

# Expressing Social Deixis through Prosody: A Case Study of American English

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*Expressing interpersonal relationships varies from language to language. Numerous studies explore morphological or other means of expressing a *tous/vous* relationship. To our knowledge, no research has been done on whether the phonic realization has a share in mapping a T or V shade onto an utterance. The present study presents the results of such research. After the corpus was compiled and T and V utterances categorized, we measured pauses and melody contours, and we identified the pitch accent placement. Then, we interpreted the data sociolinguistically. The data point to two areas worth further examination – phonetic and sociological: a) a tendency was observed in T vs. V encounters with regard to the sociological parameter of age; b) the American culture seems to apply the model of “dispersion” rather than bipolarity, which makes it an intricate task to collect a sufficient number of V encounters providing for statistically significant data.*

**Keywords:** *social deixis, T/V forms, temporal/force/tone modulation of a speech signal, ethnomethodological description, sociolinguistic interpretation*

## 1. Introduction

The verbal vocal realization of social relationships makes available a picture of conventionalized communication styles. Expressing interpersonal relationships in languages necessarily has social and form-related aspects. From a social perspective, it is largely a matter of a sliding scale on which (very) formal through (very) informal expressions are placed. Formally (in terms of the inventory of pronominal or morphosyntactic means), however, in most languages, conveying social deixis is dichotomic, i.e. it oscillates between two poles: T and V forms. This is the case of most European languages (Slavic languages, Romance languages, Germanic languages). Since these languages have in possession and, thus, use explicit pronominal and morphological markers, the users are able to consciously choose proper expression of social distance. The formal dichotomy is reflected overtly through pronominal forms and verb morphology. The presence of specific forms in the lexicon and verb morphology contributed to the conventionalized conscious usage of particular sequences in particular communication acts. Thus, the overtness implies a speaker's knowledge and subsequent usage of specific language means as a component of language behavior in T (*tous*) or V (*vous*) settings, i.e. T/V relationships.

Present-day English, as it were, is the only mainstream language with the absence of morphological markers for conveying T/V relationships; i.e. the verb is not marked for this purpose. In other words, a lexeme (i.e. pronouns corresponding to French *tous* and *vous*) and an inflectional morpheme do not reside in the inventory of the language to serve that purpose. This inevitably implies that in English the conceptualization of social deixis may as well be different. A native speaker of English, naturally, is aware of social deixis, yet expresses it non-consciously. Our reading is that the understanding of social distance is embedded in the users' mind-set, yet it is non-conscious; non-conscious in the sense of "...‘unspoken rules’ when it comes to social interaction ... grammatical, semantic (or syntactic) rules, idiomatic

conventions, innumerable idiosyncrasies and specific linguistic customs that arise from one's local environment" that "...we must know in order to communicate effectively with those around us" (Williams, online).

Non-conscious usage can be approached through the notion of speaker meaning (Haugh 2013). It can be understood not only as a cognitive notion but also as a deontological notion: what the speaker is committed to in interaction (Haugh 2013: 41): "A speaker means something by intending that the hearer recognise what is meant as intended by the speaker," but also, the speaker is held accountable to the moral order for what he or she is taken to mean in interaction". The communicative intention encompasses the speaker's meaning and the hearer's interpretation of this meaning, for "... the speaker's stance and the hearer's role in the disambiguation of the message are crucial in making the meaning of the message" (Firbas In: Urbanová 2003: 14). Terminologically speaking, the meaning of the message can possibly be equated with the interactive meaning (on the term 'interactive meaning', cf Urbanová 2003). This is generated by the speaker-hearer interaction that indisputably discloses the speaker's attitude to the message, in other words, imparts the modal meaning of the utterance. A communicative intention represents "what the speaker is committed to, or taken to be committed to, in interaction" (Haugh 2013: 41). Since discursive commitment (on the term, cf Brandom 1994) becomes socially consequential, it abides by cultural norms, hence relies on conventionalized communication styles. For this reason, speaker meaning may as well embody social commitment, which as a matter of fact is culture-sensitive.

## **2. Methodology of research**

### *2.1 Motivation for research*

Social commitment is one of the troublesome areas for anybody involved in intercultural communication. A typical example is English and Slovak (together with other languages): the latter possess(es) pronominal and morphological means of social deixis; the former lacks such elements. Hence, the underlying question is: if a language lacks overt markers of social deixis (lexical or morphological), do native speakers of that language have such a frame in their minds? Other questions may well arise: what does 'commitment' imply with regard to social deixis and do English and Slovak commitment rules in expressing social deixis exist? This generates another question, namely: what are those conventional (or rather conventionalized, as it were) means that allow a hearer access the speaker's commitment? We are aware that the nature of this phenomenon requires that several language levels be taken into consideration (phonic, morphological, semantic, syntactic, and pragmatic levels); to start with, the present paper focuses on the phonic level.

