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**TEACHING RISING AND FALLING INTONATION PATTERNS IN  
THE CONTEXT OF ESL/EFL CLASSES**

**CAMPINA GRANDE-PB  
2017**

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Orientador: Prof. Bruno Maiorquino Silva

**CAMPINA GRANDE-PB  
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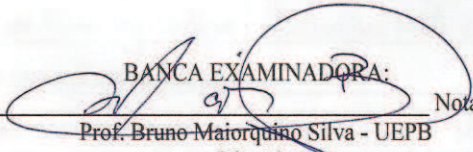
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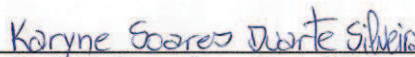
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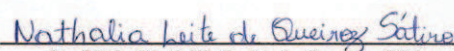
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## **DEDICATION**

To my family, who has always supported me in my journey, doing everything they could to help me become the person I'm today. Thank you

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## TEACHING RISING AND FALLING INTONATION PATTERNS IN THE CONTEXT OF ESL/EFL CLASSES

### ABSTRACT

Living in a globalised world with a high demand of English teaching, has developed the desire of many students to want to improve their communication skill and to sound natural when speaking. Therefore, the main objectives of this research are to analyze the importance of the use of intonation during the communication established in the classroom, and to present how teachers teach intonation for an English as foreign language (EFL) high proficiency students, with the support of the authors Kelly (2000), O'Connor (1967), Roach (1991) and etc. We brought examples on how to use intonation and the implications on choosing a standard pronunciation tones during the enunciation in English. Through the lesson proposed in the research for an English class as a foreign language, we can identify the use of the grammatical, attitudinal, and the discourse function of intonation. The activities were applied in a high level class of proficiency<sup>1</sup> at the language school in Campina Grande PB, for one hour and fifteen minutes. These activities were elaborated and adapted from the book *How to Teach Pronunciation* (KELLY, 2000), the pronunciation book identified as *Pronunciation Pairs: An Introduction to the Sounds of English*, by Baker & Goldstein (2008), and we also used the *Elemental English* video from a channel on youtube. With this, the objectives of the lesson were: (i) to describe how can teachers can teach intonation in EFL high proficiency classes; (ii) to present the patterns of intonation known as rising and falling intonation; and lastly (iii) to make students more confident in their use of intonation. Finally, with the results of the research, we have realized that intonation is important for communication, and it made all the difference when the students were producing the enunciation because they presented satisfactory examples during class.

**Keywords:** Intonation. Lesson. Pronunciation. English Language Teaching

### INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, English as a Foreign Language students are focused on communication, due to the fact that English is everywhere we go. “The need for good communication skills in English has created a huge demand for English teaching around the world” (RICHARDS, 2006, p.1). Since teaching English has a high demand, it is even more necessary to focus on the intelligibility during a conversation. They want to be able to communicate with people from different countries, learn new culture and are interested in being understood. The students are wanting to sound natural when speaking to natives, therefore, we have decided to study the importance of intonation during a conversation because intonation makes our sentences express meaning throughout the different types of pitches we use.

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<sup>1</sup> The high level class of proficiency was based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) is an international standard for describing language ability.

However for this research, we also discussed how teachers can teach intonation for EFL students and analyze one lesson based on intonation for a high proficiency class in a language school. As researchers, we have noticed the difficulties students have when producing the intonation patterns and trying to imitate them. The focus of this work will be on the importance of using intonation patterns when the students are speaking, and how teachers can work with intonation in the language class.

In this research, we have used theories from scholars such as Kelly (2000), Roach (1991), O'Connor *et al* (1967) and Harmer (2001). This aspect of pronunciation “is a fundamental part of the way we express our own thoughts and it enables us to understand those of others”(KELLY, 2000, p.86). During the scholar's work, she presents what learners use to help them study intonation, such as the help of ‘Grammar and Intonation’, ‘Attitude and Intonation’ and also ‘Discourse and Intonation’. With this in mind, it is important to study intonation in order to use the appropriate tone in the correct time. However, EFL students have difficulties using the equitable pitch when trying to express themselves or when listening to a conversation. During the research we have discussed some of the problems EFL students often face when producing these tones presented some examples on how to help them, as well as to help the teachers feel more comfortable in teaching intonation.

In other words, intonation should not be focused only on the theory but practiced in class because it “is an aspect of language that we are very sensitive to, but mostly at an unconscious level”(KELLY, 2000, p.86). In consequence of this, EFL students have difficulties making these stress variations because of its subtleties. Working with intonation becomes tricky because most students can not identify the stress word during the pitch, which is important in order to use the adequate pitch. In this case, “Stress is the term we use to describe the point in a word or phrase where pitch changes, vowels lengthen and volume increases” (HARMER 2001, p.42). Nonetheless, this paper aim to show learners how important the choices of utterances are when speaking because it gives us clues about the attitude the speaker is showing, such as, if they are interested, bored, being kind, or even lying. Hence, the intonation is fundamental for the comprehension of an effective communication.

The theme chosen in this article came from the interest in studying the pronunciation in the acquisition of the English language. It all started during the phonetics classes, at the university, when the researcher was first presented the different types of intonation and when to use them. After discussing and analyzing the issues relating to Kelly (2000) texts and O'Connor (1980), we have noticed that EFL students have various difficulties trying to

produce the correct intonation at the correct time during a conversation. According to J. D. O'Connor and G. F. Arnold (1968, p.2), "the pitch patterns of any other languages may, and very often do, sound wrong if they are applied to English, and give rise to difficulties in communication." For this reason, in this research we have created a lesson to present to the students the intonation patterns and to show other teachers that intonation can be taught to develop students communication skills.

By using the lesson planned, taught on March 8th, 2017 to an upper intermediate English group, we examine the utterances and intonation aiming to show the students the clues given of the attitudes throughout the activities in class. Also during this paper, it will be presented to the readers the importance of knowing the patterns the native speakers use during their conversations and the tones necessary for the rising and falling intonation.

