

THE STUDENTS' DIFFICULTIES IN USING ENGLISH INTONATION AT BUSINESS INDONESIA MURNI SADAR POLYTECHNIC

¹⁾ Doris Yolanda Saragih, ²⁾ Hengki Mangiring Parulian Simarmata

¹Komputer Akuntansi, Politeknik Bisnis Indonesia
email: dorisyolandasaragih@gmail.com

² Manajemen Administrasi Perkantoran, Politeknik Bisnis Indonesia
email: hengkisimarmata.mm@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This thesis is about the students' difficulties in using English intonation. To research this subject the writer formulates the problem as follow: What are the students' difficulties in using English intonation? It focuses on the students' intonation in reading a dialogue, which consists of positive statement, negative statement, w-h question, and yes-no question. To answer the problem above, this thesis follows some theories, namely: Allen (1954), Haycraft (1971), Jones (1979), and Roach (2000). The research design is qualitative research. The subjects of this study are the students of Business Indonesia Murni Sadar Polytechnic, and the object is the student's intonation. The technique of collecting data follows audio method or what is called recorded voice data. The data is analyzed by drawing the terminal contour of students' intonation. This research discovers that there are four difficulties of students in using English intonation, namely: (1). difficulty in using correct juncture, (2). difficulty in using rising intonation for the first clause and falling intonation for the second clause in a compound sentence, (3). difficulty in using falling intonation for w-h question and rising intonation for yes-no question, and (4). difficulty in determining pitch and stress of a syllable. This research finding recommends both teacher and students to take responsibility in overcoming those difficulties. An English teacher should teach his beginner students the using of intonation and its function in every kinds of sentence. Since there is an imitation process in learning intonation, a teacher should be able to detect a falling intonation from a rising intonation in his own voice as well as in a student's. The success of learning does not only depend on the teacher but also involves the students' awareness to learn English.

Keywords : English Intonation, English Business.

1. RESEARCH BACKGROUND

English language is an international language which is used by many people in many parts of world especially the in business world. In doing business, each people have their interaction between a person and company. In doing interaction, people must be able to speak well. In speaking, the interaction between person or company, they must be goof speaking, and one of the aspect is pronunciation. Pronunciation means the way of how we say a word or a sentence to express our idea or feeling. Many people learning English, they often do not pay any attention to their pronunciation. In practicing English in

business also has many cases of misunderstanding in communication were caused by the mispronouncing of words. Different pronunciation will have different meaning. The way pronounce words will be different, and it influence of cases, such as: locality, social surroundings, etc. the existences of all these differences make it difficult for the foreign learner to know which types of English pronunciation acquired. Parts of pronunciation are consonants, vowel, stress, and intonation.

When listening to people speaking, we get clear messages about their attitude from

the ways things are said. On the other hand, intonation is changing pitch of voice. When the pitch of voice rises we have a rising intonation; when it falls we have falling intonation; when it remains on one note for an appreciable time, we have level intonation (Jones, 1979: 275).

Common difficulties with intonation according to Haycraft (1975:71) are: 1). wide voice range, this is a problem with students of any nationality. It is rarely caused by a physical impediment; it is normally shyness and suspiciousness and can be quickly overcome. 2). the falling tone of the last stressed syllable, this is another problem connected with a narrow voice range and is corrected by increasing the range. 3). final rising tone. 4). sentences of two or more stresses. 5). the level tone. 6). pitch needed for the first stressed syllable.

1.1 Research Problem

Based on the background above, the researcher formulates the problem as follow: What are the students' difficulties in using English intonation?

1.2 Research Purpose

Based on the problem above, the purpose of this research is: To find out the students' difficulties in using English intonation.

1.3 Research Assumption

The researcher assumes that the students of Business Indonesia Murni Sadar Polytechnic faced difficulties in using English intonation in reading positive statement, negative statement, w-h question, and yes-no question.

1.4 Research Scope

The researcher focuses on the students' intonation in reading a dialogue, which consists of positive statement, negative statement, w-h question, and yes-no question, based on Jones' theory.

