

Peculiar Styles when Narrating the News: The Intonation of Radio News Bulletins

Emma RODERO ANTÓN
Universitat Pompeu Fabra
emma.rodero@upf.edu

Received: 16/06/2012

Accepted: 21/11/2012

Abstract

The voice is one of the radio news reader's most important resources when conveying messages. Controlling the voice, through the proper use of prosodic features as the main tool for transmitting the explicit content of a text, provides a referential framework. It is also instrumental in conveying the sense of the text as well as its affective dimension. Ultimately, therefore, it affects the impression forming process of the listener. Therefore, the objective of this study is to contribute to the prosodic characterisation of radio news by identifying the prosodic resources used. The results show that radio news bulletins can be characterised by a wealth of circumflex contours, regular use of the pitch contour or accent and constant stress on the emphatic accent. Although these resources can guide the discursive understanding of the listener at specific moments during speech, their repeated use can lead to counterproductive effects for comprehension and attention.

Keywords: Radio; news; intonation; stress; circumflex pitch

Ese peculiar estilo de contar las noticias. La entonación en los informativos radiofónicos

Resumen

La voz es uno de los recursos más importantes con que cuenta el presentador de informativos en radio a la hora de transmitir sus mensajes. El manejo de la voz, a través de los rasgos prosódicos, como instrumento principal de transmisión del contenido explícito del texto, proporciona el marco referencial y transporta toda la carga del sentido así como la dimensión afectiva del mismo; por tanto, en último término afecta al proceso de formación de impresiones por parte del oyente. De esta manera, el objetivo de este estudio es contribuir a la caracterización prosódica de la información radiofónica mediante la identificación de los recursos prosódicos empleados. Los resultados muestran que la presentación de la información radiofónica puede caracterizarse por una abundancia de contornos circunflejos, una regularidad en la utilización del contorno tonal y un constante realce acentual enfático. Aunque estos recursos pueden resultar útiles para guiar la comprensión discursiva del oyente en determinados momentos del discurso, su uso repetitivo puede producir evitar efectos contraproducentes.

Palabras clave: Radio; noticias; entonación; acento; entonación circunfleja

Standard Reference / Referencia normalizada

RODERO ANTÓN, Emma (2013): "Peculiar Styles when Narrating the News: The Intonation of Radio News Bulletins". *Estudios sobre el mensaje periodístico*. Vol. 19, Núm. 1, págs.: 519-532. Madrid, Servicio de Publicaciones de la Universidad Complutense.

Summary: 1. Intonation and stress. 2. Prosody in radio news. 3. Method. 4. Results; 4.1. Abundance of circumflex contours; 4.2. Regularity in movement; 4.3. Emphatic accent stress. 5. Discussion. 6. References.

1. Intonation and stress

Radio is the only medium of communication that emphasises the prosodic configuration employed in presentations. In the absence of images that can complete the meaning of a message, radio depends solely on sound and the voice of the presenter to

broadcast information. Moreover, if we consider that the radio news format offers greater complexity in how information is processed by the listener, the transmission of a multitude of information over a short time highlights the importance of the communicator properly using prosodic traits, including intonation and stress. Given this property, the objective of this study is to conduct a prosodic characterisation of radio news bulletins by investigating intonation and accent.

Intonation can be defined as a group of pitch variations produced in a spoken sequence that characterises the type of sentence, differentiates the syntactic units, and defines the emotions and attitudes of the speaker. These pitch variations are expressed in phonetic or melodic groups, that is, in units of verbal sense that are delimited by pauses or pitch movements. This pitch distribution through delimitation in phonetic groups is particularly influential during information processing, given that “the listener will base her decoding of the message mainly on these (and possibly other) phonologic units, and not on the syntactic structure of the sentences” (Sosa, 1999: 35). Within these phonic groups, accent provides an emphasis on a specific syllable to disclose the greater importance of that word in relation to the other words. Using this emphasis or stress provided by an accent, a speaker can highlight the relevance of specific portions of the message. Thus, the prosodic configuration employed in radio broadcasting news fulfils several functions, which have the joint purpose of facilitating the correct processing of the message by the listener (Rodero, 2002).

