

19 February 2004

Phonetic resources for agreeing and disagreeing in second assessments.

Richard Ogden

Department of Language & Linguistic Science, University of York

YORK YO10 5DD, England

rao1@york.ac.uk, <http://www.york.ac.uk/depts/lang/research/Phonetics/index.html>

C		I'm going to Holland .h for my (.) .h holiday in Easter,=
P		=ah <u>EX</u> cellent=whereabouts in <u>H</u> olland?= C
C		=Amsterdam and I just do not wanna go
P		↑WHY.
C	1→	I just don't wanna go=it's gonna be (.) boring I think,
P	2→	no, it's gonna be really [good.]
C		[↑it <u>i</u> s]n't, I'm tranna trade my (0.5) my ticket for my friend's cuckoo clock
P		hahahahahahahahahah

1 Introduction

Firth (1935; 1957: 19):

“a complex of contextual relations, and phonetics, grammar, lexicography and semantics each handles its own components of the complex in its appropriate context”

Firth (1957: 29):

“The meaning of language can be stated in linguistic terms if the problem is dispersed by analysis at a series of congruent levels”

Firth (1957: 32):

“...a theory of analysis dispersed at a series of levels must require synthesis at each level and congruence of levels”

Important aspects of Firthian linguistics:

- analysis at a series of congruent levels

- context of situation
- polysystematicity as axiomatic

Heritage (1984: 241):

1. Interaction is structurally organised
2. Contributions to interaction are contextually oriented
3. These two properties inhere in the details of interaction so that no order of detail can be dismissed, *a priori*, as disorderly, accidental, or irrelevant.

Important aspects of methodology—cf. Wootton (1989), Couper-Kuhlen & Selting (1996), Pomerantz & Fehr (1997) and Hutchby & Woffitt (1998); Curl (2003), Local (1996, 2003), Ogden (2001, 2003):

- commitment to naturally-occurring data
- sensitivity to (sequential, social, interactional, linguistic) context
- analytic categories grounded in the data:
 1. relation to prior turns
 2. subsequent treatment of the device
 3. co-occurring features
 4. discriminability
 5. analysis of deviant cases

2 Overview of assessment sequences

2.1 Lexical resources (Pomerantz 1984)

Table 1. Linguistic resources for (dis-)agreement, Pomerantz (1984)

Agreement type	Linguistic form	Example
strong agreement	upgraded assessment term	<i>hot</i> → <i>boiling</i>
'same' assessment	modifier	<i>not bad</i> → <i>not bad at all</i>
	repeat of assessment term	<i>nice</i> → <i>nice</i>
'downgraded' assessment	partial repeat but no assessment term	<i>that's nice</i> → <i>yes it is</i>
	scaled-down or weakened assessment	<i>beautiful</i> → <i>pretty</i> <i>really cool</i> → <i>kinda fun</i>
strong disagreement	antonym	<i>boring</i> → <i>really good</i> <i>like X</i> → <i>hate X</i>

2.2 Preference organisation (Pomerantz 1984, Sacks 1986)

Preferred turns (e.g. agreement)

- gap between first pair part and second pair part minimised
- agreement takes up whole turn
- agreement is indexed soon

Dispreferred turns (e.g. disagreement)

- disagreement delayed:
 - no immediately forthcoming talk
 - repair initiation
 - devices for delay, e.g. *well, uh*, etc.
- common format: [agree + disagree]; [agree] component done with ‘same’ or ‘downgraded’ assessment

2.3 Epistemic authority and access (*Heritage 2002, Heritage & Raymond 2002*)

- In making an assessment, a speaker makes a claim to some grounds on which to assess (e.g. knowledge, experience)
- One ground on which not to assess is lack of knowledge or evidence
- As well as agreeing/disagreeing, participants are frequently jostling over authority to assess.

3 Data

A collection of c.100 assessment pairs from several sources amounting to approximately 40 hours of naturally-occurring talk:

- the CallHome corpus, a corpus of phone calls from US Americans to friends and family abroad
- the “York Lab Data” corpus, consisting of pairs of friends (mostly students in their early 20s) chatting in a recording studio
- British (local and national) radio phone-in shows
- the Holt corpus
- collections of data known as “NB”, “SBL” and “Rahman”

In the data fragments, 2→ has an overt assessment term, e.g.:

A	1→	DP + {verb, copula} + assessment term
B	2→	DP + {verb, copula} + assessment term
A	1→	I like sitting in the window.
B	2→	Oh I hate it

This excludes very common pairs, e.g. (GTS : 4 : 15):

A	1→	he’s terrific!
B	2→	he is.

Phonetic analysis concentrates on relation of 2→ to 1→.

4 Strong agreement

4.1 Overall shape

- 2→ is a lexical upgrade of 1→
- Gap between 1→ and 2→ minimal.

4.2 Data fragments

Fragment (1) smc/00.0907.german castle

B and there was one day when I had like work to do and stuff so
I said "right this is what you're doing todahahay"
showed them like in the guide book where it was
sent them off on their own=
A ="listen it's just south of here" [hehe
B [hehe .mmh
A "and if you take highway duh"
B 1→ it's supposed to be really really pretty;
A 2→ oh it's supposed to be g:orgeous.
crowds are supposed to be pretty
bad [°in the summer°]
B [yeah really] bad cos it's like one hundred percent
touristy

Fragment (2) nrb/01.irishman

K 1→ °I find that gu#y#, (.) really funny #no:w#,°=
J =°that Iris[h one°
K [f↑Irish guyf
J 2→ ↑he's ↑hila:riou[s
K [because I thought he was really (.) scary and
really like .hh ehm sort of set in his ways and
J [yeah]
K [he's just in]terested isn't he he's like .h "well I was
r:reading about this"
and I'm like "(* * *
[* * * *)]"
J [but he's quite interested]
K yeah
J he is a bit frightening though I mean that black nail polish
K horrendous quite scary isn't

Fragment (3) Callhome 4610 290

B I'm in the Hamptons
A Eah
B E [I'm
A [which one
(0.5)
B ehm
(0.3)
B actually I'm in Amagansett [which is] between Bridgehampton=

[(click)]

B =and Easthampton I guess

A 1→ it sounds enormously po[sh]

B [pt]

A 2→ it'[s] it's superposh here I am going from Santa Fe to =

[(click)]

B = the Hamptons my summer is just filled with luxury

A s[ounds wonderful]

B [.hh ha ha] ha

A how's Helena

4.3 Phonetic characteristics

Overall, the phonetic characteristics of 2→ as compared to 1→ include (cf. Curl 2002):

- an increase in loudness
- an expanded pitch span
- pitch higher in the speaker's range
- slower tempo
- closer, tenser articulations (closer to 'hyper-speech' than 'hypo-speech')

Table 2. Pitch span (semitones) of Fragments 1-3:

	Fragment 1	Fragment 2	Fragment 3
1→	5.7	3.7	4.5
2→	7.3	7.9	5.2

Impressionistic records of the assessment pair in Fragment 1:

1→ ʔs:ɸɜs tʰ βɪ .rɪ:ɹɪ .rɪ:ɹɪ pɹe?ɪɪ

2→ e ɪtsɒstə βɪk⁷ g:^wɔ:ɹɸɜs

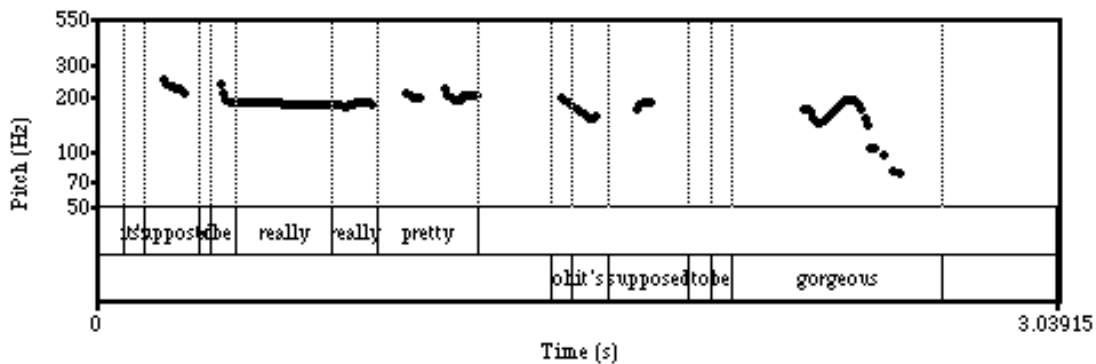


Figure 1. F0 traces of 1→ and 2→ in Fragment 1.

