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A Phono-Pragmatic Analysis of Assertive Speech Acts in English and Arabic Political Discourse

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Abstract

This study investigates the phonological characteristics that support assertive speech acts in English and Arabic political discourse, emphasizing how prosodic aspects extend the pragmatic force of political claims. Political discourse extensively employs assertive speech acts as strategic communicative tools, yet a significant research gap exists in understanding how phonological features systematically enhance the pragmatic force of political assertions across different languages. While extensive research has examined political discourse through pragmatic lenses, particularly focusing on semantic and contextual aspects of speech acts, the crucial role of prosodic elements, including intonation patterns, pitch variations, and acoustic features, in strengthening the illocutionary force of assertive utterances remains underexplored. This study addresses fundamental research questions: (1) What phonological features characterize assertive speech acts in English and Arabic political discourse? (2) How do politicians manipulate prosodic elements to enhance the effectiveness of their assertions? The research aims to identify the phonological

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characteristics of assertive speech acts in both languages, analyze how these features contribute to pragmatic force in expressing commitment, certainty, authority, and persuasive intent, establish systematic correlations between phonological patterns and pragmatic functions, and compare language-specific patterns while identifying cross-linguistic similarities. The study hypothesizes that assertive speech acts exhibit distinctive phonological patterns that systematically contribute to their pragmatic force, with different types of assertive acts (asserting, boasting, affirming, denying, concluding, claiming, stating, and lamenting) displaying distinct phonological signatures reflecting their specific pragmatic functions. Employing a convergent parallel mixed-methods design, this research combines quantitative acoustic analysis with qualitative pragmatic interpretation. Arabic exhibits higher intensity and broader F0 variation compared to English. The findings reveal both universal and language-specific prosodic strategies that politicians utilize to enhance the persuasive effect of their assertions. While both languages employ similar prosodic strategies to strengthen the pragmatic force of assertions, reflecting universal trends in political communication and cross-cultural pragmatics.

Keywords: Assertive speech acts, Phonological features, Pragmatic functions, Political discourse, prosodic elements

تحليل صوتي تداولي لأفعال الكلام التوكيدية في الخطابات السياسية الإنكليزية والعربية

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المستخلص

تستقصي هذه الدراسة الخصائص الصوتية الداعمة لأفعال الكلام التوكيدية في الخطابات السياسي الإنكليزية والعربية، مع التركيز على كيفية توسيع الجوانب العروضية (النبرية) للقوة التداولية للمزاعم السياسية. يستخدم في الخطاب السياسي أفعال الكلام التوكيدية على نطاق واسع كأدوات تواصلية استراتيجية، إلا أنه ثمة فجوة بحثية كبيرة في فهم كيفية تعزيز السمات الصوتية بشكل منهجي للقوة التداولية للتوكيدات السياسية عبر لغات مختلفة. فبينما تناولت بحوث واسعة الخطاب السياسي من منظور تداولي، مركزة خصوصاً على الجوانب الدلالية والسياقية لأفعال الكلام، يبقى الدور الحاسم للعناصر العروضية، بما في ذلك أنماط التنغيم وتغير درجة الصوت والسمات الصوتية، في تعزيز القوة الإنجازية للعبارة التوكيدية غير مستكشفة بالقدر الكافي. تعالج هذه الدراسة أسئلة بحثية أساسية: (1) ما السمات الصوتية التي تميز أفعال الكلام التوكيدية في الخطابات السياسية الإنكليزية والعربية؟ (2) كيف يتلاعب السياسيون بالعناصر العروضية لتعزيز فعالية توكيداتهم؟ يهدف البحث إلى تحديد الخصائص الصوتية لأفعال الكلام التوكيدية في اللغتين، وتحليل كيفية مساهمة هذه السمات في القوة التداولية للتعبير عن الالتزام واليقين والسلطة والقصد الإقناعي، وإنشاء علاقات ارتباط منهجية بين الأنماط الصوتية والوظائف التداولية، ومقارنة الأنماط الخاصة بكل لغة مع تحديد أوجه التشابه عبر اللغات. تفترض الدراسة أن أفعال الكلام التوكيدية تُظهر أنماطاً صوتية مميزة تساهم بشكل منهجي في قوتها التداولية، مع اختلاف أنواع الأفعال التوكيدية (التأكيد، التباهي، الإقرار، الرفض، الاستنتاج، الادعاء، التصريح، والتأسي) في عرض توافيق صوتية مميزة تعكس وظائفها التداولية الخاصة. باستخدام تصميم منهجي مختلط متوازن متقارب، تجمع هذه البحث بين التحليل الصوتي الكمي والتفسير التداولي النوعي. تُظهر النتائج أن العربية تتميز بشدة صوتية أعلى وتغير أوسع في تردد الأساس (F0) مقارنة بالإنكليزية. تكشف النتائج عن استراتيجيات عروضية (نبرية) كونه وأخرى خاصة باللغة يستخدمها السياسيون لتعزيز الأثر

