Prosodic Features in Facebook Communication

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Abstract

Rapid evolution of communication technologies has changed language use, enabling new forms of discourse, new forms of authorship, and new ways to create and participate in communities. Therefore, this paper examines how the prosodic features of spoken language such as intonation, rhythm, and stress are communicated in Facebook via unique strategies to convey nuances such as emphasis, sarcasm and loudness. The data for this paper is collected from Facebook walls posted by Maseno university students to their friends. Facebook walls are platform for the interlocutors to communicate with their Facebook friends. The study indicates that students use prosodic features such as emoticons, laughter, phoneticons (capital, exclamations, full stops) and multiple vowels when communicating with their friends. The findings reveal that users adapt language to Facebook communication to form unique constructions of prosodic features. This paper hopes to enrich the knowledge on the study of computer-mediated communication and to motivate other researchers to conduct further studies in this area.

Keywords: Computer-mediated communication, Prosodic features, Facebook.

I. Introduction

Computer Mediated Discourse (CMD) is the communication produced when human beings interact with one another by transmitting messages via networked computers (December, 1996, Herring, 2001, 2004). The study of CMD is a specialization within the broader interdisciplinary study of Computer Mediated Communication (CMC), distinguished by its focus on language and language use in computer networked environments, and by its use of methods of discourse analysis to address that focus (Herring, 2001, 2004). CMC encompasses all kinds of interpersonal communication carried out on the Internet, such as email, instant messaging, web discussion boards, and chat channels.

Today, Social Network Sites (SNSs) are the latest mode of CMC (Boyd and Ellison, 2007). SNSs in particular have created unique arenas for CMD. Sites such as Facebook are indicative of the
phenomenal growth of social sites (Boyd and Ellison, 2007). Moreover, communication in cyberspace through chat and Facebook is an important platform for language contact in social space where use of language often takes place in real time and reflects variations. However, most communicative processes require multiple channels, both linguistic and paralinguistic (Clark, 1996). In Face to Face (FtF) communication, people use a diverse range of communicative strategies to convey their meanings. In fact, the absence of social context cues, called the cues filtered out approach (Kiesler, Siegel, and McGuire (1984), is a major distinction that separates CMC from FtF communication. Because participants cannot see others' facial expressions, gestures, voice intonations, appearance, or physical adornments; it is harder to interpret statements and responses they might make (Walther and Burgoon, 1992). Much of what people aim to communicate is not explicitly stated, and listeners must infer intentional meanings based on linguistic and paralinguistic evidence.

CMC ranges along a continuum from product oriented forms resembling paper-based writing (e.g., Web sites, most e-mail) on one hand to more process-oriented interactive discourse that shares many features of speech (e.g., chat, instant messaging) on the other hand (Baron, 2000). Thus, CMC is not a single, uniform genre of language use, but rather a constellation of genres related partly to the particular medium (e.g., instant messaging, e-mail, chat groups, blogs, MOOs) and partly to the particular social and cultural contexts of a given act of communication (Herring, 2004). Lawley (1992) observed that a reflexive process in CMC enhances users to modify the system to meet their communication needs. Despite the fact that features of linguistic modalities (e.g. dialog move, intonation, pause) and paralinguistic modalities (e.g. facial expressions, eye gaze, gestures) co-occur in communication, the exact nature of their interaction remains unclear (Louwerse, Bard, Steedman, Graesser and Hu, 2004). Therefore, this paper is explores how the prosodic features of spoken language such as intonation, rhythm, and stress are communicated in Facebook via unique strategies to convey nuances such as emphasis, sarcasm and loudness.

