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THE COMMUNICATIVE VALUES OF KEY AND TERMINATION IN SLOVENE

ABSTRACT

The article examines the agreement of the pre-tonic pitch height (i. e. key) and the pitch height of the tonic syllable (i. e. termination) in the Slovene language. A typical feature of the Slovene pitch movement is its gradual descent. The result is often a difference in pitch between the tone unit initial key and the pitch height of the tonic syllable.

The auditory analysis of radio interviews with two senior Slovene politicians proved that three levels of key (high, mid, low) and three levels of termination (high, mid, low) can be distinguished in the Slovene language.

The purpose of the analysis was also to establish the communicative functions of keys and termination where the use of a particular combination of a key and termination may imply the interviewee's attitude to the discussed topic and the interviewer's question.

The analysis of the two interviews has shown that the communicative function of the high key in Slovene is to express a contrast or a different opinion. The mid key usually expresses agreement with the previous tone unit or simply adds new information, whereas the low key is used to explain a statement with the purpose of reducing the degree of ambiguity.

Key words: *communicative values, key, termination, intonation, Slovene language*

A DISCOURSAL APPROACH TO THE ANALYSIS OF INTONATION

A long tradition of intonation analysis has recognised that utterances are divided into tone units which tend to be associated with units of grammatical description, such as clauses. Within each group there is an obligatory *nuclear* or *tonic* syllable which is characterised by rhythmic and pitch prominence. Any accented syllable preceding the nucleus begins the *pre-nuclear* or *pre-tonic* segment which may be characterised by a different pitch level.

Because British English intonation has been frequently described there are a number of different models which exhibit minor differences regarding the structure of intonation.

As far as the intonational function is concerned, different analysts have proposed different functions or meanings. Gimson (1980) and O'Connor and Arnold (1973), for example proposed two functions: grammatical and attitudinal, claiming that intonation serves to distinguish sentence types, as well as to indicate the emotional attitude of the speaker. Halliday (1967), on the other hand, proposed three functions of intonation: the division into tone units (tonality), the placement of the nucleus (tonicity) and the choice of tone. The first two functions were mainly associated with the speaker's decision about what is *old* and what is *new* information.

In order to be able to decide whether a piece of information is *old* or *new*, the speaker must have access to the *context of interaction*, both discursive and situational.

The purpose of this article is neither to discard nor to defend any particular intonation model but rather to point to the *pragmatic role* of intonation which is exhibited in the intonation's prime function to enable the hearer to make inferences from the utterance's context to enrich the interpretation. It is important to remember that intonation does not alter the sense of lexical items. It provides the hearer with an opportunity to choose between different interpretations at the lexico-syntactic level.

The intonation systems of different European languages exhibit quite a large number of similarities regarding the pragmatic role of intonation. This hypothesis has encouraged the author of this article to observe the communicative functions of *key* and *termination* (as understood by D. Brazil, 1985) in the Slovene language in the interactional situation of the interview. The purpose of the attempt to transplant an English intonation model to the Slovene language was to prove the above hypothesis of natural, iconic intonational meaning.

THE COMMUNICATIVE FUNCTIONS OF KEY AND TERMINATION

In his work on discourse intonation, Brazil (1985) has proposed that certain relationships exist between tone units which are manifested by means of different prosodic elements, such as the choice of *tone*, *key* and *termination*.

The choice of *tone* marks the discursual function of the whole unit. Thus, for example, a *fall* marks the information as *new*, whereas a *fall-rise* marks the matter as *old, shared* or *already negotiated*.

In Brazil's intonation model *key* is »... any prominent syllable ... which precedes the tonic syllable in its tone unit as an onset syllable« (Brazil, 1985:23). There are three levels of key: high, mid and low. The choice of key puts the tone unit in a special relationship with the previous one. Thus *high key* expresses *contrast*, *mid key* expresses a simple *additive* relation, while the *low key* expresses *existential equivalence*.

