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THE RULES OF TEMPO ORGANIZATION OF A SPONTANEOUS MONOLOGUE

Research article

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Abstract

The article describes some rules of tempo organization of a spontaneous monologue. The phonetic and semantic analyses of the experimental material reveal that the semantic structure of a spontaneous monological text is non-homogenous. From the point of the dynamics of the semantic development of the text, the segments of different communicative weight having the same tempo characteristics are distinguished. The aim of the research is to describe the changes of tempo characteristics of the whole text and the interconnections of these changes with the communicative dynamics in the text. The results of the experiment reveal the cyclical character of the connection between the tempo variations and changing over of different communicative segments in the structure of a spontaneous text.

Keywords: spontaneous monologue, tempo variations, phonetic analysis.

ЗАКОНОМЕРНОСТИ ВРЕМЕННОЙ ОРГАНИЗАЦИИ СПОНТАННОГО МОНОЛОГА

Научная статья

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Аннотация

В статье предпринимается попытка описания некоторых закономерностей временной организации спонтанного монолога. Фонетический и семантический анализ экспериментального материала показал, что смысловая структура спонтанного монологического текста неоднородна. С точки зрения динамики смыслового развития текста в ней выделяются сегменты различного коммуникативного веса, имеющего сходные временные характеристики. Целью исследования является описание изменений темповых характеристик целого текста, а также взаимосвязи данных изменений с продвижением содержательной информации в тексте. Полученные результаты свидетельствуют о циклическом характере связи темповой вариативности и чередования различных смысловых сегментов в структуре спонтанного текста.

Ключевые слова: спонтанный монолог, темповая вариативность, фонетический анализ.

Introduction

Speech transmission implies the incitement of the listener's image similar to the speaker's one by means of successive and indirect effects. This process lasting for some time infers the naturalness of its duration, the correlation to the nature of a mind and the rules of a higher nervous activity. Only following these rules, a person can be understood and can affect others in a positive way. Speech forms generated by peoples through language usage are put up in their inexplicit representation taking into consideration the possibilities of a man's nervous system to process speech material [11, P. 126].

In the structure of a spontaneous monologue several tempo areas can be observed: slow, medium, accelerated, fast. Each area contains semantic centers of a certain degree of prominence: 1, 2, 3 (a degree of prominence reduces from 1 to 3). Semantic centers of the first and the second degrees of prominence correspond to core rhematic syntagmas on the intonation level. Semantic centers of the second and the third degrees of prominence correspond to background rhematic and thematic syntagmas.

Thus, in our research, the following units in a text structure are differentiated: the thematic component (previously mentioned ideas) and the rhematic component (new information). In the structure of the rhematic component we distinguish core rhematic syntagmas and background rhematic syntagmas.

Core rhematic syntagmas are the most relevant text segments, setting thematic development and preventing the appearance of side associations. Background rhematic syntagmas correspond to the segments which are constructed during the speechmaking process, thus developing, clarifying and detailing the semantic framework. Such approach to the semantic organisation of a spontaneous monologue is justified by the psycholinguistic theory of speech production and by psychophysiological peculiarities of speech perception.

The phonetic and the semantic analyses of the spontaneous monologues revealed that the core rhematic syntagmas (the sense markers of the text) are interchanged with background rhematic (clarifying, detailing elements) and thematic syntagmas in the text. This principle of distributing the information in the text is identified in some research works [7], [5], [6], [8].

In this way the authors of the “Russian colloquial language” draw attention to a peculiar word order in colloquial speech, including a separate presentation of the most meaningfully loaded parts of the utterance. The information is submitted “in portions”: communicatively essential parts of the utterance are alternated with the less important ones [7].

In this way, the findings about the character of the information advancement in the text made within the structural and functional approach appear to bear importance. It is admitted that the advancement of the main contextually factual information in spoken texts is carried out periodically. That is defined by a tempo periodicity in the presentation of the theme-based meaningful information. According to N. B. Tsibula periodical presentation of information, its high concentration in some parts of the text and dispersion in the other parts is the form of tempo organization of information enabling a person to accept it in an optimum manner [12, P. 146].

The issue of the periodical character of the text context advancement was thoroughly analyzed by G. G. Matushechkina in her dissertational research work [5]. The author’s contribution is the development of the dynamic model of the structurally-semantic organization of a text based on the material of spontaneous dialogical speech. This model stands for a text assembling scheme in the syntagmatical layout. The researcher outlines that the cyclical principle of the description of the text context advancement allows to give the idea of the succession among its parts, the way of changing over among them [5].

As far as we know, research concerning cyclic principles of text semantic organization has not been conducted abroad.

Our own observations of the text context advancement revealed that the cyclical principle of the semantic organisation is also typical for a spontaneous monological text. Apparently, here there occurs a psychophysiological defined universal mechanism. Hence, the cyclicity of text assembling is defined by the nature of speech process. It is known from physiology and psychology that the cyclicity is the base of a body’s vital activity. Cognitive processes (memory, perception, speech) have a cyclical character [1], [2].

The analysis of tempo features of a whole text has the zones of changing over of maximum and minimal parameters of a medium syllable duration. These zones coincide with changing over of core and background segments of a text. On the whole, the changes of tempo features make certain cycles. Thus, tempo variety correlates with changing over of segments of different communicative weight. This fact illustrates vividly that semantic and tempo changes occurring in the process of text production in most cases have equal tempo-rhythmical features of the dynamics of development towards each other.

