



TONALITY AND PRAGMATICS OF QUESTIONS IN NIGERIAN ENGLISH SPEAKING HOMES IN SELECTED NOLLYWOOD FILMS

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Abstract

The relationship between prosody and pragmatics is relatively clear for experts of a language, although often difficult to explain in practical terms. In the last few decades, researchers have emphasized the dialogical status of intonation and the need to take into account interactive dimensions of meaning. However, scanty attention has been paid to the pragmatic use of intonation in Nigerian English speaking homes. Therefore, this research investigated how interlocutors in the Nigerian English speaking homes use intonation of questions to trigger a pragmatic inference. This study adopted Mey's Pragmatic Acts theory for the analysis of the data collected. Three Nigerian home movies were randomly selected from two cultural areas where major movies are produced in Nigeria. One out of the movies exhibits the Igbo culture and the other two movies exhibit the Yoruba culture. The movies were: Gloria Bamiloye's "My Mother in-law part 2", Nonzo Uzozie's "The Billionaire's Daughter and the Poor Village Boy" and Mike Bamiloye's "House on Fire". Relevant data were extracted and transcribed from 7 hours 35 minutes streams of conversations. The study discovers that intonation contrasts play a critical role in conveying pragmatic meanings. Nigerians use intonation in ways different from the native speakers to convey meanings in relation to cultural context or situations. The commonly or highly used types of questions for pragmatic import in Nigerian English speaking homes are Wh-questions and yes/no questions. Tag questions are rarely or inappropriately used. Fall and rise tunes are used often in Nigerian English speaking homes compared to what obtains in Standard English where four tunes are used. The Pragmatic import of intonation of questions in Nigerian English speaking homes may mean a request, anger, a warning, a command, a surprise, an abuse, an insult, or a call

to order. Intonation of questions in Nigerian English speaking homes has been examined in the discourse of the Nollywood films. The prosodic information realised vary across speakers and contexts. Therefore, the interlocutors need to be familiar with the socio-cultural contexts of their environment to achieve mutual understanding, social cohesion and to avoid misrepresentation of intentions.

Keywords: *Tonality, prosody, Pragmatics of questions, pragmatic act.*

Introduction

Background to the study

English is a common language spoken across the world, and it has varieties that do not seem to originate from a common source. It is true that as the language moves across geographical, linguistic and cultural borders, it is subjected to series of modifications to enable it fit into its new environment, thereby resulting in the rise of different varieties of the English language; and to a large extent, intonation is one of the affected areas. Intonation is one major marker of English varieties rarely noticeable or attended to, especially by non-native speakers as claimed by Ado & Sambo (2017).

Prosody is a complex linguistic system that interacts with grammatical, pragmatic and affective levels of language description (Romero-Trillo (2016) quoting Halliday 1994; Snow and Balog 2002). The system of prosody and the interaction between intonational and lexico-grammatical form varies from language to language. Prosodic pragmatics intends to identify the intentions with which utterances are pronounced to differentiate between the features of the individual speaker and those that knit the web of meaning contrasts at the language level (Romero-Trillo 2016). The understanding and interpretation of the pragmatic meaning of spoken discourse largely depends on the choice of intonation patterns (Romero-Trillo, 2012). This variation often leads to difficulties in the acquisition of L2 intonation, mainly due to the unsatisfactory overuse of a very limited variety of patterns in the foreign language (Ramirez Verdugo 2003).

Native speakers are able to process lexical and contextual information and automatically select the most appropriate prosodic pattern to express the intended communicative purpose. Their prosodic choice is determined by prior

knowledge and experience of a specific linguistic message in a particular context whereas, non-native speakers often lack sufficient exposure to, experience in and knowledge of the L2 as to select the most adequate intonation pattern associated to particular linguistic, situational and pragmatic contexts (Romero-Trillo 2015).

