

# Discourse Transcription: Transitional Continuity

Bradley McDonnell

LING710

University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

April 12, 2020

# Boundary intonation

- ▶ Intonation is meaningful to participants.
- ▶ **For example**, speakers often use intonation to signal whether they intend to continue speaking, and listeners are attentive to these cues.

# Boundary intonation in DT

- ▶ DT can provide a useful representation of the more *interactionally* critical intonational information.
- ▶ Crucially differs from ToBI and other more phonologically detailed systems that are interested in the (meaningful) acoustic realization of F0.

# Transitional continuity (function)

## Transitional continuity:

marks *the degree of continuity* which occurs at the transition point between IUs.

- ▶ When a speaker arrives at the end of an IU, poised to continue – or not continue – on to the next, the intonation contour usually gives a fairly clear indication of whether the discourse business at hand will be continued, or has finished.
  - ▶ ...or is even occasioning a response.

# Transitional continuity (function)

- ▶ We focus on three general contours:
  1. Final
  2. Continuing
  3. Appeal

## Transitional continuity (form)

- ▶ While the intonation contour classes in this set are defined in terms of their function, each category will be more or less consistently realized by a specific form:
  - ▶ a specific acoustic contour, or set of contours, where each member of the set is determined by its context.

# Transitional continuity (form)

- ▶ Range of phonetic realizations for a given boundary intonation class differs from one language to the next:
  - ▶ this is one reason for using functionally based categories.
  - ▶ this helps to ensure that similar intonational functions will be written similarly across languages, ...
  - ▶ facilitating comparison even where acoustic realizations differ.

# Transitional continuity

<i>Continuing</i>	Form	mid level, mid rise, mid fall
	Meaning	'I'm not finished with my current discourse activity'

<i>Final</i>	Form	low fall (fall to bottom of speaker's pitch range)
	Meaning	'I'm finished with my current discourse activity'

<i>Appeal</i>	Form	high rise
	Meaning	'I'm seeking an (implicit) response from you'

Du Bois (in prep) *Representing Discourse*



**NOTE:** Punctuation in DT *always* represents intonation classes. It is *never* used to represent grammatical information.

# Final

**Final intonation contour** = *while it is being uttered, there is no indication that the speaker intends to continue speaking after the current IU.*

- ▶ This transitional continuity is marked by a **period (.)**
- ▶ In English (and many other languages), final is marked by a fall to low pitch.

# Final boundary intonation

(1) Final intonation  
((SBCSAE 002: 306-306.85))

JAMIE; [A ma:n].

HAROLD; [A ma:n].

play

## Final boundary intonation

(2) Final intonation  
((SBCSAE 002: 378.08:380.25))  
JAMIE; They're terrible.



## Final boundary intonation

### (3) Final intonation

((SBCSAE 002: 393.00-396.00))

JAMIE; We're gonna have babies crying.  
In the middle of the night.

play

# Continuing

**Continuing intonation contour** = *while it is being uttered, the speaker intends to continue speaking after the current IU.*

- ▶ This transitional continuity is marked by a **comma (,)**
- ▶ In English (and other languages), fall to mid-level pitch,  
...
- ▶ but it may have other realizations as well, each of which presumably has slightly different pragmatic implications
  - ▶ for example, a terminal pitch that remains level,
  - ▶ a very slight rise in pitch at the end of the IU,
  - ▶ a pitch that falls slightly but not low enough to be considered final.
- ▶ In practice the comma represents a broad cover symbol for a variety of non-final contours...



# Continuing boundary intonation

(5) Continuing intonation  
((SBCSAE 006: 21.31-34.55))

ALINA: (H) Well,  
(0.3)  
cause well,  
he --  
he was a cocaine addict.  
So he's talking about,  
he --  
you know he's,  
yeah man,  
he's gonna show us,  
you know,  
how X not X,  
to protect your car,  
not to get it,  
you know,  
ripped off man.  
Cause,  
you know,  
I --  
yeah,

I was into it,  
uh let me show you how easy it was.  
(H) He's actually pretty intelligent.

play



# Appeal

**Appeal intonation contour** = *when a speaker, in producing an utterance, overtly seeks a validating response from a listener.*

- ▶ This transitional continuity is marked by a **question mark (?)**
- ▶ In English (and many other languages), appeal is realized by a marked high rise in pitch at the end of the IU.
  - ▶ most commonly a yes-no question, but not all yes-no questions are said with the appeal contour,
  - ▶ in such cases the question should not be written with a question mark.

## Appeal boundary intonation

- ▶ appeal contour may be used in contexts other than a yes-no question,
- ▶ in such cases the question mark should be used.  
(speaker nods in agreement with example below)

(6) Appeal for recognition of a name  
((SBCSAE 006: 02.50-04.10))

ALINA; remember Tyke?  
Lived next door to Mom?



# Appeal boundary intonation

- ▶ question mark can be followed by a period or a comma
- ▶ indicating whether the IU with the appeal contour is considered to be final or continuing, respectively.

(7) Appeal intonation.

((SBCSAE 002: 454.43-456.15))

JAMIE;            Oba Oba,  
                      oh the Brazilian troupe that was here?,  
                      dancing?.

play

## Appeal boundary intonation

- ▶ question mark can be followed by a period or a comma
- ▶ indicating whether the IU with the appeal contour is considered to be final or continuing, respectively.

(8) Appeal intonation.

((SBCSAE 006:549.83-551.53))

ALINA; That's part of the reason they're not burning their bridges, right?.



# Appeal boundary intonation

(9) Morphosyntactic question with appeal intonation.  
((SBCSAE 002: 304.50-306.85)

MILES;        Does she have a what?.

JAMIE;        [A ma:n].

HAROLD;      [A ma:n].

play

# Appeal boundary intonation

- ▶ the question mark is *not* used for a grammatical question uttered with intonations other than the appeal contour,
- ▶ such as declarative contours.
  - (10) Morphosyntactic question with final intonation.  
((SBCSAE 002: 328.92-329.92))  
PETE;                      How many of them are there.

play

# Choosing a boundary symbol

1. *Is the unit wordless (consisting only of laugh, breath, pause, etc., but no words)?*

Yes → -INTONATION (non-intonational unit)  
No → +INTONATION

If -INTONATION → Stop  
If +INTONATION → Continue choosing boundary features

2. *Is the intonation contour heard as truncated (i.e. the projected contour is abandoned)?*

Yes → +TRUNCATED  
No → -TRUNCATED

If +TRUNCATED → Stop  
If -TRUNCATED → Continue choosing boundary features

3. *Is the intonation contour heard as final?*

Yes → +FINAL  
No → -FINAL (= “CONTINUING”)

4. *Is the intonation contour functionally interpreted as an appeal?*

Yes → +APPEAL  
No → -APPEAL

# Let's practice...

play