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English PronunciationS
The Pronunciation of English around the World
Geo-social Applications of the Natural Phonetics & Tonetics Method

1. International, American & British neutral Accents

36. Prominence, rhythm & pauses

Prominence

36.1. The degree in which a syllable stands out among adjoining syllables in an utterance is defined PROMINENCE. It is the result of different combinations of four fundamental elements: the TIMBRE of the phones, which form a syllable (*ie* their relative intrinsic *perceptibility*, determined by articulatory characteristics), STRESS, or *strength* of realization, relative PITCH, and LENGTH (or *duration*).

For practical purposes, it is better to analyze the four elements separately (*cf* ₲ 12 of *NPT*), even if their result is just prominence. In a word such as *visibility*, the most prominent syllable is the third one, *-bil-*, while the next prominent syllable is the first, *vis-*. The other syllables are much weaker, especially the second and fourth ones, *-i-* and *-i-*. Of course, all this is better treated by using phonetic transcriptions, while a phonemic transcription would only show the primary stress:

i[ˌvɪzə'bɪləɪi, -ɟi] *a*[ˌvɪzə'bɪləɪi] *b*[ˌvɪzə'bɪləɟi] /ˌvɪzə'bɪləɟi/ *visibility*.

Rhythm & rhythm groups

36.2. Every language has its own particular rhythm, deriving from the structures of its syllables and rhythm groups. RHYTHM is the result of regular occurrences of prominent syllables in the speech chain. Generally, the alternation of stressed and unstressed syllables is fundamental. In English, stressed syllables are longer, as well, but not necessarily on a higher pitch (as it is often said and written).

To all this, English also adds a considerable reduction in the duration ⅌ timbre of the phones of unstressed syllables (indeed some of the expected phones, often, drop completely):

i[phə'liis; ph'liis] *a/b* [phə'lɪis; ph'lɪis] /pə'liis/ *police*

i[ˌjuunə'vɜ·ɪsəɪi, -ɟi; -sɟi] *a*[ˌjɱunə'vɹ̩səɪi; -sɟi] *b*[ˌjɱunɪ'vɜ·səɟi; -sɟi] /ˌjuunə'vɜːɪsəɟi/ *university*.

36.3. RHYTHM GROUPS (or stress groups) are formed by —at least— one syllable with strong stress. Usually, a stressed syllable is accompanied by other syllables, with *secondary* (or *mid*), *weak*, or *reduced* (or *weakened*) *stresses*. Furthermore, the

rhythm groups show considerable internal cohesion, not only on the phonetic and prosodic level, but also on the semantic one; which means that they have a precise global meaning.

English may have quite long sequences of strong syllables, when lexical mono-syllables occur in a sentence; while it can even have sequences of weak or weak-ened (or reduced) syllables (with shortened phones and attenuated timbres). Here are some examples:

i[n̩ðəɹwz̩əˈlɑːɹd̢ʒ ˈkhɹɑˑʊd ɣˈphiipɫ̩ː ˈwɛɪɾɪŋfəɹˌðm̩ˑ], [-ʈɪŋ-]

a[n̩ðɹ̩wz̩əˈlɑːɹd̢ʒ ˈkhɹɑˑʊd̥ ɣˈphɹipɫ̩ː ˈwɛɪɾɪŋfɹ̩ðm̩ˑ]

b[n̩ðɯwz̩ə⁻lɑːd̢ʒ ˈkhɹɑˑʊd̥ ɣˈphɹipɫ̩ː ˈwɛɪʈɪŋfəðm̩ˑ]

/əndðəɹwəzəˈlɑːɹd̢ʒ ˈkɹaʊd̥ əvˈpiipɫ, ˈwɛɪʈɪŋfəɹˌðəm./

And there was a large crowd of people waiting for them.

i[aɛmɡənəˈʈhɛɪk ˈɔˑləðm̩ˑ ʈəðəpəɹˈfoˑɹmənsəz̩ˑ]

a[aəmɡɯnəˈʈhɛɪk ˈɔˑləðm̩ˑ ʈəðəpɹ̩ˈfoˑɹmənsəz̩ˑ]

b[aəmɡɯnə⁻ʈhɛɪk ˈɔˑləðm̩ˑ ʈəðəpəˈfoˑmənsɪz̩ˑ]

/aɛmɡənəˈʈɛɪk ˈɔːləvðəm, ʈəðəpəɹˈfɔːɹmənsəz./

I'm gonna take all of them to the performances.

36.4. For a useful comparison of rhythm, prominence, and segment qualities, let us now consider these two sentences as spoken with a marked Italian accent. The result is quite another thing from the original model:

*[ˌɛndeɹˈwɔː zaˈlarːd̢ʒ꙰ ˈkrau dʊvˈpiːpʊɫ꙳ ˈwɛitiŋ forˈdɛmːˑ]

*[aiŋˈɡɔnna teiˈkɔˑ lofˈdɛmːˑ tuˌdeperˈfɔrːmansisˑ].

Pauses

36.5. A ᴘᴀᴜsᴇ is a momentary break in speech, which takes place for various reasons: physiological (*ie* breathing), semantic (*ie* meaning), logical (*ie* connec-tion), psychological (*ie* attitudes), and pragmatic (*ie* communicative strategies).

It is possible to measure pauses in reference to the number of syllables which could fill the time of their duration (resulting from an average of both stressed and unstressed syllables). Therefore, we speak of *short, mid,* and *long* pauses, of about 3, 6, and 9 syllables respectively, or rather of about 2-4, 5-7, 8-10 mean phono-sylla-bles: [|, ‖, ⦀].

If a short pause is not certain, or may be missing, it is indicated by [:] and is better defined as a *potential* pause. Sometimes, above all for psycholinguistic or behavioral purposes, it may be necessary to indicate pauses in a more precise way: in hundredths of a second; especially when they differ from expected 'normal' ones.

36.6. Usually, in *pause groups* (*ie* what is included between two pauses), nor-mal speech uses two or more rhythm groups, which are linked to convey a fuller sense.

Sometimes, a pause group coincides with one rhythm group; at other times, combinations of rhythm groups in different pause groups change the meaning of similar utterances, often much more than the presence or absence of intonemes within the utterance itself, as in:

[i][jumɛɪˈɡɔˑʊˑˌ ˌˈnaˑɔˑˌɹ] [a][jμmɛɪˈɡɔˑʊˑˌ ˌˈnaˑɔˑˌɹ] [b][jμmɛɪˈɡɜˑʊˌˌ ˌˈnaˑɔˌˌ] /juumɛɪˈɡɔʊ. ˌˈnaʊ.ɹ/ *You may go now*, quite different from:

[i][juˈmɛˑɪˑ| ˈɡɔˑʊ ˈnaˑɔˑ] [a][jμˈmɛˑɪˑ| ˈɡɔˑʊ ˈnaˑɔˑ] [b][jμˈmɛˑɪ| ⁻ɡɜˑʊ ˈnaˑɔˌ] /juuˈmɛɪ| ˈɡɔʊ ˈnaʊ./ *You may: go now*, again different from:

[i][juˈmɛˑɪˑ| ˈɡɔˑʊˑ: ˈnaˑɔˑ] [a][jμˈmɛˑɪˑ| ˈɡɔˑʊˑ: ˈnaˑɔˑ] [b][jμˈmɛˑɪ| ˈɡɜˑʊˌ: ˈnaˑɔˌ] /juuˈmɛɪ| ˈɡɔʊ. ˈnaʊ./ *You may. Go, now.*

37. Pitch, rate & phono-texts

Pitch & intonation groups

37.1. *fig* 37 schematically shows the relationship between the three fundamental types of voices: *male* (ᴍ), *female* (ꜰ) and *infant(ile)* (ɪ); the grey band helps to realize that the same *absolute* pitch corresponds to quite different *relative* pitch levels. Of course, among the three groups, there is a fairly gradual transition, since –for each one– we can easily find more or less high/low voices, in addition to those representing the average of each group.

When two or more pause groups are linked together, their meanings are co-ordinated as well; therefore, they are combined into something wider and more coherent, thanks to a particular intonation contour. Thus we get ɪɴᴛᴏɴᴀᴛɪᴏɴ ɢʀᴏᴜᴘѕ, which may even coincide with one rhythm group, or one word, possibly formed by one syllable, again: *Yes?* or *Here.*

fig 37. Relationship between male, female, and infant(ile) voices.
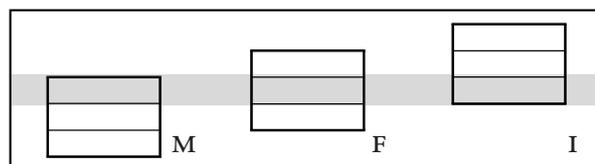
Paragraph & text

37.2. When one or more speakers continue on the same subject, with semantic cohesion, a sequence of intonation groups is technically called a ᴘᴀʀᴀɢʀᴀᴘʜ. From a prosodic point of view, a paragraph is usually characterized by given rhythm and intonation features, which determine their internal cohesion, in contrast to other paragraphs, within the same *text*.

Generally, a paragraph ends with a greater pitch lowering (compared to normal pitch), which is marked with [₀] at the end. Likewise, a paragraph may begin at a slightly higher pitch, marked by [°] at the beginning. This guarantees internal unity and coherence, in contrast with other paragraphs. A simple kind of paragraph is constituted by sayings:

i[ᵒˈwɛn ðəˈkhæts əˈwɛˑɪˑ·· ðəˈmaes wɟˈphlɛˑɪˑ.ₒ]
a[ᵒˈwɛn ðɯˈkhæts ɯˋwɛˑɪˑ·· ðəˈmaəs wɟˈphlɛˑɪˑ.ₒ]
b[ᵒˉwɛn ðɯˈkhæts ɯˋwɛˑɪˑ· ðəˉmaəs wɟˈphlɛˑɪ..ₒ]
/ᵒˈwɛn ðəˈkæʦ əˈwɛɪ; ðəˈmaes wɪɟˈplɛɪ.ₒ/
When the cat's away, the mice will play.

37.3. A ᴛᴇxᴛ may be constituted by a speech, a lesson, a (university or public) lecture, a news bulletin, a sermon, a soliloquy, a joke, &c. A ᴘᴀʀᴀɢʀᴀᴘʜ may be constituted by the sentences of different speakers, when the text (presenting semantic and pragmatic cohesion) is a conversation, a phone call, an oral examination, an interview, a quarrel, &c.

A text is not necessarily long: even *Here? –Yes* may be a text, supposing that the two speakers share certain presuppositions:

i[¿ˈhɪʋəɪˑ·] [ˈjɛsˑ.] *a*[¿ˈhɪɟˑ·] [ˈjɛsˑ.] *b*[¿ˈhɪʋɐˑ·] [ˈjɛsˑ.] /¿ˈhɪəɟ?/ /ˈjɛsˑ./
Here? – Yes.

Rate

37.4. Languages (and speakers) have different rates of uttering. ʀᴀᴛᴇ can be measured in words per minute (100-200 on average), in phono-syllables per second (2-5), or in phones per second (6-20).

In general the number of words and syllables varies according to their structures and extensions; the number of phones varies according to their (phonetic and phonemic) duration.

Moreover, the rate varies according to particular semantic, social, and pragmatic factors. *Conversation* itself can be classified in at least three different types: *slow*, *normal*, and *quick*. Consequently, the numbers given above tend to move towards the limits indicated, or even to slightly exceed them.

37.5. Pause incidence is connected with rate, too. Indeed, there is a limit beyond which phones cannot be shortened or lengthened without becoming incomprehensible, or ridiculously intolerable. Therefore, the quicker/slower the rate is, the more the duration and number of pauses will be reduced/increased.

In a *normal conversation*, pauses take almost *a quarter* of the total duration of a text. But the time taken by pauses can be longer: up to *half* of the total duration. There are cases (or particular moments) where pauses can even take three quarters of the total time (without falling into pathology); but such cases fall within the aims of paraphonic analysis.

On the contrary, anyone happens to know some speakers who talk very quickly and, practically, make 'no pauses' (and hardly use conclusive intonemes)... Fairly understandably, most listeners cannot stand such speakers!

38. A first approach to intonation

38.1. We will now concisely introduce the bare essentials of *intonation*. In fact, all languages have their own intonation system, and phonetics should therefore not be treated without examining intonation as well, by means of *tonetics*.

Unfortunately, intonation is often left out entirely, even in descriptions of particular languages or in transcriptions of sentences or passages! A notably bad example of this omission is given by the recent 'official manual' of the International Phonetic Association: *Handbook of the International Phonetic Association: A Guide to the Use of the International Phonetic Alphabet* (found in the bibliography).

38.2. Of course, we will follow the *natural tonetics method*, since we find it to be the most objective and unbiased of all, and the fittest one for actual comparisons between languages. It is a fair combination of auditory impressions and acoustic analyses, expressed in a clear diagrammatic way, by means of tonograms and signs which are derived from those of the British school.

As a matter of fact, the British approach has been among the few to have some practical use; but sometimes its diagrams are decidedly excessive. In fact, for [·ˈ‸] or [·ˈ·ˑ] (*cf fig* 38.1), it gives diagrams like ⟍ or ⟋ when there is only one short voiced element: for example, [ɪ] in *Dick*. If the result were truly as extended as their diagrams show, it would rather sound like a police siren!

These are not the only differences between these two methods, as it will appear below. However, for the time being, we will deal only with British English intonation, because it is also the most widely described one, and because it is better not to introduce other accents, which might complicate things.

