The communicative value of the tone system of English

Paul Tench
English Language Studies
University of Wales, Cardiff, UK

The tone system of English, which as a minimum comprises a choice of falling, rising and falling-rising tones, operates with two distinct kinds of function. On the one hand, the tone system exponences a set of options available to a speaker in respect of the status of the information contained in an intonation unit (or tone unit/group). On the other, it exponences a set of options in respect of the communicative function of an utterance; for example, it indicates whether a speaker is telling or asking, commanding or requesting, dismissing or bidding farewell, etc. It is also possible to argue that the tone system operates in a third function of intonation, namely the expression of altitude, but it is argued elsewhere (Tench, 1990) that although the attitudinal function relies on the tone system itself it is expressed in variations of tones; for example a high fall indicates, in addition to its informational and communicative 'meaning', strength of feeling; a low fall indicates a relative mildness of expression; the rise-fall represents further variation to the 'meanings' of a fall, namely greater emotional involvement. There are other possible variations too, and variations also to the rising and falling-rising tones.

In this paper, I wish to present the case for recognizing the communicative value of the tone system of English without reference to the potential for additional attitudinal marking. However it will be necessary first to distinguish the communicative role of the tone system from its informational role. Consider the following:

1   The farmers have lifted their block\ade

It is said as one intonation unit, and therefore, as one piece of information. The underlining represents the tonic syllable, which indicates that *blockade* is the tonic word. The final lexical item is made tonic when all the information in the intonation unit is new; this is a case of broad focus. The accent before

the tonic syllable indicates a falling tone which runs through that syllable; it would run through any syllables following it to the end of the intonation unit if they were any. The fall would indicate that the speaker was treating this information as major (Halliday, 1967; 1994).

Now consider the same wording with a rising tone in *blockade*:

2   The farmers have lifted their block/<u>ade</u>

This suggests the speaker has not completed their message and intends to continue; it would be appropriate to add *points du suspension* (...) to express this. The rising intonation indicates information that is incomplete. Such an intonation unit is normally followed (eventually, though not necessarily immediately) by a unit containing a falling tone. Thus the sequence of / followed by \ is very common indeed.

However, the rising tone may have another 'meaning'. Consider the following utterance:

3   The farmers have lifted their block\<u>ade</u> | to Ka/<u>va</u>lla

The upright line marks the boundary between two intonation units. The first unit is identical to 1 above. The second contains an additional piece of information, but the marking of it with a rising tone in contrast to the fall of the first indicates that the speaker is treating it as minor information (Halliday, 1967; 1994). Minor information is simply less important, in the speaker's estimation, than major.

A falling-rising tone is another option; its meaning can be conveniently labelled as implication (Tench, 1990) - the actual implication having to be interpreted from shared information that has not been made explicit. Consider, for example:

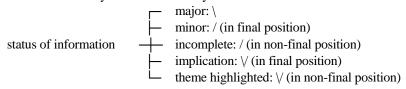4   The farmers have lifted their block\/<u>ade</u>

The complete fall and rise of the tone is achieved within the tonic syllable; if, however, there had been other syllables following up to the end of the intonation unit, the fall and rise elements would have been spread through the 'tail'. This tone is used to give a double message, one which is verbalized and one which is not. The non-verbalized message must be apparent to the listener otherwise the effect is lost and the speaker's intention thwarted. In one possible scenario, the farmers' blockade might have been used as an excuse for not travelling; thus the implication would then be "Now you've no excuse for not visiting me!"

The fall-rise also occurs in a non-final position as in:

5   The \/<u>far</u>mers | have lifted their block\<u>ade</u>

In this case there are two intonation units and thus two pieces of information. The first unit consists solely of the subject of the clause acting as the theme (Halliday 1967-68; 1994). If the speaker wishes to, the theme can be treated as a separate piece of information, thus enhancing its prominence in the total message. And further, if the speaker wishes to, the theme can be highlighted even more by having it intoned with a fall-rise. (For a full discussion, see Tench 1990: 224-30.)