The reasoning behind the research specifically on the phonic level with regard to the issue concerned is that some information in speech is independent of the words and their sounds, and this information is conveyed by intonation. Intonation represents at once discrete and categorial phenomena. The former (discrete components) are meaningless units; the meaning is mapped upon them by context in which they can function by themselves or in chunks. The latter (categorial or gradient components) convey meaning in that the speaker can select from several options; this aspect of intonation may well be related to physiological and psychological phenomena that Gussenhoven (2016) calls biological codes. Intonation is used to express a number of functions including attitudes – these appear to be directly linked to Gussenhoven's

biological codes (2016). Due to the absence of overt (explicit) markers of T/V distinction, it can be presupposed that English speakers rely on markers embedded in mind; logical inference is that markers of T/V distinction are present, yet in the form of non-conscious utilization of categorial aspects of intonation.

## 2.2 *Research problem*

As the two cultures under consideration use different ways of imparting interactive meaning of social distance/closeness deriving from the presence or absence of morphological and/or pronominal language means, a question arises how social commitment in L2 culture can be unveiled by a speaker raised in an L1 culture. A tentative solution might be looking for manifestation of certain patterns in the phonic make-up of the verbal production. Therefore, Hence, we attempt to explore the phonic realization of an utterance to find out whether or not prosody plays a role in rendering social deixis in English. Our premise is that prosody is non-consciously used to signal the “social polarity”, thus, for native speakers, can be considered a covert means of expressing social deixis. The research task builds upon the idea that in English in order to substitute for the lack of overt morphological markers prosody is a useful variable. We are interested in what language means on the phonic level native speakers of American English employ to signal social deixis. Our aim is to find out if the correlation between social norms and phonic language means employed in the make-up of a speech event exists. A study has been conducted to observe if the sound realization of utterances used among speakers with T-relationship and among those with V-relationship is indicative of any tendencies. To our knowledge, the phenomenon of social deixis has been widely studied with regard to honorifics, pronominal means, address forms, or communicative strategies, however, no studies on prosody as a means of expressing social deixis are available

## 2.3 *Research Corpus*

Speech is a social product through which communication fulfills its functions. Modern analyses of language focus on the usage of a language defined by physical, social, cultural, etc. context and/or by the psyche of the language user. For the intended analysis, it is necessary to compile a corpus of language material reflecting the language dynamics and modality of interpersonal relations. The logical inference is that this is commonly present in audiovisual text. Anecdotal evidence is that readily accessible media dialogues that would be sources of “natural” language do not provide for a balanced share of T/V relationships. In other words, in television shows intended for entertaining (sitcom, drama, crime stories, etc.) the majority of relations are T relations, while V relations are in the minority. On the contrary, for instance, political debates present V relations in majority, and T relations appear in significant minority. The solution to obtaining a source with a balanced share of relations would be online corpora. In that case, however, the data would not be contextually defined, hence robbed of natural environment, i.e. of the development of relations between speakers. For this reason, we opt for a film dialogue even though this necessitates extracting balanced subcorpora; typically the T subcorpus is to be accommodated to the size of the V subcorpus. The selected research material is an episode of the drama series *Gilmore Girls*. The language material used is a DVD recording of the episode *Bon Voyage* (2007, *Gilmore Girls*, Season VII, season finale), with running time 40 min 16 s.

## 2.4 Research Plan

Our aim is to observe the feasibility of interrelating prosody and attitudinal and social deixis in American English. The starting premise is that a phonic level has a share in signaling power and/or solidarity in English; hence, our focus is the correlation between phonic language means employed in the make-up of a speech event and a language user as a variable in a T or V communication event. To reveal and interpret the data we used phonetic measurements and sociolinguistic interpretation; the latter was based on coding that drew on ethnographic description. Phonetic study comprises the analysis of temporal, tone, and force modulation of speech signal (cf Sabol 2006), i.e. measuring intra-sentential pause, measuring pre- and post-pausal melody contours, and identifying pitch accent placement. Sociological factors are considered to provide for the sociolinguistic interpretation of the data and to interpret the share of the data obtained in communicating (in)formal relationship. The ethnographic description made available the information about the principles guiding the linguistic behavior of speakers of Slovak as their L1 (as a representative of languages overtly discriminating between T and V relationships) and that of speakers of English as their L1.