5 Overt (strong) disagreement

5.1 Overall shape:

- 2→ is constructed with an antonym of 1→, or some assessment term which overtly refutes 1→
- 2→ is often prefaced by *no*
- 2→ often repeats a stance adopted earlier by the same speaker at 0→
- 2→ comes in soon—not delayed—and therefore has the format of a turn promoting a preferred action (cf. Goodwin, Goodwin & Yaeger-Dror 2002)

5.2 Data fragments

Fragment (4) smc/00.0090.diet coke

A [it's OK]
B [it's horri]ble
(0.7)
A well I mean it's not like fabulous
(0.3)
A 0→ much prefer diet coke
(0.5)
B 1→ >no- well you see< ↑diet coke's exa(ha)ctly the same
1→ disgusting yeu#:agh:##
A 2→ no ↑diet coke is better.
`s- I don't like aspartame
B ((quiet giggle))
A °and diet coke has nutrasweet°

Fragment (5) njc/00.restaurant

M we always end up in the window though which I normally don't like but they've got really thick net curtains there
°>so people can't see in<°
0→ I hate people that- seeing you eat
W 1→ ↑oh I like sit[ting in the window,]
M 2→ [f#oh# I h:]Ate itf
(0.7)
W °oh n[o:,°]
M [#I always] feel like# some sort of performing chimp'f
(1.0)
M (* * *) I always seem to spill my dinner down my front that's not good to be on public display

Fragment (6) Nightowls amsterdam.0036.boring

C I'm going to Holland .h for my (.) .h holiday in Easter,=
P 0→ =ah EXcellent=whereabouts in Holland?=
C =Amsterdam and I just do not wanna go
P ↑WHY.
C 1→ I just don't wanna go=it's gonna be (.) boring I think,
P 2→ no, it's gonna be really [good.]

C [↑it is]n't, I'm tranna trade my
 (0.5) my ticket for my friend's cuckoo clock
 P hahahahahahahahahahah

5.3 Phonetic characteristics

- 'Upgraded' phonetic patterns, very similar to those for strong agreement.
- 2→ typically has a very wide pitch span, over an octave

Table 3. Pitch span (semitones) of Fragments 4-6:

	Fragment 4	Fragment 5	Fragment 6
1→	13.6	13.4	5.7
2→	17.8	17.9	18.5

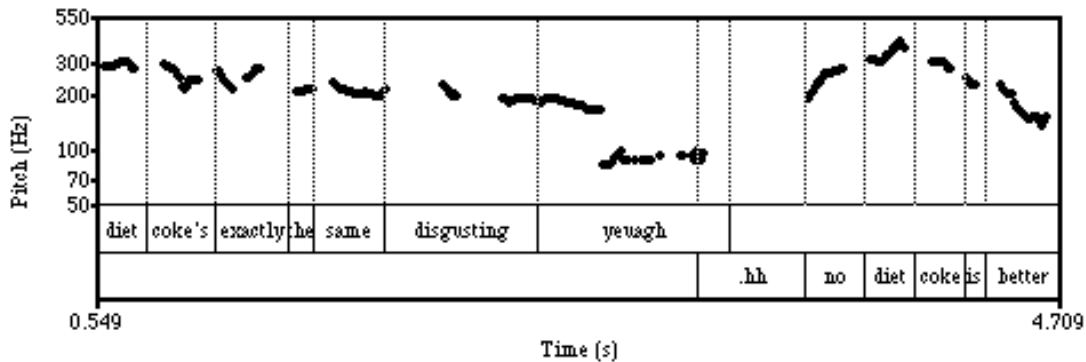


Figure 2. F0 traces of 1→ and 2→ in Fragment 4.

6 Weak agreement + disagreement

6.1 Overall shape:

- 2→ is a lexical downgrade of 1→, or a 'same' assessment
- 2→ is often delayed with respect to transition relevance at the end of 1→
- at 3→ a contrasting assessment is made by the same speaker, giving rise to the format [agree + disagree]

6.2 Data fragments

Fragment (7) smc/00.0425.househunting

B they came back and stuff and it's just like .h
 you haven't got time, to search for a #house#;
 A yeah [you can't]
 B [and they're there] I mean I came

A [back here in the middle of Aug#u#st,
 [you can't do that from] thousands of miles
 aw#ay#.

