E-ISSN: 1116 - 2619 P-ISSN: 3026-8524
MPRI-JHLAR | INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF HUMANITIES, LITERATURE AND ART RESEARCH
VOL. 05 NO. 6 – JULY, 2024

THE PRAGMATICS OF PROSODIC FEATURES IN SELECTED OYO COURTROOM DISCOURSE

***BOLANLE SOGUNRO Ph.D.; *OJO AKINLEYE AYINUOLA Ph.D.; & **ELIZABETH ABIADE AGBOOLA**

*Department of English, Ajayi Crowther University, Oyo.
**Department of European Languages, Emmanuel Alayande University of Education, Oyo
Corresponding Author: *bo.sogunro@acu.edu.ng*

Keywords:
Courtroom Discourse, Pragmeme, Court Proceedings, Prosody, Contextualisation

Abstract

Courtroom discourse is a unique type of discourse that plays a significant role in the administration of justice. Several studies have explored the use of language in the courtroom, highlighting the importance of formal language, clarity, and precision. However, the pragmatics of prosodic features in courtroom discourse has not enjoyed scholarly attention. This study therefore, examined the pragmatics of prosodic features in selected Oyo courtroom discourse with focus on the use of intonation to perform pragmatics import. The study adopted Pragmatics Acts theory (Mey 2001) for the analysis of the collected data. A qualitative descriptive approach, which involved the observation and audio recordings of court proceedings, was used in collecting data at State High Court of justice, Oyo, Oyo State. The collected data were transcribed through transcription notations. Data contains transcription of 40 hours, 10 minutes and seven seconds of 20 different court proceedings on corpus of cases which include robbery, divorce, land matter, debt recovery and chieftaincy. The analysis of the data revealed that rising and falling tunes as well as other contextualisation cues such as loudness and elongation are commonly used to show pragmatic imports in courtroom discourse. These tunes and the contextualisation cues deployed the pragmatic imports of command, call to order, inquiry, affirmation, caution, comic relief,

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Prof. S. T. Addo [GHANA]

agreement, annoyance/anger, educating and shock/surprise. The result suggests that the use of a formal tone in the courtroom discourse is essential in establishing authority and respect. In courtroom discourse, intonation contrasts play critical roles in conveying pragmatic meanings; and realisation of prosodic information varies across speakers and contexts.

Introduction

The courtroom, as a primary site of legal discourse, provides a rich context for exploring the intricate interplay between language, law, and society. The legal system is a domain where precise communication is of paramount importance. Lawyers, judges, witnesses, and litigants rely on spoken language to present arguments, evidences, and testimonies. In the complex arena of legal proceedings, language plays a pivotal role in shaping communication, understanding, and interpretation. Understanding how intonation influences the conveyance of information, intensions and attitudes is crucial in the context of legal proceedings. However, the study of intonation with pragmatics has not enjoyed much attention in legal discourse analysis. In courtrooms, the manner in which lawyers phrase questions, witnesses respond, or judges issue rulings can significantly impact the outcome of a case. The use of appropriate intonation and pragmatics is essential in ensuring that communication is successful and that participants understand their roles and responsibilities.

In courtroom discourse, tonality (tone and intonation) and pragmatics play a crucial role in conveying meaning and achieving communicative goals. Tonality refers to the use of tone and intonation in language to convey attitudes, emotions, and social relationships. Pragmatics, on the other hand, refers to the use of language in context and involves the study of how speakers use language to achieve their communicative goals. It also refers to the study of how context and social factors influence the interpretation of language. According to Alan & Janny (2017), pragmatics is concerned with how meaning is recovered from utterances whose form underdetermines their interpretation. The act of interpreting requires inference prompted by a range of contextual variables: factors which have the effect of extending or altering an apparently stated meaning. In some circumstances, a very different, additional proposition may be communicated, which may be described as an intended speaker meaning, as opposed to the encoded meaning conventionally associated with the language forms used. Understanding the relation between what is said and its context is thought to be guided by some kind of general principles such as Grice's Co-operative Principle (1975), Leech's various maxims (1983), Sperber and Wilson's Principle of Relevance (1995). To this end, Sperber and Wilson (1995) argue that acts of human verbal communication are ostensive in that they draw their addressees' attention to the fact that the communicator wants to convey some information. With Grice, relevance theorists assume that human communication is

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Prof. S. T. Addo [GHANA]

characteristically intention-based, and so they see verbal comprehension as involving not just the decoding of speech signals, but also the recognition of the speaker's communicative intentions (Mambrol, 2020). This study intends to examine pragmatics of prosodic features in selected court proceedings with a view to revealing how courtroom participants deploy intonations patterns to perform pragmatics functions.

