

LANGUAGE IN INDIA

Strength for Today and Bright Hope for Tomorrow

Volume 11 : 5 May 2011

ISSN 1930-2940

Managing Editor: M. S. Thirumalai, Ph.D.

Editors: B. Mallikarjun, Ph.D.

Sam Mohanlal, Ph.D.

B. A. Sharada, Ph.D.

A. R. Fatihi, Ph.D.

Lakhan Gusain, Ph.D.

Jennifer Marie Bayer, Ph.D.

S. M. Ravichandran, Ph.D.

G. Baskaran, Ph.D.

L. Ramamoorthy, Ph.D.

Rhythm and Intonation Patterns in English and Urdu - A Contrastive Analysis

Mohammad Owais Khan, Ph.D.

Abstract

In all the languages, Rhythm and Intonation play a central role in the production of statement and interrogative sentences, without which meaning remains ambiguous and is not conveyed to the listener properly. The rhythm of the languages of the world has traditionally been classified into stress-timed and syllable-timed patterns.

In syllable-timed rhythm there is a regular time interval between each syllable, languages like Hindi and Urdu are syllable-timed. An equal time interval is observed between two syllables. Rhythm is produced by the periodicity of a pattern that can be syllable, which is a language specific unit. Intonation involves a one to one interactional occasion when the addresser and the addressee talk to each other. If the addresser and the addressee are from the same social, cultural, regional provenance there are no overt problems of communications because of intonation. But if they are from different social, cultural, or regional provenance, difficulties of communication may arise quite often.

The present paper aims at a contrastive analysis of Rhythm and Intonation patterns in English and Urdu. It has been observed that Urdu speakers face difficulties in learning Rhythm and

Language in India www.languageinindia.com

11 : 5 May 2011

Mohammad Owais Khan, Ph.D.

Rhythm and Intonation Patterns in English and Urdu - A Contrastive Analysis

intonation patterns in English. So they use faulty rhythm and intonation patterns by which the connotation is not communicated to the listener appropriately. We devote a special attention to differentiate rhythmic and intonation patterns between the two languages. This paper will help the teachers teaching English as a foreign language as well as the students.

1. Introduction

About the two languages under study in the present investigation we can make a generalization. It is that at the phonological level there are two main divisions. They are segmental features and supra-segmental features. Segmental features are those that can have independent place and are separable from other units of the same category. Consonants and vowels are such features. Supra-segmental components are those which are not separable as independent elements and they are located at a particular point in the connected speech. Let us take the following examples to substantiate the above statement.

- (a) Where are you going at this time?
 (b) /ɪs wəqʌ ʌ um kəhã dʒa: rəhe hɔ:ʔ/

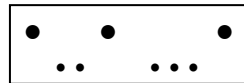
Here we can easily separate the sounds shown in the examples:

- (a) (i) Consonants : (w, r, j, g, ŋ, t, ð, s, t, m) 10 nos.
 (ii) Vowels : (eə, ə, u:, əʊ, ɪ, æ, ɪ, aɪ) 08 nos.
 (b) (i) Consonants : (s, w, q, ʌ, ʌ, m, k, h, dʒ, r, h, h,) 12 nos.
 (ii) Vowels : (ɪ, ə,ʊ, ə, a:, a:, ə, e, o) 09 nos.

In utterance (a) above there are 10+8 sounds and in utterance (b) there are 12+09 sounds. The fact that they can be counted by separating them from their phonetic context shows that they are segmental features.

The sounds under (a) (ii) and (b) (ii) are – ‘vowels’ – they have the additional features of constituting prominence because of the natural phenomenon of the chest pulse factor. Since prominence is variable and quite often spread over the stretch of the utterance it becomes supra-segmental and hence a component of rhythmic variation. These shifts or variations in prominence are not arbitrary and unorganized. They occur at regular places. Hence we can say that rhythm (i) depends upon the phonological function of the peaks of prominence or their absence or weakening and has an organized pattern of recurrence in the connected speech. The following diagrammatic form of examples show how peaks of prominence can vary depending upon the functional change of the utterance because of the factor of ‘context of situation’.

Where are you going at this time?



Where are **you** going at this time?

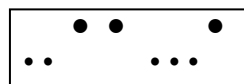
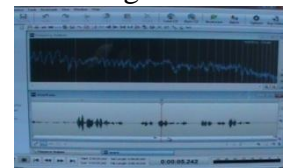


Figure I



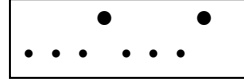
Language in India www.languageinindia.com

11 : 5 May 2011

Mohammad Owais Khan, Ph.D.

Rhythm and Intonation Patterns in English and Urdu - A Contrastive Analysis

Where are you **going** at this time?

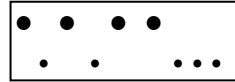


Where are you going at **this time**?

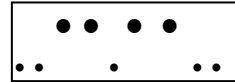


There can be a variety of patterns after the pitch variation starts until the end of the utterance depending upon the functional attitude of the choice of the tone (rising, falling, fall-rise, rise-fall) etc.)

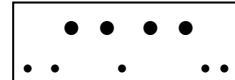
/ɪs wəqʊt̪ t̪ʊm kəhã dʒa: rəhe hɔ:ʔ/



/ɪs wəqʊt̪ t̪ʊm kəhã dʒa: rəhe hɔ:ʔ/



/ɪs wəqʊt̪ t̪ʊm kəhã dʒa: rəhe hɔ:ʔ/



/ɪs wəqʊt̪ t̪ʊm kəhã dʒa: rəhe hɔ:ʔ/

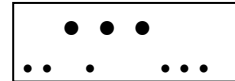


Figure - II



It will be useful to point out the division of units which contributes to the rhythmic pattern of English or Urdu. The smallest unit in the hierarchical order is a phoneme; then comes the syllable, then the phrase and the whole utterance. We speak in utterances where recurrence of beats or accents in a patterned manner is taken into account. Phonologists have asserted that in English these beats occur at a regular interval of time irrespective of the number of peaks between two beats; i.e. stresses. For this, as Leach has said “the grandiose term isochronisms (equal-time-ness)” has been used.

2. Literature Review

It will be useful to accept Firth’s (1966) theory of ‘Context of Situation’ as a framework to be kept in mind while analyzing any speech event in a living situation. Pronouns and the forms of verbal inflection are the most significant markers of the interpersonal attitudes, responses and relationships between the participants of the speech events. Participants in the speech event are members of a social, cultural and regional community.