1.5 Significance of Research.

The significance of the study is expected to be valuable to the English Lecturer in solving the students' difficulties in using English intonation to improve the quality of English teaching and learning. It is also significant to the students to make them

understand when and how rising and falling intonation are used.

1.6 Theoretical Framework

This research uses some theories which support the data analysis and research finding, they are: Allen (1954), Haycraft (1971), Jones (1979), and Roach (2000).

1.7 Key Terms.

This research uses some terms, they are:

- a) Intonation is the changing pitch of the voice.
- b) Rising tone is used when the pitch of voice rises.
- c) Falling tone is used when the pitch of voice falls.
- d) Level tone is used when it remains on one note for an appreciable time.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE Historical Background.

Intonation is one of the language aspects. It is important to develop of the student's skill in English. Intonation is the changing pitch of the voice that has rising, falling, and level types. By intonation we can understand about the attitude of the speaker or how he feels about what he is saying.

In studying intonation we study how the pitch rises and falls, be able to detect high pitch from a low pitch. Some people difficult to relate what they hear in someone's voice to scale ranging from low to high. Most of the students also do not understand how to apply intonation. It is because they are not thought well about intonation. It makes them difficult in using English intonation.

Intonation

Definition of Intonation

Intonation is the tune of a sentence, comparable with the rise and fall of the tune in a piece of music. Intonation is the, movement of the voice, between high and low pitch. English has two basic tunes, they are: 1) ultimately falling, and ultimately rising (Haycraft, 1971:1-2).

Similarly, Roach (2000: 150) defines "intonation as the pitch of the voice". Only in very unusual situations do we speak with fixed, unvarying pitch and we speak normally the pitch of our voice is constantly changing.

One of the most important tasks in analyzing intonation is to listen to the speaker's pitch and recognize what it is doing.

English intonation has five types of tones; they are falling, rising, falling-rising, rising-falling, and level. In analyzing intonation, tone unit is needed. Every tone unit has tonic syllable (TS). Tonic syllable is a syllable which carries a tone. And if the tonic syllable carries not only a tone but also a type of stress, then it will be called as tonic stress.

Tone unit has three components; they are head (H), pre-head (PH), and tail (T). The head is all of that part of a tone unit that extends from the first stressed syllable up to (but not including) the tonic syllable. It follows that if there is no stressed syllable before the tonic syllable, there cannot be a head. The pre-head is composed of all the unstressed syllables in a tone-unit preceding the first stressed syllable. Any syllables between the tonic syllable and the end of the tone-unit are called the tail.

To illustrate this more fully, a passage is provided below:

|| and then 'nearer to the front|| on the left there is a 'bit of forest | 'coming 'down to the waterside || and then a 'bit of a bay||

Allen (1954: 39) defines intonation as "the melody of speech, the changing pitch of the voice". It is to certain extent controlled by stress, for important changes of pitch occur only on stressed syllables. The English intonation can be classified under two types. Both normally begin with the first stressed syllable fairly high, and fall step – wise from stress until the last significant (meaningful) stress is reached. Type ₁ fall, remaining low for any further unstressed syllables; type ₂ rise from a low tone, continuing the rise for any further unstressed syllable.

Jones (1979: 275) explains intonation may be defined as "the variations which take place in the pitch of the voice in connected speech, i.e. the variation and pitch of the musical note produced by the vibration of the vocal cords". Intonation is quite different thing from stress. In ordinary speech the pitch of the voice is continually changing. When the pitch of the voice rises we have a rising

intonation; when it falls we have a falling intonation; when it remains on one note for an appreciable time, we have level intonation.

Based on the explanation above, intonation generally is the changing pitch of our voice from high to low, and rising to falling.

Types of Intonation.

Jones (1979:275) classifies English intonation into three categories, they are: 1). rising intonation (/), 2). falling intonation (\), and 3). level intonation (-). The detail explanation of those three categories of intonation can be seen below:

Rising Intonation

Rising intonation is normally used in:

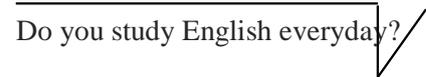
- a. Yes-No Questions

For example:

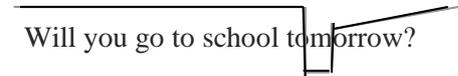
- 1. Are you happy?



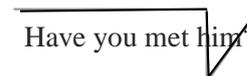
- 2. Do you study English everyday?



- 3. Will you go to school tomorrow?



- 4. Have you met him?



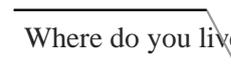
Falling Intonation

Falling intonation is normally used in:

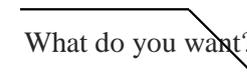
- a. W-H Questions

For example:

- 1. Where do you live?



- 2. What do you want?



3. Which do you like best?

4. Why do you complain?

5. How far is your destination?

b. Positive statement

For example:

1. We are going to the movies tonight.

2. She will celebrate her seventeenth birthday next week.

3. Tom has lived in London for five years.

4. Their plane is arriving at nine in the morning.

c. Negative statement.

For example:

1. We are not going to the movies tonight.

2. She will not celebrate her seventeenth birthday next week.

3. Tom has not lived in London for five years.

4. Their plane is not arriving at nine in the morning.

5. The church was not more crowded than usual.

Level Intonation

Level intonation is a series of word phrases or clauses in a sentence. This tone is certainly used in English, but in a rather restricted context: it almost always conveys (on single-syllable utterances) a feeling of saying something routine, uninteresting or boring. A teacher calling the names of pupils from a register will often do so using level tone on each name, and the pupils are likely to respond with “yes” (in level intonation) when their name is called.

Wave Intonation

Allen (1954: 90) provides that wave intonation consists of Falling–Rising Intonation and Rising–Falling Intonation.

a. Falling – Rising Intonation

The Falling-Rising Intonation is used a lot in English and has some rather special functions. It is to describe limited agreement or responses with reservations.

Example:

1. I don't want to be late (. . . so please excuse me hurrying away so soon)

2. She never drinks tea (. . . so it's useless to offer her any)

3. Well, I don't agree (. . . though I do understand your point of view)

4. I don't believe it's true (. . . in spite of all the rumors)



5. I only had three (. . . and you ~~—~~knew that wasn't enough)

b. Rising – Falling Intonation

This is used to convey rather strong feelings of approval, disapproval or surprise. It is not usually considered to be an important tone for foreign learners to acquire, although it is still useful practice to learn to distinguish it from other tones.

Example:

1. We walked home because we missed the train.

2. Afterwards, we went home.

3. If I put it up there, it will fall off.

4. Since you refuse to help, I must do it alone.

5. If you like, I'll send the car for you.

b. Sentences beginning with main clause have falling intonation and followed by rising intonation for the subordinate clause. It is particularly common with conditions spoken in a hesitant manner.

Example:

1. I eat steak, when I can get it.

2. I'd buy a new one, if I could afford it.

3. There'll be nothing left, after you've had yours.

Combined Intonation

Allen (1954: 59) also formulates combined intonation which usually occurs on the two or more clauses. The uses of combined intonation are as follows:

a. Sentences beginning with subordinate clause have rising intonation and followed by falling intonation for the main clause.

Example:

1. When he came, I asked him to wait.

2. After the game, we had some tea.

3. Just as the train was starting, he jumped in.

Combined intonation is also used in alternative questions, enumeration things and compound sentences.

Example of alternative question:

1. Shall we drive or shall we go by train?

2. Do you like tea or coffee or cocoa?

Example of enumeration things:

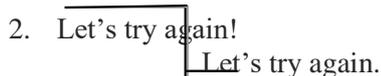
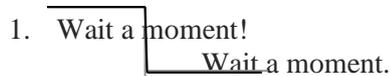
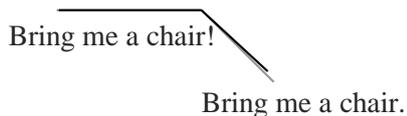
1. There were apples and pears and plums.

2. One, two, three, four, five.

Intonation of Imperative

In expressing imperative, Allen (1954: 97) suggests that it has falling intonation if the sentence expresses command, and it has rising intonation if the sentence expresses polite or friendly request.

Example:



Intonation of Parentheses

Expressions of a parenthetical nature have no particular intonation of their own. They share the intonation that the main sentence would have if the parentheses were not there. Thus a parenthesis occurring at the end of a sequence requiring Falling Intonation is said on low level pitch (Jones, 1979: 316). Example:“

- “I can't help it,” he said impatiently
 - “Will you marry me?” Susan asked
-

Function of Intonation.

According to Roach (2000:183-184), function of intonation can be divided into:
1. Attitudinal Function.

Intonation enables us to express emotions and attitudes as we speak, and this adds a special kind of meaning to spoken language. The notion of expressing an emotion or attitudes is itself a more complex one than is generally realized. Our pronunciation of different ways for example, if the sentence was ‘I want to buy a new car’ and you were to say it in the following ways: “pleading”, “angry”, “sad”, “happy”, “proud”, it is certain that at least some of your performances will be different from some others.

2. Accentual Function

Intonation helps to produce the effect of prominence on syllables that need to be perceived as stressed, and in particular the placing of tonic stress on a particular syllable marks out the word to which it belongs as the most important in the tone- unit.

Example:

- I have `plans to ,leave (I am planning to leave)
- I have ,plans to -leave (I have some plans/drawings/diagrams that I have to leave)

3. Grammatical Function

The listener is better able to recognize the grammar and syntactic structure of what is being said by using the information contained in the intonation.

It is usual to illustrate the grammatical function by inventing sentences which when written are ambiguous, and whose ambiguity can only be removed by using differences of intonation.

Example:

- `Those who `sold -quickly made a ,profit.
(Meaning: A profit was made by those who sold quickly)
- `Those who -sold quickly made a ,profit.
(Meaning: A profit was quickly made by those who sold).

The difference caused by the placement of the tone unit boundary is seen to be equivalent to giving two different paraphrases of the sentences.

4. Discourse Function

Looking at the act of speaking in a broader way, we can see that intonation can signal to the listener what is to be taken as “new” information and what is already “given”, can suggest when the speaker is indicating some sort of contrast or link with material in another tone- unit and, in conversation, can convey to the listener what kind of response is expected.

Example:

A: Have you got any free time this morning?

B: I might have later on if that meeting's off.

A: They were talking about putting it later.

B: You can't be sure.

Each sentence could be studied in isolation and be analyzed in terms of grammatical construction, lexical content and so on. But it is obvious that the sentence form part of some larger act of conversational interaction between two speakers; the sentences contain several references that presuppose shared knowledge (e.g. “that meeting” implies that both speakers know which meeting is being spoken about), and in some cases the meaning of a sentence can only be correctly interpreted in the light of knowledge of what has preceded it in the conversation (e.g. “You can't be sure”).

If we consider how intonation may be studied in relation to discourse, we can identify two main areas: one of them is the use of intonation to focus the listener's attention on aspects of the message that are more important, and the other is concerned with the regulation of conversational behavior.

3. DATA ANALYSIS

This chapter deals with the analysis and interpretation of the data. The data is analyzed in terminal contour based on British Intonation. The data is the students' intonation in reading dialogue of “giving information about robbery”. There are 4 data that are considered to represent all the data taken from the field. Data analysis attempts to find out the students' difficulties in using English

intonation at SMP N 2 JawaMarajaKabupatenSimalungun.

The setting of the recorded voice is at their classroom. In analyzing the dialogue, the researcher gives initial A for speaker A, B for speaker B. The recorded voices in data 1 are read by YuliAndriani (speaker A) and PutriMaysapuri (speaker B). The recorded voices in data 2 are read by Ade Irma Nasution (speaker A) and WidyaAndriatiPasaribu (speaker B). The recorded voices in data 3 are read by ThoatAmrullah (speaker A) and DidiSyahputra (speaker B). The recorded voices in data 4 are read by ZefriAriantoSitumorang (speaker A) and Imam Ramadhan (speaker B).

