ABSTRACT
of the dissertation for the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)
in the specialty "6D021000 – Foreign Philology"
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on the topic "Prosodic Portrait of Academic Discourse"

The relevance of the topic: The study of academic discourse has become increasingly relevant in contemporary linguistics due to the growing role of higher education as a key domain of institutional communication. The lecture, as a central genre of academic discourse and a model of academic speech, serves as a primary means of knowledge transmission and professional socialization. Due to the expanding use of English as a medium of instruction within the development of a trilingual education system, interest in the nature and features of such lectures has been steadily increasing in recent years.

Within this framework, prosody and intonation constitute essential mechanism for structuring and conveyance of spoken academic discourse. While lexical and syntactic aspects of academic discourse have been extensively studied, the prosodic dimension of lecture discourse remains comparatively underexplored, particularly from discourse-oriented and experimentally grounded perspectives. Moreover, big majority of the research is based on English and other well-studied languages, while the prosodic features of academic discourse in the Kazakh language has received less systematic attention. In particular, Kazakh academic discourse remains insufficiently studied from the perspective of discourse coherence that plays a significant role in connecting linguistic units and thoughts. Comprehensive analyses focusing on the interaction between prosody and coherence-building devices in Kazakh academic lectures are lacking.

In addition, the relevance of the study is determined by national educational priorities in the Republic of Kazakhstan. In public addresses the first president of the Republic of Kazakhstan N. Nazarbayev (2018 Address by the President) and the president of the Republic of Kazakhstan K. Tokayev (2024 Kurultai) have emphasized the importance of developing high-quality academic language as a foundation for intellectual development, scientific communication and the international competitiveness of higher education. These priorities further underscore the significance of linguistic research aimed at understanding the mechanisms of academic speech, including its prosodic and coherence-related organization.

Thus, the present research is topical due to its focus on the organization of lecture discourse as a key genre of academic communication, its contribution to the insufficiently explored area of Kazakh academic discourse, particularly from the perspective of coherence, its contrastive approach involving Kazakh and English, its reliance on experimental phonetic methodology and its alignment with current theoretical, methodological and educational priorities.

The object of the research is the academic discourse viewed as a type of institutional discourse within the lecture genre.

The subject of the research is the prosodic organization of lectures that contributes to the coherence of academic discourse through coherence-building devices.

The purpose of the work: to investigate the prosodic features characteristic of lectures as a means of structuring and maintaining coherence in academic discourse, focusing on the elements as pitch, pause, intensity and duration.

Objectives of the work:

- To examine the theoretical foundations of discourse analysis, focusing on academic discourse as an institutional type and lecture as its distinctive genre;

- To identify and characterize the coherence features peculiar to lecture such as repetition, correction, paraphrasing, parenthetical insertions and questions;

- To define the concept of prosody as an integral feature of academic discourse and study its key elements;

- To conduct a prosodic analysis of lectures delivered in Kazakh and English revealing the particular features of their prosodic organization and communicative effectiveness;

- To interpret the findings of research for determination of prosodic features and compilation of recommendations for the effective prosodic addressing the lecture delivery in English as a medium instruction by non-native English-speaking lecturers.

Methods and techniques of the research. The dissertation is based on the combination of theoretical and experimental methods that foster the comprehension of prosodic and discursive features of academic discourse. According to the outlined above objectives *qualitative* discourse analysis in combination with *quantitative* acoustic analysis are applied to comprehensively investigate the prosodic organization of academic discourse. The core methods are *theoretical and descriptive* ones that allow to examine and define the main features of academic speech, particularly lecture and its coherence mechanism. To understand how prosody works in construction and effective delivery of lectures the empirical methods like *acoustic and instrumental analyses* are addressed. With the help of Praat software prosodic elements like pitch, intensity, pause and duration are measured and interpreted to reveal the way the prosody contributes to coherence and effectiveness of lecture. *Contextual analysis* is addressed to interpret the prosodic features in relation to discourse environment and lecturer's intention. In addition to this the analysed findings are subjected to classification and systematization to construct the recommendation for the appropriate use of prosody in lecture delivery process.

