

The Phonetics of English Pronunciation - Week 12

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Registration for Final Test

- ***Compulsory and binding for BA-students***
(not necessary for Magister or Diplom students)
- Please enter your name in the ***correct*** Final-Test registration list (Dolmetscherinstitut or Anglistik) after the lecture
or ***by Monday 2nd February at the latest***
(the lists will be accessible between 9 am and 12.30 pm in the secretary's office of the Phonetics Institute)

Arrangements for Final Test

- Two options are still open:
 - a) *Written test*, Monday 18th February, **OR**
 - b) *On-line test* (CLIX), Monday 25th February
- Decision depends on:

Successful on-line "Probeklausur"
- All students *must* have an account to access CLIX
Please arrange an account with the Computer Centre if you do not have an internet account.
- The Probeklausur will be made available on
4th February (written) or later (CLIX version)

Remaining Programme this Semester

- Today: *Getting the tone right!*
Intonational differences between German and English.
- 4th February: *Problem discussion*
YOU ask the questions; I try to answer them!
- 11th February: Discussion of Probeklausur
- 18th February: EITHER Final Test (written),
OR Question-Answer session

What is intonation?

Primarily: It is the *melodic* structuring of spoken utterances.

More comprehensively: It is the *demarcation* (separation from one another) of sense "chunks" and the *tonal accentuation* of the *informationally important* words in those chunks.

What is intonation? (2)

- **Melodic Structure:** Words in a sentence can be made prominent by making them *Higher* or *Lower* than the surrounding words, or by making the pitch on the *Rise* or *Fall*.

Examples:

→ *What* would you like to ↘ *do*?

↗ *What* would you like to ↗ *do*?

↗ *What* would you like to ↘ *do*?

→ *What* would you like to ↘ *do*?

- N.B. Only the words that are important for the message are made tonally prominent (tonally accented)

What is intonation? (3)

- **Demarcation:** The important sense units (not necessarily syntactically coherent) are separated from one another (i.e. are "demarcated")

Examples:

→ *Humans* think → *God* is in con ↘ *trol*.

→ *Humans* ↗ *think*. ↘ *God* is in con ↘ *trol*.

What is intonation? (4)

- The *Informationally important* words that we accent with pitch can be important due to the semantic content of the words *or* to the emotional weight attached to the words by the speaker:

E.g. We *re*→*fuse* to *ac*→*cept* that *as* ↘ *signment*.
(the lexically important words are accented)

vs.

↘ *We* can't be expected to do ↗ *that!*

(two pronouns are accented because of their subjective importance to the speaker)

Differences in Intonation?

- The melodic structure of Standard Southern British English and Standard German are *formally* very similar (i.e., *there is the same inventory of tonal accents*)
... but there are some deceptive differences which can lead to misunderstanding (they are used differently):
 - Different “*neutral*” and emotionally “*non-neutral*” melodies can lead to unfortunate misinterpretation of a speaker’s attitude.
- The one or two small but important **formal** differences are very difficult to modify (because intonation is acquired very early).

Difference in "neutral" accenting:

- Strong tendency in *German* to have „rising tonal accents“: ↗ on the main (non-final) accented words in emotionally neutral sentences:

“*Der alte ↗Mann wollte ↗Kohl auf dem Stück ↗Land hinter seinem ↘Haus anbauen.*”

(In an English sentence this sounds rather insistent)

- *English* tends to have high-level → or falling accents ↘

“*The old ↘man wanted to grow ↘cabbages on the plot of ↘land behind his ↘house.*”

(This sounds rather insistent in a German sentence)

A few examples for "neutral" accenting:

- *Der ↗Schwiegervater meiner ↗Schwester ist Millio ↘när.
My ↘sister's ↘father-in-law is a millio ↘naire.*
- *Die ↗Hausaufgaben müssen ↗donnerstags bis 18 ↘Uhr
eingereicht werden..
The ↘homework has to be handed ↗in by 6 p ↘m on ↘Thursday.*
- *Stu ↗dierende müssen ↗heutzutage ↗viel mehr ris ↘kieren
↘Students have to take a ↘lot more ↘risks ↗nowadays.*

“Tag questions” – A tricky area

- “*It’s rather cold today, isn’t it?*”
“*It’s not very hot today, is it?*”

Syntax: It’s usual to learn about the *grammatical structure* of tag questions:

i.e., *Repeat the verb of the main clause with reversed polarity* (positive-negative or negative-positive)

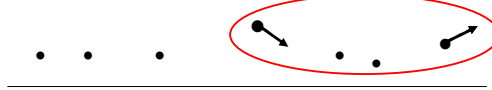
Intonation: The differences between English tag questions and German tags is very rarely taught. But they are a stubborn sign of a non-native speaker.

- *What are the German utterances which could correspond to the two questions at the top?*

The intonation of “Tag questions” (a)

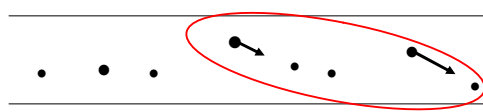
- German tag intonation:

“(Es ist) recht ↘ kalt heute, ↗ nicht?”