Two articles, which started a new line of inquiry into spoken language, are Roger Brown and Albert Gilman’s (“The Pronouns of Solidarity.”) and Paul Friedrich’s, “Structural Implications of Russian Pronominal Usage.”

Language in India www.languageinindia.com

11 : 5 May 2011

Mohammad Owais Khan, Ph.D.

Rhythm and Intonation Patterns in English and Urdu - A Contrastive Analysis

A man has to play a multiplicity of roles in a social life at various levels, -- individual level, personal level, social level, communal level, and national or international level. His relationship with his interlocutor is not a fixed one. It keeps on changing, some times overtly and some other time covertly which affect the choice of the linguistic items and the tone group of the speech even during the speech.

Sometimes code-switching takes place to denote the sudden change in the relationship of the participant in a speech event. The change from ‘thou’ to ‘you’ and the corresponding change in verbs in Hamlet – Gertrude interaction and from proper name to ‘Lady’ in King Lear are classic examples quoted by Brown and Gilman.

‘Stress’ by the way, cannot be merely reduced to the single physical factor of loudness; pitch and length also have a part to play. Stress is an abstract, linguistic concept, not a purely acoustic one. Geoffrey N. Leech (1969).

In the daily life of a man the use of language by him in interaction can be fully comprehended only when we briefly glance at Firth’s schematic framework of “context of Situation” which consists of a dual axis of (a) an axis of context, and (b) an axis of dyadic relations. The contextual dimension includes the following: (a) Topic of discourse: this relates to the consideration of whether the conversation relates to personal or impersonal problems of a social, political, professional, academic or amorous sort. (b) Occasion or situation of speech event. (c) Relative group, category, or caste membership and (d) relative role or and status of person in terms of (i) generation, age, sex, marital status, juridical position, political or economical authority and emotional solidarity.

The Dyadic Relational Dimension: Here the categories depend upon the complexity of the social organization and relational realities among the inhabitants of the community. Some of the obvious ones relevant to the two languages under study are:

- (a) Social Dyadic Relational Category (Landlord – Tenant; Master – Servant; Friends, Strangers)
- (b) Familial Dyadic Relational Category (Father – Son; Father – Daughter; Husband – Wife; Mother – Son; Mother - Daughter; Brother – Sister; Sister – Sister)
- (c) Professional Dyadic Relational Category (Official; An Official and a non-official; Customer – Shopkeeper; Doctor – Patient; Prostitute – her client).

The above sketchy discussion of the complex implication involved in the study of intonation is a useful component of any study of living speech for person-to-person interaction.

J.D. O’Cornnor and G.F. Arnold (1976) have rightly observed that “no language that we know of is spoken on a monotone; in all languages there are variations of pitch, though not all languages use these pitch variations.”

Language in India www.languageinindia.com

11 : 5 May 2011

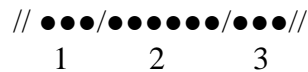
Mohammad Owais Khan, Ph.D.

Rhythm and Intonation Patterns in English and Urdu - A Contrastive Analysis

To this we may add that in English intonation is considerably significant, it is more systematic, defined and meaningful. In Urdu intonation is meaningful no doubt, because it reflects the attitudes and interpersonal relationship of the speech participants, but it is not so complex and comprehensive. Intonation patterns in Urdu may have similarities with those of English but it has its own socio-linguistic implications, reflecting the cultural and social nuances of the relational dimension of the speech participants. "Intonation may be defined as the variations which take place in the pitch of voice in connected speech, i.e. the variations in the pitch of the musical note produced by the variation of the vocal cords. Intonation is thus quite a different thing from stress." Daniel Jones, (1966).

2.1 Rhythm

As the unit of syllable is a vowel, the unit of rhythm is one of the vowels which carries maximum prominence in an utterance. The utterance may have more than one syllable – some times as many as four to six which may not carry prominence between the first stressed syllable and the last stressed syllable in a stretch of utterance. But between utterances in succession, having more than two stressed syllables, the time taken will be approximately the same. The time graph in relation to the number of syllables vis-a-vis the stressed syllable determining the rhythmic boundary is shown below:



Under 1 above the three syllables will take the same time as six syllables under 2 and the three syllables under 3.

Theoretically speaking, for emphasis, contrast, or other contextual reasons the stress may fall on any syllable. But in English certain working generalizations can be followed. For example, proper nouns and lexical words (nouns, verbs, adjectives, demonstratives, interrogative pronouns and adverbs) bear stress in connected speech, whereas grammatical words (prepositions, auxiliaries, articles, pronouns, conjunctions, personal and relative pronouns etc.) and very often monosyllabic grammatical words usually do not. In polysyllabic lexical words where we have two stresses, and if the word is uttered in isolation or at the end of the sentence, one of these stresses takes precedence over the other in bearing the nucleus of the intonation pattern. Take the word *trepidation* /'trepi'deɪsn/. Here extra prominence can be given either to the first syllable or the pen-ultimate syllable, depending upon the syllabic environment preceding that word or succeeding it. For example:

- All of the 'trepi'dation can for'ver be 'overcome.
- All of the, strong 'trepi'dation can forever be 'overcome.
- All of the, strong 'trepi,dation 'below over.

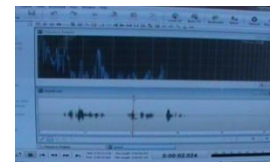
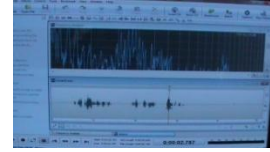


Figure - III

We can give other examples using a musical notation diagram as follows:

Figure - IV



We'll start immediately if you're ready.

 You can come with me if you're ready.

 This scene was beautiful.

Figure - V



Elision and syncopation play a great role in the phenomenon of rhythm in English. We know that in syncopation a syllable, which usually does not carry a stress, is made to bear stress in precedence over the usually stressed syllable in a word. For example any polysyllabic word with a pattern of strong-weak and weak-strong patterns. In elision the syllable-constituting vowel is omitted for example:

The orient = / ðəʊriənt /
 Cupboard = / kʌbəd /
 Tortoise-shell = / tɔ:təʃel / or / tɔ:təsʃel/

In order to achieve the characteristic isochronocity of beats in English, this language has a unique feature of using weak form mostly of grammatical words. Some of the examples are given below:

Articles	Strong Forms	Weak forms	Examples in RP
a	/eɪ/	/ ə /	/ ə ɡɜ:ɪl /
an	/æn/	/ən/ or /n/	/ ən æpl/
the	/ði:/	/ðɪ/ before a vowel /ðə/ before a consonant	/ðɪ ɔrɪndʒ/ /ðə pen/
Auxiliary verbs (no weak forms in the final position)			
am	/æm/	/ əm/	/aɪm kʌmɪŋ/
are	/ɑ:/	/ ə /	/wɪə kʌmɪŋ/
is	/ɪz/	/z/, /s/	/ʃi:z kʌmɪŋ/
was	/wɔz/	/wəz/	/ʃi: wəz kʌmɪŋ/
would	/wʊd/	/ əd/, /d/	/ʃi:d bɪ ðeə/

No such phenomenon of weak form is possible in Urdu language.

