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A study of Questions and Answers Intonation in Academic English Dialogues

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Abstract

Intonation is an important aspect of spoken communication that affects how meaning is conveyed and interpreted, especially in academic settings. This study investigates the patterns of intonation used in questions and answers in academic English dialogues. The research focuses on common question types, including yes/no questions, wh-questions, and tag questions, as well as the intonation patterns found in their corresponding answers. A qualitative approach was employed to analyze selected academic conversations and identify the functions of rising and falling intonation. The findings show that rising intonation is frequently used in yes/no questions and situations expressing uncertainty or seeking confirmation, whereas falling intonation commonly occurs in wh-questions and declarative responses to indicate certainty and completeness. The study also reveals that intonation contributes to effective communication by helping speakers emphasize information, express attitudes, and avoid misunderstandings. The research concludes that developing awareness of intonation patterns is essential for EFL learners and should be incorporated into language teaching practices to improve academic speaking and listening skills.

Keywords: Intonation, Academic English, Questions, Answers, Rising Intonation, Falling Intonation, EFL Learners.

Chapter one

1.1 Introduction

This study explains how intonation changes in dialogues and answers in academic English dialogues. Many students focus mainly on vocabulary and grammar and forget that intonation plays an essential role in clarifying meaning. Rising or falling pitch helps the listener understand whether the speaker is asking, explaining, or giving an answer. The study also discusses the difficulty non-native learners face in using correct intonation, which sometimes leads to misunderstanding during classroom discussions. The aim of this study is to analyse question-answer intonation patterns identify the common mistakes students make, and show how correct intonation can make academic dialogue clearer and more , (Brazil, R., 1997).

Intonation is an important part of spoken English because it represents the rise and fall of the voice. Intonation is not just the musicality is interpreted, (Wells, J. 2006). Many students pay attention to grammar and vocabulary while ignoring the role of intonation. Even when learning use correct words using the wrong the wrong intonation can lead to misunderstanding, (Roach, P., 2009). Intonation changes depending on the type of question. Closed questions usually end with a risings tone. Using native-language intonation in English can change the meaning of a sentence even when the grammar is

correct, (Halliday, M., 1967). English intonation includes four main patterns: rising, falling, fall-rise, and rise- helps listeners understand the speaker's intention in academic conversation .(Brazil, R., 1997)

Many students in academic settings depend heavily on intonation to understand each other during discussions. When a student uses the wrong pitch, classmates may not recognise whether the speaker is asking for information giving an opinion or finishing a point. This sometimes leads to confusion or repeated questions. Because of this teachers often encourage students to pay attention not only to the words but also to how they sound. Improving intonation helps students follow the lesson more easily and interact with their classmates in a clearer way (Roach, P., 2009). In classroom discussions intonation helps students show whether they want to keep speaking or allow someone also to talk . This makes the discussion more organised and easier to follow ,(Brazil, R., 1997).

Non-native English learners often face challenges in producing natural intonation because their first language uses different pitch patterns. This causes many students to speak with a flat tone that makes their speech sound less expressive. As a results one questions may sound like statements ,are some statements may sound like questions. These mistakes are common among learners and can affect how teachers and classmates understand the message. For this reason many language programs recommend including .(Halliday, M., 1967).

Correct intonation also helps students sound more confident when speaking English. A student who uses rising and falling tones naturally appears more prepared and comfortable speaking in front of others. In contrast, students who use one flat tone often feel nervous because they are unsure if they are speaking correctly. Practicing intonation gives learners the ability to express themselves more confidently during presentations, oral exams, and classroom discussions, (Gussenhonven, C., 2004). Students can gradually improve their intonation by practicing with simple activities. For example reading short dialogues aloud helps learners recognize rising and falling tones. Listening to English videos or lectures also trains the ear to notice how native speakers use pitch to express meaning recording one's voice and comparing it to native patterns is another effective strategy. When students repeat these exercises regularly their intonation becomes more natural and their .(speech becomes clearer to listeners ,(Kelly , K., 2000).

Therefore, learning correct question and answer intonation helps students improve their academic speaking skills and .participate more confidently in class rising intonation is often used in clarification questions when the speaker needs the listener to repeat or confirm information. This pattern is especially important in academic discussions because students frequently ask for clarification when they do not fully understand a concept. The rising tone at the end shows that the speaker is seeking additional information or confirmation , (Roach, P., 2009). Another important aspect of question-answer intonation is the speaker's ability to show certainty or uncertainty through pitch choice. In academic dialogues, many students use a rising tone when they are unsure about their answer, even if the sentence itself is not a question. This rising pitch signals hesitation and invites the listener to confirm the in information. In contrast, a falling tone shows confidence and helps the speaker give clear explanations or complete an idea (Crystal, D., 2003).