Statement of the Problem

The courtroom is a complex linguistic environment where participants must navigate different roles, power dynamics, and communication styles. The use of intonation and pragmatics is particularly important in the courtroom, where misunderstandings and miscommunications can have significant consequences. There are existing works on language and law: Richard & Nwizug (2017) examined how the question-answer sequences of direct and cross-examination, turn-taking, objections, and other legal proceedings create unequal relationship among participants in courtrooms in Nigeria, through the use of Critical Discourse Analysis. Farinde & Oyedokun-Alli (2020) studied interpreting and the use of discourse markers by lawyers to signify power and control over the witnesses and defendants in the court. Farinde & Oyedokun-Alli's (2020) research is similar to that of Wagner & Cheng (2011) where language, power and control in courtroom discourse were investigated. Osisanwo & Akintaro (2020) carried out a research on the use of intonation patterns as contextualisation cues and discursive strategies in selected courtroom discourse at Ibadan. Mood in courtroom discourse was examined by Farinde & Ogunrinde (2022). Among these research works, only Osisanwo & Akintaro (2020) related their work to intonation but data for their work were sourced from Ibadan courtrooms while the present research gathered data from the State high court of justice, Oyo. This shows that little attention has been paid to how participants in the real courtroom situations use language and intonation to manage social relationships and achieve their communicative goals which is the focus of this present research. In filling this gap, this study therefore examines the pragmatics of prosodic features in selected Oyo courtroom discourse.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of the study is to examine pragmatic import of intonation in selected Oyo courtroom discourse. To achieve this aim, the study considers the following objectives.

i. To identify prominent prosodic features and their functions in selected court proceedings at the state high court of justice, Oyo.
ii. To discuss the pragmatic acts that the prosodic features project.

Research Questions

i. Which prosodic features are prominent in selected court proceedings at the state high court of justice, Oyo?

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Prof. S. T. Addo [GHANA]

ii. What are the pragmatic acts projected by the identified prosodic features?

Research Methodology

This qualitative research used observation and the audio recordings in collecting data at State High Courtroom I and II, Oyo. Gaining permission for data collection in courtroom is very tedious because of the ethics of the legal institution. The researcher made a statement to make the information garnered confidential and that data will be used only for academic research. An android phone recorder, which was officially allowed, was used to capture the audio aspects of the courtroom interactions while participatory observational approach by being physically present within the courtroom was used to capture some nonverbal cues. A corpus of 105 cases which lasted for 40 hours, 10 minutes and seven seconds of 20 different court proceedings were recorded, transcribed through notations and subjected to phono-pragmatic analysis. The notations below helped to interpret the speakers' intentions as well as explain the implications of the speakers' use of contextualisation cues in courtroom discourse.

The study adopted Pragmatics Acts theory (Mey 2001) for the analysis of the collected data.

The following notations are used for the transcription of data.

=	Elongation
o	Softer than surrounding talk
< >	Slower than surrounding talk
> <	Faster than the surrounding talk
@	Laughter
( )	Inaudibility
(.)	A brief pause
0.0	Elapsed time in tenths of seconds
…	Omission
UPPER CASE	Loudness
#	Shaky voice
PC	Prosecuting Counsel
DC	Defence Counsel

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

A pragmeme is a situated speech act in which the rules of language and of society are combined in determining meaning, intended as a socially recognised object sensitive to social expectations about the situation in which the utterance to be interpreted is embedded (Capone 2005). Mey (2016) 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.