First, prosody decisively contributes to structuring the discourse, distributing the information according to the relevance of the information and providing meaning to the message. Given that choosing a prosodic combination through intonation and accent is directly related to the content of the message, this choice will depend on the degree of novelty and the relevance of the information that will be enunciated. When a speaker wants to highlight a part of the speech, she can choose to exercise a ‘focus projection’ on this information that relates the nuclear accent with the portion containing the new or important information in her speech (De Kuthy & Meurers, 2010; Welby, 2003). Brown (1983) demonstrated that speakers tend to place their pitch peaks on new information, whereas information that has already been provided is not accented. Terken and Nooteboom (1987) concluded that listeners expect new information to be emphasised and known information not to be emphasised by accenting. Specifically for Spanish, Cruttenden (1997) demonstrated that new information is always emphasised with a pitch accent. In summary, information that are unknown to the listener or relevant in the message are presented in an ascending intonation with an acute tone spoken with a pitch or nuclear accent (Halliday, 1967), whereas known or accessory information is marked with a declining intonation falling toward a low tone with an unmarked accent.

Second, prosody contributes to claiming the listeners’ attention. Given that the structural distribution has a distinctive function, this helps listeners recognise that the information is relevant, thereby directing their attention to the marked information. This attention guiding is due to the contrasting function that differentiates between ascending and descending movements and between high and low tones and accent peaks, thereby creating an acoustic contrast. The listener perceives acoustic modifi-

cations in the new or relevant information that indicate the moments during which she must pay greater attention.

Lastly, prosody determines the communicative intention of the speaker and configures the affective dimension, or affects the process by which the listener forms his/her impressions (Soto, 2008). In this regard, there are a number of studies that indicate that tone of voice and intonation are highly significant instruments for communicating internal states, attitudes, and feelings (De Paulo & Friedman, 1998).

Thus, prosody, which is configured by intonation and accent, is a determining factor for listeners' comprehension (Hirschberg & Pierrehumbert, 1986). Some authors have demonstrated that rendering the radio broadcasting message with vocally trained presenters favours understanding of the message content (Beighley, 1954; Nichols, 1948). Data from Bock and Mazzella's research (1983) indicate that the time required for understanding a piece of information is shortened when new or important information are emphasised with accents.

2. Prosody in radio news

The few experimental research studies on prosody conducted in audiovisual media indicate a tendency of newscasters to reproduce circumflex intonation in constant and regular melody form, which is denominated as *singsong* or *drone* (De-la-Mota & Rodero, 2010; McGregor & Palethorpe, 2008; Nihalani & Po Lin, 1998; Taylor, 1993; Tench, 1990; Brazil, 1978). This prosodic pattern is not only detected in radio, but some research studies on television broadcasting have also found the same results. The research data of Rodero (2006) confirm that the vast majority of pitch combinations employed by television newscasters present circumflex contours with emphatic accenting at the beginning, in the middle, and at the end of their statements. Strangert's (2005) study showed that television newscasters present a greater pitch range and frequently resort to using a contrasting accent. Within this logic, Francuz (2010: 74), in his analysis of television news, showed that newscasters have a natural tendency to abuse rhetorical accents and avoid using logical accents. Finally, Oleinik (2006), in his analysis of Russian radio and television news, concluded that newscasters use a 'strange' intonation, as detected in the media discourse, in the same manner as was found by scholars of English-language media.

This particular prosodic style is characterised by a combination of an ascending accent with a high or acute tone in the pitch syllable followed by a descending end (De-la-Mota & Rodero, 2010; Francuz, 2010; Price, 2008; Oleinik, 2006). This style presents emphatic accentuation that, at regular intervals, marks the syllables of the words based on the pitch climbs produced by the application of the circumflex intonation. Cantero et al. (2005: 39) considered this, "a multifactor phenomenon, characterised by the concurrence of multiple traits (melodic and non-melodic)." Price (2008: 307) dubbed this phenomenon an 'overall intonation template' and characterised it as a hyper accentuation with an exaggerated pitch range that resulted in an abuse of the pitch prominence. In addition, the repetition of this intonation range in the newscasts occurs at regular intervals, producing an excessive segmentation of phonic groups. In fact, this is a tendency observed in the research analysis of Rodero and Campos (2005)

in which the television presenters excessively segmented the phonic groups, in many cases producing a break in the meaning of the message.

Acoustically, this prosodic pattern is perceived as a staccato and regular melody that, as such, takes place independent of the message content (Price, 2005). Van Leeuwen (1984: 84) concluded that newscasters are in the habit of placing importance on everything they say, regardless of the real meaning of their words. Therefore, this accenting pattern is a practice that deviates from linguistic correctness: “the presence of a melody in discord with the syntax and discursive conditions is noted, with an enunciative boundary: these are deviations from the intonation norms in Spanish” (Aguilar et al., 2002).