Of course, the International and American systems will be given soon after, in order to compare them appropriately (₲ 41).

38.3. In every language the *three marked intonemes* (/. ? ;/) and the *unmarked preintoneme* (the normal one, / /, without a special symbol) should be clearly in-

fig 38.1. The four neutral intonemes of British English.

conclusive	interrogative	suspensive	continuative
/./ [·ˈ‸] ⟨ˋ⟩	/?/ [·ˈ·ˑ] ⟨ˊ⟩	/;/ [·ˈ‸] ⟨ˌ⟩	/,/ [·ˈ·] ⟨ˈ⟩
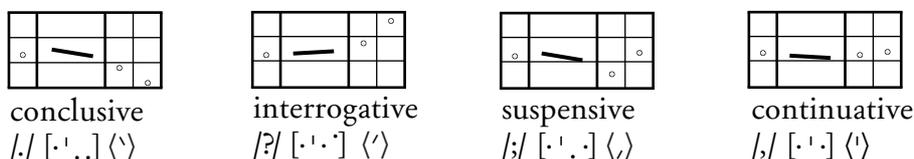
dicated with appropriate symbols (both on a phonetic, or –rather– *tonetic* level, and on a phonemic, or *tonemic* one).

The *intoneme* involves the final stressed syllable of an utterance and the syllables around it (cf fig 38.1), while the *preintoneme* is what is found before the intoneme in the same intonation group (cf fig 38.2). In the example *his cousin's name is Bartholomew* /hɪzˈkɐzn̩z ˈnɛɪm ɪzbɑːɹˈθɒləmjuu/, the intoneme is constituted by the full name of *Bartholomew*, while the preintoneme is everything prior to it: *his cousin's name is…*

38.4.   The example of *Bartholomew* is particularly interesting because it allows us to consider the four ideal components of an *intoneme*: the *pretonic* syllable (*Bar-*), the *tonic* syllable (*-thol-*), and the two *post-tonic* ones (*-omew*).

The pronunciation of this example normally provides a reasonably adequate realization of the schematic tonal movements shown in fig 38.1-2 (which besides the unmarked preintoneme and the three marked intonemes, give the important interrogative preintoneme, /¿/, which is marked, and the continuative intoneme, /,/ – which is unmarked).

38.5.   If the example were *his cousin's name is Dick* /hɪzˈkɐzn̩z ˈnɛɪm ɪzˈdɪk/, the intoneme would be *is Dick*. The tonic and post-tonic syllables would consist of only one syllable (*Dick*). In consequence, the ideal movement shown in the diagrams (for the case with four syllables) would be compressed, not just horizontally, but inevitably in terms of the vertical range as well.

When only one syllable is present (as in the answer to a question like *what is his cousin's name? – Dick*), the result is a fusion of the expected pitch patterns which maintains the characteristic movements, but in an attenuated form.

38.6.   The preintoneme and the intoneme taken together are usefully called an *intonation group*. We use examples such as *My favorite dictionary*, or *That patient thinks he's Giuseppe Verdi*, to show that the parts of an intonation group do not necessarily respect word boundaries. In fact, the intonemes in these utterances are, respectively: /ɹəʈˈdɪkʃənɛ̩ɹi./ and /iˈvɛə̩ɹɖi./ (*-rite dictionary* and *-pe Verdi*). The preintonemes, on the other hand, are /ˈðæʈs maɛˈfɛɪv/ and /ðæʈˈpɛɪʃ(ə)nʈ ˈθɪŋks (h)izʤuuˈsɛp/ (*My favo-* and *That patient thinks he's Giusep-*). The full examples are: /ˈðæʈs maɛˈfɛɪvɹəʈ ˈdɪkʃənɛ̩ɹi./ and /ðæʈˈpɛɪʃ(ə)nʈ ˈθɪŋks (h)izʤuuˈsɛpi ˈvɛə̩ɹɖi./.

38.7.   It will be seen that our transcriptions are not subdivided (pedantically, or pseudo-pedagogically) along word boundaries. That practice is still quite common (in the best case, motivated by hopes of helping the reader). It is much more useful to subdivide transcriptions into *rhythm groups*, as we have done, instead of giving things like '/ˈðæt ɪz ˈmaɪ ˈfeɪvrət ˈdɪkʃən(e)ri/', or '/ˈðæt ˈpeɪʃnt ˈθɪŋks hiːz ʤuːˈsepi ˈveə(r)di/', where the stresses and some unreduced forms (for current 'weak forms') are even unnatural (*ie* in the cases of '/ɪz ˈmaɪ/' in the first example and '/hiːz/', at least, in the second, which are weakened in normal speech, both articulatorily and prosodically).

fig 38.2. Two neutral preintonemes of British English.
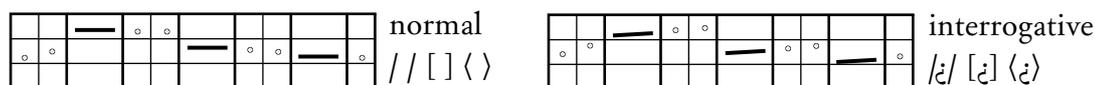
38.8. *fig* 38.3 will be a useful explanatory tool in order to understand more explicitly the use of tonograms (given that we are not all musicians or singers, for whom the analogy with a musical score is obvious). Let us observe, then, the graphemic text, to which we have given the form of the intonation curve. Normally this curve is shown with the lines and dots of tonograms, but here we have used a more 'intuitive' first approach. We show just four examples, based on the segment *see you on Saturday* (in neutral British pronunciation expressly to compare them with ˋ and ˎ , seen above). These examples contrast pairwise: a *conclusive* utterance is contrasted with an *interrogative* one (of a total question), and a *suspensive* utterance with a *continuative* one.

fig 38.3. An iconic way to introduce people to intonation.

38.9. In the case of the last two sentences, the semantic importance of what follows (given in parentheses) is fundamental, whether it is expressed out loud, or instead remains implicit.

In any case, the suspensive intoneme is characterized by decidedly greater and more immediate anticipation, while this is lacking with the continuative one.

This difference, and certainly not their syntax, explains the difference in intonation between the third and fourth examples.

38.10.1. Applying the movements of the three intonemes to a slightly different example, we see that in neutral (better than 'standard') British English, the *conclusive intoneme* is falling (/./ [·ˈ‚.]), of the type shown in *fig* 38.1 (and also in three examples in *fig* 38.3):

ᵇ[ˈkhɹɪstʃən‚] /ˈkɹɪstʃən./ *Christian.*

38.10.2. The *interrogative intoneme* is rising (/?/ [·ˈ·ˇ]), as in the question:

ᵇ[ˈkhɹɪstʃən·ˇ] /ˈkɹɪstʃən?/ *Christian?*

38.10.3. The third intoneme, the *suspensive*, is used to create a sort of antici-
pation, or 'suspense'. In neutral British pronunciation, it is falling-rising, /¿/ [· ' . ·]:

b[ˈkhɹɪstʃən.·] /ˈkɹɪstʃən¿/ *Although his name's Christian, he's no good Christian at
all.*

38.11. In *fig* 38.2 (as well as in the second example of *fig* 38.3), we have the *in-
terrogative preintoneme*, /¿/, as well. This preintoneme is a modification of the nor-
mal preintoneme, and it anticipates on the rhythmic-group syllables of the prein-
toneme the characteristic movement of the interrogative intoneme (although in
an attenuated form).

Obviously, in the part specifically dedicated to the topic, we will be more ex-
plicit and more exhaustive (*cf* ₲ 40-46). Here, we remark only that the interroga-
tive preintoneme is the same in all types of questions, whether these are *total* ques-
tions, like *Is his cousin's name Christian?*, or *partial* ones (containing a question
word, such as *why, when, who, how…*), such as *Why is his cousin's name Christian?*

38.12. Thus, we must warn the reader that, contrary to what grammar books
and writing-based teaching imply, not all questions have an interrogative in-
toneme, nor should they. In fact, partial questions, in order to sound truly natural
and authentic, should be pronounced with a conclusive intoneme (or at most,
with the unmarked *continuative* intoneme, with pitch in the mid band, which will
be seen in greater detail later on):

b[¿⁻waəɪz ɪzˈnɛˑɪm ˈkhɹɪstʃən.] [-z̥ h-] /¿ˈwaɛɪz (h)ɪzˈnɛɪm ˈkɹɪstʃən./ *Why is his
name Christian?* (or *b*[ˈkhɹɪstʃən·] /ˈkɹɪstʃən,/, with a continuative intoneme).

fig 38.4. Difference between total questions (1) and partial questions (2).

39. A second step towards intonation

39.1. We already know that *intonation* is constituted by the relative pitch of syllables forming (more or less long) sequences of connected speech.

These sequences are called *intonation groups* and can consist of different pause groups (which, in turn, consist of rhythm groups); but they can even consist in a single word – which can even be monosyllabic:

/'nσω./ /¿'nσω?/ /¡'nσω./ /'nσω,/ /'nσω;/
*No. – No? – No! – No, – No…*

39.2. What is essential is that pitch –through given differences– adds (or, rather, gives) different pragmasemantic nuances –such as 'statement, question, command', &c– to phonic sequences which could otherwise be identical.

Thus the difference obtained is not merely semantic, conceptual, as in the case of tone languages, such as Chinese. However, by using the same principles and the same symbols of syllabic-tone notation, we can accurately (and without too many problems) transcribe the characteristics of pitch and strength of the syllables of a whole utterance.

In fact, stress-tonal signs show both the relative pitch and stress-degrees of the syllables before which they are put.

39.3. The whole pitch extension of an utterance is called an *intonation group* (cf *fig* 39, *fig* 43.1-2, § 40.1-2 & *fig* 38.3 – perhaps it is better to avoid a possible unitary term as 'tuning'). It is divided into a *preintoneme* and an *intoneme* (again, we

fig 39. The intonation group and its parts.

1 & 2: intonation group	a-b: antetonic (syllables)	A: pretonic (syll.)
1: preintoneme	c: (first) protonic (syll.)	B: tonic (syll.)
2: intoneme	d-e: (first) intertonic (s.)	C-D: post-tonic group
	f: protonic (syll.)	C: internal post-tonic
	g-h: intertonic (syll.)	D: terminal post-tonic
	i: (last) protonic (syll.)	
	j: (last) intertonic (syll.)	

avoid possible –Greek and Latin– terms such as 'protune' and [the risky] 'tune', as well). Here we anticipate that a general *intoneme* consists of three parts: a *pretonic* syllable, the *tonic* (*ie* the stressed) one, and (two) *post-tonic* syllables.

A *preintoneme* consists of one or more *stressed* and *unstressed* syllables (which are classically called 'protonic' and 'intertonic' syllables, respectively).

Sometimes, it could be important to refer explicitly to the first or last 'protonic' syllable, in the description of certain languages with particular preintonemes. That is the case of British English preintonemes, which have the first protonic syllable high, [⁻], as we have already seen in the examples in Ꚏ 36. Currently, the first protonic can be preceded by some 'antetonic' (*ie* initial unstressed) syllables.

39.4. In anticipation of what will be dealt with presently (from Ꚏ 40 onwards), we may say that there is a 'normal' *preintoneme*, for statements, which has no particular symbol since it is the unmarked one: / /.

There are, then, three marked preintonemes: *interrogative* (/¿/), *imperative* (/¡/), and *emphatic* (/ʌ̣/). A blank before the second slash can help realize (in such concise indications) that we are dealing with *pre*-intonemes (/¿ /, /¡ /, /ʌ̣ /), not with intonemes, which will follow shortly.

We must make it clear at once that *written* sentences are one thing, while the *spoken* language is quite another reality, often very different indeed.

Naturally, in the spoken language, intonemes are much more numerous than 'simple sentences' of grammar and syntax, as will be seen below.

39.5. But let us consider the *intonemes*. As we have already said, generally, they are formed by the *tonic* syllable (*ie* the stressed one, which is also the last strong syllable in an utterance, in a sense), the *pretonic* (*ie* the possible unstressed syllable *before* it), and the *post-tonic* syllables (*ie* the possible unstressed syllables *after* it).

In the tonetic diagrams (or rather *tonograms*), two post-tonic syllables are indicated (*ie* internal and terminal); sometimes it is useful to refer to one of them clearly, in order to highlight typical movements more clearly, above all to distinguish interrogative intonemes of the rising type ([·'·ˑ]), from those of the falling type ([·'·.]).

In any case, the term *postintoneme* may be used to refer to both syllables, collectively.

39.6. We will now consider, concisely (and by looking closely at *fig* 40.2), the three marked intonemes (of neutral British English): *conclusive* (/./), *interrogative* (/?/), *suspensive* (/;/), and the unmarked: *continuative* (/,/):–

> ᵇ[ɒnˈsætədɛɪ.] /ɒnˈsætəɹdɛɪ./ *On Saturday.*
> ᵇ[¿ɒnˈsætədɛɪˑ] /¿ɒnˈsætəɹdɛɪ?/ *On Saturday?*
> ᵇ[ɒnˈsætədɛɪˑ] /ɒnˈsætəɹdɛɪ;/ *(If not) on Saturday… (then…)*
> ᵇ[ɒnˈsætədɛɪ] /ɒnˈsætəɹdɛɪ,/ *(Perhaps) on Saturday, (but…).*

This phonemic transcription is actually of a diaphonemic type, from which either British or American, or International pronunciation can be obtained.

