



## **On the pragmatic function of utterance-level declination as deployed by speakers with multilingual repertoires**

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**Aim and objectives/purpose/research questions:** The aim of this study is to examine the pragmatic function of utterance-level declination as used in conversations in French and Norwegian by 10 migrants from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) living in Norway whose repertoires are highly multilingual.

**Design/methodology/approach:** To investigate this contour, we draw on insights from different fields, that is, research on multilingualism, Conversation Analysis (CA), and phonetics/ phonology.

**Data and analysis:** By an automatic procedure, we examined pitch variations of 400 declarative utterances (200 in Norwegian and 200 in French). The procedure found that 38 of the utterances have declination. These were then analyzed qualitatively with methods from CA in the context of the sequence. The aim of the CA was to assess the pragmatic functions of the contour.

**Findings/conclusions:** We found that utterance-level declination is a marked contour, that is, used to make certain utterances prominent in relation to other utterances of the sequence. The contour has the same functions in French and Norwegian for these speakers. Our conclusion is that the contour is a flexible resource of the speakers' repertoires.

**Originality and significance/implications:** This study is a contribution to the scarcely explored area of the prosody-pragmatics interface in speakers with varied linguistic repertoires.