CHAPTER ONE

PRELIMINARIES TO THE STUDY OF MALAY PROSODY

1.1 Introduction

Although there is a tremendous expansion of interest in the study of the Malay language, research on the spoken form particularly its prosodic features is still left unexplored. Syntax, morphology and segmental phonology have each received a respectable measure of attention in the writings of Malay linguists, and if prosody was mentioned it was done so in passing. In short, prosody has frequently been regarded on the periphery of linguistics. This state of affairs does not come as a surprise since only 1% of the language spoken in the world has been intonationally described (Tench, 1990). The present study takes the view that prosody is best treated as essential rather than peripheral features of Malay spoken discourse.

A recent trend towards a recognition of the centrality of prosody in a Malaysian language is reflected in the work of Wong (1994). He pioneers a phonological study of Penampang Kadazan, a Malaysian indigenous language, based on the systemic framework and supported by instrumental analysis. The significance of this thesis lies in its description of the
intonation contours of a Malaysian indigenous language and his effort in identifying their roles in selected sentences. The contributions of other linguists such as Asmah (1980), Hashim (1981), Asraf (1981), Nik Safiah et al (1987), Rahimah (1989) to Malay prosody in general are described at great length in Chapter Two of this thesis.

In other languages, particularly English, the interest in the study of prosody has increased tremendously in the last ten years (Tench, 1992). A lot of work has been done on both sides of the continent, i.e. in America and Europe (cf. Pierrehumbert, 1980; Lindsey, 1985; Gibbon and Richter, 1984; Couper-kuhlen, 1986).

1.2 Definition of Terms

With the shift of focus in linguistic analysis from the examination of single sounds or segments to the emphasis on features which stretch over an utterance, "melodic prosody" is once again accorded the attention that it so deserves. According to Tench (1990), the study of prosody has increased tremendously in the last ten years.

While the nature of prosodic features is of the same substance as segmental aspects of speech continuum such that every sound segment has its own fundamental frequency, amplitude and duration, prosodic
features are not identifiable by the examination of the segment itself but derive from consideration of larger sections of speech material.

A flowering of interest in the study of prosody can be attributed to Firth (1948) whose use of this term in his approach to linguistic analysis has paved the way to a new awareness of its original denotation, i.e. its association with the melodic features of spoken language (Couper-kuhlen, 1986). Firth uses the term prosody to capture the features that spread themselves over more than one segment, over a whole syllable, etc.

Lass (1984) who shares Firth’s view regarding the definition of prosody identifies the following domains of prosodic realisations:

(1) **Sentence prosodies**
This involves the question of identifying intonation contours within a given domain, e.g. tone-group, tone-unit, sense-group, etc.

(2) **Word prosodies**
This is a consideration of prosodic features like vowel harmony, the characterisation of whole word, or portions larger than words.
(3) **Syllable prosodies**

This embraces prosodic features such as tone, stress, length and other features like velarisation, labialisation, laryngeliasation, etc. that can characterise whole syllables.

The idea of a prosodic phonological hierarchy stems from a Firthian approach to phonology which is couched in the words of Robins as follows: "We may thus speak of syllable prosodies, prosodies of syllable, phrase or sentence-part prosodies, and sentence-prosodies." (See Robins, 1970: 192).

The works of Pike and his followers (cf. McMahon, 1967) see the inclusion of larger phonological units in the hierarchy of prosodic units: discourse-sentence-clause-phrase-foot-syllable-segment. Although no mention is made of this prosodic hierarchy in standard generative phonology, such a recognition is reflected in the work of metrical phonologists especially that of Selkirk (1978, 1980a, 1980b) who assumes the following prosodic hierarchy for English:

Utterance, Intonational, Phrase, Word, Foot, Syllable, Segment.
The first issue that needs to be addressed here is the implication of the use of the term prosody instead of intonation in the title of this thesis. Some linguists view intonation as a synonym of prosody in general, while others restrict the use of the term intonation to linguistically functional pitch events only. The overlaps of the terms make the dividing line between intonation and prosody unclear and this is commented upon by Crystal (1969) as follows:

... scholars in the field have been anxious to restrict the formal definition of intonation to pitch movement alone (although occasionally allowing in stress variation as well).

(Crystal, 1969: 195)

In his definition of intonation, Crystal includes not only the phenomenon of tone but also the prosodic features like pitch range, tempo, loudness and pause. This is somewhat similar to the definition of Boves, Tenhave and Vieregge (1984:20) whereby intonation is said to consist of various prosodic features such as pitch, loudness and temporal organisation. The broad definition of intonation has resulted in a considerable overlap between intonation and prosody, with intonation being a realisation of several prosodic features, all of which co-occur simultaneously with segmental information on continually varying parameters.
Rather than adopting the term intonation, the thesis instead employs the term prosody which is taken to include not only pitch (which is the principal correlate of intonation) but also other prosodic phenomena like tempo, loudness and pause which may be used for linguistic purposes either individually or jointly. Couper-kuhlen (1986) equates prosody with a definition of intonation in its broadest sense. The use of the term prosody is considered to be more appropriate to the focus of study since the thesis does not only take into account pitch phenomena (pitch movement and height) but also other phonetic phenomena which strictly belong to prosody such as tempo, loudness and pause.

Being linguistic auditory aspects of speech, prosodic features can be distinguished from the non-linguistic aspects of speech such as voice quality, sneeze or cough which is not conventionally or intentionally used for communication or the paralinguistic features e.g. whisper, shriek, creak, falsetto, etc., and the vocal effects caused by different configurations of the glottal and subglottal organs. Below is a schematic representation of the auditory components of speech in communication:
The above auditory properties of prosody correlate in a complex manner with the following acoustic parameters:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Auditory perceptions</th>
<th>Acoustic parameters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>tempo</td>
<td>time dimension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>loudness</td>
<td>amplitude</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pitch</td>
<td>fundamental frequency (Fo)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pitch change</td>
<td>change in fundamental frequency</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(adapted from Crystal, 1969:131)
1.3 Statement of the Problem

Any analysis of spoken discourse must necessarily acknowledge that prosody is a situation-creating device involving the on-going here-and-now decisions of participants in spontaneous speech. Admittedly analysing prosodic features is not an easy task because the choice of pitch features (either high or low, rise or fall), loudness features (forte or piano), tempo (lento or allegro), etc may reflect more than one thing. This is pointed out by Brown et al (1981) as follows:

One of the major problems in the analysis of intonation is that the speaker exploits the resources of intonation in realising several different systems, all of which may be realised within the same tone unit.

(Brown et al, 1981: 21)

The aim of the present study is to identify the prosodic phenomena realised in specific domains of occurrence for the purpose of investigating their functions in Malay discourse. Specifically, it intends to undertake the following tasks:

(1) To identify the prosodic cues which contribute to making stretches of speech hearable as being made up of separate chunks whose boundaries are prosodically identifiable, and thereon examine their
roles in discourse development. We refer to this as the segmentative function of prosody.

(2) To identify the prosodic cues that influence the realisation of prominence in Malay utterances, and thereon examine the nature of the relationship between prominence and information structure. We refer to this as the informational function of prosody.

(3) To identify the prosodic cues involved in the organisation of linguistic interaction. Such an examination necessitates the setting up of a framework that will allow the investigation into the functions of prosody in the management of dyadic spoken interaction. We refer to this as the interactional function of prosody.

These aims contain a hidden assumption such that it is assumed that there is a known domain of occurrence and that the prosodic cues realised in this known domain fulfil certain functions. The thesis has established three domains within which the manifestations of prosodic phenomena can be examined and the three are:

(a) speech units (see Chapter Five for the definition and realisation),

(b) utterances and

(c) speaking turns.
Obviously there are other systems which exploit prosody (cf. Tench, 1990), but the examination here is restricted to the participation of prosody in the demarcative function of prosody and expression of informational and interactional meanings.

This thesis intends to lay the groundwork for the study of Malay prosody in two respects. Firstly it attempts to identify the prosodic phenomena in connected discourse. Thus far, the source material for the work on Malay prosody has been confined to invented isolated sentences (cf. Chapter Two of this thesis). However, language is bigger than sentences, and short utterances; language is also connected discourse. And prosody and intonation are totally involved in the spoken form of that dimension of language.