2. Prosodic Features

Prosodic features are concerned with the investigation of linguistic phenomena which generally fall outside the boundaries of phonology, morphology and lexical analysis (Crystal, 1969). Thus, human everyday verbal communication involves not only semantic but also non-linguistic, information being carried by the voice (Belin, Fecteau and Bedard (2004). Erekson (2010) echoes Belin, Fecteau and Bedard (2004) by defining prosody as the way we say words and phrases beyond their phonemic and lexical qualities. Thus, prosody is the rhythm, stress, and intonation of a speech (Fernández and Cairns, 2011) and is a skill which is necessary to ensure effective social communication (Beatty, Orbelo, Sorocco, and Ross, 2003). Prosody may reflect various features of the speaker or the utterance: the emotional state of the speaker; the form of the utterance (statement, question, or command); the presence of irony or sarcasm, emphasis, contrast, and focus; or other elements of language that may not be encoded by grammar or choice of vocabulary (Crystal, 2001). Thus, prosodic features are the voice qualities and tones which communicate expressive feelings, indicate the age, health and sex of a speaker, modify the meanings of words, and help to regulate interaction between speakers.
Prosody is typically absent in writing, which can occasionally result in reader misunderstanding (Fernández and Cairns, 2011). Orthographic conventions used to mark or substitute for prosody include punctuation (commas, exclamation marks, question marks), and typographic styling for emphasis (italic, bold, and underlined text). However, CMC lacks the facial expressions, gestures and conventions of bodily posture and distance (the kinesics and promexics) which are so critical in expressing personal opinions and attitudes and in moderating social relationships (Crystal, 2001). FtF communication provides contextual cues as to when it is socially appropriate to express certain prosodic features. However, internet interactions lack the facial expression, gestures and conventions of body posture that are considered important when expressing ideas and opinions (Kiesler, Siegel, and McGuire, 1984). Facebook communication is a new form of CMC that is text-based. The immediacy nature of CMC interaction and its closeness to speech allows Chatters (interlocutors) to form prosodic features online. Therefore, writers use various strategies to express themselves.

The forms and functions of CMC have been explicated most notably by Murray (1988, 1989, 1996, 2000), Herring (1996, 1999, 2001), and Crystal (2001). Crystal (2001) notes that text abbreviation is used by Chatters to make for lack of paralinguistic cues in CMC. Segerstad (2002) examined the linguistic features in CMC. Segerstad found that writers use capital letters, repetition of words, emoticons, asterisk, and symbol replacing words to form paralinguistic cues in an online interaction. On the other hand, Thurlow (2003) studied mobile messages among the first year language and communication students at Cardiff University. Thurlow concentrated on the unique language employed in text-messages, their main functions and popularity of text messages.

This paper expounds on what sort of extra-linguistic information is encoded in Facebook communication, and how they are represented. Text-based communication has fostered ingenuity among computer users, who must make innovative use of the symbols available to make up for the aspects of prosodic features (Segerstad, 2002). Even though Facebook communication and other internet chat are not traditional forms of interaction, they are so prevalent and persistent that they deserve attention from linguistic, psychological, and social perspectives. This paper hence shows that technologically mediated communication, including texting, has fostered the development of new textual ways of rendering prosodic features in CMC. It also shows that texters devote their time and attention to representing sound qualities in their messages. The unique constructions appearing in CMC to represent prosodic features provide contemporary insight into the way users adapt language for different mediums of communication.

3. Theoretical Framework

Data was analyzed for prosodic features of Facebook communication by using Computer Mediated Discourse Analysis (CMDA). CMDA is an approach to researching online behavior as proposed by Herring (2004). CMDA is a framework adapted from language-focused disciplines such as linguistics, communication, and rhetoric to the analysis of CMC. It is the analysis of logs
of verbal interaction, characters, words, utterances, messages, exchanges, threads, archives etc. The researcher has picked on this approach because any analysis of online behavior that is grounded in empirical textual observation is CMDA. Moreover, the specific approach to CMDA described here is informed by linguistic perspectives reflected in the application of methodological paradigms that originated in the study of spoken and written language, e.g. conversation analysis, and critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 2003). Therefore, CMDA is used to determine how Facebook users shift their style of writing to form prosodic features in Facebook communication. CMDA is also used to determine why Facebook users manipulate the grammatical rules of English language.

