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PROSODIC FEATURES OF JUDICIAL AND PROSECUTORIAL SPEECH AS INDICATORS OF EMOTIONAL DYNAMICS IN THE SHERZAT POLAT'S TRIAL

This article analyzes the prosodic characteristics of the judicial and prosecutorial speech within the framework of courtroom discourse, based on the case of Sherzat Polat. The aim of the study is to identify prosodic features employed by participants in courtroom discourse and to classify them according to institutional roles in order to determine distinctive characteristics that carry argumentative significance and reflect the emotional dynamics of the trial. The study advances the following hypothesis: courtroom discourse is characterized by a role-based system of prosodic parameters, most clearly manifested in argumentative segments of interrogation; these parameters are implemented unevenly and play an important role in achieving the communicative goals of trial participants. The primary research method used in the study is perceptual-acoustic analysis of prosodic characteristics as a multi-level analytical approach. Video material with a total duration of 2 hours, 33 minutes, and 48 seconds was analyzed using sentence segmentation (average segment length: 6–11 seconds) with the assistance of PRAAT tools. The analysis revealed specific prosodic strategies used to implement communicative functions, including those that significantly influence the course of the trial. The value of the study lies in providing the first systematic description of the prosodic features of Kazakh-language courtroom discourse within a unified perceptual-acoustic framework, contributing to the fields of forensic linguistics and forensic phonetics. The practical significance of the work lies in the potential application of the findings in forensic linguistic expertise, in the communicative training of legal professionals, and in the analysis of audio and video recordings of court proceedings.

Keywords: courtroom discourse, prosodic features of judicial and prosecutorial speech, argumentative strategy, indicators of emotional dynamics, Kazakhstan, Kazakh language.

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Сот процесіндегі эмоционалдық динамиканың индикаторы ретіндегі судья мен прокурор сөзінің просодикалық ерекшеліктері (Шерзат Полат ісінің материалы бойынша)

Мақалада Шерзат Полаттың ісіне сүйене отырып, сот процесіндегі судья мен прокурорлар сөзінің просодикалық сипаты талданады. Зерттеудің мақсаты – сот талқылауына қатысушылар жүзеге асыратын просодикалық белгілерді анықтау, олардың рөлдік жіктелуімен, сот процесіндегі эмоционалдық динамикасын көрсететін аргументтік мәнге ие ерекше белгілерді анықтау. Зерттеу келесі гипотезаны алға тартады: сот дискурсы жауап алудың аргументативті фрагменттерінде барынша айқын көрінетін просодикалық параметрлердің рөлдік жүйесімен сипатталады. Бұл параметрлер біркелкі емес, яғни әртүрлі формада жүзеге асырылады және сот талқылауына қатысушылардың коммуникативті мақсаттарына жетуде маңызды қызмет атқарады. Материалды зерттеудің негізгі әдістері: көп деңгейлі аналитикалық әдіс, просодикалық сипаттамаларды перцептивті-акустикалық талдау және ұзақтығы 2 сағат 33 минут 48 секундқа созылған бейнематериалды талдау PRAAT программасы арқылы сөйлемді сегменттеу әдісімен (орташа ұзақтығы 6–11 секунд) орындалды. Нәтижесінде, сот ісін жүргізу барысына елеулі әсер ететін, коммуникативті функцияларды жүзеге асырудың нақты просодиялық стратегиялары анықталды. Зерттеудің құндылығы – қазақ тіліндегі сот дискурсының просодикалық ерекшеліктерін тұңғыш рет жүйелі түрде сипаттауында, бұл сот лингвистикасы мен форензиялық фонетика саласындағы білімді толықтырады. Практикалық маңызы – алынған нәтижелерді сот-лингвистикалық

мада, заң қызметкерлерін коммуникативтік дайындауда және сот отырыстарының аудио-бейне жазбаларын талдауда қолдануға болатындығында.

Түйін сөздер: сот дискурсы, судья мен прокурор сөзіндегі просодикалық ерекшеліктер, аргументациялық стратегия, эмоционалдық динамика көрсеткіштері, Қазақстан, қазақ тілі.