In addition, we created an activity based on the tv series in which it was transcribed a small part of the video from an episode of *How I met your mother*, and that the students observed and mentioned the rising and falling intonation during question tags, expressing views and attitudes, indirect questions and etc.

For a better comprehension of our work, it is divided into four sections consisting of theory, methodology, analysis of the lesson plan, and final considerations, that will discuss about the subjects mentioned in the introduction.

## **1. THEORY**

In this section, the work is divided into 6 sections, which are intonation, pitches and tones, the grammatical function, the attitude function, the discourse function and lastly communicative language teaching.

### **1.1. Intonation**

Our students are interested in sounding natural in English when communicating, and in order for this to happen, students must understand the use of the pitch patterns of the English language. When we use intonation, our voice change the pitch to indicate certain meaning. Example, when you're asking a question, your voice will change the pitch at the of the question to differentiate it from a statement, causing the pitch of your voice to rise.

It all started in the 40s, as the scholars mentioned; "the study of intonation has gone through many changes during the century" (ROACH, 1991). At first, during the 1940s in the

United States, the studies were based on ‘pitch phonemes’. There were four contrastive pitch; rise, fall, rise-fall and fall-rise, which are levels established and the intonation was considered as series of movements from one of the pitch level to another. Later, based on Roach (1991), this approach was developed in Trager and Smith (1951). In spite of the theory ‘pitch phoneme’ becoming an orthodoxy, it was consistently attacked by one American Linguist, D. Bolinger (e.g. BOLINGER, 1951). Subsequently, H. E. Palmer, Kingdon (1958), O’Connor and Arnold (1968) and Halliday (1967) that later developed the ‘tone-unit’ or ‘tonetic’ approach.

### **2.1.1 Pitches and tones**

When dealing with intonation we use the pitch and tones to add meaning to the sentences. Both are an aspect of the use of voice. However, in order to understand these two different theoretical approaches, we must know the differences between ‘pitch’ and ‘tones’. The term ‘pitch’ refers to the degree of highness and lowness in which someone speaks. Everyone has a pitch in their voice, for instance some people have high-pitched voice and when they are tired or bored they can use the tone to show the emotion. On the other hand, in reference tone, ROACH ( 1991, p.141), “The notion of tone is best understood by dealing with single syllables at first. Eventually the number of tones used in the book is five: fall, rise, fall-rise, rise-fall and level.”

Since it conveys emotion to the sentences, you can express tiredness, boredom or excitement etc. During the grammatical function, attitude function and discourse function of intonation we can also try to convey emotion. Thus, on the next subsection, it will be presented some ways to help EFL students understand how to identify the intonation patterns and how to use the rise and falling tones.

### **1.1.2 The grammatical function of intonation**

Throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century, authors such as Kelly (2000), O’Conner (1967), Roach (1991) and Harmer (2001) intended to help students learn the standard intonation , as a consequence, there has been many attempts to show the connection between intonation patterns and types of grammatical structure, such as information questions, that are questions in which begin with who, what, where, and why. Also questions expecting a ‘yes or no’ answer, statements, imperatives, question tags expecting confirmation, question tags showing

less certainty and finally lists of items which use rising, rising and, finally ,falling intonation patterns.

The rules established by the grammatical function can guide learners into choosing the appropriate intonations when using words and structures that can express different meanings or convey different attitudes. These are generalisations rather than rules, because there are going to be cases in which the rule may not help. But most times it is really useful, for example, the tones rise, fall, fall-rise, and rise-fall can determine the speaker's meaning when someone is asked a question and replies with fall 'yes' or 'no', will be understood that there is nothing more to be said, it gives the impression of "finality". On the other hand, if someone replies with a rise 'yes' or 'no', the speaker intends continue to say what he/she had in mind. As the authors Baker & Goldstein (2008), mentioned that the fall-rise tone is used a lot in English to show hesitation, agreement and response with reservation. While rise-fall is used to convey a strong feeling of approval, disapproval or surprise.

The grammatical intonation is a guide for students to choose the correct intonation when producing the sentences. Here are some examples, "One of the uses of intonation is to show the *grammar* of what we are saying. For example, if the pitch of our voice falls when we say *clock* in the following sentences, this indicates that we are making a statement: I'll arrive at eight o'clock" (HARMER 2001,p.38) Here's another illustration "The bakery sells bread, cookies, cake and milk". The intonation rises on the items before the last one. On the last item, the intonation falls to a low note to show that the list is finished. *Milk* in this case, is falling. However you can also, use attitude function of intonation to show that you have finished your list. Check the next subsection.

### **1.1.3 The attitude function of intonation**

As a matter of fact, looking at the speaker's attitude during the conversation can help understand intonation. To emphasize this idea, KELLY (2000, p.95) presents an example: "that would be nice (in response to an invitation) might show enormous enthusiasm, mild pleasure, surprise, relief, sarcasm and boredom." When speaking in real face-to-face communication many things contribute to the message the person is trying to send, due to the speaker's body language and our knowledge of his personality likes and dislikes.

Intonation is also used to convey attitude. We have already seen how pitch tends to be higher overall when we are frightened, but the relative highs and lows changes in pitch direction can indicate anything from surprise to excitement or even a lack of

interest or dismissiveness. (HARMER, 2001, p.39)

The attitudinal intonation is as important as the others and it affects the speech and the emotions of the addressee. It is devoted a large amount of attention because sometimes it is difficult to produce and describe someone's attitude. This topic will be clarified in our analyses.

#### **1.1.4 The discourse function of intonation**

The discourse function of intonation pays attention to our surrounding when we speak, it studies the intonation as a whole, it also uses new and old information to convey meaning in sentence. In this case, the practice in class is significant towards a greater expressiveness and that can only be accomplished when analyzing how intonation relates to discourse. According to Brazil (*apud* KELLY, 2000 p.101), “analyzing intonation within discourse means that the wider context of conversation, or monologue, is taken into account, and enables us to see how intonation conveys ideas and information.”

