

Original Paper

Intonational Encoding of Given and New Information in the Warri Sub-variety of Nigerian Pidgin English

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Abstract

The concept of given and new information is innate to discourse intonation. The concept expounds on the idea that intonation is used to regulate conversational behaviour of interlocutors by ensuring that a listener pays attention to those important aspects of the message being passed across by a speaker. Thus, the listener's interpretation of the encoded message is pivoted on the F_0 direction whose trajectory may be falling or rising in tune. The rising tune signals given or shared information while the falling tune is reserved for what constitutes a new information between the participants. Dwelling on Brazil's (1997) and Chun's (2002) Discourse Intonation (DI) model and using Praat for the acoustic analysis in this study, we extract data from the natural speech of 10 speakers of Warri sub-variety of Nigerian Pidgin English (NPE) to investigate and describe the patterns of intonation used in the variety to convey given and new information in selected "wh-" and "yes/no" interrogatives. Findings reveal a preponderance preference for Brazil's proclaiming tone for the grammatical categories investigated.

Keywords

Given and New information, Discourse Intonation, Nigerian Pidgin English, Warri-Pidgin, F_0 direction, interlocutors, acoustically

1. Introduction

Language is a major means of communication by human beings. To some people, the existence of language is mainly for communication based on mutual understanding. However, language serves many other functions in human lives. Aside from giving and getting information, language allows human beings to inform each other, get things done and engage in actions and activities. For instance, prayers to God, committee meetings, organized interactions between interlocutors and the promises people make are done through the use of language (Paul Gee, 2011). People in a given society are defined by their

language, reflecting their shared identity, beliefs, culture and ideology. The difference in all these leads to language variation. However, if there is need for communication among these different groups of people with language diversity, then communication struggle for mutual understanding will open way for language contact which may finally result in the establishment of a new language. An instance of language contact product is the existence of Pidgin English in Nigeria. The present study seeks to investigate how given and new information are intonationally encoded in the Warri Sub-variety of Nigerian Pidgin English, a language that is gradually and rapidly gaining autonomy as a lingua-franca in the region.

1.1 Literature Review

1.1.1 Language Contact: The Birth and the Nature of Nigerian Pidgin English

Nigerian Pidgin English (henceforth NPE), also known as “Naija” (Esizimotor, 2002, 2010; Faraclas, 2021), developed as a contact language through pidginization to creolisation (Akande, 2021; Faraclas, 2021). Its existence is ascribed to the interaction between numerous polyglot communities in Nigeria, especially in the Niger Delta region, who seek to communicate with the early Arabians, Portuguese, Dutch, French and the English traders (Esizimotor, 2010; Faraclas, 2021). It is an indo-exogenous language serving as a bridge between English (an exogenous language) and the numerous indigenous languages in Nigeria such as Igbo, Yoruba and Hausa. Akande (2021) succinctly captures NPE as the language that enabled “foreigners who could not speak any of the indigenous languages to communicate with the Niger delta natives who did not understand the language(s) of their European traders” (p. 1).

Nigerian Pidgin English (NPE) derives its vocabulary mainly from English and Portuguese as the superstrate languages, while the structure and functions are hinged on the substrate (indigenous) languages’ pattern (Adegbija, 2001; Egbokhare, 2001). NPE has also been reported to be the most widely spoken language in Nigeria. Being a language, whose usage is not dependent on any form of academic expertise or formal education (Akande, 2021) for instance, over half of the nation’s 140 million citizens speak the language fluently. To buttress this submission, Ihemere (2006) posits that there are over five million native speakers of the language, and more than seventy-five million second language users, who use it in different types of discourse (Akande, 2008, 2010; Faraclas, 2004; Igboanusi, 2008). Akande (2010, 2016, 2021) reports, in addition, that NPE has become creolized in some parts of Nigeria where users largely adopt it for communication in their daily activities. Further, Agheyisi (1984), Akande (2008) and Esizimotor (2010) are of the view that NPE is not only used in informal settings, but also in offices and other formal settings. They opine, for instance, that the language is spoken by tertiary institution graduates, professors, lawyers, journalists and government officials. This implies that the assertion that NPE is the code of the non-literate people does not seem to have authenticity as there are a lot of educated speakers in Nigeria who use both Standard English and NPE competently (Akande, 2008; 2010). That is, they are able to keep both apart and in place. In this present paper, the researchers are interested in examining the discursal deployment of intonation in selected recorded audio conversations of speakers of the Warri sub-variety of Nigerian Pidgin English, with a view to establishing the intonation patterns or

tunes employed by users for conveying both given and new information in selected “wh-” and “Yes/No” interrogatives.