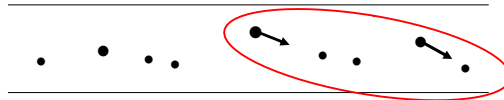


- English tag intonation:

“It’s rather ↘ cold today, ↘ isn’t it?”



“It’s not very ↘ hot today, ↘ is it?”



In both cases, *the speaker is sure* that his/her observation will meet with the agreement of the listener.

Some practice of “Tag questions” (a)

It's a ↘ funny old ↘ world we live in, ↘ isn't it?

The ↘ climate has ↘ changed, ↘ hasn't it?

We ↘ can't con↘ tinue like this, ↘ can we?

We ↘ don't want to ↘ risk our children's ↘ future, ↘ do we?

But they ↘ have to take responsi↘ bility for them ↘ selves,
↘ haven't they?

People tend to ↘ forget that, ↘ don't they?

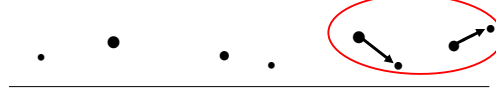
Mind you, it's ↘ easier to ↘ talk than ↘ act, ↘ isn't it?

You should tell the poli↘ ticians that, ↘ shouldn't you?

“Tag questions” (b): Speaker unsure.

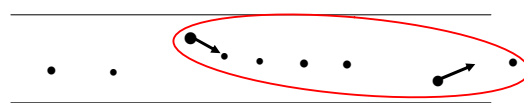
- German tag intonation:

“Du kommst morgen ↘ später, ↗ oder?”

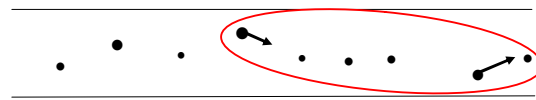


- English tag intonation:

“You’ll be ↘ later tomorrow, ↗ won’t you?”



“You won’t be ↘ late tomorrow, ↗ will you?”



In both cases, **the speaker is unsure** whether his/her observation will meet with the agreement of the listener.

Some practice of “Tag questions” (unsure)

You've been on ↘ holiday, ↗ haven't you?

Her ↘ children went to ↘ boarding school, ↗ didn't they?

Your ↘ son's an ac ↘ countant, ↗ isn't he?

They had a ↘ holiday cottage in ↘ Devon, ↗ didn't they?

Yes, but it was de ↘ stroyed in a ↘ storm, ↗ wasn't it?

↘ Business has been im ↘ proving recently, ↗ hasn't it?

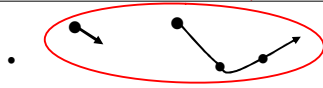
Not ↘ many people learn Chi ↘ nese, ↗ do they?

↘ More people learn Chi ↘ nese than Ti ↘ betan, ↗ don't they?

“Implicational Fall-Rise” – very English!

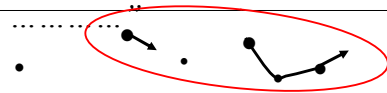
- In English *more* is often implied than is *actually* said:

E.g. “I ↘ don't ↘ dislike ↗ him” But I don't LIKE him very much!



“They ↘ can't do ↘ every ↗ thing

But they are doing as much as they can, (and you or somebody could help!)



“I'll ↘ help if I ↘ can”

But there are a lot reasons why I may not be able to, so don't expect too much!



Some practice of "Implication Fall-Rises"

You ↘ can't expect ↘ *too* ↗ *much*

They ↘ never helped ↘ ↗ *me*

Her ↘ *other* children ↗ *managed* it

We can't ↘ *always* expect them to ↗ *help*.....

I've ↘ mown the ↘ ↗ *lawn*

He ↘ always ↘ *used* to be ↗ *helpful*.....

There isn't ↘ *much* you can ↗ *do* about it.....

You ↘ don't want to spend ↘ *too* ↗ *much*.....

Here are possible implications:

You can't expect too much, (because it's known that he/she is not very good)

They never helped me (so why should you expect them to help at all)

Her other children managed it (so why shouldn't this one)

We can't always expect them to help (even if they have helped in the past)

I've mown the lawn (so why are you saying I don't do anything in the garden?)

He always used to be helpful (so there is no reason to assume he won't this time)

There isn't much you can do about it (so don't be too hopeful)

You don't want to spend too much (so let's look for something less expensive)

Now **revise** the lecture scripts,

Re-read the sections in the book and the script.....

And prepare your questions for next week.

Exam Date (if *written* test): Mon, 18th Feb.

Two sessions: 8.00-8.50 and 9.00-9.50;

Probably HERE (Musiksaal)

(if *CLIX online* test): Mon, 25th Feb.

FOUR sessions: 9.00-9.30; 9.40-10.10; 10.20-10.50; 11.00-11.30