The study of discourse attempts to look at the contexts in which the sentence is presented without having to study them in isolation. With this in mind, it helps learners understand the new information that is being shared between the speaker and the listener. We use *proclaiming tones* (falling tone) to give new information and *referring tones* ( rising tones) to refer to information that has already been shared with our listeners or when we want to check information. As a result, we agree with HARMER (2001,p.39) when he says: “Intonation plays a crucial role in spoke discourse since it signals when speakers have finished the points they wish to make, tells people when they wish to carry on with a turn (i.e. not yield the floor) and indicates agreement and disagreement.”

In this paper we have presented some aspects of intonation and how teachers can teach to their EFL upper intermediate level students. Since there is an increased amount of students wishing to improve their communication skills, in the next section, we will explain how it could be done in a communicative language teaching class.

### **1.2. Communicative language teaching**

Students are worried in sounding natural when speaking and they are concerned in being understood. Bearing this in mind, the lesson proposed to the students was

communicative, since it should improve their communication skills. Thus, preparing the lesson for this research, the methodology used at the language course in which we developed this research, was the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) also known as communicative approach.

The language course school believes in sharing and building the students knowledge through social interaction and communication. The communication in class gives students the chance to speak and master speaking abilities. According to (HARMER, 2001, P. 69)

Activities of CLT typically involve students in real or realistic communication, where the successful achievement of the communicative task they are performing is at least as important as the accuracy of their language use. Thus role-play and simulation have become very popular in CLT.

In other words, activities based on CLT should attempt to reproduce a real life communication in which a student asks a friend where the party is, or what time math class is, Also, the CLT believes in the information gap sort of activities where a student can learn from the other and both can share information. For this reason, the student's knowledge was never completely finished, it is continuously being constructed between interaction and the social environment.

The communication in class gives students the opportunity to practice their speaking, which they would use in their daily lives while grocery shopping, at the bank or at restaurant with friends. The communication in class gives students confidence to use the language anywhere else, but this only occurs when using the activities that involve students to work in groups or in pairs and have students practice their communication skills.

The Communicative Language Teaching is made up of some elements, which are; communication principle, task principle and the meaningfulness principle. These principle create activities that are required in order to have a successful class. "the activities that involve real communication promote learning. (...) Activities in which a language is used for carrying out meaningful tasks promote learning and the last is language that is meaningful to the learner supports the learning process. (Johnson 1982 *apud* Richards and Rodgers 2001, p.161)

The language school mentioned also works with a very important concept which is the zone of proximal development (ZPD), based on Vygotsky's ideas (1978, p.86) " The distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult



guidance, or in collaboration with more capable peers.” According to the school’s project, students learn throughout group work; they believe is within group that students exchange knowledge, build their opinions, and learn how to react with differences.

Since being intelligible is important for the students, intonation play a crucial role during their communication. This is an aspect of the language that should be taught in order to help learners sound natural and be understood without leading to misunderstanding and eventually embarrassment during a conversation. Based on the theories mentioned, on the next section of this research paper it will be presented the methodology used to accomplish our objectives.

## **2. METHODOLOGY**

In this section of the research, we have collected information with the adopted methodology such as qualitative that will be presented throughout the analyses of this paper as Miles and Huberman (1994, p.1) states:

With qualitative data one can preserve chronological flow, see precisely which events led to which consequences, and derive fruitful explanations. Then too, good qualitative data are more likely to lead to serendipitous findings and to new integrations and to generate or revise conceptual frameworks.

The methodology adopted by us was aimed to analyze, evaluate and interpret the lesson focusing on the importance of intonation. Also to absorb the interaction the students had when learning about the intonation pattern. Another methodology adopted was the case study because according to (ROBERT, 2003) this methodology focus on phenomena within the context of real-life situation. And during this paper we were analyzing real life situations, applying activities and finally drawing a conclusion of the feedback given by the students.

### **3.1 Classification of the research**

This research fits best in case study classification because we developed the lesson based on intonation patterns and with the help of the students we were able to present, evaluate and observe their interaction during the class. A case study research is a descriptive and exploratory analysis of a person or group, which in this case we have investigated some students individually and the group. Throughout our research, we presented the intonation to



the class and its purpose during a conversation and the implication it brings when not using it appropriately. With the use of Kelly (2000) and other authors we were able to examine their view about intonation and explain to readers with details how the lesson was applied.

Besides, the analyses of this paper is also qualitative because it did not describe numbers and graphs but the description of the class and the interaction during the activities when students practiced their intonation. Also we have worked with the transcript activity in which the students were able to identify the patterns and later collected by the researcher.

## **2.2 Context of the research and its participants**

According to Kelly (2000), it is possible to teach intonation to students with all levels of proficiency, however, for this research, we chose to work with an upper intermediate class because we felt that a group of students with a higher level of proficiency would understand easily the aspect of intonation. The activities we had in mind to use in the classroom were for students who had a vast vocabulary and a good listening skills. Consequently, in order to create a lesson plan, we had to search for a group of students with high proficiency of English.

The English course school in Campina Grande, PB, that the researcher teaches at has some teachers who lecture students with high level of proficiency. For example, the ‘Make your point 4 course is an upper intermediate course and it has a section in their student’s book in which each unit teaches about English intonation. Thus, one of the coordinators was asked to give a class about intonation, and he agreed. The coordinator had told the researcher that whenever he reached the intonation tasks from the book, he would let us work with the students. At first, we had asked him to teach two classes for two hours and thirty minutes and he agreed, however, it did not work, he later mentioned he could only provide one class because the group was behind on some tasks due to the days off of Carnival. Immediately we began searching for ideas to work with the students and created a lesson.