These then are the choices in the tone system for the indication of information status. A rising tone before a fall indicates incomplete information; after a fall, minor information. A falling-rising tone before a fall indicates theme highlighting; after a fall, or independently, it indicates an implication, an unspoken message that the hearer is expected to interpret. A falling tone indicates major information, whether it is preceded or followed by either a rise or a fall-rise. In some respects it acts as a dominant tone, which can be satellited by other tones. The system is therefore:

                           major: \

                           minor: / (in final position)

status of information   incomplete: / (in non-final position)

                           implication: \/ (in final position)

                           theme highlighted: \/ (in non-final position)

Tones and the Communicative Functions

The tone system is also used in English for the indication of communicative functions. 'Communicative function' is the term that has been generally accepted within the language teaching fraternity for what philosophers and other linguists variously call 'speech acts', 'discourse functions', 'illocutions', etc.

The traditional view (Sweet, Daniel Jones, Armstrong & Ward, H. E. Palmer, Kingdon, Schubiger, Gimson, O'Connor & Arnold, Crystal, Halliday, Brown, Cruttenden, Roach) is that statements - to sound like real statements - are accompanied by a falling tone, but genuine questions requiring an answer of either yes or no are accompanied by a rising tone. Commands have a fall, so do interjections, but question tags have either a fall or a rise depending on the speaker's sense of certainty or uncertainty. Questions with so-called *wh*-items are usually accompanied by a fall, too. This traditional view is largely borne out by extensive intonation analysis, but it only scratches the surface.

Before I begin a detailed discussion, I will consider briefly a question that must have come to mind. If the tone system of English realizes two quite different functions in spoken discourse, how can one tell when a rise, for instance, is indicating information status and when it is indicating a communicative function? The phonetic answer is easy in theory, but sometimes difficult in practice: a rise is operating in its informational capacity when it belongs to an intonation unit that is dependent upon another. When indicating either incomplete or minor information, its intonation unit is tied very closely - often with no pause - to another unit; such a unit acts as a kind of satellite to the other. The same is true of the non-final fall-rise indicating the highlighting of a theme; it is closely attached to another unit without pause. However, when a rise is operating in its communicative capacity, it is operating in an independent intonation unit, which is often separated from preceding and following units by a pause, or even silence, or, of course, by a change of speaker. Furthermore, the rise for information status is usually confined to neutral rise, from low to mid; whereas the rise for communicative functions not only uses a neutral rise - and in that respect is wholly indistinguishable in form from its use in information status - it does have the potential for high and low variations to add an attitudinal dimension to the question (or whatever). However, I do concede that in much informal conversation, with its false starts, hesitations, abandonments, etc, it is often difficult to apply the criteria of dependent and independent intonation units. In such cases, we rely more heavily upon grammatical and pragmatic cues from the context.

You will notice that falling tones are associated not with satellite, dependent, units of intonation, but with the more central, nuclear, independent, units. This befits its designation of bearing major information. This particular status of the fall is bolstered by the observation that usually between half and two-thirds of all tones are falls. Prepared or rehearsed discourse has a relatively high proportion of rises, which demonstrates the planning of incomplete information with complete, but even so, half the tones are falls; a higher proportion of falls is found in unprepared unrehearsed, speech, up to 65%. Falls dominate, in both frequency and function, and this dominance is manifest in the tone system in communicative functions, too.

The dominance of the falling tone is manifest in two ways: first of all, even from the brief introduction to communicate functions given so far, there are more functions that use the fall than use the rise:

Communicative functions	with fall	with rise

4

statements	–	
yes/no questions		–
wh-questions	–	
question tags	–	–
commands	–	
interjections	–	

Secondly, the fall is associated with the speaker knowing something, telling something, and in the case of interjections, expressing their own feelings: the speaker's knowledge, authority and feelings dominate. On the other hand, the rise is associated with the speaker not knowing and therefore having to ask. The difference in the use of falls and rises in question tags mirrors that distinction: a fall represents the speaker being pretty sure and the rise the speaker being unsure. Generally speaking, a fall represents dominance and a rise deference.

But what about those questions that begin with *wh*-words (*who, whose, whom, what, which, where, when, why, how*)? Surely, they are questions that indicate the speaker's lack of knowledge, but they are accompanied with falls - and falls are associated with knowledge. The answer is quite simple. In the case of the *wh*-questions it is only one part of the whole proposition that is unknown. For instance, if I ask

    6   What are you going to \do tonight

it presupposes that I know that you are going to do something tonight; there is only one part of the whole proposition that I do not know, but the rest I do know. If, on the other hand, I ask

    7   Are you going to /do anything tonight

I am indicating that I do not know if the proposition (that you are going to do anything tonight) is valid or not. In the *wh*-question, I know that you have a plan; in the yes/no question, I do not know.