39.7. As we already know, the best way of dealing with the intonation of a language consists in presenting its structures through appropriate and clear diagrams (*ie* tonograms), with clear examples and a simple and sufficiently complete notational system (not a cumbersome and useless one).

First of all, we must repeat that the use and choice of intonation patterns do not depend on syntax at all, but on *semantics* and *pragmatics*, and above all on *communicative goals*.

In fact, even if the syntactic formulation is, in the end, the most evident linguistic rendering (for those who are used to reading and writing), in actual fact it is nothing but a more or less faithful representation of the pragma-semantic way to express concepts and thoughts, peculiar to every language.

39.8. If, for instance, we write (and beforehand say):

[ᵇ[ˌaəvbɪnˉlɔkɪŋ fəˈðɪs.. fɟˈɛɪʤɪz̥..]
I've been ˉlooking for ˎthis for ˎages,

the superficial formulation at hand is only the inevitable result of the mental and linguistic processes that produce, in English, the sentence just seen, although with slight possible variations.

In actual fact, it results from the juxtaposition of different concepts (each one indicated by /./, or [·ˈ..], or ⟨ˎ⟩) in a single syntactic string, seemingly simple and straightforward, but actually very complex, as is obvious from its prosodic structure, if supported by an appropriate intonation pattern, as indicated by the small but precious signs used.

39.9. In the next chapters, we will examine the intonation structure of neutral British English, for which we must always keep in mind the general scheme which enables us to really *see* its characteristics.

Thus *fig* 39 gives the diagram of intonation groups. It shows the use we make –when speaking normally– of pitch heights of the various syllables forming the different possible utterances in a given language.

40. On preintonemes & intonemes

Intonation groups

40.1. An intonation group consists (as already seen, cf Ch 39 & fig 39) of a preintoneme (in our example *I am tran⁻scribing the ‚following e‚xample* [ˌaəmʈhɹæn-⁻skɹaəbɪŋ ðə'fɒlɜɷɪŋ ɪg'zɑˑmpɫ]) and an intoneme (*to‚netically* ᵇ[ʈə'nɛʈɪkliˌ.]). In this case, we have a normal preintoneme and a conclusive intoneme (even if we could certainly utter that sentence as *I am tran'scribing the ‚following e'xample to‚netically* [¨aəmʈhɹæn'skɹaəbɪŋˑ ðə'fɒlɜɷɪŋˑ ɪg'zɑˑmpɫˑ ʈə'nɛʈɪkliˌ.] –ie with four intonemes, three of them continuative– in order to highlight each part).

The conclusive intoneme is represented, tonemically (in a theoretic way) by /./, and tonetically (in a more realistic way) by [·'ˌ.], which varies according to each accent considered (or by ⟨‵⟩, in a graphemic text, which must use different signs, because they follow a partially different criterion, that is more like traditional British intonation practice).

The number of syllables in the example has been calculated on purpose in order to have full correspondence between the tonogram and the syllables of the sentence, to be able to show the characteristics more clearly.

40.2. Of course, in normal speech, it is unlikely to find sentences with the same number of syllables; however, the usefulness of the tonogram is not compromised. The actual syllables available (whether more or less than 14) share pitch heights in a fair way. So they may either compress the movement of several syllables into only one or two, or expand it over a larger number of syllables:

Yes, we do – or *Our aim is to pass on ideas, techniques, and practical activities, which we know work in the classroom* (even if this last example, more realistically, will be divided into more parts, with the addition of the respective intonemes, mostly continuative):

ᵇ[ɑˑɹ⁻ɛˑɪm ɪz̥ʈə'phɑˑs 'ɒˑn̥ˑ aə'dɪˑɜz̥ˑ ʈhɛk'nɹiiksˑ əm⁻phɹækʈɪkɫ æk'ʈhɪvətizˑ ˌwɪʧwi-
⁻nɜˑɷ 'wɜˑkˌˌ ˌɪnðʉ'khlɑˑsˌʈɒmˌˌ]

*Our ⁻aim is to ‚pass ‚on i'deas, tech'niques, and ⁻practical ac'tivities, which we
⁻know ‵work in the ‚classroom.*

Preintonemes

40.3. *fig* 40.1 shows the four preintonemes (of neutral British English): one is unmarked, or *normal*, and has no symbol; three are marked: *interrogative* /¿/ [¿], *imperative* /ˌ/ [ˌ], for instance: *Pay attention!*, and *emphatic* /ˌ/ [ˌ]: *We have to check everything very carefully!*:

[ˌˉphɛˈɪ əˈʈhɛnʃn̩ˌˌ] *Pay attention!* (imperative)

[ˌwiˉhæ̥ʏ ʈəˈtʃhɛk· ˌˈɛvɹiˌθɪŋ· ˌˈvɛɹi ˈkhɛɹfḷiˌˌ]
We have to check everything very carefully! (emphatic).

fig 40.1 shows, on the left, sketchy tonograms; on the right, they are given in a more realistic way. Actually, the schematic diagrams are sufficient indeed, since these tonograms necessarily generalize and normalize the data, allowing slight differences of realization as well.

For teaching and learning purposes, these schematic tonograms are decidedly more useful, making comparisons with those of other languages possible. On the contrary, single and peculiar acoustic tracings, or too formal and abstract notations turn out to be useless.

fig 40.1. The preintonemes of neutral British English.

normal / / [ ] ⟨ ⟩

interrogat. /¿ / [¿] ⟨¿⟩

imperative /ˌ / [ˌ] ⟨ˌ⟩

emphatic /ˌ / [ˌ] ⟨ˌ⟩
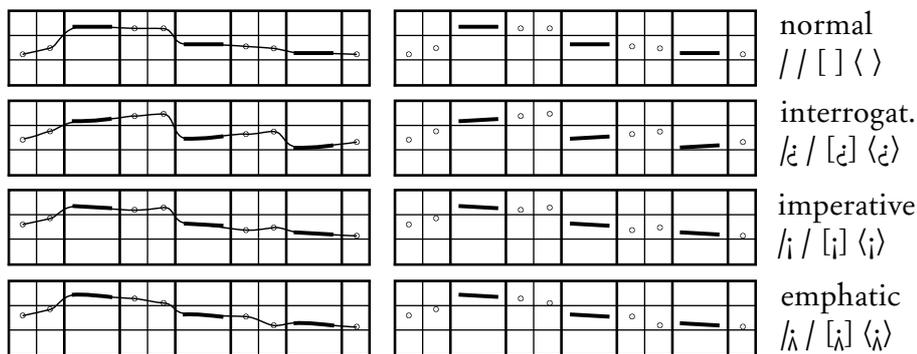
fig 40.2. The intonemes of neutral British English.

conclusive /./ [·ˈ..] ⟨ˋ⟩

interrogative /?/ [·ˈ·˙] ⟨ˊ⟩

suspensive /;/ [·ˈ.·] ⟨ˎ⟩

continuative /,/ [·ˈ·] ⟨ˈ⟩
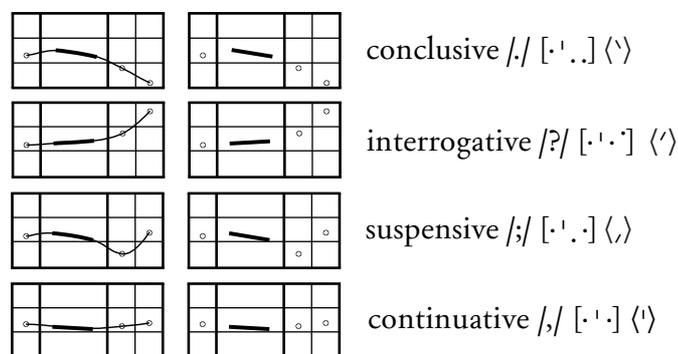
Intonemes

40.4. *fig* 40.2 shows the three marked intonemes (of neutral British pronunciation, again both schematically and realistically) – *conclusive* /./ [b][·ˈ..] or ⟨ˋ⟩, should

we need or want to use them inserted in current orthography, instead of in tran-
scriptions, *interrogative* /?/ [·ˈ·] ⟨ˊ⟩, and *suspensive* /;/ [·ˈ.] ⟨ˎ⟩ – in addition to the
unmarked one, *continuative* /,/ [·ˈ·] ⟨ˈ⟩.

The marked intonemes have a functional charge, which is crucial for commu-
nication, as they oppose one another distinctively. The unmarked intoneme –the
continuative one– may be considered as the neutralization of the three marked
ones (since each of them would be inappropriate in certain –less important– con-
texts, being too specific and having very definite functions).

40.5. The aim of the continuative intoneme, above all, is to oppose a theoreti-
cal 'zero' intoneme. It is quite different from a straightforward and progressive flow
of enunciation, without the slightest variations (or breaks), even theoretical or po-
tential. Its only purpose is to slightly highlight a word, compared to a complete
non-occurrence of intonemes (as happens within a preintoneme).

Indeed, there is a difference between *I ˉsaw ˌsix ˋmen* /aɛˈsɔː ˈsɪks ˈmɛn./ ᵇ[aɘˉsɔː
ˈsɪks ˈmɛnː.] and *I ˉsaw ˈsix ˋmen* /aɛˈsɔː ˈsɪks, ˈmɛn./ ᵇ[aɘˉsɔː ˈsɪks· ˈmɛnː.]; in the lat-
ter, of course, *six* is more prominent than in the former, since it has its own in-
toneme (ˈsix /ˈsɪks,/ [ˈsɪks·]), instead of being a part of the same preintoneme (ˌsix
/ˈsɪks/ [ˈsɪks]); while *I ˉsaw ˈsix ˋmen* /aɛˈsɔː ˈsɪks. ˈmɛn./ ᵇ[aɘˉsɔː ˈsɪks.. ˈmɛnː.], with
two conclusive intonemes, would be still more prominent.

40.6. In § 40.1-2, we have already seen that a syntactic string does not gener-
ally correspond to just one intoneme; in fact, more or less numerous continuative
intonemes occur, otherwise the sentence would not sound spontaneous and con-
vincing.

At first, one does not fully realize this internal subdivision, which is completely
natural. Its appropriate use goes entirely unnoticed; whereas, its absence would
not pass unnoticed at all (as happens in unprofessional reading or recitation).

For instance, if we consider an utterance such as *Look: the imprints of a bear*,
we realize that it can be said in many ways – apart from actual and paraphonic
considerations such as the *fright* taken at the sight, or the *delight* expressed by nat-
uralists, or the *satisfaction* felt by hideous poachers… (all of them are rendered
with different nuances, clear and easy to interpret).

Of course, this is different from a unitary sentence such as *Look at the imprints
of a bear*, in just one intonation group:

ᵇ[ˉlɒkʊt ðiˈɪmpɻʊnts əvəˈbɛ·ɜ..]
/ˈlɒkət ðiˈɪmpɻɪnʦ əvəˈbɛəɹ./
Look at the imprints of a bear (1).

40.7. Thus, if we go back to the original utterance, what we find is something
closer to a natural exposition:

ᵇ[ˈlɒk.. ðiˉɪmpɻʊnts əvəˈbɛ·ɜ.]
/ˈlɒk. ðiˈɪmpɻɪnʦ əvəˈbɛəɹ./
Look: the imprints of a bear (2).

In fact, in the same sentence, there are two pragmatic concepts: the *imprints* and its *sighting*.

40.8. If we then divide it into three parts (of course, with three intonemes), the nuances expressed are more detailed:

b[ˈlɒk‚‚ ðiˈɪmpɹɪnts‚‚ əvəˈbɛˑɹ‚‚]
/ˈlɒk. ðiˈɪmpɹɪnʦ. əvəˈbɛəɹ./
Look: the imprints, of a bear (3).

In this way, we can manage to separate, conceptually too, imprints of different shapes.

40.9. After all, it is possible to use some continuative intonemes (*ie* unmarked /,/ as already seen in previous sections), and this will add something to elocution (in opposition to a unitary utterance, although this is not for emphasis, of course). It is only a way to make enunciation a little more effective and natural: *Look at the imprints of a bear – Look: the imprints of a bear* (and variations).

40.10. By considering an example like *You must read further books on this particular subject*, again, we can easily see that there are several ways of saying it. Apart from a quite flat realization in a single intonation group, as:

b[jɹuməsˉɹ̩riɖ ˈfɜˑðə ˈbɒks ɒnðɪspəˈʈʰɪkjələ ˈsɐbʤɪkʈ‚‚]
/juuməsʈˈɹiiɖ ˈfəːɹðəɹ ˈbɒks ɒnðɪspəɹˈʈɪkjələɹ ˈsɐbʤəkʈ./
You must read further books on this particular subject.

40.11. We can actually have:

b[jɹuməsˉɹ̩riɖ ˈfɜˑðə ˈbɒks· ɒnðɪspəˉʈʰɪkjələ ˈsɐbʤɪkʈ‚‚]
/juuməsʈˈɹiiɖ ˈfəːɹðəɹ ˈbɒks, ɒnðɪspəɹˈʈɪkjələɹ ˈsɐbʤəkʈ./, or:
b[jɹuməsˈɹ̩riɖ· ˉfɜˑðə ˈbɒks· ɒnðɪspəˉʈʰɪkjələ ˈsɐbʤɪkʈ‚‚]
/juuməsʈˈɹiiɖ, ˈfəːɹðəɹ ˈbɒks, ɒnðɪspəɹˈʈɪkjələɹ ˈsɐbʤəkʈ./, or else:
b[jɹuməsˈɹ̩riɖ· ˉfɜˑðə ˈbɒks· ɒnðɪspəˈʈʰɪkjələ· ˈsɐbʤɪkʈ‚‚]
/juuməsʈˈɹiiɖ, ˈfəːɹðəɹ ˈbɒks, ɒnðɪspəɹˈʈɪkjələɹ, ˈsɐbʤəkʈ./.