This work is similar to that of Romero-Trillo and Newell (2012) in that they also focus on tonality but with emphasis on the pragmatic implications of prosodic description in the analysis of Pragmatic Markers that function as feedback. Balog (2012) had also worked on the area of intonation and pragmatic language acquisition in L2 language learners. Borràs-Comes and Prieto (2015) carried out their research on “Intonation and the Pragmatics of Yes-No Questions in Central Catalan”, Bartels (1997) worked on “The Pragmatics of WH-Question Intonation in English” but attention has not been given to tonality and pragmatics of questions most especially in Nigerian English speaking homes and this is the focus of this research work.

Statement of the Problem

Questioning in Nigerian English speaking homes has dimensions of interpretation and meaning based on the choice of the intonation patterns. The seemingly question may not be question but a command, request, warning etc. and if misinterpreted by the listener may backfire. How do we know when a question is actually a question? How does one know the intention of the speaker? How do the Nigerian English speaking homes use intonation patterns in questioning? This study will look into these and pragmatically analyse the data collected from three Nigerian movies.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this research work is to investigate tonality and the pragmatics of questions in Nigerian English speaking homes. To achieve this, the study:

1. Identifies types of questions and tunes commonly used in Nigerian English speaking homes.
2. Infers the pragmatic import of intonation of questions in Nigerian English speaking homes.

Research Questions

1. What are types of questions and tunes commonly used in Nigerian English speaking homes?
2. What are the pragmatic imports of intonation of questions in Nigerian English speaking homes?

Theoretical Framework

Pragmatics Act Theory by Jacob Mey is used for this work. Mey (2001) introduced pragmatic act claiming that Austin's term, the IFIDs of speech act theory only indicate illocutionary force; they don't put that force to work. Therefore, the need to lift the speech act out of the domain of abstract description into that of concrete action then speech act becomes Pragmatic acts. A pragmeme is a situated speech act in which the rules of language and of society combine in determining meaning, intended as a socially recognized object sensitive to social expectations about the situation in which the utterance to be interpreted is embedded (Capone 2005). Mey (2017) argues that a new term, the pragmeme, is needed to dispel the obscurity that is inherent in the classical term 'indirect speech act'. Indirect speech represents a true minefield of language use, with many utterances literally liable to explode in one's face unless proper care is exercised (Mey 2004). The pragmeme is realized in a variety of pragmatic acts, as situationally bound speech and other acts, thus complementing the traditional notion of speech act.

Literature Review

Intonation in English

According to Philip Carr (2018), intonation can be seen as the kinds of pitch modulation which are found in whole utterances. Intonation contours can be used to highlight certain elements in an utterance, to bundle words together into information chunks, and to convey the speaker's attitude to what he/she is saying. Geoff Lindsey (2018) submits that Intonation can be treated as having three sub-systems: 1. Phrasing, the division of the speech stream into chunks, each of which has a self-contained intonation pattern (sometimes called 'tonality') 2. Accentuation, the positioning within a phrase of pitch-accents, most importantly the last or 'nuclear' pitch-accent (sometimes called 'tonicity')

3. Contour, the choice of high, low, rising or falling patterns (sometimes called ‘tone’)

Intonation is often seen as an area of difficulty for second language users of English who have tonal languages as their first language. For instance, most Nigerian languages are tonal, not intonational like English. Intonation is used in all languages (whether tonal or intonational but the uses differ). In the case of tonal languages, it is applied to contrast the meaning of individual words e.g. Yoruba, *Igba* (calabash) / *Igba* (time) / *Igba* (locust beans seed) / *Igba* (200). In the case of an intonational language as English, intonation is not a property of the word. It operates at a level above the word, the tone group. Intonation affects grammatical units such as phrases, clauses and sentences (Akinjobi, Adenike A. 2014).

