




SUPRASEGMENTAL PHONEMES

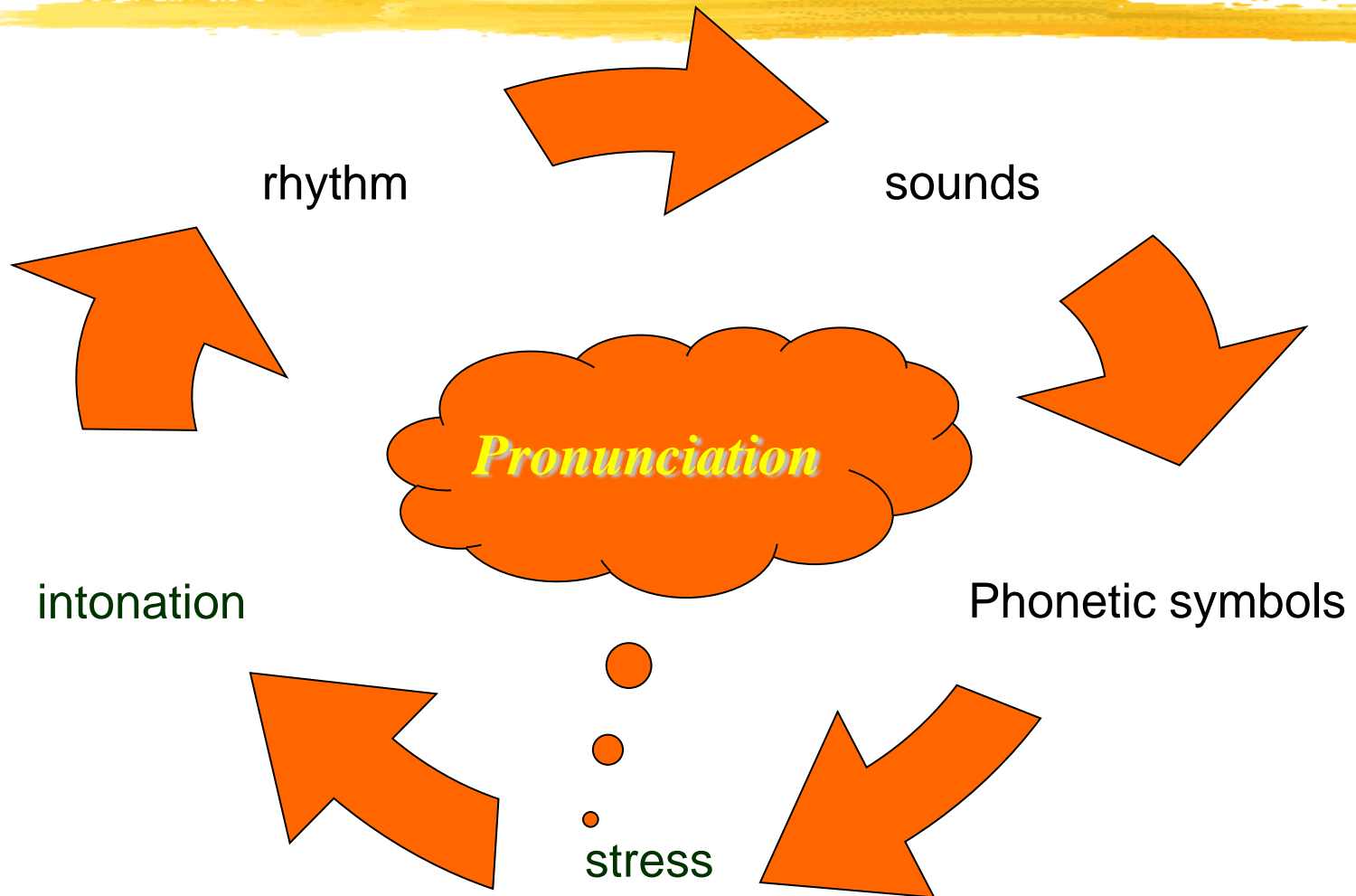
Suprasegmental Phonemes



- A phoneme is the smallest *segment* of sound that has the power to change the meaning; eg. consonants, vowels, diphthongs.
- In contrast with isolated phonemes, connected speech is characterized by continual modifications or alterations in stress and in intonation.
- Stress, intonation and rhythm are *suprasegmental* phonemes.