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Просодические особенности речи судьи и прокурора как индикаторы эмоциональной динамики в судебном процессе (на материале дела Шерзата Полата)

В статье проводится анализ просодических характеристик речи судьи и прокуроров в судебном процессе на материале дела Шерзата Полата. Целью исследования является идентификация просодических особенностей, реализуемых участниками судебного дискурса, с их ролевой классификацией для определения отличительных характеристик, обладающих аргументативной значимостью, отражающих эмоциональную динамику в судебном процессе. В исследовании выдвигается следующая гипотеза: судебный дискурс характеризуется ролевой системой просодических параметров, наиболее отчетливо проявляющихся в аргументативных фрагментах допроса; данные параметры реализуются неравномерно, выполняют важную функцию в достижении коммуникативных целей участников судебного процесса. Основным методом изучения материала стал перцептивно-акустический анализ просодических характеристик как многоуровневый аналитический метод. Анализ видеоматериала, длительностью 2 ч 33 мин 48 с., выполнен методом сегментации на предложения (средняя длина 6–11 с.) с использованием инструментов PRAAT. В результате были выявлены специфические просодические стратегии для реализации коммуникативных функций, в том числе имеющие существенное влияние на ход судебного разбирательства. Ценность исследования заключается в том, что просодические особенности судебного дискурса на казахском языке впервые системно описываются в рамках единого перцептивно-акустического подхода, что вносит вклад в развитие судебной лингвистики и фореnsic фонетики. Практическая значимость работы состоит в возможности применения полученных результатов в судебно-лингвистической экспертизе, при коммуникативной подготовке юристов, а также при анализе аудио- и видеозаписей судебных заседаний.

Ключевые слова: судебный дискурс, просодические особенности речи судьи и прокурора, аргументативная стратегия, индикаторы эмоциональной динамики, Казахстан, казахский язык.

Introduction

The courtroom discourse is a form of verbal communication, the structure of which has been ingrained for centuries and is governed by the rules of role interaction. Role interaction in court is based on a strict division of functions among six main roles: judge, lawyer, witness, defendant, jury, and audience (Wood, 2012, p. 8).

The structure of the process excludes certain types of contact. For example, the defendant and jury are strictly prohibited from interacting directly throughout the hearing (Wood, 2012, p. 39). The judge acts as the administrator of the court case, thereby monitoring the participants to ensure they do not exceed their role boundaries. However, the “objection” tool can serve as a mechanism for immediately correcting violations of the rules of this interaction.

The structure of a trial is determined by a sequence of sub-events, beginning with jury selection and ending with sentencing. Each sub-event is

characterized by a strict power structure. As Wood S.W. argues, this means that during the examination of witnesses, the defense attorney completely controls the discourse, whereas during sentencing, the defense attorney may be deprived of the floor, while the audience, in contrast, has a rare opportunity to speak (Wood, 2012, p. 42).

Strict rules can manifest themselves in the use of special registers, phrases, adherence to standards, and even the prosodic characteristics of speech. In court, participants are subject to rules; for example, emotional outbursts are generally not permitted, and participants often use evasive expressions, which in foreign sources are often described as hedging. Thus, prosody, which are the acoustic parameters of speech, play a decisive role in detecting insults. Prosodic characteristics of speech allow linguistic experts to identify subjective negative evaluations even when the semantics of words are ambiguous (Kussepova & Kenzhigozhina, 2022b). In forensic linguistic examination, spoken speech is analyzed

according to several key suprasegmental characteristics:

- fundamental frequency (Hz);
- intensity (loudness – dB);
- temporal features (duration – ms).

As the review of previous studies presented below demonstrates, existing research has more often analyzed American or Russian courts. We therefore believe it is important to examine the prosodic characteristics of Kazakhstani courts, whose proceedings are conducted specifically in the Kazakh language. The purpose of this article is to analyze the prosodic characteristics of Kazakh-language courtroom speech in Kazakhstan. We set the following objectives for further research:

- identify the prosodic parameters utilized by participants in courtroom discourse, particularly the judge and prosecutor, in accordance with their role classification;
- identify prosodic characteristics that possess argumentative significance and facilitate the realization of the intended communicative meaning.

We used three working notions throughout the article, which require clear definition. To begin with, by emotional dynamics we understand the acoustically observable change in the prosodic realization of a speaker's utterances (F0 level and range, intensity, tempo, and pausing) relative to that speaker's own baseline over the course of the hearing. Thus, the term refers to the measurable variation itself and not to the speaker's internal emotional state. They cannot be inferred from acoustic data alone (Larrouy-Maestri et al., 2025). Secondly, by argumentative significance we mean the use of a prosodic feature to foreground a pragmatically key element of an utterance in a way that listeners perceive as strengthening the speaker's position. And, the third notion, which is institutional pressure, refers to a discursive action by which the judge, exercising procedural authority, restricts the behaviour of another participant; the term describes the communicative function of the utterance in its institutional context.

The study advances the following hypotheses: Courtroom discourse is characterized by a role-based system of prosodic parameters, most clearly manifested in argumentative passages of interrogation; these parameters are implemented unevenly and play a key role in achieving the communicative goals of trial participants. The study is designed as a case study, and its results are intended as exploratory. Thus, we are not claiming results as general characteristics of Kazakh-language courtroom discourse.

