

Unit II. Sentence stress

Lesson 12: Intonation

1. What is intonation?

In connected speech, the voice pitch is continually rising and falling. These variations produce intonation.

2. Functions of Intonation, why is it important to study?

English makes more elaborate use of intonation to signal meaning than do most other languages. This is a further reason why it should not be neglected by learners and teachers of English as a foreign language (Well, 2006, p.11).

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1.

Attitudinal:

the most obvious function of intonation is to express our emotions and attitudes- to show shock or surprise, pleasure or anger, interest or boredom, seriousness or sarcasm, reproach and many others.

2.

Grammatical:

It is used to mark the beginning and end of grammatical units. It is also used to distinguish types of sentences.

- Statements ↘ falling
- yes/no questions ↗ rising
- Wh questions ↘ falling

3.

Focusing:

Intonation helps to show what information in an utterance is new and what is already known.

4.

Discursive:

Intonation signals how sequences of clauses and sentences go together in spoken discourse. It enables us to signal whether we have come to an end of the point we are making; whether we want to keep talking or are ready to give another speaker a turn

5.

Indexical:

Just as other pronunciation feature, intonation may act as a marker of personal or social identity.

6.

Psychological:

Intonation helps us organize speech into units that are easy to perceive, memorize and perform.

N.B.

Each situation and each social group may have a particular characteristic of intonation. * Speech is divided into **tone units or tone groups**; that is a tone unit starts after a nucleus and ends with a nucleus. * **A tone unit consists of parts of speech ending in a nucleus.**

3. Types of Intonation Patterns

3.1 Falling Intonation

it is the most perceptible when it is on a syllable containing a long vowel, a diphthong or a voiced continuant sound. **e.g.** ↘ **No It was ↘ raining.**
 -The falling Tone can be used for asking and giving information in normal, quiet, unemphatic style. It also conveys certain emotions, such as completion, finality and confidence.

Cases of falling intonation	Examples
- Assertions (statements)	I have arrived ↘ early.
- Wh/ questions:	What have you ↘done?
- Interjections and greetings:	Nice to ↘meet you. Hel ↘lo ↘Hi Oh, ↘good!
- Listing:	I visited Paris, London, Cairo and ↘ Madrid
- Order:	Do you ↘ homework. ↘ Stop it!
- Exclamatory sentences:	How nice of you! What a wonderful sur ↘ prise!
- Alternative questions:	Do you want coffee or ↘tea? - ↘Thank you

N.B.

- Low fall:** It may start from mid pitch to the lowest pitch. **e.g.** How are ↘you ?
- High fall:** It may start from the highest pitch of the voice to the lowest. It may be used for extra emphasis in informal situations to express lively interest and friendliness in statements, **e.g.** in greetings and exclamations. Oh ↘ hi! I'm glad to ↘ see you!

3.2 Rising Intonation

- **Low Rise:** It may extend from low to mid pitch or from mid to high pitch or with other variations.
- **High Rise:** it may extend from low pitch to high pitch.

Cases of falling intonation	Examples
	1. Low rise
- Politeness, encouragement or suspicion and also in unfinished sentences.	Carry ↗on. Will you open the ↗door, please? I have revised my lesson, watched a film ↗and... It's ↗kind of you. Have a ↗cup of tea. That's very ↗kind of you.
	2. High rise
- Questions: asking for repetition or clarification. It may express surprise or incredibility.	You said ↗ what? ↗What?
- Elliptical questions)	You ↗ did?
- Tag questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - You live in ↘Biskra, ↗ don't you? --(the speaker thinks you live in Biskra but he isn't sure and asks for confirmation) - You live in ↘Biskra, ↘ don't you? (the speaker is sure and expects the answer 'yes') to get confirmation or agreement

- Nice ↘ weather, ↘ isn't it? (the speaker is sure the weather is nice and expects the answer 'yes')

4. Falling-rising intonation

The pitch of the voice starts relatively high, moves downwards and then upwards again. It combines the effort of the fall and the emotional or meaningful attitudes associated with the rise. It may be used to express **doubt, reproach, threat, disbelief, polite correction, partial statements, negative statements**

EXAMPLE

- She's coming on ↘ Wednesday. -- On ↗ Thursday.
- There are ↘ twenty students in the group. -- ↗ Fifty.
- I came on ↘ foot. (He lives in Tolga) -- on ↗ foot.
- She ↘ refused to pay. -- I don't think that's ↗ true.
- Negative commands often have a fall-rise intonation Don't start until you're ↗ ready.

5. Rising-Falling Intonation

The pitch of the voice starts relatively low, moves upwards and then downwards again. It is used to convey strong feelings of approval, disapproval or surprise. It may also be used to show sarcasm. ○
How ↗ nice for you! ○ You ↗ spoke to her!

EXAMPLE

- Elliptical answers: ↘ yes yes, I ↘ do. (falling intonation)
- Greetings: Good ↘ morning! (I am just greeting you) Good ↗ morning! (expresses an added interest in the person addressed)
- A vocative after hi or hello, has its own rising tone ○ ↘ Hi, ↗ Margaret. Hel ↘ lo, ↗ Tim
- Thank you ↘ Thank you (straightforward meaning) ↗ Thank you (routine acknowledgment)
- To express genuine gratitude, it necessary to use a fall.
- Farewell : Good ↗ bye! (a fall can be used, but a rise is more frequent) ; Good ↘ bye! (get rid of an unwelcomed person)
- The yes/ no questions can be said with a fall. This makes the question insistent. I'll ask you once more: did you take the ↘ money?
- Wh questions can be more gentle, kindly, encouraging, sympathetic in rising intonation.

Task: mark intonation and justify

At the bank: Asking about fees

- A: Do you have any questions? B: Yes, I want to know about fees.
- A: Which fees? B: Overdraft fees.
- A: You will be required to pay a small fee for everytime of your draft. B: How much is the fee?
- A: You'll have to pay \$25 every time you overdraft. B: That's a small fee?
- A: It shoul stop you from overdrafting. B: You would think it would, but it most likely ↘ won't.
- A: Can I help you with anything else? B: That's it for to day. Thank you.