

A HANDBOOK OF ENGLISH INTONATION

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TO
PROFESSOR DANIEL JONES

Preface.

In preparing this book we have purposely avoided consulting any other works on English Intonation, and have made our analysis from personal observations only. We have to acknowledge, however, that we have used Professor Klinghardt's¹⁾ system of notation with some modifications. We have represented stressed syllables by lines, and unstressed syllables by dots. By this means, the connection between the stress and intonation of a sentence is more easily grasped than by other methods of representation; and the rhythmic scheme, which is of great importance in English speech, is clearly indicated.

Our thanks are due to Mr. Robert Lynd and the "Daily News" for permission to use extract No. 25 (Section B), to the authoress of "Love" and "A Solitary Summer" and Messrs. Macmillan & Co. for extracts No. 17 and 27 (Section B), and to Mr. E. V. Lucas and Messrs. Methuen for extracts No. 19 (Section A), and No. 26 (Section B). Numbers 25, 26, 27 (Section B) are recorded on the third gramophone record.

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1) Übungen im englischen Tonfall. French Intonation.

Phonetic Symbols used.

The phonetic alphabet used is that of the International Phonetic Association in its "narrow" form. This differs in the following particulars from the "broad" script which is used in many books on English pronunciation:

1. Length marks (: long and half-long) are used to indicate length only and not difference in vowel quality.
2. New symbols are used for

Narrow					Broad			
the	i	as	in	sit	i	instead	of	i
"	e	"	"	set	ɛ	"	"	e
"	o	"	"	not	ɒ	"	"	ɔ
"	u	"	"	put	ʊ	"	"	u
"	ɪr	"	"	bird	ɜ	"	"	ə:

Alphabet with Key Words.

Vowels

i seat	ɛ set	ɑ half	ɔ all
ɪ sit	æ sat	ɒ not	ʊ put
u soon	ɜ bird		
ʌ but	ə about, china		

Diphthongs

eɪ play	oʊ go	aɪ my
aʊ now	ɔɪ boy	ɪə here
ɜə there	ɔə more	ʊə poor

Consonants

p put	m man	θ thick	r run
b but	n not	ð then	h hat
t ten	ŋ sing	s see	tʃ church
d dog	l leaf, sell	z zeal	dʒ judge
k come	f fun	ʃ ship	w was
g go	v very	ʒ pleasure	j yes

, placed under l or n indicates that the consonant is syllabic.

The pronunciation recorded is that which the writers use in fairly careful speech. No alternative pronunciations have been indicated, although, of course, many such could occur in individual words and in the use of strong and weak forms.

' indicates that the syllable following is pronounced with unemphatic stress.

" indicates that the syllable following is pronounced with emphasis.

Gramophone Records.

Three double-sided gramophone records have been made to illustrate the principles set out in this book. They are obtainable from the Publishers

No. I Record, 1st side, contains sentences illustrating Tunes I. and II. in their simplest form (taken from Section A. Examples I and II).

No. I Record, 2nd side, contains short extracts illustrating Tunes I and II. (unemphatic) in connected speech.

No. II Record, 1st side, illustrates Tune I. used with varying forms of emphasis (taken from Section B. Examples IIa and IIc).

No. II Record, 2nd side, illustrates Tune II. used with varying forms of emphasis (taken from Section B. Examples IIb and IIId).

No. III Record, 1st side, contains text No. 25 (Section B) showing unemphatic and emphatic intonation in connected speech.

No. III Record, 2nd side, contains further connected texts (Nos. 26, 27, Section B).

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Intonation.

By intonation we mean the rise and fall of the pitch of the voice when we speak. Intonation as an element of speech has been generally neglected or left to chance in the teaching and learning of a foreign language. It has been expected that a student living in a foreign country would gradually "pick up" the correct intonation. But in practice this does not often happen. In intonation and stress, as in the pronunciation of sounds, the student is apt to introduce into the new language the habits of his own. And as it has been found that a careful and scientific analysis of pronunciation difficulties is a valuable help in overcoming these difficulties, so it is hoped that an analysis of English intonation may help towards the acquirement of that important element of speech. If students realised that correct speech melody is as important as correct speech sounds, they would devote more time and energy to this essential characteristic of our language.

Intonation varies from locality to locality and from individual to individual. The writers are aware that there are other varieties and greater wealth of detail than are here recorded. Such variations, however, are not essential for correct and good English speech, and their absence would not be missed by any one who had not made a special study of intonation. For this reason, these more elaborate schemes of English melody have been omitted, and attention has been concentrated on the simplest forms of intonation used in conversation and in the reading of narrative and descriptive prose, so that the foreign student may have the opportunity, without undue confusion, of learning one type of intonation that is essentially English.