The pitch pattern of an English sentence will be referred to as its intonation. Intonation patterns carry different information about sentences, depending on whether the utterance is a question or a statement, whether or not there is an important word to be emphasized in the utterance, and the attitude of the speaker towards what is being said or the hearer e.g. “Yes” with a falling tune is emphatic while “yes” with a rising tune is either doubtful or a question.

Types and Functions of Intonation

The appropriateness of an intonation pattern for any sentence will depend on (1) the accentual meaning, (2) the grammatical type of sentence (3) the attitude of the speaker and (4) the general and (more specifically) the intonational context (Gimson, 1975). The uses of intonation in English are more flexible and variable. Halliday (1967) proposes five tunes for intonation. He assigns: falling for statement; high-rising for seeking information or challenging a statement; low-rising for question; rising-falling for assertion and, falling-rising for submission. On the other hand, Crystal (2003) describes up to nine types of intonation for saying “yes” which include “level, falling, high-falling, low-falling, rising, high-rising, low-rising, falling-rising and rising-falling”. O’Connor and Arnold (1973) illustrate 10 patterns of intonation with contrastive examples for each pattern. These different patterns of intonation by different authors are rather difficult to learn and acquire for L2 learners of English (Atoye, 2005).

Roach (2000) argues that only two tones are necessary: falling and rising, a combination of which would produce other tones like fall-rise and rise-fall. The source disagrees with other authorities who include a rise-fall-rise and a fall-rise-fall, stating that these other tones are “unnecessary duplication” (p. 160), misleading L2 learners of English intonation. Like Roach, Eka (1996) is similarly of the opinion that intonation should be assigned two tones: simple or unidirectional and bidirectional. The unidirectional intonation comprises the falling and rising tones, whereas the bidirectional intonation includes a combination of fall-rise and rise-fall.

Intonation performs different *grammatical functions* such as differentiating between types of sentences such as statements, wh- questions (which are questions beginning with when, where, what, why, how, etc.), yes/ no questions technically called polar questions, commands, warnings and requests, exclamations and greetings. Intonation also performs an *accentual function* when a particular word in the sentence needs to be given prominence above the others. In *Attitudinal function* of Intonation we can use intonation to show our attitude towards the person we are talking to or what we are putting across. In this type, one can show: indifference, surprise, uncertainty and doubt, warm greeting, routine greeting (not warm). Intonation also performs a *discourse function* on utterances. Using a different pattern of intonation in speaking another language would be interpreted differently. For example, a falling intonation on English yes/no question can be interpreted as abruptness, or a rising intonation on a wh-question can imply surprise (Edadi Ilem Ukam, God’sgift Ogban Uwen and Christiana Omale 2017).

Pragmatics

It can be said that pragmatics deals with the study of meaning in context, although context is always an elusive and subjective composite that tries to shed a holistic, though partial, view on reality. Romero-Trillo (2016) has identified two main traditions in the study of pragmatics: the first understands pragmatics as a dynamic subject in reality, for instance Mey (1993): ‘Pragmatics tells us it’s all right to use language in various, unconventional ways, as long as we know, as language users, what we’re doing’. In other words, Pragmatics in this tradition can be the driving force in the transmission of meaning relations in communication. The second tradition describes Pragmatics as a static subject;

Leech (1983: 6), ‘the study of meaning in relation to speech situations’. The first would look for inventive relationships between language, reality and individuals, while the second would try to establish the link between words, meanings and situations.

In this way, pragmatics constitutes a discipline that spans beyond traditional linguistics

(Phonology, grammar or semantics) but functions in coalition with them. Meaning, pragmatics is based on an original linguistic meaning that has suffered some transformation as a result of its contact with reality (Romero-Trillo and Newell 2012). Pragmatic communication encompasses a variety of factors. For example, communicative intent that refers to whether a speaker is making a statement, a command, a request, or asking a question. Pragmatics also includes discourse principles such as topic maintenance, and turn-taking, among others. Within pragmatics, we also have to consider attitude and emotion. Here, attitude relates to how certain the speaker is about what they are communicating and emotion relates to feelings such as happy, sad, or angry (Balog 2012).