Materials and methods

The empirical material for this study is video recordings of the Sherzat Polat trial, which took place in an open courtroom and received widespread publicity among Kazakhstanis. Videos of this case were published on official websites of Kazakhstan. The empirical material was obtained from the official YouTube channel of the Supreme Court of the Republic of Kazakhstan. In particular, the study used the video recording entitled "Sherzat Polat trial. Live broadcast from the courtroom" (Supreme Court of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2025). The selected material lasts 2 hours, 33 minutes, and 48 seconds, or 9,228 seconds. The video material was converted to audio and fragmented into segments ranging from 6 to 11 seconds.

Acoustic and perceptual analyses of the prosodic characteristics of speech parameters, representing a primarily multi-level analytical approach that involves integrating various aspects of prosodic structure at different structural levels, served as the primary method for studying the materials. To successfully implement the study, the PRAAT computer program was used to conduct acoustic speech analysis. The study examined prosodic and phonemic elements, such as intonation, stress, duration, and tone relationships between related syllables. The following research stages were completed:

- Selection of Kazakh-language court case materials publicly available on YouTube channels;
- Instrumental analysis of the prosodic parameters of speech of participants in the courtroom discourse, namely, the judge and prosecutors, according to their role classification;
- Identification of prosodic characteristics with argumentative value.

Literature review

According to N.V. Kozhedub's dissertation for the degree of Candidate of Philological Sciences (Kozhedub, 2009), the role of the suprasegmental parameters listed above in identifying insults is as follows:

- Insulting speech acts are characterized by a rising-falling tone pattern, as confirmed in Pierrehumbert J.'s dissertation (Pierrehumbert, 1980). The maximum values of rising tone usually occur with invective predicates identifying the object of negative evaluation;
- Insults are accompanied by increased speech energy. The greatest volume in such statements is

recorded in evaluative invective vocabulary, which serves as a marker of verbal aggression;

- Emphasis, by stretching stressed vowels in offensive words. In conflict situations, an increase in the duration of unstressed vowels may be observed to further emphasize the meaning;

- Prosodic characteristics of speech help distinguish simple insults from other illocutionary acts, such as threats. For example, threats often exhibit an “explosive” pitch, while pure insults emphasize the humiliation of the recipient through a melodic peak in the invective (Shulgina & Pasko, 2021);

- Intonation can completely alter the pragmatics of an utterance. A compliment delivered with a contemptuous tone becomes an insult, while potentially rude words spoken with a friendly intonation may not be classified as a crime (Sogunro et al., 2024).

Thus, the intonation model has the potential to serve as a diagnostic indicator, helping a linguist-expert classify a speech act as a public insult without regard to the lexical composition of the utterance. Acoustic parameters in this case reveal the hidden emotional components of the speech signal. While words may be formal in nature, the pitch frequency and loudness allow one to reveal the speaker’s actual aggressive intent, thereby making hidden hostility amenable to analysis.

In her work “Prosody in the Stylistic Differentiation of Language”, V.E. Velikaya suggests that prosody performs a number of critical functions:

- delimitative function – quantizing the speech flow into phrases and intonation groups (phonodictemes), which ensures the logic of thought presentation (Velikaya, 2009, p. 18);

- integrative function – uniting parts of the text into a single whole (Sogunro et al., 2024, p. 50);

- pragmatic function – expressing the illocutionary force of the utterance and achieving a perlocutionary effect (Velikaya, 2009, p. 24).

Furthermore, according to the results of experimental phonetic research by N.V. Kozhedub, prosody, as a combination of melody, intensity, and tempo of speech, is virtually identical between prosecutors and defense attorneys in court proceedings and has no statistically significant differences. That is, the goals and objectives of defense attorneys and prosecutors do not differ significantly. The following are the main conclusions of the dissertation:

1. A comprehensive analysis of courtroom speakers’ statements revealed that none of the key prosodic variables, such as pitch frequency, intensity, and duration, reliably differentiated the speech of defense attorneys from that of prosecutors. The

authors emphasize that the statements of both sides equally possess a pronounced perlocutionary effect of persuasion.

2. The speech of both prosecutors and defense attorneys is classified as a type of journalistic intonation style with elements of artistic style. Both sides use similar prosodic markers to achieve a persuasive strategy, which is the link between the illocutionary act and the impact on the audience.

3. Representatives of both sides in court use similar intonation patterns to accomplish pragmatic tasks:

- Falling scales, combined with falling and complex tones, predominate in both the defense and the prosecution to express confidence and authority;

- Rising tones are used by both sides in interrogative constructions to express a request for information or clarification;

- Emphatic emphasis on the core part of the utterance is used by speakers on both sides to enhance the emotionally impactful nature of the speech;

- Although the acoustic parameters of speech are identical, the substantive emphases may differ. For example, prosecutors tend to present defendants as active “agents” in the commission of actions, while defense attorneys strive to avoid using agentive roles for their clients in sentence structure (Kozhedub, 2009, p. 97).

