ATTITUDINAL SEMANTICS OF PROSODY AND ITS METALANGUAGE

YURI DUBOVSKY, GALINA YERMOLENKO

English Phonetics Dept.
Pyatigorsk State Institute of Foreign Languages
Pyatigorsk, USSR 357533

ABSTRACT

Alongside the theoretical discussion of terminology and metataxonomy problems dealing with speech prosody an approach towards setting up a correlation between a semantic label, attitude and its prosody is presented.

Prosodic features differentiating the labels that denote "friendly attitude" in English are described on the basis of the lexico-semantic and semantico-prosodic experimental data. Different degrees of descriptive power of verbal metalanguage units under study are revealed.

INTRODUCTION

Semantic description of speech prosody involves the problem of an adequate linguistic terminology and metalanguage. As it is put in /1/, a great deal of difficulties ascribed to intonation are, in fact, difficulties of inadequate metalinguistic description.

A metalanguage system is regarded as possessing a hierarchic field structure the elements of which are in hyponymic relations. It comprises a core, or a relatively closed class of generic notions (terminology) and a periphery, or a relatively open class of specific notions (metataxonomy, nomenclature).

As far as terminology is concerned, it is submitted to a formal claim made to any terminological language: terms should be neutral and monosemantic at least within the limits of a certain metalinguistic system.

Metataxonomy with labels as descriptive units has been devoted very poor attention in contrast to terminology. There is a considerable disagreement between linguists as to what labels should be: nonverbal or verbal, artificial signs or linguistic ones, etc. The trouble is that lexical labels are not pure terms, they are borrowed from the popular speech. For this reason the majority of them are rather polysemic than unequivocal, as terms should be. Their heavy dependence upon specific contexts creates a good deal of ambiguity and misunderstanding. Polysemy and synonymy do not seem to be the only variables that affect the choice of lexical labels, metaphorical use and evaluative colouring being the rest.

However, there is no need to reject common words as labels since any natural language possesses the metalinguistic function i.e. it is capable of describing itself rather sufficiently. Besides, specific nonverbal metalanguages do not hold good for broad scientific descriptions.

Metalinguistic units, either verbal or non verbal, reflect two planes of description: the plane of expression and that of content, the descriptive categories being partly terms, partly labels.

The plane of expression in speech prosody can be rendered with both verbal and nonverbal descriptive units. The latter are symbolic-graphic means - prosodic transcriptions and representations. A verbal metalanguage is made up with the terminology of basic prosodic notions, i.e. units, components, structures, etc. and the metataxonomy of their specific types.

The plane of content in speech prosody is described with verbal terms and labels. Terms are used to refer to the communicative types of utterances, registers of speech, phonostyles etc., as related to the communicative and stylistic meanings of speech prosody. Semantic labels are, for the most part, of attitudinal character. They are made use of to describe the pragmatic types of utterances, of emotional and attitudinal connotations referring to the pragmatic and attitudinal aspects of speech prosody.

Any metataxonomy could be likewise characterized by a hierarchic organisation. In the attitudinal metataxonomy, for example, semantic labels fall into clusters headed by labels of a more general meaning. Related to terms as notions of higher generality labels are regarded to be specific names referring to prosodically and para-linguistically expressed emotions and attitudes.

This class of label proves to be the least systematized though the attitudinal function of intonation has been the subject of intensive study over a number of years. It may account for the fact that attitudinal labels denote psychological states.
A of attitudinal prosody is highly dependent
From the afore said one might — see that
Semantic labels perform two functions:
Accordingly, these are fixed to specific labels has already been proposed and tested. However, the experimental evidence was concerned mainly with the auditory impressions and perceptive correlates of the attitudinal labels. The acoustic aspect of this relationship still remains undiscussed.

**METHOD**

In the present study our concern was a group of questions regarding the prosodically manifested friendly attitude. The grouping was done on the basis of the attitudinal meaning of the labels and the degree of emotional intensity. These components could interact and be reflected in labels' meanings in different ways. As notions attitudes differ in several qualitative and quantitative features characterizing their psychological and physiological nature: intensity, direction, duration, way of outward expression, source and cause of emotional intensity. These are all the same time it might as well be called a synonymic series. The core of it is made up by synonymous adverbs amicably, cordially, heartily, warmly, heartily and warmly, charmingly.

The label in a friendly way was taken as a dominant of the series. As a result 3 degrees of emotional intensity were found out for the 'core' labels. Emotional intensives have not been revealed in the dictionary explanations of the 'core' labels. This testifies to the moderate nature. With regard to the internal intensives we have no evidence in question displayed by them. We also failed to detect internal intensives concerning frequency. These labels were revealing the many-sided nature of the attitudinal or attendant (cordially, heartily, warmly, charmingly) lexical meanings they possess. These are fixed to specific labels by several synonyms. The core of it is made up by synonymous adverbs amicably, cordially, heartily, warmly, heartily and warmly, charmingly.

