

JUNCTURE IN SPEECH: ILLUSTRATIONS FROM THE NNEWI DIALECT OF IGBO

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Abstract

Juncture is a phonetic feature which contributes greatly in expression and meaning in speech. This phonetic feature can broadly be divided into two: the segmental and the non-segmental juncture. Although the non-segmental appears more obvious in speech, the segmental juncture contributes in no small measure in communication and in enriching language. More importantly, it provides very good atmosphere for speech planning and execution. This aspect of segmental juncture is otherwise called filled pause. They include different sounds, hesitations, parenthetical remarks, repetitions and the like which speakers employ in their speeches. They usually come into speech unconsciously although some speakers introduce them deliberately. Unfortunately, these forms of juncture have been receiving very poor attention in language studies and analysis and this has made many people to be ignorant of their importance and function in speech. Also, some teachers, journalists and others apparently but ignorantly disregard them. This study therefore strives to project these forms of juncture and their importance in communication, with illustrations from the Nnewi dialect of Igbo language. Some native speakers of Nnewi dialect were interviewed and their speech excerpts were collected as raw data for illustration and analysis. The Expressive function approach of the Functional Phonological theory of André Martinet was adopted for the execution of the study. In the end, it was discovered that filled pauses, otherwise called pausing are very necessary ingredients for planning and execution of speech. They also help to elevate speech, nay language/dialect. The study is therefore found quite relevant to linguistic scholars, language teachers and analysts, journalists and all literate public.

Keywords: Juncture, Speech, Nnewi, Igbo, Nigeria, Dialect.

Introduction

In speech act, certain phonetic features are observed or have to be observed by speakers. For instance, it is customary to observe pauses within or between isolate words or 'macrosegments'. It is equally necessary to observe the required sound change that go with, or that introduce these pauses. Furthermore, it is a mark of competence, for instance, to observe the aspiration that accompanies a

voiceless plosive, or accent in the initial syllable, or syllable ending in some dialects or languages. These features are usually introduced unconsciously.

Usually in speech, 'sharp transition' is required across a boundary between 'macrosegments' or isolate words, while 'muddy transition' occurs within a single 'macrosegment'. This is not forgetting the pauses (silent pauses) that have to be observed at the end of stops, comas, colons, semi colons, dashes, etc. These are *sine qua non* in speech act. Similarly, sound change is naturally expected at the end of a question, or before the introduction of a dependent clause or in associative constructions in Igbo. These phonemic notations that generally introduce pauses of different kinds and durations, as well as bring about some kind of sound change in the course of speech are generally referred to as juncture; and their major function in speech has also been described as distinctive and prosodic in nature.

It has been discovered that not all junctures are non-segmental. Some can also be segmental, such as introduction of parenthetical remarks. This type of juncture may also be introduced in speech consciously or unconsciously. In any case, they are meant to communicate. For instance, nervousness during speech such as 'languid drawl' or constant 'nervous giggle' has been described as a speech style, as well as a ploy to gain sympathy on a particular occasion. Similarly, 'throat clearing', introduction of foreign phonemes or speech segments within speech such as '-eem-', '-mhh-', '-ehe-', '-eee-', '-uh-', long silence, etc. all can be habitual or unconscious speech style for special purposes or intended meanings. These 'segmental junctures', here referred to as filled pauses are the main focus of this study. The paper will identify their components and also try to ascertain their function in speech, illustrating with the Nnewi dialect of Igbo.

It is also important to mention that whatever meaning any juncture has is governed by either the personality or class of the speaker or social milieu and social settings. Therefore, speakers in most languages have ways of signalling authoritativeness or submissiveness, seriousness or light heartedness, excitement or calmness, etc. Each of these attitudes certainly is not the same across cultures. In the same vein, social institutions devise attitudinal speech patterns to project the intended message and create the required aura. Therefore, one other important thing to be noted about juncture is that whereas some can be said to be conventional, some are specialised in the sense that they are unique in type and function.

Although works on juncture abound, none studied the forms and functions of filled pauses in speech and their use in specific language or dialect. Most of the available works are mainly explanations of the concept and do not consider their uniqueness in consonance with culture. They have also not located them to different disciplines or social milieu where they perform specialised roles.