Secondly, the thesis attempts to describe the function of prosody in a specific speech event or genre, i.e. the actual use that is made of prosody by speakers of standard Malay pronunciation. This phonological aspect of prosody is indeed not a novelty in the study of English prosody and intonation (cf. Halliday, 1967, 1970) but in Malay no such attempt has been done thus far.
The present study is the first of its kind in Malaysia. To the best of my knowledge there has been no similar study done in Malaysia. Its significance lies in the fact that it contributes to the development of prosody which is new in Malaysian context. It should be viewed as a preliminary investigation into an important but complex subject.

1.4 Choice of Genre: Broadcast Interviews

The type of speech event or genre selected for examination is a two-party broadcast interview where only two participants are involved. The choice is deemed appropriate for an investigation of this nature since broadcast interview fulfils the requirement of what is referred to as discourse. As defined by Leech & Short discourse

"is a linguistic communication seen as a transaction between speaker and hearer, an interpersonal activity whose form is determined by its social purpose."

(1981: p. 25)

Such a choice is also based on the belief that the examination of the prosodic phenomena in discourse should begin with a less complex interaction with a type of spoken discourse which has much more overt structure where participants have specified roles and where one participant has acknowledged responsibility for selecting the next speaker, and initiating
and ending topics. Like any exploration of the complex, one should begin in the shallow waters and only later progress into the depths.

1.4.1 Nature of Broadcast Interview

The broadcast interview that forms the corpus of data can be categorised as the "model interview", defined by Mulholland (1991) as "a cross-section between a conversation and a legal cross-examination". It can be seen as a speech event: a highly-organised form of behaviour, demarcated by well-defined boundaries and pre-established roles.

An important aspect of broadcast interviews is the goals of participants which are predetermined by the role specification of interviewer and interviewee. The interviewer has as its primary aim the elicitation of information from the interviewee whose primary aim is to supply the required information and both participants are aware that the interviewing time will be spent on the eliciting and giving of information. The interview discourse is therefore marked with a routinised structure of elicitations employed by the interviewer and a set of reciprocal responses employed by the interviewee.

A preliminary analysis of the corpus gives the impression that broadcast interviews are an in-depth interaction in the sense of them being
probing, investigative and personal. They are planned and unplanned, i.e. they are replete with performance errors such as false starts, repeats and hesitation phenomena. The interviews were conducted in an informal and conversational manner. They centred around a particular theme and formed a coherent unity. To establish rapport, the interviewer often started with such social questions as asking about the family, road conditions, health, food, etc. Thus, the beginning of the interview was marked by shorter turns, rapid change of turns with the interviewer initiating the talk with questions and adjacency pairs. From the way they communicated with each other, the interviewer and interviewee seemed to be familiar and comfortable with each other.

Utterances produced by participants in a communicative event such as this are considered more than merely a sequence of sentences or a discourse but are viewed as a vehicle by which not only is information transferred but also by which the intention of communication is fulfilled. Such a view does not only necessitate the dependence on the analysis of naturally produced data, but also on predicting what speakers intended and how hearers understood; such prediction is based on the natural data of spoken language produced.

It is important to note here that the speaker's intentions are not only limited to the referential information: a speaker may intend an utterance to
produce a feeling of interpersonal solidarity (social information) or to communicate information of pragmatic nature. To this end, the thesis proposes three requisites:

(1) the speaker must secure the attention of the addressee;
(2) the speaker must clearly signal any shift in communicative intent, focus, topic, etc.;
(3) the speaker must present his utterance in a way that aids receipt of information and comprehension of intent.

In verbal interaction the intention of the speaker is not only communicated via verbal means but also via non-verbal means such as loudness, pitch features, tempo, etc. These cues work together to make the intention of the speaker more definite and precise. A minimal requirement for successful communication is that participants must have a common system for signalling or negotiating shifts or transitions from one activity to another (cf. Gumperz, 1992a). There is therefore a need to examine the role of prosody in this inferential process and to consider how prosody interacts with other modalities to signal thematic connection and to generate interpretation of communicative intent.

A distinctive character of broadcast interview is that the talk which transpires between the interviewer and interviewee is primarily designed for the benefit of the listening-in audience, the unaddressed
participants. This not only restricts the kind of thing that is talked about (e.g. to have the interviewee speaks on topic which is of interest to the listening-in audience) but also on the characterisation of the talk itself, which for the most part is made up of sequences of questions-answers. A large number of organisation units are adjacency pairs, comprising a two-turn interaction sequence, (greeting-greeting, question-answer pairs, etc.) or insertion-sequences, for example one question-answer pair is embedded within another or extended questions-answers.

