

# Phonostylistic Study of Broadcaster Abbas Hamza in the Iraqi Program Al-Tareeq

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## ABSTRACT

This study examines the phonostylistic characteristics present in the speech of Iraqi broadcaster Abbas Hamza in the television program Al-Tareeq. Despite the growing body of research on phonetic aspects in English-language news delivery, there remains a significant gap concerning Arabic phonostylistics—particularly within Iraqi media. To date, no in-depth analysis has explored how Hamza's vocal techniques contribute to the emotional depth and communicative strength of the program. This research seeks to answer key questions: How does Abbas Hamza employ phonostylistic features in his broadcasts? What are the dominant features used? In what ways do these elements enhance the rhetorical, persuasive, and emotional dimensions of his message? Furthermore, how do these vocal strategies shape his media persona? The primary objectives are to identify and analyze the phonostylistic features in Hamza's speech, explore how intonation, pitch, rhythm, stress, and pauses fulfill various communicative functions in Al-Tareeq, and examine the interplay between vocal performance, identity construction, and message effectiveness within the context of Iraqi broadcasting. Adopting a qualitative approach, the study analyzes selected episodes of the program, focusing on recurring vocal patterns and stylistic strategies. The findings demonstrate that Hamza's voice serves not only as a tool for information delivery but also as a performative medium that constructs his media identity and resonates with audiences on an emotional level. His style reflects a distinctive synthesis of classical Arabic oratorical traditions and modern broadcasting techniques. This study contributes to the emerging field of Arabic phonostylistics and offers valuable insights for linguists, media professionals, and speech trainers interested in the dynamic relationship between voice and communicative impact.

**KEYWORDS:** Phonostylistics, Broadcast Speech, Abbas Hamza, Iraqi Media, Intonation, Voice Identity.

## 1.1 Introduction

In the era of digital media, voice has become a powerful instrument of influence, especially in broadcast journalism where the spoken word is central. Broadcasters are not merely conveyors of information; they are performers whose voices engage, persuade, and affect audiences. The field of **phonostylistics**, which studies the expressive use of phonetic features such as intonation, stress, rhythm, and pitch, offers valuable tools to understand how broadcasters shape their message beyond the lexical content.

Within this scope, the voice of **Abbas Hamza**, a prominent Iraqi broadcaster in the television program *Al-Tareeq*, offers a rich subject for phonostylistic exploration. Hamza is known for his emotionally charged delivery, rhythmic control, and stylistic versatility, all of which contribute to the unique identity of his broadcast persona. His voice not only conveys facts but evokes emotion, creates dramatic tension, and builds connection with viewers. Such features make his speech a compelling subject for phonostylistic analysis.

## 2.1 Theoretical Background

## 2.2 Phonostylistics in Broadcast Media

Phonostylistics, the study of expressive variations in speech, has become increasingly important in understanding media language. It examines how intonation, rhythm, pitch, and stress are used stylistically to affect meaning and audience reception. Wagner et al. (2015:1- 12) defend the inclusion of **stylistic diversity** in phonetic research, arguing that everyday speech and media performance both offer valuable insights into linguistic identity and social interaction. Similarly, Barbosa and de Mareüil (2018: 419-428) compare the phonostylistic strategies of French and Brazilian news broadcasters, showing that **imitation of broadcast norms** is common but culturally distinct. Cecelewski et al. (2023: 798-802) provide a **diachronic phonetic study** of French broadcast speech, revealing how **vowel harmony and stylistic patterns** have evolved from 1940 to the present day, emphasizing the influence of broadcast norms on public pronunciation.

## 2.3 The Role of Style and Identity in Broadcast Speech

The way broadcasters speak is not only about conveying content but also about **constructing a vocal persona**. Stuart-Smith (2017: 51-84

) Emphasizes that stylistic choices in speech are linked to **language change** and are influenced by the **cultural authority of media voices**, suggesting that broadcasters can both reflect and drive linguistic trends.