1.1.2 Intonation as an Aspect of Language

Intonation is an important phenomenon in language especially for the strong effects it has on communication. Following Pike (1945), Akinjobi and Oladipupo (2010) opine that intonation is not what is said but how it is said. Pike (1972) believes that intonation directly reveals the speaker’s attitude towards the content of what is being said. Intonation modifies the lexical meanings of a sentence by adding the speaker’s attitude to the content of the sentence. For instance, if someone says something discourteous but smiles in the face and voice, the utterance to the listener, may be a great admiring comment. However, when something courteous is said with an intonation of disdain, the consequence will be an insult (Pike, n.d.). If a speaker’s tone of voice is incongruous with his words, it is assumed that the intonation with which the words are produced reflects their original linguistic intention. Corroborating this assertion, Bolinger (1989) describes intonation as the symptom of how human beings feel about what they say and how they feel when they say it. For the present researchers, intonation also includes the hearer’s feeling and reaction to what they hear. Wennerstrom (2001) maintains that intonation is the melody created by the voice in the process of speaking, which gives the speaker the opportunity to choose the pitch in accordance with what is needed to express his or her utterances. Jowitt (2000) regards intonation as a successive variation of pitch in connected utterances. However, for Roach (2009), there is no completely satisfactory definition for intonation save that its most important feature is the voice pitch. Roach believes that the voice pitch is important because human beings do not speak with fixed and unchanging pitch except in some unusual circumstances. This means that whenever human beings speak, the pitch of the voice changes constantly over the stretch of utterance made, whether short or long.

Therefore, intonation as a prosodic feature is an integral part of every human language that cannot be separated from human discursive events. Although intonation performs several functions such as grammatical, attitudinal and discoursal, this present study is interested in the discoursal function of intonation (i.e., discourse intonation) as expressed by selected speakers. It is that aspect of intonation that attempts to explain the communicative value of intonation in naturally-occurring speeches. In other words, it focuses on how intonation patterns perform communicative functions in natural conversations to show whether an utterance is being introduced newly or is already known based on the knowledge shared between the interlocutors within the context of their conversation. It hinges further on the understanding that the context of interaction cannot be ignored in the study of moment-by-moment naturally-occurring speeches such as analysed in this study.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

Studies have been carried out over the years on the description of NPE from different stimulating perspectives. Examples include: Mafeni (1971), Agheyisi (1971, 1984), Elugbe & Omamor (1991), Elugbe (2004), Egbokhare (2001), Faraclas (1996, 2004), Deuber (2005), Ihemere (2006), Akande

(2008), Akande & Salami (2010), Mansah (2011, 2012), Ofule (2012), Osinsanwo (2012), Osoba (2000, 2014), Aziza (2015), Babalola (2018), among others. These scholars have focused largely on the historical, structural, sociolinguistic evidence and attitude towards NPE, and also the morphological, syntactic, phonological and grammatical patterns to reveal its autonomy as a language. To the best of our knowledge, however, studies carried out on the discursual function of intonation patterns in Nigerian Pidgin English (NPE) variety spoken in Warri, the Niger Delta region of Nigeria, are unknown. The variety is also known as Waffi (Babalola, 2018). Investigating the deployment of intonation patterns for given and new information in this variety of Nigerian Pidgin English will not only reveal how intonation performs communicative function to expound meaning in NPE, but also provide a robust description of the tunes used by speakers for prosodic encoding of given and new information.

2. Methodology

2.1 The Model

The model adopted in this study is Brazil's (1997) Discourse Intonation (DI). It is a model used for analysing naturally occurring speech. According to Brazil (1997), DI is a context-specific model, which sees intonation as performing communicative function. Context specificity refers to the communicative situation where the speaker creates meaning through different intonation choices deployed within the situation of the discourse. This theory explicates how intonation patterns reflect the point of convergence and divergence between interlocutors. The point of convergence is the continuous negotiation towards a state of mutual understanding existing between the speakers in any naturally occurring discourse. It gives room for effective communication between the interlocutors. The point of convergence is also referred to as the common ground or shared knowledge between interlocutors (e.g., Chun, 2002; Pickering, 2009) while the point of divergence is when the interlocutors do not share previous knowledge about the message conveyed. For the interpretation of any choice of intonation system, it is stated that the context where the choice occurs is significant. Thus, speakers' choice of intonation patterns determines the state of divergence and convergence between the interlocutors. Brazil refers to these points of divergence and convergence as the "context of interaction."

Similarly, Chun (2002) suggests for DI that meaning must be observed and inferred from the context in which the discourse occurs because intonation signals specific functions within the discourse. It regulates the speaker's and hearer's cooperation in order to avoid conflict and if there is any, it will be resolved when necessary (Couper-Kuhlen & Steling, 1996).

DI, also reported to have been "... developed as a theory of intonation using British English" (Chun 2002, p.32), is concerned with the organisation of information in an utterance by presenting pieces of information conveyed to be given or new. It also signals intonation choices made by the speakers based on insight of the context of interaction between them. The context of interaction is the 'conversational setting' whose major feature is to signal the level of understanding that exists between the interlocutors. In other words, the model is based on the assumption that intonation depends on the context of discourse

for meaning.

According to Brazil (1997), there are four basic components of the DI. These components operate connectively within the tone-unit. The components are: **prominence**, **tone**, **key** and **termination**. Prominence is the domain for all other components. **Tone**, which is the focus of this study, is the pitch movement within the tone-unit. According to Brazil, there are five tone choices. These are fall, rise, rise-fall, fall-rise and level. These four tone choices are categorized into two major groups which are proclaiming and referring tones. Fall and rise-fall signal proclaiming tone while rise and fall-rise signal referring tone. On the one hand, and as mentioned earlier, the use of referring tone introduces the information passed across within the tone-unit that is already known or shared by the interlocutors. That is considered as the given information within the unit. On the other hand, the proclaiming tone refers to that information passed across within the tone unit that is considered new to the hearer.

