

THE ROLE OF PROSODY IN CONVEYING THE FOLK TEXT SUBLIMINAL EFFECT

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Contemporary phonetic research is marked by its interdisciplinary orientation, necessitating, in the first place, the integration of psychological findings, especially those concerning the mechanisms and regularities through which prosody can produce a subliminal influence on the listener. In view of this, one of the issues worked out by the Kyiv School of Phonetics within the framework of the energetic approach (Kalyta 2015) is the correlation between the text emotional-and-pragmatic potential and its prosodic organisation being capable of creating the text subliminal effect.

Subliminal influence is viewed as a subtle communicative impact that shapes the recipient's behaviour, attitudes, and thought patterns while operating beneath their conscious awareness. This sort of influence is present in many areas of life, since people constantly receive signals from their micro- and macro-environments (Klymeniuk, Kalyta & Taranenko 2024, pp. 160-167). It is also worth noting that subliminal stimuli applied in communicative practice can, on the one hand, prompt individuals towards actions or, on the other hand, dissuade them from certain behaviours (Klymeniuk, Kalyta & Taranenko 2024, pp. 27-28).

The objective of this study is to outline a set of prosodic means, whose interplay in small form folk texts has the potential of generating a subliminal suggestive effect on their recipients.

We define a small folklore text as a prosaic folk composition characterised by its lapidary style, i.e. compactness of expressive means, absence of redundant information, and simplicity of composition as well as a high concentration of pragmatic loading, i.e. ability to realise both educational and subliminal functions since their ideas have been guiding individuals throughout centuries and generations regarding their social behaviour and perception of the universe.

The auditory analysis of 381 English small folklore texts, grouped according to their pragmatic orientation into three enlarged classes: spiritual-and-ideological (myths, legends), cultural-and-household (proverbs, fairy tales), and creative-and-teaching (riddles, anecdotes, parables) texts, reveals that metaphor and allegory are prevailing linguistic devices across all folk texts, capable of triggering the recipient's cognitive response. Yet, because these texts employ simple syntax, contain minimal information, and make use of limited stylistic imagery, their pragmatic impact and thus subliminal effect is chiefly conveyed through prosodic means' interaction.

This effect is realised by the intonational isochrony of adjacent syntagms through parallel intonational patterns and rhythmic structures combined with falling tones having the same rate of their movement. The effect is further reinforced by the identical distribution of stressed syllables within adjacent intonation groups, a similar duration of pauses within the text plot elements, as well as by the predominance of short intonation groups comprising one or two rhythmic groups only. Additionally, the didactic aim of the text is accentuated by the special rise or a perceptive pause preceding a keyword pronounced with a high falling kinetic tone of an upward-downward contour.

The carried out auditory analysis of the three pragmatic classes of folk texts, gives us every reason to qualify the abovementioned prosodic means as the invariant ones that aim at activating cognitive processes in the recipient's psychic sphere ensuring the folk text suggestive subliminal effect.

References:

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