40.12. We could even have:

b[ˈjɹuˑ məsˈɹ̩riɖ· ˈfɜˑðə· ˈbɒks‚‚ ɒnˈðɪs· pəˈʈʰɪkjələ· ˈsɐbʤɪkʈ‚‚]
/ˈjuu, məsʈˈɹiiɖ, ˈfəːɹðəɹ, ˈbɒks. ɒnˈðɪs, pəɹˈʈɪkjələɹ, ˈsɐbʤəkʈ./
(with more and more numerous nuances and implications).

40.13. A *conclusive* intoneme is necessarily used whenever a given concept is completed in the speaker's mind. Thus, besides the words which form the sentences, it concerns communicative functions as well, as if, in saying *It's raining cats and dogs*, we added 'I am stating' – so:

b[ɪtsˉɹɛɪnɪŋ ˈkʰæts ənˈdɒˑgz̥‚‚]
/ɪʧsˈɹɛɪnɪŋ ˈkæʦ ənˈdɒgz./
It's ¯raining ˌcats and ˋdogs.

40.14. Each intoneme has a specific function: the *interrogative* communicates 'I am asking':

ᵇ[¿ˌɪzɪʧ⁻ˌɹɛɪnɪŋ ˈkhæts ənˈdɒˑgzˑ], [-ɪʔ-]
/¿ɪzɪʧˈɹɛɪnɪŋ ˈkæʧs ənˈdɒgz?/
¿*Is it ⁻raining ˌcats and ˈdogs?*

40.15. The *suspensive* one communicates 'I am underlining':

ᵇ[ˌɪfɪts⁻ˌɹɛɪnɪŋ ˈkhæts ənˈdɒˑgz̥.| (ₗᵥˌɪtsʊkʊˈlæməʧi..)]
/ɪfɪʦˈɹɛɪnɪŋ ˈkæʧs ənˈdɒgz; (ɪʧsəkəˈlæməʧi.)/
If it's ⁻raining ˌcats and ˌdogs… (¿ᵥit's a caˈlamity!)

40.16. The *continuative* intoneme, instead, simply communicates 'I have not finished':

ᵇ[ɪts⁻ˌɹɛɪnɪŋ ˈkhæts ənˈdɒˑgzˑ (bətˌaədʒɒŋˈkhɛˑɹ..)]
/ɪʧsˈɹɛɪnɪŋ ˈkæʧs ənˈdɒgz, (bətˌaɛdʒʊɒnˈkɛɹɪ.)/
It's ⁻raining ˌcats and ˈdogs (but ˌI don't ˋcare).

40.17. It is possible to have a series of conclusive intonemes:

ᵇ[⁻jɛsʧədɛɪ ɪʧˈˌɹɛˑɪnd̥.| ʧhə⁻d̥ɛˑɪ ɪtsˈɹɛɪnɪŋ.| ʧhə⁻mɒɹʒʊ ɪʧˈˡphɔː.| aəm⁻sɪk ənˈʧhaəəd̥.|
     aəⱡ⁻gɜˑʊ ɯˈwɛˑɪ.]
/ˈjɛsʧəˌɹdɛɪ ɪʧˈɹɛɪnd̥.| ʧəˈd̥ɛɪ ɪʧsˈɹɛɪnɪŋ.| ʧəˈmɒɹɒʊ ɪʧˈˡpɔːɹ.| aɛmˈsɪk ən(d̥)ˈʧaɛəɹd̥.|
     aɛⱡˈgʊʊ əˈwɛɪ./
⁻*Yesterday it ˋrained. To⁻day it's ˋraining. To⁻morrow it'll ˋpour. I'm ⁻sick and ˋtired.
     I'll ⁻go aˋway!*

40.18. However, a suspensive intoneme is very likely for:

ᵇ[ʧhə⁻mɒɹʒʊ ɪʧˈˡphɔːˑ]
/ʧəˈmɒɹɒʊ ɪʧˈˡpɔːɹ;/
To⁻morrow it'll ˌpour.

40.19. Too often, current writing (which is not at all sophisticated) uses only commas:

*Yesterday it rained, today it is raining, tomorrow it'll pour, I am sick and tired,
     I'll go away.*

40.20. Thus, with the guilty complicity of schools, one is led to a kind of 'child-
-like' reading, which makes people utter things like:

ᵇ[°∘⁻jɛsʧəˌd̥ɛɪ ɪʧˈˌɹɛˑɪnd̥..°| ʧə⁻d̥ɛˑɪ ɪtsˈɹɛɪnɪŋ..°| ʧə⁻mɒɹʒʊ ɪʧˈˡphɔː..°| aəm⁻sɪk ən-
     ˈʧhaəəd̥..° aəⱡ⁻gɜˑʊ ɯˈwɛˑɪ..°∘].

40.21. The small rings show the additional pitch movement which is typical of 'bookish intonation', which must be kept well apart from normal (*ie* conversational) intonation, and even from the typical intonation of text exposition (even if done mentally), as we will see in ₲ 45.

40.22. A further example to show that, normally, writing and punctuation are just miserable devices with syntactical functions, and not very helpful for reading:

ᵇ[aəm⁻ʈhɛɹəbli ˈbɪzi.. aə⁻khɑˑŋ ˈkhɐm:.| aəɫ⁻lɛʧµ ˈnɜˑω.. ʌ⁻ɟɜωm biˈkhɹɒs..]
/aɛmˈʈɛɹəbli ˈbɪzi. aɛˈkænʈ ˈkɐm.| aɛɟˈlɛʈju ˈnωω. ʌˈɟωωn(ʈ) biˈkɹɒs./
I'm terribly busy: I can't come; I'll let you know; don't be cross.

40.23. Even the example *I've been ⁻looking for ˎthis for ˎages* shows this characteristic:

ᵇ[ˌaəvbɪn⁻lɔkɪŋ fəˈðɪs.. fɟˈˈɛɪʤɪz̥..]
/aɛvbɪnˈlɔkɪŋ fəɹˈðɪs. fəɹˈɛɪʤəz./
I've been looking for this for ages.

40.24. Contrary to what grammars keep on repeating, a *comma* does not necessarily indicate a short pause, as a *semicolon* does not indicate a pause which is half-way between the 'short' one of commas and the 'long' one of *full stops* (as it is absurdly 'prescribed').

However, these are the results achieved by schools, *ie* unhappily rigorous and monotonous pauses, which are not able to convey appropriate meaning to sentences (especially when they are read).

And all those who today abuse punctuation, by omitting it almost completely, will they ever pause?

41. The intonation
of the three neutral accents

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41.1. As we have seen in the previous chapters (₲ 38-40), technically, we talk about *intonation groups* (or *tone groups*, for short), which are generally composed of a first part, the *preintoneme*, and a second, the *intoneme*. The latter is the most important for conveying pragmatic meanings, such as *statement*, *question*, &c.

It is common knowledge that these structures depend on *orthology* (*ie* expressive speech) and semantics; while syntax is nothing but the necessary linear disposition of these more important parts of language.

41.2. These will produce particular effects, but always within usual primary intonation patterns, which are flexible, though systematic.

An added 'complication' is *paraphonics* (which marks attitudes, moods, feelings and social roles, as well as physical or mental states, as we will see later on).

All this is typical of any common messages, even in every-day simple conversation.

41.3. *fig* 41.1-3 show the preintonemes and intonemes of the neutral International, American, and (again) British English accents.

These tonograms should be observed and compared very closely, in order to be able to find and actually catch all their nuances, no matter how slight they can be.

Of course, bigger differences are most important, although subtle ones are not at all negligible.

41.4. Here are some simple, but important, examples, which must be seen very carefully:

/./ *ⁱ*[aɛvˈʤɐs(p) ˈbɔˑɹ əˈnjuˑu ˈɖɪkʃn̩ɹiˑ] [ˈbɔʈ]
ᵃ[aəvˈʤʌs(p) ˈbɔˑɹ əˈnʊˑu ˈɖɪkʃn̩ˌɛɹiˑ]
ᵇ[aəv⁻ʤɐs(p) ˈbɔʈ əˈnjɹˑu ˈɖɪkʃn̩ɹiˑˑ]
/aɛvˈʤɐsʈ ˈbɔːʈ əˈnjuu ˈɖɪkʃn̩ɛɹi./
I've just bought a new dictionary.

/?/ *ⁱ*[¿djəˈspiik ˈɪŋglɪʃ ˈwɛʈˑˑ] [¿ʤə-]
ᵃ[¿djəˈspɪik ˈɪŋglɪʃ ′wɛɬˑˑ] [¿ʤə-]
ᵇ[¿djə⁻spɪik ˈɪŋglɪʃ ˈwɛɬˑˑ] [¿ʤə-]
/¿djəˈspiik ˈɪŋglɪʃ ˈwɛʈ?/
Do you speak English well?

fig 41.1. International English intonation.

/ / [·· ' ·· ' ·· ' ·]   /·/ [·' ·.]

/¿/ [¿ ·· ' ·· ' ·· ' ·]   /?/ [·' ·˙]

/¡/ [¡ ·· ' ·· ' ·· ' ·]   /;/ [·' ·.] [[·' ··]]

/i̠/ [i̠ ·· ' ·· ' ·· ' ·]   /,/ [·' ·]
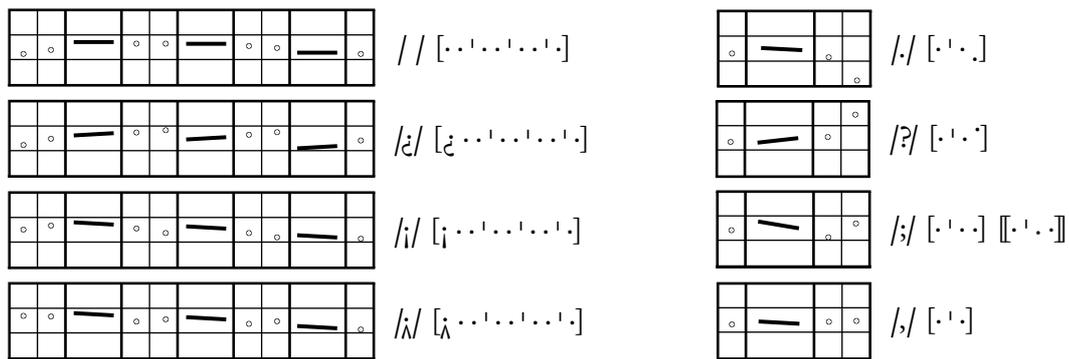
fig 41.2. American English intonation.

/ / [·· ' ·· ' ·· ' ·]   /·/ [·' ·.]

/¿/ [¿ ·· ' ·· ' ·· ' ·]   /?/ [·´ ·˙]

/¡/ [¡ ·· ' ·· ' ·· ' ·]   /;/ [·` ·.]

/i̠/ [i̠ ·· ' ·· ' ·· ' ·]   /,/ [·' ·]
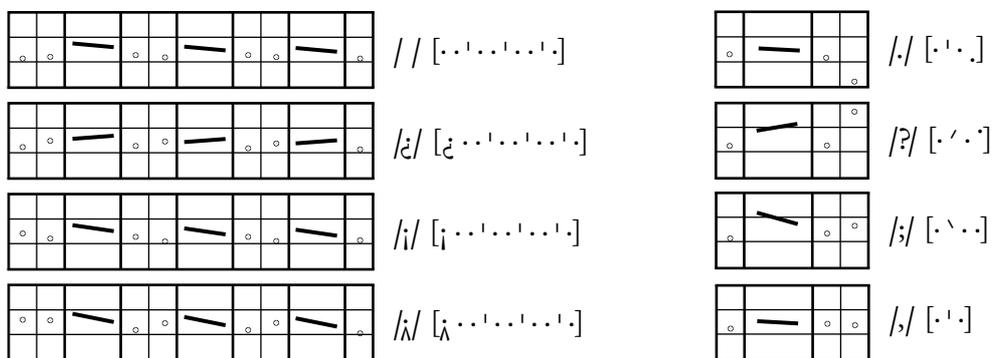
fig 41.3. British English intonation.
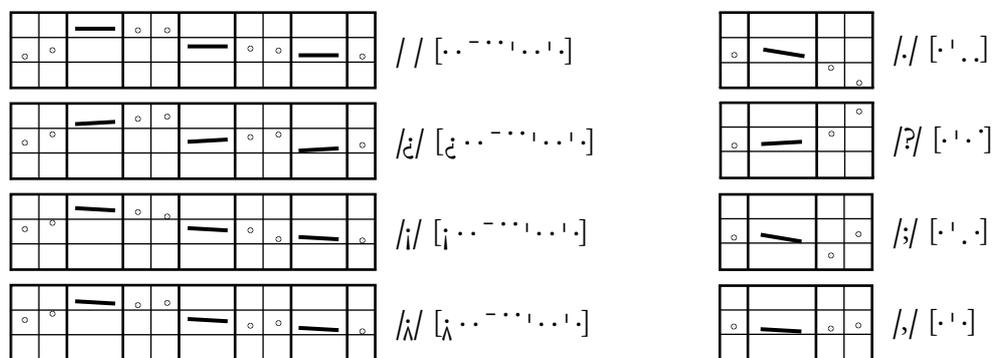
/ / [·· ¯ ·· ' ·· ' ·]   /·/ [·' ·.]