2.2 Participants in the Study

Ten purposively selected speakers of the Warri sub-variety of Nigerian Pidgin English (NPE), who were living in Warri as at the time of data collection, participated in this study. They were five males and five females. The males are labelled M1, M2, M3, M4 and M5 while the females are labelled F1, F2, F3, F4 and F5. For ease of recognition in later analysis, however, their appellations were modified to reflect the category of utterance produced by each speaker, such that M1 becomes M1WH or M1PL when he produces a “Wh-interrogative” or a Polar/Yes-No-Interrogative tone unit, respectively. By the same token, F3 becomes F3WH or F3PL when she produces a “Wh-interrogative” or a Polar-Interrogative tone unit, respectively (See Appendix 1). The participants were purposively selected from among the students, broadcasters and entrepreneurs who participated in the data collection exercise. They were selected based on their age, gender, profession and educational background.

2.3 Data: Collection and Analysis Procedure

To generate data for this study, two research instruments were used: a voice recorder used to record the participants’ spontaneous conversations, and a questionnaire. Following Brazil’s model adopted in the study, i.e., a model that is based on natural speech, one of the two researchers in this study travelled from Ile-Ife in Osun State of Nigeria to Warri in the Niger Delta Region of the nation, to record natural, spontaneous speech from native speakers of the Warri NPE, using a voice recorder. The conversations of the selected speakers with whom she had established rapport were recorded, using a structured conversation guide (incorporated in the questionnaire). She stayed some two to three weeks in Warri to familiarize herself with the people before data collection. The intonation tunes and the frequency of their occurrence as used by the study participants were identified and manually extracted. Some of the extracts were selected from the recorded conversations of ten of the speakers. From these extracts, twenty tone units which constitute the data for this study were selected. The twenty tone units were categorized into ten ‘Wh’ interrogative tone units (-WH) and ten Yes/No (-PL) interrogative tone units. Two tone-units were chosen from each participant’s renditions. The tone units are labelled after the ten participants (F1 to F5 and M1 to M5) as presented in Appendix 1. The speakers’ conversations were recorded with an

audio voice recorder in WAV form, and then converted to AIFF sound file for later acoustic analysis, using PRAAT. The background noise was reduced to an extent using Audacity, a sound editor software which allows users to edit, process and cut utterances recorded from longer audio files into smaller chunks.

Furthermore, a questionnaire was used to obtain the background information of the respondents who qualified to constitute participants for the study. The questionnaire was divided into three sections. The first section was designed to elicit the demographic information of the respondents. The second section entailed the participants' language proficiency in NPE while the third section centred on a structured conversation guide that served as the prompt for the recorded conversation.

For the purpose of data analysis and in accordance with the framework for this study as proposed by Brazil (1997), the punctuation marks signalling pause or stop such as comma, semi-colon, colon, full-stop or question mark in the utterances (Roach, 2009) were replaced with tone unit markers. The slanting line (/) was used to indicate tone-unit boundary (Roach, 2009) while double slashes (//) were used to indicate tone-unit boundary at the sentence final and non-sentence final positions (Brazil, 1997). Moreover, arrows are used to indicate the intonational patterns used by the participants. As stated in Brazil (1997), the falling tune is indicated by a falling arrow (↘). The rising tune is signalled using rising arrow (↗) while the horizontal arrow (→) signals level tune. Brazil (1997) further represents the rising tune with “r” and falling tune with “p”. In this study, the pitch pattern is identified by the direction of the pitch used in the utterance as generated in PRAAT. For instance, “Proclaiming tone” (after Brazil’s DI theory) is used if the pitch falls and “Referring tone” is used if the pitch rises. The tone-units analysed in the work are underlined in Appendix 1.

3. Data Analysis, Findings and Discussion

3.1 Intonational Choices on Wh Interrogative Tone Units

Ten “Wh”-interrogative tone-units were selected from the recorded conversations of the native speakers of the Warri sub-variety of Nigerian Pidgin English. All the ten “Wh”-interrogative tone units were said by the participants with proclaiming tone. Contextually, the speakers introduced and requested new information from their listeners. The selected participants seem to conform to DI in their choice of tone on “Wh”-interrogative tone units. In conformity with the DI model, therefore, 100% proclaiming tone was used on all the utterances produced by participants F1, F2, F3, F4, F5, M1, M2, M3, M4, and M5, requesting for new information. None of the speakers used referring tone. Invariably, the participants adhered to the use of proclaiming tone on these ten “wh”-interrogative tones-units to provide new information in relation to what DI specifies. Figures 1 to 8 are instances of the participants' rendition of the “Wh” -interrogative tone units.

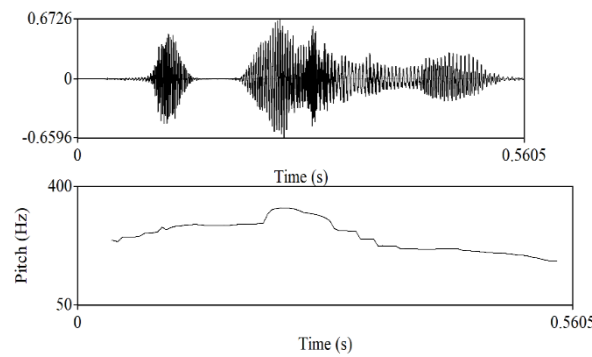


Figure 1. F1WH; //p wetin he mean//

Speaker F1 uses proclaiming tone to indicate her interest in the discussion and to make a clarification on the major point being discussed among the interlocutors. Since she appears ignorant of what is being discussed, she chooses a proclaiming tone for her “wh”-interrogative tone-unit in requesting for information which is new to her and for which she demands more explanation. Thus, her choice of proclaiming tone is in conformity with DI as well as to the grammatical rule of intonation on “wh”-questions (cf. Fajobi, 2008).

