

Lecture 10 Worksheet

INTONATION II

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

Print this worksheet and bring it with you to the lecture.

- Intonation has to be interpreted in **the context of discourse**, not in isolated utterances; according to Brazil, Coulthard and Johns (see the bibliography), “Interpretation of value depends on speaker’s and hearer’s interactions as they work out particular meanings in particular contexts.”
- In spoken discourse intonation fulfils a number of functions which may be difficult to delimit because of their simultaneity. It often happens, however, that one of the functions becomes dominant.
- Four functions of intonation can be distinguished with regard to meaning and organization of discourse, namely
 1. **the attitudinal function:** intonation conveys emotions and attitudes which add special meaning to the wording,
 2. **the accentual function:** intonation produces the effect of prominence (ie greater prominence of stressed syllables) and highlights the most significant parts of the utterance,
 3. **the grammatical function:** intonation enables the hearer to recognize and interpret the grammatical, i.e. syntactic structure of the utterance (acoustic expression of syntax),
 4. **the discourse function:** intonation signals the contrast between ‘new’ and ‘given’ information.

The co-existence of these functions in discourse is sometimes labelled *syntagmatic functions of intonation*.

Practice 1

Try to say the following phrases, conveying some of these emotions:

fun irony matter-of-factness surprise irritation impatience anger sadness

She’s asleep.

What a good idea!

We’ve got plenty of time.

Thank you very much.

Yeah, it was really nice.

Is that all?

Which of the phonological / paralinguistic features did you notice?

- Basic meanings of tones

1. FALL

- finality, definiteness:

That is the end of the _ news.

I’m absolutely _ certain.

Stop _ talking.

2. RISE

a) Yes-no questions:

Can you _↑ help me?

Is it _↑ over?

b) Listing:

_↑Red, _↑brown, _↑yellow or _↓blue.

c) "More to follow":

I phoned them right a _↑way (... and they agreed to come)

d) Encouraging:

It won't _↑ hurt

Functions of intonation – cont.

3. Fall-rise

a) Uncertainty, doubt

You _↓may be right

It's _↓possible

b) Requesting:

Can I _↓buy it?

Will you _↓lend it to me?

4. Rise-fall

surprised, being impressed:

You were _↑first

_↑All of them

Practice 2

Try to say this minimal dialogue with a partner.

He: Ready? _↗

She: No. _↘

He: Why? _↘

She: Problems. _↘

He: Problems? _↗

She: Yes. _↘

He: What? _↘

She: The babysitter. _↘

('minimal dialogue' taken from Wong, see the bibliography)

Bibliography:

- Brazil, D. and Coulthard, M. and Johns, C. 1980. *Discourse Intonation and Language Teaching*. New York: Longman Group Ltd.
- Wong, R. 1987. *Teaching Pronunciation. Focus on English Rhythm and Intonation*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall.