



# PHONOSTYLISTIC STUDY OF BROADCASTER ABBAS HAMZA IN THE IRAQI PROGRAM AL-TAREEQ

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Article history:		Abstract:
Received:	26 <sup>th</sup> May 2025	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.
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## 1.1 INTRODUCTION

With digital media, voice as a tool of influence has assumed remarkable importance, particularly with broadcast journalism where speech is a core component. Broadcasters are not only news announcers but performers with voices that captivate, influence, and move audiences. Phonostylistics, a branch of linguistics that investigates the expressive function of phonetic characteristics of intonation, stress, rhythm, and pitch, provides insightful methods of examining broadcasters as they craft their content outside of lexical meaning.

In this regard, the voice of **Abbas Hamza**, a widely recognized Iraqi anchor in the television broadcast Al-Tareeq, represents a strong subject for a phonostylistic analysis. Hamza is renowned for his emotively rich delivery, control of rhythm, as well as his stylistic versatility, thus forming the distinct personality of his broadcast voice. Not only does his voice transmit facts, it provokes emotion, creates a sense of dramatic tension, as well as a sense of affinity with viewers. Such characteristics make his utterance an attractive target for a phonostylistic analysis

## 2.1 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

### 2.2 Phonostylistics in Broadcast Media

Phonostylistics, or a study of speech's varying expressiveness, becomes increasingly relevant in terms of media language. It examines stylistic applications of intonation, rhythm, pitch, as well as stress to influence meaning as well as audiences' reception. Wagner et al. (2015:1- 12) support including stylistic diversity in terms of studies of phonetics, with both informal speech as well as media performance making integral contributions towards linguistic identity as well as social interaction. Correspondingly, 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

According to the phonostylistic analysis of some episodes in the Iraqi television show *Al-Tareeq* with broadcaster :Abbas Hamza, some important findings came to light in terms of his vocal delivery and stylistic features

### 1. Intonation and the Method of Emotional Involvement

Hamza's talk exhibits extensive intonational variability. Falling intonation marks ideas with finality and assertiveness, and his version of rising intonation often appears in questions that are rhetorical or emotionally tinged. This variable range serves to engage the hearers and to express sincerity, alarm, or stress..

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

The presenter uses frequent judicious pauses, not just for breath but to create dramatic impact, and they also give the listener a moment to think. There is a semi-poetic cadence to his speaking style, often with repetition and parallel structure to make it more memorable.

### 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 research concludes that phonostylistics plays a key role in determining the communicative ability of present-day Arab broadcasters. Using Al-Tareeq, Abbas Hamza's deployment of intonation, pitch, rhythm, stress, and pause is neither incidental but intentional and deliberate. These features:

- Enhance emotional depth of the message.
- Add to viewer trust and familiarity.
- Establish a unique media presence that uses information and emotion

Hamza's style shows that in television contexts, spoken Arabic can be aligned with present needs of performance but .remain in sync with cultural dictates of sincerity, dignity, and clarity

Voice is more than a medium of communication—it is an act of identity, feeling, and authority. In the voice of Abbas Hamza, we see one effective case study of how a broadcaster can utilize the phonostylistic features to make the message more effective, influence people's attitude, and make a long-lasting impact on national audiences.

### 5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

#### 1. For Media Professionals and Trainers

- Include phonostylistic training in voice coaching courses for broadcasters and journalists..
- Instruct broadcasters to manage pitch, stress, and pausing to boost engagement.

#### 2. For Linguists and Phonetic Researchers

- More studies must be done in Arabic phonostylistics in informal media contexts like podcasting, social networking, or local television/radio broadcasting.

Comparative studies between Iraqi broadcasters and other Arab broadcasters might identify 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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