Information is transmitted from a speaker to a perceiver through a variety of means; suprasegmentals play a major role in interpreting utterance meaning by virtue of their interrelation with extralinguistic reality. In their nature, they are attitudinally and emotionally loaded in particular communication situations (Kráľ 1984, Gussenhoven 2002, Gussenhoven 2015). Prosody-related phenomena do not result from articulatory activities; they arise from temporal, force, and tone modulation of the exhaled air stream (Sabol – Zimmermann 1984, Laver 1995). For the purpose of the present research, three elements were selected for further exploration: pause, tonic stress, and melody, i.e. the elements contributing to the unveiling of grammatical structure of an utterance. Pause (representative of temporal modulation) participates in the rhythmic patterning of speech and segmenting an utterance. Easy and smooth perception is conditioned by placing tonic stress (an element of force modulation) on the portion of a speech signal laden with most information, thus eliminating potential or real possibility of interpreting an utterance in a manner different from a speaker's intention. The third suprasegmental fulfilling a grammatical function is melody (tone modulation) which differentiates utterances in terms of content and communication forces. Namely, we are interested in the melody of pre-pausal syllables since the melody of the final part of an utterance is the most sensitive and important portion (Sabol – Zimmermann 1984, Zellner 1994; Viola – Madureira 2008; Cruttenden 1997).

## 3. Research procedure and findings

### 3.1 Ethnographic description and sociolinguistic interpretation

English and Slovak exemplify languages respectively lacking or having morphological means of expressing social deixis; thus, social distance is viewed by native speakers of the two cultures distinctively. Assumingly, the lack of morphological means in English has prevented the present-day lingua-cultural behavior from detailed stratification of relationships. The pronominal and morphological expression of the stratification of the society is much simpler in English than in Slovak. For this reason, it is much easier to describe lingua-cultural behavior in English than in Slovak. The English pronoun 'you' referring to a single recipient has both

respectful and familiar readings. Based on anecdotal evidence, the verb associated with singular ‘you’ has neutral meaning; respectful and familiar meanings are mapped onto it by other language means within the immediate linguistic environment.

In the present-day Slovak language (or other languages sharing the T/V principle), the unmarked/default singular form adopted in encounters within family and among friends is the T-form; the unmarked singular form in encounters with strangers (regardless of age or gender) is the V-form. Other encounters when the T-form is used are child-to-child, teenager-to-teenager, or the elderly-to-children/teenagers conversations. The generally held opinion is that when a child is below 18, an adult can use ‘familiar you’, while a young person is supposed to adhere to ‘respectful you’. Many a time, breaching the age limit of 18 years in the usage of T-forms is a sign of arrogance. The appropriate form depends on the level of acquaintance, level of familiarity, or gender (e.g. at work, it is more typical of men to start first-name relationship sooner than of woman-to-woman or man-to-woman relationship). The V-form is the sign of social distance among people; the T-form signals closer relationship between people. A T-form tends to be used for addressing all family members. Among strangers, the transition from a V-form to a T-form is a sign of a closer friendship, the expression of rapport or of a more relaxed relationship; in the case of work associates, the same might be applicable, yet with the necessary streak of superiority when talking business.

The transcript was studied so that T and V utterances were identified and grouped to two subcorpora. The focal language material is native English, i.e. the morphological form cannot be relied upon. The only agent determining the type of relationship is the social context; i.e. sociological parameters like age, gender, social role, or relationship. To identify the type of relationship, we used a coding system. Firstly, each type of the partnership was assigned a number; e.g. a family member – 1, a contemporary – 2, an acquaintance – 3, a stranger – 4). The second step was to tag each code with T-relationship or V-relationship. Due to the non-presence of such a pattern in English, the Slovak mindset (described above as ethnographic feature) was used to attribute the T and V relationships to the four codes based on the contextualized information on sociological parameters, like those above the length of acquaintance. The target corpus contained encounters between men and women, between two age groups (teenager vs. adult), and among speakers with social roles of family members, close friends, neighbors, and strangers. The final codes were, e.g. 1T, 1V. We counted the utterances coded as 1V – 4V, and thus established the subcorpus of V utterances (all V utterances were considered for research). The third step was to compile the subcorpus of T utterances; the number of T utterances was adjusted to the number of V utterances so that the two subcorpora were parallel in size.

