

## The Challenge of Intonation TRANSCRIPT

*"Why do we have to learn intonation?!"*

Peter Roach offers words of encouragement to learners struggling with the intonation of their target language.

AL This is Anna Linthe from Cambridge University Press and I'm here talking to Peter Roach. It's been over 25 years since the first edition of *English in Phonetics and Phonology*. What questions have you been asked most by readers since the book was first published?

PR I think the one that I've had most often is: why do we have to learn intonation? I think a lot of people feel that they're coping well enough until they get through vowels and consonants and syllables and stress and rhythm and so on, and then they have to go out and start getting into falls and rises and rise-falls, and it all just seems a bit too much. I think, I'd like to encourage people not to get too heavily bogged down in this. The important thing about doing exercises in intonation is to sensitise yourself, so that if you are trying to sound a little bit more like a native speaker of the language you're learning, you just get a feel for the way the pitch moves. Every language is different in terms of its intonation – we all know that. A French speaker, a Spanish speaker, a German speaker – even if you can't make out the words and the vowels and the consonants, you can still hear from the intonation and the rhythm which of the languages you're hearing. And I think that the more you practise these things, the more you absorb the characteristic rises and falls – the melody of the language if you like. Even if you find it difficult to do really finely targeted exercises on 'is this a rise or is it a fall, is it coming on the second syllable or is it coming on the fourth syllable'. Even if you can't cope with those, you can get something out of these exercises by just absorbing the feel of the prosody of the language.

AL Okay, well thank you very much for speaking to us.

PR Thank you.