Among the works of Kazakhstani scholars, the doctoral dissertation by G.T. Kussepova also explores aspects of the prosodic characteristics of courtroom discourse, but specifically in the mass media (Kussepova, n.d.). Authors G. T. Kussepova and K. S. Kenzhigozhina compare the differences in the prosodic characteristics of lawyers in American and Kazakh courts (2022a). The authors note that American courtroom practice is characterized by the permissibility of emotional expressiveness, while the post-Soviet judicial system of Kazakhstan, historically distinguished by greater institutional closure, is currently undergoing a transformation under the influence of democratic norms and digitalization processes.

Experimental-phonetic research into Kazakh intonation carried out in Kazakhstan provides the necessary background for interpreting prosodic peculiarities in courtroom speech. A systematic description of the intonation system of Kazakh is given by Z. Bazarbayeva (2008). D. Karagoishiyeva’s PhD dissertation is devoted to an experimental-phonetic analysis of Kazakh intonation (D. Karagoishiyeva, 2008), and her later work with co-authors examines tonal accent in spontaneous Kazakh speech (D. Karagoishiyeva, et al., 2014). These studies are

directly relevant to the question of “stress” in Kazakh discussed in the results section.

To our knowledge, however, no experimental-phonetic study has yet applied this framework to Kazakh-language courtroom speech; this is the research gap addressed here.

Thus, in courtroom discourse, prosody acts not as a marker of the procedural role of the prosecutor or defense attorney, but as a tool of professional persuasive speech common to all lawyers.

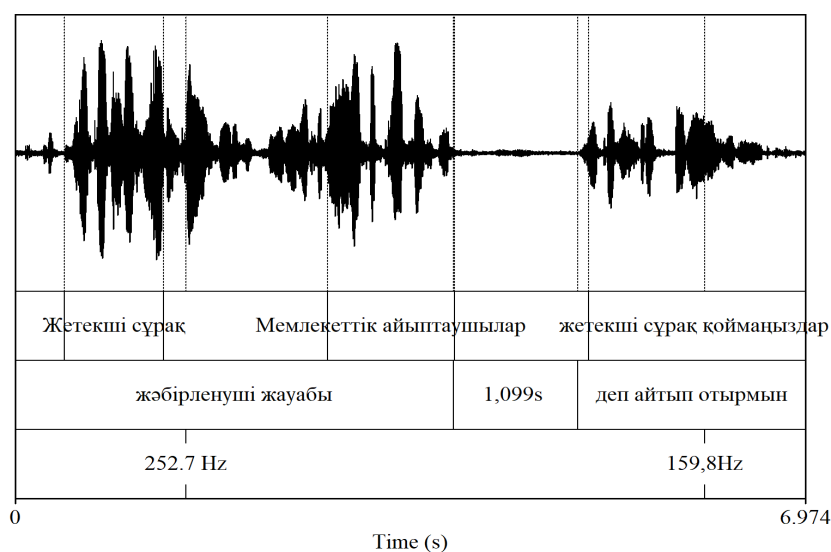
Results and discussion

An empirical analysis based on court case video recordings processed using specialized software (PRAAT and others) allowed us to quantitatively and qualitatively verify the hypotheses. The results of the instrumental analysis confirm that the forma-

tion of role profiles is determined by precise acoustic correlates of stress and intensity.

The judge's profile is characterized by highly stable acoustic parameters. The judge's speech displays consistent segment durations and pitch frequencies, although there were certain moments when the judge had to raise her pitch to maintain order in the courtroom. Speech intensity was generally consistent throughout the entire period, with sharp increases occurring only in strictly defined positions, such as *тоқтатыңыз*. Functionally, this prosodic profile serves as an acoustic marker of institutional authority. Prosodic restraint and relative monotony signal the judge's neutrality, while localized contrasting increases in intensity serve the discursive function of managing the courtroom. Despite the judge's neutral tone, some changes in speech were noticed (see Fig. 1).

Figure 1
The judge's appeal to the prosecutor

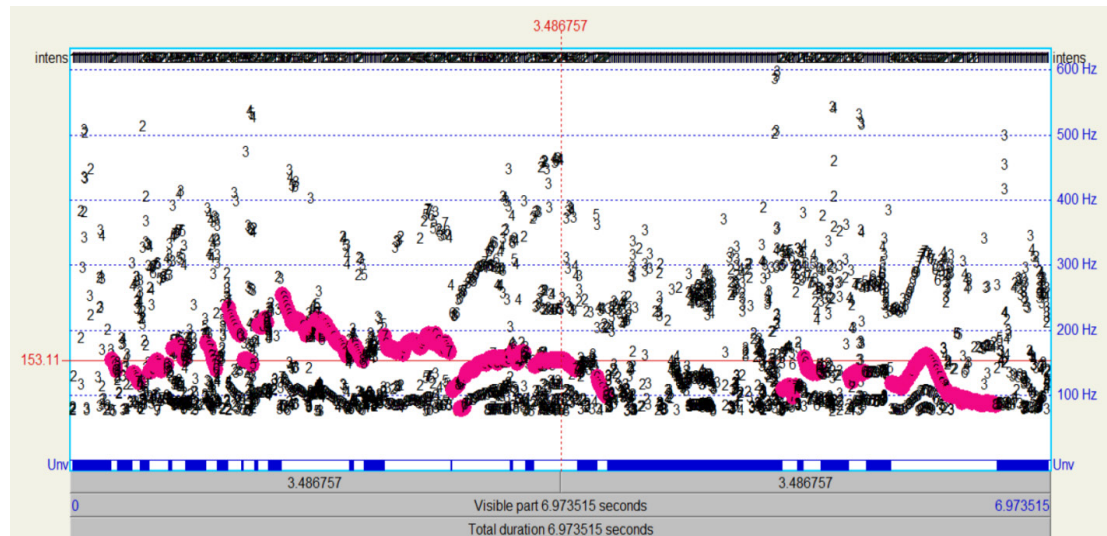


Note: Created by the author based on the analyzed materials

The analyzed fragment clearly captures the moment of change in the judge's communicative strategy when addressing the prosecutor (see Figure 1 and Figure 2). As noted earlier, the judge acts as the administrator of the court case, monitoring the participants to ensure that role restrictions are observed. In this episode, the judge attempts to issue a warning, but without achieving the expected result. Therefore,

before issuing the warning, a decrease in speech intensity is observed compared to the preceding section. A distinct pause is also observed, visually marked by the break in Figure 1. After the pause, the speech is delivered at a lower volume, without sharp dynamic bursts, lowering the pitch to 159.8 Hz, which contrasts with the preceding speech and indicates a deliberate reduction in acoustic expression.

Figure 2
Gradation of the severity of prosodic features



Note: Created by the author based on the analyzed materials

The acoustic data in the figure confirm the presence of a consistently low background intensity during the warning, clearly visible in the fundamental tone lines (pink). This combination of a slow tempo and a pause before the key statement at a subdued volume creates the effect of hidden pressure. In the context of forensic discourse, such a prosodic pattern functions as a signal of control over the situation, thereby demonstrating the hierarchical nature of the speaker's superiority.

These observations are consistent with the experimental phonetic research of D. V. Groshev (in his dissertation for the degree of Candidate of Philosophical Sciences) (Groshev, 2023), which demonstrated that "Despite the similarity of the two illocutionary sentences, a demand with a threat is characterized by less tonal and dynamic expressiveness and a slower tempo compared to a demand" (Groshev, 2023, p. 13). Thus, we suggest that in Kazakh, the most authoritarian forms of inducement, including threats, are often realized not through increased volume, but through a decrease in volume, combined with a slower tempo and clear prosodic accentuation of key semantic elements. We consider that this pattern remains to be tested on a larger corpus of speakers and trials to clarify whether it holds for Kazakh-language courtroom speech in general.

Analysis of the presented fragment allowed us to interpret the judge's warning as prosodically framed as an act of institutional pressure, where a pause and reduced intensity serve as key acoustic markers of a controlled threat. Furthermore, based on an analysis of the remaining fragments (see Figure 3), this prosodic restructuring demonstrates a transition from a neutral, regulatory mode to an authoritarian form of influence based on controlled tempo, pausing, and reduced intensity.