The studied episode comprised the total of approximately 1014 utterances<sup>i</sup> featuring twenty-four characters. We identified 67 “relationships” and/or verbal encounters. Out of 67 encounters identified, 63 were considered as T encounters, only four were considered as V encounters. Some of the identified encounters represented communicative situations when one person spoke to a crowd (altogether app 10 in the studied episode). In the studied corpus, the ratio of T : V encounters and/or utterances was 94 % : 6 %, which made it obvious that T encounters prevailed. Hence, for the sake of the research, it was necessary to balance the size of the corpora to be studied, i.e. to accommodate the T subcorpus to the size of the V subcorpus (in that the major characters were identical in the two subcorpora). In the present experimental case study, the V-relations subcorpus had 101 utterances; accordingly, we adjusted the size of the T-relations subcorpus. The two sets of 101 utterances underwent phonetic analysis and sociolinguistic interpretation.

### 3.2 Phonetic measurements

#### 3.2.1 Intrasentential pause

The utterances of the two subcorpora were first subjected to the analysis of within-speaker intrasentential pauses. The procedure of the measuring of intrasentential pause was as follows. First, a mono sound track was extracted and modified to uncompressed 16-bit/48kHz (wav format) resolution. Then from the transcript, relevant portions of utterances were selected, and from sound waves, pause duration was measured (in ms). The material was processed by Praat 6.0.14. By means of an oscilogram, spectrogram, and perceptual checks (see Figure 1), pause intervals were detected and measured; subsequently, the obtained data were put into MS Excel 2010 so that they could be statistically evaluated by the Statistica 13.1 software.

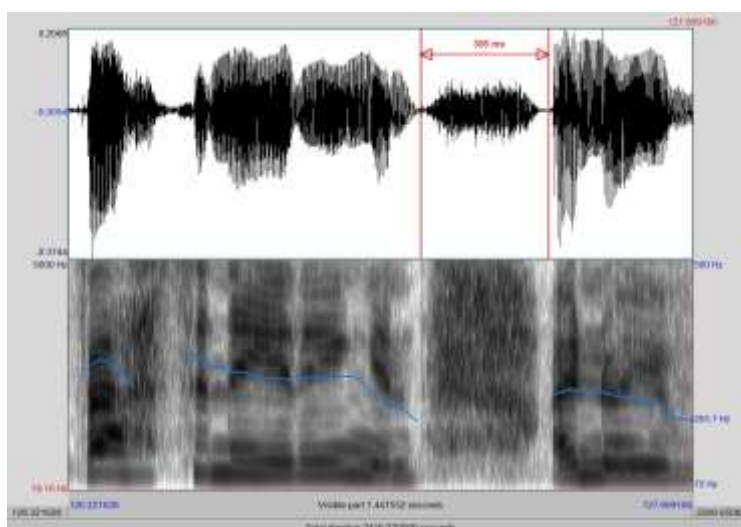


Figure 1: Oscilogram and wideband spectrogram in the Praat software with the melody contour and the pause (duration: 305ms) in the phrase fascinating and//I know you've

In the V-relations subcorpus, we identified 70 intrasentential pauses; in the T-relations subcorpus, 44 intrasentential pauses. They covered both silent and filled pauses. Their duration and occurrence expressed in percentage is provided in Table 1 below.

Table 1: The distribution of intrasentential pauses in utterances with T and V forms

Utterances with T/V forms	Total of intrasentential pauses	Silent pauses		Filled pauses	
		occurrence	Median of duration	occurrence	Median of duration
T forms (N = 101)	44	93%	62 ms	7%	314 ms
V forms (N = 101)	70	91%	102 ms	9%	301 ms

The obtained pause measurements were statistically evaluated by the Statistica 13.1 software. By means of Shapiro-Wilk W-test for normality we found out that in both V-forms and T-forms silent pauses do not manifest normal distribution ( $p = 0$ ), while filled pauses do ( $p = 0.17$ ).

Figures 3 and 4 below present Box & Whisker Plots of the pause duration distribution in the investigated datasets generated by the Statistica 13.1 software.