In this study, the theory of Functional Phonology of the Prague School as developed by André Martinet has been adopted as the theoretical framework on which the analysis is built. As junctures are prosodic and distinctive in speech, the specific aspect of function adopted from the hierarchy developed by the approach is the Expressive Function. The filled pauses are introduced in speech to express some specific function.

The paper is arranged in four main sections. Section one presents the general introduction to the work and the methodology. Section two presents the theoretical framework upon which the analysis was based and also a review of some relevant literatures on the area. Section three is the discussion or analysis of the data collected, while Section four presents the findings of the study, conclusion and recommendations.

The tone marking convention adopted in the work is that propounded by Green and Igwe (1963) where only high tones are left unmarked while the low and step tones are marked.

Methodology

Data for the study were drawn from different literatures in Linguistics and language in general. Also, some people were interviewed and speech excerpts collected to provide data for illustrations in the Nnewi dialect and more importantly to ascertain the various functions served by these junctures in the dialect and in language in general. Both standard and non standard dialects of Igbo were employed where necessary.

Structural interview written in Igbo was used to collect information from the interviewees. Three informants were randomly selected, made up of two males and one female, all between the ages of 62 years and 72 years.

A tape recorder was used to record the responses of the interviewees. Later, these responses were transcribed and analyzed.

Theoretical Framework

This study adopts the theory of Functional Phonology of the Prague School which was associated with the Russian, Nikolaj Sergiyevich Trubetzkoy (1890 – 1938). The approach is also known as Prague School Phonology. This phonological theory was developed by the French, André Martinet (1908 – 1999). The Functional Phonology which was founded on linguistic functionalism has as its main thrust the “study of phonic elements from the point of view of various functions they fulfil in a given language” (Malmkjaer: 2007).

Several functions are identified by this theory, which are also ordered in hierarchy. Among these functions are the Distinctive function and the Expressive function. Although the Distinctive function is considered most popular because of its wide coverage, the Expressive function appears most suitable for the current study, hence its adoption.

The Expressive function approach, like the entire Functional theory, according to Matthews (2007), belongs to the general label – functional linguistics which was adopted by various schools of Linguistics that wish to emphasize the attention given in their theories to the functions of language in general, or to those of specific features in particular textual or other contexts. The Expressive function approach investigates discourses and the speech mannerism employed in executing them with a view to decipher the state of mind of the speakers and the intended meaning. Because of personal idiosyncrasies in speaking, or nature of language, certain junctures introduced are for special purposes or special meanings.

In discourses, speakers convey to their listeners their state of mind (more often) without resorting to the use of an additional moneme, that is, a minimal linguistic sign, or monemes (www.ling.fju.edu.tw/phono/Functional.htm). Instead, they may employ suprasegmental phonic elements such as “over lengthening, exaggerated pitch”, etc. (Malmkjaer, 2007). Thus, in exemplifying the use of suprasegment (phonic elements) as juncture and in defining intended meaning in “*That tree is NNNormous*”, Malmkjaer (2007:162) says: “... intonation pre-eminently fulfils the expressive function in which pitch phenomena are exploited expressively, i.e. speakers express definiteness or lack of definiteness, certainty or uncertainty, etc. in their minds about what they predicate”.

It follows therefore that through phonic elements, speakers colour their speech and therefore convey different meanings. In like manner, speakers express their state of mind through different ways which could cut across phonic elements,

introduction of parenthetical remarks, filled pauses, etc. These features, we may recall, may be conventional or culture bound; and each one of them is employed for special meaning.

In conclusion, the Functional Phonological theory, and precisely the Expressive function approach can be seen to be a very suitable theory in determining meanings in discourses, languages and subject registers. Its application in speech analysis is therefore significant for good results to be achieved.

Literature Review

The term juncture is a linguistic concept which Crystal (1997:424) describes as “phonetic boundary features that demarcate units of grammar, e.g. certain features of + pitch + duration, pause”. As a phonetic boundary, it demarcates two morphemes thereby introducing some sort of pauses at different times within a speech segment. This boundary is represented with the phonemic notation ‘+’, and it could be “open” or “close”. For example: “With juncture, *Good day!* is pronounced [gud+dey], as opposed to [gudey]”, (Bussmann, 1996:246).