The fall in 6 indicates my knowing; the rise in 7 indicates by not knowing and furthermore, my deference to the knowledge that I presume my interlocutor possesses. So, although it may at first seem that a falling tone in a *wh*-question counters the general principle, it does in fact confirm it.

This explanation of *wh*-questions having a fall can even be illustrated in very common questions like

    8   What's the \time
    9   What's your \name
    10 Where do you \live

11   How \are you

The fall in each of these questions represents the speaker's presupposition of the validity of an underlying proposition, even if it is so obvious that to question it sounds odd: the time must be something, you must have a name, you must live somewhere, you must be in some kind of condition, and in the case of 12:

12   Who \are you

you must be somebody!

Three points must be noted. The first is that we are, in fact, again handling a speaker's perception of the communicative function, whether that perception is, in our estimation, accurate or not. A speaker may act as knowing something, but in fact be quite mistaken, as in

13   Twenty per cent means a \quarter

The speaker might in fact lie, but still acts as the one who knows and tells. Similarly, a speaker can ask a question even when they know the answer, what we call a rhetorical question; but the speaker has still got to use the appropriate rising tone to make it sound like a question:

14   Is that the right way to /do it

The second point is that there is always more than one way to intone an utterance. What appears on the surface as a statement can be intoned as a question; 13 could also be intoned as follows:

15   Twenty per cent means a /quarter

meaning something like a genuine, but challenging question "Is that what you really think?" And 14 could be intoned with a fall:

16   Is that the right way to \do it

meaning something like a genuine, but challenging statement: "I think that is the wrong way to do it".

Probably every example that has been given so far is capable of being intoned differently. But there is at least a tendency for declarative clauses, *wh*-interrogative clauses, imperative clauses and interjections to be intoned with a fall to effect, respectively, statements, *wh*-questions, commands and expressions of personal feelings; and for polar interrogative clauses to be intoned with a rise to effect a yes/no question.

The third point is an extension to the second. Although there is an observable tendency for declarative clauses etc to be intoned in a particular way, it is equally observable that clause types and communicative functions do not always match - as in 15 and 16 above. The tone system, however, always indicates the communicative functions, whatever the clause type may

be. It would be quite wrong to suggest that declarative clauses are realized by falls; it is not the clause that is realized by a tone, it is the communicative function. 15 and 16 above illustrate this. We can also illustrate this with a consideration of the intonation to the following imperative clauses:

17 Stop \talking
18 Take that silly \look off your face
19 Have a cup of \tea
20 Stir \well
21 Have a nice /time
22 Say that a/gain (and I'll \hit you)

17 and 18 would no doubt be regarded as commands, and the speaker's authority is expressed in the choice of the fall. 19 and 20 are also imperatives with a falling tone, even though they are not, strictly speaking, commands; 19 might be interpreted as a recommendation, 20 as an instruction, but in both cases, the speaker still considers him- or herself to be the dominant partner in the exchange. 21 would seem strange with a fall, because we know that we cannot command a person to have a nice time; such a result is outside the speaker's control; 21 is, in fact, a wish and because it is the listener's feelings that are affected, not the speaker's own feelings, a rise is the more appropriate choice of tone. 22 is part of a threat; it is the opposite of a command, the speaker does not wish the listener to repeat what they have already said. The rise, in this case, might simply be an indication of incompleteness, because the substance of the threat is yet to come.

It might also be noted that not all commands are necessarily issued in imperative clauses, but they must be accompanied by a fall to indicate the speaker's authority, e.g.

23 Thou shalt have no other gods be\fore me
24 All library books must be returned by \Friday
25 Silence in \court
26 A\way with you all

Dominance and Deference in Communicative Functions

We have seen that the traditional description of the intonation of communicative functions associates falls with statements, *wh*-questions, commands and interjections - all displaying the speaker's dominance in respect to information, authority and the expression of personal feelings - and

rises with yes/no questions - displaying the speaker's deference to the hearer's assumed knowledge.

There are, however, very many more communicative functions than those just listed. The traditional list is based on the types of clauses recognized by grammarians: declarative for statements, two types of interrogatives for two types of questions, imperatives for commands, and verbless for interjections. I have also hinted at another point, and that is that there are many more communicative functions than those recognised in traditional grammars. I have made reference to wishes, requests, instructions, recommendations, acknowledgement of the listener's personal feelings, and there are, of course, other functions like greeting, bidding farewell, thanking, apologizing, congratulating, and so on - all things we use language for.