Termination is associated with the last prominent syllable in a tone unit. It is a particular pitch level at which tones are realised. The choice of termination mainly restricts the use of key in the following tone unit.

The discursual functions of key and termination are mainly to achieve *cohesion* and *coherence* in speech.

THE ANALYSED SLOVENE DATA

There is only one description of the Slovene sentence intonation which was done in the 50's as a result of the analysis of reading of written literary texts. Its author, Jože Toporišič, was mainly interested in the description of pitch movements in different types of sentences and how the tonemic word stress affects the pitch movement. He claimed that speakers mainly use mid key. The choice of high or low key is restricted to emotionally marked utterances or when speaking to small children or animals.

Since the only existing description of the Slovene sentence intonation could not be used for the analysis of discursual functions of intonation, an attempt was made to apply Brazil's intonation model to the recorded data of spoken Slovene. We chose two radio interviews with two senior Slovene politicians: President of the Republic of Slovenia, Milan Kučan and Prime Minister, Janez Drnovšek. Each interview was 20 minutes long.

The purpose of the auditory analysis was to establish:

- [1] a possible number of keys and terminations;
- [2] possible combinations of key and termination;
- [3] communicative and discursual functions of keys and terminations within one turn, as well as between turn boundaries.

Since most of the turns of the two interviewees were relatively long and covered several subtopics of the same issue, we also observed the way speakers used prosodic features of key and termination to mark new subtopics, expand information or explain their points of view.

KEY AND TERMINATION IN THE ANALYSED DATA

The auditory analysis of the Slovene data has shown that we may distinguish between three pitch levels of the first accented syllable in the pre-tonic segment (high, mid and low key), as well as three pitch levels of the tonic syllable (high, mid and low termination). There are, however, restrictions governing the combination of a key and termination within one tone unit. Thus the following combinations of key and termination are possible in the Slovene language:

- [1] High key + high termination
- [2] High key + mid termination
- [3] Mid key + high termination
- [4] Mid key + mid termination
- [5] Mid key + low termination
- [6] Low key + mid termination
- [7] Low key + low termination

KEY AND TERMINATION WITHIN ONE TURN

- [1] High key + high termination

Meaning:

- contrast

Example:

Tako kot bi lahko človek domneval, če bi opazoval samo zunanje slovensko dogajanje, potem se ustvarja vtis, da Slovenija postaja Avgijev hlev korupcije, nesolidnosti, kriminala, podkupljivosti. // ↑ 'Jaz mislim, da tako ↗ ni, ↑ /ker potem je razumljivo pričakovanje ljudi, da tako kot je bil očiščen Avgijev hlev, da se bo tudi tu pojavil heroj, ki bo to storil.

- repetition of shared information

Example:

Kar zadeva moje deponirane knjižice sem že dostikrat odgovoril in odgovarjam še enkrat: / ↑ jaz 'nisem ni ↗koli deponiral knjižice, ↑ /nisem o tem govoril.

- emphasising the importance of the event/decision

Example:

Ampak jaz vidim racionalno jedro in domet te razprave, ki ni samo razprava v vladi, ampak je postala naša splošna razprava zdaj, / ↑ da se o'krepi zavest o po'znemosti ↑ /

[2] High key + mid termination

Although the difference in meaning between the tone units with high key + high termination and those with high key + mid termination is not essential, it has to be mentioned since it is by far the most frequent combination of key and termination in the Slovene corpus.

Meaning:

- contrast; mid termination enables a wider range of choices regarding the key of the following tone unit; a less declarative and condescending attitude to the addressee.

Example:

Torej s to splošno oceno se ne strinjam. // ↑ 'Mi ↓ smo država v pre → hodu. // Veliko stvari moramo narediti v kratkem času ...

[3] Mid key + high termination

Typical of this combination is the rising tone with high termination which restricts the choice of key in the next tone unit which can thus only begin with either a mid or a high key.

Meaning:

- the high key announces that the next tone unit will be either in contrast or will provide detailed explanation of facts, depending on the key of the next tone unit.