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- Speech communication is done via
 - segmentals
 - | phonemes, phones, allophones
 - suprasegmentals
 - | Stress, intonation, pitch, rhythm
 - | necessary for speech communication
 - | independent of segmental features (vowels and consonants)

Aspects of Pronunciation



Stress



- A stressed syllable in a word is generally spoken with more articulatory force, resulting in a syllable that is louder, longer in duration, and higher in pitch than an unstressed syllable.

Word Stress



■ When the nucleus of the syllable(s) is produced in a reduced form, the syllable is said to be unstressed. Bold syllables in the following words are stressed:

■ ***riddle**, **button**, **melon**, **manage***

■ ***person**, **zebra**, **happy**, **sedate***

■ ***surround**, **pretend**, **contain**, **remind***

Sentence Stress



- The last word in the sentence tends to stand out or have more emphasis (cf. primary sentence stress).
 - *I like his "style.*
 - *Bill and Jane went "home.*
 - *If I get "caught, I will get in "trouble.*

Sentence Stress (cont.)



- But phrases and sentences do not always end with a stressed word. Certain words in a sentence will usually receive emphasis or stress depending on:
 - the level of importance of that word in the sentence (i.e., content vs. function words);
 - the speaker's intent of the message being conveyed (i.e. contrastive stress).

Sentence Stress (cont.)



Sentences with a different stress

1. I want **two** return tickets to London.
2. I want two **return** tickets to London.
3. I want two return tickets to **London**.

Sentence stress & content/function words



- Content words tend to (but not always) receive sentence stress; function words usually do not receive stress.

- *I'm glad to "see you.*

- *I'd like a "word with you.*

Contrastive stress



- The use of sentence stress to indicate a speaker's particular intent is termed contrastive stress.

- *I want "iced coffee.*

- *I want iced "coffee.*

- *"Sheila purchased a new red sedan.*

- *Sheila "purchased a new red sedan.*

- *Sheila purchased a "new red sedan.*

- *Sheila purchased a new red "sedan.*

Sentence Stress: given vs. new information



- Sentence stress also plays an important role in distinguishing the type of information being presented by a speaker.
- The words that provide new information to the listener would typically be stressed.

A: *What did you have for lunch?*

B: *I had a "hamburger and "french fries for lunch.*

Primary and secondary sentence stress



- The "boys 'jumped into the 'pool.
- The 'boys "jumped into the 'pool.
- The 'boys 'jumped into the "pool.

Which words should be stressed?

- Usually stressed (Content Words):
 - nouns
 - verbs (excluding *be, have, do*)
 - adjectives
 - adverbs (including *not*)
 - demonstrative pronouns (*this, that, these, those*)
 - interrogative pronouns (*who, when, why, etc.*)

Which words should be stressed?

(cont.)



- Usually unstressed (Function Words):
 - articles (*a, an, the*)
 - simple prepositions (*to, of, in, etc.*)
 - personal pronouns (*I, me, he, him, it, etc.*)
 - possessive pronouns (*my, his, your, etc.*)
 - relative pronouns (*who, that, which, etc.*)
 - conjunctions (*and, but, that, as, if, etc.*)
 - the verbs *be, have*
 - auxiliary verbs (*will, would, shall, should, can, could, may, might, must, etc.*)

Which words should be stressed? (cont.)



■ More on the verbs *be*, *do*, *have*:

■ He is resigning.

■ Do you see it?

■ Harry is my best friend.

■ Barbara has a lovely smile.

■ I thought he was smarter than he is.

■ All movies aren't made in Hollywood, are they?

Which words should be stressed? (cont.)



- She is a "social worker.
- She is a 'social "worker.

- to split "up, to put "on
- to "look at him, to "listen to him
- 'What are you putting "on?
- 'What are you "looking at?

Intonation



Intonation consists of pitch contours peaking on the stressed syllable of the last content word in each phrase.

A pitch contour is related to the height or lowness of a tone in comparison to surrounding tones.

Ex. “*Really?!?*”

Try exaggerating the pitch contour.