Given that this accenting relevance is produced at regular intervals, in many instances, words are emphasised that do not add any meaning to the message, such as pronouns, prepositions and articles. This practice can be considered linguistically incorrect. “Spanish never emphasises functional words, such as articles, prepositions, possessive pronouns, ordinal pronouns, etc., instead, it only uses intonation to emphasise names and verbs, or so-called content words” (Iribarren 2005: 122). Another phenomenon that is apparent is the double accenting of words, especially when they have a long extension (For instance, in the Spanish word for president: PREsidDENte), in a binary way with emphatic stress occurring two syllables before the primary stress, as in Catalan (Nadeu & Hualde, 2012).

A possible explanation for the use of this prosodic style in the presentation of the news may be the newscaster’s lack of skill in employing prosodic resources, given the presenter’s intention to emphasise many pieces of the text with the objective of catching and keeping the attention of the listener (Price, 2008; Strangert, 2005; Aguilar et al., 2004). Thus, for Wheatley (1949: 213), radio speech is characterised by senseless pitch undulation or by misused pitch patterns that may arise from the desire to accent the expression of the discourse. Nevertheless, far from achieving this result, using this prosodic style produces several contrary effects both in the perception and the understanding of the listeners.

First, some studies have demonstrated that this prosodic type generates a negative perception in the listeners. In two research studies regarding prosody examining radio news bulletins, the sample responses valued these practices negatively (Rodero, 2007). First, the responses described circumflex intonation as: “a type of intonation that is not serious. It’s singsong, like that of a town crier. It’s a chant, a droning, a monotone. In sum, it’s ridiculous.” Second, they described emphatic accenting as “exaggerated, not natural, with little balance and resulting in the loss of meaning.” In fact, books on radio and television style succinctly summarise these prosodic characteristics as flaws that should be avoided (Alcoba, 2009).

Second, research studies have shown that this particular prosodic configuration affects the audience’s capacity to understand. Specifically, in a study conducted by Francuz (2010), subjects remembered the details of the information the least and had the greatest difficulties in identifying the real causes for the facts, as relayed in the news. In contrast, those subjects who saw and heard the news with an appropriate intonation demonstrated greater conviction in their answers to the questions regarding certain

details about the information provided. This author also showed that the elimination of emphatic accents in favour of logical accents in accordance with prosody norms (in this case, the Polish language) did not produce a negative perception in television viewers regarding the degree of attractiveness, usefulness, or objectivity of the news. Confirming this data, research by Bean et al. (1989) demonstrated that listener understanding improved when relevant information from the message was emphasised (71%), compared to information marked as accessory information (56%) or to information that had no emphasis (57%). Thus, these results reflect a clear relationship between understanding and the prosodic traits of a message.

Consequently, these considerations attest to the need to conduct an empirical investigation regarding the emphatic demarcation that radio newscasters employ in their presentations, especially with regard to the circumflex pitch patterns used in the demarcating intonation. Taking into consideration the studies that we have reviewed, this research study is based on the following hypotheses:

- H1: The more abundant pitch contours or accents will be circumflex, thereby creating a peculiar style of narrating the news that is independent of the radio news station or the newscaster.

- H2: The most frequent pitch contours will be produced at relatively regular intervals, thereby generating a characteristic melody that is independent of the radio news station or the newscaster.

- H3: The accent demarcation will be primarily of the emphatic type, thereby over-stressing accessory words as opposed to fundamental words.

3. Method

This research is based on an experimental methodology in which the body of managed data is comprised of 24 radio broadcasting bulletin recordings that were obtained from four main radio stations in Spain: RNE, SER, COPE and OC. The recordings were distributed such that there were six recordings per station. To obtain a sufficient variety in speakers and particularly in presentation styles, the recordings were made at different times, that is, there were two morning bulletins, two in the afternoon, and two at night. In this way, we ensured that no interference came from the presentation schedule for these bulletins.

Once we obtained the body of data, we conducted a segmentation of the samples that corresponded to the editor segments, that is, the pieces spoken by the bulletin presenters. First, this choice was based on the need to collect a relatively broad sample from one presenter. In a radio broadcasting bulletin, different journalist segments are produced, and in many cases, some journalists only appear in one such segment. It is the presenter or the editor who is a constant presence in these programmes, which means that this person is present in a broader sample. Second, the choice was based on the need to centre the analysis on those presenters who are responsible for truly shaping the presentation style of a bulletin at a radio broadcasting station. Therefore, at the end of data collection, by isolating the editor segments, we obtained an analysis sample of one and a half minutes for each of the six bulletins from each station. To maintain gender parity, half of the data consisted of the speech of twelve female newscasters and the other half consisted of that of twelve male newscasters.