Now, there is no special tone for each separate communicative function; the resources of intonation are simply not sufficient for so many different functions. The tone system simply indicates the speaker's status vis a vis the hearer: either as dominant or deferent. All the communicative functions can be grouped into three kinds: relating to knowledge in respect to information, reality and belief; to authority in respect of influencing other people's action ('suasion'); and to social interaction (see Leech & Svartvik 1994 as the basis for this classification). We will now consider each of these three groups of communicative functions and show how the tone system operates to indicate dominance and deference.

i) Information, reality and belief

In the area of information, reality and belief, there is a little more to be said. A fall indicates the speaker's dominance (knowledge) and a rise their deference to the presumed superior knowledge of the addressee. This is best seen in pairs of contrasting intonation units, as in 13 and 15, 14 and 16. The case of tags illustrates the general principle well:

27   He's finished with my \book | \hasn't he

which sounds as if the speaker is pretty sure of the fact, and

28   He's finished with my \book | /hasn't he

which sounds as if the speaker is not so sure.

In a study of the succession of communicative functions in an ordinary piece of spontaneous informal dialogue (Tench 1990:318-333) the following functions were noted with falling tones: statements, answers, explanations, reports, agreement, acknowledgement, descriptions, suppositions, hypotheses,

deductions. They all presuppose the speaker's dominance in knowing and telling.

The functions with an accompanying rise were questions, appeals and requests, which are all functions in which the speaker acknowledges knowledge, or authority, in the addressee

Other communicative functions that display speaker's knowledge and therefore, are accompanied by a fall, are denials, affirmations, and, of course, disagreement. The expression of doubts and hope are, like suppositions and hypotheses, expressions of belief rather than knowledge; in these cases, the speaker's dominance is realised in the observation that it is the speaker's doubts, hopes, suppositions, hypotheses, etc that are expressed. Expressions of doubt, for example, are typically accompanied by a falling tone:

29   I doubt if he would \come

30   I wouldn't have \thought so

31   I can't imagine he \would

It is sometimes argued that the fall-rise properly expresses doubt. But this is not the case. In 29, doubt is expressed lexically, and in 30 and 31, by other wordings. It is true that these three utterances could have had a fall-rise, but the fall-rise itself does not mean doubt - otherwise 29 would have to be considered as doubly doubting. The fall-rise simply means that an extra message, an implication, is in the mind of the speaker, eg.

32   I doubt if he would \/come

33   I \/doubt if he would come

If we knew, or invented a context, we could speculate on possible implications; perhaps for 32 "So we'd better select someone else as chairman", and for 33 "but, of course, I can't be sure".

Similarly it has been argued that the expression of possibility is indicated by a fall-rise. Again, this is not so. Possibility can be indicated lexically as in 34, or grammatically as in 35

34   It's \possible

35   I \might be able to do it

and the expression of possibility is quite happily accompanied by a fall. As with doubt, a fall-rise merely indicates implication; thus

36   It's \/possible

and

37   I \/might be able to do it

might imply "but I can't be certain".

But what difference would a rising tone make in these instances?

38   It's /<u>pos</u>sible

39   I /<u>might</u> be able to do it

The communicative function is now quite different. Imagine that somebody presents the proposition that a small country like Luxembourg could win the World Cup in football and your answer is 38, what you are doing is conceding to your addressee that the proposition might be valid; you are deferring to the possible validity of the addressee's statement. Or, in the case of 39, you are unexpectedly invited to participate in a meeting as the chairman in a week's time; you concede the possibility. A concession is a kind of deference to somebody else's proposition; as such, it is signalled by a rising tone.

Contradictions are also signed by a rising tone. You may wish to contest somebody's claim that you forgot all about some arrangement, by saying

40   Oh no I /<u>didn't</u>

Contradictions are regularly accompanied by a rise; it seems to signal that the other person may have grounds for making an assumption, e.g. in this case, your non-appearance at the meeting, and you concede that.

Challenges also regularly take a rising tone. In one sense, a challenge, like a contradiction, is a concession to the other person's statement of fact, but there is an element of enquiry about it, too: "Are you sure of your facts?" In response to someone's statement that her grandfather is travelling to Timbuktu, you might respond:

41   Your grandfather's travelling to Timbuk/<u>tu</u>

Because a challenge by its very nature, is a strong expression, it is often accompanied by a rise to a high level.

Concessions, contradictions and challenges all typically take a declarative clause structure, but because of the sense of deference inherent in these communicative functions, a rising tone is appropriate. Challenges can, in fact, take the form of any clause type, because in essence, a speaker who challenges uses the wording of the original, and the rise indicates as much as anything else: "Is that really what you meant to say?" If the original was "Let's go to the beach", the challenging response might be

42   Go to the beach on a day like /<u>this</u>

The term 'echo question' is often used when an interrogative clause is being challenged. If you are asked if you are going to meet somebody who you happen to dislike, you might respond

43   Am I going to meet /<u>him</u>

with the meaning of "Can you be really serious in asking me such a question?" *Wh*-echo questions are common, with the tonic on the *wh*-item itself:

> 44   /<u>What</u> did you say you're going to do

> 45   /<u>When</u> is he coming

which can either have the force of a challenge or be a genuine request for a repetition of something you mistook or misheard.

Rises, of course, are most typical of enquiries, elicitations for information on the validity of a proposition, which are usually structured as polar interrogatives:

> 46   Are you going a/<u>way</u> for Christmas

But just as rises can accompany declarative clauses, falls can accompany polar interrogatives. There is a kind of question that a speaker can employ not so much to make an enquiry, rather to guide the listener to taking a course of action or agreeing to an idea

> 47   Are you \<u>sat</u>isfied now

really means "I think you should be ...", and

> 48   Can you pay me by \<u>cheque</u> then

really means "That's what I want you to do".

These 'conducive' questions are not genuine enquiries after information, but are opinions stated in disguise. Guesses often take the form of a polar interrogative, but take a falling tone:

> 49   Have you heard all this be\<u>fore</u>

(See Hudson 1975 for further discussion)

If 49 had been accompanied with a rise, it would have been interpreted as a genuine question, but the choice of a fall indicates the speaker's guess that the other has indeed heard all this before.

Denials can follow the same pattern. We have seen above, that a denial takes a falling tone, because the speaker is sure of the facts. Denials may appear in polar interrogative form, as well as declarative, but the sense of enquiry of the polar interrogative is countered by the fall:

> 50   Have I ever let you \<u>down</u>

meaning, of course, "I have never ..."

Exclamations often take the form of a negative polar interrogative, e.g. *Isn't it hot*. A frequently used expression of exclamation when looking at a young infant is

> 51   Isn't he like his \<u>mot</u>her

The falling tone makes this utterance unmistakably a comment.

Two other typical communicative functions that combine polar interrogatives and falling tones are prompts and lead-ins. A prompt takes the form of a question, but its real intention is to get someone to comment on a matter. This is a technique often used by people interviewing on radio and television; here is an example from Brown's (1990) broadcast data:

52　Do you be\lieve | that prices can be cur\tailed

What the interviewer intended was a prompt to commit the politician to expressing an opinion, i.e. "I want you to tell me whether ..."

Lead-ins are similar. A preliminary utterance to telling a joke often takes this form:

53　Have you heard the joke about the two poli\ticians

What this really means is "I'm going to tell you a joke about ...". Similarly, an utterance like

54　Do you know about Mr \Evans

said without giving you a chance to reply is in fact just another way of saying "Let me tell you about ..."

We have seen, then, that a falling tone indicates the speaker's knowledge and certainty in respect of information, reality and belief: they know, and tell. A rising tone, on the other hand, indicates a deference to the other person's presumed knowledge: they don't know and ask or they acknowledge some degree of validity about the other person's knowledge. In general terms, a fall indicates the speaker's dominance, a rise the speaker's deference.

ii) 'Suasion'

In a similar way, a fall indicates dominance in the realm of suasion, ie. influencing people's action; a fall indicates the speaker's authority. Whether there is justification for such authority, or not, is not the issue: the speaker can act as one with authority. A rise indicates deference to the other person's authority or decision. The difference between a command and a request illustrates this. A person can only command if they have the authority to do so - whether the authority is legal, moral, physical, etc. With a request, a person asks another to do something, leaving that person the ultimate decision to act, or not.

Compare, for instance, the difference between

55　Turn the \radio off

and

56   Turn the /ra̲dio off

The second sounds much gentler, more polite. Indeed, a person who regards themselves as having authority, may nevertheless decide to project themselves as less authoritative by deliberately choosing to use a rising tone. In general terms, then, in the realm of suasion, a fall indicates authority: they decide, and tell; a rise indicates deference to the other person's authority and decision: they don't decide, but leave the decision to the other.

