

## ○ **M.A.K. HALLIDAY AND W. GREAVES, *INTONATION IN THE GRAMMAR OF ENGLISH***

(LONDON: EQUINOX. 2008. PP. IX, 224. CD ROM)

I nail my colours to the mast first. Meeting Halliday's ideas on language in the early 1980s had an impact as profound as that of reading Greer on women, or Camus on outsiders. And later, in teaching phonology and pronunciation, my central reference has remained Halliday's 1970 work *A Course in Spoken English: Intonation*. It has been a tantalizing wait, then, for this new publication by Michael Halliday and William Greaves. But its development over the past ten years, which included extensive trialling with students in Canada and elsewhere, has fully paid off in the achievement of depth, clarity and integrity. This book represents a unique contribution to the scholarship of phonology.

One of the most powerful dimensions of systemic functional linguistics has been its recognition of the spoken features of rhythm and intonation (prosody) as grammatical. Thus, far from being simply paralinguistic, prosody serves to systematically realise meaning in all three metafunctions of language: *Ideational*, where language construes experience; *Interpersonal*, where it enacts relationships; and *Textual*, where it engenders discourse.

How does the current publication sit in relation to phonology worldwide; and in relation to the teaching/learning of L2 pronunciation? First, the field of phonology remains primarily centred upon the segmentals of speech, with attention in recent years additionally being extended to macro issues of language variety (English as a Lingua Franca) and speaker identity (see in particular the 2005 special issue of *TESOL Quarterly*, 39/3). However, prosody – in the middle, and in the centre, so to speak – remains relatively neglected, notwithstanding work in the Hallidayan tradition (for a summary see Greaves, 2007), as well as that of the Birmingham school. Second, while L2 pronunciation is repeatedly identified as an area of prime importance to learners and their teachers, the majority of existing materials inadequately or even wrongly present the prosodic features of English (a notable exception, dating from 1994, being Halina Zawadzki's *In Tempo*). This new publication by Halliday and Greaves will make a major contribution both directly and indirectly towards that understanding of prosody which is fundamental to effective teaching of the spoken features of English.

*Intonation in the Grammar of English* is in two main parts, with a third providing an analysis (coding) guide.

**Part 1**, chapters 1–4, is concerned with the study of speech sounds. It explores the acoustic dimension of speech; describes its prosodic organisation; and specifies the role of intonation within the lexico-grammar of English. The descriptive insights offered by computer-based instrumental analysis are indeed impressive, and are laid out here in remarkably clear fashion. But I also liked the caveat (p. 5) that *human* perception of speech sounds is still foundational to analysis; and would note that such awareness is not often easily developed by language teachers, particularly perhaps when that language is ‘their own’.

**Part 2**, chapters 5–7, expands on the three systems of Tonality (taking the form of Tone Groups), Tonicity (placement of the Tonic), and Tone (melodic contour). These ‘3 Ts’ are used to analyse the functions of intonation in each of the three metafunctions, beginning with *Textual*, and working through *Interpersonal* to *Ideational*. Each chapter proceeds to set out principles and examples with unalloyed clarity of meaning. A minor issue rests with the actual terms, which although transparent to those who know them, often, due to phonetic similarity, represent a source of confusion for students.

The section dealing with the *Textual* metafunction shows how the tone group (in ‘the sounding’), maps onto the clause (in ‘the wording’) as the unmarked option, the latter which is suggested to constitute 60% of ‘continuous dialogue’ (p. 101). The role of the Tonic is fully demonstrated, and the semogenic power of Theme/Rheme in relation to Given/New is illustrated with examples of unmarked and marked options. There is a nice metaphor of the engendering of text as a current alternating between ‘known’ and ‘unknown’. A little more explanation of the occurrence and impact of ‘silent beats’ would be welcome here, as this is another feature which often proves challenging to student perception (and one which is vital to fluency – see Szczepek Reed, 2006).

The next section on intonation in *Interpersonal* meaning explores systems of mood and modality through the four major speech functions of statement, question, offer and command (with a reminder that commands include requests), demonstrating again both unmarked and marked options, as Tone (in the sounding) plays ‘with’ or ‘against’ Mood (in the wording). One example is reproduced below (p. 113). It illustrates a marked option, where we have a statement realised in the lexico-grammar as declarative mood, and co-realised in the prosody as a rising tone (Tone 2). The communicative outcome is ‘a challenge’, for in a productive tension of meanings, it is always intonation which wins out.

// 2 ^ no I\* / haven't / got the / tickets //

(Tone Group is marked by double slash; feet by single slash; Tone by Arabic numeral; silent beat by caret, and Tonic syllable by bold font + preceding asterisk.)

Halliday and Greaves then build upon earlier work in illustrating seven primary tones: five 'simple' tones, 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5; two 'compound' tones of 1-3 and 5-3 (the addition of the hyphen a useful guide to the pronunciation of 'one-three', 'five-three'). There is not much space for discussion of dialect differences, but it is correctly noted that the high rising terminal (Tone 2) is becoming the unmarked option for a statement among some speakers in Australia and New Zealand.