Once the body of data was segmented, the samples obtained were processed using the PRAAT acoustic analysis programme (Boersma & Weenink, 2009) together with the MOMEL and INTSINT modules (Hirst, 2007). In this manner, we related the phonetic levels with the phonologic levels. After obtaining the stylised pitch contour f_0 by means of MOMEL, we labelled the pitch contour through INTSINT. This model makes a distinction between pitch segments interpreted globally with regard to the median tone of the speaker (T –top-, M –mid- and B –bottom-) and the segmented tones that were interpreted locally in terms of the preceding tone (Higher (H): a pitch peak, Lower (L): a pitch valley, Same (S): same tone as the preceding tone, Upstep (U): an ascent with a peak lower than H, and Downstep (D): a descent with a valley lower than L).

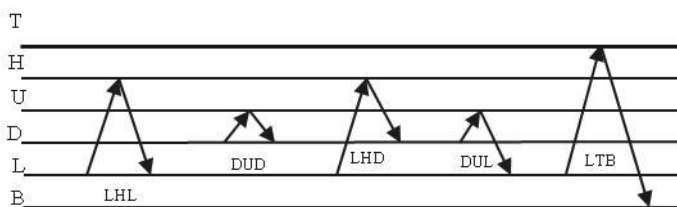
4. Results

Following the analysis of the samples, the results allowed for characterising the radio newscast editor presentations through the following prosodic peculiarities: abundance of circumflex contours, regularity in the use of the contour and emphatic accent stress.

4.1. Abundance of circumflex contours

The first of the main hypotheses proposed was that the more abundant pitch contours would be of the circumflex type, thereby contributing to a peculiar style of news narration that was independent of the news station or the newscaster. The analysis through INTSINT confirms this hypothesis given that the five most frequent pitch contours were: LHL (22.4%), DUD (14.8%), LHD (8.3%), DUL (7.2%), and LTB (5.6%). The absolute percentages were not high, given that there were 191 different possible combinations. Due to the difficulty in finding similar combinations, we know that at least those contours indicated with a frequency higher than ten can be considered significant in relative terms. Taken together, these contours include more than half of the cases (58.3%). Figure 1 shows an abstraction of the most frequent contours.

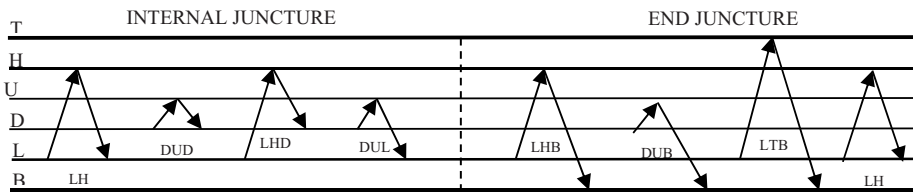
Figura 1: abstraction of the most frequent contours



In addition, an analysis of the most frequent configurations from the radio stations indicated that the results were not significant ($\chi^2=121,54$; $p=,232$), which suggests that there was no association between the radio broadcasting stations and the contours employed. In fact, all of the radio broadcasting stations followed this same frequency order. The differences between newscasters were also not relevant ($\chi^2=36,05$; $p=,513$), given that they produced the same results.

The most frequent contours LHL, DUD, LHD, DUL were produced primarily within an internal juncture, whereas LTB was usually found at the end position of a statement. If we analysed only the internal juncture, the most frequent contours were LHL, DUD, LHD, and DHL, whereas if we analysed the end statements, the most habitual contours were found in this order: LHB, DUB, LTB y LHL. Figure 2 models these movements.

Figura 2: internal and end most frequent contours

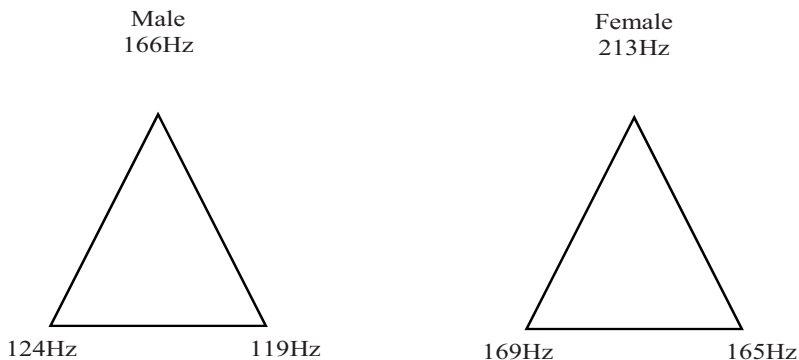


The most employed contours frequently began with an ascending movement that can be produced from L (48.3%), D (38.4%), B (7.4%) o U (3.4%). Therefore, in the majority of cases, the contour began with an important pitch valley (L) or with an intermediate valley (D).