In the above illustration, a pause is observed between the two macrosegments ‘good’ and ‘day’, and the linking of the segments could be ‘smooth-sailing’ or sturdy. Describing the production of this kind of speech segment in what he refers to as “transition contrasts”, Hockett (1958) says therefore that when there is a clean finishing of one vowel or consonant before transiting to the next, the result is “sharp transition”. When however the finishing is on the contrary, he calls the transition, “muddy transition”. In other words, sharp transition occurs across a boundary between macrosegments or isolate words, while muddy transition obtains within a single macrosegment or a single word such as ‘good’ or ‘day’ above. Therefore, juncture determines the flow of speech, and the author of this paper generally classifies juncture as pause and further follows the categorization of the concept into two, viz: silent and filled pauses. The silent pauses are generally the silent breaks between words. They include such features as stop, comma, hyphen, etc already enumerated above. The other kind of pause (juncture) - the filled pauses - refers to what Harley (2000) also calls “filled hesitation”. These include such sounds as ‘um’, ‘eh’, ‘uh’, ‘em’, ‘mm’, etc., a repetition, a false start, or a parenthetical remark such as ‘well’, ‘I mean’, ‘You know’, and so on. But, Harley (2000:245) categorically asserts: “Naturally unfilled pauses are easier to detect mechanically by the equipment used to measure pause duration, so analysis has focused upon them”. This assertion further

confirms that more studies have been conducted on the silent pauses than on the filled pauses.

Speaking requires the expenditure of energy because, it is work. During the act (of speaking), Hockett (1958:142) says: "The succession of units produced by a speaker is governed constantly by the changing context, by the units already produced, and by his habits". Therefore, the factors of changing context, units already produced and habits of the speaker all influence and determine what next to say and even whether to go on speaking or to stop. The usual result of this dilemma is pausing, hence Hockett (1958:142) continues: "Consequently, speech is broken up by pauses, by hesitations, by interruptions, by repetitions, by sudden changes of direction". The reason for these pausing, hesitations and the like is for the speaker to brace up with the task of utterance production. All these, including repetitions are introduced mainly "to "fill silence" while trying to think of what to say next..." (143). In a similar contribution, Harley enumerates various consequences of pausing. First, he says: "The theoretical emphasis in the past has been that pausing predominately reflects semantic planning" (Harley, 2000:245). In this contribution, he says that one major reason for pausing is for the speaker to ensure that he is making a meaningful statement. Other circumstances that lead to pausing, according to him, are "before words that are less *predictable* in the context of the preceding speech". Other reason for pausing is "retrieving the particular phonological form of the word", while yet another situation is 'The "tip-of-the-tongue state". The TOT state, he describes as "...more pronounced, yet nevertheless essentially transient, lexical access difficulty", (Harley, 2000:246). He describes the TOT state as the extreme form of pause. All these situations lead to pausing which Hockett (1958) had earlier described as ploy to fill silence while trying to think of what to say next.

Nonetheless, pausing in speech does not signify incompetence in any speech act as it has been observed in Hockett (1958:143) "... that speakers in any speech community vary in fluency of control, and that the same speaker varies in fluency from one occasion to another". For him, therefore, the variation should not be taken to mean difference between correct and incorrect speech. Furthermore, it should not be viewed either as differences of language habits, but rather as habits of some other order which are manifested along with language habits in speech.

Juncture has also been seen as a form of prosody. According to Malmkjaer (2002:429), "... prosody may be a phonetic feature which shows the demarcation between consecutive structures. Such prosody is often referred to as **junction**

prosody". Illustrating this assertion, he cites example with aspiration that accompany a voiceless consonant in Tamil, or accent in the initial syllable in Czech. In Tamil, Malmkjaer (2002) explains that although aspiration which serves as 'the focus of relevance' in the pronunciation of a Tamil voiceless plosive consonant occurs in word initial position as in [p^h] and in no other position, its 'domain of relevance' is actually the whole word. Similarly, in Czech, although accent falls on the initial syllable of a polysyllabic word, it characterizes the whole word. In other words, as prosody, juncture affects every aspect of the structure; that is, it expresses some specific meaning.

Clark, Yallop and Fletcher (2007) also observe that prosodies are not always superimposed on consonants and vowels, rather, suprasegmental effects are also often intertwined with the production of isolate consonants and vowels. They therefore define prosody as "... a set of higher-level organizational structures that account for variations in pitch, loudness, duration, spectral tilt, segment reduction and their associated articulatory parameters", (Clark, Yallop and Fletcher 2007:327). By this definition, they opine that prosodies also include (such) other para- and non-linguistic features which account for whatever changes or variations that may occur during speech. Perhaps, it was in consonance with the above that Bussmann (1996) describes juncture as an aspect of suprasegmental and distinctive feature; Hockett (1958:55) acknowledges the distinctive and contrastive characteristics of juncture and says: "Our way of providing for this is to recognise *sharp transition within a macrosegment* as a phoneme". These views have strongly projected juncture as that part within a speech continuum which introduces meaning other than the surface meaning. For instance, "At Penitential Rites/Services, silence is employed to allow examination of conscience, sorrow for sins committed and plea for forgiveness" (Obiefuna, B.A.C., 2014).

Malmkjaer (2002) also records that the Post-Bloomfieldians regard juncture phonemes as suprasegmental phonemes. However, although Malmkjaer (2002) recognises juncture as a suprasegmental phoneme, he views its form and function differently. Thus, he accepts its superimposed meaning on segmental phonemes, but says that it is not 'spread over' as is the case in 'pure suprasegmental phonemes'. Hence, he says:

Suprasegmental phonemes are said not to be linearly placed but to occur **spread over, or superimposed on**, a segmental phoneme or phonemes, but this is obviously not the case with juncture phonemes though their effects

themselves are phonetically manifested over segmental phonemes adjacent to the juncture phonemes. (Malmkjaer 2002:409).

Malmkjaer's assertion here justifies that even though juncture phoneme may be linearly placed, it still performs the same function of affecting and influencing the meaning of the entire segmental phoneme as does the suprasegment. This assertion is a major claim of this study.

As stated above, the aim of introducing juncture is to communicate; and to communicate here implies using special codes(junctures) to import special meaning. Such special codes (juncture phonemes) as identified by Clark, Yallop and Fletcher (2007) include nervousness, languid draw or nervous giggle. As they opine, some of these features project certain personality, and may be long-term style of speech. Some may be introduced to gain sympathy on a particular occasion such as the languid draw or the constant nervous giggle. As they continue, although some of the reasons for the use of the features may be a function of anatomy, others may be acquired as habitual characteristics. Hence, Hockett (1958:143) says: "Recent research suggests that much can be learned about a person through a close examination of his unedited speech". It follows therefore that a person's natural speech is expected to contain various kinds of pauses (including filled pauses).

Whatever the case, the conventions that govern the behaviours differ among languages, societies and social settings. Hence, Clark, Yallop and Fletcher (2007:328) have this to say: "... most speakers in most languages have ways of signalling authoritativeness or submissiveness, seriousness or lightheartedness, excitement or calmness, even though these states or attitudes will certainly not be identical across cultures". Worthy of mention here is that different disciplines like religion also signal different shades of meaning using peculiar features such as silence. This may be the reason they note: "silence: pauses are important ingredient of our communicative resources"; and citing Allen (1987) on rules for pause durations in English also state, "the length of pause increases with the size of the syntactic or informational units which the pauses demarcate" (Clark, Yallop and Fletcher 2007:333).

Despite the nature and function of these phonetic features, they influence the form and meaning of discourses. For instance, they modify the speech production of such words. Such speech modification Gimson (1980) refers to as a consequence of the speaker's consciousness of the word as an independent entity or the distinctive function of phonetic features in the speech continuum. Here, he

notes that different pauses like close or open junctures within a speech introduce phonetic differentiation. In the above assertion, Gimson opines that modifications in production of words could be as a result of isolate form of the word, or as a result of the type of juncture.

