Melodic features of emphatic apology speech formulae in business communication

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Abstract. The article presents the main results of the research on the melodic features of apology speech formulae realization in the modern English language. Special attention is paid to the study and discussion of melodic features of emphatic apology speech formulae realization in business communication. Emphatic speech acts are used when the speaker realizes the seriousness of his fault, takes responsibility for the damage and demonstrates the emotional attitude to the situation. Speech acts of regret, speech acts of sympathy and speech acts of condolence are classified as emphatic speech acts. The materials of the study are formulae with the semantics of emphatic apology in modern English. The study material was based on the following films: “As good as it gets”, “The Devil wears Prada” and “Sweet November”. The steps and methodology of an integrated perceptual and acoustic experiment are described. In the audience analysis the increase / decrease of rate of pronouncing formulae with the semantics of apology are examined. The quantitative data for each type of emphatic apology are analyzed, the general and specific terminal tones typical of emphatic apology are determined, and the linguistic interpretation of the obtained results is represented.

1. Introduction
Communication is an essential element in the functioning of any organization. Communication flows connect the organization as a system into a single whole, help to solve production and social problems. The implementation of communicative competence is associated with the parameters of typical communicative situations that structure any sphere of communication: everyday, educational, industrial, etc [1].

Negotiating partners will be able to come to an agreement if they strive to establish a favourable psychological and communicative microclimate of the dialogue and maintain a friendly tone of conversation. Establishing and maintaining business contacts at a high level of culture, adhering to the rules of business etiquette improves the efficiency of solving substantive tasks. Establishing and maintaining business contacts includes an appeal, greeting, acquaintance, order, offer, request, gratitude, praise, compliment, apology, farewell and so on [2].

Below we will consider situations related to the functioning of the etiquette-speech formulae in the communication.

Speech etiquette is an important element of culture, the product of human cultural activity and an instrument of such activity. English speech etiquette is a set of special words and expressions that give a polite form of English speech, as well as the rules according to which these words and expressions are used in practice in various situations of communication. One of the most important and integral components of speech etiquette of any language is an apology [3, 4].

An apology is a culturally and socially determined communicative phenomenon that has significant differences in different sociocultural contexts, both in terms of the conditions for its implementation and in terms of its language implementation strategies [5].

Speech formulae of apology are widely used in business communication in many sociocultural communities, being a means of realizing an extremely important social function that ensures the harmony of interpersonal relations support between the participants of communicative interaction [6].
Despite the considerable amount of works devoted to the study of an apology, a number of problems related to the peculiarities of the apology formulae functioning in speech and especially in business communication, including the intonational features of this speech act, have not been studied yet. Relevance of such analysis determines the importance and urgency of the proposed work.

The study object of this research is English language formulae with the semantics of an apology.

The study subject is the melodic features of formulae with the semantics of apology in modern English and especially in business communication.

The study material was based on the following films: “As good as it gets”, “The Devil wears Prada” and “Sweet November”.

Depending on the conditions of the communication situation, the speech act "apology" is realized in speech in one of two variants: emphatic apology and phatic apology [7].

In this article we will dwell in more detail on the peculiarities of the emphatic apology implementation in the English language.

Emphatic speech acts are used when the speaker realizes the seriousness of his fault, takes responsibility for the damage, demonstrates the emotional attitude to the situation, which manifests itself in special forms of verbal behavior associated with the expression of regret, the desire to make amends for the addressee, sympathy, the desire to share someone’s pain.

Speech acts of regret, speech acts of sympathy and speech acts of condolence are classified as emphatic speech acts.

2. Procedure of phonetic analysis

2.1. Audience analysis

The audience analysis of the experimental material was focused on identifying the melodic peculiarities of emphatic apology in the English language.

The main goal of the considered audience analysis is to determine the type of nuclear tone (NT), its level and range characteristics using the following perceptually discrete gradation of the tonal characteristic:

- Falling NT (Low Fall, Mid Fall, High Fall): … \ ... \ ... \ ... ;  ...
- Rising NT (Low Rise, Mid Rise, High Rise): … / ... / ... / ... ; ...
- Mid-Level NT: … – ... ;
- Fall-Rise NT: … \ / ... ;
- Rise-Fall NT: … ^ ... ;

3. Perceptual-acoustic features of emphatic apology

The purpose of this stage of the research was to identify the melodic features of emphatic apology. In total 90 examples of emphatic apology were analyzed. Among them: 76% - speech acts of regret; 20% - speech acts of sympathy and 4% - speech acts of condolence.

3.1. The results of the audience analysis. Melodic features of emphatic apology.

3.1.1. Speech acts of regret. Melodic features of this type of apology were revealed on the basis of the performed analysis. In most cases, the Speaker uses High Fall (47%) or Low Fall (32%). Mid Fall is used less frequently (21%). Using one of the falling tones, the Speaker regrets the circumstances, apologizes for being late or for the unperformed work:

- I don't understand why it's so difficult to confirm an appointment.