We will now consider other communicative functions from this point of view. A parent exercising authority over a child might say:

57   Don't talk with your \mou̲th full

On the other hand, that parent could try to achieve the same result by a different tactic:

58   Don't talk with your /mou̲th full

A prohibition requires a fall; a plea, a rise.

What is the difference in tactics between 59 or 60?

59   Come \o̲n

60   Come /o̲n

The first could be interpreted as a demand: "this is what you have to do"; the second is an example of coaxing: "I do wish you would ...". The first has a ring of authority about it; the speaker has decided what you should do, and tells you. The second has a ring of wishing or pleading; it may indeed be uttered with a degree of forcefulness, but the speaker is coaxing rather than demanding. Commands, prohibitions and demands suggest speaker-dominance; requests, pleas and coaxing suggest deference - but, tactfully deployed, may achieve the results desired by the speaker!

Advice and recommendation are usually accompanied by falls because they contain a degree of authority on the part of the speaker. Suggestion and invitation take a rise for, by their very nature, they allow the other person the final decision. Let us consider some examples:

61   You should take a little \brea̲k

62   You could take a little /brea̲k

The combination of the fall with a clause containing should will certainly be interpreted as advice: "That's what I think you should do". The rise and could are more likely to be thought of as communicating a suggestion: "That's one possibility you could consider doing". The whole idea of advice contains the element of respect for the authority a person has. Suggestions are alternative courses of action, from which the other person can select; a

suggestion may also be a single course of action for the other person to consider; either way, it is the other person who is left with the decision.

Now, if I follow the advice of 61 or the suggestion of 62, I might possibly ask, "Well, what shall I do?" The reply might be 63, or possibly 64

63   How about a cup of \coffee

64   How about a cup of /coffee

In this pair, the wording is parallel, but again the fall of 63 expresses advice and the rise of 64 a suggestion.

Recommendations and invitations follow the same pattern, with the speaker's dominance in the former reflected in an accompanying fall, and the speaker's deference to the other person's decision in the latter in a rise.

65   You ought to try this new \coffee

66   Would you like to try this new /coffee

67   Have a \go

68   Have a /go (="Wouldn't you like to ...?")

However, if the lexical verbs *suggest, invite, request, plead* are used, they are not accompanied with a rise.

69   I suggest a cup of \coffee

70   I would like to invite you for \dinner

71   We request the pleasure of your \company

72   I'm \pleading with you

Why do these take a fall, when, after all, they actually contain the verbs that refer to the communicative function? One answer might be their greater deal of formality, but whatever the degree of formality, that should not alter the basic type of communication that they are. A better answer is that these utterances are really announcements of a suggestion, invitation, request and plea; announcements derive from a speaker's decision: "This is what I'm going to do - I'm going to ...". And speaker's decisions are indicated by falls.

Promises take a fall; the speaker has decided on a course of action and seeks to guarantee it:

73   I'll let you know to\morrow

74   We promise you a quick re\ply

Threats take a fall, too; a threat has all the features of a promise, but with a negative effect on the person addressed

75   (Say that a/gain) and I'll \hit you

76   Don't you \dare tell lies

Offers take a rise: the speaker offers a course of action, but allows the other person to decide:

77　Can I /<u>help</u> you in any way

78　Another cup of /<u>cof</u>fee

Warnings also take a rise; although the speaker warns, it is the person warned who has to take the decision; the speaker recognizes this, with the choice of the rising tone.

79　Look where you're /<u>go</u>ing

80　/<u>Careful</u>

Offers and warnings can be announced by using the lexical verbs *offer* and *warn*; and as announcements, they are likely to be indicated by falls:

81　We offer the best service in the \<u>town</u>

82　I'm \<u>warn</u>ing you

Appeals take a rise. Appeals are attempts by a speaker to get the other person to re-consider a course of action, e.g.

83　(A: I'll have to throw this coffee a\<u>way</u>)

　　B: You don't have to do /<u>that</u>

84　(A: But the coffee tastes \<u>aw</u>ful)

　　B: It's not /<u>so</u> bad

But the intention of an appeal is often to get the other person to consider a course of action favourably; this kind of appeal often takes the form of *you see, you must understand,* e.g.