Hockett (1958:54) also observes that when the phonetic notations that exist between “macrosegments” are correctly observed, there is usually difference of sound. He then says: “Any difference of sound which functions to keep utterances apart is by definition part of the phonological system of the language - ...”. On the other hand, Clark, Yallop and Fletcher (2007) note that in any given language, the way rhythmic structures and stress placement are integrated influences duration patterns of that language. They illustrate with English and Dutch where, they say, stressed syllables are generally much longer than unstressed ones. In tone languages like Thai, they state, “there may be an interaction between tone and vowel duration in that vowels carrying rising tones are generally longer than vowels carrying falling tones, all things being equal”. In line with Gimson’s (1980) and Hockett’s (1958) observations above, these rhythmic structures and stress placements; or rising and falling tones all bring about speech modification including sound difference. That notwithstanding, the modification that is of concern to this study is interruption in the flow of speech occasioned by filled pauses during speech.

Empirical Review

Speech is based on knowledge and competence in the code one is using. These include knowledge of the lexis and structure of the language as well as the evolving meaning of the structure. Also relevant is knowledge of the people’s culture which includes their style of speaking. Language, as is often said, encodes cultural norms and idiosyncrasies. Hence, Chukwu and Okeke (2012) observe that style of language use makes a written or an oral text conversational or personal, come alive endearing and interesting. Their claim is used to recapture the significance of language to culture and encoding of cultural norms and idiosyncrasies, with their study centred on Awgu dialect of Igbo.

Other aspect of style that embellishes language, according to the authors is repetition. Thus, they say: “...repetition or refrain or chorus makes a text suffused with aesthetic colour” (Chukwu and Okeke 2012:180). As a form of juncture, repetition helps to make a language/dialect colourful.

Furthermore, Chukwu and Okeke (2012) note that language personifies a text. In other words, various levels of style of the language of a people indicate who

speaks at any time and situation. This suggests that adults, children, males and females each have their form and level of language.

Contributing to the place of language and speech style in conveying a person's message, Chukwukere (2006:65) aptly states, "Language touches upon a people's most ingrained emotions however and incoherent it may sound to a non-native/speaker". In the Igbo cultural setting therefore, elders' speech are not as plain and simplistic as they may sound. They are, however, more complex than those of the younger ones. This is because they employ different forms of junctures - conventional and idiosyncratic alike to colour and drive home their point. One such juncture (attitude) common to them is clearing of throat. Thus, she observes that clearing of throat within speech is an attribute of old age and wisdom in Igbo. Hence, she asserts, "The result is that on each occasion an old man is presented by the Igbo playwright, readers would predict the action of the clearing throat" (Chukwukere 2006:68).

The above contributions help to identify the various forms and functions of juncture used in speeches in Igbo. They also help to buttress the point that each speech has bearing with the culture of the speaker, and that these various forms of juncture add to the coloration of the language or dialect.

Analysis of Data

To determine the form and functions of pauses in speech, live speeches in the Nnewi dialect of the Igbo language were collected from native speakers of the Nnewi dialect and then studied. Nnewi dialect is located within the East Niger Group of Dialects (ENGD) of Nwaozuzu's (2008) classification of Igbo dialects.

i. Aspects of Pausing in Nnewi Dialect

Pausing in speech has been described as a regular feature in the speech of an average native speaker of the Nnewi dialect. Some people pause as they speak because they are stammerers, whereas others introduce pausing for special purposes. All the data collected opine that other dialects also introduce juncture in speech and confirm that most Nnewi dialect speakers introduce pausing junctures in their speech. This confirms the earlier claim by Clark, Yallop and Fletcher (2007) that most speakers in most languages have diverse ways of signalling different attitudes and meanings in their speech, and also that the conventions that govern the behaviours vary among societies and social settings. According to one of the interviewees, G.O. Onyekaonwu, some of these pauses (filled pauses) commonly employed in the dialect include:

(1) *e-ee; eee, e-eem, m-hhm, mm.*

(2) *mbụụ, mbụụm, naa m, mbụ na m, njizim, ọ kwọọ m, ! ma na m..., maka na m.*

(3) *throat clearing, drawling, repetition.*

The examples of pauses commonly found in the dialect as classified above indicate that some are mere sounds as in (1). The examples in (2) can be described as parenthetical remarks, while example (3) can be described as instances of speech habit. In other words, the forms of pausing juncture discovered in the dialect fall into the three main classes above. These forms of juncture can fall into either of these Lounsbury's (1954) distinctions of pauses as captured by Harley (2000) - 'hesitation pauses' that reflect planning by the speaker, or 'juncture pauses' otherwise known as micropauses (usually shorter than 250 milliseconds) that reflect articulation difficulties rather than planning time. Thus, the examples in (1) which are mere sounds fall within what Lounsbury classifies as juncture pauses (micropauses), while those in (2) which are parenthetical remarks represent his hesitation pauses.

According to G.O. Onyekaonwu, pausing is called '**nsùsù**' in the dialect. He also said that pausing is introduced as a ploy to adjust the flow of thought and to be more articulate in discussion. Also, pausing comes in to bring in what is necessary in order not to falter. Then, he goes on: "Hence, it is often said and believed that a Nnewi person is full of wisdom". Furthermore, the interview reveals that pausing is common in the speech of elders, especially males. As G.O. Onyekaonwu again said: "Pausing is not common with the youth, otherwise he will be seen as talking as an adult or being endowed with adult intellect". Corroborating Onyekaonwu's claim, C. Onuchukwu puts it this way:

Ọ bvụ nde okenye, ma nwoke ma nwanyi, mana ọ bvụkarị ụmụ nwoke na-
ewbvata nsùsù ma

ha na-ekwu okwu.

(It is the elderly, both male and female, but it is mainly the males that introduce pausing when they are speaking)

Finally, some people who use pausing juncture in the Nnewi dialect are said to introduce them merely as speech style, thus supporting the earlier claim that it can be brought in consciously. However, this is not a strong opinion about the presence of pausing in the Nnewi dialect. Clark, Yallop and Fletcher (2007:327)

point out above that these features may be “unconscious or deliberate; but nonetheless they communicate”.

ii. Functions of Juncture in the Nnewi Dialect

Apart from the fact that juncture is a necessary part of normal speech, it also serves important semantic functions in speech. In the Nnewi dialect therefore, juncture (filled pauses) serve very special purposes in communicating in the dialect. As already mentioned above, a speech of an average Nnewi elder is laden with meaning. This is evident in the frequent use of proverbs, metaphors and pausing by adult speakers of the dialect. In the words of P.N. Nnaji for, one of the informants:

(5) “Nde Nnewi na-ewebvatakarị ilu. Ma e wepụ nke a, ha na-asụ nsùsù kpatalụ e ji ekwu na okenye asughị nsùsù ọ gbaa ama”.

(People of Nnewi usually introduce proverbs. But minus this, they normally pause which is the reason it is always said that if an elder does not pause he reveals secret).

What the above statement indicates is that a speech of an elder is embellished with such ingredients as proverbs and pause. Thus, our research shows that in such special functions as traditional breaking of kola, pausing is usually introduced. The reasons for its use in a function like this include: “... to reach the ancestors/God ...; during admonition of children; in responding to a query; to control thought; ...”. For instance, in a traditional breaking of kola nuts we can have such speech pattern as this rendered by P.N. Nnaji for:

(6) “Hrhrhrhrhr, ibe anyị mbụ na ejinụ m ọjị o!

M wee na-asị na ọ ya-adirịnụ ayị mma o!

E-eem, ngu onye ji eko ya akwanahuna ya o!

Na mm onye malụ ife ya-ese okwu ya emenaya na, ọ kwọ udo ya-achi!

! malụ na m, e-eem, ọkpa ụnụ ji bịa ka ụnụ ya-eji na;

Maka na ọ bialụ be onye abiagbughu ya, ọ najeyi mkpukpu aya-apụ ya o!

Mbụ na ọ ya-aha m etu a; Chukwu nalụ ayị ọjị, Ọ taa na mbu ayị ataa n’ibe tata ahụ ike n’afa

Jizọs Krast bụ onye nwe ayi oo!”