The Terminal Contour of the Data

Data 1

A : Are you the officer that is on duty today?

B : Yes, Please sit down. What can I do for you?

A : I want to report a robbery.

B : Where did it happen?

A : At my house.

B : At what time?

A : Last night.

B : I'd send someone round to check the house for the finger prints and I'd also

B : Were you at home?

A : No, My wife and I went away for the weekend. We just came back.

like to talk to your maid.

B : Were there no servants in the house?

A : Thank you sir. I'll send my maid immediately to you.

A : My maid was supposed to be there the whole time.

Data 2

She claims she heard nothing.

A : Are you the officer that is on duty today?

B : What is missing?

A : Some of my wife's jewelry. My wife keeps it locked in a drawer.

B : Yes, Please sit down. What can I do for you?

B : Was the drawer forced to be opened?

A : I want to report a robbery.

A : Yes, it was.

B : Where did it happen?

B : Was anything else removed from the drawer?

A : At my house.

A : No, there was nothing else of value.

B : At what time?

A : Last night.

A : Yes, it was.

B : Were you at home?

A : No, My wife and I went away for the weekend. We just came back.

B : Was anything else removed from the drawer?

A : No, there was nothing else of value.

B : I'd send someone round to check the house for the finger prints and I'd also like to talk to your maid.

B : Were there no servants in the house?

A : Thank you sir. I'll send my maid immediately to you.

A : My maid was supposed to be there the whole time.

She claims she heard nothing.

B : What is missing?

A : Some of my wife's jewelry. My wife keeps it locked in a drawer.

B : Was the drawer forced to be opened?

Analysis of Data

1. Are you the officer that is on duty today?

This sentence is a yes-no question. It requires a rising intonation at the end of the sentence. The data shows that there are some incorrect forms of the terminal contour spoken by the students. Such as:

a. Are you the officer that is on duty today? (incorrect)

b. Are you the officer that is on duty today? (incorrect)

c. Are you the officer that is on duty today? (incorrect)

(a, b, & c) show that the students fail to determine which word that is stressed and unstressed. The correct one is:

Are you the officer that is on duty today? (correct)

stressed and unstressed word. While (b & d) show that incorrect terminal contour occurs in both sentences. The correct one is

Yes, please sit down. What can I do for you? (correct)

2. Yes, please sit down. What can I do for you?

There are 2 kinds of sentence that can be found in this part of dialogue. First is positive statement which its function to allow. The other is w-h question. Both require falling intonation at the end of the sentence. But the word "yes" should be in level intonation; since its function to clarify the question before. The data shows that there are some incorrect forms of the terminal contour spoken by the students. Such as:

a. Yes, please sit down. What can I do for you? (incorrect)

b. Yes, please sit down. What can I do for you? (incorrect)

c. Yes, please sit down. What can I do for you? (incorrect)

d. Yes, please sit down. What can I do for you? (incorrect)

3. Where did it happen?

This sentence is a w-h question which requires a falling intonation at the end of the sentence. The data shows that there are some incorrect forms of terminal contour, such as:

a. Where did it happen? (incorrect)

b. Where did it happen? (incorrect)

c. Where did it happen? (incorrect)

(a) fails to determine that w-h question should be in falling intonation. (b) fails to determine the stressed and unstressed word. The terminal contour in (c) is quite strange. It is because there is a juncture in a sentence that should not be. The correct one is:

Where did it happen? (correct)

(a & c) show that the incorrect terminal contour occurs only in the w-h question. Both are correct in the first sentence. The word "yes" is in level intonation, and "please sit down" is in falling intonation. The problem exists in the next sentence. (a & c) fail to determine the falling intonation on a w-h question. Moreover (c) fails to determine the

4. At what time?

This is a w-h question; another form of when for asking time. It requires falling intonation. The data shows that there are some incorrect forms of terminal contour, such as:

At what time? (incorrect)

a. At what time?

