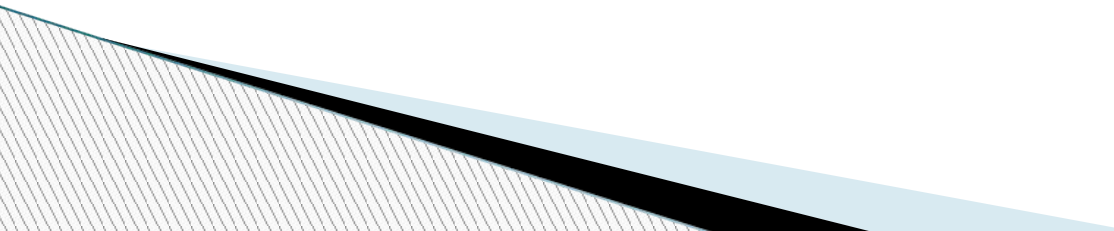


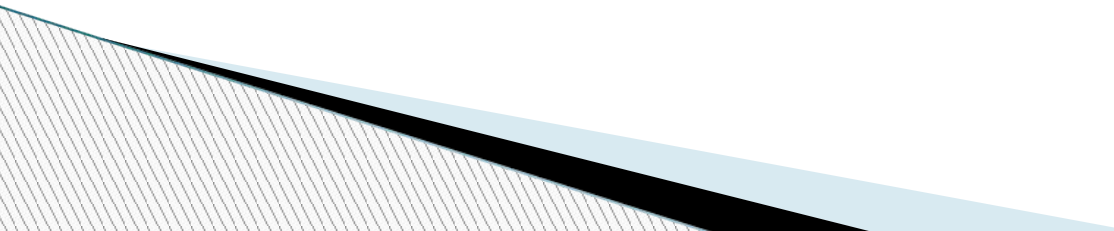
# Lecture Overview

1. Prosodic features (suprasegmentals)  
– basic terminology
  1. Functions of Intonation and its importance
  2. Elements and structure of English Intonation
- 

# 1. Prosodic features

- **Stress** (word vs. sentence stress)
- **Accent** (stressed syllable vs. unstressed syllable)
- **Pitch** – the perceived height of the human voice depending on the length of the vocal cords and the rapidity of their vibrations (male: longer-slower-lower; female: shorter-faster-higher)
- **Intonation** – the pitch variations and patterns in a spoken language
  - tonality (chunking)
    - = the division of speech into intonation phrases
  - tonicity (nucleus placement)
    - = highlighting certain words in an utterance as important to the meaning
  - tone (also tune)
    - = distinctive pitch movement/pitch pattern heard over a whole unit
- **Rhythm** – the characteristic movement or ‘timing’ of connected speech (stress-timed vs. syllable-timed languages)

# 2. Functions of Intonation

1. Attitudinal function
  2. Grammatical function
  3. Focusing function (also accentual, informational)
  4. Discourse function (also cohesive)
  5. Psychological
  6. Indexical
- 

# 2.1 Attitudinal function

= expresses the speaker's attitudes and emotions to the topic or as a response to the listener's statement.

= we do this by **TONE**. The choice of tone is context-dependent.

**1) Rising tones:** low rise, high rise, fall-rise

**2) Falling tones:** low fall, high fall, rise-fall

# 2.2 Grammatical function

= identifies grammatical structures in speech (similar to punctuation in writing)

- **Demarcative** function
- We use **TONALITY** to mark the beginning or end of utterances (grammatically referred to as clause and/or sentences)
  
- **Syntactic** function
- We use **TONE** to distinguish between clause types or disambiguate grammatically ambiguous sentences

e.g.

(1) These are ˈready ||  
These are ˈready ||

(2) My ˈdaughter who lives in ˌOxford | is a ˈdoctor ||  
My ˌdaughter | who lives in ˌOxford | is a ˈdoctor ||

# 2.3 Focusing (accentual) function

- = distinguishes between old and new information in an utterance.
- = directs the listener's attention to the salient points of the message.
- = we do this by **TONICITY**. The exact speaker's meaning is achieved by appropriate nucleus placement and choice of tone.

(a) 'Meet me by the °clock in the °station at `six ll

S            S            S            S  
A                            A  
                                  N

Message: *meet six*

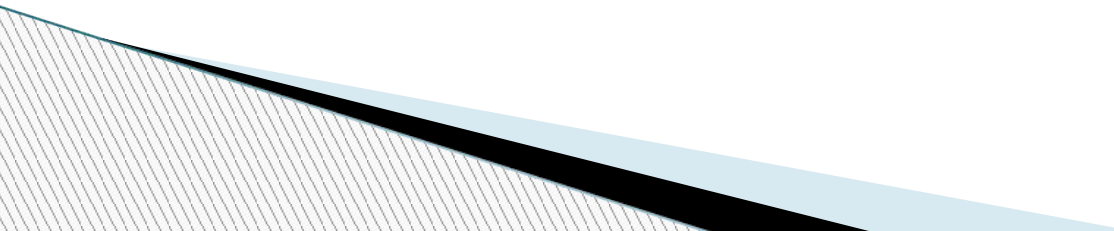
(b) A: OK, so we'll be in the station by six, but where precisely do you want to meet?