As a student, I notice that practicing intonation really helps me feel more confident when speaking English. At first, I used to speak in a flat tone, and sometimes my questions sounded like statements. By reading dialogues aloud, listening to videos, and reading recording my voice, I can now control my rising and falling tones better. This makes me feel more prepared for classroom discussions and presentations, (Roach, P., 2009). In classroom discussions, intonation helps students show whether they want to keep speaking or allow someone else to talk. This makes the discussion more organised and easier to follow , (Brazil, R., 1997).

Many students use intonation from their first language without noticing. This can create confusion or make their questions and answers sound different from what they mean, (Halliday, M., 1967). Using correct intonation is very important in presentations and oral exams. It helps students speak more clearly, sound confident, and appears better prepared, (Gussenhoven, C., 2004). Students can improve their intonation by listening to native speakers, practicing with apps, reading aloud and recording their voices to check how their intonation sounds, (Kelly, K., 2000).

Intonation plays an important role in organising classroom interaction, as it helps speakers convey their meaning clearly. Students use intonation to show whether they want to continue speaking or to allow others to take their turn during class discussions, (Roach, P., 2009).

Teachers also rely on intonation to highlight important points and emphasise questions that require student participation. Poor use of intonation may result in less interaction or misunderstanding between participants. This shows that intonation is a key element in effective academic spoken communication, (Crystal, D., 2003).

1.2 Statement of the problem

Despite the importance of intonation in spoken academic English, many university students experience difficulty in using appropriate question and answer intonation during academic interactions. This problem often results in unclear meanings, misinterpretation of speakers' intentions, and breakdown in communication between students and lecturers. Learners tend to focus more on grammatical accuracy and vocabulary while paying less attention to suprasegmental features such as intonation. As a result, their spoken contributions may sound unnatural or confusing in academic dialogues. The lack of awareness and instruction regarding intonation patterns highlight a gap in students' communicative competence. Therefore, this study addresses the need to understand how intonation is used in academic English dialogues and the challenges faced by learners in this area, (Wells, J.C., 2006).

Intonation plays a crucial role in spoken English, especially in academic dialogues where the meaning of questions and answers is conveyed not only through words but also through the speaker's pitch and tone, (Gruttenden, A., 2008). Many students focus primarily on grammar and vocabulary, overlooking the importance of intonation in clarifying meaning. This can lead to misunderstanding or misinterpretations of the speaker's intentions. In academic settings, questions are not always straightforward; a rising intonation at the end of a sentence may indicate a genuine question, while a falling intonation may indicate a statement or confirmation, (Brazil, D., 1997).

Recent studies have emphasised that intonation is not merely a decorative feature of speech, but plays a crucial role in the comprehension and production of English among foreign language learners. Research shows that intonation helps learners distinguish differences in meaning between sentences and express various intentions such as questions, emphasis, or exclamation, which enhances their ability to communicate effectively. Moreover, intonation is closely linked to auditory perception and oral production, leading to improved understanding and responses in real-life communication situations. When students learn intonation patterns accurately, they develop a greater ability to process linguistic information and convey complex messages clearly and confidently. Therefore, neglecting intonation training in traditional classrooms may hinder the comprehensive development of speaking skills, making its inclusion in curricula an educational necessity rather than an optional addition. Similarly, answers may vary in pitch to show confidence, uncertainty, or politeness. Non-native English learners often struggle to use these intonation patterns correctly because they transfer the intonation rules from their first language into English, which can affect the clarity of communication, (Jenkins, J., 2000).

In classroom discussions, incorrect intonation may cause confusion, incorrect intonation may cause confusion, disrupt turn-taking, and reduce effective interaction between students and teachers. Therefore, understanding the patterns of question and answer intonation is essential for academic success. Despite the importance of intonation in spoken English, many EFL university students face difficulties in recognising and using appropriate intonation patterns in academic discourse. This problem often leads to misunderstanding meanings, misinterpreting speakers intentions, and weak oral communication in classroom interactions. The lack of sufficient focus on intonation in English language teaching contributes to students limited awareness of its role in conveying meaning beyond words. Therefore, there is a need to investigate how intonation is used in academic and communication, (Brazil, D., 1997).

Another issue faced by EFL university students is the limited ability to interpret speakers attitudes and intentions through intonation in academic speech. Many students tend to focus only on grammatical structures and vocabulary, while ignoring intonation as a key element of spoken discourse. As a result, students may fail to understand emphasis, contrast, or the speaker's stance during lectures and discussions. This weakness highlights the need for greater attention to intonation in academic English learning, (Roach, P., 2009).