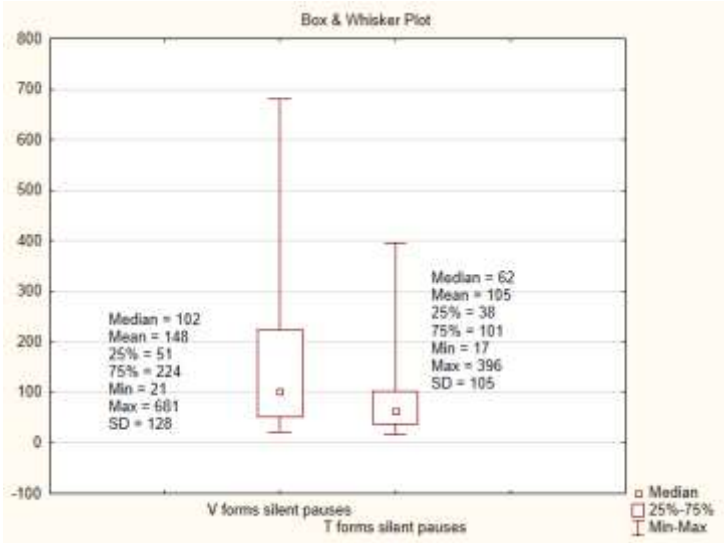


Figure 2: Box & Whisker Plot with median, mean, IQR, min, max and SD parameters of silent pauses in V forms and T forms (from program STATISTICA v. 13.1)

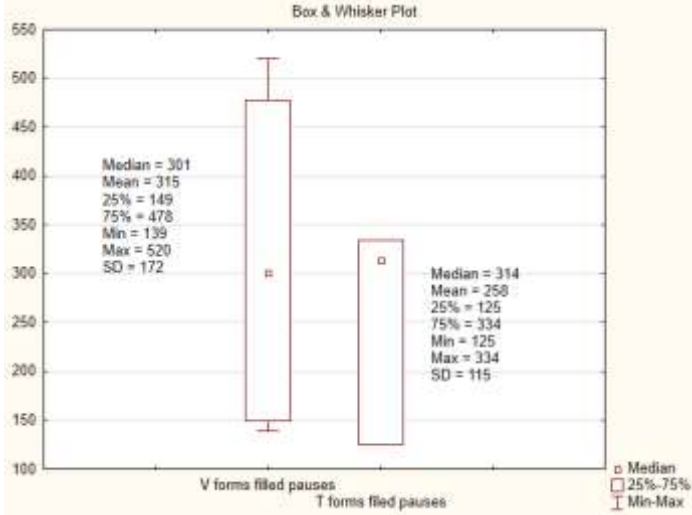


Figure 3: Box & Whisker Plot with median, mean, IQR, min, max and SD parameters of filled pauses in V forms and T forms (from program STATISTICA v. 13.1).

Based on the normality test outcome, in order to compare two independent datasets, we opted for non-parametric Mann-Whitney U test for two unmatched datasets; namely, silent and filled pauses. The statistical evaluation of the data ( $p = 0.02$ ,  $Z = 2.32$ ,  $U = 959$  at the significance level of  $\alpha = 0.05$ ) indicated that the difference in silent pause duration in utterances with T forms and V forms WAS STATISTICALLY SIGNIFICANT. The frequency of silent pauses is

presented in Figures 5 and 6 below. The pauses are divided into groups based on their duration. In the T-subcorpus, we identified 5 groups; in the V-subcorpus, we identified 7 groups.