According to Heritage (1984:98) as information elicitor, the interviewer displays alignment to prior talk by responding to it with a question that seeks clarification, requests for information, asks for elaboration, etc. This tendency to build on whatever is introduced in the prior talk through questioning is reflected in the corpus of data examined.

1.5 General Introduction and Review of Past Work on English Prosody

1.5.1 Traditions of Analysis

Approaches to intonation analysis can be divided into two traditions: British and American. The intonational analysis in the British tradition is more or less typified by the recognition that utterances are segmented into basic functional units described as word groups, tone groups or tone units
which contain one peak of prominence known as the nucleus or tonic. Palmer (1922) was the first to devise a system of intonation which emphasizes the need to distinguish the functional units of intonation and his distinction between Head, Nucleus and Tail has come to be widely used. Such componentialisation of intonation into its functional unit is closely followed by Kingdon (1958) who further subdivides the head into prehead and body.

The British tradition of analysis can be divided into two: tonetic analysis which is associated primarily with Kingdon and tune analysis associated primarily with Jones and Armstrong.

Kingdon's work is particularly significant for its ingenious system of transcription which integrates stress into intonation and for the analysis of intonation patterns within specific context. Below is a schematic representation of Kingdon's tonetic notation:

**Kinetic tones**

- Fall
  - High (´)
  - Low ( )
- Fall-rise ( ( )
- Rise
  - High (´)
  - Low ( )
- Rise-fall ( ( )
  - Low ( )
Static Tones

{ High ( )
Level { Low ( )

The tonetic stress marks which have been adopted and adapted by O'Connor and Arnold (1973) will be employed to mark the pitch movement in the prominent lexical items ((cf. Knowles, 1995) and also Chapter Four of this thesis). One of the advantages of using tonetic marks is that it is "typographically economical" (Grice,1992:152). It makes less demands on the analyst in the sense that the identification of a given pitch is based on a relative rather than absolute value. Liberman (1975) finds that tonetic notation is more consistent with actual frequency curves.

Based on Kingdon's approach to intonation analysis, Crystal (1969) devises a theoretical framework which enables him to capture the fine phonetic details of spontaneous speech. Crystal (1969:196) is uncompromising in his explicit attempt at comprehensiveness. The feature approach adopted by Crystal views intonation as a manifestation of the interaction of several prosodic features the most central are pitch range, tone and loudness. Since these features have a relatively free combinatorial potential, Crystal's system provides an adaptable framework for the description of intonational patterns in language varieties.
Of utmost importance to this study is Crystal's definition of the scope of prosody which encompasses the primary prosodic parameters such as pitch, loudness and duration which

"have a primary (but not) identifying relationship with the physical dimensions of fundamental frequency amplitude and time".

(Crystal: 1969:6)

Crystal's explicit specification of the phonetic entities that come within the scope of prosody provides us with a set of descriptive categories for the examination of Malay prosody in connected discourse.

The work of Couper-Kuhlen (1986) which can be regarded as the most recent comprehensive work on English prosody continues along similar lines to Crystal. It describes recorded spoken English data of varying degrees of spontaneity and formality but with a greater degree of precision. In another recent work within this tradition, i.e. that of Cruttenden (1986) the British approach is described and developed in the context of a number of other theories.

The typical traditional American analyses are more or less integrated within the then prevalent general theory of linguistics. The systems of analyses presented in Pike (1945) and Trager and Smith (1951) are
characterised by an emphasis on a phoneme/morpheme basis and pitch levels. The four levels postulated to describe the significant intonation contrasts in English are /1/ extra high, /2/ high, /3/ mid, and /4/ low pitch. Intonation is treated as a sequence of pitch phonemes organised into meaningful contours. The structuralist analysis of sound segments into phonemes and allophones on the basis of contrasts and complementary features is used as a guiding principle in intonation as well.

The system first proposed in Trager and Smith (1951) and modified in the 1957 version of that work was the most widely accepted analysis of intonation in the American Post-Bloomfieldian period. This system of analysis is examined in Chapter Two of this thesis in relation to its application in the intonational analysis of Malay sentences.