/¿/ [¿ ·· ¯ ·· ' ·· ' ·]   /?/ [·' ·˙]

/¡/ [¡ ·· ¯ ·· ' ·· ' ·]   /;/ [·' ·.]

/i̠/ [i̠ ·· ¯ ·· ' ·· ' ·]   /,/ [·' ·]

/;/ [i][jukən'hæ·v̥ ˌstʃɹʊˈbəˌɹiz·· əɹˈbluubəˌɹiz·.]
[a][jɹkʉn'hæ·v̥ ˈstɹɔːˌbɛɹiz·· ɹ̩ˈblʊ·uˌbɛɹiz·.]
[b][jɹkʉn¯hæ·v̥ ˈstɹʊˈbɟiz·· ʊ˞ˈblɹubɟiz̥..]
/jukən'hæv ˈstɹɔːbɛˌɹiz; əɹˈbluubɛˌɹiz./ /ɔːɹ-/
You can have strawberries or blueberries.

41.5.   There are several and quite varied *question tags* (or *tag questions*), in English, while, other languages generally have fixed formulas.

In the English language, they are morphologically determined (by modifying auxiliary and modal verbs and changing their positive/negative polarity).

They have two different functions: *confirmations* of somebody's suppositions

(by means of conclusive intonemes), or actual *questions*, to really ask something, for lack of any certainty (by means of interrogative intonemes).

Let us see a few examples: *It's cold today, isn't it?* or *You're American, aren't you?* or *They aren't well, are they?*

41.6. For *confirmation*, we will have:

ⁱ[ɪtsˈkhɒˑɷɫd̥ t̬əˈd̥ɛˑɪ· ¿ˈɪznɪ̩ʔˑ.], [-ʉʧ·.; -t̬ʉʧ·.]
ᵃ[ɪtsˈkhɒˑɷɫd̥ t̬əˈd̥ɛˑɪ· ¿ˈɪznɪ̩ʔˑ.], [-ʉʧ·.; -t̬ʉʧ·.]
ᵇ[ɪts⁻khɒˑɷɫd̥ t̬əˈd̥ɛˑɪ.. ¿ˈɪznɪ̩ʔ..], [-ʉʧ..; -t̬ʉʧ..]
/ɪts̬ˈkɒɷɫd̥ t̬əˈd̥ɛɪ. ¿ˈɪzn̩(t̬)ʉʧ./
It's cold today, isn't it?

ⁱ[jəɹəˈmɛɹəkən· ¿ˈɑˑɹn̩ʧuˑ·], [-ʧɐˑ·; -t̬juˑ·]
ᵃ[jɯɹɯˈmɛɹɯkɯn· ¿ˈɑɹn̩ʧɰ·], [-ʧʌˑ·; -t̬jɰ·]
ᵇ[jəɹəˈmɛɹɯkɯn· ¿ˈɑn̩ʧɰ..], [jɤˑ-, -t̬jɰ..]
/jəɹəˈmɛɹəkən. ¿ˈɑːɹn̩t̬ju./
You're American, aren't you?

ⁱ[ðɛɪˈɑˑɹn̩t̬ ˈwɛɹːˑ. ¿ˈɑˑɹðɛɪ·.]
ᵃ[ðɛɪˈɑˑɹn̩t̬ ˈwɛɫːˑ. ¿ˈɑˑɹðɛɪ·.]
ᵇ[ðɛɪ⁻ɑˑn̩t̬ ˈwɛɫːˑ.. ¿ˈɑˑðɛɪ.]
/ðɛɪˈɑːɹn̩t̬ ˈwɛɹ. ¿ˈɑːɹðɛɪ./
They aren't well, are they?

41.7. While, for *information*, we will have:

ⁱ[ɪtsˈkhɒˑɷɫd̥ t̬əˈd̥ɛˑɪ· ¿ˈɪznɪ̩ʔˑ·], [-ʉʧ·ˑ; -t̬ʉʧ·ˑ]
ᵃ[ɪtsˈkhɒˑɷɫd̥ t̬əˈd̥ɛˑɪ· ¿ˈɪznɪ̩ʔˑ·], [-ʉʧ·ˑ; -t̬ʉʧ·ˑ]
ᵇ[ɪts⁻khɒˑɷɫd̥ t̬əˈd̥ɛˑɪ.. ¿ˈɪznɪ̩ʔˑ·], [-ʉʧ·ˑ; -t̬ʉʧ·ˑ]
/ɪts̬ˈkɒɷɫd̥ t̬əˈd̥ɛɪ. ¿ˈɪzn̩(t̬)ʉʧ?/
It's cold today, isn't it?

ⁱ[jəɹəˈmɛɹəkən· ¿ˈɑˑɹn̩ʧuˑ·], [-ʧɐˑ·; -t̬juˑ·]
ᵃ[jɯɹɯˈmɛɹɯkɯn· ¿ˈɑɹn̩ʧɰ·], [-ʧʌˑ·; -t̬jɰ·]
ᵇ[jəɹəˈmɛɹɯkɯn· ¿ˈɑn̩ʧɰ·], [jɤˑ-, -t̬jɰ·]
/jəɹəˈmɛɹəkən. ¿ˈɑːɹn̩t̬ju?/
You're American, aren't you?

ⁱ[ðɛɪˈɑˑɹn̩t̬ ˈwɛɹːˑ. ¿ˈɑˑɹðɛɪ·]
ᵃ[ðɛɪˈɑˑɹn̩t̬ ˈwɛɫːˑ. ¿ˈɑˑɹðɛɪ·]
ᵇ[ðɛɪ⁻ɑˑn̩t̬ ˈwɛɫːˑ.. ¿ˈɑˑðɛɪ·]
/ðɛɪˈɑːɹn̩t̬ ˈwɛɹ. ¿ˈɑːɹðɛɪ?/
They aren't well, are they?

42. Questions

42.1. An important point, to always keep in mind, is that an interrogative intoneme need *not* be used whenever there is a question mark at the end of a sentence! Unfortunately, this is another real mistake taught in schools.

It is important to clearly distinguish the different kinds of questions. Among the more recurrent and normal types, only *total questions* (or '*yes–no* questions') request interrogative intonemes. These questions are answered by *Yes* or *No* (or, possibly, by *Perhaps*, *I don't know*, *It depends*, &c); but, above all, they do not include interrogative words:

ᵇ[¿ˌɖɪʤμˈsɾɪ·]
¿Did you 'see?

ᵇ[¿ɪzɪʄˈɪɳʄɹɪsʄɪŋ·]
¿Is it 'interesting?

ᵇ[¿kɯɳˌjμuˈhɪəmi·]
¿Can you 'hear me?

42.2. It is important to pay due attention to cases where there is a 'given' element (*book*, *music*, *John*, *here*, *hereabouts* in the following examples), which is less important and thus less stressed, being already 'known', since previously mentioned, or 'expected', as present in a particular communicative situation, because it can be visible, or implied, or inevitable, from social or cultural experience:

ᵇ[¿ˌhævjμˈʄɛ·d· ˌɪ¿ðɪsˈbʊk·ɹ]
¿Have you 'read this ˌbook?

ᵇ[¿ɖ(ə)jμˈlaək· ˌɪ¿ˈmjμuzɪk·ɹ]
¿Do you 'like ˌmusic?

ᵇ[¿ɖ(ə)jμˈnɜ·ʊ· ¿wɛɜˈʤɒ·nˌɪz̥·]
¿Do you 'know where ˌJohn is?

ᵇ[¿ɪzðə⁻steɪʃn̩ ˈfɑːʄ ɯˈwɛ·ɪ· ˌɪ¿fʄəmˈhɪ·ʙ·ɹ]
¿Is the ⁻station ˌfar a'way from ˌhere?

ᵇ[¿ɪzðəʄəˈlaəbʄəʄɪ· ˌɪ¿ˈnɪɜ ˈhɪ·ʙ·ɹ]
¿Is there a 'library ˌnear ˌhere?

42.3.   In the examples just seen, the structure is /¿ ?/+/¿ ,/ with *attenuation* of the sentence-internal interrogative intoneme. Thus, strictly speaking we have: /¿ ?₀/+/¿ ,/, as will be seen shortly, with modifications of the intonemes (cf ⑥ 43).

Indeed, internal attenuation is automatic, so it need not be explicitly marked: [¿ ·]+[¿ ·], for [[¿ ·₀]]+[¿ ·]. In fact, that utterance is formed by two intonemes, not just one; and this is significant to show the difference between written and spoken codings. The former is too sketchy, due to its excessively limited graphic possibilities, but it should not in the least restrict the varied phonic possibilities, which are typical of spontaneous and qualified speech.

42.4.   This is the reason why punctuation should be more careful and accurate, still without introducing new –though desirable– signs, as for instance '·' –no longer as an '*epigraphic* dot', but as an '*orthological* (raised) dot', followed by a space– in particular in those cases where Western Grammar is not allowed to separate a subject from its verb (and the like).

However, in Turkish, for instance, it is indeed more than 'correct' to write: *Ahmet, Ankara'dadır* /ahˈmet, ˈankaradadɯr./ [ʔʌhˈmɛt· ˌʔʌŋkʌɾʌˌdʌdɯ̊ʐ.] 'Ahmet is in Ankara'.

42.5.   With orthological structures as the following, we would have quite different meanings from those given above (though pragmatically less probable indeed):

ᵇ[¿ˌhævjμ⁻ɻɛ·d ðɪsˈbɒk·]
¿Have you ⁻read this ʹbook?

ᵇ[¿d(ə)jμ⁻laək ˈmμuzɪk·]
¿Do you ⁻like ʹmusic?

ᵇ[¿d(ə)jμ⁻nɜ·ɷ wɛɜˈʤɒ·nˌɪz̥·]
¿Do you ⁻know where ʹJohn is?

ᵇ[¿ɪzðə⁻steɪʃn̩ ˈfɑːɻ ɯˈwɛɪ fɻəmˈhɪɐ̯·]
¿Is the ⁻station ˌfar aˌway from ʹhere?

ᵇ[¿ˌɪzðəɻə⁻laəbɻəɻi ˈnɪɜ ˈhɪɐ̯·]
¿Is there a ⁻library ˌnear ʹhere?

42.6.   On the contrary, *partial questions* (or *wh*-questions) include specific (interrogative) words, such as *who, what, which, when, where, why, whose, how, how much, how long...* Clearly enough, the answers regard the part of the questions where the interrogative word occurs, since the rest of the questions themselves is already known, or shared, or implicit. If somebody asks you:

ᵇ[¿⁻haɷmɛni ˈlæŋgwɪʤɪz.. ˌ¿djμˈspɻik·ɻ]
¿⁻How many ˋlanguages do you ˌspeak? it is obvious that they know you happen to speak some languages; and if you say:

ᵇ[¿⁻hμ·u ˈʈhoɷɫʤμˌðæɻ..]
¿⁻Who ˋtold you that? or:

ᵇ[¿⁻ha·ɒ djμˈnɜ·ɷ..]
¿⁻How do you ˋknow? that piece of information is something known, or 'given'.

42.7. Therefore, the voice falls at the end, as for a conclusive sentence. Indeed, the questions just seen could even be formulated as: *I'd like to know how many languages you speak*, and *You must say who told you that*, and *Tell me how you know*.

However, even if in partial questions the conclusive intoneme has to be used (which is falling just as in statements), there is certainly some pitch difference (apart from an obvious syntactic one) between a question like *When will they buy a new computer?* and a statement like *When they buy a new computer*. The difference is in the preintoneme.

42.8. As a matter of fact, all kinds of questions have something in common, *ie* the interrogative preintoneme, /¿/ [¿], which, as can be seen in *fig* 38.2 (or *fig* 40.1, or *fig* 41.1-3), has a partially different pitch contour from the one used in normal preintonemes.

This difference consists in modifying the usual pitch movement, through the anticipation of the typical interrogative curve (/?/ [·¹·˙]), which in neutral British English pronunciation is rising – from mid to high pitch.

42.9. This anticipation, however, does not exhibit the actual change from mid to high, but reproduces it on a small scale, by distributing pitch heights among the stressed and unstressed syllables. Thus, it modifies the usual contour of the unmarked preintoneme only partially.

Nevertheless, this is quite sufficient to make the difference perceptible, right from the beginning, *ie* on the very first syllable(s). So, the difference is surely there already on *When*, and increases on the auxiliar (and so on, often combined with a different degree of stress). But the symbol /¿/ [¿] alone is sufficient to indicate the pitch difference that the ear clearly hears:

ᵇ[¿⁻wɛm: wɪɫðeɪˈbaˑɘ.. ˌ¿əˈnjɱˑu kʉmˈphjɱutɐ.ˌ]
¿⁻*When will they* ˋ*buy a* ˌ*new com*ˌ*puter?* and:

ᵇ[ˌwɛnðeɪ⁻baˑɘ əˈnjɱˑu kʉmˈphjɱutɐ..]
⁻*When they* ˌ*buy a* ˌ*new com*ˋ*puter.*

42.10. Besides, as all of the partial questions, these too can be said with a continuative intoneme (which renders them less categorical), or by attenuating the intoneme (*cf* Ch 43).