الإقناعي لتوكيداتهم. بينما تستخدم اللغتان استراتيجيات عروضية متشابهة لتعزيز القوة التداولية للتوكيدات، مما يعكس اتجاهات كونية في التواصل السياسي والتداوليات عبر الثقافات.
الكلمات المفتاحية: أفعال الكلام التوكيدية، السمات الصوتية، الوظائف التداولية، الخطابات السياسية، العناصر العروضية

1. Introduction

Political discourse frequently utilises various strategies, as politicians deploy different linguistic techniques to persuade and assert control. One of these strategies is the use of assertive speech acts, statements affirming the veracity of expressed propositions, playing an essential role in political discussions. These assertions fulfil several functions: establishing facts, indicating certainty, displaying commitment, and strengthening ideological beliefs. Despite substantial research on political discourse through pragmatic lenses, particularly regarding the semantics and context of speech acts, a significant gap remains in understanding how phonological features enhance the pragmatic effects of assertions in political communication. Most studies have concentrated on textual analysis of political discussions, overlooking the vital influence of prosodic elements such as intonation, stress patterns, pitch variations, rhythm, and vocal quality on reinforcing, altering, or contradicting the propositional content of assertive statements. Given the noticeable differences in phonological systems and prosodic conventions, this gap is even more pronounced when analysing political discourse across different languages. English and Arabic, originating from distinct linguistic families and possessing unique phonological structures and prosodic systems, offer a fascinating foundation for exploring the connection between phonology and pragmatics in political assertions. Furthermore, the evolving field of phono-pragmatics, which investigates how prosodic features inform pragmatic meanings, has not yet been systematically integrated into political discourse across languages. The interaction between phonological characteristics and pragmatic functions in political assertions remains unexamined, particularly regarding how politicians leverage prosodic elements to enhance the persuasive impact of their statements. This lack of comprehensive research leaves many essential questions unanswered: How do politicians use prosodic features to improve the pragmatic efficacy of assertive speech acts? What phonological characteristics define different types of assertions in political discourse? Do these characteristics systematically differ between English and Arabic? How do prosodic features interact with contextual elements to develop, reinforce, or sometimes weaken the intended pragmatic force of assertions? Addressing these questions necessitates a comprehensive approach that merges phonological analysis with pragmatic insight and integration rarely applied to political discourse. This study aims to fill this research gap by conducting a phono-pragmatic analysis of assertive speech acts in English and Arabic political discourse, focusing on how prosodic traits influence the pragmatic strength of political assertions within these two linguistically diverse contexts.

2. Theoretical Background

2.1 Prosodic Features

Wennerstrom (2001:154) explains prosody as it concerns elements of speech that are not individual phonetic segments (vowels and consonants), but rather properties of syllables and larger units of speech, including linguistic functions such as intonation, stress, and rhythm. Prosody is the study of all the elements of language that contribute to acoustic and rhythmic effects in poetry

and prose. The term is derived from an ancient Greek word that originally meant a song accompanied by music or the particular tone or accent given to an individual syllable. Prosody is often described in terms of intonation and rhythm, the musical qualities of speech.

2.2 Assertive Speech Acts

Assertive speech acts are included in illocutionary acts. According to Austin (1962: 108), an illocutionary act is performed by making a speech that has a certain power and presents the function of speech based on context. Searle (in Leech, 1993:164) divides illocutionary acts into five categories: assertive, directive, commissive, expressive, and declarative. This research focuses on assertive speech acts, so the theory referenced pertains to the ins and outs of assertive speech acts.

Searle (1979:12) Assertive is a speech act that states what the speaker believes is true or not. The intent or purpose of assertive class members is to bind the speaker (to varying degrees) to something that happened, to the truth of the proposition being expressed. Searle and Vanderveken's (1985:182-183) Assertive is also called a representative speech act. Few words show that the sentences or utterances are included in assertive speech acts like assert, claim, affirm, state, admit, deny, assure, argue, rebut, inform, notify and others.

Yule (2006: 92) illustrates that assertive speech acts are speech acts that express the speaker's beliefs about matters of external reality. So while talking, the speaker is sure about the truth of the speech.

2.3 Phonopragmatics

Romero-Trillo (2016: 44), phonopragmatics is a fairly new concept in the study of contextually relevant meaning. It examines the link between phonological aspects defined by certain suprasegmental elements and meaning as it is found in context (pragmatics). It is generally accepted that the suprasegmental components, prosodic features, and intonational contour can serve as a trigger for providing a clear interpretation of the speaker's intended meaning.

According to Demina (2011:99), phonopragmatics is described as "examining the manifestation and development of prosodic characteristics in various communicative acts," and is grounded in the premise that the theory of Speech Acts (SA) is fundamental to pragmatics, with SA serving as its smallest unit. Speech Acts illustrate the interactions among individuals engaged in communication, primarily aiming to fulfil specific intentions. The principal goal of this disciplinary domain is "to define the nomenclature of SA based on the numerous prosodic qualities of a given language and their systematisation." The expansion of phonopragmatic research to include issues of communicative impact and modification signifies a linguistic concept of particular importance and utility.