Despite the growing emphasis on oral communication in English classrooms, many English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners still struggle with using correct intonation patterns while speaking. Research indicates that features like pitch variation and word stress are crucial for conveying meaning accurately, yet learners often have difficulty perceiving or producing them correctly. This lack of mastery can result in misunderstandings and reduce clarity in daily educational interactions. Many students also rely on intonation patterns from their first language, which limits their ability to express emotions and linguistic intentions accurately in English. Moreover, the lack of focused and practical intonation training in traditional classrooms further hinders learners from using these patterns effectively and spontaneously. Therefore, insufficient mastery of intonation among EFL learners represents a significant challenge affecting their ability to communicate clearly and confidently, (Brown, H. D., & Lee, H., 2015).

In addition, many students find it difficult to understand the correct intonation when listening to academic English questions and answers, (Gruttenden, A., 2008). This can make them feel less confident. Using intonation incorrectly may also cause others to misinterpret the meaning, especially when teachers or classmates are trying to understand a question or answer quickly, (Brazil, D., 1997). Therefore, it is improving their intonation skills through regular practice and listening to native speakers, as this helps them communicate more clearly and increases their effectiveness in academic dialogues, (Jenkins, J., 2000).

Therefore, it is essential for students to pay greater attention to improving their intonation in academic English, as neglecting this skill may lead to misunderstanding of questions and answers and reduce confidence during classroom discussions. It is important for English language programs to include regular intonation practice, such as reading aloud, listening to native speakers, and recording one's voice for self-review. Integrating these strategies helps students express themselves more clearly and confidently in academic dialogues, (Jenkins, J., 2000).

Another problem related to intonation in academic English is the EFL university students often struggle to distinguish between different sentence functions, such as statements, questions, and requests. Incorrect use of rising and falling intonation may cause confusion during academic discussions, especially in lectures and seminars. This difficulty affects students ability to respond appropriately and participate effectively in classroom interaction. (Celce-Murcia, M., Brinton, D. M., & Goodwin, J. M., 2010).

Moreover, the lack of explicit instruction in intonation within academic English courses contributes to students weak awareness of its importance. Many curricula emphasize grammar and written skills while giving limited attention to spoken features such as stress and intonation. As a result, students may have adequate vocabulary knowledge but still face problems in conveying meaning accurately in spoken academic context, (Gilbert, J.B., 2008).

As a student, I notice that many students have difficulty using correct intonation when speaking academic English. This sometimes makes their questions and answers unclear and can lead to misunderstandings between students and teachers. I believe the main reason is that most students focus only on grammar and vocabulary without paying attention to tone. Therefore, students need regular practice to improve their intonation and better understand the meaning of speech. Improving this skill helps students participate more confidently in classroom discussions, (Cutler, A., 2012).

1.3 Research Questions

- 1_ How does intonation help us know the type of question in class ?
- 2_ why is intonation important for questions and answers in class ?
- 3_ Can intonation show if a student is confused or understanding the lesson?
- 4_ How does intonation contribute to meaning turn-taking in spoken academic discourse?
- 5_ What is the role of intonation in expressing speaker attitude in academic spoken discourse?

1.4 Hypotheses

- 1_ students understand questions better when teachers use correct rising and falling intonation.
- 2_ Non-native speakers may have difficulty understanding questions if intonation patterns are not clear.
- 3_ Using clear intonation patterns helps students feel less confused during class discussions.
- 4_ Intonation contributes to the clarity of turn-taking in classroom discussions. Students participate more effectively when speakers signal their speech boundaries through intonation.
- 5_ It is expected that integrating various teaching materials with intonation exercises will enhance students' understanding of implicit meanings in English.

1.5 Significance of the study

This study is significant because it helps teachers understand how intonation patterns in academic English affects students comprehension of questions and answers. By analysing rising and falling intonation , the study shows how students can respond more accurately and confidently in class discussions. Moreover, it provides students with practical guidance to improve their listening and speaking skills in academic dialogues which can enhance classroom interaction and overall learning outcomes. (Levis, J.M., 2024).

This study is also important because it helps curriculum designers and educational researchers understand the role of intonation in classroom communication. By knowing which intonation patterns make questions clearer and improve teaching methods and design better classroom activities. Additionally, the study can raise awareness among students about the importance of pronunciation and

intonation in academic English, which supports their overall language development. (Selting, M., 1992).

From an academic perspective, this study highlights the role of intonation in spoken academic discourse, a feature that is often given less attention than grammar and vocabulary. Focusing on intonation helps explain how meaning is conveyed in real academic interactions such as lectures and classroom discussions. This study also increases students' awareness of how intonation contributes to clearer and more effective spoken communication. In addition, the findings may support teachers in improving students' spoken English skills. Moreover, this research provides useful insights for future studies in discourse analysis and phonetics by emphasizing the practical importance of spoken language features. (Crystal, D., 2008).

