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Prosodic systems and intonation in English
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Preface

The study of intonation and related features in language is developing more rapidly these days than at any other time. Even a brief look at the extensive bibliography on the subject makes it clear that a great many linguists are concerned that intonation study should not remain ‘the Cinderella of the linguistic sciences’, as Alan Sharp once put it (1958, p. 151). But despite this activity, there is still precious little description available of intonation and related vocal effects in English or any other language, and there is a marked reluctance to develop any theoretical perspective, or to provide criteria for evaluating different partial descriptions. In this book, then, I have tried to develop just such a theoretical basis for the study of intonation in English, by emphasising the need for intonational phenomena to be integrated within a more general theory of non-segmental phonology. After an introductory discussion of some of the procedural difficulties involved and a review of the history of work on this subject (chapters 1 and 2), I shall outline various fundamental concepts required for the study of sound, relating these to the linguistically relevant notions of voice-quality and prosodic system (chapter 3). Chapter 4 provides a descriptive framework which defines and interrelates all the prosodic contrasts I have found in English, and acts as a theoretical perspective for the detailed study of those pitch contrasts which form the subject-matter of intonation (chapter 5). I discuss the relevance of intonation for grammatical analysis in chapter 6, and I have tried to isolate the main problems hindering progress in the semantics of intonation in chapter 7. In conclusion, I have attempted to give as comprehensive a bibliographical picture as possible, in the hope that this will clarify the ‘state of the art’ for future researchers. This book should make it clear that there are still a great many questions unanswered and unasked.

In order to present a reasonably comprehensive picture of my approach, I have incorporated into the present book, sometimes in rewritten form, parts of my earlier published work on intonation, and on prosodic features in general. 2.10.2, 4.4 and 5.10.2 contain material
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originally published in Crystal & Quirk (1964); 4.16 is largely identical with Crystal (1966a); and the principle behind the experiments discussed in 7.3 is reported in Crystal (1969a). A great deal of the research for this book was originally undertaken for a doctoral thesis for the University of London. The main difference between the thesis and the present exposition is that, while the statistical reasoning and conclusions of the analysis have been retained, most of the statistical minutiae which occupied so many pages in the thesis have had to be omitted, for reasons of space and readability—the book is already overlong, and disjointed enough. Those who would like to examine the statistics in more detail may of course refer to a copy of the thesis, obtainable in the libraries of University College London and the University of London; the full title is given in the bibliography under Crystal (1966c). Alternatively, readers who would like to see a restricted section of the statistics in order to clarify a particular point may obtain a copy by writing directly to me.

This book has been some six years in the making, and during this time there have been many colleagues who have given me invaluable support and criticism. I am particularly aware of my debt to Randolph Quirk for his encouragement and advice in the early days of this research; and I am also grateful to Frank Palmer, Peter Barnes, Peter Matthews and Derek Davy for providing me with a continual supply of helpful criticism. Finally, I would like to thank my wife for tolerating so long a period of enforced learning about intonation with such patience. Needless to say, I have only myself to blame for those inadequacies and errors which obstinately remain.

DAVID CRYSTAL

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February 1968