



# Phonetics

Introduction to intonation by Prof. Chelli

---

## Learning objectives

- Making students aware of the functions of intonation
- Introducing intonational patterns

# Definition of intonation

---

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

## 2. Functions of Intonation

---

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).



c. **Focusing:** Intonation helps to show what information in an utterance is new and what is already known.

---

d. **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

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

# Continued

---

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

↓  
**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.

# Continued

---

- **Assertions (statements):** I have arrived **early**.
- **Wh/ questions:** What have you **done**?
- **Interjections and greetings:** Nice to **meet** you. Hello **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 surprise!
- **Alternative questions:** Do you want coffee **or tea**?
- **Thank you**

\* **Low fall** may start from mid pitch to the lowest pitch.

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, for example, in greetings and exclamations. Oh **hi!** I'm glad to **see** you!

## □ 3.2. Rising Intonation



---

- Carry, on. Will you open the, door, please?
- I have revised my lesson, watched a film, and...

---

- \* **High Rise:** it may extend from low pitch to high pitch. It is associated with questions: asking **for repetition or clarification**. It may express **surprise or incredibility**.
- You said<sup>↗</sup>**what?**
- <sup>↗</sup>**What? (elliptical questions)**  
You<sup>↗</sup>**did?**
- . Are you <sup>↗</sup>**ready?**
- Won't you come a <sup>↗</sup>**long** with us?

# Tag questions

---

- 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...

---

A: She's coming on Wednesday. B: On **✓ Thursday**.

A: There are twenty students in the group. B: **✓ Fifty**.

A: I came on foot. (He lives in Tolga) B: on **✓ foot**.

A: She refused to pay. B: I don't think that's **✓ true**.

**Negative commands often have a fall-rise intonation**

Don't start until you're **✓ ready**.

---

- **\*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 <sup>A</sup>**nice** for you!
- You <sup>A</sup> **spoke** to her!

## □ 5. Remarks

---

## \***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.

# Correction

---

At the bank: Asking about fees

A: Do you have any <sup>↗</sup>questions? **High rise** ( yes/no question)

B: <sup>↘</sup> Yes, I want to know about <sup>↘</sup> fees. **Elliptical answer/ statement**

A: Which <sup>↗</sup> fees? **High rise** ( elliptical question)

B: Overdraft <sup>↘</sup> fees. **Low fall** ( answer/ statement)

A: You will be required to pay a small fee for everytime of your <sup>↘</sup> draft.

B: How much is the <sup>↘</sup> fee? **Low fall** (wh question)

A: You'll have to pay \$25 every time you <sup>↘</sup> overdraft.

B: That's a small <sup>↗</sup> fee? **High rise** ( yes/ no question)

---

A: It shoul stop you from over  drafting.

B: You would think it  would, but it most likely  won't. **Low fall (statement)**

A: Can I help you with anything  else? **Low rise ( polite request)**

B: That's it for to  day.  Thank you.

1. **low fall ( statement)**

2. **low rise (routine acknowledgement)**

---

- Exercise

- Amy :Hi, Michael.
- Michael : Hi, Amy. Can I help you ?
- Amy : How can I get to the airport ?
- Michael : It's too far from here. You can take the subway .
- Amy : What ? Do you know where the subway is ?
- Michael : Sure. It's over there
- Amy : Thanks. Bye.
- Michael : Bye bye.