The excerpt is a typical traditional kola nut breaking session in Nnewi dialect, the type rendered at a cultural event. The italicised segments represent filled pauses in the speech, including throat clearing (line 1), micropauses (lines 3, 4, 5), and hesitation pauses (5, 6, 7), each serving one function or the other. For instance, throat clearing serves dual functions here: drawing attention of the audience as well as invoking the gods. This supports Harley's (2000:250) assertion that says: "...it is quite possible that any one particular pause might serve more than one function...". The parenthetical remarks here are mainly for planning, including syntactic planning, while the micropauses are mainly for articulation of thoughts.

Pausing juncture is also discovered to be introduced to serve co-ordinating function in the dialect. For instance, in listing of items, pausing juncture such as the micropauses are employed in the dialect. For example, G.O. Onyekaonwu again gives these instances:

(7) (i) *Obi ee mm, Ada ee mm, Okoyeee mm, Ojukwu eee mm, Orizu etc*

(ii) ... *mbuyuu ... ego iri*

In the illustrations above, the pauses are used, first of all to serialise the items and secondly they help the speaker to articulate his thoughts as he speaks. The example in (7ii) also indicates that the pause helps the speaker to articulate his thought but mainly when called upon to speak impromptu.

Furthermore, pausing juncture in the dialect helps to enrich the dialect. As earlier pointed out, pauses (filled pauses) are mainly used by adults. Therefore, they use them more artfully, hence the belief that it is a speech style. In the words of P.N. Nnaji for and corroborated by C. Onuchukwu,

(8) "Ọ na-eme ka ofeke ghalu ịma ife a na-ekwu. N'aka nke ọzọ, ọ na-eme ka asusu di enu, nwee nghota miri emi ma luo ọlu ya nke oma".

(It makes the stupid not to understand what is being discussed. On the other hand, it enriches language, makes it have deep meaning and also plays its role well).

He further stated that pausing is usually employed by orators in their speeches, as well as during very important discussions. Thus, he says:

(9) “Ana-ewebvata ilu na nsùsù mgbe ọbùla onye maalu ọnu okwu na-ekwu okwu, ma ọ bụkari mgbe a na-ekwu okwu di mkpa”.

(Proverbs and pausing are used when speech experts talk, but it is mostly when important matters are being discussed).

The employment of proverbs and pausing in speech is done by elders and speech experts like orators in the dialect and usually when serious issues are being discussed. As we know, figurative expressions are used mainly by adult native speakers and speech experts in any language or dialect.

In speech generally, pausing juncture are employed for various purposes. These purposes as summarised by Harley (2000) are for microplanning which occurs to help in retrieving particularly difficult words. It is also during this period that the speaker articulates his thoughts well. The other purpose is macroplanning which is hesitation to plan the syntax and content of a sentence. Duration of pausing differs from one to another. Pausing for microplanning lasts shorter than that for macroplanning. In any case, pausing enhances good and articulate speech and facilitates communication.

iii. Analysis of Speech Excerpts with pausing from the Nnewi Dialect

Excerpts (1) and (2) in the Appendix were rendered by the informants in the Nnewi dialect. A close study of the excerpts reveals that there are a good number of filled pauses in the speeches. These are written in italics. The pauses are of different forms depending on their functions in the speeches. For instance, Excerpt (1) on Local Council Elections in Anambra State rendered by G.O. Onyekaonwu is full of such filled pauses that represent the seriousness of the topic. This corroborates Hockett’s (1958) view that the succession of units a speaker produces is a factor of the changing context, the units already produced and his habits. Here, a very serious issue is being discussed and the speaker is being careful in selecting the right words for the right message, hence a lot of languid drawls as can be found in line 1: *i ma naam, mbu naam*, in line 3: *Ọ bụ eziokwu naam*, also in lines 5, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, 14, etc. There are hesitations, including what the researcher describes as elliptical hesitations which include the following: *eem*, ‘*a yaa ... e nwelu*’, ‘*i ya-akuzilinu m nu ka ...*’. Parenthetical remarks are also present in the speech. This is also reminiscent of the speech of elders in Igbo. Again, there are quite a number of repetitions in the speech. Apart from seemingly suggesting the speech habit of the speaker, this form of pausing serves for emphasis and as a check to enable the speaker organise his thought.