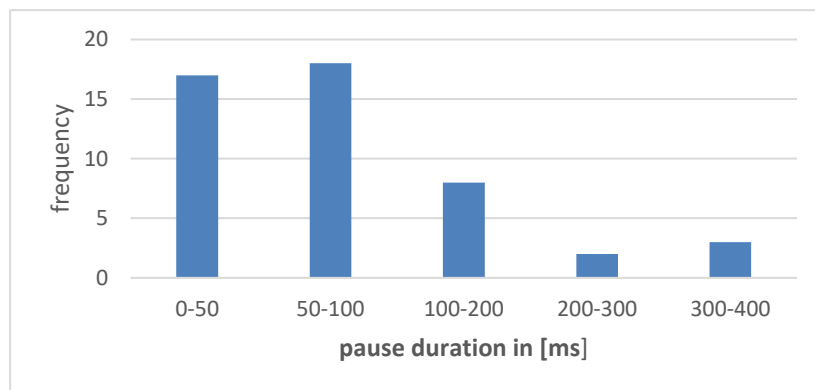


Figure 4: Frequency of silent pauses duration in T-forms

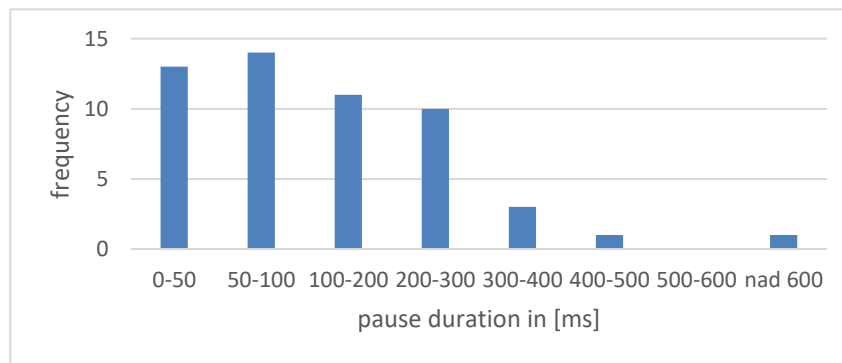


Figure 5: Frequency of silent pauses duration in V-forms

In the utterances with V forms, 9% of pauses were filled pauses (their duration was longer than that of silent pauses, the median of pause duration being 301 ms). In the utterances with T-forms, filled pauses represented 7% (their duration was longer than that of silent pauses, the median of pause duration being 314 ms). The median was used due to a low number of pieces of data (filled pauses in T forms:  $n = 3$ , filled pauses in V forms:  $n = 6$ ). The difference in the duration of filled pauses in the T forms and of those in the V forms is not statistically significant at the 0.05 level of significance (Mann-Whitney U test:  $p = 0.52$ ,  $Z = 0.65$ ,  $U = 6$ ). The results of the statistical evaluation may as well be influenced by the low number of the investigated data. For the same reason, in both T and V subcorpora, filled pauses fell into 1 group: in the former, that of 300-500 ms; in the latter, that of 100-600 ms.

### 3.2.2 Pitch accent placement

Pitch accent placement was detected through multiple perceptual checks by three independent assessors. The procedure involved the detection of points that, in an utterance, speakers emphasized due to their high informational importance, or implication of contrast and topicality. The classification included the following categories: broad focus, marked pitch accent placement, and the combination of the two. The corpus included utterances both marked



and not marked for special emphasis. The former included utterances with broad focus, utterances with marked pitch accent placement, and utterances with both broad focus and marked pitch accent placement in an utterance. Out of 101 utterances in the T-subcorpus and V-subcorpus, we identified the following results (Table 2).

Table 2: The ratio of utterances marked for special emphasis

TYPE OF SPECIAL EMPHASIS	T utterances	V utterances
broad focus (BF)	18	31
marked tonic placement (MTP)	10	3
BF + MTP in an utterance	14	13

The focal categories can be exemplified as follows. Small capitals denote pitch accent placement. Utterances 1 – 3 occurred in the T-subcorpus; utterances 4 – 6 in the V-subcorpus:

1. utterances with broad focus, e.g. LORELAI: WHAT are you TALKING about?
2. utterances with marked tonic placement, e.g. LORELAI: She's STAYing here?
3. utterances with the combination of BF + MTP in one utterance, e.g. MICHEL: I WANTED to avoid YET aNOther emBARrassing INcident.
4. utterances with broad focus, e.g. LORELAI: HelLO, I'm Lorelai GILmore. I RUN the INN.
5. utterances with marked tonic placement, e.g. C. Amanpour: Do you know which ONE?
6. utterances with the combination of BF + MTP in one utterance, e.g. C. Amanpour: HI, RORY. How are YOU? NICE to MEET you.

The comparison of the two subcorpora revealed interesting findings. The striking difference is noticed in the occurrence of broad focus (18 utterances in the T-subcorpus vs. 31 utterances in the V-subcorpus) and in the occurrence of marked pitch accent placement (10 utterances in the T-subcorpus vs. 3 utterances in the V-subcorpus). A balanced occurrence is observed in the case of the combination of broad focus and marked pitch accent placement in one utterance (14 utterances in the T-subcorpus vs. 13 utterances in the V-subcorpus).

### 3.2.3 Melody

Pre- and post-pausal melody contours were analyzed as follows: melody contours were first obtained from Praat and then F0 values were measured in peaks of segmented syllables of words in relevant utterances (Figure 7a illustrates melody contours). The obtained data were subsequently put into MS Excel 2010 and statistically evaluated by the Statistica 13.1 software. Figure 7b below illustrates prosodic representation for the same utterance using a hierarchically structured set of phonological constituents (cf Gussenhoven 2015).