B: 'Meet me by the `clock in the °station at °six ll

S                            S            S            S  
A                            A  
                                  N

Message: *meet clock*

## 2.4 Discourse (cohesive) function

- = signals the way sequences of utterances are contrasted and/or cohered in a spoken discourse (resembles the division of written text into sentences and paragraphs)
  - = keep-talking vs. turn-taking
- 

## 2.5 Psychological function

- = helps us organise speech into units that are easy to perceive, process and understand.
- = we do this by **TONALITY** or we divide the **continuous speech signal into smaller logical sense units**



## 2.6 Indexical function

= personal characteristic intonation

= intonation may act as a marker of personal or social identity

e.g. Queen Elizabeth



# 3. Elements of English intonation

- ▣ **NUCLEUS** (obligatory)

Basic tone choices:

fall, rise, fall-rise

More subtle tone choices (tunes):

high fall, low fall, high rise, low rise, rise-fall, fall-rise, mid level

- ▣ **TAIL** (optional)

- ▣ **HEAD** (optional)

Types: high head, low head, falling head, rising head

- ▣ **PRE-HEAD** (optional)

Types: low pre-head, high pre-head



# EXAMPLE

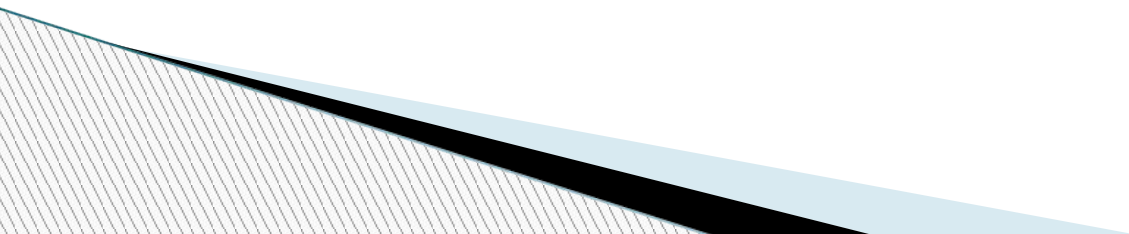
It's 'made of °some sort of wood, I believe.

PREHEAD ONSET

HEAD

NUCLEUS

TAIL



# Nuclear elements: Nucleus + (Tail)

## ▣ **Nuclues**

- = the stressed syllable of the last accented word which carries the most important information for the listener.
- = from this syllable on there is a noticeable pitch movement over several syllables i.e. the nuclear tone begins
- = the type of tone used is chosen by the speaker to convey his/her attitude
- = in English the nucleus is usually placed towards the end of the IP especially if new information is introduced. When the speaker makes a deliberate decision in the speaking process to focus on certain information mentioned earlier, that is usually shared information known to both speakers.

## ▣ **Tail**

- = any syllable(s) of the IP that follow the nuclues
- = the tail may contain other stressed syllables but never an accented syllable

# Pre-nuclear elements: (Pre-head)+(Head)

## ▣ **Head**

= a group of syllables consisting of an ONSET (the first and only accented syllable) and other unstressed and stressed syllables (if any) before the nucleus in an IP.

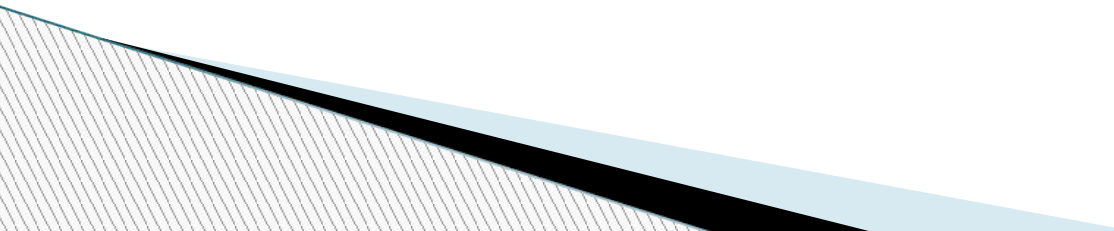
= the onset is accented because there is a pitch change making the syllable stand out

## ▣ **Pre-head**

= the unstressed syllables before the onset, or before the nucleus if there isn't a head

# Intonation Phrase (IP) Structure

Possible combinations:

- Nucleus only
  - Nucleus + Tail
  - Pre-head + Nucleus
  - Pre-head + Nucleus + Tail
  - Head + Nucleus
  - Head + Nucleus + Tail
  - Pre-head + Head + Nucleus
  - Pre-head + Head + Nucleus + Tail
- 

# Tone Groups

## (pitch pattern combinations)

1. The Low Drop = high head + low fall
2. The High Drop = high head + high fall
3. The Take-Off = low head + low rise
4. The Low Bounce = high head + low rise
5. The Switchback = falling head + fall-rise
6. The Long Jump = rising head + high fall
7. The High Bounce = high head + high rise
8. The Jackknife = high head + fall-rise
9. The High Dive = (high fall + low rise)
10. The Terrace = high head + mid level

# Tone and meaning

## = expressing the attitude

❖ Don't worry. It'll be all right.

(low rise – soothing, reassuring)

❖ A: Do you need any help? B: No.

(fall-rise – friendly/OK)

(low rise – rude)

❖ I've already explained the procedure twice.

(high head + low rise – neutral, positive)

(low head + low rise – grumpy, cross)

❖ A: I've done all the cleaning for you.

B: Thank you.

(high rise – ungrateful, insincere)

(high fall – grateful, sincere)

❖ A: What do you think of his new film?

B: Well, the story was interesting.

(fall-rise – implies that the speaker actually thinks it's terrible but avoids being rude or unpleasant)

❖ A: Shall we meet at the restaurant then?

B: Fine. Sounds good.

(high fall – enthusiastic; low fall – reluctant)

❖ A: How do you find his girlfriend?

B: Lovely.

(rise-fall+mid key – genuine, sincere, truthful)

(rise-fall+low key – sarcastic, implying the opposite)



# THANK YOU 🥰

□ Next class:

Bring a printed copy of the book

***Intonation of Colloquial  
English***

**by O'Connor & Arnold**