The detailed lexicosemantic analysis has shown that friendly attitude is present in the label warm-heartedly, heartily, heartily and warmly, charmingly. The core of it is made up by synonymous adverbs amicably, cordially, heartily, warmly, heartily and warmly, charmingly. As a result 3 degrees of emotional intensity were found out for the 'core' labels. Emotional intensives have not been revealed in the dictionary explanations of the 'core' labels. This testifies to the moderate nature. With regard to the internal intensives we have no evidence in question displayed by them. We also failed to detect internal intensives concerning frequency. These labels were revealing the many-sided nature of the attitudinal or attendant (cordially, heartily, warmly, charmingly) lexical meanings they possess. These are fixed to specific labels by several synonyms. The core of it is made up by synonymous adverbs amicably, cordially, heartily, warmly, heartily and warmly, charmingly.

The detailed lexicosemantic analysis has shown that friendly attitude is present in the label warm-heartedly, heartily, heartily and warmly, charmingly. The core of it is made up by synonymous adverbs amicably, cordially, heartily, warmly, heartily and warmly, charmingly. As a result 3 degrees of emotional intensity were found out for the 'core' labels. Emotional intensives have not been revealed in the dictionary explanations of the 'core' labels. This testifies to the moderate nature. With regard to the internal intensives we have no evidence in question displayed by them. We also failed to detect internal intensives concerning frequency. These labels were revealing the many-sided nature of the attitudinal or attendant (cordially, heartily, warmly, charmingly) lexical meanings they possess. These are fixed to specific labels by several synonyms. The core of it is made up by synonymous adverbs amicably, cordially, heartily, warmly, heartily and warmly, charmingly.

The detailed lexicosemantic analysis has shown that friendly attitude is present in the label warm-heartedly, heartily, heartily and warmly, charmingly. The core of it is made up by synonymous adverbs amicably, cordially, heartily, warmly, heartily and warmly, charmingly. As a result 3 degrees of emotional intensity were found out for the 'core' labels. Emotional intensives have not been revealed in the dictionary explanations of the 'core' labels. This testifies to the moderate nature. With regard to the internal intensives we have no evidence in question displayed by them. We also failed to detect internal intensives concerning frequency. These labels were revealing the many-sided nature of the attitudinal or attendant (cordially, heartily, warmly, charmingly) lexical meanings they possess. These are fixed to specific labels by several synonyms. The core of it is made up by synonymous adverbs amicably, cordially, heartily, warmly, heartily and warmly, charmingly.

The detailed lexicosemantic analysis has shown that friendly attitude is present in the label warm-heartedly, heartily, heartily and warmly, charmingly. The core of it is made up by synonymous adverbs amicably, cordially, heartily, warmly, heartily and warmly, charmingly. As a result 3 degrees of emotional intensity were found out for the 'core' labels. Emotional intensives have not been revealed in the dictionary explanations of the 'core' labels. This testifies to the moderate nature. With regard to the internal intensives we have no evidence in question displayed by them. We also failed to detect internal intensives concerning frequency. These labels were revealing the many-sided nature of the attitudinal or attendant (cordially, heartily, warmly, charmingly) lexical meanings they possess. These are fixed to specific labels by several synonyms. The core of it is made up by synonymous adverbs amicably, cordially, heartily, warmly, heartily and warmly, charmingly.

The detailed lexicosemantic analysis has shown that friendly attitude is present in the label warm-heartedly, heartily, heartily and warmly, charmingly. The core of it is made up by synonymous adverbs amicably, cordially, heartily, warmly, heartily and warmly, charmingly. As a result 3 degrees of emotional intensity were found out for the 'core' labels. Emotional intensives have not been revealed in the dictionary explanations of the 'core' labels. This testifies to the moderate nature. With regard to the internal intensives we have no evidence in question displayed by them. We also failed to detect internal intensives concerning frequency. These labels were revealing the many-sided nature of the attitudinal or attendant (cordially, heartily, warmly, charmingly) lexical meanings they possess. These are fixed to specific labels by several synonyms. The core of it is made up by synonymous adverbs amicably, cordially, heartily, warmly, heartily and warmly, charmingly. The detailed lexicosemantic analysis has shown that friendly attitude is present in the label warm-heartedly, heartily, heartily and warmly, charmingly. The core of it is made up by synonymous adverbs amicably, cordially, heartily, warmly, heartily and warmly, charmingly. As a result 3 degrees of emotional intensity were found out for the 'core' labels. Emotional intensives have not been revealed in the dictionary explanations of the 'core' labels. This testifies to the moderate nature. With regard to the internal intensives we have no evidence in question displayed by them. We also failed to detect internal intensives concerning frequency. These labels were revealing the many-sided nature of the attitudinal or attendant (cordially, heartily, warmly, charmingly) lexical meanings they possess. These are fixed to specific labels by several synonyms. The core of it is made up by synonymous adverbs amicably, cordially, heartily, warmly, heartily and warmly, charmingly. The detailed lexicosemantic analysis has shown that friendly attitude is present in the label warm-heartedly, heartily, heartily and warmly, charmingly. The core of it is made up by synonymous adverbs amicably, cordially, heartily, warmly, heartily and warmly, charmingly. As a result 3 degrees of emotional intensity were found out for the 'core' labels. Emotional intensives have not been revealed in the dictionary explanations of the 'core' labels. This testifies to the moderate nature. With regard to the internal intensives we have no evidence in question displayed by them. We also failed to detect internal intensives concerning frequency. These labels were revealing the many-sided nature of the attitudinal or attendant (cordially, heartily, warmly, charmingly) lexical meanings they possess. These are fixed to specific labels by several synonyms. The core of it is made up by synonymous adverbs amicably, cordially, heartily, warmly, heartily and warmly, charmingly.
and frequent use. On the whole, labels of more general meaning of friendliness tend to be frequently used to refer to other attitudinal variants (in a friendly way, intently, cordially). This is not true for easily recognizable heartily. The matter is that heartily is very often used to label general emotional colour. That is why listeners often ascribe descriptive terms emphatically or impatiently to this attitudinal variant.

