

THE IMPORTANCE OF INTONATION, RHYTHM AND PAUSING IN INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION

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What even the most skillful non-native English speakers lack is the correct intonation, rhythm and pausing. Mass media all the time suggests the popular thought that the most powerful ideas are the ones you absorb indirectly – by means of tone and voice vibrations and sound changes. The problem is that in case of the mother tongue we pick them up through our pores within the first few years of life, but it's much more difficult to acquire such skills, when learning English (or any other foreign language). People have a tendency to think of intonation as being directly linked to the speaker's emotions. In fact, the meaning of intonation contours is as conventionalized as any other language aspect. Intonation varies from language to language. Meyers and Holt (2001) point out that when you are in an international environment, for instance an airport, it is easy to differentiate your native language from the many others being spoken in the area. This is not because you can hear the individual words, but rather because you can hear the “music” of your language.

Different languages can use different conventions, giving rise to the potential for cross-cultural misunderstandings. In comparison with the English, Ukrainians and Russians are gloomy and dull and their languages sound dry, indifferent and unemotional. Such interpersonal misunderstanding, caused by cultural differences, can mar relations, crumb a deal or even detonate a war (on the level of inter-ethnic relations).

Measure speech, without passion and excitement, may sound like if you are not interested in communication or in the subject matter under discussion. The most persuasive presentation (monologue, etc.) may be easily dejected or even destroyed if you do not use rhythm, intonation and pausing, when speaking to somebody or holding a presentation. The interaction of intonation and stress – the patterns of relative prominence which characterize an utterance – is particularly close in many languages, including English. Intonation is crucial for communication. It is just one of those things.

Indeed, the importance of the right pronunciation in the English language can hardly be overestimated. Of course, mispronunciation may make your speech difficult to understand, but if you just make one mistake with intonation, the whole meaning of your sentence could change. Sometimes one and the same sentence can acquire two, three and maybe even more meanings with just a mere intonation, tone change or incorrect pausing. It's necessary for every non-native speaker to go out of his/her way and practice his/her intonation over and over again, practice the pausing, practice the rising and the lowering of his/her tone. It's also useful to speak loudly, then quietly, to slow down and to put stress, to use different kinds of rhythm. It is in no way necessary, if you are eager to obtain a result and to sound like a native English-speaker.

English has a number of intonation patterns which add conventionalized meanings to the utterance: question, statement, surprise, disbelief, sarcasm,

teasing. An important feature of English intonation is the use of an intonational accent (and extra stress) to mark the focus of a sentence. Normally this focus accent goes on the last major word of the sentence, but it can come earlier in order to emphasize one of the earlier words or to contrast it with something else.

When following the basic "rules" of English intonation, speakers tend to rise on the last stressed syllable of a phrase or sentence and then fall after the last stressed syllable. For a yes/no question, North American English speakers will generally rise on the last stressed syllable and continue up from there. However, for any number of different reasons, speakers may choose an alternate intonation pattern. More specifically, if the speaker wants to stress something or focus the listener's attention on something else in the sentence, he or she will rise on a different syllable.

It's no surprise that many teachers don't feel confident about tackling intonation, rhythm and tone in the classroom, unlike teaching grammar or lexis, when they find ways of making the language accessible to the learners. However, all language-learners have to come to grips with the intonation norms of the target language and the meanings associated with them.

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ВІДОМОСТІ ПРО АВТОРА

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СПІВСТАВНА СЕМАНТИКА І ПРОБЛЕМИ МІЖМОВНОЇ ІНТЕРФЕРЕНЦІЇ

Олександра ПАЦІРА

Для мов різних народів спільним є те, що вони, виконуючи когнітивну (від англ. *cognition* – знання, пізнання, пізнавальна здатність) і комунікативну функції, відображають одну й ту саму дійсність. Визначаючи цю парадигму як когнітивно-комунікативну (комунікативно-дискурсивну), мовознавство визнає домінуючими два напрями у своїх дослідницьких інтересах – когнітивно-семантичний опис мовних одиниць і їх дискурсивний аналіз.