

THE ACCENTUAL AND MELODICAL STRUCTURE OF STYLISTICALLY HETEROGENEOUS TEXTS. AN INVESTIGATION BASED ON ENGLISH LANGUAGE MATERIAL

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This paper presents a short account of an investigation aimed at discovering certain peculiarities of the accentual and melodic organization of stylistically heterogeneous recorded English texts (transposed from the written form of English into their sound form).

An auditory and linguistic analysis of experimental texts (excerpts from a fairy-tale, a novel, a lecture, some humorous stories, some conversations, presenting different functional styles) shows that the structural elements in all of them have specific quantitative and qualitative features.

Their structural differences display themselves, for example, in the number of syntagms (or breath-groups) with reference to the general number of sentences in the text, in the frequency of occurrence of the main types of nuclear tones of English, and in the frequency counts of the accentual types of the syntagms.

It has been discovered that, alongside with the nuclear tone, the scale (or the head, that part of the accentual structure which extends from the first stressed syllable up to the nucleus) has a very high frequency of occurrence: 68% of all the syntagms comprising the scale.¹

Conclusion

A preliminary survey of the results leads us to the conclusion that the stylistic heterogeneity of the texts determines their peculiar accentual and melodic organization, which requires further investigation and description.

Reference

Crystal, D.D. (1969): Prosodic systems and intonation in English, Cambridge.

(1) These data correspond to those presented by the English phonetician D. Crystal (1969).