

# Unit 9

## Intonation (1):

tonality and tonicity

Slides for the session of

*Phonetics with Listening Practice (British)*

held on

29 / 30 nivôse de l'année CCXXX de la République

18 / 19 January 2022

English Phonetics: Unit 9:

[ˈɪŋ.ɡlɪʃ fə.ˈnet.ɪks ˈjuːn.ɪt̩ ˈnɑːn]

Intonation (1)

[ˈɪnt.ə(ʊ).ˈneɪʃ.ŋ ˈwʌn]

tonality and tonicity

[t̪ʰə(ʊ).ˈnæɪ.tɪ.i ˌjən t̪ʰə(ʊ).ˈnɪs.tɪ.i]

Robert Spence, based on material by M. A. K. Halliday

[ˈrɒb.ət ˈspens ˈbeɪst\_ɒn mə.ˈt̪ʰɪ.ɪ.əɪ bɑː ˌjɛm\_eɪ k̪ʰeɪ ˈhæɪ.lɪ.d.eɪ]

## 1 Language and music

## 2 On the term "intonation"

## 3 Tonality

unmarked tonality

marked tonality

## 4 Tonicity

meaning of given and new

unmarked tonicity

marked tonicity

given-new transition

broad vs. narrow focus

## Language and music have common origins

A piece of music (e.g. a song) consists of

- **melodic phrases**,  
which are made up of
- **bars** (dt.: *Takte*),  
which are made up of
- **notes**.

Each bar starts with either an 'accentuated' note (one that is louder than normal), or else a 'silent beat', and may also contain one or more unaccented notes as well.

A piece of spoken English consists of

- **tone groups**,  
which are made up of
- **feet**,  
which are made up of
- **syllables**,  
which are made up of
- **phonemes**.

Each foot starts with either a 'stressed' syllable, or else a 'silent beat', and may also contain one or more unstressed syllables as well.



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- The term INTONATION, as used here, encompasses three partly related phenomena:

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  - ③ TONE — the choice of *melody* or INTONATION CONTOUR for each tone group.
- We shall examine each of these in turn.

# TONALITY

- TONALITY is the realization of INFORMATION DISTRIBUTION.

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- One TONE GROUP corresponds to one INFORMATION UNIT.

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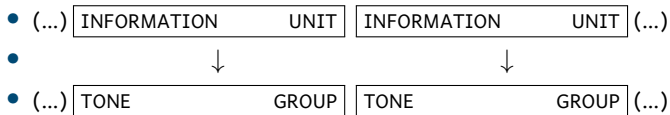
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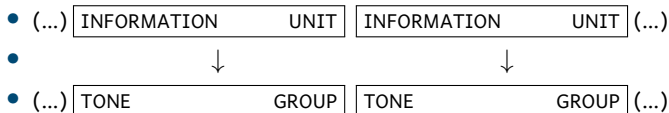
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## TONALITY

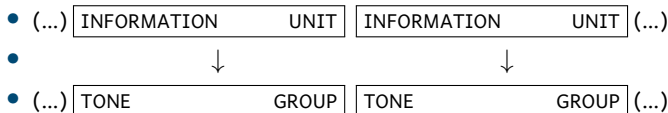
- TONALITY is the realization of INFORMATION DISTRIBUTION.
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- *Unmarked* information distribution  
(= 'unmarked tonality'):  
one non-rankshifted clause  
corresponds to  
one information unit.

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- *Unmarked* information distribution  
(= 'unmarked tonality'):  
one non-rankshifted clause  
corresponds to  
one information unit.
- *Marked* information distribution  
(= marked tonality):  
one non-rankshifted clause  
corresponds to  
less or more than one information unit.

## Examples of unmarked tonality (1)

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INFORMATION	UNIT	INFORMATION	UNIT
-------------	------	-------------	------

β clause:	α clause:
-----------	-----------

When they go abroad,	they take the car.
----------------------	--------------------



TONE	GROUP	TONE	GROUP
------	-------	------	-------

 wen ðei gəʊ ə bɪɔ:d	 ðei teɪk ðə kɑ:
---	--

## Examples of unmarked tonality (2)

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INFORMATION

UNIT

independent clause (with rankshifted clause inside):

They take the car [[ that they inherited ]].



TONE

GROUP

^ ðeɪ teɪk ðə kɑ: ðæt ðeɪ ɪnheɪrɪtɪd



## Examples of marked tonality (1)

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INFO UNIT	INFORMATION UNIT
-----------	------------------

independent clause:

*He* prefers the *Ferrari.*



TONE GP	TONE GROUP
---------	------------

 hi: p.π	 fɜ:z ðə fə'ri:ni
---	---

## Examples of marked tonality (2)

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INFORMATION

UNIT

$\alpha$  clause:

$\beta$  clause:

His wife insists on the *Merc* when they go abroad.



