Unit 10

Intonation (2):

the primary tones of English and their meaning

Slides for the session of Phonetics with Listening Practice (British) held on 6 / 7 pluviôse de l'année CCXXX de la République (25 / 26 January 2022)

Lintonation (2): Cutline Tone(s): form and function A constructed dialogue Simple primary tones tone 1 tone 2 tone 3 tone 4 tone 5

Compound primary tones

tone 13

tone 53

Tone sequences

listing questions

intonation and taxis

intonation in moodtags

Robert Spence LangSciTech Saarland University

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English Phonetics: Unit 10:
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Intonation (2) ['ınt.ə.'neɪʃ.n 'tʰuː]

the primary tones of English and their meaning [ðə 'pıaım.(ə)ı.i 'thəynz_əv_'ıŋ.qlı[ən deş 'mim

Robert Spence ['Jobət 'spens] based on material by M. A. K. Halliday ['beist pn mə.'thiəi.i.əl bai _'jem_ei khei 'hæl.id.ei]

1 Tone(s): form and function

2 A constructed dialogue

3 Simple primary tones

tone 1 tone 2 tone 3 tone 4 tone 5

4 Compound primary tones

tone 13 tone 53

5 Tone sequences

listing questions intonation and taxis intonation in moodtags



Compound primary tones

tone 13

tone 53

Tone sequences

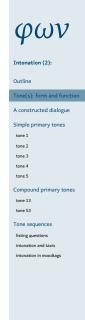
listing questions

intonation and taxis

 The primary tones of English are based on the opposition between falling pitch ('polarity certain', Tone 1) and rising pitch ('polarity uncertain', Tone 2).



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- The pitch movement concerned (rising or falling) begins at the beginning of the tonic segment of the tone group.
- The opposition between 'falling' and 'rising' can be neutralized as a 'level' pitch ('polarity not (yet) relevant', Tone 3 —); phonetically, this is typically low, and slightly rising at the end.



Intonation (2):

Outline

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- The movements 'falling' and 'rising' can be combined into one : 'falling-rising' ('polarity starts out certain, turns out to be uncertain', Tone 4 √) or 'rising-falling' ('polarity starts out uncertain, turns out to be certain', Tone 5 [^]).



Intonation (2):

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Tone(s): form and function A constructed dialogue Simple primary tones tone 1 tone 2 tone 3 tone 4 compound primary tones tone 13 tone 53 Tone sequences listing questions intranation and tasis

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tone 1

tone 2

tone 3

tone 4

Compound primary tones

tone 13

tone 53

Tone sequences

listing questions

intonation and taxis

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- The opposition between 'falling' and 'rising' can be neutralized as a 'level' pitch ('polarity not (yet) relevant', Tone 3 —); phonetically, this is typically low, and slightly rising at the end.
- The movements 'falling' and 'rising' can be combined into one : 'falling-rising' ('polarity starts out certain, turns out to be uncertain', Tone 4 √) or 'rising-falling' ('polarity starts out uncertain, turns out to be certain', Tone 5 [^]).
- Tone 1 and Tone 5 can have an extra 'level' tonic segment at the end; this is identical to the tonic segment of a Tone 3, but without a pretonic segment of its own (\ _ and \ _)
- Primary tones express choices in the system of 'KEY', 'fine-tuning' the grammatical system of 'MOOD' (and/or the discourse-semantic system of 'SPEECH FUNCTION').



Constructed dialogue illustrating all primary tones

A: //___ Arthur and / Jane / left for */ Italy this / morning //

____ ___

- B: // 2 do they / take the */ car when they / go a- / broad //
- A: // 3 Arthur / likes to */ have it / while he's / there //
- B: $//_{4, \wedge}$ they / didn't / take the / car */ last time they / went//
- C: // $_{5.}$ // didn't / know they'd / ever */ been to / Italy //

· __ __ ~

A: // 1.3 Arthur's / been there */ twice in the / last */ year or so //

C: //_____ he's / never / taken */ Jane on / any of his */ visits / though //

Notes on the dialogue

The constructed dialogue on the previous slide (taken from M. A. K. Halliday: *A Course in Spoken English: Intonation.* London: Oxford University Press, 1970) demonstrates the five simple primary tones of English and also the two compound primary tones. Each tone is shown in its most typical variant form (see next lecture on 'secondary tones' for more detail).

Conventions used in the transcription:

- Foot boundaries (rhythm) are shown by single slashes.
- Tone group boundaries (tonality) are shown by double slashes; every tone group boundary is also automatically a foot boundary.
- A silent beat is shown by a caret sign.
- The location of the tonic syllable (tonicity) is shown by an asterisk immediately before the foot boundary symbol, thus dividing the tone group into a 'pre-tonic' and a 'tonic' segment.
- The intonation contour (tone) is shown twice: non-iconically via a code number immediately after the double slash at the beginning of the tone group, and iconically via the straight and/or curved lines above the transcription.