Urdu as we know is a syllable-timed language while English is a stress-timed one. We have seen that in English regular beats or accents occur at approximately fixed duration of time. In a particular stress group if the number of syllables is small (it may be even a monosyllabic word) more time is devoted to the vowel length than usual. But in the succeeding unit of measure,

Language in India www.languageinindia.com

11 : 5 May 2011

Mohammad Owais Khan, Ph.D.

Rhythm and Intonation Patterns in English and Urdu - A Contrastive Analysis

consisting of multiple syllables, in order to keep isochronocity of the rhythmic beats the vowel length is either considerably reduced or sometimes the vowel is even elided.

In Urdu no such phenomenon as mentioned above of elision or weakening of vowels, is significantly noticed. Even if it occurs because of extra phonological reasons it is phonetically not functional. For example, in Urdu a long vowel for reasons of pitch emphasis or contrast can be made longer but a short vowel cannot be weakened and elision does not take place at all. This sweeping generalization can be tested by the following:

- (i) Long vowel can be made longer
/si:ḡha dʒa:ja: kəɾɔ:/ (The implication is you should not go in a zigzag way)

In this example [ḡha] can be softened no doubt and the pitch can be made low but no reduction in the length is possible. This is because if we reduce the length a separate vowel will be needed which will be /ə/: /ḡha/ but this will be an all together a different word i.e. /si:ḡhe/ this is because in Urdu /a:/ can be reduced to /ə/ only and no other vowel.

/si:ḡha: dʒa:ja: kəɾɔ:/

Figure VI



Jaya / dʒa:ja:/ here also /dʒa:/ if reduced will give a different word. / dʒəja:/ is a proper noun. But the vowel in ja: cannot be reduced at all. The vowels, which can be reduced, are as follows:

a:→ə; u: → ʊ; æ → e; əu-> o; but this reduction does not help rhythmic variation and considerably contribute to lack of communication.

This is not to say that rhythm is an aspect of the phonological feature of Urdu which does not require to be paid any attention to. In any Urdu utterance there are peaks of prominence. It is a different matter, though, that there is no regularity of isochronocity. But still certain generalizations can be made.

- (i) Long vowel + Long vowel (one of the two will be more prominent in natural utterance) e.g. / dʒa:ja:, kha:ja:, ni:la:, khu:ni:, pa:ni:, tha:ni.

Choice of prominence quite often depends upon the inherent sonority of the consonants. For example, in /dʒa:ja /, / dʒ / is a harsher sound than / j /. Similarly in the example given above kh, n, p, tha, have the tendency to carry loudness more than the other consonants. Perhaps this observation will apply more suitably to voiced consonants.

2.2 Intonation

It is a universally accepted fact that speech is a means of communication within and some times across a social, cultural or regional boundary. The participants in the speech event, while

Language in India www.languageinindia.com

11 : 5 May 2011

Mohammad Owais Khan, Ph.D.

Rhythm and Intonation Patterns in English and Urdu - A Contrastive Analysis

Communicating, always demonstrate the features, peculiarities and cultural characteristics of their milieu. They determine the choice of linguistic items for communication. The whole attitude, response to social and other interactional communications depends upon the culture of which the language is the product. Intonation involves a one to one interactional occasion when the addresser and the addressee talk to each other. If the addresser and the addressee are from the same social, cultural, regional provenance there are no overt problems of communication because of intonation. But if they are from different social, cultural, or regional provenance, difficulties of communication may arise quite often.

Daniel Jones' distinguishing of stress from intonation will be clear if we keep the following definition of stress given by him in mind: Stress may be described as the degree of force with which a sound or syllable is uttered. It is essentially a subjective action. A strong force of utterance means energetic action of all the articulatory organs; it is usually accompanied by a gesture with the hand or head or other part of the body; it involves a strong 'push' from the chest wall and consequently strong force of exhalation; this generally gives the objective impression of loudness. Weak force of utterance involves weak action of the chest wall resulting in weak force of exhalation and giving the objective acoustic impression of softness.

2.2.1 Sense Group

We neither think nor speak in single words; we express our thought in closely-knit groups of words which contribute to the situation in which we are placed at a given moment.

Such groups of words are called 'Sense Groups'. They are usually separated from each other by pauses, though on occasions these pauses may be separated for example:

Good Morning. | How are you?
 I'm very well, | thank you. | And you?
 Fine. | The last time I saw you | you were just going to take your exam. |
 Yes. | I failed, unfortunately. |
 Oh, | bad luck. |

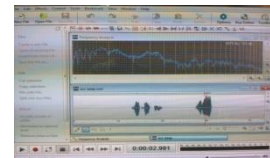
Figure - VII



Urdu example:

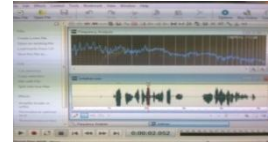
a:ɖa:b ərz |
 a:p kæse hæʔ |
 mǎĩ thi:k hũ | ɔ:r a:p? |

Figure - VIII



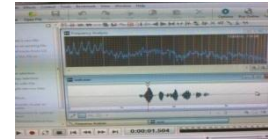
thi:k hũ. | a:khɪr ba:r dʒəb mʊla:qa:ʈ huɪ | ʈum ɪmʈeha:n ɔene dʒa rəhe ʈhe. |

Figure – IX



hã. | bəɖqɪsməʈi se mǎi fel hɔ gəja. |

Figure- X



Oh, | kesi: bəɖqɪsməʈi: |

Sense groups may consist of a single word or a number of words. Their length may vary according to the situation and the kind of speech being used. e.g.

Single word: When | How | Why | are not relevant |
Allah | Allah | Kəɾɔ | sʌb thi:k hɔga: |

If the utterance is unduly long, pauses are required to give respite to the pulmonary system. Hence pauses become a biological necessity.

