

# The Realisation of the Rising Tone in Nigerian English

ADO, A. Jacob

Girls High School, Gindiri, PMB 01001

Mangu, Plateau State, Nigeria

[Jacobama2@gmail.com](mailto:Jacobama2@gmail.com)

**Abstract-***Nigerian English differs significantly from British English with the obvious disparity in the use of the rising tone and the meanings associated with it. This paper analyses the realization of the rising tone and the extent to which its use in Nigerian English differs from that in British English. Recorded utterances and spontaneous conversations were collected and analysed. A list of conversations got from O'Connor and Arnold (1987) were administered to fifty subjects whose responses were recorded and examined. The tones were analysed to show how the rising tone is used in Popular Nigerian English (PNE) to achieve pragmatic effect in communication. The result showed significant differences in how PNE and BE speakers use the rising tone, how they associate meanings to it, and how the pattern of the rising contrast.*

**Key words-** *Intonation; Rising Tone; Meaning; English*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The ability of man to manipulate tone in speech differentiates them from machines or animals that are capable of mimicking humans (like robots and parrots). That is why the subject of intonation becomes very important in the discussion of issues that concern language. Intonation has been studied in relation to how it affects inter-regional communication and how it helps to explain how different people use language. O'Connor and Arnold (1973:1)[11] observe that a major feature of the spoken medium of any language is intonation, that 'No language that we know of is spoken on a monotone'. Katamba (1989:239)[10] also observes that every language uses pitch; and the reason could, as perceived by Wilkins (1991)[17], be that it could be impossible to correctly interpret any spoken utterance without taking note of its intonation.

Roach (1983:152)[15] maintains that it sounds quite unnatural if we try to say words like yes or no with a level tone. Especially with native English speakers, level tones are not commonly used on one-syllable utterances. They may be said using a rising tone /yes/no or a falling tone \yes/no. He says moving or changing tones are more common.

The basic efficient way to learn to use the intonation is by acquiring the intonation of one's first language which is by listening and talking to people who are always available. This implies that it is very likely that if a child does not have the opportunity to learn speaking by conversing with L1 English speakers, he will apply the intonation of his first language in his later learned English. A foreign or L2 speaker usually concentrates more on grammatical accuracy during conversation, especially with the struggle to first interpret an idea into his mother tongue before translation to English is done. This has left the area of intonation to suffer neglect.

Though the rising tone is not a new concept in linguistics, in terms of its range of usage it is important to investigate whether Nigerian speakers use it maximally as they use the other patterns of intonation, especially the falling tone; and whether or not the realisation varies.

A number of research results reveal that instances exist where the rising tone occurs in Nigerian English as in British English, but hardly are there such evidences that describe the difference or similarity in the pattern of the rise, and whether or not the attitudinal correlation is entirely or partly the same. It is therefore important that investigation in this respect be considered as the use of the rising tone may appear similar in some respect between the two varieties but they may yet differ in pattern and attitudinal reflection.

## 2. TONE/INTONATION

Tone refers to the distinctive type of fluctuating pitch used during a conversation. Gimson (1980:270)[7] identifies the following tones used to express meaning in speech: falling tone, rising tone, fall-rise tone, rise-fall tone, rise-fall-rise tone. He regards intonation as fundamentally a matter of frequency which he refers to as pitch. This shows that the manipulation of pitch by a speaker is like using an instrument to achieve a goal. Intonation is a linguistic concept that is concerned with the loudness of the voice and the level of energy required to make a particular part of a stretch of utterance louder than the other parts. It refers to the rise and fall in pitch of the voice during speech. According to Roach (1983:2), it is "the use of pitch of the voice to convey meaning". Eka (1996:81)[6], in line with the observation of O'Connor and Arnold, affirms that "natural languages are never spoken at one level of voice pitch for a considerable length of time"; that the pitch of the voice is always falling, rising, or having a rise-fall or fall-rise movement.

It becomes important to ask; how can the use of tones be described in terms of whether or not all speakers of English around the world use them in the same manner?