Generally speaking, these filled pauses colour and elevate the speech as is common in the dialect.

Excerpt (2) given by P.N. Nnaji for, though not as serious as excerpt (1) is also embellished with different pauses. These range from micropauses and macropauses. But, as a mere narration of story, it does not involve as serious forms of pauses as in the other excerpt. There are, however, such forms of pauses as mere sounds, parenthetical remarks repetitions and elliptical hesitation. Thus, it projects the levels of speeches which different contexts produce. They also show that speeches in the dialect are context-bound and subject-dependent. For Excerpt 1, the speaker knows that the issue is serious and sensitive and is employing all forms of pausing both to guard his thought as well as to check the environment and his listener(s). These instances of pausing in the excerpts help to show the forms and functions of junctures commonly introduced in the speech of average Nnewi dialect speakers, particularly the elderly.

Summary of Findings and Conclusion and Recommendations

i. Findings

In the end, it was discovered that there are various types of junctures; some suprasegmental and others segmental. These linguistic features were also discovered to be distinctive and are of essence and therefore serve specialised functions; and these functions vary from one language (dialect) or context to another – all geared towards communication.

From the discussions, it has become evident that junctures are important ingredients in rendition of any good speech. They are relevant for colourful and meaningful communication. Therefore, pauses are a special form of juncture which contributes to meaning in speech.

Both supra and segmental phonemes serve as juncture. Furthermore, all the pauses and extralinguistic features introduced within speech convey some meaning. Such pauses as throat clearing, sounds and parenthetical remarks. Similarly, specific disciplines and languages/dialects employ specific forms of juncture for specific meanings. In religious observances, for instance, silence or elliptical hesitations convey special information during speech.

Junctures are culture-bound or context-based. In Nnewi, for instance, throat clearing, hesitations, parenthetical remarks, repetitions are quite significant.

Also, in Nnewi, such junctures as *mbuumm*, *e-eeem*, *mbunaam*, *throat clearing*, *hesitations*, colour discourse and make their speech to be more elevated and complex. In the same way, such junctures as *throat clearing*, *njizim*, *mbu naam*, are distinctive in their speech.

Finally, Nnewi dialect of Igbo language makes profuse use of pausing juncture in speeches particularly by elders at such occasions as kola nut breaking, admonitions, traditional marriage ceremonies, etc.

ii. Conclusion

In conclusion, pausing as an aspect of juncture serves as check for meaning and expression in speech. It is of two major kinds, the silent (unfilled) and filled pauses. In normal speech, pausing comes in unconsciously, but occasionally, speakers introduce pausing deliberately. Despite that, some people pause due to natural reasons of say being stammerers, or as a result of some other internal speech organ disorder. Also, some languages/dialects lend themselves more to pausing than others.

Different forms of pausing serve different functions in speech. The micropauses are mainly to create opportunity for the speaker to articulate his thought and realign his flow of thought, if necessary. This usually lasts very briefly, usually about 250 milliseconds. For macropauses, the speaker waits a little longer. During pausing, he checks the syntactic and semantic appropriateness of his sentences.

All the same, pausing does not necessarily determine the speaker's competence in the language/dialect, or his linguistic ability, rather as Hockett (1958:144) succinctly puts it, they "are revealing both of his basic personality and of his momentary emotional orientation". No wonder he says that much can be learned about a person through his unedited speech.

The purpose a particular form of pausing serves at one time may not necessarily be the same at another context. This is fully illustrated in the discussion on Nnewi dialect and the excerpts from native speakers of the lect.

In all circumstances, pausing helps in communication and in enriching language. It strengthens the affinity of language and culture. It also elevates the figurative strength of a language or dialect.

iii. Recommendations

The researcher recommends that further study be conducted on the subject using the dialect to broaden its communicative capacity. The study is therefore recommended for all linguistics scholars, journalists, teachers of language and indeed the general literate public since language is used by all for inter-personal interaction and communication.

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