2.2.2 Breath Group

A breath group is not arbitrary in normal utterances, and it normally corresponds with the sense group. The unit of breath group, therefore, is the sense group.

2.2.3 Tune

Tune is “the complete pitch treatment of a sense group there are six tunes: , low fall, high fall, rise fall, low rise, high rise, fall rise.

2.2.4 Pitch variation

All the above tunes are related to the pitch on a relatively more prominent syllable. It is this syllable from which variation or movement in the direction of one of the tunes takes place. Pitch variation may start and end on a syllable if it occurs finally and is stressed. e.g. /juər ə fu:l / (You’re a fool.)

2.2.5 Tonic/Tonicity

Tonic is the extra breath force exhorted on a syllable which is the carrier of pitch variation. In the following examples the tonic may fall on any stressed syllable of the lexical word. e.g. His brother is an extra ordinary intelligent scholar. The tonic may fall as shown below depending

Language in India www.languageinindia.com

11 : 5 May 2011

Mohammad Owais Khan, Ph.D.

Rhythm and Intonation Patterns in English and Urdu - A Contrastive Analysis

upon the information to be conveyed. We will take up a statement for the sake of economy of the space. e.g. *His brother is an extraordinary intelligent scholar.*

The tonic may fall as shown:

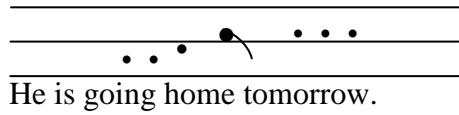


Figure - XI

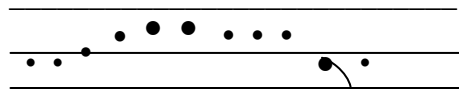
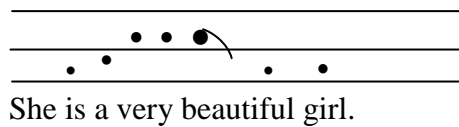


Figure – XII



In Urdu the tunes are more leveled than the significantly marked ones in English.

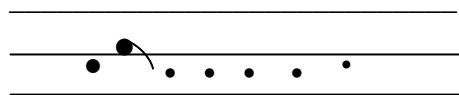


Figure –XIII

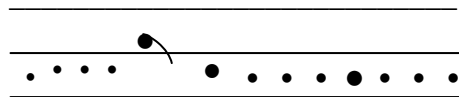
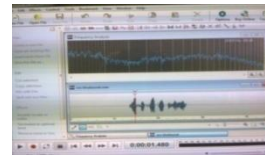


Figure- XVI

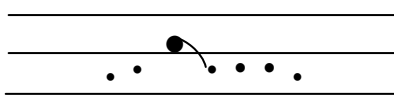
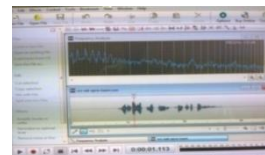
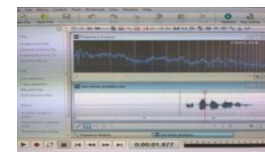


Figure – XV



2.2.6 Tone groups

Tone groups can be studied on a dual-axis parameter of (a) grammatical sentence patterns and (b) contextual and other extra linguistic factors of social and psychological nature. We should keep in mind that intonation in language has meanings which are super-imposed on the dictionary meanings of the words uttered. They may convey subtle shades of meaning, which

Language in India www.languageinindia.com

11 : 5 May 2011

Mohammad Owais Khan, Ph.D.

Rhythm and Intonation Patterns in English and Urdu - A Contrastive Analysis

could only be expressed by words in a cumbersome matter, if at all. We can compare the following tunes used in the same word for example:

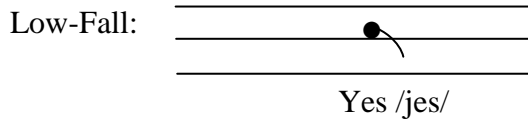


Figure - XVI

this tune means:
“that is so”

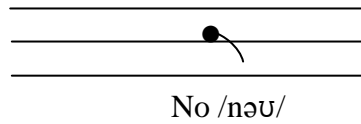
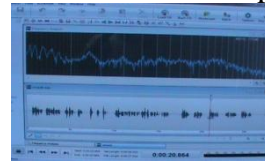


Figure - XVII

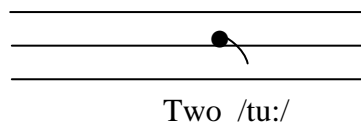


Figure - XVIII

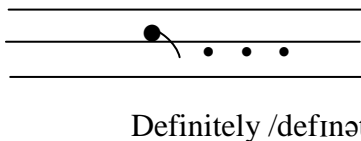
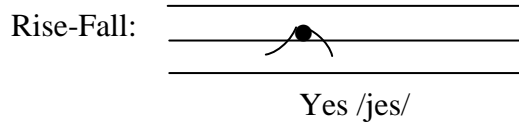


Figure - XIX



this tune means: “of course it is”

Grammatical Sentences Patterns: Statements: Normal, Natural Pattern; last lexical item to carry the tonic.

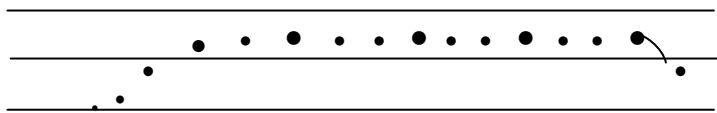


Figure-XX

(She was about the only diligent girl in the whole class.)

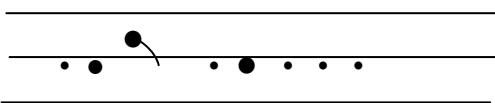
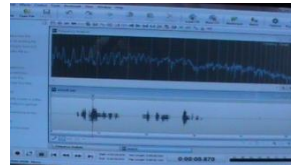
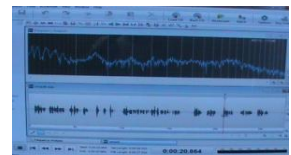


Figure - XXI

(I have just bought a new pair of gloves.)



Language in India www.languageinindia.com

11 : 5 May 2011

Mohammad Owais Khan, Ph.D.

Rhythm and Intonation Patterns in English and Urdu - A Contrastive Analysis

Urdu:



Figure-XXII

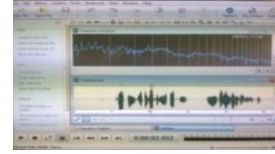
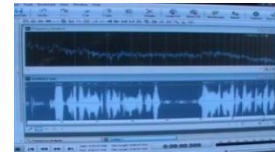


Figure - XXIII



In Urdu the syntactic pattern is not always important especially in statement sentences. Here the tonic falls on the lexical items, which contain the core information.