### 3. INTONATIONAL VARIATION

Intonational variation exists across language and dialectal borders in that different languages or dialects may use intonation differently such that the rising tone, which may indicate question in one language or dialect, may not be the same in a different language or dialect. English is not an exception, given the almost inexhaustible number of English varieties spanning through first language, second language and foreign language levels. Within each of the identified levels of English, internal variations obviously exist. For instance Yoruba, Hausa and Igbo speakers in Nigeria to a great extent can be identified by the local flavours (from their mother tongues) they carry into their English utterances even in the area of intonation. As non-native speakers of English, the appropriate use of English intonation becomes a serious problem to overcome. Jowitt (1991:100-104)[8] argues that Most of the Nigerian users of English neglect the rich intonational resources of Standard English, and that the falling tone has more patronage in Popular Nigerian English than in SBE.

Banjo (1976:12)[2] describes the appropriate use of stress and intonation as “the final hurdle, which a vast majority of speakers of English as a foreign language never manage to cross”. This obvious hurdle stems from the contrasting occurrence of intonation between the speakers’ first language and the foreign language. This is acknowledged by Onose (2010)[13] who identified phonology as one problem area of English on which scholars and linguists often focus attention. Atoye quotes Tiffen on the variation that exists in the use of stress in Indian English and the fact that the difference in the use of stress can affect intelligibility. Tiffen’s observation about the intonational variation that exists between Indian English and RP may not in every instance be the same as what is noticeable between Nigerian English and RP but it consolidates the fact that just as Indian languages affect Indian English intonation, so Nigerian languages affect intonation in Nigerian English thereby making Nigerian English intonationally different from the RP.

### 4. USE OF THE RISING TONES

Cruttenden (1997)[4] observes that “undoubtedly the most noticeable variation within British English is the more extensive use of rising tones in many northern cities” (they include Birmingham, Liverpool, Belfast, and Tyneside). In RP, it is observed by O’Connor and Arnold that there are various forms of the rising tone: the low rise, the high rise, the low bounce, and the high bounce. These features of the rising intonation show that for specific effect in speech, a speaker can decide on the option of tone to use. The differences that exist between these levels of the rising tone are as important as the

differences that exist between the various intonation groups.

Quirk and Greenbaum (2000:455)[14] observe that the rising tone is the commonest tone after the falling tone. Their opinion on the use of the rising tone concurs with that of Eka (1996:93)[6] who says that the rising tone has its usefulness in communication.

Considering Eka’s (1996:94)[6] observation, the rising tone has been discovered to be a very useful tool for enumeration. When a list of items is being enumerated, they are said with the rising tone except the last item. This is in consonance with the idea of non-finality given as one of the reasons for using the rising tone. For example; the colours are /red, /yellow, /pink and \green. The last word syllable is said with a falling tone. This has been tested in the past in public exams in Nigeria (e.g. West African Examination Council, Nigerian Examination Council etc.).

O’Connor and Arnold (1973:57-60)[12] in their presentation of the Take-Off as one of the ten tone groups point out that the rise shows that the speaker expresses reservation of judgement until more is heard from the listener. He gives the following examples;

Have you any money on you?	/Yes.
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Shall we be in time?	I \think so.
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They add that the take-off can be used to appeal to the listener to change his attitude, which the speaker considers wrong. The appeal may be presented as a statement or a command (but the commanding effect is not intended).

Example:

I shall have to sack him.	You can’t do \that    (he’s too useful.)
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Must I do it now?	Not if you don’t /want to.
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I am going to sack him.	Don’t do \that.    (he’s not a bad chap.)
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I’m afraid I’ve broken it.	Don’t worry about \that.
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The low bounce is used to sound soothing or reassuring. The listeners mind is put at rest as it does not imply any criticism or warning. The speaker sounds as one who has got the situation personally all under control and the hearer having nothing to fear or any reason to worry. It is used in echoed statements usually turned into an expression of surprise.

Example:

Where are you going?	Just to post a \letter.
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I said he was a liar.	You actually called him a \liar?
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The High Bounce shows that a complete statement can be given the effect of questions; which according to O’Connor is the usual situation. They gave the following examples:

You /like him?	To mean do you \like him?
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He’s definitely /going?	To mean is he definitely \going?
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## 5. METHODOLOGY

The researcher read questions taken from O'Connor and Arnold (1973)[12] to fifty educated Nigerians chosen from different language backgrounds. The contextual situation in which the statement was made and what exact meaning his/her response was meant to capture was explained to the responder. The responses were recorded and analysed. In some cases, the researcher listened to discussions of people in a group or on the street and took note of how they used the rising tone, especially if they used the falling tone where in RP the rising tone would be used. The pattern of the rising tone used by the respondents is also observed. This study combines the descriptive and functional linguistic approaches, as it investigates the attitudinal functions and pattern of realisation of the rising tone.