This study is significant because it helps learners of English become more aware of how intonation patterns influence meaning in academic question-and-answer exchanges. Understanding these patterns can improve students ability to ask clear questions and give appropriate responses during lectures and discussions. As a result, lesrners may give more confidence in participating actively in academic settings, (Brazil, D., 1997) .

In addition, the study contributes to linguistic research by providing insights into the practical dialogues rather than isolated sentences. This focus supports teachers and curriculum designers in developing teaching materials that address spoken interaction more effectively, especially in higher education contexts, (Roach, P., 2009).

This study is significant because it draws attention to the importance of intonation as a key element of spoken academic English, particularly in managing interaction between speakers. Understanding how intonation signals turn-taking, emphasis, and sneaker intention can help learners participate more effectively in academic discussions. By focusing on real spoken interactions, this study supports the development of learners communicative competence and encourages more natural and meaningful classroom communication. (Wennerstrom, A., 2001).

The significance of this study lies in its contribution to clarifying the role of intonation in improving speaking skills among learners of English as a foreign language. A proper understanding of intonation helps convey intended meanings more accurately and reduces misunderstandings in role communication. In addition, this study provides a theoretical basis that students can rely on to enhance their linguistic performance and build confidence when speaking both inside and outside the classroom. (Brown, H.D. & Lee, H., 2015).

Furthermore , this study can benefit students in real-life academia situations, such as participating in seminars presentations,or groups discussions. Understanding intonation helps them communicate their ideas more clearly and respond appropriately to questions which can increase their confidence and academic performance. Therefore, the research not only supports language learning but also enhances students overall academic skills. (Pierrehumbert, J., 1980).

Chapter Two

2.1 Literature Review

Intonation is very important when we speak English because it shows the meaning of what we say. Sometimes, we say a sentence, but our voice makes it a question or an answer. According to (Brazil, D. 1997), using the voice in a good way helps people to understand us better in the classroom. If a student speaks without any tone, the listener might get confused. This is why we need to focus on how we raise or lower our voice. Many people think grammar is everything, but the sound of the voice is what makes the conversation real and easy to follow for everyone. In English dialogues, we use different sounds for questions and answers. Most of the time, our voice goes up at the end of a question and goes down at the end of an answer. According to (Wells, J. C. 2006), these patterns help the teacher and students to know when to speak and when to listen. If we use the wrong tone, the sentence might sound strange or wrong. Learning these simple rules makes the student speak more naturally. It is not just about words, but about how the voice changes to show that we are asking for help or giving information.

Many students find it hard to use the correct English intonation. They often speak English using the same sounds from their own language, and this makes their speech sound a bit different. According to (Roach, P. 2009), this happens because students focus too much on vocabulary and forget about the sounds. This can make it difficult for others to understand if the student is sure about their answer or not. To fix this, students need to listen more to English speakers and practice how they use their pitch. Practice is the only way to stop making these common mistakes in the classroom. Inside the classroom, intonation helps to make the lesson more organized. It tells the listener if the sentence is a simple fact or a question that needs an answer. According to (Tench, P. 2011), using the right pitch helps to highlight the important parts of the lesson. For example, when a teacher asks a question, the sound of the voice is very clear. Students should learn how to do the same to show they understand the topic. Without these voice changes, the academic dialogue would be very boring and hard to understand for the people who are listening. When students know how to use intonation, they feel more confident. They are not afraid to speak because they know their voice sounds correct and clear. According to (Chun, D. M. 2002), being good at sounds makes students want to participate more in the class. If a student is worried about their voice, they might stay silent and not share their ideas. Learning the music of the language is a great way to make students feel better about their English. This confidence is very important for success in school and for making new friends during discussions.

Now, there are many simple tools and programs that can help students learn intonation. These tools show the students how their voice looks on a screen so they can fix it. According to (Levis, J. M. 2018), seeing the voice is a very easy way to learn because it gives quick feedback. This helps students who study at home to improve their speaking without a teacher. Technology makes learning sounds more fun and less difficult than just reading from a book. By using these tools, students can become better at English dialogues in a very short time. Using the wrong tone can lead to big mistakes in understanding. Sometimes a student wants to give an answer, but their voice makes it sound like they are asking a question. According to (Cruttenden, A. 1997), small changes in the voice can change the whole meaning of the sentence. This is why students should be careful when they speak in academic meetings. Understanding how to control the voice is the best way to make sure the message is clear. It helps to make a friendly environment in the classroom where everyone understands each other easily and without any errors.

