

Intonation in English

Intonation

- a language universal.
- There are no languages which are spoken without any change of prosodic parameters but intonation functions in various languages in a different way.

Two main approaches

- a contour analysis
- a grammatical approach

A contour analysis

- represented by a large group of phoneticians: H. Sweet, D. Jones, G. Palmer, L. Armstrong, I. Ward, R. Kingdon, J. O'Connor, A. Gimson and others.
- the smallest unit to which linguistic meaning can be attached is a tone-group (sense-group)

A contour analysis

- intonation consists of basic functional "blocks"
- Intonation is a layer that is superimposed on the lexico-grammatical structure

Criticism

- pay much attention to these "blocks" but not to the way they are connected
- the aim of communication determines the intonation structure, not vice versa

A grammatical approach

- worked out by M. Halliday.
- The main unit of intonation is a clause.
- Intonation is a complex of three systemic variables: tonality, tonicity and tone, which are connected with grammatical categories

A grammatical approach

- Tonality marks the beginning and the end of a tone-group.
- Tonicity marks the focal point of each tone-group.
- Tones can be primary and secondary. They convey the attitude of the speaker.
- is based on the syntactical function of intonation.

K. Pike

- founder of the American school of intonation
- considers «pitch phonemes» and «contours» to be the main units of intonation.
- describes different contours and their meanings
- **but** «meaning» stands apart from communicative function of intonation.

Russian linguists

- on perception level intonation is a complex, a whole, formed by significant variations of pitch, loudness and tempo closely related.
- speech timbre is the fourth component of intonation

Russian linguists

- Neither material form of speech timbre nor its linguistic function has been thoroughly described.
- speech timbre definitely conveys certain shades of attitudinal or emotional meaning
- **But** there is no good reason to consider it alongside with the three prosodic components of intonation, i.e. pitch, loudness and tempo.

Russian linguists

- the term prosody embraces the three prosodic components and substitutes the term intonation (M. Sokolova and others)
- the term is widely used in linguistic literature, it causes no misunderstanding and, consequently, it is more adequate

- Many foreign scholars (A. Gimson, R. Kingdon) restrict the formal definition of intonation to pitch movement alone + allowing variations of loudness.

- the most important prosodic effects are those conveyed by the linguistic use of pitch movement, or melody (D. Crystal).
- **But**
not possible to restrict “intonation” by the pitch parameters only → generally all the three prosodic parameters function as a whole though in many cases the priority of the pitch parameter is quite evident.

The functions of intonation

- no general agreement
- three functions of intonation: delimitating, integrating and semantic (T.M. Nikolayeva)
- the semantic function → the primary and syntactic and stylistic functions → the secondary functions (L.K. Tseplitis)
- main functions of intonation: communicative, distinctive (or phonological), delimitating, expressive, appellative, aesthetic, integrating (N.V. Cheremisina)

The functions of intonation

- D. Crystal
- Emotional function → to express attitudinal meaning - sarcasm, surprise, impatience, delight and other semantic nuances.
- Grammatical function → to identify grammatical structure in speech, performing a role similar to punctuation → clause and sentence often depend on intonation.

The functions of intonation

- Informational function → to draw attention to what meaning is given and what is new in an utterance → the word carrying the most prominent tone in a contour carries new information.

The functions of intonation

- Textual function → to contrast and cohere larger units of meaning than the sentence.
- In radio news-reading paragraphs of information can be shaped through the use of pitch.
- In sports commentary changes in prosody reflect the progress of the action

The functions of intonation

- Psychological function → to organize speech into units that are easier to perceive and memorize.
- Indexical function → to serve as a marker of personal or social identity → lawyers, preachers, sports commentators, army sergeants are readily identified through their distinctive prosody.