The question about the *computer* already shows that the plan of buying a new machine (hopefully a new Mac) was 'known', or 'given', not a 'new' fact. Equally, we have a parenthesis as soon as an example like *When are you leaving?* becomes a known fact as far as the departure is concerned:

ᵇ[¿⁻wɛnː əjɱˈlɪivɪŋ..]
¿*When are you leaving?* (new)

ᵇ[¿ˈwɛnː.. ˌ¿əjɱˈlɪivɪŋˑˌ]
¿*When are you leaving?* (known).

42.11. Usually, this also happens –for pragmasemantic reasons– in sentences like *¿How 'much does it ˌcost?* whereas realizations such as *¿How ⁻much does it ˋcost?* are to be found only in 'teaching' recordings, and, unfortunately, what we actually hear, in too many of these recordings, is indeed as in the last example that follows:

ᵇ[¿haʊˈmɐtʃ.. ˌˌʤəzɪkˈkhɒʂˈɹ]

¿How 'much does it ˌcost? (normal, textual, and communicative)

ᵇ[¿haʊ⁻mɐtʃ ʤəzɪkˈkhɒʂ..]

¿How ⁻much does it ˋcost? (neither normal nor communicative)

ᵇ[¿haʊ⁻mɐtʃ ʤəzɪkˈkhɒʂˈ]

¿How ⁻much does it ˊcost? (unnatural and absurd).

42.12. Let us briefly move back to the kind of intonation used at school, which makes people say *ˣ¿⁻When will they ˌbuy a ˌnew comˈputer?* whose meaning, strictly speaking, would be closer to 'Would you mind repeating that? I didn't quite catch what you said. Did you ask about when they're going to buy a new computer?':

ˣᵇ[¿⁻wɛm wɪɫðɛɪˈbaˑɘ əˈnjɰˈu kɰmˈphjɰuʈɐˑ]

ˣ¿⁻When will they ˌbuy a ˌnew comˈputer? ('school intonation')

ᵇ[¿⁻wɛm wɪɫðɛɪˈbaˑɘ əˈnjɰˈu kɰmˈphjɰuʈɐˑ°]

¿⁻When will they ˌbuy a ˌnew comˈputer??° (where ° indicates a higher pitch raising, which is typical of questions asking for a repeat).

42.13. In actual fact, there is a big difference, since the classic 'bookish question' (as we will see presently, in § 42.15-18 & § 45.1-2) is:

ˣᵇ[⁻wɛm wɪɫðɛɪˈbaˑɘ əˈnjɰˈu kɰmˈphjɰuʈɐ..°] ('bookish question').

42.14. That is, an interrogative intoneme is added at the end of conclusive intonemes ([..]+[°°]), as if it were not real communication, but rather a kind of drill in order to 'identify' a question, and by 'concluding' it –only at the end– with what is thought to be expected (according to the 'rules', *ie* with an interrogative intoneme).

However, this operation goes against the rules of real communication completely; and practically without distinguishing between *total* and *partial* questions. Indeed, even a question like *ˣ⁻What's your ˋname°°?* is a classic example, instead of *⁻What's your ˋname?*:

ˣᵇ[¿⁻wɒts jɔˈᵘˈnɛˑɪm..°°]

ˣ⁻What's your ˋname°°? ('bookish question')

ᵇ[¿⁻wɒts jɔˈˈnɛˈɪm..]

⁻What's your ˋname? (correct question).

42.15. There is even a difference between *¿⁻How many 'times shall I ˋsay that?* – a normal partial question, and *¿⁼How many ˈtimes shall I ˋsay that?* –a *rhetorical*

(partial) question, which certainly does not ask for information about the number of times, but instead communicates a meaning like 'Will you obey me at last?' (please, note the emphatic stresses):

ᵇ[¿ˉhaʊˌmɛni ˈʈhaˑəmz̥· ¿ʃəlaəˈsɛˑɪˌðæʈ.]
¿ˉHow many ˈtimes shall I ˈsay that? (normal partial question)

ᵇ[¿⁼haʊˌmɛni ˈˈʈhaˑəmz̥· ¿ʃəlaəˈˈsɛˑɪˌðæʈ.]
¿⁼How many ˈˈtimes shall I ˈsay that?! (*rhetorical* partial question).

42.16.   In addition, there can even be a *polite* partial question *¿ˉHow many ˈtimes shall I ˈsay that?* – which uses the unmarked continuative intoneme (after *say that*) in order to make the question less brusque, as in *¿ˉWhat's the ˈtime?* – decidedly more suitable, above all with strangers, than *¿ˉWhat's the ˈtime?* or *¿ˉWho ˈis it?*:

ᵇ[¿ˉhaʊˌmɛni ˈʈhaˑəmz̥· ¿ʃəlaəˈsɛˑɪˌðæʈ·]
¿ˉHow many ˈtimes shall I ˈsay that? (polite question)

ᵇ[¿ˉwɒts ðəˈʈhaˑəmˑ]
¿ˉWhat's the ˈtime? (polite question)

ᵇ[¿ˉhμˑu ˈɪzɪʈ·] [-ɪʔ·]
¿ˉWho ˈis it? (polite question)

ᵇ[¿ˉwɒts ðəˈʈhaˑəm.]
¿ˉWhat's the ˈtime? (normal partial question)

ᵇ[¿ˉhμˑu ˈɪzɪʈ.] [-ɪʔ.]
¿ˉWho ˈis it? (normal partial question).

42.17.   All this demonstrates that syntactical punctuation and word order are not at all sufficient to determine which kind of intonation is the most appropriate for a given sentence. Besides, if people ask *¿Can you ˈhear me?* – their intention is certainly not to check whether their listener's hearing is (still) good, but rather whether it is possible or not to ask them for something, talking normally:

ᵇ[¿kɯɲjμˈhɪəmi.]
¿Can you ˈhear me?

42.18.   Obviously, there are many nuances which can be detected in the various kinds of questions that –every day– we can produce or hear. These questions may be participating, polite, inquisitive, formal, detached, ironic, sarcastic, and so on.

In all these cases, the paraphonic component, with its varied facets, highly modifies canonical intonation patterns, which are –so to say– 'expected', producing mixtures of preintonemes and intonemes, too.

43. Intoneme modifications

43.1. Even a sentence like *Put it on the table* can be said with different *intentions*. In fact, with the conclusive intoneme, it can sound too brusque and impolite, or too familiar and friendly; these nuances are *not* explained by syntax, but rather by *pragmasemantics.*

Therefore, often *attenuation* may be introduced, which can be shown by placing an empty dot at mid height [∘]:

ᵇ[⁻pʰʊ̆ʈʏ̆ ɒnðə'ʈʰɛɪbɫ̩..], [-ʈʊ̆ɪ, -ɪ̆ʈ] ⁻*Put it on the* ˋ*table*

ᵇ[⁻pʰʊ̆ʈʏ̆ ɒnðə'ʈʰɛɪbɫ̩..∘], [-ʈʊ̆ɪ, -ɪ̆ʈ] ⁻*Put it on the* ˋ*table∘*

43.2. We have seen above that, for repetition (or incredulity) questions, the intoneme is *accentuated*. At the end of a conclusive utterance, and especially at the end of a text paragraph, it is frequent and normal to use the accentuation of the conclusive intoneme, too:

ᵇ[ən⁻ðɪs 'ɛːndz ɑ'pʰɹɜɒgɹæmz̥..∘] *And* ⁻*this* ˌ*ends our* ˋ*programs∘*

43.3. Often, again for pragmasemantic reasons, utterances are *specified*, when their communicative highlighting –or sentence highlighting– is not on the final part of an utterance (as generally happens), as we have already seen in some previously presented questions. For instance we find a 'normal' intonation group expected according to the tonogram:

ᵇ[aəv⁻bɒ·t ðə'ʈʰɪkɪts fəðʉ'kʰɒnsəʈ..] *I've* ⁻*bought the* ˌ*tickets for the* ˋ*concert.*

43.4. However, one may have to say (possibly even with some emphasis) as an answer to a rather doubtful question about somebody's efficiency or memory:

ᵇ[aəv'bɒ·t.. ˌðə'ʈʰɪkɪts fəðʉ'kʰɒnsəʈ..ɹ]
I've ˋ*bought the* ˌ*tickets for the* ˌ*concert*

ᵇ[aəv''bɒ·t.. ˌðə'ʈʰɪkɪts fəðʉ'kʰɒnsəʈ..ɹ]
I've ˣ*bought the* ˌ*tickets for the* ˌ*concert.*

43.5. From a pragmasemantic point of view –for a question like *Have you bought the tickets for the concert?*– the most likely intonation pattern is:

ᵇ[¿hævjʉ'bɒ·t· ˌ¿ðə'ʈʰɪkɪts fəðʉ'kʰɒnsəʈ·ɹ]
¿*Have you* '*bought the* ˌ*tickets for the* ˌ*concert?*

This is contrary to school performances and, unfortunately, to most recordings in various teaching courses too, which instead foist absurdities such as:

*ᵇ[¿ˌhævjμ⁻bɔˑt ðə'ʈhɪkɪts fəðʊˈkhɒnsəʈˑ]
*¿*Have you ⁻bought the ˌtickets for the ˈconcert?*

Strictly speaking, a sentence pronounced like that would really mean something like 'Why did you buy the tickets for the concert, you silly idiot!'.

43.6. The best way to attract (much) attention to what somebody is going to say is to use a *suspensive* intoneme:

ᵇ[ˌɪfðɛɪ⁻hævn̩ˌɛndə'stɔˑd̥ˌ| aə⁻ɹɪəli dʒɒn'nɜˑɵ 'wɒʈ ʈə'd̥μˑu.. ˌɪə'baʊʈɪ̩..ˌ], [-ɹʊʔ..ˌ]
If they ⁻haven't underˌstood, I ⁻really don't ˌknow ˌwhat to ˋdo aˌbout it!

ᵇ[əm⁻wɛnː əʈ'lɑˑsʈ aə'khɛˑɪm 'ɹaɒnd ðʊ'khɒˑnɐ.| ðɛɪwɜˑɹɵˈɫ⁻ɹɛdi 'ðɛˑɜ.], [əʔ'lɑˑsʈ]
And ⁻when at ˌlast I ⁻came ˌround the ˌcorner, they were alⁿready ˋthere.

43.7. Or else to clearly separate the parts of an utterance:

ᵇ[¿⁻ɑˑjμ 'gɜɒɪŋ baə'bɐs.· ¿ɵˈwɒˑkɪŋ.]
¿⁻*Are you ˌgoing by ˌbus, or ˋwalking?*

Or to announce in advance the end of a complete list of items:

ᵇ[⁻æp̥ɫz̥.· 'phɛˑɜz̥.· 'stɹɵˑbɹiz̥.· 'ʧhɛɹiz̥..]
ˌ*Apples, ˌpears, ˌstrawberries, ˋcherries.*

43.8. A suspensive intoneme can even occur at the end of particular *incomplete utterances*:

ᵇ[aə⁻d̥ɪˑd̥ 'thɹaˑɜ.·] *I ⁻did ˌtry…*
ᵇ[juʊɫ⁻sɹi wɐn'd̥ɛˑɪ ɵˑɹə'nɐðɐ.·] *You'll ⁻see one ˌday or aˌnother…*

43.9. Of course, 'intermediate' degrees are possible:

ᵇ[aə⁻d̥ɪˑd̥ 'thɹaˑɜ.·º] *I ⁻did ˌtry…º*
ᵇ[juʊɫ⁻sɹi wɐn'd̥ɛˑɪ ɵˑɹə'nɐðɐ.·º] *You'll ⁻see one ˌday or aˌnother…º*
(with attenuated suspensive intonemes),

ᵇ[aə⁻d̥ɪˑd̥ 'thɹaˑɜ·] *I ⁻did ˌtry*
ᵇ[juʊɫ⁻sɹi wɐn'd̥ɛˑɪ ɵˑɹə'nɐðɐ·] *You'll ⁻see one ˌday or aˌnother…*
(with continuative intonemes), or:

ᵇ[aə⁻d̥ɪˑd̥ 'thɹaˑɜ..º] *I ⁻did ˋtryº*
ᵇ[juʊɫ⁻sɹi wɐn'd̥ɛˑɪ ɵˑɹə'nɐðɐ..º] *You'll ⁻see one ˌday or aˋnotherº*
(with attenuated conclusive intonemes), and:

ᵇ[aə⁻d̥ɪˑd̥ 'thɹaˑɜ..] *I ⁻did ˋtry*
ᵇ[juʊɫ⁻sɹi wɐn'd̥ɛˑɪ ɵˑɹə'nɐðɐ..] *You'll ⁻see one ˌday or aˋnother*
(with no attenuation of conclusive intonemes).

43.10.   Obviously, these examples present *different communicative nuances*, which are fairly easy to imagine. In addition, some particular words can receive *emphasis*. Here we will not enter the field of paraphonics, which adds further nuances, ie *emotional* (eg sadness, shyness, threat…), and *social* as well (eg skill, supremacy, arrogance…).

Certainly, these characteristics are real and present, in actual communication, but they are even more complex to analyze, describe, and transcribe. This means that it is important both to develop full awareness and to succeed in using a notation system which is fairly appropriate, but obviously not too simple. However, see Part 5 (Ch 47-49, on *Superstructures*).

43.11.   In English (and, of course, in other languages, as well), according to communicative aims, when there are some *implications*, quite frequently, a *suspensive* intoneme may be used (with or without attenuation, or possibly accentuation), or a *continuative* one.