4. Methodology

The main objective of this paper is to examine the prosodic features of Facebook communication. The specific objectives that guided the analysis of this paper were to: 1) Identify strategies used by Facebook chatters to express prosodic features and 2) determine the role of prosodic features in an online conversation. A total of 60 Facebook users took part in this study, all of whom were Kenyan. To achieve a greater degree of generalizability and to limit bias between the sexes, 30 of the participants were males and the other 30 were females. The participants were aged between 17 and 25 and were Maseno University students. The 60 participants were chosen at random from a second year class of English course. Once the 60 participants had been chosen, the process was explained to participants and permission was gained to examine their Facebook accounts for different types of prosodic features. Status updates, wall posts, comments and discussions were collected for analysis from the participants’ Facebook accounts.

Each participant’s Facebook account was examined over a two-weeks period. Each day the researcher recorded how many times each expression marker was used.

5. Results And Discussion

The purpose of this study was to identify and discuss strategies used to achieve prosodic features in Facebook communication and their use. Prosody is an important feature of language, comprising intonation, loudness, and tempo. Emotional prosodic processing forms an integral part of our social interactions that were prevalent in CMC. The analysis revealed that strategies used to achieve prosodic features in Facebook communication can be divided into six: Emoticons, laughter, Phoneticicons (punctuation marks) and multiple vowels as discussed below. This study thus investigated six prosodic features of Facebook users. The study entailed an analysis of 300 Facebook comments. The frequency use of strategies that reveal prosodic features was as follows; 257 messages contained emoticons, 160 messages contained laughter, 120 messages had capitals, 67 messages had exclamation marks, 50 messages had full stops while 37 messages employed the use of multiple letters as depicted in Figure 1 below.
Figure 1 shows that 257 messages of 300 messages had emoticons. Thus, emoticons are the most used prosodic features by Facebook friends to express emotional prosody. Emotional prosody is characterized as an individual's tone of voice in speech that is conveyed through changes in pitch, loudness, timbre, speech rate, and pauses which is different than linguistic and semantic information (Erekson, 2010). It can be isolated from linguistics and interacts with verbal content (i.e. sarcasm). Emoticons on the other hand, are graphical representations of interpersonal and emotional features expressed through gesture and facial expression in face-to-face setting, in the online setting (Park, 2007). CMC users are presented with a range of emoticons to compensate for the loss of non-verbal cues (Crystal, 2001). Observing 300 comments in Facebook threads the researcher observed the acceptance level of emoticons among Facebook users. Moreover, emoticons give visual representations of what the speaker is feeling. Thus, if the speaker is happy a smiley face (😊) is used to show it without ambiguity. In addition there is a large ‘bank’ of emoticons, which makes it a very convenient means of expression.

Studies have found that some emotions, such as fear, joy and anger, are portrayed at a higher frequency than emotions such as sadness (Bachorowski, 1999). An analysis of the frequency use of emoticons in 257 messages reveals two emoticons were heavily favoured. The big grin (😊) around 27% of total emoticons used and the wink (😉) 20% of the emoticons to express joy. Two others quite ranking highly were the smile (😊) and the angel (😇) accounting for 17% and 7% of the total emoticons analysed. The researcher observed that some emoticons were hardly used. The percentages are presented in Figure 2 below.
Figure 2: Distribution of Emoticons

Three different samples of Facebook conversation that made use of emoticons to express emotional prosody are presented and discussed below. Emoticons similarly take on different pragmatic meanings depending on the tone of an exchange, which they may also help to establish (Huls, 2006). The CMDA theory considers tone as a situational factor that influences users’ language. Tone refers to the manner or spirit in which discursive acts are performed (cf. Hymes 1972’ “key”); it can be described along a number of continuous scalar dimensions, including (but not restricted to) degree of seriousness, formality, contentiousness, and cooperation. Thus, tone varies according to scalars such as serious/playful, formal/casual contentious/friendly and cooperative/sarcastic tone.