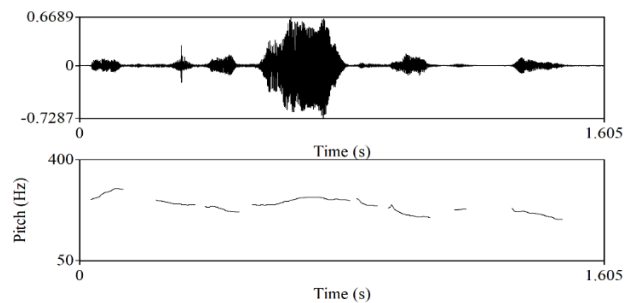


Figure 2. F2WH; //p which women/ p married women abi girls//

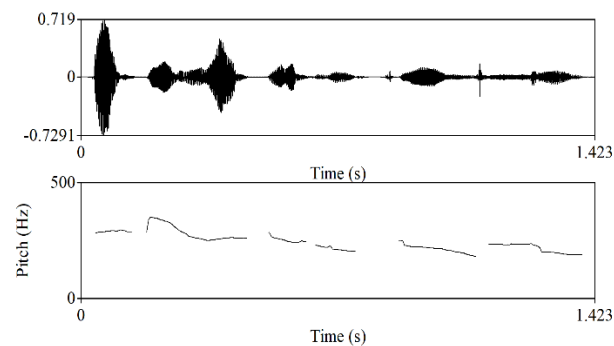


Figure 3. F3WH; //p wetin yu wɔn tek mentain yɔsef//

The tone units produced by participants F2WH and F3WH are said with proclaiming tone. The proclaiming tone is used here to signal that the speakers seek to understand what other interlocutors were saying and to get more clarification on the issue being discussed. At this juncture, speaker F2WH seems to be lost and needed to get the intended message of other interlocutors in order to also participate in the discussion.

In Figure 3, participant F3WH seems to be asking questions about the wellbeing of ladies generally especially when they have affairs with men. Their discussion centred on men refusing to take care of their ladies while dating them. In the course of their discussion, men to them, only admire ladies; they are neither ready to take care of them nor give them money. For participant F3WH, if ladies are not being given money to take care of themselves, how will men admire them? Men admire them all because they are pretty and the beautification will continue if they are being given money to maintain themselves. This tone-unit is in form of rhetorical question because it is not really seeking new information from the common ground of the interlocutors; nobody answered the question. It is said with proclaiming tone as a new point to be considered in the discussion; and as it is, the question may or may not be answered. Therefore, the choice of proclaiming tone here is appropriate and in accordance with the DI specification.

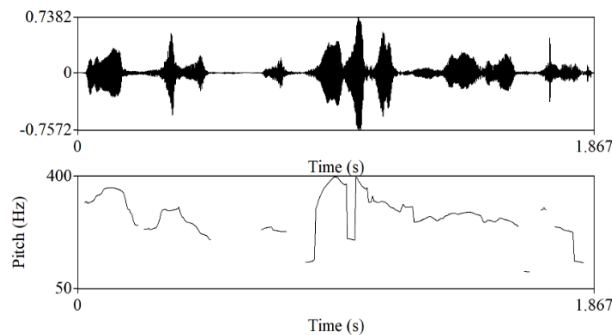


Figure 4. F4WH; //p which voice/p which voice yu wən record//

Speaker F4WH in Figure 4 uses a proclaiming tone on her “wh”-interrogative tone-unit to show her total disagreement with the stance of the other interlocutor. From the spectrogram, it is observed that the speaker’s pitch was high at the beginning of each of the two tone-units. This signals how serious and unready the speaker is for the conversation. The “wh”-interrogative tone-units are not directly requesting any information, but indirectly terminating the conversation, earlier than the other interlocutor wants. In the context of this discussion, the use of proclaiming tone does not therefore mean that the participant is introducing or requesting new information. Rather, it shows her unwillingness and reluctance towards both the conversation and the request of the other interlocutor. With this tone choice, it is clear that she is not ready to grant any permission. The speaker (i.e., F4WH) conformed to the grammar-based rule of intonation with the use of proclaiming tone on the two “wh”- interrogative tone-units rendered.

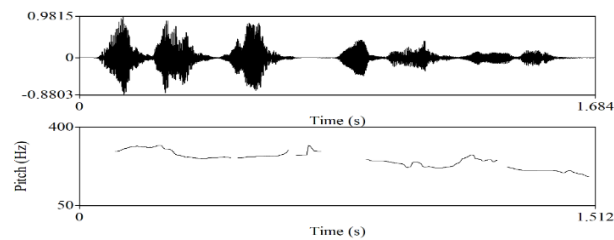


Figure 5. F5WH; //p how body/p how today /p how the weather//

In Figure 5, there are three tone-units said with proclaiming tone by speaker F5WH. The speaker uses that in requesting for the wellbeing and the readiness of the other interlocutor and to know if he is willing to get involved in the discussion. The use of proclaiming tone on these tone-units signals the commencement of a new conversation. The speaker also uses that tune to get the attention of the listener ready for conversation. The use of proclaiming tone in these tone-units is appropriate and in conformity with the DI theory/model; it is seeking new information about the other interlocutor's wellbeing in order to know if the speaker is actually willing to converse or not. The response to these questions will signal the listener's readiness for it or otherwise.