This use is more likely to be found in phrases like the following, in place of the intoneme that one might infer from writing and syntax:

Hi!
I'd like a pizza
Go straight ahead
Make yourself at home
Can I have that chair?

43.12.   Quite often, the suspensive or continuative intonemes are used –instead of conclusive (or attenuated conclusive) ones– when there is *no real planning* of what is being said, differently from what *actors* do with a text they already know and have 'studied', just to render it in the best possible way (and there *is* a difference – which is quite easily noticed!).

When people talk with *no previous planning*, in addition to the task of putting together the things to say, another problem arises: trying to avoid *being interrupted* by their interlocutors, while trying to manage to collect the ideas they want to present.

Thus, using different intonemes from the conclusive one, obviously, also has the aim to try to achieve this very result, and at the same time communicating that the speakers have *not finished* their exposition yet.

43.13.   Another frequent use of *non-conclusive* intonemes derives from the *insecurity* –or weak conviction– of the speakers about what they are saying, or towards their interlocutors felt to be 'dominant', by superiority of prestige, role, age…

Often, it is a real behavioral *implication* –of the speaker, not about the message– which conveys 'non-invasiveness', in different mixtures of friendliness, deference, hesitation (precisely with /;/, or even simply /,/).

43.14. However, sometimes it is *actual invasiveness* indeed –although not really aggressiveness– due to an excess of liveliness or talkativeness, which prevent the speaker from taking pauses (and almost breathing), with the result that normal conclusive intonemes are practically missing (or are very much attenuated).

On the contrary, more pauses and more conclusive intonemes would give the listener relief.

43.15. Indeed, this use of non-conclusive –*ie* continuative or suspensive– intonemes includes reported cases of 'rising intonemes' above all for variants of English (firstly from New Zealand, Australia, and the North of England, but now even for the rest of Great Britain, and for Ireland and North America, too), instead of the expected or predictable conclusive intonemes.

Although this phenomenon has been detected and described in the areas just mentioned, it is nevertheless not absent elsewhere, and for other languages, too. Neither is it something absolutely new, but simply something which can show itself more freely, without real drawbacks or excessive social stigma.

43.16. However, the problem of these reports (even of 'high rises', as in total questions!) arises from the fact that, still too often, intonation is dealt with according to the old method of the British school of phonetics, which is mainly based on two opposing types: falling and rising.

However, the British method of intonation had been really innovative and praiseworthy, especially in the first half of the twentieth century, even compared to other schools and methods, still currently followed by some, as the so-called *ToBI*, which tries to do tonetics by using computers, *ie* mostly using one's eyes instead of one's ears.

43.17. Unfortunately, the British 'rising' type included both *interrogative* intonemes (usually: ^{b}[· ˈ ··], but also ^{a}[· ′ ··], &c) and *suspensive* intonemes (generally: ^{b}[· ˈ .·], or ^{a}[· ˋ ··] ⟦· ˋ ··⟧, or ^{i}[· ˈ ··] ⟦· ˈ ··⟧, and ⟦· ˉ ··⟧ &c), which really have rising movements on the post-tonic syllables; but clearly *on different levels*.

In fact, for /?/ the terminal post-tonic syllable is high indeed, whereas for /;/ it remains within the mid band, as can be clearly seen in the tonograms of *fig* 38.1, *fig* 38.3, *fig* 40.1 and *fig* 41.1-3 (including the 'Oceanian' ones of Australia and New Zealand, as we will see in the chapters of Parts 23-24).

Therefore, these characteristics must absolutely *not* be combined in descriptions (although this is just what is done, too often).

43.18. The solution to this problem is to adequately separate the 'linguistic' level of intonation (*ie* the linguistic *system* proper) from the 'paralinguistic' one (*ie paraphonics*).

Of course, machines cannot do that, since even environment noises 'are a part' of a sound message for a machine. Rightly, it is up to *Natural Tonetics* to define in advance an inventory of intonemes and preintonemes, with their actual realizations, in order to be able to separate them from paraphonic superstructures, which are (inevitable, but just) additional.

No doubt, the latter belong to *language usage*, but *not* to intonation proper (or linguistic intonation).

43.19. Instead, they belong to *paralinguistic intonation*. It is quite obvious that rising post-tonic syllables, if modified by an equally rising superstructure, produces the global, 'raw', result consisting in an even more rising movement.

However, the analyst's experience and skill could avoid gross errors such as those of interpreting any pitch movements as if they really belonged to the intonation system of a given language.

On the contrary, they are the (natural and inevitable) result of the combined actions of (true) intonation and paraphonics (according to pragmatic, geographic, and sociolinguistic characteristics).

43.20. For neutral British English, *fig* 43.1 shows the *attenuation* mechanism of the three marked intonemes, whereas *fig* 43.2 shows the *accentuation* mechanism of the two intonemes which are functionally the most opposing (conclusive and interrogative).

Of course, the same kind of modifications is valid for any other accents of English (and, indeed, for any other languages), even for rising-falling interrogative intonemes, &c.

*fig* 43.1. Attenuation of intonemes.

attenuated conclusive /.₀/ [·ˈ‥₀]

attenuated interrogative /?₀/ [·ˈ·˙₀]

attenuated suspensive /;₀/ [·ˈ.·₀]
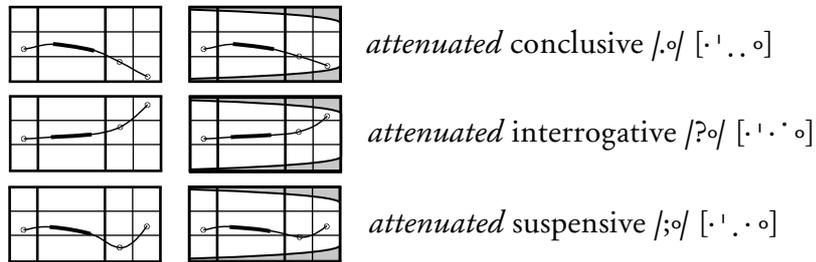
fig 43.2. Accentuation of intonemes.

accentuated conclusive /.₀/ [·ˈ‥₀]

accentuated interrogative /¿ ?°/ [¿ ·ˈ·˙°]
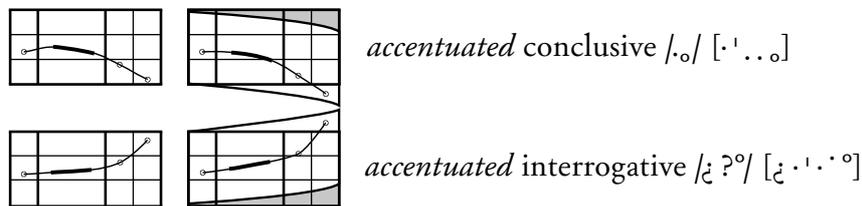
44. Parentheses & quotations

44.1. Let us consider ƒɪɡ 44 which shows the diagram of *parenthetic phrases* (which can be *low* or *mid*, as we will see presently) and of *quotations*. Here we will illustrate parentheses and quotations:

ᵇ[ˉfɝˑʂ əvˈɔːɫˑ ˌhiˈsɛˑd̥ˑ˧ ˉlɛts kʊnˈsɪɖə ˹ˈnætʃɻɫ˳˙ˑ˥ fəˈnɛɽɪks˳˳ ˌəzɪtsˉphɻɒpəli ˈkhɔːɫd̥˳˳]
*First of all –he said– let's consider 'natural' phonetics, as it's properly called.*

44.2. Parentheses are characterized by a reduction of stress, an increase in the rate of speech, and low or mid compression; whereas quotations have an increase in stress, a reduction of rate and a raising of pitch (without compression). Therefore, quotations are –practically– the opposite of parentheses.

In transcriptions, it is neither necessary nor recommendable to try to show these prosodic peculiarities, not even with regard to stress, which remains marked as usual (without notational reductions, [ˌ], or accentuations, [ˈ]). The symbols [ʟ ˌ], [˧ ˧], [˹ ˺] are more than sufficient to bear in mind all these differences, with respect to 'normal' utterances.

44.3. Obviously, quotations must not be confused with 'direct speech' – since, in *First of all –he said– let's consider 'natural' phonetics, as it's properly called*, only *he said* would be excluded, because all the rest (and what may follow) *is* direct speech, indeed.

ƒɪɡ 44. Diagrams of parentheses and quotations.

low parenthesis: [ʟ ˌ] /ʟ ˌ/ mid parenthesis: [˧ ˧] /˧ ˧/ quotation: [˹ ˺] /˹ ˺/
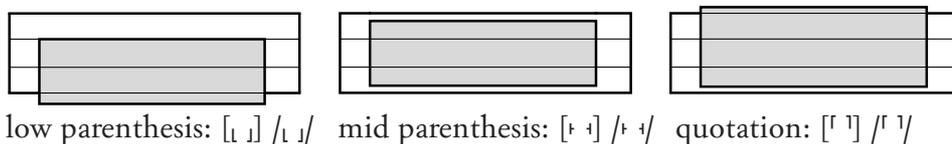
45. Considerations on communicative 'roles'

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45.1. We have already talked about 'bookish intonation' (see § 40.21, as well). We will now study in depth even 'bookish questions' (mentioned in § 42.9-14). Considering things from the outside, some typical and recognizable superstructures are fairly easy to find.

As a matter of fact, a *bookish question* is the sum of a (substantially affirmative) sentence and a (substantially interrogative) communicative function.

They use a conclusive intonation group –ie a normal preintoneme followed by a conclusive intoneme– modified by a *role* interrogative intoneme: /./+'/?/' [..]+[◦º], without even distinguishing between the two fundamental types of questions – total (/¿ ?/ [¿ ·]) and partial (/¿ ./ [¿ ..]).

45.2. Contrary to the rules of actual communication, in bookish questions something *is stated* (which is the literal content of an utterance), and only at the end something else is added like *there is a question too* (but with no real fusion of the elements).

For that particular task, then, it is not at all important (to try) to realize the two different types of question as in actual speech: it is only a 'task' to perform! (… nothing more.)

Thus, instead of using an interrogative preintoneme and other intonemes fit for conversation, the structure indicated above is provided: /./+/?/ [·.]+[◦º].

45.3. During a lecture on Phonetics, if we give the example of a (partial or total) question without introducing it –as usual– by stating first 'for instance', but saying it exactly as *What's the time?* or *Is it raining?* even the most attentive students, at least for a short while, will feel obliged to answer:

ᵇ[¿ˉwɒts ðəˈʈhaˑəm‚], [-t sə-]
ˉ*What's the* ˅*time?* or:

ᵇ[¿ˌɪzɪʈˈʈɛɪnɪŋˑ'], [-ɪʔʈ-]
Is it ˊ*raining?*

45.4. However, the situation of a lecture is exactly one of an 'implicative' superstructure or a 'role' superstructure, which makes what is being said clear, so much so that it is often not easy to avoid the tautology that makes one say:

[b][lɛts⁻gɪʋ ənɪgˈzɑˑmpɫ.. fəɹɪgˈzɑˑmpɫ.· ⸢ˈɛks· ˈwaˑɘ· ˈzɛˑd̥..⸣]

'Let's give an *example*, for *example*: x, y, z'.

45.5. It goes without saying, of course, that the intonation examples given during a lecture (or a lesson, or used as a drill) must –or should– aim at spontaneous conversation as far as possible, getting rid of the typical superstructure of the teaching situation.

45.6. Actually, even *bookish intonation* is a prosodic superstructure, which is added to a whole *text* presented to someone.

The function of all those monotonous sudden rises within a text (also corresponding to the end of a concept, or a categorical statement, even an emphatic one) is that of communicating that the speaker has *not yet finished talking* and does not want to be interrupted.

In the case of someone who is reporting something (rather than expressing one's thoughts), like a story or the subject of an oral examination, even an implicit reference to the temporary incompleteness of the *text* is added; whereas its completion is implied by the final pitch lowering, which opposes the (higher than usual) pitch of the beginning.

45.7. There is even an 'acceptable' version of bookish intonation, which consists of the typical pattern of an *exposed* text (*ie* mental, not a read one).

Therefore, it is not a conversation –nor is it a soliloquy– because a superstructure is added which gives the characteristic of a *text exposition*.

It is recognized by the fact that it presents mechanical and 'regular' pauses (which are never too long), and quite attenuated intonemes, but, most of all, they are 'completed' by slight sudden rises from low to mid pitch, which are indicated by adding [ₒ°] after an intoneme.

45.8. We will now give an example and compare it with real bookish intonation:

conversation: [b][ˈðɐs· ɪn⁻sɛtʃ ˈkhɛɪsɪz.· ⁻wɛm məsˈkhɹip ˈkhɑːm.. ⁻fɒlɜø ðiɪnˈstɹɐkʃn̩z..| ən⁻θɪŋk ˈlɒˑŋ ənˈhɑːd̥.. bɪ̥fɔˑɹˈækʧɪŋ..]

exposition: [b][ˈðɐs· ɪn⁻sɛtʃ ˈkhɛɪsɪz.·ₒ° ⁻wɛm məsˈkhɹip ˈkhɑːm..ₒ° ⁻fɒlɜø ðiɪnˈstɹɐkʃn̩z..ₒ°| ən⁻θɪŋk ˈlɒˑŋ ənˈhɑːd̥..ₒ° bɪ̥fɔˑɹˈækʧɪŋ..ₒ°]

bookish reading: [b][°ₒˈðɐs· ɪn⁻sɛtʃ ˈkhɛɪsɪz.·ₒ° ⁻wɛm məsˈkhɹip ˈkhɑːm..ₒ° ⁻fɒlɜø ðiɪnˈstɹɐkʃn̩z..ₒ°| ən⁻θɪŋk ˈlɒˑŋ ənˈhɑːd̥..ₒ° bɪ̥fɔˑɹˈækʧɪŋ°ₒ]

Thus, in such cases, one must keep calm, follow the instructions, and think long and hard before acting.