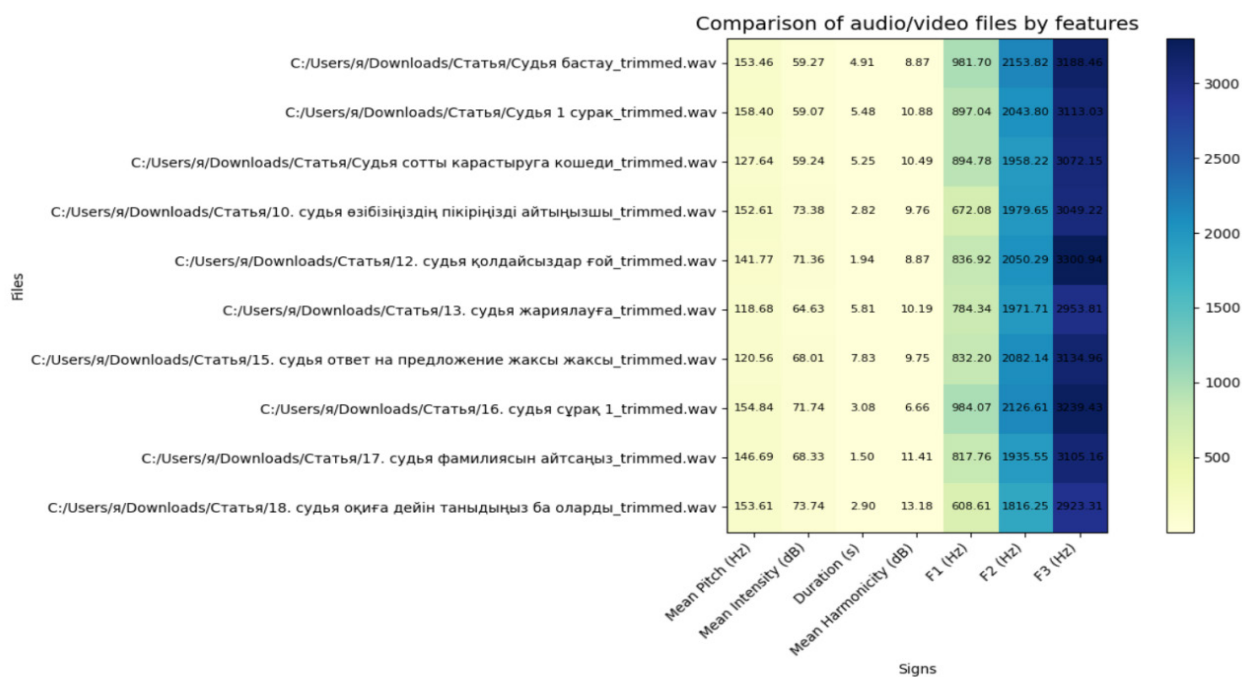
Based on this, the hypothesis is confirmed that even an impartial judge, when necessary, exhibits uneven prosodic characteristics in speech, emphasizing individual acoustic parameters depending on the institutional context.

Next, the profile of the prosecutor as a narrative constructor was examined. Two prosecutors were present in the courtroom, and their expressiveness varied significantly. The speech of the first prosecutor was characterized by a more even and smooth tone, while the second prosecutor demonstrated a distinct emphasis on individual lexemes through increased intensity (see Figures 4 and 5).

At the same time, the speech of the first prosecutor, despite the perceptual impression of uniformity, also included selective prosodic reinforcement in functionally significant moments, as demonstrated by the episode in Figure 4.

Figure 3

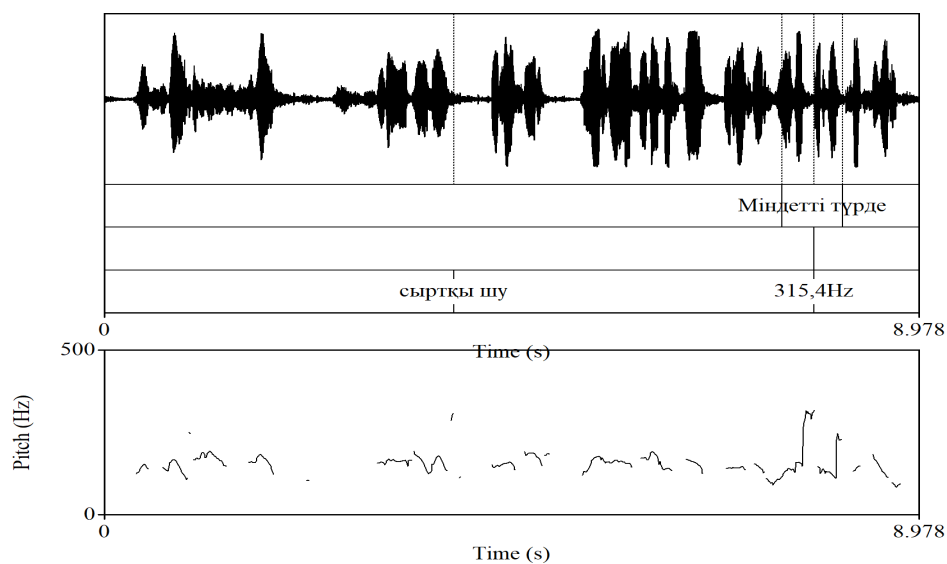
Episodes of the judge's speech with neutral prosodic characteristics



