

Phonetics and Phonology

FF1B

Lecture 9

INTONATION I

“It’s not what you say, but the way you say it.”

- Every language has melody in it; no language is spoken on the same musical note all the time. The voice goes up and down and the different notes of the voice combine to make tunes.
- In some languages the tune mainly belongs to the **word**, being part of its shape, eg the Chinese languages and many others in south-east Asia, --> **tone languages**.
- In many other languages, including English and Czech, the tune belongs not to the word but to the **word group**. If you say the English “No” with different tunes it is still the same word, but nevertheless tune plays an important part in English – the tune adds the speaker’s feelings at the moment; this way of using tunes = **intonation**.

- Intonation is part of suprasegmental phonology; it is a device by means of which the speakers interpret their own utterances, making them more explicit for the listener by changing the pitch of the voice.

- **Pitch** = the ‘height’ of the voice, change of pitch = change of the speaker’s height of voice = tone
Pitch range = the inventory of the individual speaker’s pitch repertoire from the lowest to the highest pitch:
highest pitch: - high }
 - low } arbitrary choices for end-point of the pitch scale

Discovery activity:

1. Give the following sentence as many different meanings as you can. Keep the words the same but find different ways of saying it. You probably need to imagine a context.

“It’s eight o’clock!”

Now observe the difference between the intonation patterns you have used.

2. Should you find it difficult to imagine any suitable contexts, try to say it with such an intonation that it could mean any of the following:

Hurry up!	We’ve got plenty of time.
I’m hungry	You’re late
You’re early	At last we can start!
The bus is late!	You didn’t set the alarm clock!
Please turn on the TV!	We’ve overslept
He’ll be here shortly	Hurray!

- Intonation refers to the **patterns of pitch change** over an utterance or series of utterances. Such patterns may be partly *personal*, but they are also *conventional*, and to that extent they are also systematic. The special problem is, however, to find an adequate and *learnable* description of these rules that learners can relate directly to their own experience.

- It is undisputed that while we can demonstrate a fairly conscious choice over our selection of words, our choice of intonation seems much less conscious. It is as if it comes from deeper within us, from another part of the brain which is less open to our conscious intervention.
- Intonation works with **tones** (some writers refer to *tunes* instead)
Tone is basically a movement from one height of voice to another (one pitch to another) except the so called “level tone”.

Examples:

˘yes ˘yes ˘yes _yes

- Although **rising** and **falling** tones are basic intonation patterns in most languages, we also work with the so called **complex** tones, ie **rise-fall** and **fall-rise**.

Examples:

^yes ˘yes ^no ˘no

In English we distinguish between 5 basic tones:

1. fall
2. rise
3. fall-rise
4. rise-fall
5. level

The use and frequency of occurrence varies for each tone. Here are the basics of basics:

1) The use of fall

a) statements – when you want to give some information

Examples: I study ˘English.
Well-˘done!
My brother got ˘married last week.

b) most Wh-questions

Examples: Why do you study ˘English?
Where are you ˘from?
What’s the ˘time?

Practice 1:

NB In the exercises the intonation is indicated by the following typographical devices:

'house	stressed syllable
˘house	significant (final) stress; falling
˘house	significant (final) stress; rising
but he	unstressed initial syllables

Examples:

But he 'didn't 'see me 'leave the ˘house.

'Did you 'see me 'leave the ˘house?

You should repeat each of the phrases in the following exercises at least three times according to the pattern given!

Pattern 1: *He's* `gone *we're* `late

in `time / *they've* `come / *at* `school / *it's* `true / *of* `course / *you* `must / *down* `town / *you're* `right /
in `bed / *he's* `ill / *they're* `wrong / *you* `see / *in* `sight / *on* `fire / *up* `there / *by* `now /

Pattern 2: 'Where did you 'put my `hat?

'what's the `time? / 'where have you `put it? / 'who would 'like some `chocolate? / 'which do you
'like `best? / 'which is the `way? / 'what have you `got? / 'what `day is it? / 'why `can't you? / 'what's
on at the `cinema? / 'what's the `matter? / 'when do you have `dinner? /

Revision:

1. 'George plays 'football every 'Saturday after `noon.
2. 'What 'time does the 'night-train for `Glasgow leave?
3. 'How 'far is it from 'here to `London?
4. 'Where did you 'say you had 'put my `glasses?
5. *It's been a* 'very en'joyable 'evening for `all of us.

2) The use of rise

a) most Yes-No questions

eg Do you study ´English?
 Have you done the washing ´up?

b) conveying an impression that something more is to follow

- eg.* i) A: (*wishing to attract B's attention*): Excuse me
 B: ´yes
- ii) A: You start off on the ring road ...
 B: ´yes
 A: Turn left at the first roundabout
 B: ´yes
 A: and ours is the third house on the left
 B: `OK

Practice 2:

Pattern 1: *You?* , *Now?*

me? / *him?* / *them?* / *all?* / *these?* / *mine?* / *yours?* / *whose?* / *who?* / *when?* / *where?* / *four?* / *ten?* /

Pattern 2: *May* we? *Couldn't* he?

must you? / *shall* I? / *does* he? / *should* we? / *wasn't* he? / *can't* we? / *was* it? / *doesn't* she? /

Pattern 3: 'Can you **hear**?

'have they **gone**? / 'may I **come** in? / 'is it **yours**? / 'have you heard the **news**? / 'are you on the **phone**? / 'have you got e**nough**? / 'can you **see**? / 'will you be **there**? / 'does it **work**? / 'may I **try**?

Revision:

1. 'Did you 'have a 'good **holiday**?
2. 'Have you 'heard the 'latest **news**?
3. 'Were you **out** all day?
4. 'Shall I 'bring some 'sandwiches for 'you **too**?
5. *Will* 'someone 'meet you at the **station**?

3) The use of fall-rise

a) limited agreement or 'response with reservations'

eg i) A: I've heard that it's a good school

B: ˇ yes

ii) A: It's not really an expensive watch, is it?

B: ˇ no

b) reassurances (comforting)

eg It `won't ,hurt

It's `only a ,pound

Practice 3:

1. I 'don't want to be ˇ**late**.
2. I 'hope you're not ˇ**bored**.
3. *That's* 'not quite the ˇ**same**.
4. *Yours are* 'larger than ˇ**mine**.
5. *She looks* 'very ˇ**tired**.
6. *I'd* 'rather go by ˇ**train**.
7. *I ex*'pect he'll be ˇ**late**.
8. I 'don't know 'what to ˇ**choose**.
9. *We* 'can't ask ˇ**them**.
10. *This* 'bread seems 'very ˇ**stale**.

4) The use of rise-fall

Expresses strong feelings of

- approval
- disapproval
- surprise, etc.

eg A: You wouldn't do a thing like that, would you?

B: ^ no

A: Isn't the view lovely!

B: ^yes

5) The use of level

Expresses usually a feeling of saying something routine, uninteresting or boring
eg

i) a teacher calling the names of pupils from a register

ii) replies to questions when applying *eg* for an insurance policy

A: Do you suffer from any serious illness?

B: no

A: Do you ...?

B: no/ yes

iii) listing (members of a group, things to buy/take, ingredients, etc.)

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