The more recent approach to intonational analysis within the American tradition is seen in the works of autosegmentalists such as Goldsmith (1976 & 1990), Liberman (1975), Pierrehumbert (1980), Hirst (1983) and Ladd (1986). The phonological model proposed by Pierrehumbert (1980) assigns two distinctive tonal elements, i.e. [+H]igh and [+L]ow to fixed points in the melodic line. For simplicity, the mid-tone of Liberman (1975) is dispensed with. The manifestation of L and H tones results in three different kinds of tonal entity:
(1) pitch accents of one or two tones, one of which is marked with a star (e.g. H* or L*) for alignment with prominent syllables;

(2) boundary tones, marked with (%) for alignment with the initial or final boundary of an intonation phrase;

(3) phrase accents, which fall near the end of the word bearing the nuclear (rightmost) pitch accent.

Since the thesis does not intend to give a phonological description of Malay intonation, the method of representation proposed by Pierrehumbert will not be adopted. It is for the same reason that the Kingdon and O'Connor and Arnold's componential analysis is not adopted here. In examining the phenomenon of prominence (cf. Chapter Seven of this thesis), the thesis dispenses with the conventional British tone-group structure of Pre-head, Head, Nucleus and Tail. Instead the researcher resorts to assigning the prominent lexical items in selected utterances with a tonetic stress mark.

In establishing the theoretical framework for analysis we concur with Knowles (1986) as regards the need for a "an improved model" when one moves "from the study of structures to the study of language in communication" (p. 238).
The notational system developed by Crystal forms a convenient shorthand for identifying those features of prosody that are most significant for the purposes of analysis. An adaptation of it is employed in this thesis (cf. Chapter Four) and explained in the note on conventions (cf. Chapter Three).

While Crystal focuses on the phonetic aspect of intonation, Halliday concentrates on the phonological aspect of intonation focusing on how intonation contributes to the meaning of an utterance. The historical importance of Halliday's work is the foundation of a theory that links intonation and information structure. In Halliday's terms, intonation displays the distribution, structure and focus of information. The former through tonality, i.e. the segmentation of the speech event into discrete tone-units, the second through tone, i.e the choice of tones which determines the status of information, and the latter through tonicity, i.e. the speaker's definition of the focus of information. The notion of tone group is examined in Chapter Six of this thesis where issues of segmentation are the major preoccupation.

Due to the sheer amount of speech material that must be examined, corpus-based researchers like Halliday, Crystal et al (1964) and Crystal and Davy (1969) have relied mainly on auditory analysis. This choice is also motivated by such constraints as inadequate availability of
instrumentation, poor audio quality of natural recordings, etc., which make acoustic analysis almost impossible.

The interest in discourse-oriented study of prosody can be said to be brought about by the emergence of the two main centres of discourse intonation analysis: the Birmingham school represented by Sinclair, Coulthard, Brazil and Johns and the Edinburgh school represented by Brown, Currie, Kenworthy and Yule. They have been investigating the meaning and functions of intonation in new and interesting ways. Their interest in the study on speech in use has been the stimulus for an evergrowing research on the role of prosody in communication.

Based on a corpus of natural spoken data Brown et al (1980) set out to examine the forms and functions of intonation in Scottish English. What is of interest is their preoccupation with the prosodic phenomena realised in the following three pre-established domains, i.e. pause-defined units, stressed word and last stressed syllable. The identification of the prosodic forms leads to the investigation into the functions they perform in their domains of occurrence. By adopting a less restrictive theoretical framework (i.e. by not restricting themselves to the domain of tone-units) the researchers are able to examine the prosodic phenomena which appear in larger phonological units such as turns, topics, paragraphs, etc. The speaker's exploitation of the resources of prosody in actual communication
is illustrated with reference to the functions of prosody in expressing affective meaning, interactional structure, topic structure and informational structure.

Likewise, the researchers at Birmingham are also interested in describing the organisation and function of larger phonological units which correspond with units of discourse e.g. moves, paragraphs, exchange, etc. The term discourse intonation refers to the application of Brazil's (1975) theory of intonation to discourse analysis. This analytic framework allows examination into the nature and structure of discourse produced in a wide variety of contexts, e.g. news broadcasts (Mansfield, 1990), classroom talk (Brazil et al., 1980), lectures (Barr, 1990), the speech of language learners (Brazil, 1986), teacher talk (Sinclair and Brazil, 1982) and Classroom talk (Sinclair and Coulthard, 1975).