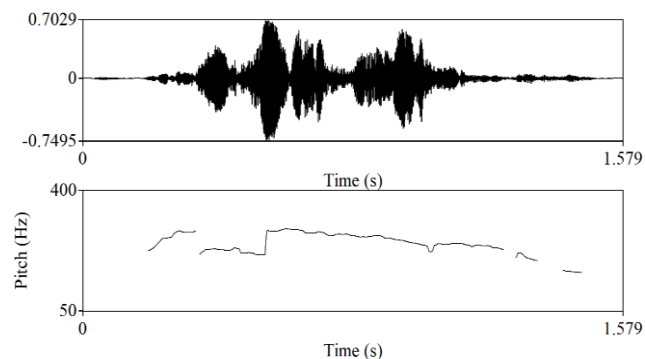


Figure 6. M2WH; //p watin dat one kən dey do now//

Speaker M2WH in Figure 6 sought some information about someone who was not attentive to their conversation. Thus, the use of proclaiming tone on the utterance conforms to DI since the tone unit is newly introduced to the existing context and seeks an answer- a new information.

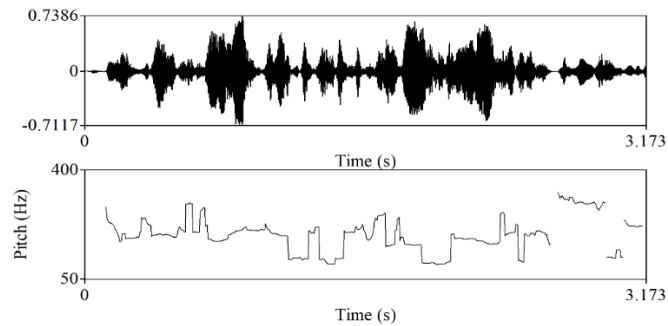


Figure 7. M3WH; //p di most kərɒpt office for Nigeria wetin yu go tək//

Speaker M3WH in Figure 7 genuinely seeks to be informed about the most corrupt office in the country. Before this utterance, there has been an argument between the interlocutors on the system of the government operating in their country. Furthering the argument, participant M3WH seeks to know which of the government offices operating in their country is most corrupt. In response to M3WH, participant M4WH (*//p* which arm of government dey kərɒpt pass//), whose tune also falls, adds another question thereby deviating from the initial question asked. It is therefore evident from these two tone-units that, in the Nigerian context of interaction, questions can, at times, be used as answers to questions. The two tone-units of M3WH and M4WH are said on proclaiming tone with both participants seeking new information. The use of proclaiming tone in these renditions conforms to DI.

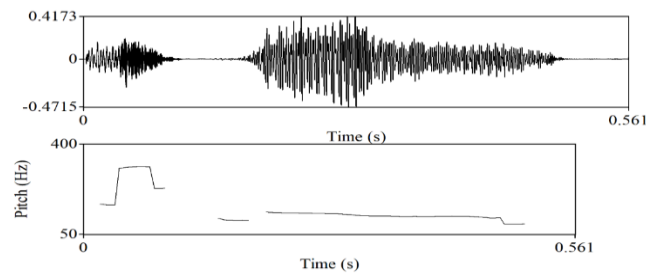


Figure 8. M5WH; //p I dey /p which level//

There are two tone-units in Figure 8 uttered by M5WH. Both are said with proclaiming tone. Participant M5WH genuinely questions the other interlocutor seeking information about her wellbeing. The choice of proclaiming tune by the speaker conforms to DI which signals that the speaker is seeking new information.

3.2 Intonational Choices on Yes/No Interrogative Tone-Units

Another aspect of interrogative tone-unit that constitutes the data analysed in this study is the “yes/no” (PL) interrogative tone-units. According to DI, the referring tone is expected to be used, being the tone that conforms to the grammar-based rule of yes/no intonation. However, findings in this study show that

seven of the ten participants (70%) used proclaiming tone while only three (30%) used referring tone. The three participants who used referring tone are; F3PL, M2PL and M5PL. The remaining seven participants (F1PL, F2PL, F4PL, F5PL, M1PL, M3PL and M4PL) who used the proclaiming tone do not conform to DI because the utterances were supposed to be shared knowledge; they do not introduce new information. On the contrary, the tune used by the participants made the utterances sound as if they are newly introduced to the common ground between the interlocutors.