Our first idea of a lesson was with two classes; each class would take one hour and fifteen minutes. The first class was devoted to present the intonation patterns and had the students to practice it. During the second class, the students were going to be exposed to the tv series of “How I met your Mother” and were going to analyze it by identifying the rising and falling intonation patterns. Towards the end of the second class, each student was going to role-play a character of the video to have more practice and later a classroom discussion.

The classroom chosen to apply the lesson was an upper-intermediate group with ten students aged from fifteen to twenty years-old. In the classroom there were four girls and six

boys, and they all interacted well. They spoke English throughout the entire class and gave meaningful examples that helped enrich the lesson. The class was given for one hour and fifteen minutes on Wednesday March 8<sup>th</sup> 2017, held in the language school, in room four. The classroom had a computer, and a tv and it was used throughout the lesson. It was a small group of students who were all seated in a semicircle, they had the opportunity to face each other and interact more, also the students had great knowledge of the language and knew how to express themselves in English very well.

### 3.3 Tools and procedures for data collection

The lesson plan was developed to present all three functions of intonation. Its grammar function, attitude function and discourse function of intonation, also to practice with the students the rising and falling tones. The lesson plan applied for this research were adapted from *How to Teach Pronunciation* (KELLY, 2000), where the author has given readers some ideas of how to teach intonation to students and it has many examples of how teachers can apply the lessons in their classes. The ideas used in this research were from lesson 5 (see annex) where she explains how to present attitudinal intonation and its patterns to the students. We have used the first two activities from the author, where the students practiced them using ‘mmm’ and greeting Mr. Johnson. Later, in the class we also used some questions mentioned by Kelly (2000, p.95) to make a small quiz, see in annex section.

The purpose of the lesson was to have students practice rising and falling intonation patterns using activities from Kelly (2000), a pronunciation book called “*Pronunciation Pairs: An Introduction to the Sounds of English*”, by Baker & Goldstein (2008), a video from *Elemental English*<sup>2</sup> and a transcript from the tv series “*How I met your Mother*”. Together we took a closer look at the characters attitudes, the use of the grammar and intonation patterns and the use of the discourse approach, when using the referring tones (falling) and proclaiming tones (rising).

Therefore, students explore the ways in which they use their voices when speaking English, and also to introduce various ways the same sentences can be said by using choral repetition and giving students greater confidence in their intonation use. While preparing the lesson, the methodology used at the language course, were Communicative Language

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<sup>2</sup> Introduction to Intonation. *Elemental English*, November, 10th, 2013, 3:29. Available on: [https://youtu.be/tzh3Owutf5Y?list=PLytLOCUcYQj\\_BKDX\\_tfDu2el83SJuu0Me](https://youtu.be/tzh3Owutf5Y?list=PLytLOCUcYQj_BKDX_tfDu2el83SJuu0Me). Accessed: on february 2017.

Teaching (CLT) also known as communicative approach and socio-constructivist.

Finally, the learners were able to complete an activity created based on the tv series “How I met your Mother”, in which there was a transcript of the beginning of the episode. The students were able to analyze and point out the falling and rising intonation when absorbing the video. In the final analysis, based on this activity, we have collected data and presented to the readers the effect the intonation has and why it is essential for the comprehension of a conversation.

#### 4. ANALYSING THE LESSON

It was decided to introduce the class with a contextualization of the topic by presenting the first slide using “mmm”. This idea was taken from Kelly (2000), which focuses on the relationship between the attitude of the speaker and intonation. To begin with, the students were given a couple of minutes to brainstorm some ways they could use “mmm” and then it was elicited from the students some of the examples they thought of. At this moment, two students gave an example and while the rest of the class stayed in silence just paying attention. The examples were (↗mmm) and (→mmm). Meanwhile, it was shown the next slide on tv with the examples of how to use them.

(↘mmm) could indicate I agree,

(↘↗mmm) I agree, but... ,

(↗mmm) tells us that the speaker wants the listener to say more,

(↗↘mmm) might indicate strong agreement,

(→mmm) could reflect boredom or lack of interest.

*Example 1 from the slides used in class.*

Now the students had a visual idea of how to use “mmm”, by having a support to glance at just in case they forgot the different types of ‘mmm’. Next, as a group, we had a choral repetition of each ‘mmm’ using the intonation pattern and pointed out that “mmm” can have many meanings and the meaning changes whenever you change the intonation. It was mentioned by Hammer (2001) that the intonation will help students convey different type of meaning when their feeling excited or bored during a conversation. Other examples were given “mmm” with a falling intonation indicating that the person agrees and expresses the

purpose of the sentence and “mmm” with a rising intonation to indicate the speaker to continue the conversation. When the first moment ended, the students had to listen to the audio “Mom’s muffins” from an exercise in the student’s book by Baker and Goldstein (2008) “Pronunciation Pairs: (see annex) an introduction to the sounds of English”. In this part of the lesson, the listening was included to help the learners understand and have other references to different types of mmm sounds.

The students practiced their listening and had their first contact focusing only on intonation. Before playing the audio, it was explained to the students that the audio ‘Mom’s muffin’ was a dialog between two characters, a mother and her son. Throughout the conversation, the character (mother) is going to use *Mmm* to answer the son’s questions. The students listened and then pointed out what they had understood from the listening. Some students had a pleasant time noticing the changes and also what the mother meant when she used the different type of ‘mmm’. Still during this moment, a student also brought up an example in his mother tongue of how they change the meaning of the words by changing the intonation. The student had said that in Portuguese they used ‘Vei’<sup>3</sup>: in different ways with his friend when he wanted to express a different meaning. The students also mentioned two examples of how to use ‘Vei’

(i) ↗Vei! pass me the eraser.

(ii) ↘Vei, I can’t believe this.

In Portuguese “Vei” is an informal expression and is usually used between men when talking to their friends. It was satisfying to hear students interacting and giving examples in class because it meant that they understood what intonation is.