The above-mentioned experimental data bring us to the conclusion that the periodicity of going down and rising of tempo parameters and changing over of syntagmas of different communicative weight are due to the cyclical process and can be explained by psychological peculiarities of oral speech production and its perception. Apparently, changing over of tempo zones as well as changing over of variously accented semantic centers in the spontaneous text are defined by the cyclical character of the person’s verbal and cogitative activity.

Research methods and principles

We specify the interaction between tempo and semantic cycles of changes by the Spirman’s method of rank correlation [9].

The material of the research is composed of 8 spontaneous monologues of the informational intonation style. The classification of intonation styles worked out at the department of the English language phonetics of Moscow Pedagogical State University is used in our research work [10]. The texts are stories, narrations of British people speaking received pronunciation [13]. The texts are homogeneous both from the point of style forming factor (the aim of communication) and from the point of style modifying factors (speaker’s attitude, forms of the communication, the degree of speech spontaneity, the degree of formality of communicative situations). The total amount of the sounding material is 30 minutes. As a result, we got two sets of variables for each text. One of the sets characterized the dynamics of the semantic perspective of the text, the other one characterized the dynamics of its tempo surrounding. Each syntagma of the analyzed text was correlated with two numbers. The first one was the value of the medium syllable duration, the second one was the value 1 (for the background rhematic and thematic syntagmas) or the value 2 (for the core rhematic syntagmas). The obtained values were ranked.

Main results

The rank correlation between two sets of values reflecting semantic and tempo criteria of all syntagmas of the same text was evaluated. The substantial index number of the rank correlation was obtained for the texts № 1, 4, 7, 8. A weak or passive correlational connection was revealed for the other experimental texts.

The substantial correlational connection between two variables is peculiar for the texts of a high tempo variation. A weak or passive correlational connection is typical for non-variational texts from a point of view of a tempo (see table 1).

Table 1 - The values of Spirman’s rank correlation (r_s) in the experimental texts

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Text	The values (r_s)
1	0.51
2	-0.19
3	0.28
4	0.49
5	0.33
6	0.41

7	0.37
8	0.34

Discussion

We can see the correlation of the semantic and tempo outlines of Text 4 (see figure 1).

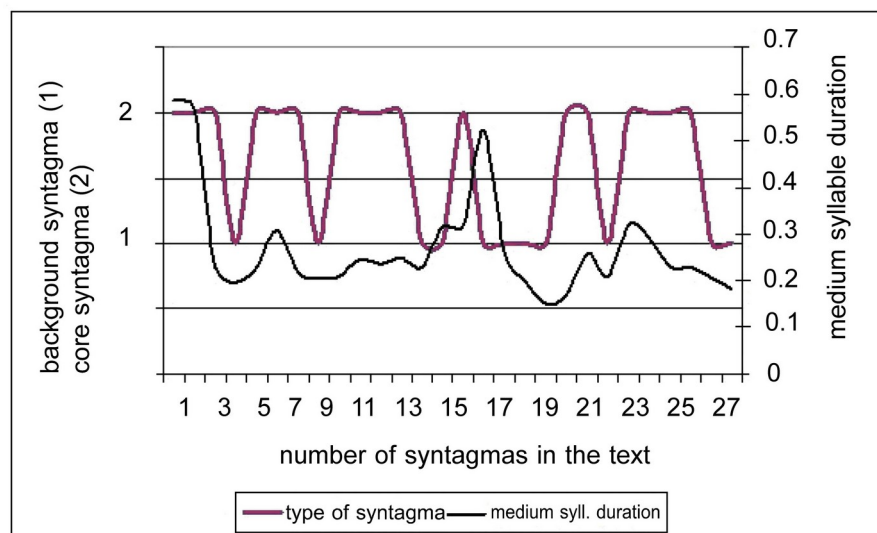


Figure 1 - The correlation of the semantic and tempo outlines of Text 4
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According to figure 1 these outlines have a similar configuration. The data prove that the semantic and tempo changes occurring in text production have equal tempo-rhythmical features of the dynamics of development towards each other. In figure 1 the dependence of tempo values on the communicative type of syntagmas is demonstrated. Figure 1 reveals rising and going down areas. In this way we suppose that this periodicity of maximal and minimal values, of tempo lowerings and risings, is explained by psychophysiological peculiarities of speech activity.

Conclusion

In this way, the analysis of the variety of tempo features reveals the areas of changing over of maximal and minimal parameters. These areas coincide with the areas of changing over of various communicative segments of the text. The above-mentioned periodicity of the parameters rising and decreasing is due to the cyclicity of the process that is the periodic change of the activity state and the still state. Changing over of tempo areas and changing over of differently outlined semantic centers in the text reflect a harmonious work of the verbal and cogitative apparatus. The tempo signals the regime of the information processing. Thus, the variations of the parameters of the medium syllable durations (acceleration and deceleration of the tempo) and changing over of syntagmas of different communicative weight are determined by psychophysiological peculiarities of speech activity.

Конфликт интересов

Не указан.

Рецензия

Все статьи проходят рецензирование. Но рецензент или автор статьи предпочли не публиковать рецензию к этой статье в открытом доступе. Рецензия может быть предоставлена компетентным органам по запросу.

Conflict of Interest

None declared.

Review

All articles are peer-reviewed. But the reviewer or the author of the article chose not to publish a review of this article in the public domain. The review can be provided to the competent authorities upon request.

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