Wh questions: containing interrogative word demanding a statement answer, e.g.

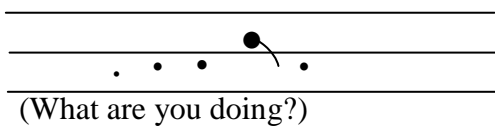


Figure - XXVI

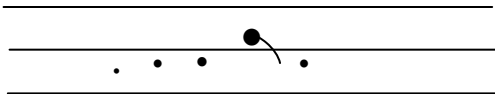
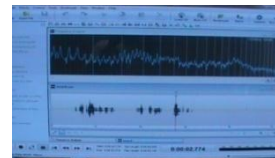


Figure - XXV



Urdu:

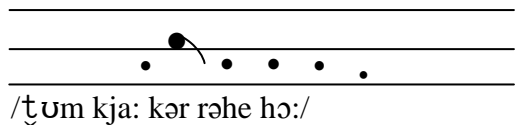


Figure - XXVI

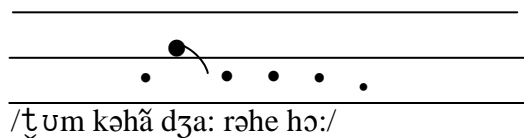
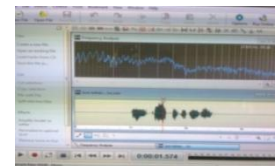
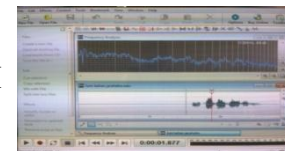
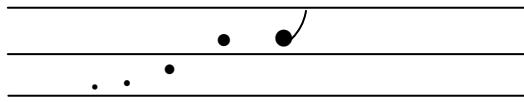


Figure - XXVII

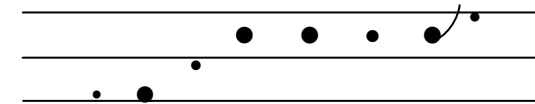


In the above examples the desired answers to the core information queries in the special question words -- /kja:/, kəhǎ/. In English such words are invariably unstressed and weakened in neutral interrogative questions.

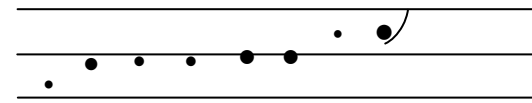
Yes/ No questions: Here the answer is straight ‘yes’ or ‘no’ and the tone is rising e.g.



(Is your father home?)



(Does your mother beats you?)



/ʈmha:re əbbu ghər mē hāʔ/



/kja: ʈumha:ri əmmi: ʈumhē ma:rʈɪ hāʔ/

Figure - XXVIII

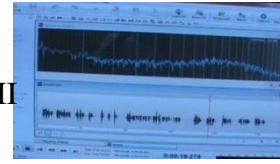


Figure - XXIX



Figure - XXX

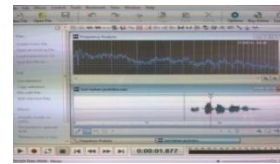
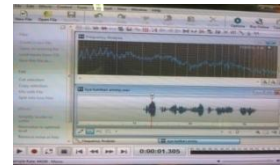
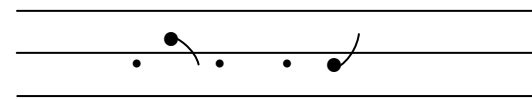


Figure - XXXI

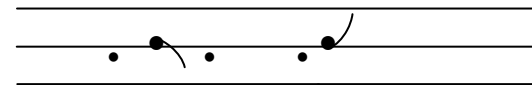


In both Urdu and English in this grammatical pattern the focus is on the point of information in the utterance.

Question Tags: Question tags may be meaningful or meaningless. A meaningful question tag is that which requires a confirmation whereas a meaningless question tag is that which does not require any information or refutation. In English question tags are quite frequent in statement patterns whereas in Urdu the frequency is somewhat less. Eg.



(She is \pretty, \isn't /she?)

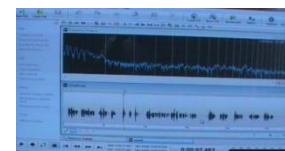


(Please \sit down, will /you?)

Figure - XXXII



Figure - XXXIII



Urdu:

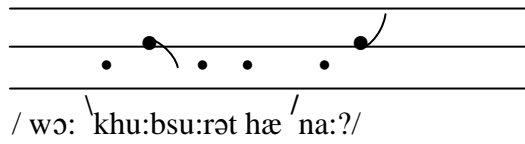


Figure - XXXIV

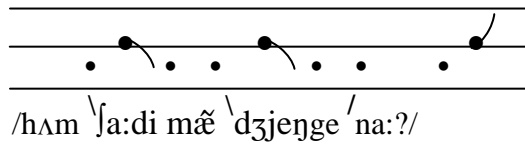
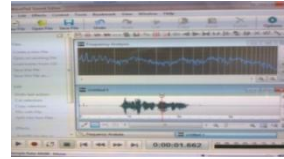


Figure-XXXV



These categories show the complexity of the interpersonal, interactional reality of a community's existence. A speech participant is a bundle of persona and has to play multiple roles even within a single situation. His relationship, attitude etc are reflected in his choice of grammatical items as has been mentioned in the two articles by Paul Friedric and Roger Brown and Albert Gillman. But the grammatical choices have their limited socio-linguistic implications. Shift in pitch movement as an indicator of the possible choice of a tune has a much deeper implication because it is on this that comparison, contrast, confirmation, refutation, etc. depend.

Choice of tones: Besides the two primary tunes, falling and rising, there are a number of combinations of these two tunes in conjunction with low, mid, and high pitches either on the segment of pitch variation group or on the tonic. Sometimes the pitch variation starts on the first stressed syllable of the breath/sense-group and spreads over the entire stretch of utterance until it terminates at the tonic syllable. We have shown that in the diagrammatic representation of pitch movement in regard to the discussion on grammatical categories. In Urdu the pitch is normal and expression of irritation is shown by the help of extra linguistic means such as gesture etc. Unlike English in Urdu the post-tonic syllables remain at their normal pitch. The whole difference is explainable with reference to one language (English) being stress-timed and the other language (Urdu) being syllable timed.