Emoticons are often used to alert a responder to the tenor or temper of a statement and can change and improve interpretation of plain text. For instance, emoticons expressing positive feelings such as the big grin, the wink, the smile, the angel, the kiss and the heart were the most used in the data collected to express a friendly tone. The initials of the participants in each sample are used. Sample 1 is a conversation between D and O.

Sample 1
D: Okay. BTW u didn ans my qtn ..wat made u wnt 2b ma pal? (Okay. By The Way you didn’t answer my question...what made u want to be ma pal?
O: Hard question thea😊. Ba iuju lykd u. Dats it (Hard question there (emoticon to mean unsure). But i just liked you. That’s it)
D: 😊gud 2kno ( Emoticon to mean a smile: good to know)
Sample 1 represents a conversation between D and O who make use of Facebook emoticons to express emotional prosody. D asks O a question that O had not answered earlier on. O though unsure as shown by the emoticon (😊) attempts to answer it. D being satisfied by the answer she expresses her happiness by the using a smile (😊) as shown above.

The participants in Sample 2 below talk about a Mexican soap known as Passion Morena that is aired on Citizen Television in Kenya. M is a follower of the soap while 1 thinks otherwise. I uses grin (😊) together with an orthographic representation of laughter including mockery (haha) to show the reason why she is not a lover of soaps. The use of emoticons therefore is used as a strategy to create the tone of voice in text-based CMC (Herring, 2001) that is crucial for effective social communication.

Sample 2
I: So wat r u up to (So what are you up to).
M: Watchn morena. I love da tense mood inda soap (Watching morena. I love the tense mood in the soap)
1: 😃Haha n dats y i h8 2 follow wot i cnt finish cuz b goin 2xul...ey r nyc tho. Le mie slp den. ( Grin) Haha and thats why i hate to follow what i can’t finish because i will be going to school ...they are nice though. Let me sleep then)
D: Okay den....slp t8😊 (Okay then...sleep tight. Kiss)
O: Swt drms 😊. (Sweet dreams. Kiss)

Sample 2 ends in an interesting way by both I and M using the kiss emoticon (😊) which we consider in this study as leave taking hence maintaining the relational aspect of Facebook communication or the kiss plays a phatic function in communication. In speech communication the term phatic communication means “small talk”-conversation for its own sake (Malinowski, 1923). Phatic expression is one whose only function is to perform a social task as opposed to conveying information as used by I and M. Thus, the occurrence of phatic communication is to provide social lubricant in CMC.

Sample 3 below is different from 1 and 2 since it expresses negative emotional prosody. S and P make use of negative emotions to express emotional prosody. The emoticons expressing negative feelings such as sad, grumpy, upset, cry, confused and devil, although lower in frequency as reflected in Figure 2, were used in interesting ways by the participants. Sample 3 below shows the use of negative emoticons.

Sample 3
S: Damn😊 don tel me al ma budies wont b in school. I wanna ms em. Da place sucks atyms (Damn (frown) dont tell me all my buddies won’t be in school. I will miss them. The place is boring at times)
P: yah..don worry (M) will be there. (Yah don’t worry M will be there.)
S: ds Soap is ova i wona slp. Wl u let me go. (This soap opera is over. I want to sleep. Will you let me go.)
P: woiye i don wnt u 2go😊 (surely i don’t want you to go crying)
In spoken speech, sad emotions are produced with a higher pitch, less intensity but more vocal energy, longer duration with more pauses, and a lower first formant (Sauter, Eisner, Calder and Scott, 2010). In CMC chatters use emoticons that express negative feeling to achieve emotional prosody. For instance, S expresses frustration by frowning (😭) due to the absence of her friends in school. S in the same sample feels sleepy and she has to tell P to sign off the conversation. P who is not willing to end the conversation expresses her frustration by using a cry emoticon (😢). Notably, the emoticons that express negative feelings such as sadness and confusion were invariably used to denote the stress and frustration. Thus, negative social emotions require the interpretation of social intention in a conversation. The findings on the use of emoticons to express emotional prosody show that Facebook users use emoticons to enhance the non-verbal aspect of their online communications and emoticons enhance the quality of interaction. Hence, the use of emoticons in expression of emotional prosody is thus important in the interpretation of meaning especially in text-based communication.

