



# Pronunciation for Advanced Learners of English

David Brazil

**Teacher's Book**

CAMBRIDGE  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

## Listening for meaning

Students should be discouraged from trying to remember the exact *language* of the original. By focussing upon the sequence of *events* they have just heard about, they will have preparatory experience of putting together a message in their own way; and by doing it with a partner as recipient, they will appreciate that what they are doing involves both a speaker and a listener. Both of these considerations are important for the way spoken communication is treated in this course.

## Listening to intonation

### I.I

In the material used in this task, and in most others in Unit 1, tone unit boundaries usually coincide with very clear pauses. It may simplify matters at this stage simply to rely on pauses to determine where tone units begin and end. There is no harm in this, provided it is seen as no more than a provisional expedient.

Students may also notice that the tone units included in this task coincide with major grammatical chunks, which are often sentence-like. Attention can be directed in subsequent activities to the fact that there is no reliable relationship between tone units on the one hand and 'sentences' or 'clauses' or any other kind of grammatical item on the other.

If this task is done in pairs, there is likely to be a great deal of informal repetition of the material, and students will consequently become more at home, both in handling it and in perceiving tone units.

Something to be stressed is that, while the length of pause can vary, allowing the speaker or reader just as much time as is needed to 'prepare' for the coming tone unit, the tone unit itself must be spoken as an uninterrupted whole.

The notion of speech as a step-by-step progress through the message the speaker wants to communicate, each step being 'prepared' mentally before it is embarked on, is crucial to what comes later in the course, and could usefully be discussed at this early stage.

### ANSWERS

- 2 but it was too late // they'd gone // the street was empty // even the bus driver had gone/

If students lack confidence in tackling this task, it may be better to proceed one tone unit at a time, giving plenty of time to read and make mental preparation of, for instance,

// but the BENches were WET //

before attempting to say it. If this piecemeal approach is adopted, a second stage should be to attempt the complete sequence of tone units:

// but the BENches were WET // it was WINter // and there WASn't a PLANT // to be SEEN //

before going on to a similar two-stage treatment of the next piece.

## 1.5

If sufficient cassette-recorders or language laboratory facilities are available, this should be done in small groups. Even if you have neither of these, students should be encouraged to say what they think they are hearing: that is to say, to repeat the tone unit in the same way as it is spoken in the recording. It is important that both teacher and students see this activity as giving 'hands-on' experience of describing intonation. The fact that some people make different judgments about what they hear must not be allowed to undermine confidence at this early stage.

Differences are most likely to be of two kinds:

- 1 Tone units will be thought to include either one or two prominent syllables, e.g.:

// HOLly // and SNOWmen // or  
// HOLly and SNOWmen //

- 2 Different words may be given a prominent syllable within a tone unit, e.g.:

// in the FIRST street on the LEFT // or  
// in the FIRST STREEt on the left //

The significance of doing either of these two things might be discussed informally at this stage. It is examined in the next three tasks.

## ANSWERS

- 1 // i passed some shops // bright lights // and bargains // and fashionable dresses // on plastic figures // videos // and fridges // and

hundreds of shoes // at giveaway prices // leftover gift wrapping //  
and holly // and snowmen //

2 // she thought there was a pub // in the first street on the left //  
perhaps they'd know there //

3 // there was just nobody about // i walked on // and took the left  
turning // where she'd said // and found the pub //

(See the comment on the accuracy of transcriptions in Note 7 on pages 5–6.)

## 1.6

This task is designed to show the difference between a single, two-prominence tone unit, and two, one-prominence tone units, when falling tones occur throughout. It is quite likely that failure to appreciate the difference will have arisen in the course of Task 1.5.

It should be pointed out that neither version is more 'correct' than the other: there are times when it is better to present a certain amount of information as 'one parcel' and times when it is better to present it as two. For instance, we may want to draw separate attention to the fact that there were different articles in the window – // Videos // and FRidges // – or we may only want to have them all thought about as electrical appliances – // Videos and FRidges //.