(incorrect)

b. ~~At what time?~~

(incorrect)

(a & b) are incorrect because both use rising intonation at the end of the sentence. Moreover (b) fails to determine the stress and unstressed word. The correct intonation is:

At what time?

(correct)

5. Were you at home?

This sentence is a kind of yes-no question. It requires rising intonation at the end of the sentence. The data shows that there are some incorrect forms of terminal contour, such as:

a. Were you at home?

(incorrect)

b. Were you at home?

(incorrect)

Research Finding

After analyzing the data, the researcher discovers the students' difficulties in using English intonation at SMP N 2 Jawa Maraja Kabupaten Simalungun. The findings of this research are:

Difficulty in using correct juncture.

- a. This occurs frequently while the students speaking or reading. Usually its factors are shyness and doubt. If it is not being overcome quickly, this difficulty can cause the listener get confused since its voice faltered.
- b. Difficulty in using rising intonation for the first clause and falling intonation for the second clause in a compound sentence.
- c. This difficulty often occurs when the students are faced with combined intonation that exists in compound sentence. The rule is the first clause is in rising intonation and the second one is in falling intonation. The students do both clauses are in falling intonation and sometimes there is no juncture between those clauses.
- d. Difficulty in using falling intonation for w-h question and rising intonation for yes-no question.
- e. The students use very often rising intonation in asking something by w-h question and falling intonation in asking question which requires answer of yes or no. They do not know in what type question rising or falling intonation should be used.
- f. Difficulty in determining pitch and stress of a syllable.
- g. This is the very crucial difficulty of mastering correct intonation. The students have minimum knowledge about what words that have stress and high/low pitch. The effectiveness of an intonation depends very much on the pitch and stress.

Interpretation of Research Finding

Learning intonation for foreign learners is equally important with learning structure, speaking, and writing. But unfortunately, there are many students do not understand how to apply intonation either in speaking or reading. It is because they are not taught well about intonation. In short, intonation has been ignored in a learning English for foreign learners.

Many of the intonation faults described are both related to each other and to

difficulties with stress. For this reason faults need to be looked at in relation to stress, intonation, and the students' nationality. Speech in all language has different stress and intonation. To avoid the interference from the student's mother tongue, selected voice disciplines, and certain stress and intonation patterns must be firmly established in the student's mind.

The disciplines can be: control over voice range, and distinction between rising, falling and level tones. The patterns are: one which descends regularly from a high to a lower voice pitch, and one which brings out one or two strongly emphasized words.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Conclusions

This research attempts to discover the students' difficulties in using English intonation at SMP N 2 JawaMarajaKabupatenSimalungun. By analyzing the students' terminal contour, the researcher finds out the difficulties, namely:

- a. Difficulty in using correct juncture.
- b. Difficulty in using rising intonation for the first clause and falling intonation for the second clause in a compound sentence.
- c. Difficulty in using falling intonation for w-h question and rising intonation for yes-no question.
- d. Difficulty in determining pitch and stress of a syllable.

Suggestions

Based on the conclusion above, the writer suggests the following to be considered:

- a. The lecturer should teach the students about pronunciation and word stress, and must be able to repeat and the students can learn.
- b. The lecturer should teach the students the theory of rising and falling intonation and demonstrate to the students the pattern deliberately more audible
- c. Students should repeat the teacher's intonation pattern in close imitation. They must understand when rising, falling and level intonation is used. Besides that, students must be able to

detect where the changing pitch of voice is placed.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- [1] Linse, Caroline, T. 2005. *Practical Language Teaching : Young Learner*, Mc Graw-Hill.
- [2] Patel, M, F, 2008. *English Language Teaching*, Sunrise Publisher.
- [3] McCarthy, Peter A.D.1991. *English Pronunciation*, Cambridge: W. Heffer& Sons Ltd.
- [4] Cresswell,W.John. 2005. *Educational Reseach Planning, Conductin , and Evaluating Quantitative an Qualitative*.