Tone groups



- Long sentences will usually have more than one tone group. Tone groups in longer sentences are signaled by a slight pause in the utterance (indicated in writing with a comma, dash, or semicolon).
- *Yes!*
- *Not now.*
- *You took my umbrella, didn't you?*
- *I got a blue scarf, not a red one.*
- *I need apples, pears, and tomatoes.*
- *The boys, who ate the candy, got sick.*

Types of intonation contours: Falling



- Falling intonation contours are indicative of the finality of an utterance.
- falling and rise-fall
 - *The boys went home.* (unemotional statement)
 - *The boys went home.* (declarative statement)

Types of intonation contours: Rising

- Rising intonation contours usually indicate some uncertainty on the speaker's part.
- Rising intonation contours are typical of *yes-no* questions, incomplete thoughts.
 - *Are you coming?*
 - *When I got work, I became ill.*
- Rising intonation contours are also common when reciting a list of items.
 - *My favorite colors are red, blue, and green.*
 - *Richie, Darren, and Williams came along.*

Three basic types of intonation



- The falling intonation
- The rising intonation
- The level intonation

Intonation Patterns



- Fall
- Rise
- Fall-Rise
- Rise-Fall
- Level

Transcription of intonation



/	rise
\	fall
^	rise-fall
v	fall-rise
∧	rise-fall-rise

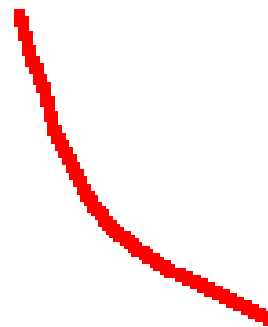
Each of these may express particular attitudes



- Fall: neutral statement
- Rise: neutral question, doubt
- Fall-Rise: surprise, skepticism
- Rise-Fall: emphatic statement
- Level: boredom, disinterest

Fall: neutral statement, conclusion

- E.g. Have you seen Ann?
- Yes. (Falling intonation indicates 'I have answered your question and do not intend to add anything else')

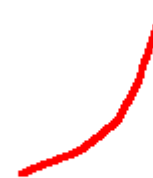


Yes

Rise: questioning, doubt, desire to continue conversation



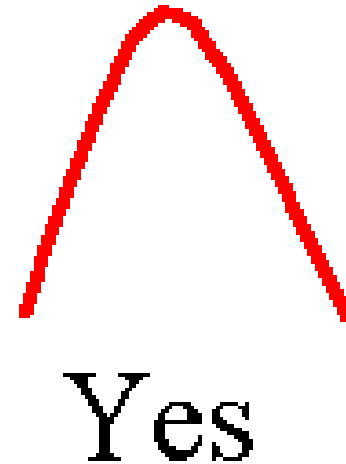
- E.g. Have you seen Ann lately?
- Yes... (Rising intonation indicates ‘I want to continue the conversation, I am curious’)



Yes

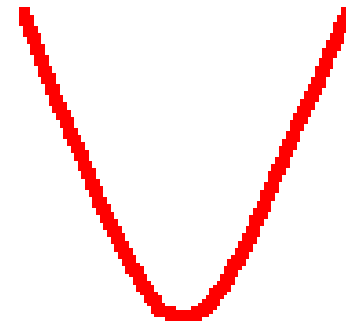
Rise-Fall: emphatic statement, irritation, command

- Do I really have to clean my room?
- Yes!




Fall-Rise: surprise, scepticism

- Ann and Peter were on good terms at the party
- Oh yes?



Yes

Level: boredom, lack of interest



■ Can you remember Peter Jackson? The other day in the office I invited him for dinner, he'll be coming tomorrow.

■ Yes.

Yes

Rhythm



- Stresses tend to recur at regular intervals.
 - *The 'boy is 'interested in en 'larging his vo "cabulary.*
 - *'Great 'progress is 'made "daily.*

Stress-timed vs. Syllable-timed languages



- English is a stress-timed language
- *Dogs 'eat "bones.*
- *The 'dogs 'eat "bones.*
- *The 'dogs will 'eat "bones.*
- *The 'dogs will 'eat the "bones.*
- *The 'dogs will have 'eaten the "bones.*