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Prof. S. T. Addo [GHANA]

The pragmatic act theory is a socio-cultural international view of pragmatics which emphasises the priority of socio-cultural and social factors in meaning construction and comprehension (Osisanwo & Akintaro, 2020). It is a context-based theory which is divided into two parts as shown in figure below.

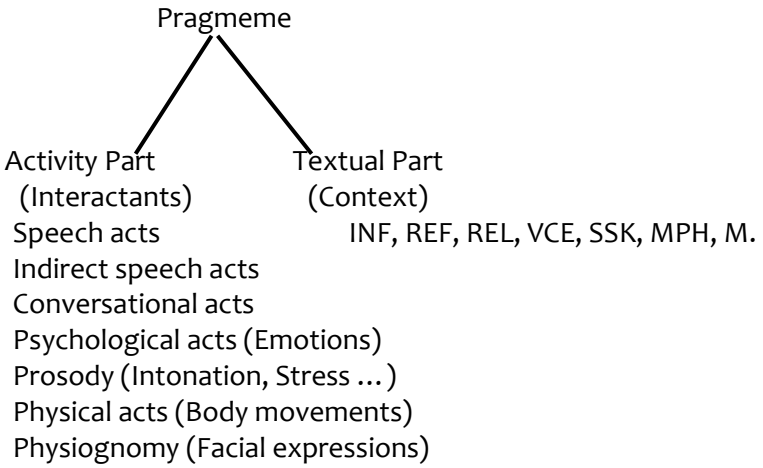

Figure 1: Odebunmi & Unuabonah, (2014)

The activity part and the textual part interact to produce a pract and allopract. The activity part covers speech acts, indirect speech acts, Conversational acts (dialogue), Psychological acts (Emotions), Prosody (Intonation, Stress … our focus), Physical acts (Body movements), and Physiognomy (Facial expressions). The textual part involves context elements: INF -inference, REF- reference, REL- relevance, VCE- voice, SSK- Shared situation knowledge, MPH- metaphor, and M- metapragmatic joker. The textual part (that deals with context) and prosody, an aspect in activity part, are also used as one of the theories for data analysis in this present work.

PRESENTATION OF DATA AND ANALYSIS

PROMINENT PROSODIC FEATURES IN SELECTED COURT PROCEEDINGS

Table 1: Showing intonation tunes (and other cues) used in courtroom discourse and their pragmatic functions when used by the courtroom interactants

Interactants	Falling tune	Rising tune	Other cues	practs
Judge	Yes, (even at that) It seems you are embarrassing them			Confirmation/ agreement
Judge	Yes, please. Is that with the permission of this honorary (sic) court? Why are you bringing the application here? Appearance?	What will you have us to do? Enforcement of fundamental right? When did you file it?		Inquiring

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Prof. S. T. Addo [GHANA]

Judge	Did you not go back to the trial court?			Instruction Command
Judge			HA=HA=HA	Shock/surprise
DC			I am A=DE=O=LU A=KAN=BI (not original name)	Boldness
Judge **Clerk**			Mr = A=kan=bi HELLO= Sir Mr AKINDOYIN WA SORO SOKE NI O (you will have to speak louder)	Power and control
DC		It's a fundamental human right action		Confirmation
PC		Why are you now saying you have been there? you have been there… With due respect sir	I DON'T LIKE	Anger
Judge			HELLO= sir	Call to order
Judge		You came from Ibadan? A whole of Ibadan?		Sarcasm

The table above illustrates the different intonation tunes and other cues used during court proceedings and their pragmatic functions when used by the major courtroom interactants. The first column represents the interlocutors or interactants (Judge, Defence counsel, Prosecuting counsel and clerk), who used the identified tunes (second and third columns) and other cues (loudness and elongation) in the fourth column. The fifth column shows the pragmatic functions performed by the cues and tunes based on the context in which they have been used.