Finally, a descent began that usually ended in L (37.4%), D (30.5%), B (24.1%) or H (6.3%). Therefore, similar to the beginning and at the peak of the intonation (67.9%), this is mainly a broad descent (L) or an intermediate descent (D).

An analysis of the pitch frequencies of this movement using a factorial MANOVA 4 broadcasts (SER, RNE, OC y COPE) by 2 gender (male, female) by 5 most frequent pitch contours (LHL, DUD, LHD, DUL and LTB) indicate that a circumflex melodic contour was initiated for male voices at an average of 124 Hz ($SD=14$), ascending up to 166 Hz ($SD=26$) and descending to 119 Hz ($SD=17$). In female presenters, this began at 169 Hz ($SD=17$), ascending up to 214 Hz on average ($SD=32$) and descending to 165 Hz ($SD=21$), as illustrated in Figure 3. As is logical here, due to the diversity in pitch qualities of the presenters, the differences between men and women were significant ($F=117.83$; $p=.000$).

Figura 3: Pitch frequencies for male and female voices

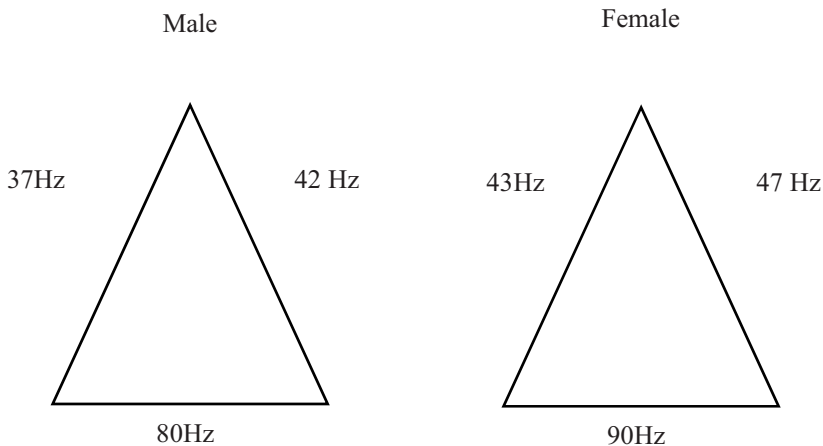


The results were also significant for an analysis of pitch contours ($F=273.46$; $p=.000$), and this finding was also made in an analysis from the radio broadcasting stations ($F=11.32$; $p=.000$). However, in these cases, the data are not highly informative, given that they also depend on the average tone of the different newscasters. *Post hoc* tests were only significant for the comparison between SER and the rest of the radio stations both in the frequency of the ascent and in the pitch peak and descent. Both for male and female newscasters, the frequencies of this radio station were significantly lower than for the rest of the radio stations, which were higher than SER and fairly similar to each other.

To avoid conditioning of the pitch level of the newscaster, we analysed the pitch frequencies using the same MANOVA factorial model applied to the pitch ascents, descents, and differences. We obtained few significant differences, which clearly outlines a marked uniformity between both newscasters and radio broadcasting stations.

The results divided by gender of the newscaster were not significant ($F=2.99$; $p=.055$), which reveals that there are pitch ascents, descents, and differences that are similar between subjects that are independent of their gender. The male newscasters, on average, had an ascent of 37 Hz, a descent of 42 Hz, and a pitch difference of 80 Hz, whereas the female newscasters, on average, had an ascent of 43 Hz, a descent of 47 Hz, and a pitch difference of 90 Hz. As shown in Figure 4, the pitch breadth of the circumflex contour was similar between the different newscasters, regardless of whether they were male or female.

Figura 4: Pitch ascents, descents, and differences



This marked uniformity between newscasters was clearly observed when the most frequent pitch contours were analysed. The results were not significant ($F=3.98$; $p=.010$), given that the averages obtained were notably similar for men and women. Table 1 illustrates the frequencies of the most employed pitch movements for male and female newscasters.

Table 1. Most employed pitch movements for male and female newscasters

Contours (Hz)	Ascent			Descent			Difference		
	Male	Female	Mean	Male	Female	Mean	Male	Female	Mean
LHL	50	52	51	-50	-54	-52	100	106	103
DUD	27	31	29	-29	-33	-31	56	62	61
LHD	50	66	54	-37	-50	-40	88	109	94
DUL	26	35	30	-49	-47	-49	76	83	79
LTB	68	90	77	-81	-104	-91	149	196	168

The results when analysed by radio broadcasting stations were not significant ($F=4.06$; $p=.008$), meaning that the degree of pitch ascent, descent and the difference in the circumflex contours was similar between the different radio stations. If the data were not sufficiently significant, this was solely due to the fact that, in the pitch ascent, the SER station was broader than the OC and RNE stations, as indicated by the *post hoc* tests.