2.4 Previous studies

Gumar, A., & Al-Zubaidi, N. (2025). A Phono-pragmatic Analysis of Assertiveness and Rhetorical Questioning in Selected English and Arabic Election Speeches. This study analyses the argumentative strategies of assertiveness and rhetorical questioning in selected English and Arabic

election speeches, focusing on their prosodic features. Assertiveness conveys conviction; rhetorical questioning highlights issues and provokes reflection. Politicians use prosodic principles to express these strategies. The research investigates how prosodic features contribute to pragmatic meanings and the universality of these strategies across languages. The hypothesis suggests a correlation between prosodic principles and strategies, common to both English and Arabic speeches. It examines two broadcasts: the Ohio U.S. Senate Debate (NBC4) and The Opposite Direction (Al-Jazeera). Using Braga and Marques' (2004) phonopragmatic model and Wennerstrom's (2001) discourse intonation model, findings show a universal relationship between prosodic principles and strategies, with some variables used more frequently. This study differs from the current study as it investigates assertiveness and rhetorical questions in English and Arabic Election speeches while the current study deals with the investigations of assertive speech acts only. Moreover, emphasizing how prosodic aspects extend the pragmatic force of political assertions.

Al Shamiri (2024) A phono-pragmatic analysis of selected questions in the Glorious Quran. examines how phonology and pragmatics interact in interrogative structures in the Quran, focusing on rhetorical questions. Using Roach's intonation patterns and Leech's speech act classification, it analyses recitations of Surat Al-Baqara by Abdulbasit Abdulsamad (Saba Maqam) and Hussein Al Aryan (Lami Maqam). The study explores pitch variations and their relation to meaning, considering pragmatic factors like speaker intent and context. It aims to identify how tone and pitch clarify meanings at phonological and pragmatic levels through qualitative analysis and comparison of the two recitations. Though this study dealt with selected questions in the Qlorious Quran but, this is study is related in adopting a phonopragmatic appraoch although the two appraoches are completely different.

4. Methodology

This section elucidates the methodological framework employed to analyse the phono-pragmatic elements of assertive speech acts in the political discourse of both English and Arabic. The selection of English and Arabic is of considerable significance due to their extensive application in political communication, as well as their distinctive phonological and pragmatic characteristics. Furthermore, this section outlines the research design, data collection methodologies, the instruments used, and the analytical techniques applied to both quantitative (phonological) and qualitative (pragmatic) data. In addition, the strategy employed for synthesising the findings derived from these two approaches is outlined. This mixed-method approach facilitates an enhanced comprehension of the interplay between phonological attributes and pragmatic functions across both languages within the context of political discourse.

4.1 Data Collection and Data Description

The collated data, sourced from various YouTube channels, comprises authentic political speeches in both English and Arabic. YouTube was chosen as the primary data source due to its accessibility and the availability of genuine political speeches from diverse contexts, which together provide a reliable basis for this research. The relevant data includes assertive speech acts extracted from political discourse delivered in both English and Arabic by two different presidents. English data are systematically collected as assertive speech acts performed by Justin Trudeau, the Prime Minister of Canada, through various links, as follows: Justin Trudeau delivers a keynote at a New York forum titled "We Beat Fear With Hope." This can be found in

[<https://youtu.be/cmUCMy33Y6k>]. He emphasises democracies' duties, globalisation challenges, and progress in a changing world. His speech addresses global concerns such as living costs, climate change, authoritarianism, and polarisation, outlining Canada's responses and vision for democracy and prosperity. Setting: New York City, at a high-profile international policy or diplomatic forum. Duration: the entire speech lasts 16 minutes and 43 seconds, offering a comprehensive overview of both Canadian and international priorities. Additionally, the Arabic data of assertive speech acts are performed by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, as follows: <https://youtu.be/XXEEVEel7e8> Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's speech at the Arab-China Summit in Riyadh, the first high-level forum aimed at boosting Arab-Chinese cooperation. The event, held at a notable venue, was attended by President Xi Jinping, Arab officials, and Saudi royals, with the speech delivered to visiting dignitaries and summit participants. The full address lasts 4 minutes and 23 seconds.

4.2 Research Design

This study employs a convergent parallel mixed-method design, representing a comprehensive approach that simultaneously gathers and analyses both quantitative and qualitative data. Rooted in pragmatism, this design emphasises the practical application of research to address real-world challenges (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, pp. 214–217). The methodology involves the concurrent collection of political speeches in both English and Arabic, followed by quantitative (acoustic analysis) and qualitative (pragmatic analysis) procedures. Ultimately, the findings from these analyses are synthesized to discern patterns, similarities, and differences in the articulation of assertive speech acts, thereby ensuring a thorough understanding of the research issue.

