

## FALLS AND RISES: MEANINGS AND UNIVERSALS

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A basic distinction between some type of fall and some type of rise exists in a majority of the world's languages. This distinction has been seen at different times as relevant to grammar, lexis, discourse or attitude. At a higher level of abstraction all such meanings of intonation have something in common: the meanings typically associated with falling tunes, e.g. 'finality' 'closed-listing' 'response-denying' 'dogmatic' appear to have a common factor which may be called STRONG; while those associated with rising tunes e.g. 'continuity' 'open-listing' 'response-requesting' 'deferential' appear to have a common factor which may be called WEAK.

In some languages the distinction between fall and rise is either not used at all or is used only peripherally. Languages of this kind have a compensating increase in their use of distinctions of pitch height. In such cases meanings conveyed in other languages by a distinction between rise and fall are conveyed by the height of the terminal pitch, which may involve a distinction between a fall to mid pitch and a fall to bottom pitch or a rise to mid pitch and a rise to high pitch.

The use of intonation in languages may thus be stated in terms of a number of intonation universals: (i) if a fall v. rise distinction is used for certain dimensions of meaning, the correlations of form and meaning will be predictable; (ii) use of the fall v. rise distinction to convey one dimension of meaning will imply its use for certain other specifiable dimensions; (iii) where the fall v. rise distinction is used for several dimensions of meaning, certain dimensions will predictably always overrule certain other dimensions; (iv) if the fall v. rise distinction is not used in a language, then the language will use a distinction of pitch height to convey dimensions of meaning associated with fall v. rise in other languages.