This interest in examining prosody in discourse has encouraged other linguists in Britain to use actual recorded speech rather than invented isolated sentences as data for analysis. Couper-kuhlen (1986), for example, uses a corpus of spoken English data to exemplify the various prosodic forms realised in spoken data and illustrate the functions they perform at their place of occurrence. The functions of prosody that she highlights are informational, grammatical, attitudinal and textual or discoursal.
Another recent work in this tradition is by Tench (1990) who attempts to construct a theory of the functions of intonation. Tench has attempted to bring together the studies which seek to specify the details of prosodic forms and those whose major preoccupation is with the functions of intonation.

In Part III of his book entitled *Studies in Systemic Phonology*, Tench (1992) takes a broader view of phonology by including in the book studies of phonology in three different contexts: lullabies (Oladeji), poem (Davies) and radio speech (Van Leeuwen). Of interest is the investigation into the nature of relationship between rhythm and the phenomena of accent and juncture in the speech of professional radio announcers.

1.5.2.2 American Linguistic Scene

Not much attempt has been made to present a thorough study of intonation within a generative-transformational framework. In transformational generative grammar prosody was limited to the accentuation rules of single, isolated sentences. The last fifteen years or so have seen a considerable growth of interest among the American scholars in the study of various aspects of prosody beyond the discussion of sentence stress and focus in Chomsky and Jackendoff.
The development of autosegmental phonology and of metrical phonology by Leben (1976) and Liberman (1975) have both contributed to the study of English intonation. Building on Liberman's work, Pierrehumbert gives a rigorous account of the phonology of English intonation and its phonetic interpretation. Selkirk, on the other hand, is concerned (among other things) with fitting intonation into an overall grammar, specifying the organisation of intonational phonology.

Despite the flowering of interest in prosody, the phenomenon is still examined within the domain of simple sentences and short texts. Connected texts, like Crystal's, Halliday's, Couper-kuhlen's and Cruttenden's data are not in sight.

By late 70's and early 80's a change is also felt in the American linguistic scene whereby the study in discourse takes the centre stage. This change in orientation is marked by the advent of several approaches to spoken discourse among which are conversational analysis and interactional sociolinguistics. It is surprising to find that although the concern is with spoken discourse, prosody which is an important feature of the spoken form is not given due prominence it so deserves.
Although conversational analysis looks into the verbal strategies of speaker/listener coordination as revealed in turn-taking and other practices of conversational management, their concern is not with the features of speech but the structure and cohesion of talk. Even in the writings of Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (1974), the realisation of prosody in the data is only captured in the transcription conventions which provide information on such prosodic phenomena as accenting, tempo, volume, pitch height and movement and pausing (1974: xiv). In his brief review of the above work, Tench (1990) concludes that not much attempt has been made to incorporate intonation in the theory nor in the theoretical framework established to handle the development of talk.

Likewise in the work of Tannen (1984) prosody only appears in the notation conventions (Tannen, 1984: xix). However, mention is made of the role that prosody plays in contextualising the speech of conversational participants as being of a particular style. A rather interesting notion is the strategy of "machine gun questions" marked prosodically by a high pitch, rapid rate and fast pacing, which is used by speakers to indicate interest, casualness and familiarity. From the preliminary analysis it is observed that the interviewer often uses this strategy at the beginning of the interview where questions broached are for the purpose of establishing rapport and invoke solidarity and where the topics of discussion touch on such light matters as family, food, road situation, weather, health, etc. What is
interesting is that this sort of strategy is used with interviewees with whom the interviewer is familiar, i.e. that the interviewees have appeared in the show before.

Nevertheless, in recent years there have been attempts to examine prosodic features within the framework of conversational analysis. The major preoccupation is to establish a model to describe regularities in the organisation of talk and then attempt to examine the role of prosody features in this pre-established framework.

Duncan (1973, 1974) is one of the first to bring prosody into a conversational analysis. Working within the framework of conversational analysis, Duncan identifies six cues which signal turn finality, three of which are prosodic. The other more recent works include Goldberg (1979), French and Local (1986), Cutler and Pearson (1986) and Local (1992) (cf. Chapter Four of this thesis).

Ethnographers like Gumperz (1982) and Goffman (1981) make reference to prosodic features like pitch features, tempo, loudness and pause and the function they perform in their locus of occurrence. Goffmann's notion of "footing", i.e. shifts of gear is signalled by a change in prosodic features like loudness, pitch, rhythm and tonal quality. Pitch step-
up fulfils a special function in "policing" the listenership in multi-party conversations (1981:35).