From the table, seven sentences were said with falling tune, eight were said with rising tune, 15 words were said with high intensity that resulted into loudness and six words with feature of elongation. It is evident that fall and rise tunes, as well as loudness and elongation (contextualization cues) are prominent prosodic features used by major courtroom interlocutors during court proceedings. The findings agree with Cruttenden's (1997:2) submission that there are three features which are most consistently used for linguistic purposes, either singly or jointly. These three features are pitch, length, and loudness and they are perceived by listeners. However, Akinjobi & Oladipupo (2010) claimed that Nigerian English users make restricted use of the complex intonation tunes of English especially those tunes assigned to reflect the speaker's attitude to the listener or what is being said. Agreeing with their claim, the speakers here made use of the limited

tunes and cues to reflect their attitude and intention to the listeners. Therefore, in this study, the use of fall-rise and rise-fall tunes is not prominent.

The data reveals that the same intonation pattern or cue can pract different acts when used in different contexts by the same or different speaker(s). For instance, the Judge employed the same tune (fall) for the word "yes" in different contexts to pract confirmation/agreement and inquiry. Also, loudness is utilised by different speakers – the judge, PC, DC and clerk to convey diverse pragmatic functions such as shock, surprise, boldness, power and control/authority, call to order and anger. The Judge and DC used elongation to show call to order, control, surprise and boldness as seen in the table.

The use of different tunes (fall and rise) to practing inquiring by the same speaker (judge) featured as well in the table above. As in:

1. Yes, please. ↘
2. Is that with the permission of this honorary (sic) court? ↘
3. Why are you bringing the application here? ↘
4. Appearance? ↘
5. What will you have us to do? ↗
6. Enforcement of fundamental right? ↗
7. When did you file it? ↗

Examining the above data, while all utterances can perform the function of inquiry, the application of tunes to some statements is inappropriate. In line with the English intonation patterns, utterances 1 (statement change to question), 2 (polar question) and 4 (statement change to question) were supposed to be said with a rising tune, while falling tune should be assigned to sentences 5 and 7 (WH questions) however, the opposite occurred; only sentences 3 and 6 were assigned appropriate intonation patterns.

PRAGMATIC ACTS OF PROSODIC FEATURES IN SELECTED COURT PROCEEDINGS

1. Pragmatic Import of Inquiring/Confirming

Inquiring refers to the act of asking questions or seeking information about something. It involves seeking clarification, understanding, or additional details on a particular topic or matter. It is often used in courtroom discourse most especially by the judge to ascertain the appearance of the lawyers, for confirmation and clarification. This is exemplified below.

Falling Tune Practing Inquiring/Confirming

Excerpt 1

HOY/10/2023: Chief S.M.A vs J.A.O.

1. **Judge**: Yes, please ↘

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Prof. S. T. Addo [GHANA]

2. **lawyer**: Yes, my lord, we have a mission extract dated 16th of March, 2023 and filed on 29th of March, 2023. (pause)
3. **Judge**: is that with the permission of this honorary (sic) court?
4. **Lawyer**: no (o)
5. **Judge**: if this application, if the judgment was obtained to (sic) the customary court, why are you bringing the application here?
6. **lwyer**: (stammering #) I I the the judgement was … to the high court
7. **Judge:** yes? Even at that did you not go back to the trial court?

The above conversation shows a courtroom interaction between the Judge and a lawyer who filed an application at the high court. From the discourse and as reflected in utterance 5, the case seems to be an appeal filed against a judgement earlier obtained from a customary court: "if this application, if the judgment was obtained to the customary court, why are you bringing the application here?"
At the start of the conversation, the judge used falling intonation tune to ask the lawyer to state his mission and the purpose of his appearance in court for the day. The use of "yes" by the Judge in line 1 and 7 performs different pragmatic acts – inquiry and agreement respectively. The first, practing inquiry is expected to have a rising intonation tune, but it was said with a falling tune. Based on the existing shared background knowledge or shared situation knowledge (SSK) on courtroom interaction, the lawyer recognised the intention of the speaker for him to take turn and state his mission, hence, his response in sentence 2 above.