Learning how to use the right tone is not easy and it takes time. Some students feel shy or nervous when they try to change their voice, but using apps and practicing every day can help a lot. When students listen to themselves, they can see their mistakes and fix them. This practice helps them to speak better and feel more comfortable. If students work hard on their voice now, they will be ready

for the future and for their new jobs,(Derwing, T. M. 2015)." In the future, being able to speak clearly will be very important for all students. They need to learn how to use English sounds to be successful in their jobs and studies. According to(Derwing, T. M. 2015), the most important thing is for the student to be easy to understand. This means they should practice their grammar and their intonation together. Students who focus on their voice will have more chances to do great things in the world. In the end, learning how to talk is the most useful skill for any student who wants to be professional.

2.2 Research Design

The current study follows a descriptive research design to investigate how students use intonation in academic dialogues. This design is the most suitable because it allows for a detailed description of the pitch patterns used by learners during their conversations. According to(Brazil, D. 1997), descriptive studies in phonetics are essential to understand the real-life speech habits of non-native speakers. Also,(Bryman, A. 2016) points out that choosing a clear research design helps to collect data that truly reflects the students' linguistic performance. By using this approach, the study can focus on the rising and falling tones in questions and answers without changing the natural environment of the classroom. This makes the results more honest and helps to identify the actual problems that students face when they try to speak English fluently. The design of this research focuses specifically on academic dialogues because they provide a rich source of question-and-answer patterns. In these dialogues, intonation plays a major role in showing the difference between asking for information and giving a final statement. According to(Wells, J. C. 2006), analyzing dialogues is the best way to see how pitch changes according to the speaker's purpose in the conversation. Moreover, emphasizes that a well-designed study should focus on the context where the language is actually used, such as school discussions. This helps to provide a clear picture of how students manage their voice to make their ideas understood by their teachers and classmates. This focus ensures that the research covers all the important linguistic aspects of spoken English in a professional way. (Saunders, M. 2019)

To achieve the goals of this research, the design includes selecting tools that can record and analyze sound patterns accurately. These tools are meant to capture the musicality of English speech and show how students use their pitch in different situations. According to(Roach, P. 2009), the accuracy of any phonetic study depends on the quality of the tools used to observe the voice changes. Additionally (Denscombe, M. 2021) suggests that using multiple tools for data collection can enhance the credibility of the research results. Therefore, the design ensures that every question and answer is analyzed carefully to see if the student is using the correct rising or falling tone. This careful selection of tools makes the study more reliable and helps to provide practical results that can be used to improve speaking skills. An important part of the research design is choosing a representative group of students to participate in the dialogues. This helps to ensure that the findings about intonation can be applied to other learners in similar academic settings. According to (Cohen, L. 2017), selecting the right sample is a key step to making the study successful and its results more general. Furthermore,(Flick, U. 2020) mentions that the design should consider the background of the participants, especially in linguistic studies where the first language affects the sounds of English. By choosing a diverse group of students, the research can identify the common patterns and mistakes that many learners share when they speak. This makes the design more comprehensive and allows for a better understanding of the difficulties that students face during their daily English conversations. The final part of the research design is linking the theoretical knowledge of intonation with the practical performance of the students. This ensures that the study is not just about rules, but about how these rules are used in real academic interactions.

The current study follows a descriptive research design to investigate how students use intonation in academic dialogues. This design is very helpful because it allows for a detailed description of the pitch patterns used by learners during their conversations. According to(Brazil, D. 1997),

descriptive studies in phonetics are essential to understand the real-life speech habits of non-native speakers. This approach helps the study to focus on the rising and falling tones in questions and answers without changing the natural environment of the classroom. This makes the results more honest and helps to identify the actual problems that students face when they try to speak English fluently. Also, choosing a clear research design helps to collect data that truly reflects the students' linguistic performance. By using this method, I can see how students manage their voice to make their ideas understood by their teachers and classmates. This focus ensures that the research covers all the important linguistic aspects of spoken English in a professional way. In the end, this design provides a solid foundation for future studies that want to explore the relationship between voice patterns and academic success (Patton, M. Q., 2015).

2.3 Population and Sample

The population of the current study consists of English language students who are involved in academic dialogues to improve their speaking skills. Choosing this specific population is important because these students frequently use questions and answers, which provides a rich environment for studying intonation patterns. According to (Brazil, D. 1997), the study of sound systems requires a population that is actively engaged in verbal communication to capture natural pitch changes. Furthermore, (Bryman, A. 2016) emphasizes that defining the population clearly is the first step toward achieving reliable research results that can be generalized to similar groups. By focusing on this group, the research can accurately observe how non-native learners manage their rising and falling tones during their daily academic interactions in the classroom. This helps to understand the real challenges they face in mastering English sounds.