Tonality and Pragmatics

Realizations of prosodic information vary across speakers and contexts. Bartels (1997) observed that the task of mapping sound into meaning is made difficult by the fact that a given intonation contour - *a sequence of tones, or tune* - can have very different connotations in different contexts. It is often suggested, therefore, that the contribution of tune, i.e., choice of tones, to utterance meaning in English is dependent on the discourse situation at utterance time and cannot be analytically reduced to constant semantico-pragmatic correlates of the relevant pitch movements; in short, that English pitch contours are polysemous.

According to Snow & Balog (2002), there are three distinct (and probably linguistic) aspects of the prosodic structure of English that contribute to what a speaker means: *tonality* – the chunking of words into groups or phrases; *tonicity* – the location within that phrase of the pitch accent – or tonic – a prominent syllable, which typically highlights new information; *tone* – the type of melodic contour on that accent. On the other, there are the natural aspects of prosody which encode information that conveys information about emotional states and attitudes or creates impressions. L1 intonation functions as a source of

pragmatic hypotheses for L2 intonation. Non-native speakers tend to generalize certain prosodic choices to contexts which would require different realizations (Romero-Trillo 2016). Prosodic features overlap segments and serve a variety of purposes, including: contrastive stress, lexical stress, pragmatic intent, emotion, attitude, etc. Therefore, intonation contrasts play a critical role in conveying pragmatic meaning.

This approach to intonation is that it allows us to describe not only the placement of the tonic (tonicity) but also the other systems that play a role in the description of prosody: tonality (the division of speech into units of meaning), and tone (the contour direction and shape). Tonality is obviously related to tonicity because the division of information correlates with the acoustic peaks. However, what is important from a methodological perspective is that only one primary tonic can appear in a tone unit. If there is a second, this would always be secondary in pragmatic meaning and acoustic saliency. The third component, tone, is related to the upward/downward/level movement of the voice pitch in a certain linguistic unit. This is probably the most salient feature of intonation and is also more clearly related to the basic meanings in communication: questions, statements or indeterminacy. Romero-Trillo (2001) shows that intonation has the capacity of substituting words by hesitations or interjections in a process that neutralises word classes that we would define as ‘grammatical emaciation’, e. g.: ‘mhm’ instead of ‘yes’ to show agreement. From this perspective, we can say that prosody is the substance that permeates all grammatical constructions and gives them full-fledged pragmatic meaning in context. Intonational meaning is essentially pragmatic in nature.

Methodology

The method uses for this research was observation. Data were collected from 7 hours 35 minutes streams of conversations from the randomly selected three Nigerian films from eastern and western parts of the nation. The films are Gloria Bamiloye’s *My Mother in-law part 2*, Nonzo Uzozie’s *The Billionaire’s Daughter and the Poor Village Boy* and Mike Bamiloye’s *House on Fire*. Sampling technique and stratified random sampling technique were used to obtain the required sample for the study. The target populations of this study were people in the Nigerian home videos. This qualitative research adopted pragmatics act theory for the analysis of the collected data.

Analysis and Discussion of Findings

Types of Tunes

Table Showing Rise and Fall Tunes

S/N	Film Names	Rise Tune ↗	Fall Tune ↘
1	My Mother-in-Law part 2	Your husband is the elderly one that doesn't need any care again? Again? Bread? Burnt?	But why did you tell Lola's mum not to come again? Why waiting this long?
2	The Billionaire's Daughter and the Poor Village Boy	Does this expensive car look faulty to you? Come inside and do what?	Eeee! What are you trying to do?
3	House on Fire	Are you brought here to work or to preach for us? What kind of lifestyle is that? Where, when, and with who?	By this hour of the day? Night party? Kunle, what is the meaning of all these? Is anything there? What kind of a father are you?