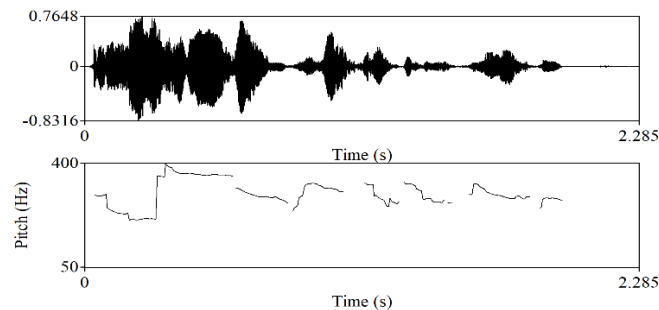


Figure 9. F1PL; //p Yu never hear that Lanji wey dey say dey cure everything//

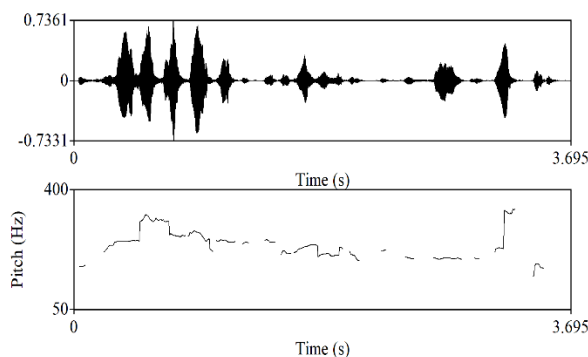


Figure 10. F2PL; //p yu na know say those wey be say dey no dey give mɔ̀ni na dem dey fɔ̀k pas//

Speaker F1PL who produces the rendition in Figure 9 does not conform to DI because the speaker used proclaiming tone instead of referring tone. The use of demonstrative pronoun “that” in the speaker’s utterance signals that the subject matter being discussed between the interlocutors had been mentioned earlier in their previous discussion but contrary to that, the speaker used proclaiming tone on the utterance. Though the pitch is generally high in range, the direction reflects the pitch as falling, nevertheless. Moreover, speaker F2PL in Figure 10 seeks to hear the opinion or response of the listener on the existing issue being discussed which also concerns the listener. Here, proclaiming tone is not appropriate because it is not a new information. Instead, referring tone should have been used. Both participants do not conform to DI in their tone choice.

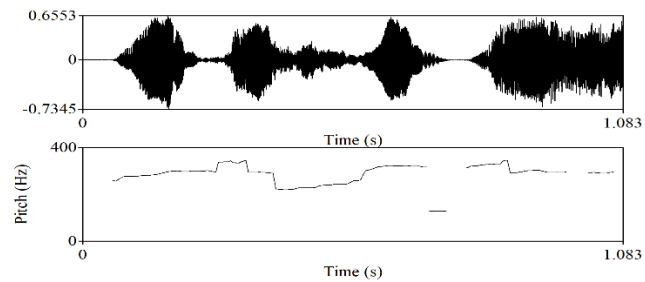


Figure 11. F3PL; //r fəget yu wən die//

The choice of referring tone used by speaker F3PL in Figure 11 is in accordance with what DI specifies. It also conformed to the grammar-based rule of intonation on yes/no interrogatives which states that all yes/no questions are said with rising tune. The speaker does conform to DI because she seeks new information based on the existing discussion from the other interlocutor. What the other interlocutor said led to the questioning which is not meant to solicit response at all from the other interlocutor. Connotatively on one hand, speaker F3PL is requesting new information but the question is rhetorical in nature. It is not meant to be answered. On the other hand, and context wise, the question is newly asked to show the level of reaction put on by the participant towards what the other participant said but the choice of tone used to express the speaker's mind shows that the participant is referring back to the point being discussed (i.e., there is connection between the question being asked and what their discussion was based on).

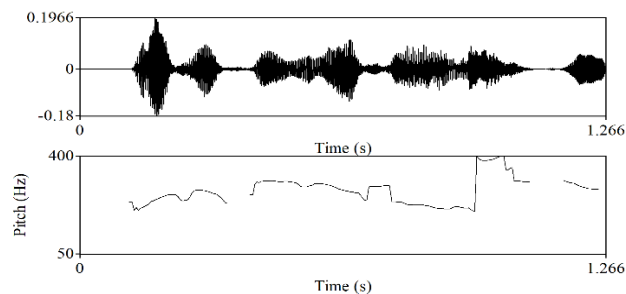


Figure 12. F4PL; //p I go say yes or no//

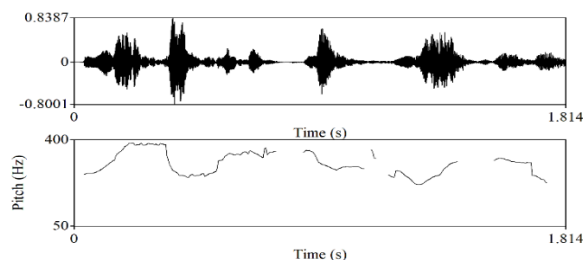


Figure 13. F5PL; //p if yu wən crəss yu no fit crəss through di right channel//

In Figure 12, participant F4PL queries the other interlocutor with the hope of confirming what had been said before. She thus reiterates that in form of questioning, in order to get new information other than what she already heard. Whereas what she already knows or heard constitutes given information in the locution, using proclaiming tone for this yes/no interrogative tone-unit violates the principle of DI; because, as stated already, the information is not new to either of the speakers. Similarly, participant F5PL in Figure 13 used a proclaiming rather than a referring tone on the yes/no interrogative tone-unit which is meant to confirm what had been said earlier based on their shared knowledge. This is therefore not in conformity with DI. The reason for these speakers' inability to maintain the right tune patterns on their renditions may not be unconnected with the fact that the seeming tone sequence in the utterance, as Fajobi (2012) observes in her study of tonal interaction in Yoruba, for instance, may prevent the normal course of the expected English tune patterns. This view is also plausible if we consider the fact that, though the superstrate language is stress-timed, the substrate languages for NPE being tonal and syllable-timed are capable of characteristically blocking the expected pitch trajectory of native English intonation patterns or tunes (cf. Fajobi, 2008; 2013).