In exploring the role of intonation in the *Ideational* metafunction, we meet the co-realisation of logical relations across clauses (rather than in the realisation of transitivity, the latter in which intonation plays no part). Intonation beyond clause-complex, ie in 'paragraph' type stretches, or 'Paratones', is not dealt with here (but see, for example, Tench, 1996).

A microtext of a Radio chat show is analysed acoustically, phonetically and semantically, with rich results. As the authors note: 'The listener is always processing at all strata at once, and it seems to us desirable for the analyst to do the same' (p. 163).

Chapter 7 is mainly concerned with illustrating the 19 'secondary' tones of English, which represent more delicate exponents of the 7 primary tones. The authors here provide counter-examples through 'Tone substitution' in order to illuminate meanings. As Halliday and Greaves note, there is further work to be done in describing what we might call 'tertiary' tones: this is an exciting prospect, and one in which technology will prove an asset. This section is a particularly welcome addition to the literature: nowhere else, to my knowledge, are the systems described with such insight and elegance. An appendix to this section analyses a series of spoken texts, both Australian and British.

The third part of the book, a brief Analysis Guide, serves to describe the SFL model in an economical way. There is a coda to that section which could possibly assist the reader better if transposed as an introduction.

The book comes with a CD-ROM which provides video extracts from Anne Thwaite's *Language in Contexts* (Thwaite 1997), audio clips, and a digital version of the print text itself. The video clips naturally embody context of situation and culture; their richness may remind us of the constraints of working with monomodal texts in this field. Audio clips also provide an interesting range of voices and dialects. The speakers in the latter are not credited but certainly include both Halliday and Greaves, a fact which might be of interest to readers.

The book is clearly signposted and pleasantly laid out. An index would have been useful; as would headers/footers to remind us of chapter number and chapter section.

I consider this to be a landmark study. The fusion of human and technological perception with grammatical analysis – and always, the ‘return to the data’ – results in an exceptionally lucid and scientific work. I believe it will provide a source of insight to linguists and language teachers for many years to come. There is another recent publication which has applied Hallidayan prosodic analysis directly to the field of second language teaching and learning: John Wells’ *English Intonation: An Introduction* (Wells 2006); and this, I suggest, could well serve as a companion to the present volume.

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## REFERENCES

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In linguistics, intonation is variation in spoken pitch when used, not for distinguishing words as sememes (a concept known as tone), but, rather, for a range of other functions such as indicating the attitudes and emotions of the speaker, signalling the difference between statements and questions, and between different types of questions, focusing attention on important elements of the spoken message and also helping to regulate conversational interaction. (The term tone is used by some British... In speech, intonation is the use of changing vocal pitch to convey grammatical information or personal attitude. Dr. Richard Nordquist is professor emeritus of rhetoric and English at Georgia Southern University and the author of several university-level grammar and composition textbooks. our editorial process. Richard Nordquist. Updated May 25, 2019. Intonation is the melody or music of a language, says David Crystal, author of "A Little Book of Language." Intonation refers to the way your voice rises and falls as you speak, as in, "It's raining, isn't it? (or 'innit,' perhaps)". In this sentence, you're not really asking a question: You're telling the listener that it's raining, so you give your speech a "telling" melody. Intonation is the natural music of English. If you make intonation mistakes, it's like playing in an orchestra with an instrument that's out of tune. You'll sound strange, even if you have good grammar and vocabulary. Worse, you might communicate a wrong message or not be understood at all. Intonation is that important! The good news is: it's easy to avoid mistakes. Today, I'll guide you to practice 3 intonations for different situations, so you feel more confident about how you speak English. It's a big step on your way to Master Real American English! Hi, I'm your English coach Christina, and welcome to Speak English with Christina: Step by step English lessons to help you learn faster, feel more confident, and reach your full potential. Intonation and grammar in British English. By M. A. K. HALLIDAY. (Janua linguarum, series practica, 48.) The keynote of Halliday's position is that 'English intonation contrasts are grammatical: they are exploited in the grammar of the language' (10). What then is meant by 'grammatical'? The classical Hallidayan position is to consider phonology as the 'bridge' between phonic substance and linguistic form: 'In phonology we make a separate abstraction from phonic substance, and represent this in statements which show how the given language organizes its phonic re-sources in such a way as to carry (or "expound") its grammatical and lexical patterns' (9; cL 1961: 244). Intonation in English can be used to convey the nature and mood of your sentence. Changes in intonation tell your listener if you have finished speaking or if you are going to add something else to the sentence. Intonation can also convey a friendly or unfriendly mood, sarcasm, humour, sadness, reluctance, excitement, anger, disapproval and many other attitudes and emotions. Tag questions in English also act as a kind of emphasis, as a way of getting the listener involved in the discussion by drawing their attention to your statement and as a way of asking for further comment. In both our examples: "It's rather hot today, isn't it?" and "It isn't very hot today, is it?" the intonation falls in pitch at the end, even though the questions seem to ask for a simple "yes" or "no" answer.