4.3 The Model of the Analysis

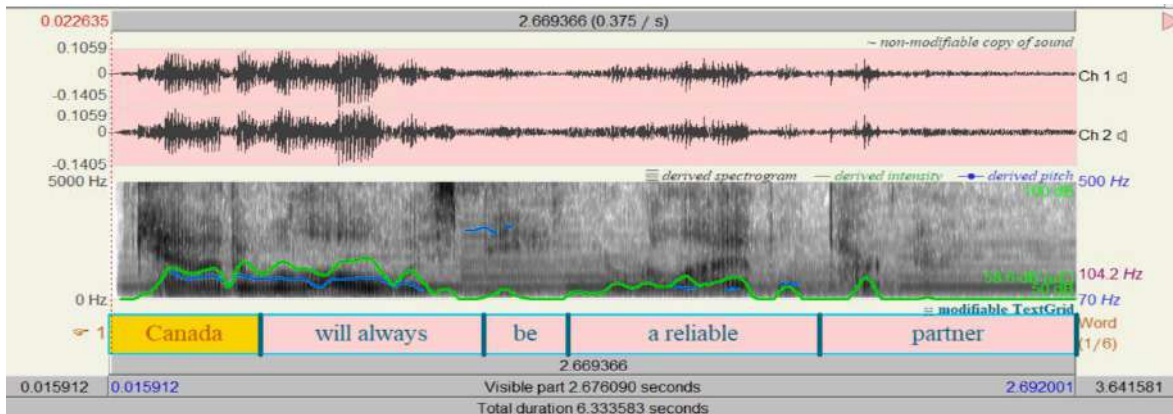
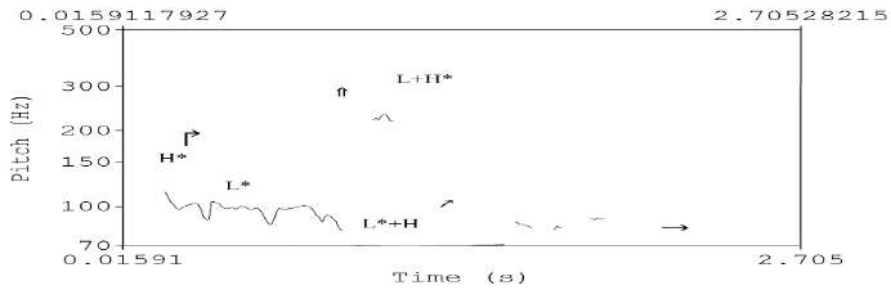
This study employs an eclectic model throughout the analysis of the current data. In alignment with the study's objectives, the model is designed to analyse the collected data. The models above are intended to serve as the framework for this investigation. It encompasses Wennerström's (2001) discourse functions of intonation and Searle's (1979) classification of speech acts, as studied in the theory of speech acts.

5. Data Analysis

This section presents the study's data analysis, which is analysed and discussed both qualitatively and quantitatively. It examines the applicability of the eclectic phonopragmatic model using data drawn from political discourse.

5.1 Phono-Pragmatic Analysis of English Assertive Speech Acts

Extract (1)



And Mabel, major global investors are looking around the world to where they can be part of that. ***Canada will always be a reliable partner*** because the key is simple. Make sure you're putting people first.

Table (4.1) of the phonetic features of assertive speech act of affirming

Types of Assertive Speech Acts	Frequency F0	Loudness	Duration
1- Affirming	103.96 Hz	58.58dB	2.66/s

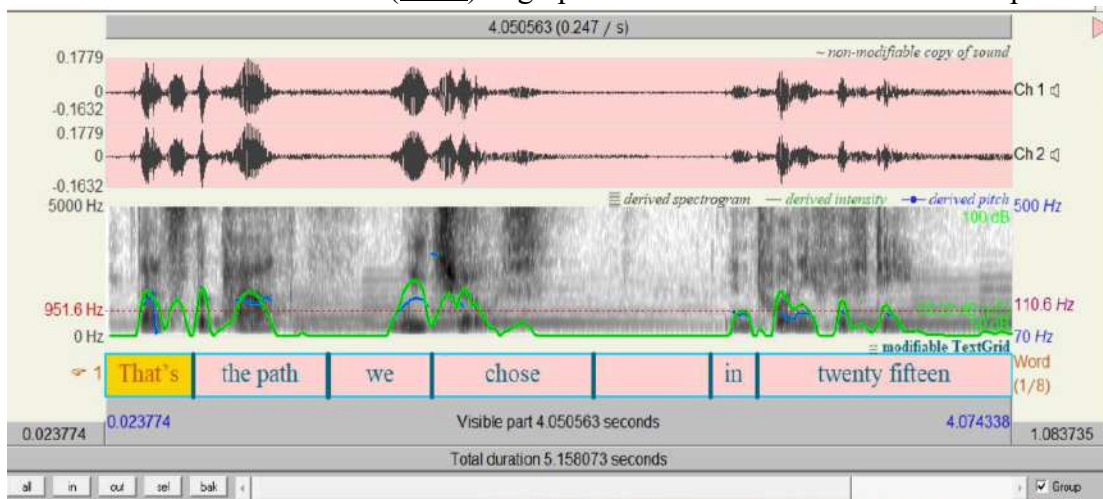
The speaker utters the type of assertive speech act in English language “Affirming” which is identified because it expresses the speaker's belief or commitment to the truth of the proposition and the speaker strongly supports or endorses a fact or statement that "Canada will always be a reliable partner." with a frequency reaching 103.96 Hz and the loudness with 58.58dB during 2.66/s. The mechanism is illustrated above using the PRAAT software.

Figure (4.1). Justin Trudeau’s first intonational phrase.