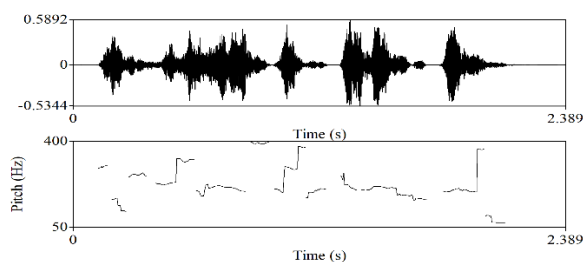


Figure 14. M1PL; //p I hope you na dan hear am say na boko haram we dey kol u na//

Participant M1PL in Figure 14 is a male whose pitch height reaches above 300Hz (about 400Hz) before falling very low on the last syllable <na> in the utterance to reflect its being projected with a proclaiming tone. Interestingly, this height contradicts Kent and Read's (2002) position, which states that a male's pitch height cannot exceed 300Hz, but conforms to Fajobi's (2008) proposition that a male's pitch height could exceed 300Hz. In Figure 14, M1PL seeks to confirm what has been said before to know if the other interlocutor has been informed or not. Because the information is not new, he ought to have used the referring tone instead of the proclaiming he used as depicted in the abrupt pitch fall at the end of the utterance in the figure. Thus, the participant failed to conform to DI.

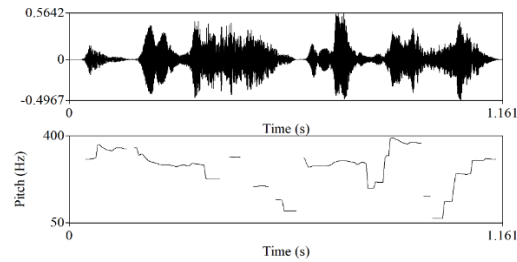


Figure 15. M2PL; //r dis one na recordeerrr//

Participant M2PL in Figure 15 seeks to confirm the already given information and uses the referring tone to do so. This contrasts M1PL's behaviour in Figure 14. In other words, while the two participants expressed themselves to confirm an already given information, only Participant M2PL conforms to DI on his choice of tone.

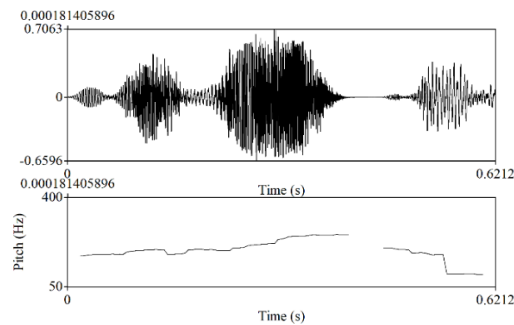


Figure 16. M3PL; //p you dey get me//

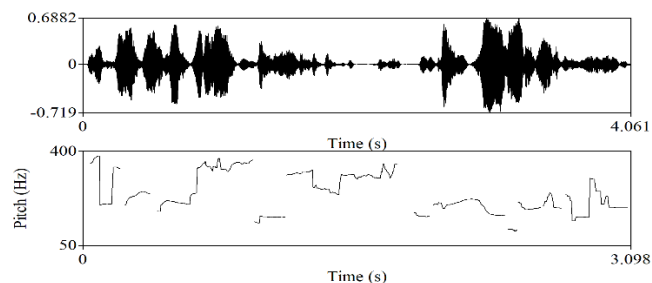


Figure 17. M4PL; //r di job wey he dey do laik dis so/p he dey offensive//

Participant M3PL in Figure 16 genuinely seeks to be informed in order to know the view and to control the attention of the other interlocutor. It is evident that this speaker holds the ground in this discussion and he needed to get full attention of the other person and to call him to order so as not to digress from the point being discussed. The response given by the listener will determine whether his attention was captured or not. Meanwhile, Participant M4PL in Figure 17 uses proclaiming tone, on the tone unit in question which is the second, instead of referring tone on the yes/no interrogative tone-unit produced because he was really seeking to get confirmation about what has already been known to both speakers

about the ‘job’. That is, they both have an idea of the job he was talking about; he only wanted to clarify the authenticity of the job. Thus, a referring tone should have been used instead. We therefore conclude that the two participants in Figures 16 and 17 violate the principle of DI.

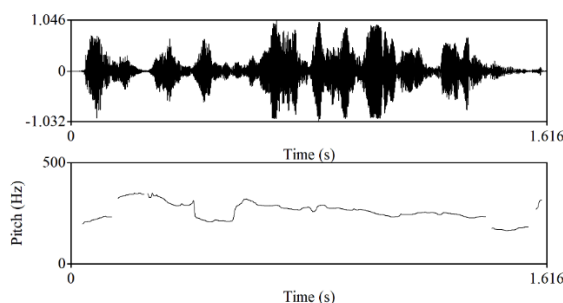


Figure 18. M5PL; //r moni dey to do it legal way nomally//

In comparison with the behaviours in Figures 16 and 17, the choice of referring tone (rising) by Participant M5PL in Figure 18 is in tune with the DI specification for given or shared information because the participant is not seeking to get informed but to confirm the information that has already been given within the context of earlier interaction between them both. They both have common grounds on the issue discussed; further confirmation on the point being discussed was all that was required by this participant.