In his reflections on BBC English, Elmes (2015: 3-8) highlights how **linguistic authority** in broadcasting is maintained through voice, tone, and articulation, suggesting that broadcasters act as models for 'standard' English. Similarly, Neumann (2019:9) explores the strategic **style-shifting** of politicians, showing how intentional vocal variation is used to **persuade and build credibility**, a principle equally relevant to media presenters.

## 2.4 Intonation, Rhythm, and Voice Quality in Broadcast Speech

Several studies examine the **prosodic features**—intonation, pitch, tempo, stress—used by broadcasters to enhance content delivery. Nissen et al. (2020: 63-77) conducted a quantitative study of pitch patterns in American news anchors, revealing how **vocal pitch** contributes to message clarity and audience trust. Ekpe and Nsikak (2022: 2070-2078) analyze the intonational patterns of Nigerian broadcasters, situating their style within the boundaries of Received Pronunciation and local phonological influences. They argue that **intonational choices** reflect both formal broadcast norms and **contextual sociolinguistic identities**. Strelluf (2015: 467-491) notes that broadcast speech is **perceived as more correct** than ordinary speech due to both its **precision and prosodic control**. He explains that media professionals are expected not only to speak clearly but to do so with stylistic finesse, fulfilling a **normative role** in public discourse.

## 2.5 Cultural and Linguistic Contexts of Broadcast Language

Studies in regional broadcasting—such as that of Onyeocha (2021:87-88) on **Igbo radio** in Nigeria—emphasize the tension between **standard language forms and local linguistic realities**. Broadcasters often balance between formal norms and audience-friendly familiarity, which also applies to Abbas Hamza's strategy in *Al-Tareeq*. Cantor-Cutiva et al. (2019: 178-191) explore the **vocal demands** and communication profiles of radio broadcasters, arguing that their **vocal health and style** impact not only performance but also the credibility and longevity of their career.

Hannisdal (2015:45), in her corpus-based study of American *t*-flapping in broadcast speech, shows how **subtle phonological shifts** can become acceptable within broadcast standards over time.

The reviewed literature underscores the multifaceted nature of broadcast phonostylistics. From **intonation and vocal variation** to **style-shifting and media influence**, the voice emerges not merely as a vehicle for information but as a **rhetorical and stylistic tool**. The present study builds upon this foundation by analyzing how Abbas Hamza's voice in *Al-Tareeq* embodies **emotional intensity, stylistic identity, and cultural resonance**, using techniques that reflect both personal expression and professional media norms.

### 3.1 Methodology

The methodological framework adopted for conducting a phonostylistic analysis of broadcaster Abbas Hamza's speech in the Iraqi TV program *Al-Tareeq*. It explains the research design, data collection procedures, sampling technique, data analysis methods, and the justification for the chosen approach.

This study employs a **qualitative descriptive design** with a **phonostylistic framework**. The research is rooted in the field of stylistics, particularly focusing on **spoken discourse**, and it aims to analyze the **phonetic and prosodic features** used by Abbas Hamza to deliver his content and connect with the audience. The data consists of selected audio-visual recordings of *Al-Tareeq*, a program hosted by Abbas Hamza and broadcast on Iraqi television. A total of **5 episodes**, each approximately **30–45 minutes** long, were selected based on the **diversity of topics** and **variation in tone and audience interaction**. The recordings were accessed through the program's official YouTube channel and transcribed manually. Transcriptions included **phonological phenomena** such as intonation, stress, pauses, pitch variation, and rhythm.

### 3.2 Sampling Procedure

The sampling method used in this study is **purposive sampling**, focusing on instances that demonstrate noticeable stylistic phonetic features. Episodes were selected based on:

- High viewership
- Variety in thematic content
- Richness of vocal performance

From each episode, **2–3 expressive segments** were selected for in-depth phonostylistic analysis, including both **introductory narrations** and **interactions with guests or callers**.