Label identification of test phrases pronounced within the context was, to some extent, negligible. This finding is in agreement with the results of label identification experiments done by D.Crystal /1/. Easily identifiable labels tend to have high recognition scores in both cases (in a friendly way, amiably, cordially, heartily). Amicably and warm-heartedly proved to have similar identification (10-15% of correct instances). The exception could be made for warmly. The influence of context was rather strong in this case; correct identification rose to 40%.

These observations suggest that labels could be used as terms out of context. However, the statement requires experimental confirmation since attitudinal variants rarely were ascribed a single label.

Analyzing the prosodic features of the attitudinal variants under study we have obtained a) constantly overlapping, b) variationally overlapping characteristics and c) distinctive features by which a certain label differs markedly from the rest. The latter two are briefly outlined below.

Amiably - b) no instances of high initial fundamental frequency (F0) levels, few instances of mid-narrow F0 ranges in pre-heads, relatively low F0 peak values; absence of medium-zone mean syllable duration; low minimum-zone intensity of unstressed syllables; c) low decreased-zone intensity of unstressed syllables.

Amically - b) relatively high mean values of mid-wide F0 range in terminal tones, few instances of mid-narrow F0 range in the utterance; c) high mid-narrow F0 range average values in terminal tones.

Friendly - b) moderate recurrence of wide F0 range in the utterance; high upper limit of high-wide and full F0 registers in terminal tones and heads; c) low F0 medium range mean values in terminal tones; low minimum-zone average intensity of unstressed syllables, high medium-zone average intensity of unstressed syllables in preheads.

Intimately - b) frequent wide F0 range in the prosodic structure; low medium-zone intensity of stressed syllables; c) high mean values of mid-wide F0 range in terminal tones and heads, low F0 minimum values of nuclear syllable followed by a post-nuclear syllable; high decreased-zone mean syllable duration.

Cordially - b) high frequency of mid-narrow and mid-wide F0 registers in prosodic structures; low decreased- and medium-zone intensity of unstressed syllables; c) low mean values of mid-narrow F0 range in pre-heads.

Heartily - b) instances of extra-high F0 final level, no cases of mid-narrow and mid-wide F0 registers in pre-heads; increased upper limits of wide F0 register in prosodic structures, increased F0 peak values; high F0 minimum values; high minimum-zone mean intensity values of unstressed syllables; c) increased upper limits of high-wide F0 register in terminal tones; high F0 peak values in nuclear syllables; high decreased-zone mean syllable duration.

Warmly - b) no instances of mid-wide and narrow F0 range in terminal tones, no instances of narrow and mid-wide F0 range in prosodic structures as compared to the 'core' labels and labels heartily, warm-heartedly; relatively high mean values of mid-narrow and wide F0 range, particularly in comparison to other 'periphery' labels; c) high minimum-zone shortest duration.

Warm-heartedly - b) mid-high, low, extra-high and mid-low (in decreasing rank of frequency) F0 initial levels; high average values of minimum-zone intensity of unstressed syllables; c) high-narrow F0 range mean values in pre-heads.

As the results of the experiment show the most marked and functionally loaded are heartily, in a friendly way, intimately. They are most readily identified by the listeners too. The fact that certain prosodic structures are associated with a certain label makes it possible to speak about such labels as having a strong degree of descriptive power. On the contrary, labels with only some distinctive prosodic features 'attached' to them are of very little metalinguistic help (amicably, warmly, warm-heartedly) or of no use at all (such as 'amicably').

REFERENCES