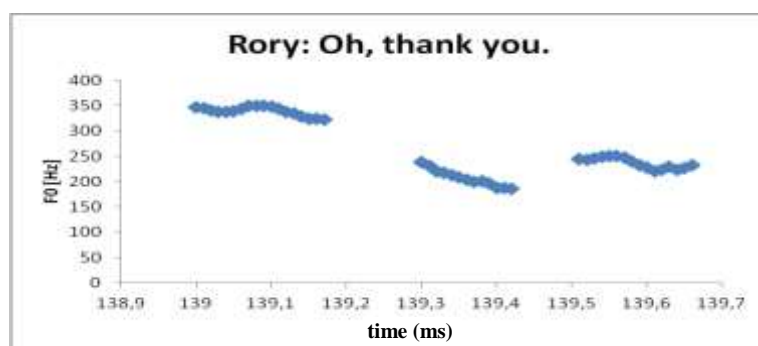


Figure 6a: Melody contour for the utterance: Oh, thank you.

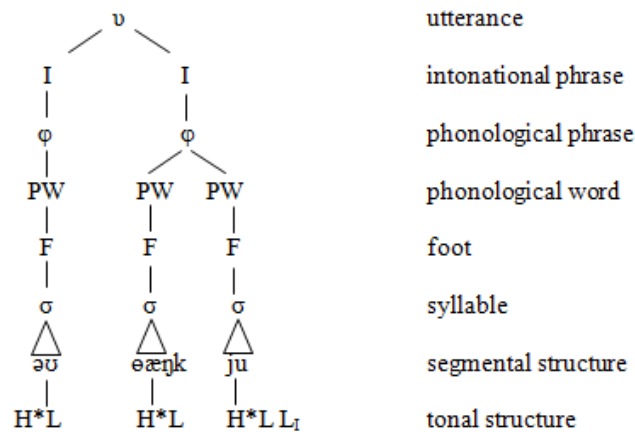


Figure 6b: Prosodic representation for the utterance: Oh, thank you.

We measured mean F0 values in semitones: these are more appropriate for investigating intonation since a human ear perceives sound frequencies logarithmically (Skarnitzl et al. 2016: 40). Mean F0 values for individual interactants in utterances with T-forms and V-forms indicate that according to non-parametric Mann-Whitney U test the differences are not statistically significant. However, some tendencies have been observed considering sociological parameters (see below).

### 3.3 Discussion and implications

#### 3.3.1 Sociolinguistic interpretation of pause duration

The measurements imply that the interpretation of the obtained data necessitates considering the sociological parameter of AGE. The opposition of teenager (Rory) vs. adult (Lorelai and Luke) can be formed (Tables 3a, 3b). In the age category of ‘teenager’, shorter mean pause duration was observed in the V forms, longer mean pause duration in the T forms. By contrast, in the age category of ‘adult’, shorter mean pause duration was observed in the T forms, longer mean pause duration in the V forms.

Table 3a: Mean duration and median of intrasentential pause V and T utterances

Interactants	T-forms		V-forms	
	mean pause duration [ms]	median [ms]	mean pause duration [ms]	median [ms]
RORY (teenager)	196	196	172	134
LORELAI (adult)	122	110	139	89
LUKE (adult)	137	128	224	250

Table 3b: Mean pause duration and sociological parameter of age

AGE	mean pause duration in T encounters	mean pause duration in V encounters
Teenager (Rory)	longer	shorter
Adult (Lorelai, Luke)	shorter	longer

### 3.3.2 Sociolinguistic interpretation of pitch accent placement

In the utterances marked for special emphasis, the differences among the three characters are less significant, which is why sociopragmatic interpretation presented below focuses on the utterances not so marked. With regard to sociological parameters, also in this case the sociological variable of AGE seems to have interesting impact on the interpretation. Considering the three characters involved in both T and V relationships, the difference is between teenager vs. adult. In the case of teenager (Rory), the V utterances outnumbered the T utterances by 60%. In the case of adults (Lorelai and Luke), the situation was the opposite – more utterances not marked for emphasis occurred in the T relationships than in the V relationships; the difference in the ratio of T and V utterances can be attributed to the sociological parameter of gender only within one age group (adult): in Lorelai’s case (female), the T utterances not marked for special emphasis outnumbered such V utterances by 80%, while in the case of Luke (male), the difference was only 42% (see Figure 8).

