L18: Discourse Intonation

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Practice
1. where does your teacher live
2. is it raining there
3. after I lost my purse I didn't look for it
4. you brought your credit card didn't you
5. who did you say is moving next door
6. it was a dictionary that I told you to buy
7. what time is it now
8. on the shelf you'll find a phone book

Non-final tonic syllables

Tonic syllables may not be final with
- predictable final information
- compound nouns
- contrastive stress

Given/new information

- tonic syllable is on new information
- repeated information is not new
- predictable information is not new
- sometimes predictability is hard to determine:
  - I'm taking the dog for a walk |
  - I'm taking the dog to the vet |

Cleft constructions

- start with it + be
- noun is the information in focus
- final relative clause is old information

| it was my brother that sent you the letter |
| it was last Tuesday that I took the exam |

Compound Nouns (N + N)

- always stressed on first element
  - post office
  - traffic lights
  - history teacher
  - toilet paper
  - library card
  - letter opener
  - police car
  - tennis ball
  - physics exam
  - computer screen
  - football boots
  - phonetics book
cf Adj + N
• Adj + N is not a compound noun
  floppy disk
  ripe banana
  prime minister
  eighteenth century
  national library

Contrastive Stress
• usually, tonic syllable is final content word
• with contrastive stress, it may fall elsewhere
  my \brother wrote that letter |
  A: | is that /Fred's book on the table |
  B: | \no | \my book is on the table |

deaccenting
• repeated information is deaccented
  A: | do you like /durians |
  B: | \no | I /hate durians |

discourse intonation
according to Brazil (1997):
• given information has referring tone (rise or fall-rise)
• new information has proclaiming tone (fall or rise-fall)
  the man at the /front | is \wonderful |

practice
1. you bought some tennis balls didn't you
2. where is the police station
3. have you read Hamlet
4. when I lost my credit card I called the police
5. my brother a brain surgeon is coming to dinner
6. the vase that you broke was a Ming vase
7. I might study biology next year
8. you bought the Christmas cards didn't you

Reading
• TELISROP 35 – 45 (Goh 2000)