3. Experimental Analysis

In order to investigate the rhythm and intonation patterns in English and Urdu acoustic analysis of recorded material was carried out.

3.1 Choice of Data

In order to be able to grasp the violation or neglect of the socio-cultural component in an interactive speech act, a detailed questionnaire consisting of 24 items were prepared. Sentence lists containing the Statement and Interrogative sentences were prepared. The lists included sentences which were useful for analyzing the rhythm and intonation patterns of Urdu. The above data was prepared only from the sentences which were used commonly by the Urdu speakers. Difficult and Technical sentences which were not usually used by the Urdu speakers were carefully avoided. Generally these sentences were used in day-to-day conversation.

Language in India www.languageinindia.com

11 : 5 May 2011

Mohammad Owais Khan, Ph.D.

Rhythm and Intonation Patterns in English and Urdu - A Contrastive Analysis

3.2 Speakers (Informants)

The corpus of the data for analysis was selected from the first year undergraduate students of the faculty of Arts, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh. Ten undergraduate students speaking Urdu as their mother tongue, coming from the different areas of Western UP and Delhi were chosen as informants. Students of science, technology, and other courses were not taken into account because their competence in the English language is at great variance from that of Arts students. Moreover, these Arts students mostly come from the rural areas of Urdu and Hindi speaking regions. Hence their selection as informants for the present paper was felt to be more meaningful.

These informants who had been speaking Urdu as their first language were identified because they had some sort of uniformity in their speech utterances as well as diversity because of the regional differences of their previous schooling. Their number was 10. The record of all the 10 informants and their particulars were maintained in the table.

Table 1
INFORMANTS' DETAILS

Informant	Age	Sex	Mother tongue	Educational qualification	Other languages known
1	23	M	Urdu	BA. II	Hindi, English
2	21	M	Urdu	B.A. II	Hindi, English
3	20	M	Urdu	B.A. III	Hindi
4	23	M	Urdu	B.A. I	Hindi, English
5	24	M	Urdu	B.A. III	Hindi
6	21	F	Urdu	B.A. I	Hindi, English
7	20	F	Urdu	B.A. III	Hindi
8	22	F	Urdu	B.A. II	Hindi, English
9	22	F	Urdu	B.A. II	Hindi, English
10	23	F	Urdu	B.A. II	Hindi

3.3 Methodology

The recording was made on the Phillips Tape recorder, in the Department of English, AMU, Aligarh, UP. Firstly the informants were asked to read the sentences given to them silently to make the informants familiar with the given text. Before recording their speech, they were asked to mention their names and class and then asked to read the sentences as they spoke those sentences in their daily conversation.

Language in India www.languageinindia.com

11 : 5 May 2011

Mohammad Owais Khan, Ph.D.

Rhythm and Intonation Patterns in English and Urdu - A Contrastive Analysis

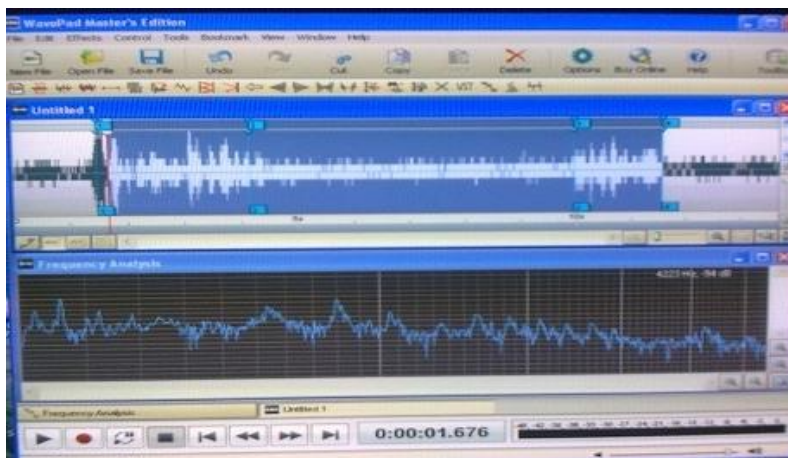
The following framework for listing the various characteristics of rhythm and intonation patterns was recorded. These categories were then reshuffled and rearranged in order to investigate the general patterns.

(i) Rhythm, (ii) Recognition of peaks of prominence in syllable formation, (iii) pitch variations, (iv) fundamental frequency, (v) falling tone, (vi) rising tone, (vii) Rise fall and fall rise.

(viii) Attitude, (ix) Softness, (x) Question, and (xi) Question tag.

Informants were encouraged to read the given text for analyzing the rhythm and intonation patterns. Later, these recorded materials were tabulated and analyzed using WavePad Speech Analyzer acoustically and phonologically so as to arrive at a generalization as to which area(s) presented great difficulty to these informants. WavePad Speech Analyzer provides standard operations such as acquisition, replay, display and labeling, spectrographic and formant analysis and fundamental frequency estimation. It has many specialized tools relating to building speech synthesis and speech recognition applications and is widely used in the teaching of speech science. Figure XXXVI shows a photo shot of a WavePad file where pitch points are displayed.

Figure XXXVI
WavePad Speech Analyzer file showing the pitch of a sound sample



The study is proposed to focus on rhythm and intonation patterns in English and Urdu. This raises lots of problems for working out a study of the type we have undertaken. We have to grapple with a two-fold problem, i.e. which standard form of spoken English is to be taken up for comparison and contrast with which form of Urdu. The problem of the standardized form of spoken Urdu will, therefore, be taken up first.

Because of the social structure of the Hindi-speaking regions there is a close intermixing between speakers of Urdu and Hindi. The features of spoken English of the two languages, therefore, have penetrated into each other.

Language in India www.languageinindia.com

11 : 5 May 2011

Mohammad Owais Khan, Ph.D.

Rhythm and Intonation Patterns in English and Urdu - A Contrastive Analysis

For practical purposes, it can safely be asserted that at the grammatical level there is no marked difference between Urdu and Hindi. But at the lexical level, the difference varies from one region to another as well as from one local dialect of Hindi to another. This difference and lack of standardization is more noticeable in spoken Urdu, both at the level of segmental phonological features of the language as well as supra-segmental features.

The use of supra-segmental features, especially rhythm and intonation have got regional varieties because of the dialectal diversity of spoken Hindi or Urdu which – in the form of its various dialects – is the language of family and social interaction. It is said that the dialectal variation in the language of social interaction in Northern India takes place at approximately 15 to 25 miles.