A representative sample was selected from the total population to participate in the recorded academic dialogues. This sample includes students from different levels to ensure that the findings about intonation are diverse and cover various speaking abilities. According to (Wells, J. C. 2006), choosing a sample that represents the actual learners helps in identifying the common pitch mistakes that occur during questions and answers. The selection was made carefully to make sure that the participants are comfortable speaking English, which allows for a more natural flow of intonation patterns during the study. The participants in the sample share similar educational backgrounds, which makes the analysis of their intonation more accurate and fair. These students are all learning English as a foreign language, and they face similar difficulties in controlling their voice pitch in academic settings. According to (Roach, P. 2009), the linguistic background of the sample is a key factor in phonetic research because it explains why certain sound patterns are used. By focusing on this group, the research can highlight how their first language might influence the way they ask questions or give final answers in English.

The size of the sample was determined to provide enough data for a detailed descriptive analysis of the intonation patterns. A balanced sample size allows the researcher to observe many examples of questions and answers without making the data too difficult to manage. According to (Cohen, L. 2017), the sample must be large enough to give credible results but small enough to allow for deep and careful observation. This balance is essential in studies that deal with sounds and pitch, as every dialogue needs to be listened to and analyzed multiple times to ensure accuracy. During the selection of the sample, all ethical considerations were followed to protect the students' privacy while recording their academic dialogues. Every student was informed about the purpose of the study and how their voice recordings would be used for linguistic analysis only. According to (Flick, U. 2020), respecting the participants and getting their permission is a fundamental part of a successful research design. This created a safe environment for the students to speak freely, which helped in capturing the real rising and falling intonation patterns that they use naturally in their studies.

The population of this study includes English language students who want to improve their communication skills for their future careers. Selecting this group is important because they are at a stage where they need to use intonation correctly to be professional. A sample of these students was chosen to participate in academic dialogues, where I can listen to how they use their voice in real conversations. This sample represents different levels of learners to see the common mistakes they make with pitch and tone. According to (Richards, J. C. 2015), choosing a representative sample of learners helps the researcher to understand how speaking skills are developed in classroom settings. By focusing on this specific group, the study can show how practicing intonation helps students feel more confident. The results from this sample will provide helpful tips for other students who face similar challenges. In the end, studying this group is the best way to link classroom learning with the needs of the professional world. This approach ensures that the findings are practical and can be used to help students succeed in their studies and future jobs.

2.4 Data Collection Tools

The main tool used to collect data in this study is audio recording to capture the students' voices during academic dialogues. This tool is very helpful because it allows the researcher to listen to the questions and answers many times to analyze the pitch correctly. According to (Brazil, D. 1997), recording natural speech is the best way to study how intonation changes in real conversations. Using a digital recorder ensures that every small change in the voice, like rising or falling tones, is clear and easy to understand. Also, (Bryman, A. 2016) mentions that audio tools provide a permanent record of the data that can be checked later for accuracy.

This makes the collection process more reliable and helps in identifying the common mistakes students make when they speak. Another tool used in this research is the design of specific academic dialogues that contain many questions and answers. These dialogues are prepared to make students use different types of intonation patterns naturally while they talk. According to (Wells, J. C. 2006), using structured dialogues helps to focus on specific linguistic features like pitch and tone. This tool ensures that the collected data is relevant to the research aims and covers all the necessary phonetic aspects. Moreover, (Saunders, M. 2019) states that designing the right tasks for participants is a key part of collecting high-quality data in any study. By using these dialogues, the study can show how students manage their voice to make their academic messages clearer to others in the classroom.

An observation checklist was also used as a tool to record the rising and falling intonation patterns during the analysis of the recordings. This checklist helps to organize the data and make it easier to see which patterns are used most by the students. According to (Roach, P. 2009), having a clear list of sound features is essential for any phonetic analysis to avoid missing important details. This tool allows the researcher to mark the pitch of every question and answer carefully. Furthermore, (Denscombe, M. 2021) suggests that using a checklist helps to make the data more organized and ready for descriptive analysis. This tool ensures that the findings are based on a careful observation of how students use their voice in different academic situations. Choosing a quiet and suitable environment for collecting the audio data is a very important part of the tool's success. This ensures that the voice recordings are clear and free from any background noise that might affect the analysis of intonation. According to (Tench, P. 2011), the quality of the recording environment is a critical factor in studies that deal with pitch and sound frequency. If the environment is noisy, it becomes difficult to distinguish between rising and falling tones accurately. Additionally, (Flick, U. 2020) mentions that providing a comfortable place for participants helps them to speak more naturally and without stress. This careful preparation of the collection setting helps to get high-quality audio data that truly reflects the students' real speaking abilities in English.