In sum, the results confirm that, in radio news bulletins, there is a recurrent circumflex pitch contour, primarily with the LHL form in an internal juncture, and there is marked prosodic uniformity with similar pitch ranges not only between the different radio broadcasting stations but also between male and female newscasters. Therefore, acoustically, this contour is perceived as a uniform melody within the statement.

4.2. Regularity in movement

The results from this study indicate that the circumflex contour is present at regular intervals along a statement, particularly when a phonic group ends, which supports the second hypothesis. In fact, the intervals between the times in which these movements began along the length of a phrase were similar among the different radio broadcasting stations, demonstrating this regularity. The measurements obtained were not significant according to radio station ($F=1.94$; $p=.156$) or newscaster ($F=.53$; $p=.456$). As a general average, a circumflex contour was initiated every one and a half seconds ($SD=.88$). The SER and COPE radio stations initiated their contours at a later point (every 1.6 seconds), whereas the OC and RNE stations did so at an earlier point (1.4). When we examined newscasters, the men initiated their circumflex contours every 1.4 seconds and the women did so every 1.5 seconds.

This regularity in the initiation of pitch movements also produced an excessive segmentation of the phonic groups. In this analysis, we observed a continuing pronunciation of accent groups in different pitch units, resulting in units that were formed repeatedly by only a few syllables. Acoustically, this effect was perceived as staccato or interrupted speech, in which the juncture tones form the boundary for four units.

In radio news bulletins, the results support a marked uniformity in that the circumflex contours were produced at regular intervals in numbers that were similar for

both radio broadcasting stations and newscasters. Consequently, this regularity produced an excessive segmentation of the phonic groups that acoustically generated a feeling of interrupted or staccato speech.

4.3. Emphatic accent stress

From an acoustic point of view, one of the most significant factors at the moment in which the sensation of emphatic demarcation is produced is the accent stress. This stress is the reason that the third hypothesis proposed that an accent demarcation would primarily be of the emphatic type, which stresses accessory words more than fundamental words. The analysis of the data supports this hypothesis given that the majority of the words emphasised in these movements were accessory (61.6%), rather than relevant to the information content (36.9%). These differences were not significant for the radio broadcasting stations ($\chi^2=7.57$; $p=.056$). SER was the station that marked the most accessory words (74%), followed by the COPE (66%), OC (62%) and RNE (48%) stations. In contrast, RNE was the station that marked the most relevant words (52%), followed by the OC (38%), COPE (34%) and SER (26%) stations. The differences were not significant for newscasters either ($\chi^2=.023$; $p=.880$). The male newscasters marked 62.9% of the accessory words and female newscasters marked 63.1% of the accessory words. In both cases, the results were adjusted such that the differences were not significant. Thus, we did not find a relationship between the relevance of the words for the different radio stations nor for the different newscasters. In many cases, the accent stress provokes over-accenting with the creation of secondary accents. The accenting effort was conducted in a syllable that was not pitch, generally on the initial syllable, which was added to the corresponding accent over the pitch syllable.

The results indicate that, for the majority of cases, words that were unimportant for the processing of radio broadcasting information were accented by both the radio broadcasting stations and the newscasters. Moreover, on occasion, these words were doubly accented, which multiplied the number of logical accents, thereby producing the acoustic sensation of a continuous emphasis.

5. Discussion

The main purpose of this study was to identify the prosodic resources employed in radio news bulletins to contribute to the characterisation of this peculiar prosodic style and to complement the scarce investigations that have been conducted to date. The results of this study show that the presentation of radio broadcasting news can be characterised by an abundance of circumflex contours, a regularity in the use of pitch contours, and a constant emphatic accent stress. This supposes a marked pitch uniformity and a regularity in the emphatic accent stress, especially on accessory words, which is manifested in both the configuration of the circumflex contour and in the pitch frequencies and intervals that delimit the boundaries for this contour. Given that these data were produced independent of the radio stations analysed and the gender of the newscasters examined, our study supports the conclusion that there is a particular style in narrating or telling the news on the radio.

