**Features of Aural Language**

**Diagetic/Non-Diagetic:**

The word “diagetic” simply means “natural”. It means an aspect of the film itself is motivated by something in the film’s plot or setting (diagetic) or is part of the filmmaking process (non-diagetic). This term usually applies to sound and lighting, but it can have other applications as well.

Diegetic sound is any sound that comes from within the film's world.

Diagetic sound is heard by the actors.

Non-diagetic sound comes from a source outside the story space.

Non-diagetic sounds are heard by the audience, but NOT heard by the actors.

**Sound in the spoken word:**

* *Tone* – the use of voice emphasis to express love, anger, or other human emotions.
* *Intonation* – which (more important) words are stressed; which (less important) words are ‘glossed over’, rushed or mumbled.
* *Rhythm* – the arrangement of words or sounds in a recurring pattern that alternates stressed and unstressed elements.
* *Tempo/Pace* – speed (Slow? Fast? Irregular?)
* *Pitch* – how high or low on the scale the words are spoken in. (Is the pitch high or low?)
* *Stress* – Importance, significance, or emphasis placed on something. (What is emphasised?)

**Sound effects:** background noises (breaking glass, slamming door) can be used to add realism, or for dramatic effect.

**Sound as signifier:**

It is easy to identify the DENOTATION (actual meaning) of a sound, but…

What is the **CONNOTATION** (associated/suggested idea or meaning) of the sound?

What does the sound signify? e.g. the sound of flames denotes a flame/fire, but possible connotations are…? Is it being used to signify: Warmth/security? Burning/destruction/death? Hell?

**Silence as a signifier:**

Silence can be used for anticipation as well as conclusion of a sequence: to signify “concentrate on the following” (anticipation) and to signify “reflect on what you just observed” (conclusion).

You should consider BOTH:

1. WHAT feature of aural language is being used, AND
2. HOW is the feature used to contribute to the overall dramatic features or meaning of the scene?