

Unit 6 When to take control

The first part of this unit is concerned with some of the circumstances in which it is better to use one tone rather than another. The main focus is upon the two versions of the referring tone, and the choice is related to the question of whether it is better to behave as if you are 'in control' or not. In Task 6.4 the possibility of not using *either* version is introduced: what circumstances would favour the use of a proclaiming tone instead?

Summary

- 1 When you use referring tones in 'making sure' enquiries, you may be doing so for the benefit of your listener. In that case, it is usually better to use the 'dominant' form, i.e. the rising tone. This includes offers of help which take the form of 'making sure' enquiries.
- 2 If you are making sure for your own benefit, it is usually better to use the non-dominant form, i.e. the fall-rise tone. This includes occasions when you use 'making sure' to ask for help.
- 3 When consonant clusters come at the beginning of a prominent syllable, the first sound is usually attached to the preceding syllable. This cannot happen, obviously, if the prominent syllable begins the tone unit.

Listening for meaning

This conversation is very short. Listening for the answers to the three questions should make students familiar enough with its content.

ANSWERS

- a) In London.
- b) At seven this evening.
- c) He will phone her at home.

Listening to intonation

6.1-6.3

These three tasks introduce the general idea that it is often a good thing to adopt a 'controlling' role when your aim is to offer help, but that this may not be such a good idea when you are seeking it. It will be seen that this applies whether one is using question-like utterances or some other kind. Students should be encouraged to examine the two sets of examples and work out the 'Who stands to gain?' distinction for themselves if possible.

6.4 and 6.5

The use of either the fall-rise or the rising tone in Tasks 6.1 and 6.2 depends upon a prior decision to refer rather than to proclaim. Some of the examples could well be heard in other circumstances with a proclaiming (i.e. falling) tone instead. This occurs where there is a clear intention of telling, as in // ↘ DON'T WOrry // or of finding out, as in // ↘ IS he THERE //.

6.5 ANSWERS

- 1 // ↗ IS he THERE // (a)
- 2 // ↘ could he POssibly // ↘ make it about SEVEN // (b)
- 3 // ↘ is there Anything I can do // (b)
- 4 // ↗ DON'T WOrry // (a)
- 5 // ↘ is he THERE // (b)
- 6 // ↗ COULD he possibly make it about SEVEN // (a)
- 7 // ↗ is there Anything i can DO // (a)
- 8 // ↘ DON'T WOrry // (b)

6.6 and 6.7

These tasks return to the rise/fall-rise distinction. The pair

// ↗ can i HELP you // (6.6)

// ↘ CAN you HELP me // (6.7)

provide a useful pattern with which to compare all the examples.

A possible classroom procedure would be to ask students to speak examples they select from 6.4 and 6.5 alternately.

6.8

In these examples, there is no easy way of describing the effects of using one form of the referring tone rather than the other. The task is, therefore, one in making purely aural discriminations. If it proves too difficult it is probably better not to insist. Having noted some situations where the choice noticeably *does* affect the relationship between speaker and listener, it is possible to reassure students that there are some situations where it doesn't matter much which of these tones you use.

ANSWERS

The second version has a rising tone where the first has a fall-rise.

1 // ↘ well NO // ↘ it's HIS day in LONdon // ↗ toDAY //

// ↘ well NO // ↘ it's HIS day in LONdon // ↗ toDAY //

2 // ↗ well he's Usually in // ↘ about SIX //

// ↗ well he's Usually in // ↘ about SIX //

3 // ↘ PREtty GOOD // ↗ REALLY //

// ↘ PREtty GOOD // ↗ REALLY //

4 // ↗ if the BAbysitter doesn't let us down //

// ↗ if the BAbysitter doesn't let us down //

6.9 and 6.10

These tasks exploit a general tendency to use items like 'usually' with a non-dominant tone at the beginning, but with a dominant tone at the end. (It would probably be a good idea not to give too much attention to why this is so.) The purpose of the tasks is simply to provide practice in alternating the two tones in circumstances where many speakers, including learners, seem to find the use of one or other of them easier and 'more natural'.

6.9 ANSWERS

'Usually' has a fall-rise tone at the beginning of the answer, and a rising tone at the end of the answer.

6.10 ANSWERS

1 // ✓ Usually // ↘ it's about SIX //

// ↘ it's about SIX // ↗ Usually //

2a // ✓ ACTually // ↘ it's called HOSpital LANE //

2b // ↘ it's called HOSpital LANE // ↗ ACTually //

3a // ✓ eVENtually // ↘ it led to a peDEStrian PREcinct //

3b // → it LED // ↘ to a peDEStrian PREcinct // ✓ eVENtually //

4a // ✓ as FAR as i can reMEMber // ↘ it was a COUple of YEARS ago //

4b // ↘ it was a COUple of YEARS ago // ↗ as FAR as i can reMEMber //

5a // ✓ at THIS time of DAY // ↘ it will be DREADful //

5b // ↘ it will be DREADful // ↗ at THIS time of DAY //

6a // ✓ if I were YOU // ↗ i should WAIT // ↘ until AFTer the RUSH hour //

6b // ↗ I should WAIT // ↘ until AFTer the RUSH hour // ↗ if I were YOU //

In (3b) there is a fall-rise, not a rising tone – a reminder that what we are dealing with here is no more than a tendency. There is no question of one of the versions being the 'correct' one.

6.11

ANSWERS

1 // ✓ JONson and JONson limited // ✓ GOOD MORning // ↗ CAN i HELp you //

2 // ✓ we DO have a mister robertson // ↗ YES //

- 3 // ↘ WHO is it CALLing // ↗ PLEASE //
- 4 // ↘ oh YES // ↗ ONE MOment mister jordan // ↘ i'll SEE if he's
IN //
- 5 // ↗ good MORning // ↘ DO you have a mister RObertson there
please //
- 6 // ↘ COULD i have a WORD with him //
- 7 // ↘ the NAME'S JORdan // ↘ i'm from JOHN DAvies and co //

Suggested reasons for these choices of tone are:

- 1 The first two units have fall-rise tones. As a routine acknowledgement of the call, followed by a greeting, they do not have the 'dominant' tone, but the offer of help does.
- 2 The agreement that there is someone called Mr Robertson in the office has a fall-rise tone, but the telephonist returns to rising tone for 'Yes', which is in effect, a further offer of help.
- 3 'Who is it calling?' is a finding out question and therefore has falling tone, but a referring tone is used for the routine (but polite) 'please'.
- 4 'Oh yes' with proclaiming tone indicates that the caller has been recognised. The last two units, as promises of help, have rising tones (Note that 'Mr Jordan' is not a selection in this context, so it does not have prominence.)
- 5 Mr Jordan uses the dominant form of referring tone to return the telephonist's greeting but the non-dominant fall-rise to ask about Mr Robertson – a request which amounts to asking a favour.
- 6 The same tone is used to ask to be connected to him and for a similar reason.
- 7 Both these tone units provide information, and therefore have proclaiming tones.

6.12

Student B may, for instance, want to find out what the wages will be; Student A may want to make sure that B is available for weekend work. Some enquiries could equally well be spoken in either way.