The theoretical and methodological framework of the research is grounded in the foundational and contemporary works of foreign and Kazakhstani scholars. The general theory of discourse draws on the contributions of B. Akhatova, N.D. Arutyunova, G.G. Burkitbayeva, T. van Dijk, M. Foucault, M. Halliday, V.I. Karasik, E.D. Suleimenova. The study of academic discourse builds upon the works of N.G. Burmakina, A.J. Desiderato, I.P. Khoutyz, F.T. Rahmen Cassim, Ya.V. Zubkova. The issues related to prosody and its features are considered in the works of Z.M. Bazarbayeva, D. Crystal, A. Fazylzhanova, M.K. Isayev, A. Junisbekov, D. Karagoishiyeva, R. Potapova, M. Swerts, especially of academic discourse G.I. Fortanet, E.L. Freydina, F. Giménez, A. Seitzhanova, M.A. Tajik, A.M. Zhalalova.

The sources and material of the research: The materials used in the research include a selection of lectures conveyed in the Kazakh language by native speakers and in the English language as a medium instruction by non-native lecturers. The research corpus of Kazakh-language lectures used in this paper consists of ten university lectures in Kazakh, five of which were recorded at al-Farabi Kazakh National University, two of them were taken from the personal archive of lecturers and other three ones are the archive of Abay Institute at al-Farabi KazNU (20 943 seconds). The transcription has a total word count of 32182 words. Subjects are university lecturers. The lectures represent a formal register. The lectures are taken from different fields of science: Linguistics, Literature, Law, Biology.

The English part of the corpus comprises a small-sized corpus of a total of 5 lectures, each lasting 25-30 minutes and 5 traditional lectures each lasting an academic hour. The video and audio materials of 5 lectures were taken from the base of massive open online courses of al-Farabi KazNU and others were recorded at al-Farabi KazNU for the research purposes (15 614 seconds). The lecturers involved in this research conveyed lectures on various disciplines such as Macro-Economics, Physical Geography, Environmental Science, Advanced Corporate Finance and Biotechnology and Philology. The transcription has a total word count of 23139 words. The primary reason for choosing the lectures under analysis is that they represent the typical characteristics of academic lectures as a spoken genre. All recording is made in natural classroom conditions which ensures the authenticity of prosodic phenomena and real communicative strategies used by lecturers.

The scientific novelty of the research. The dissertation presents an original investigation of the prosodic features of academic discourse focusing on the lecture genre based on authentic Kazakh and English-language lectures. The research offers findings derived from a theoretical-discursive analysis and acoustic-experimental study of prosodic features that function as coherence-building devices in lecture delivery.

A distinctive aspect of the dissertation lies in the analysis of authentic lecture materials delivered in the Kazakh language, which have not been previously studied in terms of their prosodic organization within academic discourse. The analysis identifies prosodic features that cover pitch, intensity, pause and duration, which contribute to the coherence of spoken academic communication thus developing the field of Sociolinguistics. The study also establishes that discourse devices such as repetition, correction, paraphrasing, parenthetical insertions and questions serve as key coherence-building mechanisms in spoken academic speech, particularly in lectures. These findings reveal the ways in which prosody interacts with discourse structure and facilitates information transmission in Kazakh academic lectures.

Another aspect of novelty in the dissertation is the examination of English-medium lectures delivered by Kazakhstani lecturers at higher educational institutions, which identifies how the established prosodic features manifest in a non-native academic environment. The research determines the elements of interference between the lecturers' native prosodic patterns and the norms of English academic speech. influencing the coherence of lecture delivery. The integration of linguistic interpretation and acoustic analysis through Praat provides deeper understanding of

how prosody is realized in English-language lectures and enables the development of recommendation for improving academic speech delivery and comprehension.

The theoretical significance: The key contribution of the dissertation lies in the development of prosodic theory and discourse linguistics within the framework of academic speech. The approach to defining the concepts 'discourse' and 'academic discourse' expands the theoretical basis of modern linguistics. Through the integration of linguistic, discourse and acoustic approaches the study provides a comprehensive theoretical model for analysing the interaction between prosody and coherence in spoken academic discourse. The findings form a solid theoretical basis for functional phonetics, text and discourse theory and Pragmalinguistics. It also broadens the scope of the genre studies, institutional communication and sociophonetic studies, demonstrating how prosodic organization reflects the lecturer's professional identity and intention. The identified peculiarities of Kazakh and English-language lectures like their distinctive and overlapping prosodic and coherent patterns, offer valuable insights for contrastive and cultural communicative studies. Overall, the findings enrich the theoretical framework of the studies conducted in the fields of academic discourse, speech communication and educational linguistics.