Example:

- Jaz sem enkrat že v razgovoru z vami dejal, / jaz za no'beno pometanje pod preproge → nisem: ↑ / 'mislim, da imajo drža → vljani / pra → vico zvedeti resnico o vseh vprašanjih, ki jih te afere odpirajo.

- Ne vem, / 'tega ne morem tr → diti. ↑ / 'Ne po → znam teh stvari..

[4] Mid key + mid termination

Meaning:

- the mid termination does not restrict the choice of key in the following tone unit; it is most frequently used to explain one's point of view

Example:

- ... *dostikrat sem zadnje dneve slišal vprašanje, kdaj sem in kako sem bil obveščten, da je orožje na mariborskem letališču. Iz časopisja. // Šele kasneje, /ko je Mi'nistrstvo za notranje za vdeve /pro vsilo, /če bi krimina'listi lahko dobili vpo vglad vpreiskovalnih dejanjih, /ki so jih opravljali, /v dokumen v'acijo, /...*

[5] Mid key + low termination

The low termination is almost always realised within a falling tone. The combination is typical of final tone units and marks the end of a pitch sequence. This means that the next tone unit, which is also the beginning of a new pitch sequence, can begin in any key.

Example:

Kot pravite je vlada razpravljjanje, odločanje /o tem aktu'alnem problemu odlo vsila. v // 'Torej se ga ne izo v'giba, v /ampak je ocenila, da lahko koristneje o njem presodi čez teden dni.

[6] Low key + mid termination

Meaning:

- the low key expresses existential equivalence with the previous tone unit, whereas the mid termination announces that the message is not complete.

Example:

Ampak jaz vidim racionalno jedro in domet te razprave, /ki vni samo razprava v vladi, /v 'ampak je postala naša vsplošna razprava /v zdaj, /da se okrepi zavest o pomembnosti neodvisnosti sodišč kot eden temeljev pravne države in demokratične parlamentarne ureditve.

[7] Low key + low termination

Meaning:

- expresses existential equivalence with the previous tone unit and marks the end of a pitch sequence; used in appositions.

Example:

Za jutri dopoldan se bo tukaj oglasil predsednik Predsedstva Republike Slovenije, / ↓ go'spod Milan ↘ Kučan. ♡ //

- inserted clauses or phrases which meaningfully complement or explain the previous clause or phrase

Example:

Pri tem je seveda poseben problem SOVA, / ↓ o'ziroma nekdanji AVIS, ↓ /ki ga praktično ni in s tem je, / ↓ 'to si upam trditi, ↓ /v tem trenutku slovenska država protiobveščevalno praktično nezaščitena.

KEY IN THE BEGINNING OF A NEW PITCH SEQUENCE

Phonological paragraphing is a feature which divides spoken discourse into units similar to written paragraphs. Brazil has observed that speakers use pitch to form units larger than one word group. These units are characterised by the overlapping of syntactically and semantically complete units with low falling tones. This usually signals that the speaker has completed his thought as well as his turn and expects somebody else to continue or he himself intends to introduce a different topic or subtopic. Brazil called a series of tone units where the last one ends with low termination a *pitch sequence*. The key which begins the next pitch sequence puts the whole sequence in a relationship with the previous pitch sequence. Thus hearers can establish coherent links between two successive pitch sequences whereby the key plays the role of the anaphoric reference.

[1] High Key

Meaning:

- introduces a new topic or subtopic

Example:

Ja vedno poslanci pač odločajo, velikokrat sicer po svojih nagibih, ne tako koordinirano, kot se včasih zdi. Tudi koaliciji se velikokrat očita ravno to,

da pač ne deluje ravno koordinirano in usklajeno. //↑ Kar se tiče 'zakona o pranju dežnarja, ↑ // bi rad poudaril, da ge je v postopek, v proceduro parlamentu, Državnemu zboru, poslala vlada.

- puts the second pitch sequence in a contrastive relationship with the previous pitch sequence.