85　You /<u>see</u> (I've \<u>got</u> to pay him today)

86　You must under/<u>stand</u> (we can't af\<u>ford</u> a holiday)

The appeal may be directed at the other person's general knowledge, or particular local knowledge, or knowledge of a particular word; this kind of appeal usually takes the form of *you know*, e.g.

87We wanted to go to - you /<u>know</u> | that little place in \<u>I</u>taly | that's inde\<u>pen</u>dent

88　(A: I'm going to get the \<u>tickets</u>)

　　B: The /<u>tick</u>ets

　　A: You /<u>know</u> | the tickets for the \<u>cir</u>cus

89Then they wanted to - you /<u>know</u> what I mean | what they did to \<u>Nixon</u>

The use of the lexical verb *appeal*, however, as in the other cases above, suggests an announcement rather than an appeal; hence a falling tone:

90　I'm appealing to your common \<u>sense</u>

Thus, in general terms, communicative functions that display the speaker's dominance - authority, decision-taking, announcing - are

accompanied by a fall; those that display the speaker's deference to the other's authority or their right to decision-taking take a rise.

iii) Social exchanges

The third category of communicative functions is social exchanges. These kinds of communication do not involve either the provision or elicitation of information, nor are they primarily intended to influence other people's action; they are simply intended to establish and maintain relationships between people; for instance, greeting and bidding farewell, introductions, attracting attention, apologizing, sympathizing, wishing, thanking and so on. Once again, some of these functions seem naturally to require a fall, others a rise, and yet others either. Let us take greetings and farewells as examples.

Farewells are typically accompanied by a rising tone, e.g.

91   Good/<u>bye</u>
92   Cheeri/<u>o</u>
93   See you a/<u>gain</u>

However, if the parting is regarded as only temporary, a fall accompanies the farewell, as if a piece of information is being given, e.g.

94   See you this \<u>eve</u>ning

Greetings take either a fall or a rise, e.g.

95   Good \<u>mor</u>ning
96   Good /<u>mor</u>ning

What is the difference? Falls tend to focus attention on the speaker's feelings, whereas the social functions in which the other person's feelings, or attention, are in focus, are expressed by means of the rise. In farewells, we attend to the other person's feelings: we are thinking of them, rather than ourselves, when we bid them farewell. If you say goodbye with a fall, you create a very different situation:

97   Good\<u>bye</u>

It sounds very much like a dismissal in which the speaker's feelings dominate. The speaker's feelings dominate even mere provocatively in

98   Good \<u>rid</u>dance

which will only take a fall - a rise in 98 would sound like mocking.

But what is the difference between 95 and 96? A rise in a greeting seems to suggest an interest in the person(s) addressed; O'Connor & Arnold

(1973: 66) describe it as "bright" and "friendly". This is not meant to suggest that the fall is unfriendly or unconcerned with the person(s) addressed; all it means is that the greeting with a fall is a plain greeting, possibly a little formal: "I am greeting you". The rise seems to mean: "I am acknowledging you as I greet".

The same difference can be detected in thanking. A fall means: "I am thanking you".

99   \Thank you

A rise seems to mean "I am acknowledging you as the one I thank" (Knowles 1987: 195):

100   /Thank you

Greetings and thanking seem to take a fall as a neutral tone, but a rise to indicate an interest in the other person's(s') feelings. Greetings on the phone, however, generally take a rise:

101   Hell/o

The speaker seems to be acknowledging the initiative taken by the caller and thus defers to the caller's attention. (This was noted as early as 1945 by Pike (1945: 68); see also Leech & Svartvik 1994: 151).

Welcomes take a fall; the speaker's sense of welcome seems to dominate:

102   \Welcome

103   How nice to \see you

104   Come on \in

Good wishes take a rise; inevitably it is the other person's(s') feelings that are uppermost in the speaker's mind:

105   Happy /birthday

106   I hope you /pass

107   Remember me to your /father

Toasts and congratulations take a fall; they are announcements of the speaker's feelings about somebody else's success or happiness. Typical toasts are:

108   To be bride and \groom

109   Here's to a wonderful old \lady

and congratulations:

110   Well \done

111   Congratulations on your en\gagement

Praise, appreciation, approval and disapproval are all accompanied by a falling tone: it is the speaker's feelings that dominate, e.g.