The table shows that there are 17 questions to be analysed. Nine (9) questions were said with rise tune while the remaining eight (8) were said with fall tune. It also shows that there are eight (8) Wh questions, six (6) polar questions and three (3) Statement changed to questions in the data.

Pragmatic Import of Intonation of Questions

Pragmatic import of warning

There are three questions with import of warning. One is from *The Billionaire's Daughter and the Poor Village Boy*, one is from *House on Fire*, and the remaining one is from *Abattoir Season 2 Episode 3*.

- (1) Eeee! What are you trying to do?
The above practs is taken from *The Billionaire's Daughter and the Poor Village Boy*. The film is from Igbo cultural background.

Here, a rich young lady driving an expensive car is looking for a carpenter's place. She drives near a place where a young man and his friend sit outside sharing a small stainless plate of rice. The young man offers to assist her by taking her to the carpenter's place and he tried to board the car, then the practs "Eeee! What are you trying to do?"

There is Shared Situation Knowledge (SSK) between the two interlocutors. He knew that the lady was not actually asking him question but warning him not to board the car. This made the addressee inferred the intended meaning of the speaker that he was warned not to board her car therefore, he stepped back.

The statement said in a fall tune performs an attitudinal function of indifference as well. She agreed with him leading her direction but not with him boarding or sitting with her in a car. Maybe because he is poor and she is wealthy.

- (2) Come inside and do what?

The conversational act is also between the same interlocutors from *The Billionaire's Daughter and the Poor Village Boy* in pract (1). The young man went on a visit to her house because he wishes to identify with her. She came out to meet him at the door. In their interrogations, he asked for permission to enter the house then she responded with "Come inside and do what?" The emergent of the utterance is situated in the social status of the interlocutors. Culturally, it is inappropriate to speak to a colleague in such manner, but he was so addressed because of their status differences. He understands that she was not asking him question but a warning. The fall tune coupled with contextualization cue and physiognomy of facial expression determines the interpretation and understanding of the speaker's message that the young man's presence is not needed inside.

- (3) Are you brought here to work or to preach for us?

The above question is from *House on Fire*: A movie from Yoruba cultural background. The conversation ensued between a legitimate daughter of a family and their house maid. The maid was warned by the daughter not to preach to her again but to face

her reason for been employed. The phenomenon here is also associated with social class or status of the interlocutors for actual interpretation of the context. To some extent in Yoruba culture or Nigeria as a whole, a house maid, irrespective of her age, has no legal right to rebuke, reprimand or correct a legitimate child of her employer. She can only report the child to the parents. The girl, seeing the maid as going beyond her boundary, therefore warned her.

Pragmatic Import of Request and Plea

- (4) Your husband is the elderly one that doesn't need any care again? The pract here is between a husband and his wife from *My Mother-in-law Part 2*. Their child was delivered of a baby. As part of Nigerian (Yoruba) culture, the wife had gone earlier to look after the baby and its mother. Then, the above statement changed to question was uttered by the husband in their cause of interaction, when his wife was about going on the second trip to perform her role as a grandma. The question said with a rise tune is an indirect speech act that performs the task of a request. It can be interpreted pragmatically as: As your husband, I also need care.

Pragmatic Import of Surprise

- (5) Bread?↑
The above is from *My Mother-In-Law Part 2*. It was a wife's response to her husband on a telephone conversation. The wife who was not around called to know if the husband has eaten, the husband responded with "I have taken the juice and I'm eating bread right now". She then replied with *Bread?* The word said in a rise tune suggests surprise. For her saying that, there is background share knowledge between them. He was not expected to be eating bread at that moment; there could be provision of foods in the freezer that he was expected to just warm or microwave. The husband understands the pragmeme, he knows that he was not expected to do that, then, he gave reason for his

action: “well, I’m sorry, the food got burnt”. This leads to the next practs.

(6) Burnt? Again?