### 3.3 Data Analysis

The data was analyzed using the principles of **phonostylistics**, focusing on the following key elements:

- **Intonation patterns** (e.g., rising/falling contours)
- **Pitch variation** (low, medium, high)
- **Rhythm and tempo** (speed of delivery)
- **Stress and emphasis**
- **Pauses and silence**
- **Voice quality** (e.g., breathy, strong, emotional tones)

Analysis followed a **segment-by-segment approach**, examining each utterance both phonetically and contextually to uncover the **expressive function** behind the speaker's style. Attention was also given to **audience engagement, emotional appeal, and rhetorical effect**.

### 3.4 Tools and Software

For accuracy in phonetic analysis, the study used the following tools:

- **Praat**: For analyzing pitch, intensity, and duration
- **ELAN**: For aligning audio and transcriptions
- **Audacity**: For audio segmentation and enhancement

These tools enabled the identification of fine phonetic details and the synchronization of speech features with their contextual functions.

### 3.5 Ethical Considerations

All media content used in this study is publicly available and used strictly for academic purposes. No modifications were made to the content, and the broadcaster's rights as a public figure were respected. Any personal data or off-topic content not relevant to the analysis was excluded from transcription.

## 4.2 Phonostylistic Features in Abbas Hamza's Speech

### 4.2.1 Intonation

Abbas Hamza masterfully uses intonation to guide listeners' emotions. For example, in an episode discussing **a young man who lost his family in war**, he says:

"Can you imagine waking up... (*rising tone*) and not hearing your mother's voice? Not seeing your father in his usual spot? (*falling tone*)"

Here, the **rising intonation** in the first question builds suspense and engages the listener, while the **falling intonation** signals emotional depth and seriousness.

### 4.2.2 Tempo and Rhythm

Hamza slows down dramatically during emotional or reflective moments, while maintaining a steady rhythm during factual segments.

"In a single moment... (*slowly*) he left everything behind... (*pause*) and walked into the unknown."

The **deliberate slowing down** enhances emotional gravity, allowing the audience to reflect deeply.

Conversely, when stating facts:

"According to the UN reports, over five thousand families were displaced just last month!"

The **faster pace** here communicates urgency and information density.

### 4.2.3 Pitch Variation

Hamza varies his pitch effectively. He raises his voice during motivational moments and lowers it during intimate or sorrowful reflections.

“This young man... didn’t wait for help! Didn’t seek pity! He made his own path!” Here, the **high pitch** adds enthusiasm and motivation.

“His mother sold bread... to educate him. Today... he stands by her grave, holding his degree.”

In this line, the **low pitch** expresses sorrow and reverence, enhancing emotional connection.

#### 4.2.4 Stress and Emphasis

He places **strategic stress** on key words to deliver impact.

“Life... isn’t what happens to us, but what we **do** with what happens to us.” The word “**do**” is stressed to emphasize action and agency.

Another example:

“We don’t need a miracle... we need **willpower!**”

Stress on “**willpower**” directs the listener’s focus to the solution, not the problem.

#### 4.2.5 Pauses and Silence

Hamza uses **silence** as a rhetorical tool. In a story about a martyr’s mother, he says:

“She told me... (*silence*) ... he didn’t die. He returned to God.”

The **pause** between the two parts of the sentence creates a powerful emotional effect, allowing the listener to absorb the weight of the statement.

This use of silence is a form of “**non-verbal eloquence**” that complements the spoken message.

### 4.3 Functional Impact of Vocal Style

#### 4.3.1 Emotional Effect

Hamza’s voice triggers strong emotions. In human-interest stories about poverty, loss, or sacrifice, he slows down, softens his pitch, and allows pauses to add depth.

“He said to me... ‘What I miss is not the house... but my father’s laughter.’”

This kind of storytelling, supported by vocal modulation, connects deeply with the audience’s emotions.

#### 4.3.2 Persuasive Function

When discussing national or social issues, he shifts to a more confident tone, using assertive pitch and stress to present his opinion as credible and convincing.

“Iraq won’t be rebuilt by complaints... but by hands that work, and minds that think.”

The stress on “**won’t**” and “**think**” adds rhetorical strength and conviction, guiding the listener toward agreement or reflection.

