

Urdu Intonation

The talk is about the analysis of Urdu speech using Tone and Break Indices (TOBI) transcription system undertaken to develop an Urdu speech corpus annotated with intonation. The analysis indicates that Urdu has three pitch accents (L*, L*+H and H*) and two levels of boundaries; accentual phrase (AP) boundaries (Ha and La) and intonational phrase (IP) boundaries (L%, H% and LH%). Accentual phrase is a pitch bearing unit on a single word, or more than one word in the contexts of a) izafat, b) conjunctive 'Vao', c) case markers, d) compound postpositions, and e) verb auxiliaries. The study also investigates the tonal structure of declarative, interrogative (Wh-questions and Yes-no questions) and imperative (semi-formal and polite) sentences in neutral focus context using 50 utterances produced by ten speakers (6 females and 4 males). Results indicate that (i) all declarative sentences consist of a series of APs with rising F0 contours within each – (aL) L* (H) Ha, except the sentence final AP which has a falling F0 contour – (H*) L%; (ii) wh-questions are different from their corresponding declaratives in terms of pitch range of the question word and the final boundary tone; (iii) imperatives are different from their corresponding declaratives in terms of final boundary tone.