### 5.1 Methods of Transcription

The methods of transcription adopted in this research include the use of both tonetic marks and the interlinear method. However, the use of the interlinear method of transcription is more owing to its preference in recent works on intonation. It gives a clearer description of how intonation is used in an intonation phrase. The dots are used to show the height and accent of the tone. The large dots show that the syllable under or atop which it is placed is accented; the small dots indicate that the syllable is not accented. The height of the dots between the lines indicates the height of the voice. Phonetic transcription is added to show how the occurrence of strong or weak syllable may affect the pattern of the rise or expected attitude.

## 6. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This research answers the following questions:

How frequently does the rising tone occur in Popular Nigerian English (English spoken by more-or-less educated Nigerians)?

How can the rising tone in Nigerian English be said to relate to attitude as in RP?

To what extent can the rising tone in Popular Nigerian English likely to pose communication problems (mild or serious) in international communication?

Is the pattern of rise the same in RP and PNE?

## 7. INTONATION IN PNE

According to Jowitt (1991:100)[9], Nigerians ignore the rich intonational resources of Standard English, resulting in the likelihood of misinformation. For instance, a public official may unintentionally sound rude and unfriendly only because he has failed to use a rising tone that would make him sound friendly. Communication among Nigerians usually does not take into account the effects of intonation, since meaning is established based on phonological, semantic and syntactic criteria, and the same is the case when Nigerians communicate with non-Nigerians. Hence, a foreigner who exploits his

knowledge of intonation in a communication with a Nigerian may fail to provide his intended message using intonation.

After a period of observation of the form and the frequency of intonation patterns in educated Nigerian spoken English, Jowitt (1991:64)[9] also points out that "certain patterns having a high frequency, constitute a system in Nigerian usage differing in important respects from native-speaker systems, though lacking stability". His observation is valid to the extent that it points out the instability which characterise the usage of intonation in Nigeria, which is a consequence of the multi-linguistic composition of the Nigerian society.

Reasons abound to explain the existence of the difficulty Nigerian learners of English encounter in using intonation. Atoye (2005)[1] says,

*"One of the sources of the difficulty of English intonation for the foreign learner is, no doubt, the undue emphasis placed, in teaching, on its structural analysis rather than on its communicative value in EL2 programmes."*

It appears there is a separation between English for examination and English for communication in Nigeria owing to the obvious fact that students are taught intonation which they eventually do not really apply in their conversation. So, they learn intonation only to pass exams, and only a few aspects of it. The use of tone features like low rise, high rise, mid-level etc. can be considered a complex concept in Nigerian English.

### 7.1 Presentation and Analysis of Data

#### 7.1.1 The Rising Tone in Nigerian English

In this analysis, the RP realization of the rising tone is given as the standard; and then the Nigerian realisation is explained alongside.

#### 7.1.2 The Take-Off Tone

The pre-nuclear tones are low pitched and it ends with a low rise

In statements: RP uses the take-off to encourage further conversation, express reserved judgement, resentfulness, deprecation or guardedness.

Table 1

Question	Respondents' response	Rising tone	Falling tone
Have you heard about James?	No.	9	41
You know where John lives?	Yes.	16	34
How much is your watch?	Two thousand.	5	45
Aren't they rather expensive?	Some of them are.	5	45



The table shows that 17.5 % used the rising tone, and 82.5% used the falling tone.

In NE, the answer to the first question seems not to be informative enough if tone alone would be relied upon for meaning. Therefore, an additional statement, also said with falling tone, may be needed to complete the meaning. For example:

/no. wai du: ju: ask/	/tu: θauzənd. wai du: ju: ask/
No. Why do you ask?	Two thousand. Why do you ask?
/jes. wai du: ju: ask/	/sɒm ɒf ðeɪm a:. wai du: ju: ask/
Yes. Why do you ask?	Some of them are. Why do you ask?