↑CÁNADA WÍLL ALWAYS↗ BÈ ↑ a RELIABLE PÁRTNER. →

Based on the drawing picture from the PRAAT program above.

- 1- The speaker performs the assertive SA of affirming “Canada will always be a reliable partner” with high pitch accent (H*) as noticed in CÁNADA WÍLL to show new information adding to the discourse in addition to accessible, extra-propositional and proposition questioned in (L*) and the relevance uncertain in contrast to another item in (L*+H) (PÁRTNER ALWÀYS).
- 2- Pitch boundaries where the boundaries are used as configurations at the ends of phrases or utterances. Low-rising boundary at the end of the first phrase (ALWÀYS↗), which anticipates the next constituent (often from same speaker) and Plateau boundary (PÁRTNER →) which anticipates next constituent (listing or hesitation)
- 3- The “Key” where the speaker employs the key as the choice of pitch a speaker makes at the onset of the utterance to indicate the attitude or the stance the high key as noticed in (ǀCÁNADA) for contrasting.
- 4- Para-tone which is noticed in (BÈ ↑) High para-tone reached to show a new topic.



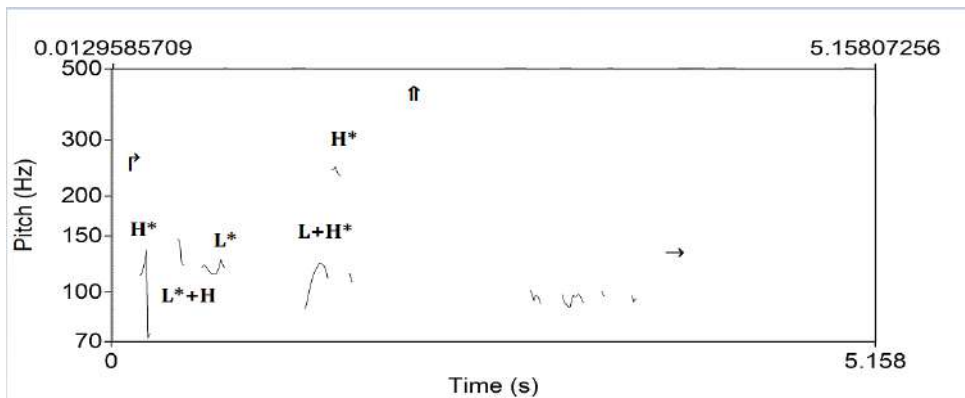
**Extract
(2)**

One was to burn it all down, to attack our institutions, to be isolationist, protectionist, and nativist. The other was to roll up our sleeves and get to work fixing it in Canada. *That's the path we chose in twenty fifteen.* While other places were tearing up trade deals, we actually signed more.

Types of Assertive Speech Acts	Frequency F0	Loudness	Duration
Avowing	109.66 Hz	59.32dB	4.05/s

Table (4.2) of the phonetic features of assertive act of avowing

The speaker utters the type of assertive speech act in English language. “Avowing” which is



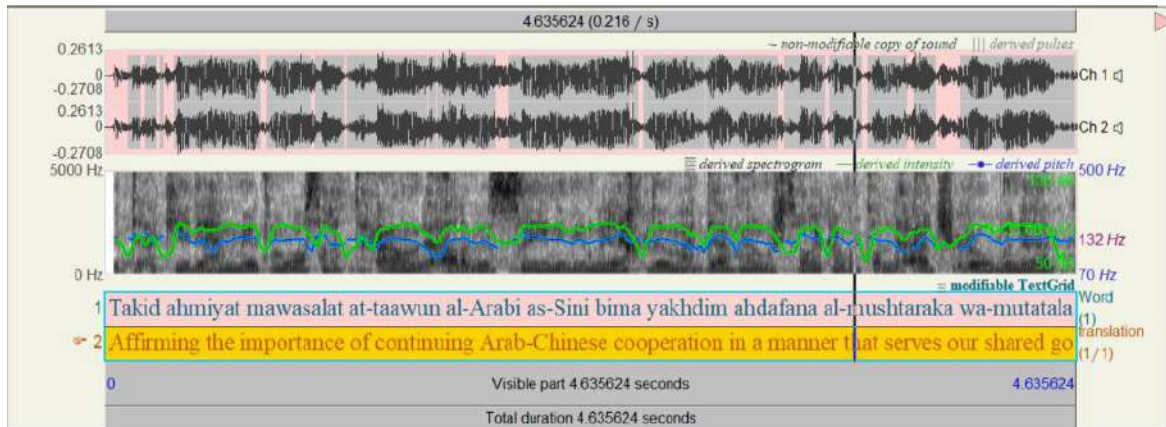
identified because it expresses the speaker's belief or commitment to the truth of the proposition and the speaker can openly declaring a personal belief or feeling that "That's the path we chose in twenty fifteen" with a frequency reaching 109.66 Hz and intensity with 59.32dB during 4.05/s. The mechanism is as shown above through the PRAAT Software picture.

Figure (4.2). Justin Trudeau’s second intonational phrase

THÁT’S THE PÀTH WE CHOSE in twenty fifteen.

Based on the drawing picture from the PRAAT program above.