Subsequently, we had another activity, and this time the students role-played a situation. It was written on the board the language structure ‘Happy birthday, here’s your present’ and the students were told they were going to choose the correct *Mmm* as a response to the gift. This example was also taken from Kelly (2000) but, instead of using *thank you* like suggested, we decided to use the expression *Mmm*. Then, a volunteer role-played an example for the rest of the class. The student who got up was considered the most intelligent student in the class by the other students, and she was also very enthusiastic to volunteer.

The structure “Happy birthday, here’s your present” was used and then given a card to the volunteer, in which there was an image of a motorcycle and she used a rising tone to show

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<sup>3</sup> Vei: Is a informal language, usually used between young adults(men); shorten for ‘Velho’(aged)

surprise. The student was asked to go back to her seat, then students got into pairs, and were told that they were going to practice their intonation by following the example we had just role-played in front of the class.

The students then give presents to their neighbour, saying *Thank you* to each other in accordance with how they feel about their present. The range used should reflect how excited (or not) students are by their presents.(KELLY, 2000, p.99)

As we followed some of Kelly's examples, each student had received three cards and they used the language structure and the rising or falling intonation pattern according to the feeling they had when receiving the gift.



Picture 1 of the cards students received in class

The students were being monitored as I walked around the room and observed each pair and helped them when necessary. Some students were still embarrassed at first and others were enjoying the activity. During this moment, the students practiced with each other what we had discussed before and started to get confidence in using the appropriate intonation patterns. Most of them finished quickly and referred to the activity as being easy.

Next, the students were told to look at the color on the back of the card and based on it they were going to get into small groups. The students were then divided into groups according to the color on the card. When everyone was seated, the sentence "Good Morning, Mr. Johnson" was being written on the board. As the students observed the sentence I walked around the room saying the language structure to random students using different intonation patterns. First, it began by using a rising intonation to show excitement and high-fived a student afterward, then I acted like I was secretly in love with Mr. Johnson to another student

using a rise-fall intonation pattern. This example was also adapted from Kelly (2000); she explained that

it is important to choose sentences appropriate to the students' level. These could be sentences which use a structure which the students have recently studied, and which are ambiguous enough to be used in variety of situations, or flexible enough to be said in variety of ways, reflecting different attitudes.(... )It makes sense to void sentences in which the words used are themselves direct indicators of attitude (e.g *I don't like this food*), as different ranges of intonation wouldn't be so appropriate. (KELLY, 2000, p.100)

When the activity was finished, the students were asked to guess the attitude it was just used and which intonation pattern it was. Some guessed it right by saying excited and friendly. After, it was exposed on the screen the attitudes that people can use on their daily basis, such as embarrassed, friendly, rude and etc. Next, the students were told that one person from the group was going to be 'Mr. Johnson' and the rest was going to receive situations in which they had to use the appropriate attitude so that the student, that was chosen to be 'Mr. Johnson', had to guess which attitude they had just used. Each group received a slip of paper with the relationship they had with 'Mr. Johnson' and according to their relationship, they were going to use the correct attitude to express themselves. Here are the attitudes below;

1.You've never met Mr. Johnson before. You want to do business with him.
2. Mr. Johnson owes you a lot of money.
3. You think Mr. Johnson is a pleasant man.
4.You're secretly in love with Mr. Johnson
5.You really don't like Mr. Johnson

*Example 2 Activity used in class (KELLY, 2000, p.100)*

There were three small groups, and on each group a boy was chosen to play Mr. Jonson. The students were then given five minutes to practice greeting Mr. Johnson, by using different attitudes. According to Kelly (2000, p.100); "There will clearly be other clues here, such as facial expression and body language, but Mr. Johnson can usually get a fair idea from the intonation used." Here we can notice that 'Attitude intonation' contribute to how the message has been delivered and also for the understanding of it. The students can use a facial

expression to show dislike or excitement and therefore it will make it obvious when they use the intonation pattern correctly.

The class was being monitored as I walked around the room and it was possible to notice the students were enjoying it, there were plenty of laughter and some students also acted out the attitude satisfactory. At the end, the students were asked if they found the activity difficult and if it was troublesome to produce the intonation by using the correct attitude and most of them said no, after it was asked if the students who were role playing Mr. Johnson found it difficult to figure out which attitude were the other students using during the activity and they also said no.

After they had finished with this part of the lesson, the students were asked to go back to their seats and look at the screen. The students were going to watch a small video from Elemental English channel from Youtube<sup>4</sup>, in which a woman explains a little more about intonation. During the video, they used the ‘Grammatical function of intonation’ which they explained a list or rules of appropriate choices of ways things can be said. These rules may not cover all aspects regarding intonation it guides students to make the most adequate choice. Kelly presents an analogy to help explain her point of view, “a driving instructor cannot hope to teach all driving manoeuvres that exist to a student, yet those they do teach will enable the students to cope on the road and give them confidence to discover more as they gain experience”(KELLY, 2000, p.90).

The video is very short, only four minutes long, but we believe it was enough for the students to get a brief knowledge of the grammatical function of intonation. An image of the video can be found picture1.

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<sup>4</sup> Introduction to Intonation. Elemental English, November, 10th, 2013, 3:29. Available on: [https://youtu.be/tzh3Owutf5Y?list=PLytLOCUcYQj\\_BKDX\\_tfDu2eI83SJuu0Me](https://youtu.be/tzh3Owutf5Y?list=PLytLOCUcYQj_BKDX_tfDu2eI83SJuu0Me) . Accessed: february 2017.





Picture 2 Introduction to intonation. Source: Screenshot taken by the author

During the video, the students were given the sentences or questions with the intonation and were asked to repeat the example. Everyone in class repeated out loud and followed the pitch exactly like the woman from the video. The image above shows the sentence “She got a dog” with a falling tone which it shows completeness. The learners understood the examples very well due to the fact that the video was colorful, vivid, and had the rising and falling arrows, which followed her voice when it went up or down.

