

# INTONATION

The pitch of the voice with which a voiced sound is pronounced is called its intonation. In connected speech the voice-pitch is continually rising and falling. These variations produce intonations which may be described as "tunes" or "patterns" or "contours".

When the pitch of the voice rises we have a *rising intonation*; when it falls we have a *falling intonation*.

It's very hard to systematize intonation, as general meanings, such as questions, statements or doubts are not the only ones involved, but there are other intonations with connotative meanings:

- a) Melodic features of each person.
- b) Dialects belonging to a certain group of a region or a profession.
- c) Affective connotations, such as tiredness, friendliness.
- d) Mental attitude of the speaker.

Anyway, there are some basic tunes which can be systematized due to didactic purposes.

## TYPES OF TUNES

The tunes which compose the melodic wave depend on the number of vibrations per second of the vocal chords. These tunes go from more to less vibration, that is, from high to low pitches.

- a) High rising tune
- b) Low rising tune
- c) High falling tune
- d) Low falling tune
- e) Rising–falling tune
- f) Falling–rising tune

## a) High rising tune

It is used in questions that begin with an auxiliary particle (yes/no questions) or to express interrogation in a statement.

Ex. Do you live **here**?

Ex. You're **leaving** your job.

## b) Low rising tune

It is used to express a lack of interest or before pauses.

Ex. **Please** come in.

c) High falling tune

It is typical of affirmative and negative questions.

Ex. Yesterday **morning** (when did you get there?)

d) Low falling tune

The hearer expects the answer or sentence.

Ex. It's **mine** (whose car is this?)

### e) Rising-falling tune

It is used to express emphasis.

Ex. Is **this** what you were looking for?

### f) Falling-rising tune

It is used to express doubt, surprise, astonishment, insecurity or confusion.

Ex. If you **like** (I'm not sure if it's the best thing to do.