In his recent article, Gumperz (1992) examines the speech signals relevant to contextualisation work and how they enter into communication. Gumperz demonstrates that speakers signal what activity they are engaging in by deploying prosodic and paralinguistic features of speech such as intonation, pitch registers, tempo, pausing, loudness and choice of code and lexical forms. His notion of contextualisation cues brings to light the role of prosody in conversational inference which he refers to as

"the mental processes that allow interactants to evoke the cultural background and social expectations necessary to interpret speech".

(Gumperz, 1992:229)

This function of prosody is captured in Michels and Gumperz (1979) whereby the prosodic signals of topic shift within the black children's talk are lost on the teacher who is unfamiliar with such devices.

The postulation put forth by Gumperz (1992a) which is of immediate relevance to this study is the role that contextualisation cues play in the inferential process at the perceptual plane, the level where "communicative signals are received and categorised" (p. 232). At this level, inferences
provide information on matters pertaining to the organisation of turn at talk, e.g. turn completion, turn-holding, turn yielding (cf. Chapter Eight of this thesis), etc. and informational structure of talk, e.g. "foregrounding and backgrounding of items of information, separating shared or known items from new information" (cf. Chapter Seven of this thesis), segmenting what is perceived into informational units, determining the nature of the transitions between these units and the type of relationship of one unit to another (cf. Chapters Five and Six of this thesis).

In an attempt to describe the interactional strategies that speakers undertake in order to contextualise speaker activity as starting and opening, Panese (1996) adopts the "contextualisation theory" proposed by Gumperz (1982, 1992) as the theoretical analytic framework. The prosodic cues identified as performing this contextualising function include rhythm, tempo and intonation.

1.5.3 Recent Issues in Prosody

On examining the recent studies in prosody, there seems to be a general tendency to deal with issues of the following nature. In an effort to bring together studies that come from different backgrounds, Cutler and Ladd (1983) include in their book contributions drawn from the fields of linguistics, phonetics and psychology.
The articles can be divided into two categories. The first group is made up of those interested in model building such as Garding (a generative model), Nespor and Vogel (a metrical model) and Ladd (whose model takes into account speaker choice). The second comprises those interested in presenting experimental findings. Cutler reports on how speakers view the function of prosody in speech. Brown who examines Halliday's notions of "given" and "new" concludes that both new items and "inferrable" ones have pitch prominence. Previous mentions and/or situationally recoverable information are not assigned pitch prominence. Vassiere looks into the issue of cross-linguistic similarities and differences of prosodic phenomena. The similarities include the tendency for Fo declination, the presence and length of junctural and hesitation pauses, prepausal prolongation, etc. The differences include such phenomena as the timing of falls and rises in relation to accented syllables and different priorities in the use of pitch either for accentual or boundary marking.

Most of the contributions in Johns-Lewis (1986) are concerned with matters pertaining to the actual manifestation of prosodic phenomena in speech. What seems to be the subject of interest is the relationship between physical parameters on the one hand and perceptual phenomenon on the other. The examination of prosody includes identifying the role that specific prosodic cues play in realising linguistic entities such
as prominence, onset and signalling turn-competition, turn-finality, discoursal function, etc.

Gibbon and Richter (1984) focus on issues which they regard as "being of lasting concern" in the field of prosody. This includes investigating the nature of intonational meanings, i.e. finding out in particular the role that intonation and prosodic features play in speech. They also draw our attention to the concept of "normal intonation" and "normal accentuation". What seems to be at issue are such matters as normal and non-normal intonation contours, emphasis, contrastive accent and default accent. The third area of interest concerns the autonomy of phonological systems. This focuses on issues pertaining "to the relationship between phonology, syntax and discourse and the extent to which they are dependent or independent of another" (Tench, 1990:10)

The growing interest in discourse provides the impetus for the examination of prosodic phenomena in units larger than a single tone-unit such as exchanges, paragraphs (major paratones), turns, pitch sequence etc (typified in the work of researchers from the Birmingham and Edinburgh studies in discourse). This shift to a larger domain of prosodic realisations has resulted in the development of an analytic framework that facilitates the examination of the functions of prosody in discourse.