When the video ended, there was another slide with some questions. On the slide there was a title “Small Quiz” and the questions were developed by Kelly (2000). It was used the same type of sentences and questions that were mentioned on the video. For example, question tags, lists, and statements. The purpose of the small quiz was to make sure the students had understood the examples given on the video and had an extra practice before going to the next activity. The small quiz [extracted from Kelly (2000, p.95)] served as a feedback, and throughout the quiz it was noticed that some of the students were able to find the difference between the patterns.



## QUIZ TIME !!

Match these intonation patterns to the sentences types.

Question	A. How much do I put <u>IN</u> ?
Statements	B. You put it in the <u>BOWL</u> ?
Lists	C. You need <u>FLOUR</u> , <u>MILK</u> , AND <u>BUTTER</u> .
Question tags	D. It shouldn't look like <u>THAT</u> , should it?

1. (↗ ↘)

2. (↘ ↗)

3. (↘)

4. (↘ ↗)

*Picture 3 Quiz on the slides. Source: Screenshot taken by the author*

Further, into class, it was handed some slips of paper and the students were asked to get into small groups of three or four students. At first, the students were told not to touch or look at the slips of paper until they were handed out to every group. Then, it was explained to the students that they were going to receive definitions and examples of each type of intonation and when to use them. They were going to have two minutes to try and match the definition to the example. When it was time to start, the students immediately began reading and working together to try to match the slips of papers. When time was up, I walked around the room to make sure everyone did their best. Then, we corrected it together, the definitions were read to the students and they had to read the example out loud. While we were correcting together, we had noticed two groups correcting their mistakes. Following, there are some of the examples of the slips of paper used in class:

(i) **TO COMPLETE A THOUGHT:** Use Falling intonation to say that you have finished the sentence.

**Example:** // I got a dog .↘//

(ii) **TO EXPRESS SURPRISE:** To show surprise, you can ask a short question with rising intonation.

**Example:** // Your dog speak English?↗ //

(iii) **LISTS:** In saying a list of items, the intonation often rises on each item before the last item. On the last item, the intonation falls to a low note to show that the list is finished.

**Example:** //My dog is smart, pretty, and sweet ↗ ↘ //

*Example 3* Activity produced by the researcher.

Finally, our last activity began by talking about tv series. First, it was asked if the students liked tv series, and which ones. In the meantime, the video from the tv show ‘How I met your mother’ was being exposed on the tv. Some students mentioned that they enjoy watching it and they had watched it before. Then they were told that they were going to watch a short video from season 3 episode 4, only the introduction . When the video was done, the class was asked; ‘Where are they?’ ‘What are they doing?’ and ‘What is it about?’. At this moment, the students answered all the questions and also mentioned other information about the video. The discourse approach to intonation has been used, for instance, we were focused not only on intonation but the interaction between the characters from the series and looked at the context in which the conversation appears.

In the classroom, the students were paying attention to the intonation and the information the actors had delivered. They had a wider view of the context and it would help the students later on when producing the intonation, which corroborates with Brazil (*apud* Kelly 2000, p.101) “analyzing intonation within discourse means that the wider context of conversation, or monologue, is taken into account, and enables us to see how intonation conveys ideas and information.” Again, the students were asked to work with the person next to them while it was being passed out the worksheet with the transcript of the tv series. The students were told they were going to watch the tv series and pay attention to the intonation, and in the meantime mark the rising and falling intonation pattern.

Lastly, the video was repeated three times in order for the students to complete the task. Before the worksheet had been collected, the class was asked if it was difficult, and after that the dialogue was checked and corrected together. We read it together and the students had to mention if it was rising or falling intonation. Still, with the worksheet in hands, five students were asked to volunteer, and each played a role from the tv series. Two girls and three boys went up in front of class and role played the beginning of the situation. The students read the script and tried their best to produce the correct intonation. The girl who role-played Lily’s part expressed the attitudes well and was not embarrassed to produce the intonation and the facial expression that comes with it, while some of the boys had a hard time to produce the exact intonation the actors had done. Overall the lesson proposed by us

helped the students see intonation as an important aspect of a conversation, also had students practice the use of rising and falling tones.

## 5. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

In the 18th century, learning English was focused on Grammar Translation Method, they were focused in translating a word to another word using their mother tongue, grammar, and vocabulary words. However nowadays, things has changed, EFL students are now focused on communication. By using Richards' words (2006, p.1): "The ever-growing need for good communication skills in English has created a huge demand for English teaching around the world." They want to be able to communicate with people around the world and learn different cultures.

It all started in phonetics classes, we noticed the difficulties in the classroom, when our classmates were producing the intonation patterns. And with the struggles to identify the patterns of intonation, we have decided to study the importance of intonation during a conversation, Therefore, the lesson plan was developed in the research to present and practice the intonation patterns such as, rising and falling intonation patterns, and explain to the students the use of grammar intonation, attitude intonation and discourse intonation. The lesson was based on examples from Kelly (2000), which they were very helpful and easy to apply with the students. We felt that the activities were an important tool and there were satisfying feedback from the EFL students.

Some of the feedback the researcher realised in class was how they interacted well with each other when practicing the activity, how they understood what is intonation and its patterns quickly and lastly the students brought up examples that enrich the the content. During the class, there were ten students aged approximately fifteen and twenty years-old and they were in an upper intermediate level according to the English course.

In the beginning of the lesson the students were a little shy to produce the intonation, but after some of the activities we used in class they felt comfortable and participated well. One student even used an example from our mother tongue which was *Veí*, he said two sentences producing the correct intonation and this helped the rest of the class also understand the content. It was satisfying in continuing the lesson after his examples because the students were making it relevant to their daily lives and were able to understand the importance of intonation. Therefore, when this happens, as teachers, we can tell that it became significant to the students, and they only learn when something is relevant for them.

Another important example we took from this lesson was how the students interact well while performing the activities. They were enjoying themselves and using the standard intonation when speaking to Mr. Johnson, also another great example adapted in our lesson plan from Kelly (2000). And later the video used in class from Elemental English explained the grammar intonation in a very explicit way with arrows and easy sentences. The students also got a chance to drill the sentence that was presented on the video. During this part of the lesson, the researcher felt happy because, the use of the video in class motivated the students, gave them an extra practice and helped the teacher save time without having to explain each of the grammar rules.

