

Name that tune! The problem with labelling intonation contours

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My (our?) Assumptions

- Any utterance in a conversation can be doing more than one thing at a time
- Meaning is co-constructed and emergent
- **All** aspects of linguistic design contribute to the potential action performed by an utterance

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- Question: Why then allow 'our' published work to support the idea of an intrinsic meaning for intonation contours?

What we say – only lip service?

... glossing utterances/actions with vernacular terms such as "polite", "rude", "angry", "bored" etc. is not a useful analysis unless it can (i) show whether the participants displayed to each other an observable orientation to those categories or (ii) explain what it is about the organisation of the utterances/actions which lend themselves to being glossed in such a way.

The meaning of intonation contours outside CA

For instance, if we consider [...] what meanings that tone has when combined with each of the sentence-types [...] we may end up describing a number of local meanings like 'weighty', 'impatient', 'dispassionate', 'serious', and 'powerful', which are all meanings suggested by a low-fall ...

The meaning of intonation contours *inside* CA

Punctuation marks indicate intonation. The period indicates a falling, or final intonation contour, not necessarily the end of a sentence. A question mark indicates a rising intonation, not necessarily a question, and a comma indicates 'continuing' intonation, not necessarily a clause boundary.

The meaning of intonation contours *inside* CA

turn-final-level or continuing intonation . . . can project the lack of turn completion, and thus turn continuation

Robinson and Kevoe-Feldman 2010: fn4

Where we *do* separate form and function: action

Show *how* forms accomplish particular action: not simply *that* “I wonder if X” or “modal verbs” mean requesting is going on

FIELD X(C)2:1:4

Kat: **Could-** (0.3) Dad **couldn't** pick me up from:: (.)
ee- even from Westbury could he

1:1:12

Doc: Hello

Clr: Hello **I wonder if** you could give me some advice

Where we *do* separate form and function: action

Repetition repairs with expanded pitch range, louder, longer, altered vocal tract settings – ‘Upgraded’ phonetic pattern

Repetition repairs with compressed pitch range, quieter, shorter, similar vocal tract settings – ‘Non-upgraded’ phonetic pattern



Where we *do* separate form and function: action

'Upgraded' repetition repairs after trouble-source turns that:

- are appropriately designed to follow previous turn
- continue sequence in progress *or* begin new sequence if prior collaboratively closed

'Non-upgraded' repetition repairs after trouble-source turns that:

- are not designed as relevant next actions
- lack link to prior turn and fail to display shared understanding

Decoupling form and function

13 cases with fall-to-low pitch **co-occurring with other markers of turn-continuation**: only 3 resulted in turn transition

67 cases with fall-to-low pitch **co-occurring with other markers of turn-completion**: 60 resulted in turn transition

Local and Walker 2012

What do we gain by, or mean by saying “final intonation”?

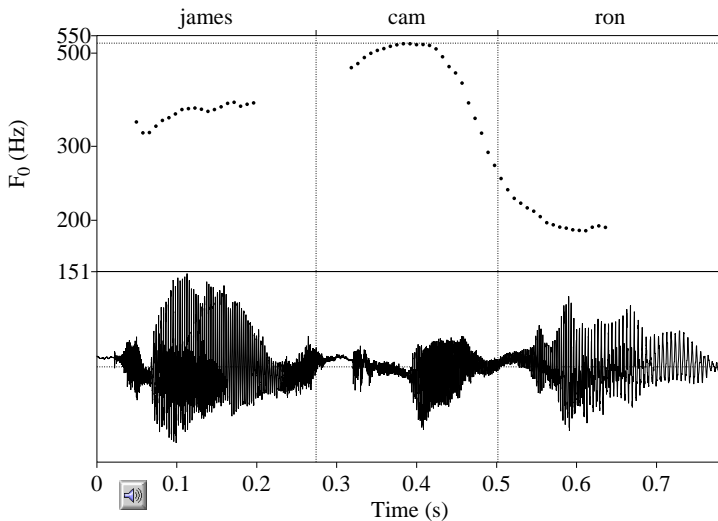
Using descriptively accurate labels for phonetic design

High rise fall: Not too catchy, but better than
claiming a problem with veracity or moral or contextual appropriateness

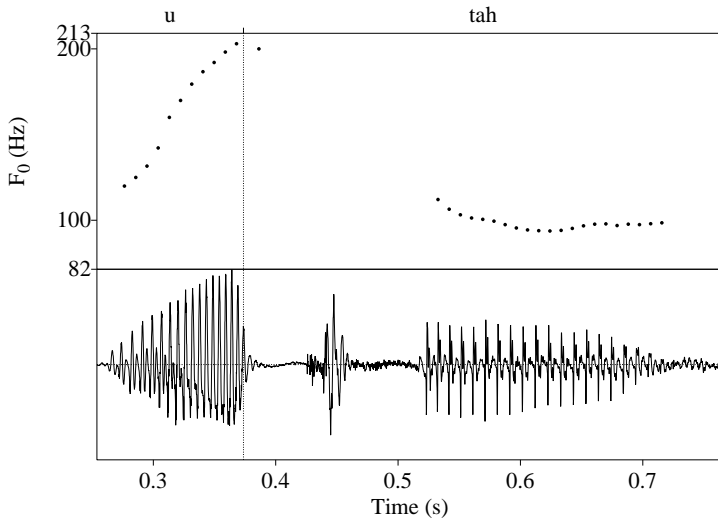


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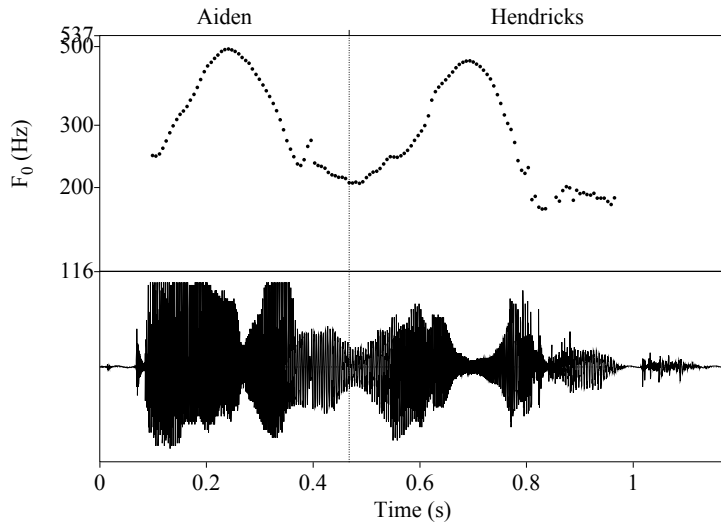
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Using descriptively accurate labels for phonetic design



Leaves 'surprise' available



To surprise

To surprise, astonish, amaze, astound, dumbfound, dazzle, startle, take aback, electrify, stun, petrify, flabbergast, confound, stagger, stupefy, bewilder, fascinate, boggle

Roget's Thesaurus of English Words and Phrases