The husband’s reason for eating bread brought another act. With the word “Again”, one can infer that that was not the first time the husband will burn food. She was surprised to hear that. There is observable evidence of local understanding in practs (8) and (9), because, the husband’s response after “Bread?” (giving reason) and apology after “Burnt? Again?” validate this.

(7) By this hour of the day?

The extracts above are between father and daughter from *House on Fire*. In their interaction, the girl informs her father that her elder brother is on his way home from campus. The father’s response to the information is pract (10). Such a statement said with a fall tune shows that he was surprised. There is inference from the statement that it was late in the night, Bayo (the boy) was not expected to be moving around or traveling at that hour of the day. The girl declared her elder brother’s intention of coming for a party to their father. This led to pract (11) above.

(8) Night party? Where, when, and with who?

The children are not expected to have been doing such. A child who supposed to be in school is not expected to come home for a night party even without the knowledge of their parents. There is inference that the parents are not expected to be at home for that weekend, that was why they were not informed and also, that may not be their first time of doing such. The girl’s response brings surprise to the father and he doubts the fact that his children could do such.

(9) Kunle, what is the meaning of all these?

Pract (9) is the continuation of the practs (7) and (8) above. The conversation is between the husband and wife (Bayo’s parents) this time around. The wife entered from a night party (in reference to (8) that the children did not expect to meet the parents at home), met her children and their friends partying, she went into the room to meet her husband, then the practs above. The question suggests



surprise. She does not expect to see the children partying. This indicates that that was the first time she sees them doing such even right in their living room. Since the husband was at home, the question is directed to him. The husband's response (Is anything wrong with that?) is a metaphor to say that they took after her since she also has just arrived from night party. A polar question is said in a rise tune but it is said here in a fall tune, meaning nothing is wrong with what the children are doing.

Pragmatic Import of Call to Order and Order

- (10) Are you brought here to work or to preach for us?

The question is from *House on Fire*. It is a statement directed to a house maid by a legitimate daughter of a family. The practs came up when the maid was warning the girl of her wayward lifestyle. The girl in question here is the younger sister of Bayo in pract (10) and (11). The above question has been examined in Pract (3) as a pragmeme of warning, and here as a pragmeme of call to order. She was reminded of the fact that she is a maid and she must not cross her boundary to becoming their pastor or counselor. It is a way of telling her to mind and face her duty.

- (11) Eeee! What are you trying to do?

This has been also examined under the pragmatic import of warning as pract (1). It performs the task of call to order here. The man being a person of low status in the community is not expected to have or share things in common with a person of high status. He was therefore called to order by restraining him from boarding the car. He understood the pragmeme of, he then stepped back.

The Pragmatic Import of anger/ annoyance

- (12) Bread?

- (13) Burnt? Again?

These have been explained under the import of surprise as practs (5) and (6). The wife's responses, 'Bread? Burnt? Again?' with the rise tune suggest that she was annoyed for hearing that her husband was eating read after she had labored to cook for him and

plus the fact that the food got burnt. The use of again indicates that it was not his first time of burning food in the cause of warming it. The husband understood the metaphor and quickly responded with explanation of the reason for eating bread and then apologized for his act of burning food again.

(14) What kind of a father are you?

The statement was directed to man (husband) by his wife in *House on Fire*. When she came in from a night party, met her children and friends partying and their father inside doing nothing about it, she out of anger insulted her husband of irresponsibility. The husband's response (What do you want me to do? Take cane and beat them?) shows that he understood the accusation leveled against him.

Pragmatic Import of Insult and Abuse

(15) Hum hum?

(16) Does this expensive car look faulty to you?

These extracts here are taken from conversation between a young lady and a young man from a typical Igbo village setting in *The Billionaire's Daughter and the Poor Village Boy*. The man pushing his mechanically faulty motorcycle home saw the lady standing beside a car in a nearby bush, and then greeted her "good morning" and further asked if her car had developed a mechanical fault. The lady's response to his greeting is pract (15) while pract (16) is the answer to his enquiry.