Note: Created by the author based on the analyzed materials

Figure 4

Accentuation of certain phrases in the Kazakh language



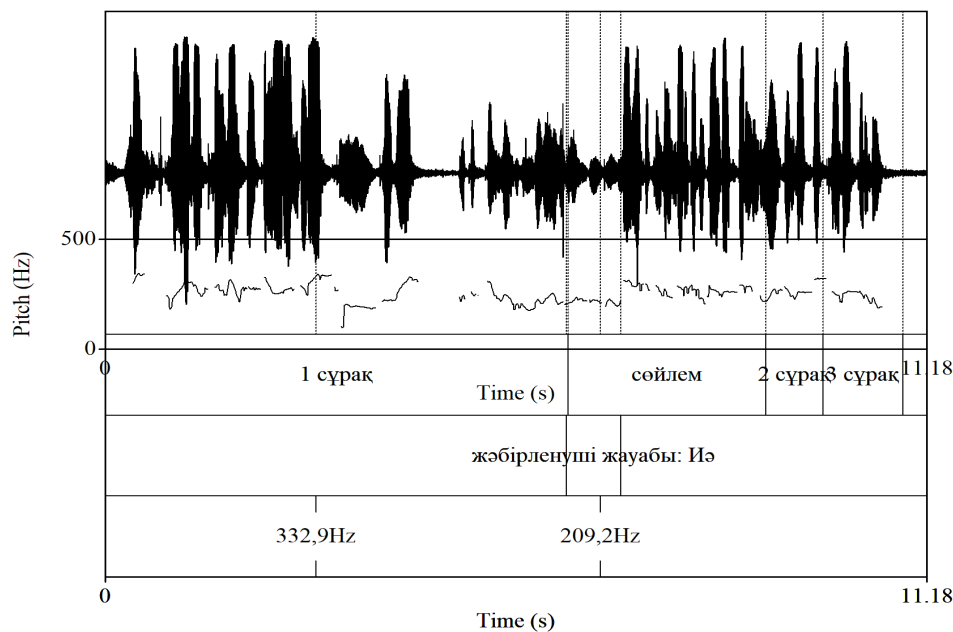
Note: Created by the author based on the analyzed materials

There are two distinct phonetic concepts in the Kazakh language. Lexical stress is a property of the word, which is a predictable syllable similar in every realization of that word despite the context, while, prosodic accentuation is a property of the utterance. Thus, the speaker's selection of a word for accentuation to mark focus.

The status of lexical stress in Kazakh is debated. A number of authors describe Kazakh as a language without word stress in the classical sense, on account of vowel harmony and the syntagmatic

organization of the word (Z. Bazarbayeva, 2008), while experimental-phonetic studies indicate that prominence in Kazakh, where it is realised, is signalled mainly by pitch (D. Karagoishiyeva, 2008; D. Karagoishiyeva et al., 2014). In this article we make no claim about lexical stress. What is described in Figures 4 and 5 is prosodic prominence at the utterance level. The deliberate rise of pitch (and, in the case of the second prosecutor, of intensity) on semantically significant elements of the statement.

Figure 5
Expressive high-pitched speech of the second prosecutor



Note: Created by the author based on the analyzed materials

Based on the results of an analysis of speech fragments from judges and prosecutors, we propose that courtroom discourse in Kazakh, also known as *take*, is characterized by a role-based system of prosodic parameters. Intensity, accentuation, and pauses are clearly evident in argumentative passages of questioning. Thus, the previously proposed hypothesis that prosodic speech parameters are implemented unevenly, playing a key role in achieving the communicative goals of trial participants, is confirmed.

Conclusion

This study set out to examine the prosodic characteristics of judicial and prosecutorial speech

in Kazakh-language courtroom discourse, using the Sherzat Polat trial as a case study, and to determine whether these characteristics are organized into a role-based system that carries argumentative and emotional significance. The results provide clear support for the initial hypothesis. The judge's speech was characterized by a stable, restrained acoustic profile in which localized departures from this baseline, rather than continuous variation, carried the primary communicative load. The drop in intensity and pitch preceding the warning to the prosecutor, together with the pause that separated it from the surrounding speech, functioned as a deliberate signal of institutional control rather than as a lapse in composure. This pattern is consistent with

the broader observation that authoritative speakers in institutional settings often achieve emphasis through withdrawal of acoustic energy rather than through its amplification, a strategy that appears counterintuitive from the standpoint of everyday emotional expression but is well suited to a context in which composure itself is a marker of authority.