B and you need at least one person who's willing to do it all,
 to sort out, to find some#where#,

A 1→ and it's (.) a l:ot °of eff#or#t°=
 B 2→ °it is quite a lot of hassle°,
 3→ unless you like cos sometimes it's just luck(y) isn't it you
 just like walk in and find someone who who's got a house for
 the right number of people

Fragment (8) gw/00.washing machine

H? °'ts crap°
 E they should just put a slot machine in that- that bloo[dy
 H [↑mm
 (0.6)
 H stupid
 (2.0)
 E [I mean why]
 H 1→ [but it's] better than tokens #though#;
 (0.4)
 E 2→ yes it is better than token[s],
 H [cos like you always went to the
 porter and he said "oh we've got none" like went back two days
 later and he still had none
 E 3→ .mt we-uhm (1.0) my card always says bad card all the time

Fragment (9) nrb/01.reluctant lover

J he wouldn't stop asking her out
 he used to ring her like three times a day and she'd go "no:
 no:" .h or she'd say yes and not turn up
 and then she just completely fell for him
 K ! a:[h: that's love]ly=
 J [°together°]
 K 1→ =she's- she's- she's rea:lly nice in't [she
 J 2→ [>she is n#i#ce,=<
 3→ =.h I do find that she just says stuff just for the sake of
 fsaying stu[(h)uff thoughf
 K [yeah
 [yeah
 J [even when she's not got that much to say

6.3 Phonetic characteristics

- 2→ is generally quieter than 1→
- 2→ is generally faster than 1→
- the pitch span of 2→ is narrow, usually compressed relative to 1→
- 2→ often has fall-rise intonation followed by a contrasting assessment
- 2→ is generally lower in the speaker's range

Table 4. Pitch span (semitones) of the assessments in Fragments (7)-(9)

	Fragment 7	Fragment 8	Fragment 9
1→	6.0	6.5	5.1
2→	3.6	4.7	4.6

Impressionistic records of the assessment pair in Fragment 7:

1→ ʔãĩĩʔsʔəl::atʔəvɛfəʔtʔ

2→ ɪɪzzkwæəlpfhasɪʏ

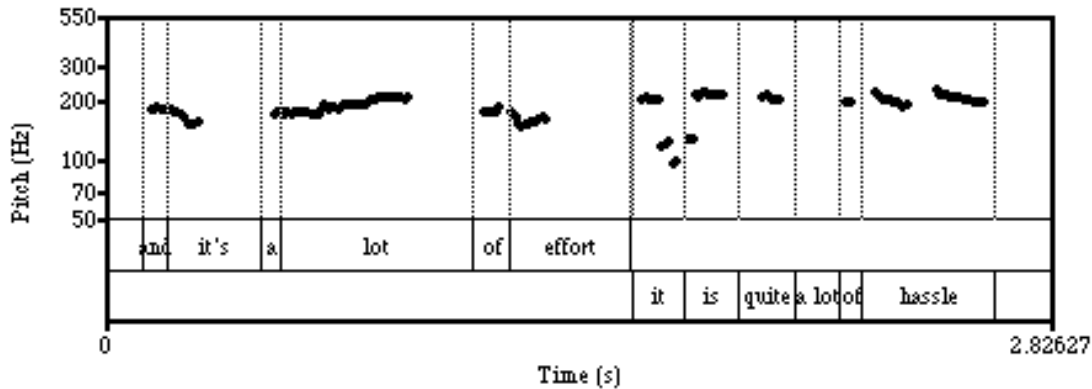


Figure 3. F0 traces of 1→ and 2→ in Fragment (7)

7 A deviant case

2→ is a fitted, type-conforming response to the interrogative at 1→ (Raymond, 2000; Heritage & Raymond 2002). Lexical upgrade of 1→, and comes in soon. Part of a turn with the [agree + disagree] format, and has phonetic properties like those described under Section 6: narrower pitch span (1→ 8 st, 2→ 6 st), lower in the speaker's range, quieter and faster.

Fragment (10) Holt U88.1.10 pay

S That's alright I just wanted to make sure: (.) whether
you'd p'hh gone back or no[t.h
F [Yes I did. No[I got that=
S [.hhhhhhh.p
F =thanks 'n I, I've also heard about th'of course about
the cash ↓in toda:[y.↓
S 1→ [gYes::. Yes isn't that good at l:ong
1→ la:[st. [((sniff))
F 2→ [That[s u-very good news. B't'v cour[se it (0.3)

S [khhhhhhhh
 F 3→ we'll haf to pay out a lot a'that I[guess
 [.hhhhh ihYe:s but
 at least it'll bring us int'th'black hhh.hhh in the
 middle of Ma:y whi:ch is just the time when we should
 be[.kmhhh[hhh.glp.tk]lp
 F [(0.5) [ih Y e : s]But buh[but (.) do we owe: I mean=
 S [u h h h h h h
 F =ih- we haven' paid any of the (Almans) 'n people like
 that yet I[(take it)
 S [eeYES we paid some of them-