5.2 Laughter

Another strategy that was initiated by users to express prosodic features such as sarcasm was laughter. Irony and sarcasm are features of speech prosody (Erekson, 2010). Sarcasm is verbal irony that expresses negative and critical attitude toward persons or events (Kreuz and Glucksberg, 1989). Thus, prosodic features are routinely used to signal, for example a speaker’s attitude to what they are saying, their emotional state or different rhetoric functions. Laughter in CMC is formed by use of onomatopoeic and or stylized spellings. An onomatopoeic word is a word that phonetically imitates or suggests the source of the sound that it describes (Crystal, 1997). One well known example is “hahaha” to indicate laughter. As laughter is a big part of FtF; it is also part of online communication as depicted in 160 messages of 300 in Figure 1. Figure 1 on prosodic features show that users opted to invent orthographic representation of laughter to enhance their intended meaning. For instance, there were thousands of uses of haha and its variants. Haha was the most productive laughter created by chatters. Another marker of laughter was hehe and lol (laugh out loud) as shown in the 3 samples below:

Sample 4:
Haha...aki i hav tried alot. Ushud conragts me (haha...surely i have tried. You should congratulate me)

Sample 5:
Hehe...work hard? I don’t have the psyche.

Sample 6:
LOL.....youre nasty at tymes

“Haha” is a variant marker of laughter that is used by Participants to signal positive laughter as shown in sample 4 above. “Hehe” on the other hand, is a laughter variant but with connotations of giggling as shown in sample 5 which shows that the Participant seems to be sarcastic about what is said by the sender of the message. For example, the sarcastic tone of speech in sample 5 is shown by the laughter “hehe” followed by the phrase “work hard”. The
phrase “work hard” is probably extracted from the message that the Chatter had received. The Chatter creates sarcasm through repetition of the same phrase.

Another variant of laughter that is associated with Facebook Users is LOL “Laugh out Loud” and OMG “Oh my God”. Lol is used by Chatters in a flow of conversation to signal involvement, just like one would say “mm-hm” in a course of conversation. Thus, Lol is like voiced pauses that provide thinking time in spoken language. OMG (Oh my God) on the other hand is used by participants to show regret as shown in the excerpt below. In this case, the falling intonational element of speech is shown as reflected in the regretful tone shown by the phrase “oh my God” as shown in sample 7 below.

Sample 7:

Omg am stressed...am sorry about it

Semantic cues (i.e. words or phrases) often signal sarcasm in conjunction with prosodic cues (Kreuz and Glucksberg, 1989) and there are some phrases or words which may be so closely tied to the sarcastic context that these expressions can independently signal sarcasm (i.e., these expressions become enantiosemantic (Haiman, 1998, p. 39). In CMC the repetition of the laughter markers is used to show Chatters were laughing a lot or they are sarcasm. For example, some repeated laughter that signalled the emotional state of the Chatter and the presence of sarcasm in the collected data were (hahahahahahh, tihihihi, hehe hehe). Sample 8 below show how users formed excessive and mockery laughter to signal sarcasm as a prosodic feature.

Sample 8

L: Hi, guyz what do you think of KKK alliance.
M: hahahahahahaha!!!!!!! KKK!!!! basically means: KUBAKA, KUUA, KUIBA, KUSALITI, KUTENGANISHA KENYA. Not with my vote will anyone from that group get till i die.
   hahahahahahha!!!!!!! KKK!!!! basically means: RAPE, KILLING, STILLING, BETRAYAL, DIVIDING KENYA. Not with my vote will anyone from that group get till i die.

The mockery laughter formed is hahahahahahaha!!!!!!! accompanied by excessive use of exclamation marks. M seems to be mocking the recent developments in politics in Kenya. A group of politicians had formed an alliance branded KKK which is an abbreviation of people from 3 ethnic groups in Kenya that is, Kikuyu, Kalenjin and Kamba. The chatter insinuates that KKK means KUBAKA (to rape), KUUA (to kill), KUIBA (to steal), KUSALITI (to betray) and KUTENGANISHA KENYA (to divide Kenya) hence mocks at the followers of KKK.