***Judge**: is that with the permission of this honorary (sic) court?*
The above pract 3 is a polar question that demands yes or no response. Conventionally, a polar question is expected to be said with rising tune whereas, the speaker applied falling tune. The application of this intonation pattern by the speaker goes beyond ordinary inquiry. The choice of falling tune by the Judge was to be mild and not embarrassed the addressee. The addressee, as a legal practitioner, is expected to know that such a case should not have been filed at the high court. Based on the shared situation and background knowledge, the DC understood the message the judge was passing across to him, hence, the response "no" was said with a lower voice than the previous speeches. More so, the illocutionary act of rejection, mildly done by the Judge, had a Perlocutionary effect on the listener which resulted to stammering and incoherent displayed in utterance 6.

Rising Tune Practing Inquiring/Confirming
Excerpt 2
HOY/11/2023: V. A. Vs. A. Finance bank
1. Judge: First appearance. yes?
2. DC: Yes, may court be pleased, I appear for the RES=PON=DENT. I am
A=DE=O=LU A=KAN=BI
3. Judge: Yes, what will you have us to do? Enforcement of fundamental right?

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Prof. S. T. Addo [GHANA]

4. DC: it's a fundamental human right action. …

The above excerpt is an interaction between a judge and a DC who filed for enforcement of fundamental human right. The judge, after the announcement of the next case by the clerk, asked for first appearance to which a lawyer responded by standing.

Judge: *First appearance. yes?*

The standing-response of the learned counsel depends on the shared cultural knowledge of what is practised within the courtroom. The mentioning of 'first appearance' with a low voice and falling tune by the judge was recognised as inquiring for the appearance of the learned counsel. The use of rising tune with 'yes' after recognising the appearance of the DC who was on his feet can be interpreted as "who are you? For whom are you appearing?" The DC adequately recognised the pragmatic import of the judge's statements to be inquiry, hence, his response to "yes" below.

2. DC: *Yes, may court be pleased, I appear for the RES=PON=DENT. I am A=DE=O=LU A=KAN=BI*

The DC also started his response with word 'yes' to suggest readiness and preparedness for business. This can pragmatically be interpreted as "I know why I am here and I am here for a serious business". As the practice of the courtroom and base on previous interactions witnessed between judges and lawyers, no one has started announcement of his or her name and purpose with the word 'yes'. They usually start with "may court be pleased, may it pleased the noble court, with due respect, my lord," etc. The use of 'yes' by the DC is seen as determination to fight (a case) with all his effort and having an assurance to win. This is further demonstrated in his use of other cues (elongation = and loudness) for mentioning his name and whom he appeared for. The DC demonstrated a little bit of arrogance or better still over confidence; he was too sure of himself to win the case.

Judge*: Yes, what will you have us to do? Enforcement of fundamental right?*

4. DC*: It's a fundamental human right action. …*

Amazed with how the DC was announcing his appearance, the judge was perusing the file in front of him, obviously, to know the DC's mission. This prompted the use of rising tune by the judge to ask the question in line 3, which ordinarily should be asked with a falling tune. The judge who was also speaking in low voice quickly raised his voice and in eagerness, did not even wait for DC's response before mentioning it himself with a rising tune to pract inquiring and confirming. The DC confirmed that in line 4 as a response to the inquiry.

Pragmatic Import of Caution

Caution in a courtroom is essential for maintaining order, ensuring fairness, and upholding the integrity of the judicial process. It is used to maintain professionalism, follow ethical

guidelines in order to avoid conflicts of interest or breaches of confidentiality, for appropriate language usage and behaviour, and to show respect to the judge, jury, opposing counsel, and court staff. In this research, the judge and senior learned counsel practed caution on other junior learned colleagues.

Falling Tune Practing Caution

Excerpt 3

HOY/11/2023

1. Lawyer: it's a fundamental human right action ↗ which ordinarily ought to be passed speedily but the applicant, as found out, has decided to abandon the action without due process.