The tools selected for this study are closely linked to the aim of understanding intonation in academic questions and answers. By using audio recordings and structured dialogues together, the research can provide a complete picture of the students' spoken performance. According to(Chun, D. M. 2002), combining different tools is the best way to study the complex nature of intonation and how it affects communication. This approach helps to make the results more credible and useful for future English language teaching. Also,(Patton, M. Q. 2015) emphasizes that every tool used in the research should serve the final goal of providing clear and logical findings. This careful selection of tools makes the study more professional and ensures that the analysis of sounds is done in a very organized and clear way for the readers. Using these different tools together helps to make the results more accurate and easy to trust. It allows me to see how students really feel when they speak, not just how they use grammar. By focusing on both recordings and checklists, I can provide better tips for learners to improve their professional voice in the future. According to (Creswell, J. W. 2014), combining different ways to collect data is a great way to see the full picture and find the best solutions for the students."

2.5 Data Analysis Procedures

The data collected from the audio recordings were analyzed using a descriptive method to identify the patterns of intonation. This process involves listening to the dialogues carefully and marking the pitch changes in every question and answer. According to(Brazil, D. 1997), descriptive analysis is very important in phonetics because it helps to show how sounds are actually used in real life. Also,(Bryman, A. 2016) mentions that this type of analysis is useful for transforming spoken words into organized information that can be easily understood. By using this method, the study can provide a clear description of whether the students use a rising or a falling tone during their academic discussions. This helps to make the results more accurate and directly linked to the research goals. The main focus of the analysis was on the direction of the pitch, especially the rising and falling tones in dialogues. Each recorded dialogue was checked to see how students finish their questions and how they start their answers. According to(Wells, J. C. 2006), analyzing these directions is the key to understanding if the speaker is asking for information or giving a final statement. The analysis follows a step-by-step process to ensure that no sound detail is missed during the listening phase. This part of the procedure is essential for identifying the common patterns that students use when they communicate in English. It provides a solid foundation for understanding the linguistic habits of the learners in the classroom.

To make the analysis more organized, an observation checklist was used to record the findings from each audio file. This tool helps to count how many times each intonation pattern was used correctly or incorrectly by the students.

According to (Roach, P. 2009), using a structured list during data analysis ensures that the focus stays on the specific sounds being studied without missing important details. This procedure makes it easier to compare the results between different students and identify the most frequent mistakes. Moreover, it helps in transforming the qualitative sound data into a more organized format that can be easily discussed in the findings. This organized way of working makes the whole study more professional and clear for the readers. Accuracy is very important in phonetic analysis, so the procedures included listening to the recordings multiple times to confirm the pitch patterns. This ensures that the distinction between a rise, a fall, or a rise-fall tone is recorded correctly without any errors. According to(Tench, P. 2011), the reliability of intonation research depends on the careful repetition of the listening process to catch every small change in frequency. This careful review helps to avoid any personal bias and ensures that the results reflect the students' actual speaking performance. By following these strict procedures, the study can provide high-quality data that is useful for English language teachers and researchers. This attention to detail is what makes the analysis of sounds successful and scientifically acceptable.

The final step in the data analysis procedures is linking the identified intonation patterns to the main questions of the research. This helps to explain why students use certain tones in their academic dialogues and how this affects their communication. According to (Chun, D. M. 2002), the goal of linguistic analysis should always be to explain the relationship between the sound and the meaning in a conversation. This procedure helps to show the practical importance of mastering intonation for successful academic learning. By connecting the data to the theory, the study can provide useful suggestions for improving speaking skills in the classroom. This final stage makes the research more complete and ensures that the analysis provides a clear answer to the research problem. This final step shows that knowing the rules is good, but the most important thing is how we use them when we speak with others. By connecting what we learn in books to our real voices, we can communicate more professionally in the future. This makes the whole work useful for anyone who wants to speak English fluently and succeed in their career.

Chapter Three

3.1 Research Summary

This study investigated the significance of intonation in academic English dialogues, focusing specifically on question-and-answer patterns. The research addressed a fundamental problem faced by EFL (English as a Foreign Language) learners: the tendency to overemphasize grammar and vocabulary while neglecting prosodic features. This imbalance often results in communication breakdowns and misunderstandings within the classroom environment. The study illustrated how variations in pitch—specifically rising and falling tones—enable listeners to distinguish between different sentence functions, such as questions, statements, or confirmations. Key findings highlighted that: Rising intonation is typically employed in questions to elicit information or seek clarification. Falling intonation is used to provide answers, convey certainty, or signal the completion of a thought. Furthermore, the research discussed the challenges non-native speakers encounter, such as speaking with a flat tone, which can make their questions sound like statements and cause confusion. The study also emphasized the role of intonation in managing turn-taking during academic discourse, providing cues that help organize the flow of interaction. Ultimately, the study concluded that improving intonation skills not only enhances clarity but also boosts students' confidence and their ability to express academic attitudes and emotions accurately. This work provides a theoretical and practical foundation for students and educators to recognize intonation as an essential tool for precise communication.