Example:

Skratka ocene, zunanje ocene, so pozitivne in bistveno odstopajo od tega, kar pravite, da opozicija trdi. ↓ // ↑ 'Vendar opozicija ↑ /že po naravi vedno kritizira. Najbrž bi se začudli, če bi naenkrat zagledali opozicijsko stranko, ki, ki hvali vladne rezultate, vladni program. Tega najbrž ni nikjer v svetu. ↓ // ↑ 'Dejstva pa so, ↑ /da se vsi gospodarski pokazatelji v zadnjem času popravljajo, ...

[2] Mid key

Meaning:

- explaining and providing new information, opinions, etc.

Example:

// ↑ Člani sveta, kakorkoli bo sestavljen, moj predlog je, da bi to bilo pri vladi in da mu načeljuje predsednik vlade, morajo člane nacionalnega sveta obveščati o vseh relevantnih podatkih, do katerih pridejo in stvar tega sveta, tega organa je, da potem to službo usmerja in da tudi pove, katere informacije smatra on za relevantne, katere pojave je treba spremljati in s katerimi stvarmi se ni potrebno ukvarjati. ↓ // 'Itak pa ostanejo / zdaj po naravi te službe to samo stvari, ki so povezane z obveščevalnim in protiobveščevalnim delovanjem ↓ //

[3] Low key

Meaning:

- expresses existential equivalence between the two pitch sequences

No such examples were found in the analysed corpus.

TERMINATION AND KEY BETWEEN TWO TURNS

Cohesion between two turns is established by means of the termination which ends one turn and the key which begins the next turn. The pitch contour of the Slovene sentence intonation is gradually descending and is generally not in favour of the so-called *pitch jumps* which are typical of the English intonation.

Thus the function of the termination in the Slovene language is mainly to restrict the choice of key in the next tone unit. Hence there should never be more than one level difference between the termination and the key of two successive tone units. The exception is low termination which ends a pitch sequence and can be followed by any key thus putting the next pitch sequence in a particular relationship with the previous one.

The analysis of interviews has shown how interviewers use termination to restrict the interviewees' choice of key.

The interview with President Kučan

The interviewer asked the president 16 questions which were all related to the political situation in Slovenia. The questions covered 4 topics:

- [1] political affairs in Slovenia
- [2] how informed is the president
- [3] party political membership of politicians
- [4] the return of state decorations

The interviewer completed his questions using all three terminations restricting the choice of key to his interviewee. The table below shows the combinations of interviewer's terminations and the interviewee's keys.

Table 1. Termination and key between turns.

Tablica 1. Završeci intonacijskih jedinica i početni tonovi kod izmjena govornika.

Termination (reporter) Završetak intonacijske jedinice (voditelj)		Key (Kučan) Početni ton (Kučan)	
type / tip	number / broj	type / tip	number / broj
high / visoki (↑)	4	high / visoki (↑)	2
		mid / srednji (→)	2
mid / srednji (→)	7	high / visoki (↑)	1
		mid / srednji (→)	5
		low / niski (↓)	1
low / niski (↓)	5	high / visoki (↑)	2
		mid / srednji (→)	3
		low / niski (↓)	-

The interview with Prime Minister Drnovšek

Two interviewers asked the Prime Minister 10 questions which covered 4 topics:

- [1] the role of political opposition
- [2] the anti-corruption law
- [3] the economic programme
- [4] the "Smolnikar" affair

The interviewers completed their questions using only high or mid terminations. The Prime Minister began his replies either in high or mid keys. The below table shows the combinations of interviewers' terminations and the interviewee's keys.

Table 2. Termination and key between turns.

Tablica 2. Završeci intonacijskih jedinica i početni tonovi kod izmjena govornika.

