Intonation Salience as an Underframe to Text Intonation Models

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Abstract : It is common knowledge that intonation is not laid over a ready text. On the contrary, intonation forms and accompanies the text on the level of its birth in the speaker's mind. As a result, intonation plays one of the fundamental roles in the process of transferring a thought into external speech. Intonation structure can highlight the semantic significance of textual elements and become a ranging mark in understanding the information structure of the text. Intonation functions by means of prosodic characteristics, one of which is intonation salience, whose function in texts results in making some textual elements more prominent than others. This function of intonation, therefore, performs as organizing. It helps to form the frame of key elements of the text. The study under consideration made an attempt to look into the inner nature of salience and create a sort of a text intonation model. This general goal brought to some more specific intermediate results. First, there were established degrees of salience on the level of the smallest semantic element - intonation group, as well as prosodic means of creating salience, were examined. Second, the most frequent combinations of prosodic means made it possible to distinguish patterns of salience, which then became constituent elements of a text intonation model. Third, the analysis of the predicate structure allowed to divide the whole text into smaller parts, or units, which performed a specific function in the developing of the general communicative intention. It appeared that such units can be found in any text and they have common characteristics of their intonation arrangement. These findings are certainly very important both for the theory of intonation and their practical application.