

Discuss the different Intonation Pattern in English.

Intonation is a very significant element of pronunciation that marks changes in the meaning of an utterance. If we minutely listen to an utterance, we can easily distinguish continual variations in the levels at which the voice is pitched. These varied levels are patterned by the variations in the use of the phonemic elements like stress, pitch, terminals or tone in sequences. In fact, they are intonation patterns which are called differently in different languages. They are not haphazard. The factors that determine the choice of one pattern against another are both objective and subjective. Objective in the sense that the particular type of utterance is important and subjective because the mood and attitude of the speaker to his utterance are also significant. Intonation patterns help in conveying even those information which are not conveyed by the words. As for an example, if the sentence, 'he is very smart', is uttered with a falling intonation, the general meaning is conveyed. But, if it is uttered with falling-rising intonation, some doubt about his 'smartness' is expressed.

Thus, the meaning of an utterance is based not only on its in sound patterns and contrasting stress pattern but also on its associated patterns of intonation. Actually, stress and intonation are inter linked and always work together. Stress, an extra force applied in the articulation of a syllable, give prominence or accent to a syllable. The accented syllables can be uttered with level pitch, high or low, or with a change in pitch. An accented syllable, uttered on level pitch, is described as having a static tone, where as an accented syllable on which a pitch change takes place has a kinetic tone. The syllable that initiate the kinetic tone is called the 'nucleus' and has the primary or tonic accent. Thus, the sentence, 'The Thieves came at night', would normally be uttered in British English on a high level (static) tone on 'came' and a falling kinetic tone on 'night'.

The most important factor that also influence the intonation patterns is the speaker's emotions, the degree of intensity he brings to bear on what he says. In other words the more the speaker is involved with what he is saying, the greater will be the range of pitch and the amount of pitch change. However, it must be admitted that the system of intonation patterns used by a native speaker of English is complex. A foreign learner of the language would need years of study and practice before he could use the total system with the same facility. Nevertheless, it is possible to use a simplified system which will be completely intelligible and enable the learner to avoid conveying false impression.

The intonation patterns, generally used in English, are broadly divided into rising pattern intonation, falling intonation and level one. ~~They~~ A few examples of their uses are given below.

Falling intonation: It is used as follows.

(a) In ordinary statements made without emotion implications.

It's seven o'clock

(b) In questions beginning with a question word like what, why or how, which are said in a natural and, sometimes, unfriendly way.

Why did you do it?

How will they get here?

(c) In Commands.

Don't take it.

Do as I say.

In British R.P., the typical intonation contour of a 'tune' in which a falling tone occurs is that the first accented syllable of the group is said on a high level note and each successive accented syllable on the last accented syllable, which has the nuclear tone. Unaccented syllable before the first accented syllable and after a falling nuclear tone are said normally on a low tone. Whether the nuclear tone takes a high or low fall ~~is~~ usually depends on the degree of intensity which the speaker imparts to his utterance.

Rising intonation: It is used as follows.

(a) In complete utterance, very often the first clause of a sentence.

I have a lot of students (and some are quite bright)

(b) In questions which demand an answer in yes or no.

Are they coming?

(c) In questions which are said in a warm and friendly way.

What's the time?

(d) In polite requests.

Do come to our house.

In the beginning of the intonation contour in a 'tune' in which rising tone occurs is the same as for a falling tone, the first accented syllable is uttered on a high level note and any following accented syllables on successively lower notes. The last accented syllable, having the nuclear tone is said on a rising note on any of the following accented syllables continuing the rise. Whether the

Rising tone goes up to mid or high pitch is against largely a matter of the degree of emotion and intensity involved

Falling. Rising intonation

It is used for special implication and gives the impression that the listeners should understand more than a literal interpretation of the words. Its use involves a moderately high to low fall, followed by rise in the pitch from low to medium. An example.

I'm going there this evening

In this context, the special implication includes veiled insult, apology, unpleasant news, happiness or doubt on the part of the speaker. As for example.

Do it at once (I know that a person of your type won't do it unless I tell him to)

Thus, we see that intonation patterns are important elements of English language that enable the speaker to express his even those feelings which are not expressed by the words. =