The practical significance: The dissertation provides findings that are applicable in the spheres like university teaching and professional communication training. The identified prosodic features and coherence mechanisms can be employed to improve the effectiveness of lecture delivery in Kazakh- and English-medium classroom discourse. The methodological approach and acoustic analysis techniques developed in the research can serve as a model for further linguistic and philological studies of spoken academic discourse. Moreover, the developed recommendations can be applied in the design of lecture materials and massive open online learning platforms. The data and findings can be valuable for compiling corpora of academic spoken discourse.

The statements submitted for the defense:

1. Academic discourse is an institutional type of discourse that combines educational and scientific features, characterized by specific thematic and prosodic properties that ensure coherence and information structure and reflect the communicative intention of a participant engaged in academic interaction within higher educational institutions. Academic discourse is considered as a combination of scientific and educational discourse as it consists of both features.

2. Lecture as a genre of academic discourse is effective if only the content and its prosodic organization are equally considered. Proper prosodic structuring ensures coherence and communicative intention, while content organization provides the logical foundation for meaning. Therefore, neither can function effectively in isolation. The coherence-building features like correction, paraphrasing, repetition, parenthetical insertion and questions are identified as the widely used ones. Kazakh-medium lectures rely primarily on interrogative scaffolding and iterative presentation, whereas EMI lectures prioritize corrective and paraphrastic moves, reflecting real-time management of accuracy and comprehensibility in a non-native-language setting.

3. The prosodic portrait of lecture, as a distinct genre of academic discourse, is determined by coordinated prosodic cues like pitch, intensity, duration, and pause to

organize information and sustain coherence. Across devices, repetition and paraphrasing place primary prominence on the first occurrence of the target element, whereas corrections and parenthetical insertions shift prominence to the second, corrected/inserted segment, typically bracketed by pauses. Parentheticals form prosodically distinct "islands" marked by short entry/exit pauses and a compressed or rise–fall contour, allowing listeners to integrate asides without losing the main thread. Question types are reliably distinguished by their contours: genuine Yes/No questions end in a rise and invite response; rhetorical/tag questions close with a fall and signal non-response; Wh-questions carry a mid-to-low final fall with focus-aligned prominence.

Kazakh-medium lectures tend to signal coherence with clear boundary timing (especially in parentheticals and Wh-questions) and high pitch for corrective and tag forms, while EMI lectures amplify corrective prominence (higher F0 and intensity), extend explanatory timing in Wh-questions, and use shorter pauses for repetition and parentheticals – prosodic choices consistent with managing accuracy, engagement, and comprehensibility in English.

4. In English-medium lectures, traces of the lecturer's first language show up in both wording and intonation, and they matter differently for different audiences. Tag questions are often reduced to single words like yes or okay instead of the usual English pattern. Russian words still appear and are then paraphrased into Kazakh, showing ongoing contact at the lexical level. Yes\no questions frequently end with a falling tone, which is not typical for English and can sound like a rhetorical statement rather than a real question. The pattern of extended explanatory timing peculiar to the Kazakh language persists in EMI that are traced in Wh-questions and parenthetical insertions, which retain very long durations even when bracketing pauses are shortened. Corrections remain a primary locus of prominence across modes but are more strongly marked in EMI (higher F0 and longer pauses), reflecting repair strategy amplified in English. Features of native tongue transfer affect how questions and meanings are signaled.

5. Prosody is an integral component of lecture design rather than an accessory to delivery. The prosodic portrait of lectures demonstrates specific peculiarities influenced by both cultural and individual characteristics of a lecturer. Such prosodic patterns are more likely to be perceived properly by the target audience when the lecturer and the audience share the same linguistic and cultural background. However, when English is used as the medium of instruction for English-speaking audiences, lecture delivery should be approximate authentic prosodic models, requiring adaptation to the characteristic features of English prosody.

The structure and volume of dissertation. This dissertation is structured into an introduction, three sections, a conclusion, a list of references.