Some students may suggest that the parcelling of information has something to do with grammar (see Note 21 on pages 15–16). Though this idea should not be rejected out of hand, it is better not to pursue it. What is often needed is the confidence to produce the two-prominence tone unit when one wants to; it is easy to see that the longer single tone unit requires more 'advance planning' than does a two-tone unit version. For instance, to begin

// Videos // (pause) and FRidges //

you need only to be sure of the way ahead as far as the end of 'videos'; but before you begin

// Videos and FRidges //

you need to have cleared up any planning problems you may have as far as the end of 'fridges'.

## ANSWERS

- 4 // HOLLY // and SNOWmen //
- // HOLLY and SNOWmen //
- 5 // there WASn't a PLANT // to be SEEN //
- // there WASn't a plant to be SEEN //
- 6 // i WALKed aLONG // LOOKing at the WINdows //
- // i WALKed along looking at the WINdows //

## I.7

Informal discussion of // where MARKet street was // is intended to provide some starting points for the longer exploratory work in Task 1.8. It is fairly easy to see that if the shop assistant failed to hear 'street' she would still probably know what Elizabeth was looking for. If she didn't hear 'market' she probably wouldn't know. Apart from the general purpose of 'helping your listener to follow your message', no attempt need be made at this stage to give a formal answer to the question the rubric poses.

## I.8

This task is included here to help students appreciate that the proper placing of prominences is not a mechanical matter: *it amounts to a deliberate highlighting of certain parts of the message* and the decision as to which parts need to be highlighted depends upon *the special circumstances of the moment*.

The examples chosen are intended to allow students to find their own way of stating the significance of assigning, or *not* assigning, a prominent syllable to a word. There are, therefore, no 'correct' answers here. Ideas that would suggest that they were thinking on the right lines might be:

- 1 The fact that it was a 'holiday' job, rather than a 'regular' job has an obvious bearing upon how much the assistant knows about the town.
- 2 She only 'thought' there was a pub, she didn't claim to 'know'.
- 3 'Left', as opposed to 'right', is crucial to the message.
- 4 Elizabeth could have decided to walk 'back'; instead she walked 'on'. She wasn't going to give up yet!

- Part 2: Notes on the cassette
- 5 The time the pub opened is stated as 'seven'; if it had been 'six', she might have thought it was worth waiting.
  - 6 The verb 'do' is the only one that is likely to be used in connection with 'a job'.
  - 7 In the context, some word meaning 'the district' is fairly predictable. (Of course, she could have said // she didn't KNOW the area //, but then 'area' – or another possibility, 'neighbourhood' – would have meant the same thing as 'district'.)
  - 8 In 'Perhaps they'd know there', it can be taken for granted that Elizabeth is looking for somewhere where they will 'know'. Is there any other verb that could have been used instead?
  - 9 In 'and took the left turning, where she'd said' there is now no real possibility of it being anything but 'left'. Why?
  - 10 In 'the first street on the left' there is no alternative to 'on', so it does not need special attention. (Compare this with (4).)

When pairs have found ways of expressing their own reasons, they can be asked to report back to the class, so that their explanations can be compared with others'. They should be encouraged to mention the example they are explaining *with the original intonation* in the course of their explanations.

## 1.9

The version on the cassette is as follows:

// there was NO ANswer // i RANG aGAIN // it was GEtting COLD //  
 so i deCIded to go BACK // i SHOuld have come // in the DAYtime //  
 THIS was HOPEless // i could be WAlking aBOUT // ALL NIGHT //  
 and NEver find market street // i WENT BACK // to where the SHOPS  
 were // it was RAIning // HARD // and the PREcinct // was deSERted //  
 i felt VEry // MISerable //

The reason for making the comparison is simply to give experience of hearing – and recognising – what different versions sound like. Though students may readily see that some are more likely than others, the question of which are 'correct' should be avoided: the exact way information is packaged depends very much upon circumstances.

If students notice that some of the tonic syllables, both in their own versions and in the recorded one, have pitch movements that do not fall, this observation can be noted and referred back to in Unit 2.