Intonation (2): Outline Tone(s): form and function Simple primary tones tone 1 tone 2 tone 3 tone 4 tone 5 Compound primary tones

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• Tone 1 is the most common tone in English.



Intonation (2):

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Tone(s): form and function

A constructed dialogue

Simple primary tones

tone 1		
tone 2		
tone 3		
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Compound primary tones

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- Tone 1 is the most common tone in English.
- It is the neutral ('unmarked') tone for every major speech function except yes/no questions:

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Intonation (2):

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tone 1 tone 2

Tone(s): form and function

A constructed dialogue

Simple primary tones

tone 3 tone 4 tone 5

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 - statement: John's a doctor.

• wh- question: When are they coming?

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- It is the neutral ('unmarked') tone for every major speech function except yes/no questions:
 - statement: John's a doctor.
 - wh- question: When are they coming?
 - command: Close the window!

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Intonation (2):

Outline

tone 1

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Tone(s): form and function

A constructed dialogue

Simple primary tones

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 - offer: Let me take your coat!

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Simple primary tones

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 - statement: John's a doctor.
 - wh- question: When are they coming?
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 - offer: Let me take your coat!

• suggestion: Let's have lunch!

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Intonation (2):

Outline

Tone(s): form and function

A constructed dialogue

Simple primary tones

- tone 1 tone 2
- tone 3
- tone 4
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Compound primary tones

tone 13

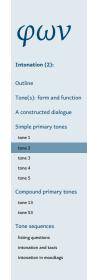
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Tone sequences

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intonation and taxis

• Tone 2 is the neutral ('unmarked') tone for yes/no questions:



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• Are you finished?



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Intonation (2): Outline

Tone(s): form and function

10.8

A constructed dialogue

Simple primary tones tone 1 tone 2

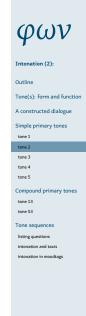
tone 3 tone 4 tone 5 Compound primary tones tone 13 tone 53 Tone sequences listing questions intonation and taxis intonation and taxis

• Are you finished?

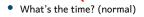
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 - What's the time? (normal)
 - What's the time? (polite)
- Tone 2 is used in indignant responses:

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 - What's the time? (normal)
 - What's the time? (polite)
- Tone 2 is used in indignant responses:
 - ('Have you got the tickets?') No I haven't!

Intonation (2): Outline

Tone(s): form and function

A constructed dialogue

Simple primary tones tone 1 tone 2

tone 3

tone 5 Compound primary tones tone 13

tone 53 Tone sequences listing questions intonation and taxis

 Tone 3 expresses that something is tentative, or deferential, or incomplete:



Intonation (2):

Outline

Tone(s): form and function

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Simple primary tones

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 Tone 3 expresses that something is tentative, or deferential, or incomplete:

• That could be true ...

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Intonation (2):

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Tone(s): form and function

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Simple primary tones

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- That could be true ...
- It doesn't really matter ...



Intonation (2):

Tone(s): form and function

A constructed dialogue

Simple primary tones

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Compound primary tones

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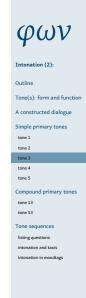
intonation and taxis

- Tone 3 expresses that something is tentative, or deferential, or incomplete:
- That could be true ...
- It doesn't really matter ...
- Well so far I've invited Peter, and Sally, and Tom, ...



intonation and taxis

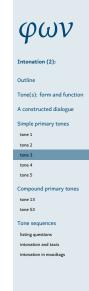
- Tone 3 expresses that something is tentative, or deferential, or incomplete:
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- In the minor speech function 'Call', tone 3 has a special form that involves switching down in pitch by a minor third (kleine Terz):



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• lo- ohn

- It doesn't really matter ...
- Well so far I've invited Peter, and Sally, and Tom, ...
- In the minor speech function 'Call', tone 3 has a special form that involves switching down in pitch by a minor third (kleine Terz):



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• If it rains, we'll get wet.

Intonation (2): Outline Tone(s): form and function A constructed dialogue Simple primary tones tone 1 tone 2 tone 3 tone 4 tone 5 Compound primary tones tone 13 tone 53 Tone sequences listing questions intonation and taxis intonation in moodtags

- Tone 4 is the second most common tone in English.
- It can imply a logical complication (such as a condition on something) or a personal opinion offered for consideration.

\sim

• If it rains, we'll get wet.

\sim

• I quite like it...

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Intonation (2):

Outline

Tone(s): form and function

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Simple primary tones

tone 1

tone 2

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Compound primary tones

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intonation and taxis

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- It can imply a logical complication (such as a condition on something) or a personal opinion offered for consideration.

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• If it rains, we'll get wet.

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- I quite like it...
- It is also the typical tone choice for a grammatically marked Theme.