5.3 Phoneticons

Phoneticons can be defined as graphemic representations of voice qualities and sound imitations in writings (Knas, 2006) and their use is characteristic of CMC. Phoneticons are the only naturally textual type of aural contents of text-based online messages. Phoneticons
constitute written equivalents of paralinguistic signals expressed by means of non-standard spelling, multiple vowels, punctuation markers, or by use of capital letters. Figure 1 shows that 67 messages made use of punctuation markers to express emotions. According to CMDA, CMC users manipulate the grammatical rules to meet their communication needs. For instance, punctuation markers are traditionally seen as grammatical devices. However, punctuation markers that were collected in the analyzed data were not used for grammatical purposes. Instead, these punctuation markers were used in greater numbers (3 or more) to indicate prosodic features. One exclamation point and question mark is allowed under the rules of punctuation. M in sample 8 below however used six exclamation marks in order to convey a strong feeling or as a way of compensating for the loss of facial gestures, body language and other contextual cues normally observed in F2F conversation.

Sample 8

M: hahahahahahha!!!!!!! KKK!!! basically means: KUBAKA, KUUA, KUIBA, KUSALITI, KUTENGANISHA KENYA. Not with my vote will anyone from that group get till i die.

(hahahahahahha!!!!!!! KKK!!! Basically means: RAPE, KILLING, STILLING, BETRAYAL, DIVIDING KENYA).

The excessive use of exclamation marks is also used to exaggerate bitter emotions to the followers of KKK and to add further contextual emphasis. The bitter tone is shown by the swearing language used by M as illustrated below:

M: Not with my vote will anyone from that group get till i die.

This finding confirms that Facebook is an online space where political expression occurs on Facebook walls. Therefore, there is great potential for users to receive political information about friends in their network, such as their political stances and affiliations as well as membership in political Facebook groups. Moreover, the excessive use of exclamation marks indicates a degree of intensity on what the Chatter is saying.

Full stops were also not limited to grammatical use. Figure 1 shows that 50 messages made use of full stops to represent silence. Silence in writing was expressed by means of full stops. The number of silences in one message can be seen as an indication that the content of the message is not easy for the sender to express: that is why she allows her/himself a lot of time to think and, at the same time, lets the recipient know that the message requires his/her emotional involvement as shown in sample 9 below:

Sample 9

J: Guys.......got ma results.......thx.....il let u know. (guys. I have got my results. Thanks. I will let you know).

Sample 9 above shows that time was needed to construct the message and the sender of the message opted to use full stops to show some loss of words. The sender of the message also shows that there is more to what s/he is saying. Another function of silence was to indicate that an utterance is unfinished as shown below in sample 10 below:

Sample 10

W: Guess who came to visit..................

Sample 9 above shows that time was needed to construct the message and the sender of the message opted to use full stops to show some loss of words. The sender of the message also shows that there is more to what s/he is saying. Another function of silence was to indicate that an utterance is unfinished as shown below in sample 10 below:

Sample 10

W: Guess who came to visit.................
The above excerpt indicates that the utterance is unfinished and moreover there is a lot that s/he needs the others to know. Another phoneticon strategy that was largely observed in the analysed data is the use of Capitals (120 messages). Capitalization of words in CMC is associated with expressing shouting or anger (Crystal, 2001). Thus, capitalization is used to signal intonation as a prosodic feature in CMC. Intonation is collective term used to describe variations in pitch, loudness, tempo, and rhythm (Bolinger, 1989).

In the analysed data Chatters manipulated the standard use of capitalization to enhance emotional prosody such as disgust, sadness, fear and happiness. For instance, in sample 11 below the Chatter capitalizes the words KENYA, PAKISTAN, IRAQ and AFGHANISTAN to express loudness. In more extended speech, loudness can be used for other effects. It is associated with anger (though anger can also be indicated by very quiet, tense speech). In public speaking, orators produce powerful effects by varying the loudness of their speech while in CMC loudness is produced by capitalization. The Chatter of the message compares KENYA to PAKISTAN, IRAQ and AFGHANISTAN which are characterized by mass killings of their citizens due to religious conflict. The capitalized words express a rise-fall intonation to highlight the Chatters’ surprising tone to the news. The Chatter also expresses a shouting tone by capitalizing the names of the countries mentioned as shown in sample 11 below:

Sample 11

R: Riots have now taken a dangerous turn as mobs descend on SDA Church and PAG Church in Mombasa Ziwani area attempt at setting the churches ablaze. Reports also indicate the Sheikh received 14 bullets to his chest, while his wife and daughter were critically injured in the attack.

B: Dear this isn't going to work is it. I thought that's KENYA not PAKISTAN, IRAQ or AFGHANISTAN

The use of capitals was also seen in the middle of a sentence as shown below to give specific words an additional emphasis. According to Nishumura (2007), users choose to use capital letters most probably because they are visually more prominent as compared to lower cases. The meaning of such emphasis in speech would probably be expressed by a raised or louder voice. In written context emphasis is inferred from the content of the message or from situational context as shown in sample 12 below.

Sample 12

E: This is for everyone...THANKS for your support

Other participants used Capitals to express happy emotions as shown in sample 13 below.

Sample 13

Y: It was so PASSIONATE though

Textual means were also used together with Capitals to enhance emphasis. For example in sample 14 below T used asterisks to highlight the words in capitals (*EVIDENCE AND WITNESSES*) to emphasize what s/he is saying.
T: Evidence has more weight than a witness, and if a prosecutor has both, the higher the chances that his case gonna sail through. Ocampo has *EVIDENCE AND WITNESSES*. Yes, evidence alone is *enough* to prosecute even without a witness. Note: That’s why in cases where the courts declares that a witness is inadmissible, the hearing goes ahead without a *witness*. Instead of arguing about what you don’t know, you could, alternatively ask about it.

In other words since saying the words louder in text-based genres is not possible, the sender of the message manipulates textual resources available in CMC to expresses the intended meaning by means of asterisks and capitals, depicting its particular intonation pattern in comparison with the rest of the sentence and adding to the importance of this words in the message.

5.4 Multiple vowels or consonants

The last strategy observed in the data was the use of multiple vowels or consonants in 37 messages to signal prosody. At the typified phonetic level, prosody is typified by such things as lengthening the duration of phonemes and syllables, acoustic intensity (Pitch). Chatters in CMC may add letters to a word to help mark their tone of voice. It was observed that manipulation of letters, such as repetition of certain vowels or consonants were used creatively in many situations to represent emotional stances such as frustrations, disappointment and happiness as shown in the samples below.

Sample 15
Yuck.....the exam was sooooooooooo hard.
Sample 16
High school was fuuuuuuuun
Sample 17
swwwwwvet

In sample 15, 16, and 17 tone is indicated by the word that is being lengthened and the surrounding that create the context. In sample 15 above the word “so”, in this context is used as a term for “disappointment”. The word “so” has been lengthened to add a negative aspect to what has been said while “fun” and “sweet” as a terms for “happiness” have been lengthened to add a positive feeling to what is being said. Thus, the lengthening of the duration of phonemes and syllables are simultaneously compiled and delivered with the linguistic utterance that helps infer meaning.

5: Conclusion

The study reported in this paper investigates strategies used by Facebook users to express prosodic features. The samples presented in this study have provided an insight into how Facebook users form unique constructions to adapt language for different mediums of
communication. Prosodic features have been adapted to add meta-linguistic features such as emphasis, intonation, gestures, and pauses. Prosodic features are used very creatively and independently by different users. Moreover, it is a common understanding that CMC is currently ‘the way’ students communicate and thus, it will have bearing on the teaching and writing for academic communication and in particular within the context of English for specific purposes.

References