45.9. Notice, for *exposition*, the difference in the relative height reached by [ₒ°] (*ie* lower than [ₒ°]), and the quite normal pitch at the beginning (in comparison with [°ₒ] of bookish intonation).

Furthermore, in bookish intonation, *hesitations* can be frequent, generally realized as longer than usual *unfilled pauses* (*cf* § 36.5-6), but often they may become *filled pauses*, with autonomous 'syllables': [ɐ, ɐː, ʌ, ʌː, ɜ, ɜː, m̩, hm̩] &c, or with

(paraphonic) drawls (not regional ones, such as those typical of the American 'Deep South'):

b[bət'ðɛɛn jɒɬ'hæ̞æ̞v̥ ʈɯ'wɛɛɪʃ]
but the-en you'll ha-ave to wai-it…

45.10. A well-done exposition will limit hesitations to the most, unless they are 'intended' to reach two aims: to draw somebody's attention to certain points, or to fake spontaneous speech, as when improvising, in order to be more welcome and seem smarter.

45.11. *TV news* presents a [°₀ ₀° ₀° ₀° ₀° °₀] superstructure, which permits one to identify the beginning and the end of every piece of news.

Good newsreaders restrict themselves to this superstructure, which is necessary and crucial, while accurately avoiding introducing the excessive internal (sudden) rises, which are typical of bookish intonation.

45.12. But, too often, the news is unduly and arbitrarily segmented so that its utterances are even distorted, to the point that they can communicate different –or even opposite– senses, as regards the actual meanings of the information intentions.

Furthermore, these pauses are quite mechanical and short (but, above all, different from those of ordinary conversation), whereas, near the end of a piece of news, there is frequently an interruption between the last stress (*ie* the one on the tonic syllable) and the preceding one.

All this happens independently from internal cohesion (which would be necessary among the elements), so much so that even a first name is separated from its family name, a verb from its direct object or adverb, and an adjective from its noun, &c:

...the ˉfamous ˌopera by Giuˈseppe| ˋVerdi°₀
the ˉefforts to acˌcelerate the ˌstructural reˈforms| of the eˋconomy°₀
...with ˈnew| proˋposals°₀

fig 45. Paraphonic structures of: conversation (A), exposition (B), TV news (C), and bookish intonation (D).
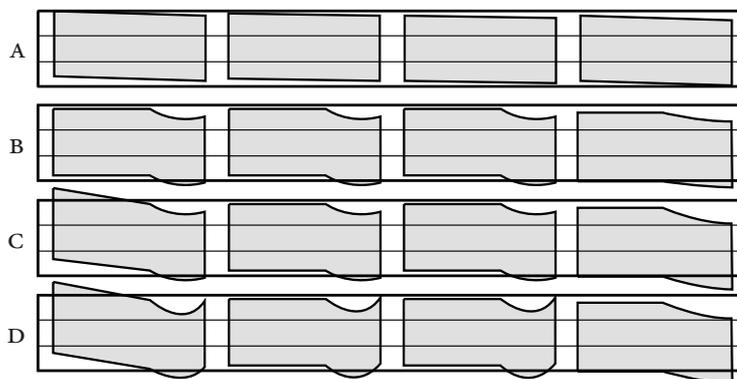
45.13. The last examples show that often the normal structure is irrationally distorted; whereas, in previous points of a piece of news, more often distortions regard cases such as:

*…*the ˈCannes| ˋFilm ˌFestival∘∘* – instead of:
…*the ˋCannes ˈFilm ˌFestival∘∘*.

45.14. Often, within a piece of news, newsreaders do not keep the end of a sentence separated from the beginning of the next one:

*…*they deˌcided to ˋmeet| in ˉLondon they ˈalso ˈpromised…* – instead of
…*they deˌcided to ˌmeet in ˋLondon| they ˉalso ˈpromised…*
(ie …*they deˌcided to ˌmeet in ˋLondon. They ˉalso ˈpromised…*).

45.15. Obviously, there are many other *communicative roles*, which must allow people to realize that spoken words are not to be interpreted in a *personal* way, as among friends or acquaintances.
On the contrary, it must be clear that they are to be interpreted as a part of a role, thus in an absolutely *impersonal* way, as operator and client. For instance:

a ticket collector: *Fares, please!*
a postal worker: *Good morning!*
a switchboard operator: *Hello, we-are-the-best-in-the-world!*
a shop assistant: *Good afternoon, Sir, can I help you?*
a stewardess: *Flying with us is a pleasure and a guarantee!*
a Far-West sheriff: *Howdy, stranger!*

45.16. Their messages (beyond the expected meaning, which is practically superfluous) want to communicate, above all, 'we are just doing our job, and we want you to know'.
Therefore, the (ticket) collector, the (postal) worker, and the (switchboard) operator will use paraphonic pitch *compression*: ⟨∘ /ˌ/⟩ ⟨∘ [·]⟩, avoiding using a conclusive intoneme.
Whereas, the (shop) assistant, the stewardess, and the sheriff will make use of paraphonic *raising*, emphatic preintonemes, and again continuative intonemes: ⟨° /ˌʌ ˌ/⟩ ⟨° [ˌʌ ·]⟩ (cf fig 48).

45.17. After all, even every-day *greetings* among people known by sight, who are not on intimate terms, are just kindnesses, which simply show peaceful coexistence (in comparison to cutting somebody dead). Thus greetings cannot be either omitted, or too friendly:

ᵇ⟨∘ [gʊbˈmɔˑnɪŋ·]⟩ *good ˈmorning*
ᵇ⟨∘ [gʊdˈɹivnɪŋ·]⟩ *good ˈevening*.

45.18. In fact, generally, they are reduced to:

ᵇ⟨∘ [ˈmɔˑnɪŋ·]⟩ *ˈmorning*
ᵇ⟨∘ [ˈɹivnɪŋ·]⟩ *ˈevening* – or even to:
ᵇ⟨∘ [ˌmɔɯŋ·]⟩, and *ᵇ*⟨∘ [ˌiɯŋ·]⟩.

45.19. Let us now also consider *'child-like' reading*. Everybody can easily recall it and recognize it at once (rather annoyingly). However, this is a 'role', again, with its conditions.

In fact, child-like reading has the typical 'textual' superstructure [°° ₒ° ₒ° ₒ° °ₒ], with the addition of emphatic *stress* (but without using an emphatic preintoneme) on each expected rhythm group (but also with more subdivisions that often produce two intonemes instead of only one).

Obviously, even bookish questions (or *child-like questions*) are included in this pattern. Again they are parts of an utterance which are artificially separated and maintained together only by *textual* superstructures (not by real conversational strategies).

45.20. Let us give an example, by comparing the structures of conversations with the superstructures of expositions and *child-like readings*:

conversation: ᵇ[ʈhəpɻʉˈpʰɛˑɜɻˑ əˉʈʰɛɪsʈi ˈvɛʤʈəbɬˌsɥup·ˑ ðiʊŋˈgɻɪɖiənts· məsbiˉʧhɞ-zn̩ ˌvɛɻiˈkʰɛɜfəli.‖ ¿ˉwɒʈ ɖɯwiˈnriɖ..]

exposition: ᵇ[ʈhəpɻʉˈpʰɛˑɜɻ·ₒ° əˉʈʰɛɪsʈi ˈvɛʤʈəbɬˌsɥup·ₒ° ðiʊŋˈgɻɪɖiənts·ₒ° məsbiˉʧhɞ-zn̩ ˌvɛɻiˈkʰɛɜfəli.ₒ°‖ ¿ˉwɒʈ ɖɯwiˈnriɖ..ₒ°]

child-like reading: ᵇ[°ₒʈhəpɻʉˈpʰɛˑɜɻ·ₒ° əˉʈʰɛɪsʈi ˈvɛʤʈəbɬˌsɥup·ₒ° ðiʊŋˈgɻɪɖiənts·ₒ° məsbiˉʧhɞzn̩·ₒ° ˌvɛɻiˈkʰɛɜfəli.ₒ°‖ °ₒ¿ˉwɒʈ ɖɯwiˈnriɖ..ₒ°]

To prepare a tasty vegetable soup, the ingredients must be chosen very carefully. What do we need?

45.21. The (alleged) 'remedy' prescribed by schools, in order to avoid the dullness of child-like reading, leads to *flattening* (with pitch compression of the internal parts), to *increasing rate* (with the reduction of many stresses), and to *hypo-segmenting* utterances (with the suppression of many intonemes, by producing longer stretches), with a loss of the wished expressiveness:

*ᵇ[°ₒʈhəpɻʉˈpʰɛˑɜɻ əˉʈʰɛɪsʈi ˈvɛʤʈəbɬˌsɥup·ₒ° ðiʊŋˈgɻɪɖiənts məsbiˉʧhɞzn̩ ˌvɛɻi-ˈækjəɻəʈli.ₒ°‖ °ₒ¿ˉwɒʈ ɖɯwiˈnriɖ..ₒ°].

To prepare a tasty vegetable soup, the ingredients must be chosen very carefully. What do we need?

46. Considerations on intonation

46.1. The fundamental criterion for 'choosing' the appropriate intonemes, for each sentence, consists in the *communicative intention* of every single sentence, or sometimes of a part of a sentence, which thus receives a certain intoneme, often without an actual pause.

But the absence of pauses must not make people think that the stream of syllables and words is constant and homogeneous: intonation differences are there (indeed!) in spite of the connection among syllables.

Rightly these pitch differences, which are included in the typology of linguistic intonation, convey the nuances of meaning that native speakers instinctively recognize, and thus (re)act accordingly.

46.2. Therefore, it is not sufficient to have a *continuative* intoneme, which is used mainly for subdividing the speech chain into pragmasemantic sequences. These are of fundamental importance to communicate what people think, in order to interact with others. Thus, one of the three marked intonemes has to be chosen.

46.3. A *conclusive* intoneme, as we have already seen, adds to the concept being expressed the communicative function of completeness.

An *interrogative* intoneme adds the function of request, generally with total questions and, occasionally, with clarifying questions, when people have not (fully) understood, or think they cannot believe an interlocutor or their own ears.

Lastly, a *suspensive* intoneme is used to draw attention to what somebody is going to say (or not to say), or to some more or less relevant alternatives.

46.4. When people are not slave to syntactic punctuation (if any – or at least syntactically appropriate), in order to obtain satisfactory results, it is sufficient to apply the right *communicative aim* to one's thoughts.

However, it is quite obvious that, if people do not *really* know the intonation patterns of their own language (*ie* in a perceptive and productive way as well – *not* only *theoretically*), the result will be a performance which is either regional (for native speakers with no falterings or hesitations), or decidedly foreign (if they try to use the patterns of their own language while speaking another language).

46.5. Since some intonemes (and preintonemes) of certain languages may be very different from those of others, or even opposite (or can remind some opposite functions), it is important to consider the provided tonograms very carefully, to compare them with those of one's own mother tongue (or a regional variant of it), if they are available.

Otherwise, it is highly advisable to endeavor to get them, and try to grasp the differences of the tonograms of other languages or those of the neutral (or 'standard') accent of one's own tongue.

46.6. If one is able to sing in tune, the operation proves to be better, but this is not at all indispensable: what is essential is to have the will to make this comparison (if one is convinced).

Certainly, a significant number of speakers of tone languages are 'out of tune', and yet they all use their ton(em)es adequately, as for instance Chinese men and women do (and, of course, children as well, if not very young).

46.7. Obviously, even less clearcut behavior is to be expected. For instance, a question like ¿ ⁻*Who* ₁*wrote* ⁻*"Romeo and* ˋ*Juliet"?* –instead of the answer ˋ*Shakespeare*– might receive a not too sure one, like ¿ˋ*Shakespeare*, or even a far less positive one, like ¿ˋ*Shakespeare…* – where the interrogative preintoneme seeks confirmation:

ᵇ[¿ ⁻hɰ·u ˈɟɜɵʈ· ⌐¿ ⁻ɟɜɷmiɜɵ əɲˈʤɰuliəʈ‥ˈ]
¿ ⁻*Who* ₁*wrote* ⁻*"Romeo and* ˋ*Juliet"?*

ᵇ[ˈʃɛɪkˌspɪɐ‥] ˋ*Shakespeare.*

ᵇ[¿ˈʃɛɪkˌspɪɐ‥] ¿ˋ*Shakespeare.*

ᵇ[¿ˈʃɛɪkˌspɪɐ·] ¿ˋ*Shakespeare…*

46.8. More convinced answers like ₄ˋ*Shakespeare!* (*ie* emphatic) or ¡ˋ*Shakespeare!* (*ie* imperative) would still be different from ˋ*Shakespeare*, in the opposite direction:

ᵇ[₄ˈˈʃɛɪkˌspɪɐ‥] ₄ˋ*Shakespeare!*

ᵇ[¡ˈˈʃɛɪkˌspɪɐ‥] ¡ˋ*Shakespeare!*

ᵇ[ˈʃɛɪkˌspɪɐ‥] ˋ*Shakespeare.*