

ON THE NATURE OF FALL RISE INTONATION IN ENGLISH

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In this paper I will be discussing two facts concerning fall-rise intonation in English which I have discovered while looking for facts for or against an interpretative theory of intonation.

I will show that an intonation pattern which I will call a "marked" form of fall-rise pattern could be treated in relation to "un-marked" fall-rise intonation as a point further along a continual scale of "fall-riseyness". Data from a different source, however, tends to show that this marked fall-rise is the result of an entirely different process and can be best explained as a method of caricature of the basic pattern. Fall-rise intonation may therefore itself be part of a discrete system of intonation and therefore be explainable within an interpretative theory of intonation but this process of caricature is obviously a non-discrete system of coding information and cannot therefore be treated in an interpretative theory of intonation.

A second fact is put forward which cannot be accounted for by an interpretative theory of the syntactic type presented in Hirst (1974). I show that final rise is not the only factor in the intonation pattern which gives the reading not just any to a sentence such as I won't speak to any doctor; altering that final rise into a fall does not necessarily change the interpretation of this sentence to not any at all as predicted by the syntactic theory.

Reference

Hirst, D.J. (1974): La levée de l'ambiguïté syntaxique par les traits intonatifs, thèse, Aix-en-Provence (non-publiée).