

EFFETTI EMOTIVI SULLA REALIZZAZIONE DI STRUTTURE INTONATIVE

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Research shows that ‘identical’ phonological structures can and usually are realised in different ways phonetically across languages and different varieties of the same language (see Nolan, 1999, for a discussion). The systematic nature of this linguistic-phonetic variability makes such detail of use to the native-listener, with acoustic indices signalling structure more minute than phonemic difference or allophony, as work by Local (2003) and Hawkins (2003) shows. Payne (2004; *under review*) proposes the formalisation of these language-specific, low-level repeated sound patterns as “phonetic motifs”. Such variability in phonetic realisation occurs for both segmental and suprasegmental phonological structures. For example, Grabe (1998) has shown that in the absence of sufficient segmental material, there is cross-linguistic variation in the realisation of a falling pitch contour (truncation vs compression).

This paper will discuss how the notion of ‘phonetic motifs’ can be applied also to systematic *paralinguistic* phonetic variability, such as that signalling emotion. I shall explore the extent to which motifs of this kind can be thought to be universal, language-specific or a mixture of the two. Related to this is Gussenhoven’s (2004) proposal that pitch effects resulting from biological characteristics are encoded into linguistically significant structures. I shall consider the extent to which these ‘biological codes’ may also underlie paralinguistically (but nevertheless culturally-specific) significant structures. Finally, I shall consider how *paralinguistic* motifs signalling emotion may interact with the realisation of intonational phonology (i.e. since emotion causes variation in speech production, e.g. increased pitch excursion, how does it affect the transmittance of intonational linguistic structure?) and may even generate linguistic structures diachronically. We can in theory envisage the effects of emotional states becoming linguistically encoded in certain intonational contours (e.g. exclamations, questions, etc.). This would be an example of a prosodic motif become grammaticalised from a paralinguistic state into something more robustly linguistic.

References

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