In an Igbo community and Nigeria at large, it is an insult to respond with pract (15) to a greeting (good morning). One is expected to courteously react to such compliment, but when reaction like the pract above is gotten, it means the person's greeting and his presence are not recognised. This could be, may be, when there is misunderstanding between the two or because of indifference. It could be pragmatically interpreted as why are you greeting me? I do not need your greetings. Or what do you want? Any problem? Who are you?

The young man did not pay attention to the lady's response but trying to be of help to her by asking if the car has fault. The response "Does this expensive car look faulty to you?" said in a rise tune is an insult. The response expected should be either yes or no, followed by appreciation and not pract (16). In a situation when pract (16) is the response, then it is an insult. It could be interpreted as; if you are in your right senses, you should know that this kind of expensive car cannot have fault. The use of the word 'expensive' is deliberate. That is to point to the boy that he is poor and that she does not need his assistance.

(17) What kind of a father are you?

This has been discussed in pract (14) as the pragmatic import of anger and annoyance. It is not a question but an insult borne out of emotional expression of anger and disappointment. It suggests that he is an irresponsible and careless father. Such weighty words are not expected from a wife to her husband. Due respect is requested of a wife for her husband in a Yoruba community. In fact, it is believed that when an elder or husband is talking, a younger person or wife is neither expected to look at the person straight in the eyes nor reply, it is an insult to do such. "I should take a cane and begin to flog them?" was the husband's response to the insult. It shows that he understood the intent of the speaker and disagreed with the fact that he is irresponsible and careless.

(18) Are you in your right senses? Eehn?

This is another pragmatic of question examined from *House on Fire*. Just like in pract (17), the above is from the same woman to her husband as the discussion continues. The statement shows the import of abuse. This means that the man is senseless, or not in his right senses. In English, this looks like a tag question (You are not in your right senses, are you?) but does not properly tagged here.

Summary of findings

The study focus is on tonality and the pragmatics of questions in Nigerian middle-class homes. Many scholars have worked on pragmatics of questions

and prosody separately, but this study marries the two. The English intonation, types and functions had been briefly examined. This paper also examined pragmatics, the relationship between tonality and pragmatics and pragmeme (pragmatic act theory). It was discovered that intonation contrasts play a critical role in conveying pragmatic meaning. Nigerians use intonation in ways different from the native speakers to convey meanings in relation to context or situations. The use of questions in Nigerian homes may mean a request or plea, warning, command and call to order, surprise, an insult, an abuse, anger and annoyance.

Conclusion

This paper investigates the pragmatic functions of intonation patterns in questioning as used in Nigerian English speaking homes. It is discovered that Pragmatics, through the medium of the pragmeme, maps situations onto individual human activities. Questions could be in epistemic and discourse relations. Questions have been viewed in discourse relation and we conclude that questions oscillate between the force of requests and that of orders (Bartels 1997), and that realizations of prosodic information vary across speakers and contexts. This research agrees with Cruttenden (1997) that intonation may convey several types of meaning. It may indicate a discursal meaning like inviting a listener to make a contribution to the conversation, or an attitudinal meaning like being condescending. Approaches to spoken discourse analysis have demonstrated that prosodic features in English such as intonation, stress and pausing play a key role in determining how participants manage interaction. This paper concludes that the speakers' intonation tunes reveal their communicative intentions. Emotions and their degrees of intensity have effect on utterances and their meaning. Intonation assists grammar in some instances but it is not ultimately grammatical. Therefore, prosody encodes both linguistic and paralinguistic meaning.

Suggestion for Further Studies

There is a need to replicate this research for a larger population from other zones of the nation. Through such, we will be able to ascertain the generalization of the findings here. The study could be replicated using families from core north,

south-south, south-west, middle belt etc. More variables like in-laws, siblings, and the likes could be brought into the study.

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