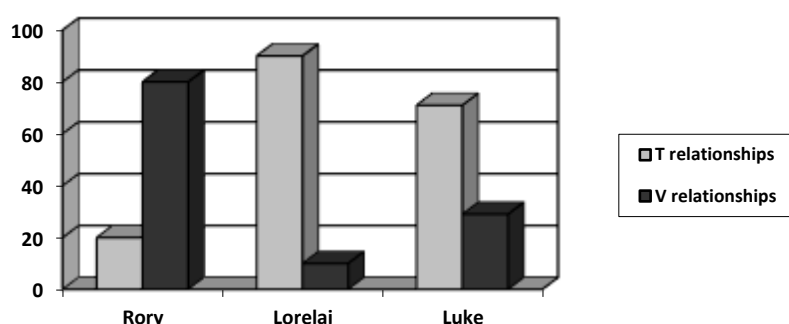


Figure 7: Utterances not marked for pitch accent placement and the sociological parameter of age

### 3.3.3 Sociolinguistic interpretation of melody

The comparison of melody contours in the dialogs forming the two subcorpora also necessitates taking into account the sociological variable of AGE. It is reflected in utterances by adult (Lorelai and Luke) vs. those by teenager (Rory), as illustrated by the tables below (Tables 4a, 4b). The age category of ‘teenager’ demonstrated lower mean F0 values in V forms, higher mean F0 values in T forms, while the age category of ‘adult’ showed lower mean F0 values in T forms, higher mean F0 values in V forms.

Table 4a: Mean F0 values in conversation employing T/V forms

AGE	T encounters		V encounters		V/T forms
	Mean F0 values [Hz]	Mean F0 values [ST]	Mean F0 values [Hz]	Mean F0 values [ST]	Mean F0 values [ST]
RORY (f)	277	17,63	249	15,79	-1,84
LORELAI (f)	246	15,58	253	16,07	0,49
LUKE (m)	162	8,35	191	11,20	2,85

Table 4b: Mean F0 values and sociological parameter of age

AGE	Mean F0 values in T encounters	Mean F0 values in V encounters
Teenager (Rory)	higher	lower
Adult (Lorelai, Luke)	lower	higher

#### 4. Conclusion

The present paper focuses on the phonic level. The reasoning behind the research on specifically this level with regard to the issue of social deixis is that some information in speech is independent of the morpho-syntactic structuring and propositional content of an utterance – such information is conveyed by intonation. Intonation is used to express a number of functions including attitudes – these appear to be directly linked to what Gussenhoven (2015) calls biological codes. Due to the absence of explicit markers of T/V distinction, it can be presupposed that English speakers rely on markers embedded in mind; logical inference is that markers of T/V distinction are present, yet in the form of non-conscious utilization of categorial aspects of intonation.

With regard to the target language data, the interpretation needed to account for sociological parameters of AGE and GENDER. The phonetic analysis did not bring statistically significant results (except for one case), yet some tendencies were indicated. The only case of statistically significant results was the difference in silent pause duration in T/V utterances in that V utterances exhibited longer silent pause duration than T utterances. The frequency of pauses, intrasentential pause duration, melody contour, and pitch accent placement shared the tendency which can be explained through the sociological parameter of age. The age group of teenager showed the results reversed to those in the age group of adult: what was applicable to T and V in the teenager group, it was applicable to V and T, in that order, in the adult group. The sociological parameter of gender did not prove relevant.

Even though the conducted research is only done on a limited corpus of utterances and encounters, and further exploration on a larger sample of data is necessary to support the above findings, an important fact has been revealed. The type of encounters known as V in the cultures differentiating between T and V relationships is hard to identify in the Anglophone setting. This indicates that on one hand, a phonic analysis is one of relevant variables in the search for parallels in T/V and non-T/V cultures; on the other hand, an appropriate corpus for such a study needs a rich typology of encounters as T and V relations have proven to be transient in the Anglophone setting. For future corpus-based research, it is necessary to bear in mind that defining a relationship as T or V necessitates profound contextualization and abundance of speakers to assure a profile of a true T or V encounter.

It is an intricate task for a non-native language user of English coming from a T/V based culture to detect what is considered proper social manners and etiquette. We believe, this can be unveiled by research. The issues dealt with in the present paper highlight the areas worthy of exploration and show that social meaning appears to be embedded in language use and may be intricately interwoven with sociological variables that need further attention. This leads our thinking in the following direction: if phonic realization is taken as covert for a native speaker, yet possible to identify through phonic research, in the long run, its identification may be deemed potentially applicable for L2 acquisition, which may result as an overt language means in the non-native speaker's mind.

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<sup>i</sup> In our understanding, an utterance embodies the modification of a sentence (syntactic construct) and the situationally and contextually determined attainment of a speaker's communicative intention delimited by speakers' swap (Crystal – Davy 1973, Yule 1996). A sentence signifies a detached, independent (predicative or non-predicative) structure, relatively non-compositional in meaning, intonationally delimited, and with grammar-consistent word ordering (Oravec – Bajžíková 1986).