Introduction to Intonation

1. In connected speech the voice pitch is continually rising and falling. These variations produce intonation.

2. Functions of Intonation

English makes more elaborate use of intonation to signal meaning than do most other languages. This is a further reason why it should not be neglected by learners and teachers of English as a foreign language (Well, 2006, p.11).

Several functions can be recognized, among them:

a. Attitudinal: the most obvious function of intonation is to express our emotions and attitudes- to show sock or surprise, pleasure or anger, interest or boredom, seriousness or sarcasm, reproach and may others.

b. Grammatical: It is used to mark the beginning and end of grammatical units. It is also used to distinguish types of sentences.

- Statements   ↘   falling
- yes/no questions   ↗   rising
- Wh questions   ↘   falling

c. Focusing: Intonation helps to show what information in an utterance is new and what is already known.

d. Discoursive: Intonation signals how sequences of clauses and sentences go together in spoken discourse. It enables us to signal whether we have come to an end of the point we are making; whether we want to keep talking or are ready to give another speaker a turn

e. Psychological: Intonation helps us organize speech into units that are easy to perceive, memorize and perform.

f. Indexical: Just as other pronunciation feature, intonation may act as a marker of personal or social identity. Each situation and each social group may have a particular characteristic of intonation.

* Speech is divided into **tone units or tone groups;** that is a tone unit starts after a nucleus and ends with a nucleus.

* **A tone unit** consists of parts of speech ending in a nucleus.

3. Types of Intonation Patterns

3.1 Falling Intonation: it is the most perceptible when it is on a syllable containing a long vowel, a diphthong or a voiced continuant sound.

　　　　　↘ **No**   It was↘**rai**ning.

The falling Tone can be used for asking and giving information in normal, quiet, unemphatic style. It also conveys certain emotions, such as completion, finality and confidence.

- **Assertions (statements):** I have arrived ↘ **ear**ly.

- **Wh/ questions:** What have you ↘**done**?

- **Interjections and greetings:** Nice to ↘**meet** you.   Hel ↘**lo**   ↘**Hi**   Oh, ↘good!

- **Listing:** I visited Paris, London, Cairo and↘ **Ma**drid.

- **Order:** Do you ↘ **home**work.   ↘ **Stop** it!

- **Exclamatory sentences**: How **nice** of you! What a wonderful sur↘ **prise**!

- **Alternative questions**: Do you want coffee **or** ↘**tea?**

- ↘**Thank** you

* **Low fall:** It may start from mid pitch to the lowest pitch.

How are↘**you** ?

* **High fall**: It may start from the highest pitch of the voice to the lowest. It may be used for extra emphasis in informal situations to express lively interest and friendliness in statements, for example, in greetings and exclamations. Oh↘hi! I'm glad to↘see you!

3.2. Rising Intonation

* **Low Rise:** It may extend from low to mid pitch or from mid to high pitch or with other variations. It is used to express politeness, encouragement or suspicion and also in unfinished sentences.

Carry↗**on.**   Will you open the↗**door**, please?

I have revised my lesson, watched a film↗**and**…

It's↗**kind** of you.

Have a↗cup of tea.   That's very↗kind of you.

* **High Rise:** it may extend from low pitch to high pitch. It is associated with questions: asking for repetition or clarification. It may express surprise or incredibility.

You said↗**what?**   ↗**What? (elliptical questions)**   You↗**did?**

* **Tag questions**

You live in↘**Bis**kra, ↗**don't** you? (the speaker thinks you live in Biskra but he isn't sure and asks for confirmation)

You live in↘**Bis**kra, ↘ **don't** you? (the speaker is sure and expects the answer 'yes') to get confirmation or agreement

Nice↘**wea**ther, ↘ **isn't** it? (the speaker is sure the weather is nice and expects the answer 'yes')

4. Falling-Rising Intonation: The pitch of the voice starts relatively high, moves downwards and then upwards again.

It combines the effort of the fall and the emotional or meaningful attitudes associated with the rise. It may be used to express doubt, reproach, threat, disbelief, polite correction, partial statements, negative statements…∧

She's coming on↘**Wed**nesday.   On∨**Thur**sday.