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Intonation (2):

Outline

Tone(s): form and function

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Simple primary tones

tone 1

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- It can imply a logical complication (such as a condition on something) or a personal opinion offered for consideration.

If it rains, we'll get wet.

\sim

- I quite like it...
- It is also the typical tone choice for a grammatically marked Theme.
- In summer we go to the beach.

Intonation (2): Outline Tone(s): form and function A constructed dialogue Simple primary tones tone 1 tone 2 tone 3 tone 4 tone 5 Compound primary tones tone 13 tone 53 Tone sequences listing questions intonation and taxis intonation in moodtags

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Look at that! Isn't it amazing!



Tone sequences

listing questions

intonation and taxis

 Tone 5 is common in the speech of children, where it expresses surprise; it is a typical tone for exclamations:

\mathbf{v} \mathbf{v}

- Look at that! Isn't it amazing!
- It is also typically used in statements to 'override' any possible objections (i.e. it is an even stronger way of asserting something than to use Tone 1):

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Intonation (2):

Outline

- Tone(s): form and function
- A constructed dialogue

Simple primary tones

tone 1

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Compound primary tones

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Tone sequences

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intonation and taxis

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\mathbf{v} \mathbf{v}

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\mathbf{v}

It's true!

Compound primary tones

tone 13

tone 53

Tone sequences

listing questions

intonation and taxis

• The use of tone 13 ("one-three") is related to the absence of what in German is the 'Satzbogen': in English, the 'zweite Prädikatsteil' comes in the middle of a clause, and can be followed by an indefinite amount of material. Some of this may come after the main information focus, as 'secondary' information (on tone 3). It is thus typical for a clause-final circumstance, e.g. of time, which is not unimportant enough to be post-tonic ('Given') but not important enough to get a separate tone group all to itself.

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Intonation (2):

Outline

Tone(s): form and function

A constructed dialogue

Simple primary tones

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- Arthur's been there twice in the last year or so.

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Intonation (2):

Outline

- Tone(s): form and function
- A constructed dialogue

Simple primary tones

- tone 1
- tone 2
- tone 3
- tone 4
- tone 5

Compound primary tones

tone 13

tone 53

Tone sequences

listing questions

intonation and taxis

• Tone 1 in a command can sound somewhat too brusque:



listing questions

intonation and taxis

- Tone 1 in a command can sound somewhat too brusque:
- Please close the window!



listing questions

intonation and taxis

Tone 1 in a command can sound somewhat too brusque:

• Please close the window!

• We therefore use tone 13 instead:



listing questions intonation and taxis intonation in moodtags

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- Please close the window...



Tone sequences

listing questions

intonation and taxis

- Tone 1 in a command can sound somewhat too brusque:
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- We therefore use tone 13 instead:
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- In negative commands this is even more important:

listing questions

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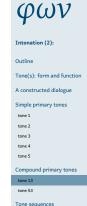
tone 53

Tone sequences

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intonation and taxis

- Tone 1 in a command can sound somewhat too brusque:
- Please close the window!
- We therefore use tone 13 instead:
- Please close the window...
- In negative commands this is even more important:
- Don't stay out all night again! (rude)
- Don't stay out all night again (polite 'entreating')



listing questions

intonation and taxis

• The meaning of tone 53 ("five-three") is deducible from the meaning of the tone 5 tonic segment and the meaning of the tone 3 tonic segment that follows it.

Intonation (2):

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Tone(s): form and function

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Simple primary tones

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• The meaning of tone 53 ("five-three") is deducible from the meaning of the tone 5 tonic segment and the meaning of the tone 3 tonic segment that follows it.

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• He's never taken Jane on any of his visits though.

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Tone(s): form and function

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Simple primary tones

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- He's never taken Jane on any of his visits though.
- The word "though" is a grammatical item (a conjunctive Adjunct, with no real lexis in it); therefore it has no trouble being entirely post-tonic; but the circumstantial Adjunct "on any of his visits" has a lexical item in it, and there is therefore a tendency to treat it as a piece of 'secondary' information.

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Tone sequence and listing questions

. . // , is it */ mine or *// , yours //

(closed list - there are no further possibilities)

// $_{,2.}\,$ would you / like some */ tea // $_{2.}\,$ $_{\wedge}\,$ or some */ coffee //

· · · ·

(open list - there are additional possibilities)

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Intonation and taxis

(typical tone sequence signalling 'two independent clauses') (typical tone sequence signalling 'paratactic clause complex') $//_{4_{-}}$ if we / don't */ hurry we're $//_{1_{-}}$ going to be */ late //

(typical tone sequence signalling 'hypotactic clause complex')

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Intonation in Moodtags

 $\frac{1}{1. \ \wedge} they / live in */ Beckenham *//_{2.} don't they // (speaker expects answer 'yes' but is not completely certain)$

(speaker expects answer 'yes' and is almost absolutely certain)

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