- 1- The speaker performs the assertive SA of avowing “That’s the path we chose in twenty fifteen” with high pitch accent (H*) as noticed in THÁT’S to show new information added to the discourse in addition to the relevance uncertain in contrast to another item in low rising pitch accents in (L*+H) (THE PÀTH) and accessible, extra-propositional and proposition questioned in (L*) (WÈ) and contrasting in (L+H*) (CHÓSE)
- 2- Pitch boundaries where the boundaries are used as configurations at the ends of phrases or utterances. Plateau boundary at the end of the phrase (in twenty fifteen →) which anticipates next constituent (listing or hesitation).
- 3- The “Key” where the speaker employs the key as the choice of pitch a speaker makes at the onset of the utterance as in (P̣THÁT’S) for contrasting.



- 4- Para-tone which is noticed in (CHOSE↑) high para-tone reached to show a new topic.

5.2 Phono-Pragmatic Analysis of Arabic Assertive Speech Acts

Extract (3)

أهمية مضاعفة الجهود لإيجاد حلول سياسية لإنهاء الأزمة في كل من سوريا وليبيا بما يكفل تحقيق الأمن والاستقرار والازدهار في البلدين الشقيقين وعودتهما إلى دائرة العمل العربي المشترك. وفي الختام، نجدد تأكيد أهمية مواصلة التعاون العربي الصيني بما يخدم أهدافنا المشتركة وتطلعات شعوبنا والقيام بدور فاعل على الساحة الدولية، وأن تساهم نتائج هذه القمة

في تحقيق آثار إيجابية مستدامة في جميع المجالات على المستوى الإقليمي والدولي، مقدرين للأمين العام لجامعة الدول العربية والأمانة العامة ما يبذلونه من جهود موفقة في هذا الإطار.

Table (4.3). The phonetic features of Arabic assertive speech act of concluding.

Types of Assertive Speech Acts	Frequency F0	Loudness	Duration
Concluding	131.99Hz	71.32dB	4.63/s

The speaker utters the type of assertive speech act in Arabic language which is “Concluding” which is identified because it expresses the speaker's belief or commitment to the truth of the proposition and the speaker drawing a logical inference or summarizing evidence that " tákid ahmiyàt mwásalat at-taawun al-arabí as-seèny bima yakhdim ahdafuna al-mushtaraka wa mutataliaat shuaubuna." with a frequency reaching 131.99Hz and the loudness with 71.32dB during 4.63/s. The mechanism is as shown above through the PRAAT Software picture.

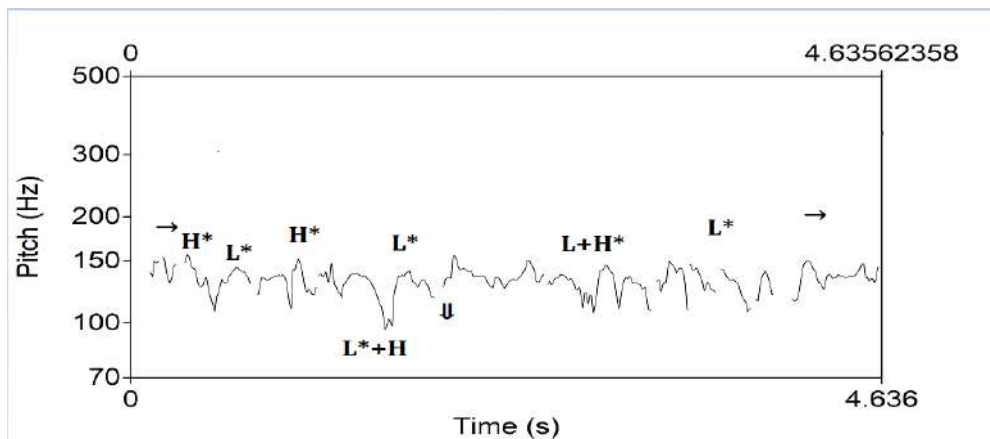


Figure (4.3). Salman’s first intonational phrase

TÁKID AHMIYÀT MWÁSALAT AT-TAAWUN AL-ARABÍ AS-SEÈNY BIMA YAKHDIM AHDAFUNA AL-MUSHTARAKA WA MUTATALIAAT SHUAUBUNA.

تأكيد أهمية مواصلة التعاون العربي الصيني بما يخدم أهدافنا المشتركة و متطلبات شعوبنا.

Affirming the importance of continuing Arab-Chinese cooperation in a manner that serves our shared goals and the needs of our peoples.

Based on the drawing picture from the PRAAT program above.

- 1- The speaker performs the assertive SA of concluding with High pitch accent (H*) as noticed in (TÁKID, MWÁSALAT) as new information and Low pitch accent (L*) in (AHMIYÀT, AL-ARABÍ AS-SEÈNY and WA MUTATALIAAT SHUAUBUNA.) to show accessible, extra-propositional, proposition questioned in addition (L*+H) which associates with (AT-TAAWUN.)

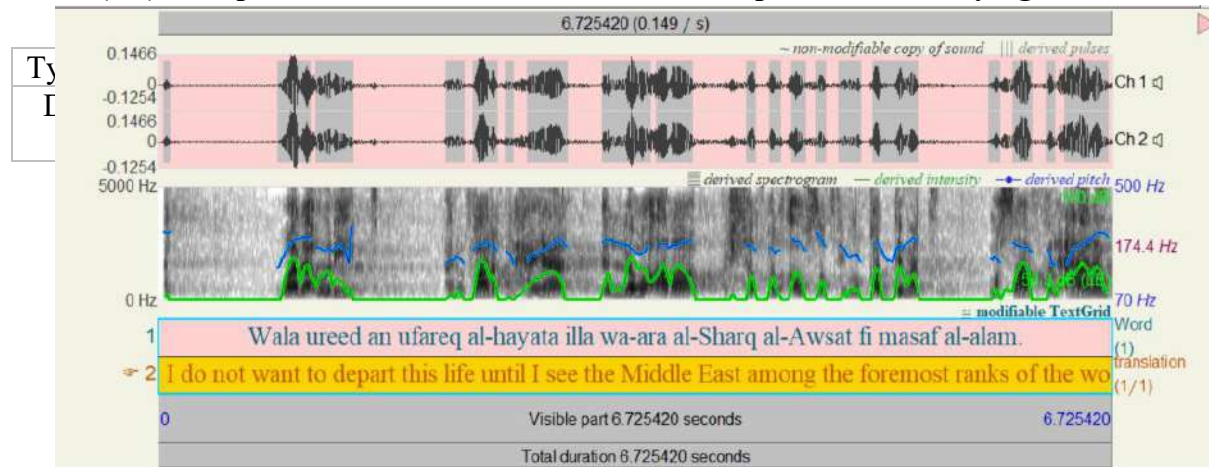
for relevance uncertain in contrast to another item and (L+H*) as in (AL-MUSHTARAKA) for contrasting.

- 2- The boundaries are used as configurations at the ends of phrases or utterance. Plateau boundary in (WA MUTATALIAAT SHUAUBUNA →) anticipates next constituent (listing or hesitation).
- 3- The “Key” where the key is the choice of pitch a speaker makes at the onset of the utterance as in (TÁKID AHMIYÀT MWÁSALAT AT-TAAWUN→) for additive.
- 4- Para-tone which is noticed in (MWÁSALAT AT-TAAWUN ↓) High para-tone reached to show aside from main topic.

Extract (4)

إذا نجحنا في الخمسة سنوات القادمة سوف تلتحق فينا الدول أكثر وسوف تكون النهضة القادمة في العالم في الثلاثين سنة القادمة في الشرق الأوسط إن شاء الله هذه حرب السعوديين هذه حربي التي أخوضها شخصيا ولا أريد أن أفارق الحياة إلا وأرى الشرق الأوسط في مقدمة مصاف العالم وأعتقد أن هذا الهدف سوف يتحقق مئة في المئة

Table (4.4). The phonetic features of Arabic assertive speech act of denying.



The speaker utters the type of assertive speech act in Arabic language. “Denying” which is identified because it expresses the speaker's belief or commitment to the truth of the proposition and the speaker rejecting or negating a statement or claim that” wála uréed án ufáreq al-hayáh illá wa-ara al-sharq al-awsat fí masaf al-alam” with a frequency reaching 174.36Hz and the loudness with 58.30dB during 6.72/s. The mechanism is as shown above through the PRAAT Software picture.

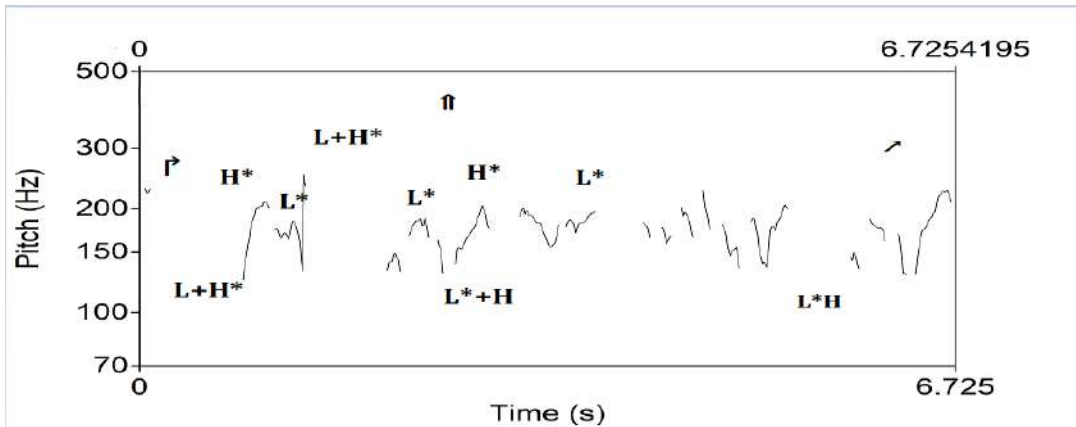


Figure
(4.4).
Salman's
second

intonational phrase

WÁLA URÉED ÁN UFÀREQ AL-HAYÁH ILLÁ WA-ARA AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT FI MASAF AL-ALAM.