Method of Indicating Intonation.

The intonation of the model sentences in each section is marked in the following way. The mark over the vowel of a syllable shows its relative pitch. The signs \ and / show respectively that the pitch falls or rises in the syllable so marked. Stressed syllables are marked with a line, and unstressed syllables with a dot.¹⁾ It should be noted that though the pitch is shown by a series of disconnected marks, the whole of one intonation group is continuous, and might be represented by a continuous line. It is the experience of the writers, however, that these disconnected marks are easier for the foreign student to interpret than a continuous line, and that the connections between them are made quite naturally. No attempt has been made to record the intonation with mathematical precision, but the relative pitch of the voice on each syllable is shown with sufficient accuracy for all practical purposes.

Attention is here drawn to the representation of the intonation of the gramophone records. This has been more or less normalised. Several slight variations in stress and intonation are to be observed which would not occur in quick speech. Some of the syllables, which would normally be unstressed in quick speech, have some stress, and consequently lose to a certain extent the even intonation of unstressed syllables. Many of these variations have not been indicated, for the following reasons:

1. They are not essential.
2. They might add unnecessary confusion.

¹⁾ The sign / occurring finally may indicate an unstressed syllable on which the pitch rises, since it is impossible to show this rise by a dot.

3. The general effect of the tune is what has been indicated.
4. Students usually make these variations without having their attention drawn to them.

Connection between Stress and Intonation.

It is customary to consider stress as the breath force which we use in speaking. In a sentence, those words are said to be stressed which are pronounced with greater breath force than the others. These are the words which are felt by the speaker to be important; if he feels one idea only in a sentence to be important, he stresses the word embodying that idea; if many ideas, he stresses many words.¹⁾

- e. g. 'John 'came 'early 'yesterday 'morning.
"Writing wouldn't have been any good.

In addition to stress, other elements go to make a word more prominent than its neighbours, the chief being a change in pitch or intonation. These two elements, stress and intonation, are very closely connected. So close is the connection, indeed, that it is often difficult to decide whether stress or intonation or a combination of the two is responsible for certain effects.

For practical purposes, however, the student will do well to remember that if the intonation is right, the stress does not greatly matter, for the result is English; whereas the stress can be right and the intonation wrong, and the result is not English.²⁾

1) Here sentence stress only is being considered. Words of more than one syllable pronounced in isolation have their own word stress; but in connected speech this word stress is often dropped or changed under the influence of rhythm.

2) A German who speaks English very well was not understood by a bus conductor when he asked for a ticket to Queen's Lane with the stress and intonation 'Queen's Lane \ . (instead of — \), although his sounds were perfect. This shows the important part that these two elements of speech — stress and intonation — play not only in a good "accent" but in making for mere intelligibility.

e. g. The 'North 'Sea		is correct,
The 'North Sea		} are wrong
The 'North 'Sea		
A 'Railway Company		} are right,
A 'Railway 'Company		
A 'Railway 'Company		is wrong

English Intonation Analysed.

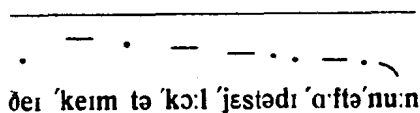
English intonation can be reduced to two tunes, with variations of these due to special circumstances. The examples given are divided into two sections:

- A. Unemphatic sentences in which the two tunes are used in their simplest form;
- B. Emphatic sentences where the intonation expresses a special meaning in the speaker's mind.

A. Unemphatic Sentences.

1. Tune 1.

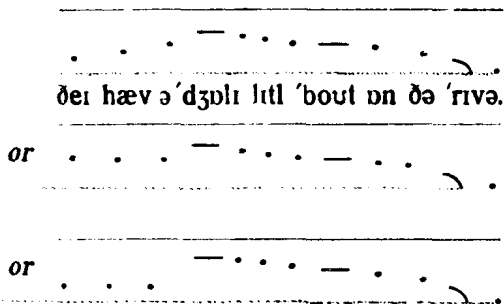
The first tune may be represented as follows: —



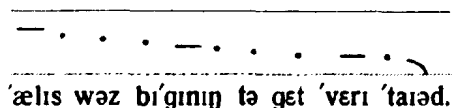
and is interpreted in this way. The stressed syllables form a descending scale. Within the last stressed syllable, the pitch of the voice falls to a low level. It is the correct relative pitch of these stressed syllables which is most essential. The pitch of the unstressed syllables occurring between the stresses matters little, so long as it is not far removed from that of the previous

stressed syllable. The pitch of initial and final unstressed syllables is important. The student will find the following observations useful:

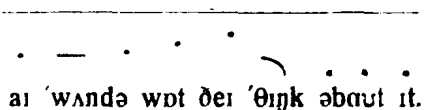
1. The pitch of initial unstressed syllables may either rise gradually to the pitch of the first stressed syllable, or be on a mid or low level note:



2. Those occurring between the last two stresses generally descend gradually.
3. Those occurring between other stresses may either descend gradually to the next stress, remain level, be on a slightly higher or a slightly lower level. From our experience we find that it is more usual for the pitch of these unstressed syllables to descend gradually to the next stress:



If the unstressed syllables rise, there seems to be an element of surprise, cheerfulness, enthusiasm or more interest introduced:



wɒt ə 'pɪtɪ hi dɪdnt 'kʌm. or
 hi 'θɪŋks aɪ m 'dʒʊvɪŋ. or
 wi 'dɪd wɒt wi wə 'təʊld. or

Note that in these cases the first stressed syllable has a low pitch, and that the unstressed syllables preceding it may be higher in pitch.

4. The pitch of final unstressed syllables is most important. These must be either on a low level, which is the most usual, or must begin very low and descend a little lower:

— . . . — . . .
 'wɒt ə ju 'gɔɪŋ tə 'du: əbaʊt ɪt?
 or — . . . — . . .

Note the following examples, where, in the final syllables (name of the person addressed, "he said," "he replied", etc.), some stress might be used; this would, however, make little difference to the tune, so that these expressions, which are in the nature of parentheses, can be treated as final unstressed syllables:

— . . .
 "aɪ 'daʊnt θɪŋk aɪ 'kæn," hi sɛd faɪnəli (or hi 'sɛd 'faɪnəli.)
 — . . .
 'weə ə ju 'gɔɪŋ, mɪstə braʊn? (or 'mɪstə 'braʊn.)
 — . . .
 aɪ m 'kʌmɪŋ ət wʌns, sɜ (or 'sɜ:.)

Rhythm.

One other general factor is important. In each sense-group the stressed syllables occur at more or less regular intervals of time and the unstressed syllables, whether many or few, occupy the time between the stresses; it is this factor that gives English its characteristic rhythm. Such regularity is not monotonous, however, because of the pauses that are made between the groups and the varying intonation of the groups.

e. g. aɪ 'daʊnt 'θɪŋk aɪ kən 'duː ɪt.

aɪ 'ʃʊdn̩t əv 'θɔːt hi kʊd 'duː ɪt.

aɪ 'ʃʊdn̩t əv θɔːt ɪt 'pɒsɪbl̩ tə 'duː ɪt.

These three sentences, each with the same number of stressed, but with a different number of unstressed, syllables may be said in the same time, although in the first sentence no syllables occur between the first two stresses and in the last there are four.

Generally speaking all the grammatically important words in a sentence receive the stress, i. e. nouns, adjectives, principal verbs and adverbs. But in actual fact, these words come under the influence of the rhythm of the sentence and the rhythmical rather than the grammatical principle often seems to regulate the stress, and consequently the intonation:

'all the 'way

but 'all the way 'there and 'back

Similarly, compound words, which in isolation would have the stress ' and the intonation — come under the influence of rhythm and their stress and intonation may vary according to this principle:

hand-'made — but 'hand-made 'paper —
 'over-'ripe — „ an 'over-ripe 'pear —
 'pre-'paid — „ a 'prepaid 'telegram —
 'un-'known — { an 'unknown 'warrior —
 „ { he's 'quite un-'known —
 'discon-'nected — { a 'disconnected 'story —
 „ { it was 'very discon-'nected —
 'hard-'working — „ a 'hard-working 'boy —

Among these are those verbs which have an adverb attached, such as “take off”, “put on”, “set about”, “make up”:

'Put your 'hat on — but 'Put it 'on. —
 He 'made up his 'mind —
 but his 'mind was made 'up. —
 'Make your 'mind up — but 'Make it 'up. —
 He 'set about his 'work. — „ 'Set a'bout it. —
 'Eat up your 'pudding — „ 'Eat it 'up. —

Further Analysis of Tune I. **to show its application to shorter sentences.**

It will be seen that in the example given on p. 4 there are five stressed and a number of unstressed syllables:

— — — — —

 ðeɪ 'keɪm tə 'kɔ:l 'jestədi 'aʃtə'nʌn.