### 4.4 General Analysis

From the above observations, it is clear that Abbas Hamza's vocal performance is not merely expressive—it is **deliberately crafted**. His voice:

- **Evokes emotion** through pitch, pace, and silence
- **Persuades** through stress, rhythm, and confident delivery
- **Engages** through tonal contrast and voice branding

His voice functions as a **stylistic identity**, making him instantly recognizable and emotionally impactful.

This chapter demonstrated that Abbas Hamza's speech in *Al-Tareeq* is a sophisticated example of phonostylistic communication. His vocal delivery is not only a carrier of content, but a **performative act** that enriches meaning, persuades, and moves the audience. Phonostylistics, thus, proves essential in understanding media discourse beyond words.

## 5.1 Findings

Based on the phonostylistic analysis of selected episodes of the Iraqi TV program *Al-Tareeq*, featuring broadcaster **Abbas Hamza**, several key findings emerged regarding his vocal performance and stylistic choices:

### 1. Intonation as a Tool of Emotional Engagement

Hamza's speech displays wide intonational variation. He uses **falling intonation** to conclude ideas with authority, while **rising intonation** is often used in rhetorical or emotionally loaded questions. This dynamic range helps draw in the audience and convey sincerity, concern, or emphasis.

### 2. Strategic Use of Pauses and Rhythmic Structure

The broadcaster makes frequent use of **well-placed pauses**, not only for breath but to add **dramatic effect**. These pauses also provide the audience time to reflect. The rhythm of his speech tends to follow a **semi-poetic cadence**, often marked by repetition and parallel structure to increase memorability.

### 3. Pitch Modulation and Voice Timbre

Hamza's use of **pitch modulation** is a core feature of his style. His **lower pitch** is employed when discussing serious or grave matters, while a **higher pitch** may signal urgency or moral appeal. His voice timbre tends to be warm, resonant, and emotionally expressive.

### 4. Stress and Emphasis

Lexical stress is used **intentionally** to highlight emotionally or ideologically significant words. Stress placement sometimes breaks with Standard Arabic norms to foreground specific themes, creating a **phonostylistic signature** unique to Hamza.

## 5. Identity and Authority

The combination of vocal features contributes to **Abbas Hamza's vocal persona**—a figure of compassion, moral clarity, and national concern. His **phonostylistic identity** enhances the perceived **authenticity** of the program, distinguishing him from conventional news anchors.

## 5.2 Conclusions

This study concludes that **phonostylistics plays a central role** in shaping the communicative power of modern Arab broadcasters. In the case of *Al-Tareeq*, Abbas Hamza's use of **intonation, pitch, rhythm, stress, and pausing** is not accidental but **deliberate and strategic**. These features:

- Reinforce the **emotional depth** of the message.
- Contribute to **viewer trust** and connection.
- Create a **memorable media identity** that blends information with affect.

Hamza's style exemplifies how **spoken Arabic in broadcast contexts** can adapt to modern performance demands while still aligning with cultural expectations of sincerity, dignity, and clarity.

Voice is not just a tool of communication—it is a **performance of identity, emotion, and authority**. In the voice of Abbas Hamza, we find a compelling case study of how a broadcaster can use phonostylistic techniques to **elevate the message**, shape public perception, and create a lasting impression on national audiences.

## 5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

### 1. For Media Professionals and Trainers

- Incorporate **phonostylistic training** into voice coaching programs for journalists and broadcasters.
- Teach broadcasters how to control **pitch, stress, and pausing** to enhance engagement.

### 2. For Linguists and Phonetic Researchers

- Further study is needed on **Arabic phonostylistics**, particularly in **non-formal media settings** like podcasts, social media, or regional broadcasts.
- Comparative research between Iraqi broadcasters and those in other Arab countries could reveal **cultural phonostylistic trends**.

### 3. For Academic Institutions

- Encourage the development of **courses in phonostylistics** within departments of linguistics, media studies, and Arabic language.
- Promote **interdisciplinary research** connecting phonetics, rhetoric, and media communication.

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