At the Aligarh Muslim University, Urdu-speaking students, officially or as the common perception is, use a variety of Urdu which is highly coloured by the regional dialects. This dialectal colouring is quite marked among the Urdu speakers coming from rural areas and lower, uneducated families.

But this situation is different so far as students from educated traditional Muslim families are concerned. This, in fact, is not an insurmountable problem for a research scholar, except that the researcher has to be cautious in selecting his informants. Another variety of Urdu is literary Urdu which is used only on formal occasions by the distinguished users. Such occasions are Lectures, Seminars, Citations or literary discussions in academic and other sophisticated circles. Since such users of Urdu are not to be counted for purposes of interactive language teaching, they can safely be left aside. Hence, to limit the scope of the present study, literary users of Urdu are not taken into consideration.

4. Result and Conclusion

According to the recorded data in Urdu the length of the vowels or pauses will determine the interval of time between the two prominent peaks of prominence.

- (i) Long vowels bear the peaks of prominence
- (ii) In successive long vowels harsher or more sonorous or voiced consonants help the relative peaks of prominence.
- (iii) Loudness plays a greater role in Urdu than that of English. Almost any syllable can be made distinctly loud where in English weakened grammatical words, if made loud, will affect the rhythmic flows.
- (iv) All syllables in Urdu are distinctly pronounced whereas in English some sounds are more prominent than others.

The data recorded show that the tone (rise-fall, fall-rise) depends upon the intention/attitude of the speaker. This phenomenon exhaustively and conclusively is not always feasible especially in

Language in India www.languageinindia.com

11 : 5 May 2011

Mohammad Owais Khan, Ph.D.

Rhythm and Intonation Patterns in English and Urdu - A Contrastive Analysis

English. In Urdu the situation is not so complicated. As situations for verbal interaction are theoretically infinite so are the attitudinal responses of the speech participants. The following example describes only those which are commonly encountered in both the languages English and Urdu.

- (i) /wɪl jʊ \du: əz aɪ a:skt ju: tʊ?/
Will you do as I asked you to?

In the normal situation it should have rising intonation because it is a 'yes-no' question pattern. But in annoyance, irritation, exasperation etc. the tune is falling. The above utterance can be said with four different pitch variations, depending upon emphasis, with falling tone.

- (ii) /wɪl jʊ \du: əz aɪ a:skt ju: tʊ?/
(iii) /wɪl jʊ du: əz \aɪ a:skt ju: tʊ?/
(iv) /wɪl jʊ du: əz aɪ \a:skt ju: tʊ?/

Urdu:

- (i) /dʒesa: mǎne kəha: vesa: kərə:/
(ii) /dʒsa: \mǎne kəha: vesa: kərə:/
(iii) /dʒesa: mǎne \kəha: vesa: kərə:/
(iv) /dʒesa: mǎne kəha: vesa: \kərə:/

In Urdu the pitch is normal and expression of irritation is shown by the help of extra linguistic means such as gesture etc. Unlike English in Urdu the post-tonic syllables remain at their normal pitch. The whole difference is explainable with reference to one language (English) being stress-timed and the other language (Urdu) being syllable-timed.

Cynical, ironical and sarcastic: e.g.

- (You are not very good at it| are you?)
/ ju:a: nɒt very \gʊd ət ɪt, | \a: jə/

The implication is that you have always pretended otherwise. The question tag in a normal utterance would have carried no separate tonic.

Urdu:

- /tʃʊm tʊ hamesha achcha karte ho | hona?
/ tʃʊm tʊ: \həmetʃa ətʃha: karte hɔ:, /hɔna:/
/ tʃʊm tʊ: həmetʃa \ətʃha: karte hɔ:, /hɔna:/
/ hǎ \bhəɪ /

Language in India www.languageinindia.com

11 : 5 May 2011

Mohammad Owais Khan, Ph.D.

Rhythm and Intonation Patterns in English and Urdu - A Contrastive Analysis

Warning, reprimanding:

(Its time you did it) / Its^V taim jə did it /

Urdu: parhayi kar lo /pəɣhai kər^V lo /

Politeness, request: (Shut the door) / ∫ʌt ð^V dɔ:r /

(Thank you) /^V θeŋk ju: /

In Urdu normally intonation alone is not the carrier of politeness. It depends heavily upon lexical items. (Zara zehmat farmaiye ga) / zəra; ^V zehmət̤ fərmaɪje ga: /

Here politeness or request is dependent on the dictionary meaning of the words and the softness of the voice pitch of the speaker. This is not to say that the utterance is not potent enough to convey contrast for irony or sarcasm. This can be done by a simple shift of loudness or pitch variation.

/ zəra; ^V zehmət̤ fərmaɪje ga: /

/ zəra; zehmət̤ fər^V maɪje ga: /

We have seen above that variations in pitch and shifts in pitch movements have a baffling variety and extensiveness. The voice movements can register a quick transition of loudness. But most of the cases where loudness is normal in Urdu, in English rise-fall or fall-rise or a combination of these is used. The full implication of which can be grasped only by a trained ear of the listener who is well-versed in the socio-cultural aspect of the English language. Whether in our practical classroom strategies we adopt them for practice is a matter of opinion.

So far as Urdu is concerned variations in pitch movement and choice of tune is much less. The burden of the message is primarily borne by the lexical component of the language. This phenomenon can be accredited to the socio-cultural aspect of the speech participants, an inquiry of which will surely be a useful, independent investigation.

It will be relevant to close our discussion of this paper by a quotation from the published doctoral dissertation of Prof. Iqtidar H. Khan: “the precise analysis of Urdu intonation has been done hitherto and mostly it is ignored by most of the linguistic scholars. Every language has a system of basic speech melodies which is unique to the language as is its set of vowel and consonant phonemes.”

What the teacher can do is not enter into the subtle niceties of the problem of intonation in English and Urdu, but to teach the learners the basic tones → rise, fall, rise-fall, fall-rise, he will be misunderstood in his interactional contact not only with the native speakers but also with those in his own country. In order to be able to speak intelligible English and to be able to

Language in India www.languageinindia.com

11 : 5 May 2011

Mohammad Owais Khan, Ph.D.

Rhythm and Intonation Patterns in English and Urdu - A Contrastive Analysis

comprehend what is being spoken one needs to be aware of the various aspects of the Rhythm. A failure to understand it may lead to breakdown of communication.

Most of the inhabitant varieties of English construct inimitable stresses on the language. English is a stress-timed language, and both syllable stress and word stress, where only certain words in an utterance or phrase are stressed, are important features of Received Pronunciation.

