semantics is possible only by clarifying the relationship intonation means with lexical and grammatical. Intonational indicators, interacting with indicators of other levels of the language, can be in different relations with them, while showing different functional load. According to the famous British linguist J. O'Connor (1976) [16], the lexico-grammatical structure of an utterance itself and its surrounding context make the listener or receiver expect the use of a well-defined intonation form. If the expectation is not met, the resulting deviation from the norm creates a textual contrast, a misunderstanding that requires an explanation. Let us illustrate this statement with an example from our experimental material.

As a result of a preliminary analysis, it was possible to establish that the speakers who own the southern regional norm can use an incomplete descending tone even with full lexical and syntactic completeness. As it is known, among RP carriers, this design is most often associated with incompleteness, the intention to attract attention and to continue the conversation. Therefore, it can be assumed that in this case, bilinguals who know or study the pronunciation norm (RP), in certain situations, may experience some distortion of the speech perception of speakers of the southern standard with problems arising at the communicative level. That is why it is especially important to clarify the unidirectionality or multidirectionality of the action of intonation and lexical-grammatical means in the formation of the semantic essence of an utterance in different versions of the same language.

Speaking about the semantic features of intonation, one cannot fail to mention the fact that the meaning of an intonation unit is also determined by the degree of dependence on the context. With the least dependence (or independence), intonation is not semantically complicated, correlated with the main meaning, which appears in the intonation of semantically homogeneous contextually conditioned statements and also appears as their general semantic essence (invariant) and is taken as the primary function. In textual conditions, meanings occur that are realized as secondary, additional functions, causing various changes and transformations of the intonation model in the text, which can act as mandatory and optional. Each element of the set is one of the intonational-semantic variants of the intonation unit, among which the main one, which is the closest to the invariant meaning and the least dependent on the context, and contextual,

syntagmatically dependent intonational-semantic variants whether mandatory or optional, stand out. The main meaning of contextual intonation-semantic variants is to ensure communication [17].

In the absence of context, for example, when the object of research is the final syntagma in an isolated phrase, the choice of tone in English is obvious: as a rule, it is a low descending, medium descending, or high descending tone. However, in a monologue, the final syntagma, which is within the microthematic monological unity, cannot be regarded as entirely complete in terms of content. Such a syntagma is closely related in meaning to the subsequent utterance and its design; along with the above tones, speakers can use an even, low ascending, high descending, descending-ascending, incomplete descending (especially in the southern regional version) and some other tones. Let us demonstrate the above with the following example:

'President of 'our 'Republic has been in'vited to'Italy next year | for a `meeting | 'discussing 'Global' Warming 'Problem|| 'Four 'thousand 'representatives are ex'pected to at'tend this `meeting | at the 'conference `hall next Au-gust||.

In the example above, a speaker with a southern pronunciation norm draws up a relatively final syntagma ("discussing Global Warming Problem"), which is inside the information message, in an incomplete descending tone.

Thus, the more the text is enriched, the more complicated are the intonational-semantic variants, the greater the degree of their remoteness from the general invariant meaning of the unit. According to V. I. Petryankina [17, p. 23], due to the fact that an intonation unit is a meaningful unit and at the same time a certain sounding model, the transition from one unit to another is essentially a transition from one meaning to another.

Investigating the question of the relationship between intonation and lexico-syntactic content to convey a certain meaning, it is necessary to dwell on the issue of syntagmatic and paradigmatic relations within the intonation system. So, the syntagmatic aspect of the intonation system of any language consists in the syntagmatic relation of signs and their functioning in speech, that is, in other words, this type of relationship involves the analysis of hierarchically interrelated rhythmically organized text segments of the speech chain, including rhythmic groups, intonation groups, phrases, phono paragraphs. These relationships are based on the linear nature of speech (text) and its properties such as length, unidirectionality, consistency. Consideration of intonation units in speech syntagmatics contributes to the identification of the space of meanings transmitted by them.

The paradigmatic aspect is the opposition of signs that are homogeneous in meaning to other signs of the same class, that is, the ability of signs to form, in the paradigmatic sense, a certain structure of the system. Paradigmatic relations in the flow of speech are neither linear nor simultaneous, as the presence of one of the members of the paradigmatic series excludes the presence of the other, but makes it possible for them to be interchangeable. L. F. Fomichenko draws the attention of researchers to the fact that the paradigmatic aspect provides for the analysis of intonation parameters in the vertical section [6, p. 21]. The intonation level consists of sublevels of tone, volume, and tempo. Each of the sublevels consists of intonation units, which together form an intonation system.

It is necessary to pay attention to the fact that the formation of a concrete utterance reflects the interaction of paradigmatic relations with syntagmatic ones, because the choice of one or another linguistic form in the linear development of an utterance is entirely based on the paradigmatic basis of the language. We share the opinion of V.I. Petryankina [17, p. 59-60], who emphasizes that the study of a specific intonational form is possible only when the speaker has in reserve the paradigmatic axis of the main forms as material incarnations that make up the space of meanings of one intonation unit. In other words, the

speaker chooses the form that is dictated by their paradigmatic status in the given syntagmatic context.

Thus, intonation, just as the lexical composition of a sentence and its grammatical design, serves the purpose of expressing the content of an utterance – its meaning, in the broad sense of the word. These choices depend precisely on the content. It should be emphasized that the analysis of intonation units seems complete only with a comprehensive examination of closely interrelated aspects of meanings: syntagmatic and paradigmatic.

## 5 Conclusion

As a result of the attachment of linguistic forms to typical social and communicative situations, which are a segment of the reality reflected in the language and resulting from repeated speech practice, speech models ready for use are deposited in the memory of a native speaker. This applies to the intonational design of the category of completeness/incompleteness. The category of intonation is a priori present in every language, but it is realized in it by its own set of intonation means. It should be noted that the choice of a particular intonation model will depend not only on linguistic, but also extralinguistic factors: the regional variant, the communication situation, that is, the conditions that are taken into account by the speaker and the interlocutor: social, temporal, spatial, and others.

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