2. Judge: AH= AH= AH! (Shocked) when did you file it?

3. Lawyer: from the applicant's disposition, it is not even a court case

4. Judge: is it not you are embarrassing them? ↘

5. Judge: [ ] 30TH MARCH?

6. Lawyer: yes, my lord

7. Judge: from the application representation, is there any report?

8. Lawyer: no, my lord @↗

9. Judge: are you embarrassing them? ↘

10. Lawyer: As court pleases

The above dialogue is extracted from a conversation between a judge and a lawyer. The lawyer in line 1 accused an applicant of abandoning an action without due process. The contextualisation cues (loudness and elongation) with which the judge responded in line 2 shows surprise and shock. To confirm the lawyer's submission, he asked of the time the application was filed. The lawyer did not even respond to the inquiry but continued with his submission (line 3). The judge by himself searched for the dated and loudly mentioned "30TH MARCH". The day of hearing was 8th May, meaning that it was actually a long time, hence the use of loudness cue by the judge. Observing that the lawyer was trying to make jest (@) of the opponent (who was even absent) with his response coupled with action in line 8, the judge cautioned him.

***Judge**: are you embarrassing them?* ↘

The statement above is a polar question which ought to be said with a rising tune instead of a falling tune assigned to it. The choice of low pitch was to pract caution and not for inquiry or confirmation. The pragmatic import of caution threw at the lawyer brought the effect of the response "as court pleases" in line 10.

Loudness and Rising Tune Practing Caution

13. Judge: [ ]@ the journey of about 10 hour

14. Everybody: @

15. Lawyer: the applicant that brought us here attempted …
16. Judge: [] MR A=KAN=BI, please… five thousand naira, o you used about ten hours @
The above is the continuation of the case exemplified above. After hearing his arguments and request made in previous conversations, the judge as usual was trying to pin down some points, the lawyer continued to talk. Therefore, the judge in a rising tune, louder voice and elongation called out his name (MR A=KAN=BI, please) and there was silence.

Falling Tune Practing Power and Control/Command

Excerpt 4

HOY/10/2023

Judge: Yes, even at that, did you not go back to the trial court?

Lawyer: As court pleases.

judge: I mean, you should go back to the trial court where the enforcement rule will be done there (sic).

Lawyer: As court pleases. As court pleases.

The excerpt above shows a situation where a judge, through the use of authority, issued an order to a lawyer. The lawyer had earlier filed a mission extract at the high court where the judge presides. Their preceding dialogues revealed that a judgment was initially obtained at the customary court against which the lawyer filed a mission extract. The disposition of the judge shows that such should not have been filed at the high court but maybe ignorantly, the lawyer brought it to the high court. The judge asked if the lawyer did so with the permission of the high court to which he replied "no". Then, the judge in pract 1, through pragmatic import of intonation question, indirectly asked the learned counsel to go back to the trial court "*did you not go back to the trial court?*" The polar question traditionally, should be said with a rising tune which will require a yes or no answer. Saying it with a falling tune, the addressee, based on the shared situation knowledge, understood the allopract, he then responded with "as court pleases". The response means agreement; no objection, I will take it there, while the word "court" pragmatically refers to the authority (Judge).

The exertion of command was emphasised in line 3 when the Judge made the verdict in a clear and imperative statement "I mean, you should go back to the trial court…." The speaker demonstrated power and authority to show that he did not give advice rather, he actually commanded him to do so. The lawyer, recognising the pragmatic import of the judge's statement, submits to the authority of the judge with "as court pleases. As court pleases."

Pragmatic Import of Educating

Falling Tune Practing Educating

Excerpt 5

HOY/10/2023

Judge: The truth of the matter is, even if you took cases won, at least, at the Supreme Court, if the supreme court averse the judgment of the trial court,

Lawyers: yes, sir

Judge: (continues) it is the job of the trial court to enforce.

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Prof. S. T. Addo [GHANA]

Lawyer: as court pleases
Judge: you don't do enforcement at the Supreme Court.
Lawyer: As court pleases

The above is the continuation of the dialogue between the judge and the lawyer who filed a mission extract, wrongly, at the high court. The judge after adjourning the case, acknowledging the ignorance of the learned counsel and for the sake of others present, seized the opportunity to educate them about who does what and where what is done or to be taken. The use of "you" in practs 1 and 5 by the judge does neither refer particularly to the lawyer in question nor other learned counsels on seat, but serves as a metaphor (M) to mean that enforcement is not done at the Supreme Court but at the trial court.