Indian local languages are actually syllable-timed languages. Indian English speakers usually speak with a syllabic rhythm. When they speak, they appear to put the stress accents at the wrong syllables, or accentuate all the syllables of a long English word. They do not care for strong and weak forms of functional words which is very important to produce rhythmic patterns.

Unlike in English, Urdu does not make a very clear distinction between stressed and unstressed syllables. In Urdu the position of the stress is not fixed in relation to the words, whereas in English it is fixed. Urdu words nearly always have the stress on the first syllable, irrespective of the number of syllables in the word. Also, the long vowels in the words are stressed. The phrase stress in Urdu cannot be easily predicted since it depends on the context. Hence, it was decided to place the stress on the first syllable and long vowels of each word by the stress assignment algorithm.

References

1. Abercrombie, Davie. (1967). *Elements of general phonetics*. Edinburgh University Press. Edinburgh.
2. Abercrombie, Davie. (1965). *Studies in phonetics and linguistics*. Oxford University Press. London.
3. Ahmad, M. (1964). *A contrastive phonological study of English and Urdu with special reference to some major problems of pronunciation*. University of North Wales.
4. Ali, Asad. (1994). *Phonological Patterns in Urdu speakers, English*, Bahri Publications. New Delhi.
5. Austin, J.N. (1962). *How to do things with words*. Clarendon Press. London.
6. Balasubramaniam, T. (1966-67). *Stress rhythm in English and Tamil: A Study in contrast*. *CIEFL*. Hyderabad, Bulletin, 11.

Language in India www.languageinindia.com

11 : 5 May 2011

Mohammad Owais Khan, Ph.D.

Rhythm and Intonation Patterns in English and Urdu - A Contrastive Analysis

7. Balasubramaniam, T. (1972). *The Phonetics of colloquial Tamil*, Ph.D. thesis. University of Edinburgh. Edinburgh.
8. Bansal R.K. (1966-67). "A study of intonation patterns in educated Indian English." CIEFL. Bulletin,6.
9. Bates, Douglas and Deepayan Sarkar. (2007). lme4: Linear mixed-effects models using S4 classes. R package version 0.9975-11.
10. Cohen, A. & Hart, J. (1967). On the anatomy of intonation, *Lingua*, 19, 177-192.
11. Dyrud, Lars O. (2001). Hindi-Urdu: stress accent or non-stress accent? Ph.D. thesis, University of North Dakota.
12. Ervin-Tripp, Susan M. (1973). *Language acquisition and communicative choice: Essays*. Selected and Introduced by Anwar S. Dil. Stanford University Press.
13. Firth, J.R. (1949). *Sounds and prosodies*. T.P.S. 1948. London.
14. Fisher, J.L. (1966). "Social influence on the choice of a linguistic variant," in *Language in Culture and Society*, 483-98.
15. Gimson, A.C. (1962). *An introduction to the Pronunciation of English*. Edward Arnold. London.
16. Harnsberger, James D. and Jasmeet Judge, (1996). Pitch range and focus in Hindi. *The Journal of the Acoustical Society of America*, 99:2493.
17. Harnsberger, James D. (1994). Towards an international phonology of Hindi. Unpublished manuscript.
18. Harnsberger, James D. (1999). The role of metrical structure in Hindi intonation. *South Asian Language Analysis Roundtable, University of Illinois, Urbana Champaign*.
19. Hayes, Bruce and Aditi Lahiri. (1991). Bengali international phonology. *Natural Language and Linguistic Theory* 9(1):47-96.
20. Jones, Daniel. (1956). *The Pronunciation of English*. Eighth Edition. Cambridge Univ. Press. Cambridge.

Language in India www.languageinindia.com

11 : 5 May 2011

Mohammad Owais Khan, Ph.D.

Rhythm and Intonation Patterns in English and Urdu - A Contrastive Analysis

21. Khan, Iqtidar. H. (1999). *A contrastive and comparative study of standard Urdu and standard Hindi*. AMU Press, Aligarh.
22. Leech G.N. & M.H. Short. (1981). *Style in Fiction: A linguistic introduction to English fictional prose*. Longman, Inc. New York.
23. Misra, K.S. (1977). *Terms of address and second person pronominal usage in Hindi: A sociolinguistic study*. Bahri Publications, New Delhi.
24. O'Connor J.D. & Arnold, G.F. (1961). *Intonation of colloquial English*. London.
25. O'Connor, J.D. (1967). *Better English pronunciation*. Cambridge University Press. Cambridge.
26. Sethi, J. (1969). *Intonation of statements and questions in Punjabi*. M.A. Dissertation. University of Leeds. Leeds.
27. Shuja, A. (1985). *A spectrographic study of Urdu diphthongs*. Paper Presented at a Seminar. Central Institute of Indian Languages. Mysore.
28. Soltani, M.A. (2007). Contrastive Analysis of English-Persian Intonation. Retrieved February 22, 2010. From <http://www.isba.ir/e-book/soltani1.pdf>
29. Diez, F.G.(2005). Intonation focus in the interlanguage of a group of Spanish learners of English. *Revista Alicantina de Estudios Ingleses* (18), 129-147. Retrieved March 12, 2010 from http://rua.ua.es/dspace/bitstream/10045/5214/1/RAEI_18_06.pdf
30. Wang, G. (2005). Applications of discourse intonation III: contrastive analysis of discourse III: Intonation in English and Korean. Retrieved June 26, 2010 from http://www.speechinaction.net/pdf%20files/Applications_03.pdf

31. Hayati, A.M. (1998). A contrastive analysis of English and Persian intonation. *Paper and Studies in Contrastive Linguistics* 34, 53-72. Retrieved June 26, 2010 from <http://ifa.amu.edu.pl/psicl/files/34/03Hayati.pdf>
32. Z. S. Bond*, Z.S., Markus, D. and Stockmal, V. Prosodic and rhythmic patterns produced by native and non-native speakers of a quantity-sensitive language. Retrieved June, 2010 from <http://pascal.kgw.tu-berlin.de/gnom/Lehre/hs-rhythm/literatur/Bond-Barcelona.pdf>

=====

Mohammad Owais Khan, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor
Department of English,
P.O. Box : 1988
Najran University, Najran
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.
khan_mokhan@yahoo.co.in

Language in India www.languageinindia.com

11 : 5 May 2011

Mohammad Owais Khan, Ph.D.

Rhythm and Intonation Patterns in English and Urdu - A Contrastive Analysis