

Accentuation Moods of Blaming Utterances in Egyptian Arabic: A Pragmatic Study of Prosodic Focus

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Abstract : This paper investigates the pragmatic meaning of prosodic focus through four accentuation moods of blaming utterances in Egyptian Arabic. Prosodic focus results in various pragmatic meanings when the speaker utters the same blaming expression in different emotional moods: the angry, the mocking, the frustrated, and the informative moods. The main objective of this study is to interpret the meanings of these four accentuation moods in relation to their illocutionary forces and prelocutionary effects, the integrated features of prosodic focus (e.g., tone movement distributions, pitch accents, lengthening of vowels, deaccentuation of certain syllables/words, and tempo), and the consonance between the former prosodic features and certain lexico-grammatical components to communicate the intentions of the speaker. The data on blaming utterances has been collected via elicitation and pre-recorded material, and the selection of blaming utterances is based on the criteria of lexical and prosodic regularity to be processed and verified by three computer programs, Praat, Speech Analyzer, and Spectrogram Freeware. A dual pragmatic approach is established to interpret expressive blaming utterance and their lexico-grammatical distributions into intonational focus structure units. The pragmatic component of this approach explains the variable psychological attitudes through the expressions of blaming and their effects whereas the analysis of prosodic focus structure is used to describe the intonational contours of blaming utterances and other prosodic features. The study concludes that every accentuation mood has its different prosodic configuration which influences the listener's interpretation of the pragmatic meanings of blaming utterances.

Keywords : pragmatics, pragmatic interpretation, prosody, prosodic focus

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