Sarcasm and Joke Practing Relief of Tension

In courtroom discourse, the study discovered that learned counsels often use contextualisation cue to show accusation out of anger. This is usually done consciously and unconsciously when the case has got to the climax. Most times, the judge, having inferred this cue, uses jokes or sarcasms to ease or suppress the tension.

Excerpt 6
HOY/11/2023
Judge: what do you want the court to do to =?
Lawyer: my lord, … to= pay a cost of five thousand sir.
Judge: is that not too much?
Lawyer: as court pleases. Well, I came from Ibadan o = …
Judge: you came from Ibadan? {} ↗
Lawyer: yes my lord
Judge: a whole of Ibadan? {}@ ↗
Lawyer: a whole of Ibadan {}@ ↗
Lawyer: the applicant that brought us here attempted …
Judge: @ the journey of about 10 hour [ ]
Everybody: @
Lawyer: @ they attempted to drag us here and then they affected themselves.

The above interaction is the continuation of the conversation between a judge and the lawyer who filed an application for fundamental human right. The lawyer in their earlier conversations had shown his grievance against the disposition of the applicant thus:

Lawyer: It's a fundamental human right action which ordinarily ought to be passed speedily but the applicant, as found out, has decided to abandon the action. Without due process…
Judge: HA=HA=HA= when did you file it?

Unfortunately, the applicant respondents and their counsels were absent meanwhile the defence counsel came from Ibadan. The judge, observing how furious the DC was,

pragmatically tried to suppress the anger and change the atmosphere through joke and sarcasm. The judge started by asking of what he would want the court to do (line 1). Based on shared situational knowledge and cultural knowledge of the legal profession, the DC did not misinterpret the judge's question for any other thing or else he would have forfeited the opportunity. He quickly used the opportunity to request a charge of five thousand naira against his opponent.

Lawyer: *as court pleases. Well, I came from Ibadan o = …*
Judge: *you came from Ibadan? {}* 
Lawyer: *yes my lord*
Judge: *a whole of Ibadan? {}@* 
Lawyer*: a whole of Ibadan {}@* 
Lawyer*: the applicant that brought us here attempted …*
Judge*: @ the journey of about 10 hour [ ]*
Everybody: *@*
Lawyer: *@ they attempted to drag us here and then they affected themselves.*

The judge started raising his voice quicker than the surrounding talk {} as he pressed further in lines 5, 7and 10. The DC who was burning with anger before and the whole courtroom that was very silent burst into laughter after the judge's statement in line 7 (*a whole of Ibadan?* ). The DC wished to embarrass the opponent the more (*the applicant that brought us here attempted*), but the judge cut in [ ] with *the journey of about 10 hour* and everybody laughed out again. Though, the DC eventually made his statement but this time around with laughter. The judge eventually achieved his intention and there after asked them to choose another date.

Summary and Conclusion

This paper has explored the pragmatics of prosodic features of selected court proceedings, focusing on the intricate interplay between prosodic features and pragmatic functions within the legal discourse. Scholars have widely acknowledged the fact that there is a strong and important relationship between intonation and attitude (Roach, 2009). Atoye (2005) comments that if one says something insulting, but smiles in face and voice, the utterance may be a great compliment; but if one says something very complimentary but with an intonation of contempt, the result is an insult. The findings from the analysis of this work agree with the submission of these scholars. The results highlight the significant role of prosody in conveying a range of communicative intents and maintaining courtroom decorum.

The study identifies rising tune, falling tune, and contextualisation cues such as loudness and elongation as prominent prosodic features prevalent in courtroom interactions. These prosodic elements are essential in signalling the speaker's intentions, managing the flow of discourse, and highlighting the significance of specific utterances. For instance,

rising tune often indicates inquiry or uncertainty, falling tune marks finality or authority, while variations in loudness and elongation serve to emphasize critical points, convey emotions, and assert control. The research also demonstrates that these prosodic features and cues are strategically employed to perform various pragmatic functions. In courtroom settings, they facilitate pragmatic acts of inquiry, command, expressions of anger, appeals, accusations, requests, exertion of power and control, calls to order, educational directives, relief of anger or tension, and objections.