There are ↘**twen**ty students in the group.   ∨**Fif**ty.

I came on ↘foot. (He lives in Tolga)   on ∨**foot.**

She wasn't very ∨**pleased.**

She↘refused to pay.   I don't think that's ∨**true.**

Negative commands often have a fall-rise intonation

Don't start until you're ∨ready.

*__Rising-Falling Intonation__: The pitch of the voice starts relatively low, moves upwards and then downwards again. It is used to convey strong feelings of approval, disapproval or surprise. It may also be used to show sarcasm.

How⌃**nice** for you**!**

You⌃**spoke** to her**!**

5. Remarks ↘

* Elliptical answers: ↘ yes   yes, I ↘do.   (falling intonation)

*Greetings

Good ↘morning! (I am just greeting you)   Good ↗morning! (expresses an added interest in the person addressed)

      *A vocative after hi or hello, has its own rising tone

↘Hi, ↗Margaret.   Hel ↘ lo, ↗Tim

*Thank you

↘Thank you (straightforward meaning)   ↗Thank you (routine acknowledgment)
To express genuine gratitude, it necessary to use a fall.

*Farewell

 Good ↗ **bye**!   (a fall can be used, but a rise is more frequent)

Good↘ **bye**! (get rid of an unwelcomed person)

*The yes/ no questions can be said with a fall. This makes the question insistent.

I'll ask you once more: did you take the ↘**mo**ney?
*Wh questions can be more gentle, kindly, encouraging, sympathetic in rising intonation.

At the bank: Asking about fees
A: Do you have any ↗questions? High rise (yes/no question)
B: ↘Yes, I want to know about ↘fees. Elliptical answer/ statement
A: Which ↗ fees? High rise (elliptical question)
B: Overdraft ↘fees. Low fall (answer/ statement)
A: You will be required to pay a small fee for everytime of your ↘ draft.
B: How much is the ↘fee?   Low fall (wh question)
A: You'll have to pay $25 every time you overdraft.
B: That's a small ↗ fee?   High rise (yes/ no question)
A: It shoul stop you from overdrafting.
B: You would think it ↘would, but it most likely ↘won't. Low fall (statement)
A: Can I help you with anything ↗ else? Low rise (polite request)
B: That's it for to↘day. ↗Thank you.
        1. low fall (statement)
         2. low rise (routine acknowledgement

Course No. 14

British versus American Pronunciation
RP versus GA

I. Vocalic Differences
1. Vowels are more open in GA   copy / kɑpi/   body / bɑdi/
2. Long vowels are usually shortened
3. /ɑ:/ is realized as /æ/ or   /   / in GA in most words when followed by /s/, / f/, /θ/ and /n/
followed by another consonants: staff, pass, path, bath, chance, dance.

Transcribe the words above in both pronunciations.

*Some GA speaker use /æ/ for /ɑ:/ like father

4. Some diphthongs are realized as monophthongs (true vowels)
Transcribe the following words in both pronunciations: go, fair, here, boat, open, show

II. Consonantal Differences
1. In GA, flapping is most common: when /t/ occurs between a stressed syllable and an unstressed one it is realized as an alveolar /d/ or /ʈ/ to RP speaker.

Latter	matter	better	later

* But not after syllabic n   Button /ˈbʌtn/   like in the word writer
* But not when immediately preceded by an unstressed syllable (retain)
2. jod dropping occurs in GA when preceded by alveolar consonants.

Words	RP	GA
suit		
new		
assume		
tune		

3. RP speakers are called non-rhotic because they don not pronounce / r/ except when it followed by vowels, while GA speakers are called rhotic because they pronounce /r/ in all situations.
4. Intrusive /r/ of many RP speakers is absent in GA.
5. / l/ is usually darkened in all situations in GA.

III. Differences in stress placement in some words such as:

Words	RP	GA
detail		
cigarette		
garage		
Address (noun)		
laboratory		

Listening activities+ Transcription