- I know. I'm so sorry, Miranda. I actually did confirm last night.
Details of your incompetence do not interest me. (The Devil wears Prada)

Miranda complained about her senior assistant Emily because she did not confirm the appointment. Emily, in turn, tries to excuse herself and claims that she approved it last night. Emily uses Low Fall when she pronounced an excuse remark, as this tone is often used to express sincere regret and apology.

Let us give an example of the use of High Fall in Speech acts of regret:

No I can't, I'm \sorry but I have to go

Here is an intonogram of apology from this sentence (figure 3).

In this example, Andy has to refuse the offer of her friend Christian to visit a party where he can introduce Andy to a man who can offer her a very good job that interests her. But Andy can not accept this offer, as Christian is actively caring for her, knowing that she is in a relationship. When expressing rejection, Andy uses High Fall tone, as it conveys certain emotions, such as completeness, finality, confidence. Lowering the tone sounds distinctly, confidently and convincingly.

In some cases (21%) the speaker uses a High Fall tone, (more often it is going on in an informal setting) this can be seen in the following examples:

Slow down. We need to talk.
-Talk about what?
-Us.
-Us. Right. Hey, isn't there some kind a limit on 'us' talks?
-You forgot about my parents, didn't you?
- I can't make it. -I'm \sorry.
-Nelson, this is their third trip to the city. This is important to me.
- And this account is very important to me. (Sweet November)

The conversation takes place between the couple-Nelson and Angelica. Nelson hurries to work and he is very concerned about the new advertising project of the company he works for but Angelica believes that they need to have it out with each other. Her parents have to come to the city where Angelica lives with Nelson, but Nelson is completely absorbed in work, he forgot about arrival of her parents. He does not want to sort things out, because at the moment he is only concerned about the
work. He apologizes for this, but apologizes are High Fall tone, because he is completely indifferent to the situation.

3.2. Speech act of sympathy
To implement this Speech act, Low Fall tone (60%), High Fall tone (20%) and Mid Fall tone (20%) are used. A specialized tone of sympathy expression is Low Fall tone, which is observed in the following examples:

1. - I’m so sorry Miranda. (The Devil wears Prada)
2. - I heard about this terrible event. I’m sorry. (The Devil wears Prada)
3. - Oh, I’m so sorry, dear. I can’t believe in it! (The Devil wears Prada)

Using this tone, the speaker tries to express sincere and deep regret about what happened. For example, Andy regrets Miranda’s divorce, dismissal of her creative Director Nigel and her friend’s problems. This tone is used to express the speaker's involvement in the problems of the interlocutor and to express sympathy.

However, sometimes the speaker uses High Fall tone:
- I’m sorry about your job. (The Devil wears Prada)

Andy apologizes in Mid Fall tone, as her interlocutor is not her close friend and the purpose of this apology is to pay attention to what happened.

In addition, when expressing sympathy, there is the use of the High Fall tone by the speaker:
- It's non-Hodkin’s lymphoma. It’s a type of cancer. You shouldn’t find out like this. I’m sorry, Nelson. She’s gonna be asleep for hours. You want to go for a walk, have a chat or something?
- Yeah.
- Yeah, ok. (Sweet November)

Sarah had a sudden attack, she was taken to the hospital. Nelson is desperate, he doesn't know what's going on. Sarah's best friend explains that she is sick: Sarah has cancer. He expresses sympathy to Nelson through the use of High Fall tone, as it is very emphatic and expresses the sincere involvement of the speaker in the problems of his partner [8].

3.2.1. Speech act of condolences
To express condolences, the speaker uses High Fall tone in all analyzed examples, as through this tone the speaker demonstrates sincere empathy and involvement in the problems of the communication partner [9].
- Hey, by the way, when do I get to meet your parents?
- My parents are dead.
- I’m sorry. (Sweet November)

Sarah and Nelson have saddled up with and entered into relationship. Sarah wonders when she will meet with the parents of Nelson. Nelson replies that his parents are died. Sara apologizes in High Fall tone, as she genuinely sympathizes with Nelson, and this tone is often used to express the speaker’s involvement in the problems of communication partner.[10].

Thus, in the course of the analysis of various types of emphatic apology, the following tonal features were revealed: in most cases, the construction containing an apology is pronounced in High
Fall tone (44%), for example, when the Speaker seeks to provide moral support to the Addressee in a difficult situation, when he expresses his sadness and regret and demonstrates involvement in the conversation.

There are cases where we can see the use of the Mid Fall (20%) and Low Fall (36%) tone. It happens when the speaker is in a frustrated state, when he sets a goal his speech to be restrained and calm. For clarity, we present the results of the study of melodic features of the emphatic apology in the diagram:

**Figure 2.** Diagram melodic features of emphatic apology

Without special communication skills and abilities, even a great specialist in his field will not be able to support a business conversation, hold a business meeting, take part in the discussion, and defend his point of view. It means that businessman except his professional competencies must master the communicative competence, i.e. knowledge of the psychological, intonational, substantive (content) and language-specific components needed for the understanding negotiating partner.

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