Overall, out of the ten yes/no interrogative tone-units investigated, three participants (30%) conformed to DI while the remaining 7 (70%) did not conform to it in their choice of tone. The three participants who conformed to DI are F3PL, M2PL and M5PL. They conformed to DI because the choice of referring tone used by them reveals that they do not seek new information; they were only confirming the already given information within the context of their discussion.

3.4 Findings

Findings from the data analysed in this study show that speakers of Waffi, on the average, used both the referring and proclaiming tones on the selected tone-units investigated to either restate already known/shared information or to contribute new information to the locution at hand, respectively. However, the participants demonstrated a predominant preference for the proclaiming tone (or falling tune) on the two grammatical categories tested. That is, they failed to display competence in their use of the appropriate tone on the yes/no interrogative tone-units investigated in the study. The participants have, therefore, demonstrated a shallow competence in their articulation of the yes/no interrogative tone units compared to their performance in the “wh”-interrogative tone-units.

On the tested “wh”-interrogative tone-units, the participants used the expected proclaiming tone, demonstrating their knowledge of the grammatical rules of intonation in the superstrate language, at least. Irrespective of the communicative values of the tone-units examined in this category, for instance, speakers had one hundred percent (100%) use of proclaiming tone. This choice conforms largely to what

is specified by the DI model for articulating the “wh”-interrogative tone-units.

On the contrary, findings in the analysis of the yes/no interrogative tone-units investigated reveal that seventy percent (70%) of the selected participants failed to use the tone appropriate to DI model in expressing their intentions; only 30% did, i.e., speakers F3PL, M2PL and M5PL, as shown already. This performance suggests two things about the participants (i.e., the Warri- NPE speakers); it's either they genuinely lack basic knowledge of the grammatical rule of intonation on yes/no interrogative tone-units, or the NPE (being a blend or fusion of a superstrate and some substrate elements) tends to generally deviate from the norm as regards intonational encoding of the pitch trajectory on this question type.

4. Conclusion

Using Brazil's (1997) Discourse Intonation (DI) in analysing the utterances of native speakers of the Warri sub-variety of Nigerian Pidgin English has shown how speakers of the variety use English intonation patterns in naturally-occurring utterances. The findings in this study bear semblance with Jowitt's (2000) and Akinjobi and Oladipupo's (2010) submission about Nigerian English intonation system which is described as preferring the use of falling tune on “wh”-interrogative tone-units. Similarly, findings about the Yes/No interrogative utterances reveal that speakers of the Warri variety of Nigerian Pidgin English used more of falling tune. This latter result tends to contrast Fajobi's (2013) submission about Nigerian English informants whom she described as using “higher pitch range” (which we term “rising tune” for our purposes in this study) for this question type in her study of Nigerian English intonation. However, “higher pitch range” may not be entirely synonymous with “rising tune” in that researcher's submission. Further acoustic investigations may thus be required.

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Appendix 1

Data for the Study

F1WH: // ↘ Di one wey dey vex me pass/ ↗ na di one wey dem go kɔn tel yu/ ↘ I'm a secret admirer//

↗ That word// ↘ I never understand di meaning// ↘ Watin he mean//

F2WH: ↘/ which women// ↘ Married women abi girl//

F3WH: ↘ // Watin yu wan tek maintain yourself//

F3WH: // ↘ Which voice, which voice yu wan record// // ↘ yu nɔ get people yu nɔ get mama//

F4WH: // ↘ how body how today how di weather//

M1WH: // ↘ fɔ which kɔntri fɔ Nigeria dem dey laminate ID card//

M2WH: ↘ Watin that one kɔn dey do now/ ↘ your pirro nɔ dey near oooo//

M3WH: // ↘ as we dey tɔk about dis illegal now/ ↗ if dey ask yu fɔ Nigeria ehn ehn / ↘ Nigeria in particular/ ↘ di most corrupt office fɔ Nigeria watin yu go tɔk//

M4WH: // ↘ Which arm of government dey corrupt pass//

M5WH: // ↘ I dey now/ ↘ which level//

F1PL: // ↘ Yu never hear that lanji wey dem say he dey cure everything/ ↘ everything both HIV sef / ↘ #100 na he dem dey sell am ooo/ ↘ Yu never hear Lanji//

F2PL: // ↗ Fɔ dis boyfriend matter wey u dey tɔk ehn/ ↘ u na know say those wey be say dey nɔ dey give money na dem fɔk pass//

F3PL: // ↘ forget, yu wan die//

F4PL: // ↘ I go say yes or no//

F5PL: // ↘ Two wrongs no dey make right//

// ↘ Dey no tell yu say mek yu no cross/ ↘ If yu wɔn cross, yu no fit cross through di right channel//

M1PL: // ↘ I hope yu na hear say na Boko Haram/ ↘ we dey kɔl u na//

M2PL: // ↗ dis one na recorder//

M3PL: // ↘ You dey get me//

M4PL: // ↘ Unto di mata laik dis now/ ↘ no be illegal / ↘ unto say di government wey dey operate fɔ Deltal State ehn ehn / ↘ in particular presently now nɔ create job access fɔ us/ Unto say/ ↗ I no understand. // ↘ Di job wey he dey do laik dis so dey offensive//

M5PL: // ↘ Mɔni dey to do legal way //