

Distribution Pattern of Duration of different Sentence Types in Standard Mandarin

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Abstract: Based on theory of Hierarchical System of Intonation, Using the computing method of Rate of Pause and Extension, we conducted a detailed analysis and comparison of the duration on different intonation levels including simple sentences and complex sentences. Simple sentences included basic pattern which was declarative sentence with natural focus and varied patterns. Varied patterns included the following types, such as semantic focus, functional focus which contained interrogative sentence, imperative sentence and exclamatory sentence. Complex sentence: rhetorical parallelism was chosen in the paper. By comparison, we generalized their individual distribution pattern of duration. Compared with the averaged value, the durational distribution of boundary tone, focus tone, semantic tone and mood tone showed a gradient growth. In the mood tone, according to the different mood types, such as functional mood, the intensity of mood, and the emotional color, the durational distribution showed the high and low differences. By the durational comparison between different hierarchical intonation and basic intonation, we got the distribution boundaries and domains of duration among boundary tone, focus tone, mood tone, and pragmatic tone respectively.

Key Words: Standard Mandarin; Intonation hierarchy; distribution pattern; duration; rate of pause and extension