INTONATION PATTERNS & THEIR USAGE

WHAT IS AN INTONATION?

When we speak the pitch of the voice either goes up or down or is not the same. This variation in pitch of the voice is called intonation. It occurs in a casual and formal speech. Thus Intonation refers to the rising or lowering of the pitch of the voice, and this leads to forming pitch patterns. It conveys some information that can't be conveyed in writing. Only when it is spoken (or read) that change in pitch and the emphasis given on certain words, implies a special added meaning, intended by the speaker.

Say these following sentences, as an example, and you'll observe that they are not said in the same tone and pitch, rather different.

(i) This is a pen.

(ii) Is this a pen?

(iii) What a lovely pen it is!

(iv) Don't play with pen.

MAJOR PATTERNS OF INTONATION & ITS USAGE WITH EXAMPLES

The major patterns of intonation are the following:

I. Affirmative and negative statements get a falling tone at the end.

Examples:

- a) He is a boy.
- b) He is not a good boy.
- II. All 'wh' questions or information questions have a falling tone.

Examples:

- a) Why did you come late today?
- b) How will you go home?
- c) Where is your bicycle?
- iii. Commands and Instructions:

Examples:

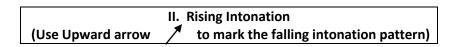
- a) Write it down.
- b) Get out.
- c) Send it by courier service.
- iv. Exclamations, greetings, etc.

Examples:

- a) Lovely! / Super! / Excellent!
- b) How beautiful the church is! \
- c) What a terrible noise! 🔪
- $\ensuremath{\text{v}}.$ Question tags that confirm the statements and do not expect response.

Examples:

- a) He can swim, can't he?
- b) This is your book, isn't it?
- c) You don't have money, do you?



1. Verbal questions (or) Yes/No questions should always have a rising tone at the end.

- a. Can you do it? b. Did you get any message?
- c. Were you here yesterday?



Ι. In choice question or alternate question each choice has a rising tone but the last choice has a falling tone.

Examples:

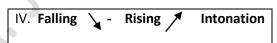
- a) Do you like / tea, / coffee, or milk ? ? b) Is it a fountain pen or a ball point pen?
- II. When a sentence has a list, all except the final item gets the rising tone and the final item gets the falling tone.

Examples:

- a) I like / apples, / oranges, / grapes, / date and mangoes.
- b) Try to visit Kolkata, Bombay, Delhi and Kashmir.
- III. If there are clauses in a sentence, the initial clause, usually, has the rising tone and the other part of the sentence has falling tone.

Examples:

- a) If I switch on the / light, the child will wake up.
 b) As I / see, the students are overcrowded.
 c) What you do is much more / important than what you say.



It is used in the context of expressing surprising emotions, especially in the context of I. answering.

Example:

Today is a holiday because of rain. X: Really 🖊

THANK YOU

Questions:

- ✓ What is an intonation? Explain with an example.
- ✓ Explain the four Patterns of intonation and their usages with examples.

Reference: English Language Education: Sourcebook for the Diploma in Teacher Education. Tamil Nadu Text Book Corporation. Chennai. p. 162-1654 Page 2