These results are not surprising when previous research studies are taken into consideration. Some authors have already demonstrated that the use of the nuclear circumflex contour in statements is considered frequent and characteristic of news programmes in radio and television (De-la-Mota & Rodero, 2010; Francuz, 2010; McGregor & Palethorpe, 2008; Price, 2008; Oleinik, 2006; Rodero, 2006; Nihalani & Po Lin, 1998; Taylor, 1993; Tench, 1990; Brazil, 1978). Clearly, the objective for the use of this prosodic style is mainly to maintain continuous claims on the attention of the listener through a melody that is similar to that employed at the end of an exclamatory statement. The problem occurs when this style becomes part of the majority of the text by being both uniform and repetitive because, aside from being disagreeable to the listener, this style can affect the listener's information processing.

First, this can affect the understanding capacity of the listener, as has been demonstrated by some authors (Francuz, 2010; Bean et al., 1989). Price (2005) concluded that it is surprising that the same intonation pattern is used independent both of the speech's purpose and of the relevance of the message's information. Given that these recurring movements, "are not useful to identify the type of phonic group within their intonation criterion" (Garrido, 1994: 188) and that making almost every word significant is the same as not stressing any word, it is evident that the conclusion to be drawn is that this prosodic style is not the most effective for the listener's information processing, in agreement with conclusions by Francuz (2010).

Second, this uniform, regular, and emphatic melody can provoke a negative perception in the listener, because it becomes unnatural or artificial, as is demonstrated by Rodero's (2007) research. There is a warning regarding this in the style manuals of radio broadcasting stations. Garrido (1994: 188) is emphatic in his opinion regarding this issue: "Sometimes in order to provide liveliness to an expression, it is given an emphasis that it does not hold. Sometimes this manifests in the typical singsong in which the speaker incorrectly marks all of the endings of a phonic group as ascendant and with a characteristic pause (example: ascending-descending). The listeners reject this when they hear it." Evans (1977) also points to the fact that intoning meaningless phrases with exaggerated emphasis is the best way to develop, "irritating vocal mannerisms." From a perceptive point of view, this prosodic style is not appropriate, particularly if its objective is to catch the listener's attention.

In conclusion, the results of this study should encourage newscasters and radio broadcasting stations to reflect on the prosodic traits employed in the communication of their radio news bulletins, if they truly wish to favour the attention and understanding of their listeners.

6. References

- AGUILAR, Lourdes (2000): "La prosodia" (The prosody). En ALCOBA, Santiago: *La expresión oral*. Barcelona, Ariel.
- AGUILAR, Lourdes; ALCOBA, Santiago; CARBÓ, Carme; & MACHUCA, María Jesús (2002): "Los marcadores discursivos en la lengua oral informativa". *Congreso Internacional de Análisis del discurso: lengua, cultura y valores*. Pamplona, Spain.

- ALCOBA, Santiago (coord., 2009): *Lengua, comunicación y Libro de Estilo*. Madrid, Digital Edition.
- BEAN, Carolyn; FOLKINS, John W., & COOPER, William E. (1989): "The effects of emphasis on passage comprehension". *Journal of Speech Hearing Research*, nº 32, pp. 707-712.
- BEIGHLEY, Karl C. (1954): "An experimental study of the effect of three speech variables on listener comprehension". *Speech Monographs*, nº 21, pp. 248-253.
- BOCK, J. Kathryn & MAZZELLA, Joanne R. (1983): "Intonational marking of given and new information: Some consequences for comprehension". *Memory and Cognition*, nº 11, pp. 64-76.
- BOERSMA, Paul & WEENINK, David (2009): *Praat: doing phonetics by computer* [Software]. In: <http://www.praat.org>.
- BRAZIL, David (1978): *Discourse Intonation II*. Birmingham, English Language Research, University of Birmingham.
- BROWN, Gillian (1983): "Prosodic structure and the given/new distinction". In LADD, D. Robert & CUTLER, Anna (eds.): *Prosody: Models and Measurements*, Springer-Verlag, pp. 6-78.
- CANTERO, Francisco José; ALFONSO, Raúl; BARTOLÍ, Marta; et al. (2005): "Rasgos melódicos de énfasis en español". *Phonica*, nº 1, pp. 1-40.
- CRUTTENDEN, Alan (1997): *Intonation*. New York, Cambridge University Press.
- DE-LA-MOTA, Carme & RODERO, Emma (2010): "La demarcación entonativa y el énfasis en la locución de los editores de boletines informativos radiofónicos". Santiago de Compostela, *XXXIX Simposio Internacional de la Sociedad Española de Lingüística (SEL)*.
- DE KUTHY, Kordula & MEURERS, Detmar (2010): "Focus in German: Towards a Corpus-based study". *Proceedings of Linguistic Evidence 2010*, pp. 1-5.
- DE PAULO, Bella M., & FRIEDMAN, Howard S. (1998): "Nonverbal communication". In GILBERT, Daniel T.; FISKE, Susan T. & LINDZEY, Gardner (eds.): *The handbook of social psychology*. New York, McGraw Hill.
- EVANS, Elwyn (1977): *Radio, a Guide to Broadcasting Techniques*. London, Barrie and Jenkins.
- FRANCUZ, Piotr (2010): "The impact of audio information intonation on understanding television news content". *Psychology of Language and Communication*, nº 14 (1), pp. 71-86.
- GARRIDO, Juan María (1994): *Idioma e Información. La lengua española de la comunicación*. Barcelona, Síntesis.
- HALLIDAY, Michael A.K. (1967): "Notes on transitivity and theme in English: Part 2". *Journal of Linguistics*, nº 3, pp. 199-244.