Finally we had a quick role-play, in which five students volunteered to become the characters and perform in class. They used the transcript that they had checked with the rising and falling intonation to present it to the class. A girl, that role-played Lily's character, did very well throughout the performance, she read the lines using the intonation patterns correctly. However, this part of class could have been more explored, every students should have had an opportunity to practice and enjoy this part of the lesson plan. Since we only had one hour and fifteen minutes of class, this part of the lesson plan had to be rushed and only used five volunteers to perform the role-play.

To conclude, we believe this paper is not only addressed for EFL students who need help learning the intonation patterns, but it is also for teachers who wish to teach their students on how to improve their communication throughout intonation patterns. Based on the experienced we gained in preparing this lesson, and searching for ways to make intonation seem less tricky for students, we can prove to others that it is possible to create a lesson plan based on intonation patterns, apply in class and help students enjoy and improve their communication skills. And it was understood that the activities used in class were important tools for teaching intonation efficiently and this paper is addressed to teachers as well as EFL students who would like to improve their communication skills based on intonation patterns.

## **RESUMO**

Vivendo em um mundo globalizado com uma alta demanda por ensino de inglês, desenvolveu-se o desejo de muitos estudantes de querer melhorar suas habilidades de comunicação e de soar natural quando falando em inglês. Portanto, os principais objetivos desta pesquisa são analisar a importância do uso da entonação durante a comunicação estabelecida na sala de aula e apresentar como os professores ensinam entonação para estudantes de alto nível de inglês como língua estrangeira (EFL), com o apoio de autores como Kelly (2000), O'Connor (1967), Roach (1991) e etc. Nós trouxemos exemplos sobre

como usar a entonação e as implicações na escolha de tons de pronúncia padrão durante a enunciação em inglês. Através da lição proposta na pesquisa para uma aula de inglês como língua estrangeira, podemos identificar o uso da função gramatical, atitudinal e discursiva da entonação. As atividades foram aplicadas em uma classe de alto nível de proficiência na escola de idiomas em Campina Grande PB, por uma hora e quinze minutos. Essas atividades foram elaboradas e adaptadas do livro *How to teach pronunciation* (KELLY, 2000), o livro de pronúncia identificado como *Pronunciation Pairs: An Introduction to the Sounds of English*, de Baker & Goldstein (2008), e também usamos o vídeo *Elemental English* de um canal no youtube. Com isso, os objetivos da lição foram: (i) descrever como os professores podem ensinar a entonação em classes EFL de alta proficiência; (ii) apresentar os padrões de entonação conhecidos como entonação ascendente e decrescente; E, por fim, (iii) tornar os alunos mais confiantes em seu uso de entonação. Finalmente, com os resultados da pesquisa, percebemos que a entonação é importante para a comunicação, e isso fez toda a diferença quando os alunos estavam produzindo a enunciação porque apresentaram exemplos satisfatórios durante a aula.

**Palavra-chave:** Entonação. Pronúncia. Ensino de Língua Inglês

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## APPENDIX

### 1st Lesson: Intonation

**Objectives:** Is to help students explore the ways in which they use their voice range ( how high or low their voice goes) when speaking English, and to introduce various ideas which may subsequently be used remedially, as a reminder and give student greater confidence in their intonation use.

**Input:** Slides, video, Cards with images, role cards

**grouping:** pairs, small groups

**Contextualization:** Welcome student to class. Ask students what they know about intonation. Have students share their opinion, while I put on the slide with “mmm”. And asks students to think about the different ways they can say it. Then, elicit a couple of examples ( ↘mmm and ↗mmm). And have the class brainstorm other examples. When finish, show the examples on the slides. (↗mmm, ↗↘mmm , and →mmm) using surprise, boredom, agreement.

**Preparation:** Then I will asks students to think about what these mean. I will explain to the students about the *rise*, *fall*, *fall-rise* and *partial fall* intonation using “mmm”.

The first one (↘mmm) could indicate **I agree**, (↗↘mmm) **I agree, but...** , (↗mmm) **tells us that the speaker wants the listener to say more.** (↗↘mmm) **might indicate strong agreement**, and (→mmm) **could reflect boredom or lack of interest.**

When finish explaining, we are going to have choral repetition of each pattern and drill again together. And have students listen to a audio about mom’s muffins. The students will listen and complete the task.

**Performance:**When finish, we are going to role play, I will first write on the board the language structure “ Happy birthday, here’s your present” and pick one students to stand up and he/she will receive a card. Then he is going to say mmm according to the image that he receives. (surprise, not interested, happy etc.) when we are finished have students get into pairs, and each student will receive cards. Some of the cards are going to be exciting gifts, like a new Ferrari, money, and others are going to be toilet paper or a pair of socks. Students A then give presents to their neighbour, saying “ *happy birthday, here’s your present*” and Student B will have to say “*mmm*” according to how they feel about their present.

**Accountability:** Now using the color from the back of the card, have student get into small groups. When everyone is seated, write the sentence “ *Good morning, Mr. Johnson.*” and on the slides will have the attitudes that will be spoken with. Walk around the room saying “Good morning Mr. Johnson” and have the students guess in which attitude did I use. Now have them get into small groups and practice saying the sentence in a variety of ways. (*neutral*,



happy, bored, surprised, unfriendly, polite, etc.) And check together as a group. Still in group, one person is going to be Mr. Johnson and the rest is going to receive role cards with relations to Mr. Johnson and greet him appropriately. At this moment Mr. Johnson is going to try and guess the attitude towards him.

