# Unit 13

# Intonation (1):

# tonality and tonicity

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English Phonetics: Unit 13: Intonation (1) tonality and tonicity

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

[ˈɪɒb.ət ˈspens ˈbeɪst ɒn mə.ˈtʰɪəɹ.i.əł baɪj ˈem eɪ kʰeɪ ˈhæl.ɪd.eɪ]

13.2

13.3

## Language and music

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.

13.1

1

#### 2 On the term "intonation"

#### On the term INTONATION

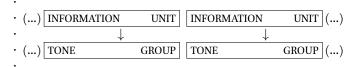
- · The term INTONATION, as used here, encompasses three partly related phenomena:
  - 1. TONALITY the division of continuous speech into *melodic units* called TONE GROUPS;
  - 2. TONICITY the placement of the *melodic nucleus* or TONIC of each tone group;
  - 3. TONE the choice of *melody* or INTONATION CONTOUR for each tone group.
- · We shall examine each of these in turn.

13.4

## 3 Tonality

#### **TONALITY**

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



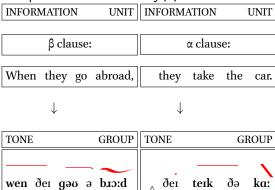
- · Unmarked information distribution
  - (= 'unmarked tonality'): one non-rankshifted clause corresponds to one information unit.
- · Marked information distribution
  - (= marked tonality):
    one non-rankshifted clause
    corresponds to

less or more than one information unit.

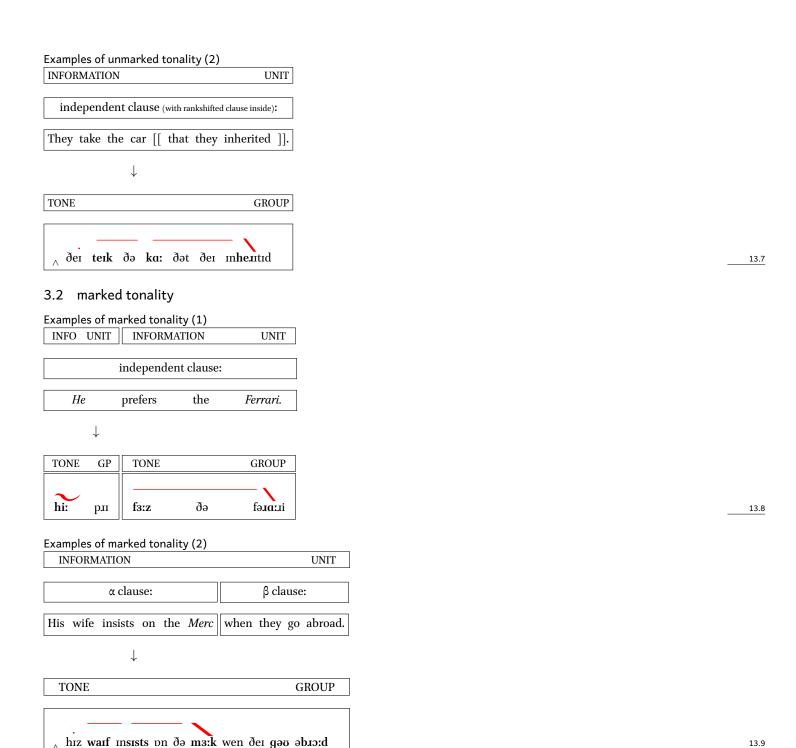
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#### 3.1 unmarked tonality

Examples of unmarked tonality (1)



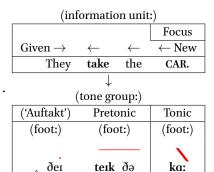
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# 4 Tonicity

#### TONICITY

- TONICITY realizes the internal *structure* of the INFORMATION UNIT as a configuration of 'Given' and 'New' elements, with a 'Focus' within the 'New'.
- The internal structure of the TONE GROUP is: PRETONIC segment (optional) plus TONIC segment (obligatory).



13.10

#### 4.1 meaning of given and new

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'.
- · 'New' means: 'this is something I assume you don't yet know, and it's something you can't recover from the situation'.
- 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.
- $\cdot$  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'.

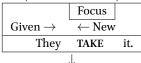
13.11

#### 4.2 unmarked tonicity

Unmarked tonicity

- · A tone group has 'unmarked tonicity' if the tonic segment begins on the main stress-bearing syllable of the last 'content word'.
- 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).
- $\cdot\,$  So does the following example, because the last word is a 'function word' (the pronoun "it").

(information unit:)



(tone group:)

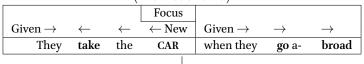
('Auftakt')	Tonic	
(foot:)	(foot:)	
	\	
∧ ðei	teik it	

13.12

#### 4.3 marked tonicity

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

(information unit:)



(tone group:)

('Auftakt')	Pretonic	Tonic			
(foot:)	(foot:)	(foot:)	(foot:)	(foot:)	(foot:)
A ðei	teık ðə	ka:	wen ðei	gəv ə	b:crd

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 [ka:], 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'.

13.13

#### 4.4 given-new transition

Hearing the beginning of the 'New'

			Focus
Given $\rightarrow$	$\leftarrow$	$\leftarrow$	← New
They	take	the	CAR.
('Auftakt')	Pretonic		Tonic
(foot:)	(foot:)		(foot:)
ðei	teık	ðə	ka:

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

			Focus
Given $ ightarrow$	$\rightarrow$	$\rightarrow$	← New
They	take	the	CAR.
('Auftakt')			Tonic
(foot:)		(foot:)	
dei	teik	ðə	ka:

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

13.14

### 4.5 broad vs. narrow focus

Broad vs narrow focus

- · 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).
- · In "they take the CAR" the focus in '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.

13.15