Termination (reporters) Završetak intonacijske jedinice (voditelji)		Key (Drnovšek) Početni ton (Drnovšek)	
type / tip	number / broj	type / tip	number / broj
high / visoki (↑)	4	high / visoki (↑)	4
		mid / srednji (→)	-
mid / srednji (→)	6	high / visoki (↑)	2
		mid / srednji (→)	4
		low / niski (↓)	-
low / niski (↓)	-	high / visoki (↑)	-
		mid / srednji (→)	-
		low / niski (↓)	-

The discursal meanings of different combinations of termination and key are presented in the table below:

Table 3. Key and termination in questions and answers.**Tablica 3.** Početni tonovi i završeci intonacijskih jedinica u pitanjima i odgovorima

Question / Pitanje		Answer / Odgovor	
Termination Završetak intonacijske jedinice	Meaning Značenje	Key Početni ton	Meaning Značenje
high (↑)	to challenge the speaker	high (↑)	contradicts
		mid (→)	agrees, explains
mid (→)	a 'neutral' question	high (↑)	contradicts
		mid (→)	explains, adds, agrees
		low (↓)	disagrees
low (↓)	ends a pitch sequence	high (↑)	contradicts
		mid (→)	explains, adds

CONCLUSION

The analysis of discursal meanings of key and termination in the Slovene language has shown that their prime function is to establish cohesive as well as coherent links between a series of tone units. The discursal functions of key and termination were analysed both within one turn, as well as between turn boundaries, i.e. when speakers change.

To sum up, we conclude that there are seven combinations of key and termination in Slovene. High key can combine only with high or mid termination, mid key with any termination, whereas low key combines with either mid or low termination. The discursal function of key is to establish the anaphoric cohesive link with the previous tone unit. Coherence between the two tone units is established by expressing contrast, addition or existential equivalence by means of high, mid and low key, respectively. The same discursal functions of key are found between larger units, i.e. pitch sequences.

The discursal function of termination in Slovene is to restrict the choice of key in the next tone unit which can be exploited in interviews to an important extent. Our data show that the interviewers are aware of this possibility to control and influence the interviewees in their answers.

In their responses to questions, the interviewees use high key to:

- express contrastive meaning
- clarify and emphasise their points of view
- repeat and explain misunderstood statements
- avoid further misunderstandings or doubt about the felicity of the message

They use mid key to explain and enumerate facts, view points or reasons for decisions.

The low key is most frequently used to express existential equivalence and as such usually found in:

- appositions
- inserted phrases or clauses
- words or phrases with an 'empty' meaning which serve as fillers.

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KOMUNIKACIJSKE VRIJEDNOSTI POČETNOG TONA I ZAVRŠETKA INTONACIJSKE JEDINICE U SLOVENSKOM

SAŽETAK

Članak se bavi podudaranjem prednaglasne visine tona (početni ton, key) i visine tona na naglašenom slogu (završetak intonacijske jedinice, termination) u slovenskom jeziku. Tipična osobina kretanja tona u slovenskom je silaznost. Rezultat je često razlika u visini između početnog temeljnog tona tonske jedinice i naglašenog sloga.

Slušna analiza radijskih intervjua s dvojicom starijih slovenskih političara pokazala je da se u slovenskom mogu razlikovati tri razine početnog tona (visoki, srednji, niski) i tri razine tonskog završetka intonacijske jedinice (visoki, srednji, niski).

Analizom se željela utvrditi komunikacijska funkcija početnih tonova i završetaka intonacijskih jedinica u slučaju kada njihova određena kombinacija može implicirati stav intervjuirane osobe prema temi o kojoj se raspravlja ili prema pitanju voditelja.

Analiza dva intervjua pokazala je da je komunikacijska funkcija visokog početnog tona u slovenskom izražavanje suprotnosti ili različitog mišljenja. Srednji početni ton obično izražava slaganje s prethodnom tonskom jedinicom ili jednostavno dodaje nove informacije, dok se niski početni ton upotrebljava za pojašnjavanje izjave često s ciljem smanjenja dvosmislenosti.

Ključne riječi: *komunikacijske vrijednosti, početni ton, završetak intonacijske jedinice, intonacija, slovenski jezik*