1. You've never met Mr. Johnson before. You want to do business with him.
2. Mr. Johnson owes you a lot of money.
3. You think Mr. Johnson is a pleasant man.
4. You're secretly in love with Mr. Johnson
5. You really don't like Mr. Johnson

**Link:** Have students go back to their seats, watch a small video of explaining intonation and later look at some example on the slides. have students say if it's rising or falling intonation. (A small quiz on slides)

## Part2

**Objectives:** Is to help students explore the ways in which they use their voice range ( how high or low their voice goes) when speaking English, and to explain how we use intonation in different situations using the Tv series.( Examples; Wh-questions, completed thought, surprise, clarification/repetition, lists and incomplete sentences.)

**Input:** Slip of paper, transcript(worksheet) , video, student's book

**grouping:** In small groups, pairs.

**Preparation:** In group the students will receive slips of papers, some will have the explanation of when to use Wh-questions, completed thought, surprise, clarification/repetition and lists. And the others slips of paper is going to have examples so the students can match it. When finished, have students share their answers and correct as a class. Open their Student's book and complete the activity. When finish correct together.

**Performance:** Now ask students if they have watched the tv series "how I met your mother" , first play the video, and ask question, like; where are they? what are they doing? what's happening? what is it about? to help them get a general idea of what is it about. Now the students are going to work in pairs and have to listen to a short video from a tv series "How I met your mother". And they will have to identify the rise and falling intonation by making arrows.(↗, ↘) Repeat the video as many time as necessary.

**Accountability:** Still in pairs, have students role play parts of the video.

## Transcript

Name:

Date:

### INTONATION

**Information question** with “who”, “what”, “when”, etc. = Falling tones

**Yes/ No Questions** = Rising tones

**Statements** = Falling tones

**Imperatives** = Falling tones

**Question tags( expecting confirmation)**= Falling tones

**Question tags( showing less certainty)**= Rising tones

**List of items** = Rising, rising and falling tones

The dialogue transcribed below was extracted from the Tv series “How I met your Mother”. This scene is from season 3 episode 4 . In the scene there are 5 friends sitting down in the living room and one of them has some news.

1. Listen and mark (↗) raising or (↘) falling intonation pattern in the following dialogue:

**Ted:** It was a Saturday night in New York City and a young metropolitan was out in town living the kind of crazy life style you can only find in the Big apple.

**Everyone:** //↗97// ,// ↗98//, //↗99// ,//↗100!//

**Lily:** // 100?// // We only got to 82 in our honeymoon.//  
// So Robin// // I got a guy for you// ,// he is cute,// // he is funny// ,// he is smart.//

**Ted:**// mmh// // what's his but?//

**Lily:** // What you mean?//

**Ted:** // When someone wants to set you up they always tell you the good qualities first//  
but // then they leave out their huge flaws.//

**Barney:** // She is totally hot // and // really fun // but // she has a dead tooth.//

**Marshall:**// She is super hot// and// she's so successful // but // she has a pug she pushes around in a stroller.//

**Lily:** // She is so cute// and// she's so smart // but her last boyfriend had to get a restraining order against her.// // And then his cat and new vacuum cleaner both went missing.//

**Ted:** // wow set it up!// // I'm still convinced she killed my turtle.//

**Robin:** // Hey you know what, // not every set up has a but, //  
 // what about uhM Jamie? // // That girl that lily set you up, // // she was really nice. //

**Barney:** // If memory shows me she had a huge but, // her huge but , // nailed it! //

**Lily:** // Well there is nothing wrong with this guy, // he is really nice //and// he is really cute. //

**Ted:** // but //

**Lilly:** // fine, // but he has a kid //

**Everyone:** Ahh

**Ted:** // There it is, // // Robin is not going out with a guy with a kid. //

**Lilly:** // but the guy is really great // and // his kid is sweet, he is in my class. //

**Ted:** /// but it doesn't matter Robin hates kids. //

**Robin:** // I don't hate kids! //

**Ted:** // you told me even when you were a kid you hated kids. //

**Little girl:** // Robin would you watch cartoon with me? //

**Young Robin:** // I go to school all week, // // can I just have five minutes to myself read highlights // and // drink my juice? //

**Robin:** // ok, yes, kids are not my favorite thing in the world // // but, I like them. //

**Ted:** // but you don't want to have them. //

**Robin:** // well I like sports cars // but, It doesn't mean I want to push a Ferrari through my virgina. //

**Barney:** // SHOTGUN //

**Marshall:** hahaha // you can blame us for things that the kid will be a problem, // // I mean we were friends with Garfield // // we wouldn't set him up on a date with Mondays. //

**Robin:** // you know what, the kid is not a problem, // // I want to meet this guy. //

**Lily:** ok, that's awesome

**Robin:** yeah!

### **Activity 3: Match the definition to the examples**

**TO COMPLETE A THOUGHT:** Use Falling intonation to say that you have finished the sentence.

// I got a dog .↘//

**TO ASK A WH-QUESTIONS:** Use a Wh- question with falling intonation to ask for new information. In falling intonation, the voice jumps up on the most important word and then goes down at the end.

// How are you?↘ //

**TO EXPRESS SURPRISE :** To show surprise, you can ask a short question with rising intonation.

// Your dog speak English?↗ //

**NEED CLARIFICATION / REPETITION:** You can use a Wh-question with rising intonation if you aren't sure what someone said and you want the person to repeat it. In rising intonation, the voice goes up at the end.

//Who got a dog?↗ //

**LISTS:** In saying a list of items, the intonation often rises on each item before the last item. On the last item, the intonation falls to a low note to show that the list is finished.

//My dog is smart,pretty, and sweet ↗↗ ↘//

**UNFINISHED THOUGHT: Use Fall-Rise to Show the listeners you still have more to say.**

// I want a dog, but.... ↗ ↘//

**TAG QUESTION WITH RISING FALLING INTONATION: A tag question is a question like isn't she? or were they? added to the end of a sentence. A tag question has rising intonation when you want to check information. A tag question has falling intonation when you expect the other person to agree with you.**

// I told you the story, didn't I? ↗//

//He's the worst nurse, isn't he? ↘//