The two prosecutor profiles examined in this study diverged in ways that further support the role-based model. The first prosecutor's speech was perceptually even, yet closer instrumental analysis revealed selective prosodic reinforcement at functionally significant moments, suggesting that apparent uniformity can coexist with targeted emphasis. The second prosecutor relied more heavily on pitch elevation and increased intensity to foreground individual lexemes, illustrating that within a single institutional role, speakers may draw on markedly different combinations of acoustic parameters to achieve comparable argumentative goals. Taken together, these findings indicate that the prosodic system observed in this corpus is not reducible to a fixed inventory of role-specific cues; rather, it is a flexible repertoire from which speakers select strategies according to the local interactional demands of the moment, while remaining constrained by the broader institutional expectations attached to their role.

These findings resonate with recent work on the architectonics of courtroom discourse, which treats the courtroom as an information cluster whose persuasive effect depends on the coordinated arrangement of its rational, emotional, and non-rational components (Zaitseva & Ericsson, 2024), and with research on footing in courtroom talk, which shows how shifts in speaker alignment are used strategically to frame competing communicative acts (Alqahitani, 2026). The present results extend this line of research into the acoustic domain, demonstrating that footing shifts and discursive framing are not purely lexico-grammatical phenomena but are also encoded prosodically. The judge's move from a neutral administrative register to a lower, slower, pause-marked delivery when issuing a warning can be understood as a prosodic footing shift that re-frames the interaction from routine proceeding to disciplinary intervention.

The results are also consistent with sociological accounts of prosecutorial emotion management, which describe how legal professionals habituate feeling rules of confidence, emotional distance, and controlled presence over the course of their careers (Wettergren & Bergman Blix, 2022). The relatively even prosodic profile of the first prosecutor in this study may reflect exactly this kind of habitu-

ated emotional restraint, while the more expressive profile of the second prosecutor suggests that habituation is neither uniform nor complete, and that individual variation persists even within a shared institutional role. This observation invites further research into how professional experience, personality, and case-specific stakes jointly shape the prosodic performance of legal actors.

More broadly, the difficulty of establishing a stable mapping between acoustic parameters and emotional or attitudinal states, repeatedly noted in the general literature on emotional prosody (Larrouy-Maestri et al., 2025), is compounded in forensic and institutional contexts by the fact that speakers are actively managing, rather than simply expressing, their emotional state. The prosodic strategies identified in this study should therefore be understood not as transparent windows onto the speakers' internal states but as communicative resources deployed, consciously or not, to accomplish institutional and interactional goals; the same reduction in pitch and loudness that in ordinary conversation might index withdrawal or discomfort here indexes control and authority, in the same way that a rise in pitch, elsewhere associated with the marking of complaint or appeal (Mauchand & Pell, 2021), here indexes emphasis and argumentative force.

From a practical standpoint, these findings have implications for forensic linguistic expertise, for the training of legal professionals in courtroom communication, and for the interpretation of audio-visual trial records in cases where the emotional tenor of an exchange is itself at issue. Recognizing that a lowered, slowed, pause-marked delivery can function as a marker of institutional pressure, rather than as evidence of hesitation or uncertainty, may be of direct use to legal analysts and to forensic phoneticians called upon to characterize the communicative intent behind a given utterance.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Ethics Statement

This study is based exclusively on materials that were officially published and openly accessible. The trial was conducted as an open court hearing, and the video recordings analysed here were released through official public channels of the Republic of Kazakhstan. No confidential, restricted-access, or independently obtained data were used, and no recordings were made by the authors.

The analysis is confined to the prosodic characteristics of institutional speech behaviour. It does not constitute, and should not be read as, an assessment of the guilt or innocence of any party, of the lawfulness of the court's decision, or of the personal qualities or professional competence of any trial participant. All interpretations offered in this article are linguistic in nature and carry no legal force.

With the exception of the case designation, which is already a matter of public record, individual participants in the proceedings are not identified. The presiding judge and the prosecutors are referred to solely by their institutional roles, and no biographical, contact, or other personal data concerning them are reported. Speech fragments are cited only to the extent necessary to illustrate the acoustic phenomena under discussion.

Author Contributions

S.Zh. Badanova developed the scientific concept of the study and its methodological framework, se-

lected and systematized the empirical material, performed the segmentation and instrumental processing of the video recordings using PRAAT, prepared the figures presented in the article, and administered the research project. R.Zh. Kondybaeva carried out the perceptual-acoustic and formal analysis of the prosodic parameters, validated the results of the instrumental measurements, interpreted the obtained data in accordance with the role classification of the trial participants, and supervised the research. M.R. Zheltukhina prepared the original draft of the manuscript, provided the theoretical substantiation of the study within the framework of forensic linguistics and media discourse research, critically reviewed and edited the text, and prepared the final version of the article. All authors participated in the discussion of the results, have read and approved the final version of the manuscript, and bear joint responsibility for the content of the article, the accuracy of the analysis, and the conclusions presented in the study.

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