112   That's \great

113   You shouldn't have gone to so much \trouble

Expressions of regret take a rising tone, as befits a situation in which the other person's(s') feelings are in focus:

114   I'm ever so /sorry

Apologies also take a rise, as they are regrets over what the speaker has done:

115   I do beg your /pardon

116   We won't let that happen a/gain

Sympathy also takes a rise:

117   That's a /pity

118   I was sorry to hear about your father's /accident

When regret is communicated via exclamations, however, the exclamation retains its falling tone:

119   What a \pity

120   How \awful

A request for forgiveness follows the normal pattern for requests, with a rise. And granting forgiveness or reassurance is also accompanied by a rise as the speaker acknowledges the guilty person's feelings:

121   That's all /right

122   It doesn't /matter

Thus the choice of fall or rise in social exchanges follows the same pattern of other communicative functions: the fall indicates that the speaker's feelings are dominant in an utterance, and the rise indicates a deference to the addressee's(s') feelings.

Conclusion

I have sought to show, by many examples, that in addition to the role of expressing the speaker's choice in respect of status of information, the tone system has a role in expressing the speaker's choice of type of interaction with the addressee. It is a simple system that covers a wide range of communicative functions; I would claim that it covers in fact all types of communicative function, with the possible exception of calls/vocatives and attention-seeking which quite possibly involves fall-rises in English - but that would be another paper.

The above presentation offers the immediate opportunity for contrastive analysis and the analysis of foreign accent.

References

Armstrong L.E.& Ward I.C. (1931) *A Handbook of English Intonation,* 2nd ed. Cambridge, Heffer

Brown G.(1990) *Listening to Spoken English*, 2nd ed. London, Longman

Cruttenden A.(1986) *Intonation*, Cambridge CUP

Cruttenden A.(1994) *Gimson's Pronunciation of English*, London, Ed Arnold

Crystal D. (1969) *Prosodic Systems and Intonation in English*, Cambridge, CUP

Crystal D. (1975) *The English Tone of Voice*, London, Ed Arnold

Halliday M.A.K. (1967) *Intonation and Grammar in British English*, The Hague, NL, Mouton

Halliday M.A.K. (1967-68) Notes on Transitivity and Theme in English, *Journal of Linguistics*, *3*: 37-81; 199-244; *4*: 179-218

Halliday M.A.K. (1994) *An Introduction to Functional Grammar*, 2nd ed. London, Edward Arnold

Hudson, R.A. (1975) The meaning of Questions, *Language, 51*: 1-31

Jones D. (1975) *An Outline of English Phonetics*, 9th ed. Cambridge, Cup

Kingdon R. (1958) *The Groundwork of English Intonation*, London, Longman

Leech G. & Svartvik J. (1994) *A Communicative Grammar of English*, 2nd ed. London, Longman

O'Connor J.D. (1980) *Better English Pronunciation*, 2nd ed. Cambridge, CUP

Palmer H.E. (1922) *English Intonation (with systematic exercises)*, Cambridge, CUP

Pike K.L. (1945) *The Intonation of American English*, Ann Arbor, Univ. of Michigan Press

Roach P. (1991) *English Phonetics and Phonology*, 2nd ed. Cambridge, CUP

Schubigen M. (1958) *English Intonation, its Form and Function*, Tübingen, Germany, Niemeyer

Sweet H. (1980) *A Primer of Phonetics*, Oxford, Clarendon Press

Tench P. (1990) *The Roles of Intonation in English Discourse*, Frankfurt a.M., Peter Lang

Appendix

Pronunciation teaching materials consulted:

Halliday M.A.K. (1970) *A Course in Spoken English: Intonation*, Oxford, OUP
O'Connor J.D. & Arnold G. (1973) *Intonation of Colloquial English*, 2nd ed. Cambridge, CUP
Gimson A.C. (1975) *A Practical Course of English Pronunciation: a Perceptual Approach*, London, Ed Arnold
Baker A. (1981) *Ship or Sheep?*, 2nd ed. Cambridge, CUP
Baker A. 1982) *Tree or Three?* Cambridge, CUP
Hooke R. & Rowell J. (1982) *A Handbook or English Pronunciation*, London, Ed Arnold
Thompson I. (1981) *Intonation Practice*, Oxford, OUP
O'Connor J.D. & Fletcher C. (1989) *Sounds English*, Oxford, OUP
Rogerson P. & Gilbert J.B. (1990) *Speaking Clearly*, Cambridge, CUP
Cunningham S. & Bowler W. (1990) *Headway Intermediate Pronunciation*, Oxford, OUP