- HIRSCHBERG, Julia & PIERREHUMBERT, Janette (1986): "Intonational structuring of discourse". *Proceedings of 24th meeting of the association for computational linguistics*. New York, pp. 136-144.
- HIRST, Daniel (2007): "A Praat plugin for Momel and Intsint with improved algorithms for modelling and coding intonation". *ICPhS XVI*, Saarbrücken, pp. 1233-1236.
- IRIBARREN, Mary C. (2005): *Fonética y fonología españolas*. Madrid, Síntesis.
- MCGREGOR, Jeannette & PALETHORPE, Sallyanne (2008): "High Rising Tunes in Australian English: The Communicative Function of L* and H* Pitch Accent Onsets". *Australian Journal of Linguistics*, nº 28 (2), pp. 171-193.
- MACHUCA, María & DE-LA-MOTA, Carme (2006): "Estrategias pragmlingüísticas orales: El énfasis en la publicidad". León, Spain, *Actas del XXXV Simposio Internacional de la SEL* (Ed. por M. Villayandre Llamazares).
- NICHOLS, Ralph G. (1948): "Factors in listening comprehension". *Communication Monographs*, nº 15 (2), pp. 154-163.
- NIHALANI, Paroo & PO LIN, Tay (1998): "Intonation patterns in news broadcasts". *World Englishes*, nº 17 (1), pp. 15-29.
- OLEINIK, Helen (2006): "Intonation trends in news broadcast". *Respectus Philologicus*, nº 9 (14), pp. 152-157.
- PRICE, Jennifer (2008): "New News Old News: A Sociophonetic Study of Spoken Australian English in News Broadcast Speech". *AAA, Arbeiten aus Anglistik und Amerikanistik*, nº 33 (2), pp. 285-310.
- RODERO, Emma (2007): "Characterization of a presentation on audiovisual media". *Estudios del mensaje periodístico*, vol. 13, pp. 523-542. Madrid, Servicio de Publicaciones de la Universidad Complutense.
- RODERO, Emma (2006): "Analysis of intonation in news presentation on television". In *ExLing-2006*, Athens, pp. 209-212.
- RODERO, Emma (2002): "The sense and melodic beauty of radio news or how to intone news on radio". *Comunicación y Sociedad*, nº 15 (2), pp. 115-145.
- RODERO, Emma & CAMPOS, Gloria (2005): "The voices of Spanish's broadcasters". *Comunicar. Revista Científica Iberoamericana de Comunicación y Educación*, nº 25.
- SOSA, José Manuel (1999): *La entonación del español*. Madrid, Cátedra.
- SOTO, María Teresa (2008): "Efecto del tono de voz y de la percepción del rostro en la formación de impresiones sobre los hablantes mediáticos". *Nueva Época*, nº 10, pp. 129-161.
- STRANGERT, Eva (2005): "Prosody in public speech: analyses of a news announcement and a political interview". *INTERSPEECH 2005*, Lisbon, pp. 3401-3404.

- TAYLOR, David S. (1993): "Intonation and Accent in English: What teachers need to know". *IRAL*, XXXI (1).
- TENCH, Paul (1990): *The Roles of Intonation in English Discourse*. Germany, Peter Lang.
- TERKEN, Jacques & NOOTEBOOM, Sieb G. (1994): "Opposite effects of accentuation and deaccentuation on verification latencies for given and new information". *Language and Cognitive Processes*, nº 2 (3/4), pp. 145-163.
- VAN LEEUWEN, Theo (1984): "Impartial Speech: Observations on the Intonation of Radio Newsreader". *Australian Journal Cultural Studies*, nº 2 (1), pp. 84-98.
- WHEATLEY, Katherine E. (1949): "Anomalies of Radio Speech". *American Speech*, nº 24 (3), pp. 213-215.