TONE

GROUP

^ hɪz waɪf ɪn'sɪsts ɒn ðə mɜ:k wɛn ðeɪ gəʊ əbrɔ:d

- TONICITY realizes the internal *structure* of the INFORMATION UNIT as a configuration of ‘Given’ and ‘New’ elements, with a ‘Focus’ within the ‘New’.

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(information unit:)

			Focus
Given →	←	←	← New
They	<b>take</b>	the	<b>CAR.</b>



(tone group:)

(‘Auftakt’)	Pretonic	Tonic
(foot:)	(foot:)	(foot:)
ðei	teɪk	ðə
		<b>ka:</b>

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## Meaning of 'Given' and 'New'

- 'Given' and 'New' are statuses assigned by the speaker to various parts of the information (s)he is transmitting to the addressee.

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## Meaning of 'Given' and 'New'

- 'Given' and 'New' are statuses assigned by the speaker to various parts of the information (s)he is transmitting to the addressee.
- 'Given' means: 'this is something you already know, or else it's information you can recover from the situation'.

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- The meanings 'Given' and 'New' thus constitute part of the 'textual' function of language — establishing relevance, relating an utterance to what has gone before it and what is going on around it.

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- The speaker can play games with the addressee, presenting 'given information' as 'New' and 'new information' as 'Given'.

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## Unmarked tonicity

- A tone group has ‘unmarked tonicity’ if the tonic segment begins on the main stress-bearing syllable of the last ‘content word’.

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- The utterance we looked at a few moments ago (“They **take** the **CAR**”) had ‘unmarked tonicity’, because its last word was the content word “car” (a noun).

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- So does the following example, because the last word is a ‘function word’ (the pronoun “it”).



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- So does the following example, because the last word is a ‘function word’ (the pronoun “it”).

(information unit:)

	Focus	
Given →	← New	
They	<b>TAKE</b>	it.



(tone group:)

(‘Auftakt’)	Tonic
(foot:)	(foot:)
ðei	<b>teik</b> it

## Marked tonicity (with post-tonic lexical material as ‘Given’)

(information unit:)

			Focus			
Given →	←	←	← New	Given →	→	→
They	<b>take</b>	the	<b>CAR</b>	when they	<b>go a-</b>	<b>broad</b>






(tone group:)

(‘Auftakt’)	Pretonic	Tonic			
(foot:)	(foot:)	(foot:)	(foot:)	(foot:)	(foot:)
△ ðeɪ	teɪk ðə	kɑ:	wen ðeɪ	gəʊ ə	bɹɔ:d




Once the tonic segment begins, the tone contour of the rest of the tone group is already decided. In the example shown here, the tone contour is ‘falling’. The pitch of the voice falls dramatically on the tonic syllable [kɑ:], then continues falling slightly all the way to the end of the tone group. All of the lexical material following the tonic syllable is thus signalled as being ‘Given’.



## Hearing the beginning of the ‘New’

			Focus
Given →	←	←	← New
They	<b>take</b>	the	<b>CAR.</b>
(‘Auftakt’)	Pretonic	Tonic	
(foot:)	(foot:)	(foot:)	
 ðei	 <b>teik</b> ðə	 <b>kɑ:</b>	

‘(I’ll tell you about what they do:) they take the car’

			Focus
Given →	→	→	← New
They	take	the	<b>CAR.</b>
(‘Auftakt’)	Tonic		
(foot:)	(foot:)		
 ðei	 <b>teik</b>	 ðə	<b>kɑ:</b>

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- The previous slide showed an example of 'broad' vs. 'narrow' focus:

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- The previous slide showed an example of ‘broad’ vs. ‘narrow’ focus:
- In “they **take** the **CAR**” the focus is ‘broad’, because the information being treated as ‘new’ (culminating at the word “car”) extends all the way back to “take” (what they did was: take the car).

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- In “they take the **CAR**” the focus is ‘narrow’, because the information being presented as ‘new’ only covers the information that what they took was the car.

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- In “they take the **CAR**” the focus is ‘narrow’, because the information being presented as ‘new’ only covers the information that what they took was the car.
- Here it was possible to actually ‘hear’ the point at which the ‘New’ begins: at the beginning of the first ‘full’ foot.

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- In “they take the **CAR**” the focus is ‘narrow’, because the information being presented as ‘new’ only covers the information that what they took was the car.
- Here it was possible to actually ‘hear’ the point at which the ‘New’ begins: at the beginning of the first ‘full’ foot.
- In many cases, however, the only way to tell where the ‘Given’-‘New’ transition occurs is to work it out from the context.