This research focused on the importance of intonation in academic dialogues, especially when students ask and answer questions in class. Many EFL students, like myself, usually care more about grammar and learning new words, but they often forget that how we say the words is just as important as the words themselves. The problem is that without using the right rising or falling tones, the meaning of a sentence can change completely, and this leads to misunderstandings between students and their teachers during lectures. This happens because most students focus only on accuracy and vocabulary without paying enough attention to the tone of their voice. Therefore, this study tried to show that learning intonation is a necessary part of speaking English correctly, not just an extra skill. It is important to realize that the melody of our speech carries a lot of the meaning we want to send to others.

The study explained how different tones work in a conversation and how they affect the listener's understanding. For example, we use a rising tone at the end of a sentence when we want to ask a "Yes/No" question or if we are not sure about something. On the other hand, a falling tone is usually used when we give an answer or finish a statement to show that we are confident in what we are saying. Many students face a big challenge because they speak in a "flat tone," which makes them sound bored, nervous, or unclear to their classmates. This research showed that if students practice these patterns regularly, they will be able to communicate their ideas more clearly and avoid making mistakes in their

daily academic interactions. Practicing with dialogues and listening to how native speakers change their pitch can really help in making a student's speech more expressive and natural.

Another important point discussed in the research is how intonation helps in "turn-taking" during classroom discussions and seminars. This means that the rise and fall of the voice tell the other person when it is their turn to speak or when the speaker has finished their point and is ready to listen. Without these vocal cues, students might interrupt each other or feel confused about when they should start talking. The study also mentioned that intonation helps students express their feelings and attitudes, such as showing certainty, hesitation, or even confusion about the lesson. By understanding these signals, the classroom environment becomes more organized and the flow of the conversation becomes much smoother for everyone involved. Teachers also rely on these tones to highlight important points and emphasize questions that require student participation and interaction.

In the final part of the research, the focus was on how improving intonation can build a student's confidence and overall performance. When students know how to control their pitch and stress, they feel more prepared for oral exams and presentations because they sound more professional. The research suggested that teachers should include more listening and speaking exercises in their language programs, such as recording voices for self-review or using apps to check sounds. This helps students move away from their first language habits, which often make their English sound flat or unnatural. In conclusion, intonation is a key part of academic success, and paying attention to it helps students participate effectively and feel more comfortable in English-speaking settings. It is not just about being understood, but about feeling like a confident and successful speaker in the academic world.

3.2 Conclusion

This chapter shows that intonation is a very important part of academic English because it helps to clarify the meaning of questions and answers in dialogues. Using the right pitch, whether it is rising or falling, makes the communication between students much clearer and prevents misunderstandings. The tools used in this study proved that understanding these patterns is essential for anyone who wants to speak English correctly in a classroom. Intonation is not just about the voice, but it is a way to organize information and show the speaker's purpose during the conversation. The findings of this chapter help to identify the common mistakes that non-native students make when they use intonation in academic discussions. Many students focus only on grammar and words, but they forget that the way they say the sentence can change the whole message. Learning how to use the correct tone helps students to be more confident when they ask questions or give answers in English. This approach confirms that focusing on sound patterns is a fundamental part of developing speaking skills and making the academic dialogue more organized and effective. Practicing these patterns is the best way to improve the quality of spoken English for learners.

It is also important to note that using the right intonation helps to create a better interaction between students and teachers during academic lessons. When students understand how to raise or lower their voice at the right time, it makes the dialogue more natural and helps everyone follow the discussion easily. This shows that speaking English is not just about knowing the rules, but also about how to use the voice to show interest or give a clear signal that the answer is finished. The way we use pitch is what makes the conversation successful and helps to keep the information organized for the listener. Moreover, the results suggest that constant practice on sound patterns can help students overcome the fear of speaking in academic environments. Focusing on the musicality of English through intonation makes the students' speech more professional and closer to native speakers. This helps to reduce the gaps in communication and makes the academic exchange of ideas much smoother. Teaching students the functions of intonation is a great way to improve their overall fluency and make them more effective in classroom dialogues.

In conclusion, the study of intonation in academic dialogues provides a new way to understand how students communicate and share knowledge. These findings emphasize that focusing on sounds is just as important as focusing on grammar to achieve success in learning English. There is always a need for more practical ways to help students use these patterns naturally. A clear understanding of these phonological systems is the final step to becoming a confident and professional speaker in any academic setting. By practicing these sound patterns, students can feel more confident when they speak in front of others. This study shows that mastering intonation is a great way to be ready for the professional world after graduation. It helps learners to express their ideas clearly and successfully in any future job. In the end, focusing on how we say words is just as important as the words themselves to achieve our goals.

3.3 References

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