

Unit 13

Intonation (1):

tonality and tonicity

Slides for the session of
Phonetics with Listening Practice (British)

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English Phonetics: Unit 13:

Intonation (1)

tonality and tonicity

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

[ˈɹɒb.ət ˈspɛns ˈbeɪst_ɒn mə.ˈtʰɪəɪ.i.əl bæɹj_ɛm_ɛɪ kʰeɪ ˈhæl.ɪd.ɛɪ]

[ˈɪŋ.gɫɪf fə.ˈnɛt.ɪks ˈju:n.ɪθz:ˈtʰi:n]

[ɪm.tə(ʊ).ˈneɪf.ɪˈwʌn]

[tʰə(ʊ).ˈnæl.ɪt.ɪ_ən tʰə(ʊ).ˈnɪs.ɪt.ɪ]

- 1 Language and music
- 2 On the term “intonation”
- 3 Tonality
 - unmarked tonality
 - marked tonality
- 4 Tonicity
 - meaning of given and new
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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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 - ① TONALITY — the division of continuous speech into *melodic units* called TONE GROUPS;

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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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- TONALITY is the realization of INFORMATION DISTRIBUTION.
- One TONE GROUP corresponds to one INFORMATION UNIT.

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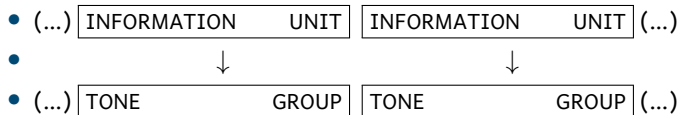
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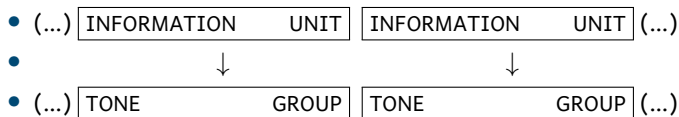
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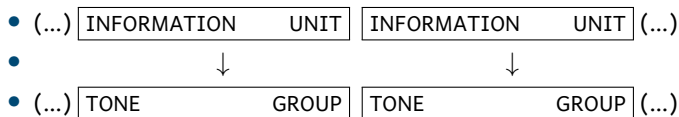
- TONALITY is the realization of INFORMATION DISTRIBUTION.
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- *Unmarked* information distribution (= 'unmarked tonality'):
 - one non-rankshifted clause
 - corresponds to
 - one information unit.

TONALITY

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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 bɪ:ɔ:d	 ^ ðei teɪk ðə kɑ:
--	--

Examples of unmarked tonality (2)

INFORMATION UNIT

independent clause (with rankshifted clause inside):

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



TONE GROUP

^ ɤei teɪk ɤə kɑ: ɤət ɤei ɪnheɪtɪd

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Examples of marked tonality (1)

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

independent clause:

He prefers the *Ferrari.*



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

 hi:	pɪ	fɜ:z	ðə	fəˈrɪ:ɹi
---	----	------	----	----------

Examples of marked tonality (2)

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α clause:

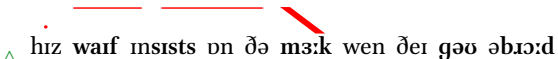
β clause:

His wife insists on the <i>Merc</i>

when they go abroad.



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

 <p>^ hɪz waɪf ɪn'sɪsts ɒn ðə mɜ:k wen ðeɪ gəʊ əbrɔ:d</p>

- 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	take	the	CAR.



(tone group:)

(‘Auftakt’)	Pretonic	Tonic
(foot:)	(foot:)	(foot:)
 ðei	 teɪk ðə	 kɑ:

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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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- Even though these meanings are orientated to the addressee, they are assigned by the speaker.



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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.
- Even though these meanings are orientated to the addressee, they are assigned by the speaker.
- 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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(information unit:)

	Focus	
Given →	← New	
They	TAKE	it.



(tone group:)

(‘Auftakt’)	Tonic
(foot:)	(foot:)
 ðeɪ	 teɪk it

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

(information unit:)

			Focus			
Given →	←	←	← New	Given →	→	→
They	take	the	CAR	when they	go a-	broad



(tone group:)

(‘Auftakt’)	Pretonic	Tonic			
(foot:)	(foot:)	(foot:)	(foot:)	(foot:)	(foot:)
ðeɪ	teɪk ðə	kɑ:	wen ðeɪ	gəʊ ə	bɾɔ: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’.

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Hearing the beginning of the ‘New’

			Focus
Given →	←	←	← New
They	take	the	CAR.
(‘Auftakt’)	Pretonic	Tonic	
(foot:)	(foot:)	(foot:)	
ðei	teik ðə	ka:	

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

			Focus
Given →	→	→	← New
They	take	the	CAR.
(‘Auftakt’)	Tonic		
(foot:)	(foot:)		
ðei	teik	ðə	ka:

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

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broad vs. narrow focus

- 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 ‘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).
- 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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- 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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- 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.