"ولا اريد ان افارق الحياة الا و ارى الشرق الاوسط في مصاف العالم".

And I do not want to depart this life until I see the Middle East among the foremost ranks of the world.

Based on the drawing picture from the PRAAT program above.

- 1- The speaker performs the assertive SA of denying with High pitch accent (H*) as noticed in (WÁLA, AL-HAYÁH) as a new information and Low pitch accent (L*) in (URÉED, UFÀREQ, and ILLÁ) to show accessible, extra-propositional, proposition questioned in addition (L*+H) which associates with (WA-ARA AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT FI MASAF AL-ALAM.) indicating relevance uncertain in contrast to another item and (L+H*) as in (ÁN) for contrasting.

- 2- The boundaries are used as configurations at the ends of phrases or utterance. Low-rising boundary in (WA-ARA AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT FI MASAF AL-ALAM.↗) anticipates next constituent (often from same speaker).
- 3- The “Key” where the key is the choice of pitch a speaker makes at the onset of the utterance as in (WÁLA URÉED ÁN UFÀREQ AL-HAYÁHP) for contrasting.
- 4- Para-tone which is noticed in (ILLÁ WA-ARA AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT FI MASAF AL-ALAM↗) High para-tone reached to show a new topic.

5.3 Statistical Analysis

The shifts turn to the statistical analysis, which aims to furnish a quantitative foundation for the conclusions derived from the phono-pragmatic analysis.

Table (4.5). Measures of Intensity in English vs. Arabic Assertive Acts

Table (4.5). Measures of Intensity in English vs. Arabic Assertive Acts

Types of assertive acts	English acts
1-Affirming	58.58dB
2-Avowing	59.32dB

Types of assertive acts	Arabic acts
3-Concluding	71.32dB
4-Denying	58.30dB

Table (4.6). Measures of Frequency (F0) in English vs. Arabic Assertive Acts

Types of assertive acts	English acts
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Assertive Type	H*	L*	L*+H	L+H*	↗	↘	→	↶	→	↷	↕	↕	Total
Denying	2	3	1	1	1				1			1	10 (7.3%)
Concluding	2	3	1	1			1		1			1	10 (7.3%)
3-Concluding			131.99Hz										
4-Denying			174.36Hz										
1-Affirming			103.96Hz										
2-Avowing			109.66Hz										

Table (4.7)

The tables above show the diversity of frequency (F0) between two English and Arabic assertive speech acts.

Assertive Type	H*	L*	L*+H	L+H*	↗	↘	→	↶	→	↷	↕	↕	total
Affirming	1	1	1	1			1	1			1		7 (5.8%)
Avowing	1	1	1	1			1	1			1		7 (7.8%)

Table (4.8) Statistics of Functions of intonation in English Assertive Acts

The total rate of functions of intonations in English assertive speech act of affirming is 5.8%, and the same percent appears in English assertive speech act of avowing 5.8%.

Table (4.9) Statistics of functions of intonation in Arabic assertive acts

The total rate of functions of intonations in Arabic assertive speech act of denying is 7.3%, and the another percent appears also in Arabic assertive speech act of concluding 7.3%.

5.4 Findings

After careful considerations of the current study through the practical field of the analysis. It is noticed that English assertive speech acts are performed differently from the Arabic assertive

speech acts according to the adopted model of discourse intonation, where the phonetic features are adopted to show the total percents of each assertive act separately as shown above in tables.

Intonation plays a vital role in shaping the pragmatic force and interpretive nuance of assertive speech acts across languages. By analyzing specific English and Arabic assertive speech acts, it becomes apparent that both languages utilize intonation to convey meaning. Yet, they do so according to distinct acoustic and functional patterns. Examining these patterns reveals how speakers of each language deploy prosodic cues not only to structure information but also to express broader cultural and communicative norms. The following key findings still highlight the primary acoustic differences, functional divergences, and shared strategies observed in assertive speech acts, underscoring the ways intonation reflects both universal and language-specific approaches to communication.

1. Acoustic differences: Arabic exhibits higher intensity and broader F0 variation, suggesting greater prosodic expressiveness.
2. Functional divergence: English prioritizes information novelty and contrast; Arabic emphasizes information accessibility and contextual reinforcement.
3. Shared strategies: Both languages use intonation for additive and contrastive functions, even though at varying frequencies.

6. Conclusion

The research effectively identified unique phonological features of assertive speech acts in English and Arabic political contexts, including intonation patterns and pitch changes. These prosodic elements significantly enhance the pragmatic impact of assertions by conveying commitment, certainty, authority, and persuasive intent, thereby validating objectives. The analysis demonstrated that certain phonological patterns consistently correlate with specific pragmatic functions in political assertions. For example, different types of assertive speech acts, such as statements of fact, expressions of belief, evaluative judgments, and predictive assertions, exhibit distinctive phonological markers that reflect their pragmatic roles. A comparative analysis of English and Arabic political discourse revealed both universal and language-specific phono-pragmatic strategies. While both languages utilise the same prosodic strategies to enhance the pragmatic force of assertions, reflecting some universal trends, there are also distinct phonological resources and prosodic conventions that are unique to each language.

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