REFERENCES

Akinjobi, A. A. & Oladipupo, R. O. (2010). Intonation and Attitude in Nigerian English *LWATI: A Journal of Contemporary Research*, Vol.7(1), 159-167.

Alan, D. & Janny, H. C. L. (2017). *Language and law: A resource book for students*. London: Routledge.

Atkinson, J. M., & Drew, P. (1979). Order in court: The organisation of verbal interaction in judicial settings. London: Macmillan.

Atoye, R. O. (2005). Non-native perception and interpretation of English intonation. *Nordic Journal of African Studies,14*(1), 26-42.

Capone, A. (2005). Pragmemes (a study with reference to English and Italian). *Journal of Pragmatics,* Vol.37 (9), 1355-1371.

Cruttenden, A. (1997). *Intonation*. U.K.: Cambridge University Press.

Farinde, R. O. (2016). Pragmatic markers in Nigerian courtroom discourse. In A. Odebunmi, A. Osinsanwo, H. Bodunde & S. Ekpe (Eds.). *Grammar, Applied linguistics and society: A festschrift for Wale Osinsanwo.* 546 – 556.

Farinde, R. O. & Oyedokun-Alli, W. A. (2020). Interpreting and Markers in Nigerian Courtroom Discourse. *Advances in Language and Literary Studies*. Vol.11(3): 24-33

Farinde, R. O. & Ogunrinde, E. D. (2022). Mood in Courtroom Discourse: An Example of Olu Olagoke's 'The Incorruptible Judge'. *IGWEBUIKE: An African Journal of Arts and Humanities.* Vol.8 (3). 61-76.

Grice, H. P. (1975) 'The logic of conversation', in P. Cole and J. Morgan (eds) Syntax and Semantics: Speech Acts. New York: Academic Press.

Leech, G. (1983). Principles of Pragmatics. London: Longman.

Mambrol, N. (2020). Relevance Theory. *Literary Theory and Criticism.* https://literariness.org.

Miyatun, S. R. (2015). A Pragmatic Analysis of Politeness Strategies in Court Represented by the Main Character in Lee's *To Kill A Mockingbird*. A Thesis Submitted to English Education Department, Faculty of Languages and Arts, Yogyakarta State University.

Mey, J. L. (2001). *Pragmatics: An introduction* (2nd ed.). USA: Blackwell Publishing.

Mey, J. L. (2009). Pragmatic Acts. In J. L. Mey (Ed.) *Concise Encyclopedia of Pragmatics* (pp. 747-753). U. K: Elsevier Ltd.

Mey J. L. (2016). Why We Need the Pragmeme, or: Speech Acting and Its Peripeties. In K. Allan, A. Capone & I. Kecskes (Eds). *Pragmemes and Theories of Language Use: Perspectives in Pragmatics, Philosophy & Psychology, Vol 9* (pp. 133-140). Springer: *https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-43491-9_7Use.*

Odebunmi, A & Unuabonah, F. O. (2014). Contextual beliefs in a Nigerian quasi-judicial public hearing. Journal of Asian and African Studies, 17(6), 45-67.

Osisanwo, A. & Akintaro, S. (2020). Intonation Patterns as Contextualisation Cues and Discursive Strategies in Selected Ibadan Courtroom Discourse. In R. Oladipupo, J. Akindele, & A. Osinsanwo (Eds). *Phonetics, Phonology and Sociolinguistics in the Nigerian Context: A Festschrift for Adenike Akinjobi*. Ibadan: Stirling-Horden Publishers Ltd.

Richard, B. & Nwizug, S. S. (2017). A Critical Discourse Analysis of Courtroom Proceedings in Nigeria. *International Journal of Arts and Humanities (IJAH)*. Vol. 6 (4). 93-102. http://dx.doi.org/10.4314/ijah.v6i4.8

Roach, P. (2009). *English phonetics and phonology: A practical course* (4th Ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Sperber, D. and Wilson, D. (1995). *Relevance: Communication and Cognition* (2nd ed). Oxford: Blackwell.

Tiersma, P. (1999). *Legal language*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Wagner, A. & Cheng, L. (2011). Exploring Courtroom Discourse: The Language of Power and Control: England: Ashgate publishing limited. 1-14.