The question that follows is used to encourage further conversation even if the answer is said using the rising tone. This shows that to encourage further conversation, reserve judgement, express resentfulness, deprecation or guardedness, Nigerians do not solely rely on the rising tone; meaning that the supposed attitude is not related. They prefer the falling tone and additional statements to achieve meaning where in RP, the rising tone alone would do.

In WH-questions, the Take-Off tone in RP expresses wonder, mild puzzle or a very calm but disapproving and resentful attitude.

Table 2

Question	Respondents' response	Rising tone	Falling tone
When's the meeting due to take place?	When? (Why, at five.)	48	2
The meeting's at five.	When? (I thought it was six.)	12	38
She's thirty six.	How old is she?	22	28
Who gave it to you?	Who gave it to me? (Andrew of course.)	42	8

Table 2 shows that 62% used the rising tone, and 38% used the falling tone. This shows that using the rising tone to express wonder, mild puzzle or a very calm but disapproving and resentful attitude is frequent in Nigerian English. This result is probably because the statements are very much like yes/no questions. They could preferably be said thus:

*Are you asking me when?*

*Are you asking me how old is she? Or Are you asking me how old she is?*

*Are you asking who gave it to me?*

The answers to these questions could be 'yes' or 'no'. They are usually asked rhetorically, but sometimes they are answered, not because the answers are necessary but

because the rising tone is assumed in PNE to be used only in questioning. Even when a rising tone is used to express surprise, answers are likely to follow. An RP speaker who expresses surprise by saying *How old is she?* may immediately add *I thought she would be a lot younger*, without waiting for the other's remark. But in PNE, the earlier speaker is expected to repeat what he or she had said, but not because it was not heard. It becomes as though the statement showing surprise is a question. For example:

A: My last daughter is twenty-seven.

B: How old is she? Or how old did you say she is?

A: Twenty-seven.

B: I thought she would be younger than that.

Therefore, to express wondering, mild puzzle or a very calm but disapproving and resentful attitude, PNE patronizes the rising tone more than the falling tone, but not always in the exact manner in which it is used in RP.

PNE	RP
/wen/	/wen/
When?	When?
/hau old is ʃi:/	/hau ould is ʃi:/
How old is she?	How old is she?
/hu: gev it tu mi:/	/hu: geiv it tə mi:/
Who gave it to me?	Who gave it to me?

In Commands, the Take-Off tone in RP expresses appeal, calm warning, and exhortation.

Table 4

Situation	Respondents' response	Rising tone	Falling tone
[Mother to a small daughter who is overexcited]	Steady.	3	47
[Father to small son who is riding his bicycle a little too fast]	Slowly.	3	47

The statements which are supposed to express appeal, calm warning, or exhortation are said by 94.7% of the assessed people. Only 5.3% used the rising tone. In PNE, the statements are said with the aim to achieve the same result as in RP, but the falling tone is preferred. They are rather said slowly with a smiling face so that the friendly look has more encouraging effect than the pleading words and the rise in tones. After all, among Nigerians, such situations would rather call for stern rebuke and warning, which would require a falling tone. Therefore, though a parent may try to persuade a child with such words, subconsciously the parental domination still surfaces; and the smiling face may not last for too long if the child does

not respond immediately. Most probably, to a child riding his bicycle a bit too fast, the parent would say Be \careful with a falling tone or care/ful, but not /careful. It would be more of a warning than a plea or advice.

PNE	RP
/sloli/	/sləuli/
Slowly.	Slowly.
/get daun/	/get daun/
Get down	Get down

In interjections in RP, the Take-Off sometimes shows reserving judgment or casual acknowledgement. PNE always uses a rising tone for really and a falling tone for splendid. One could say that the words have default tones no matter the attitude they express. Seriously is said with a rising tone but most likely, it is replaced with serious, but the tone does not change. However, Are you serious? is another well preferred options said with a rise. Though the three words are used as interjections showing reserving judgment or casual acknowledgement, they don't all take the same tone. This means that the choice of tone in PNE also sometimes depends on the word rather than the attitude it is intended to show.

PNE	RP
/splendid/	/splendid/
Splendid!	Splendid!
/ri:li:/	/riəli/
Really!	Really!
/si:ripsli:/	/siəriəsli/
Seriously!	Seriously!

It is observed that the patterns of rising are not the same in the two varieties. In RP, the rise begins from the first syllable in really. In PNE the rise moves to the second syllable which is more lengthened than in RP. The first syllable has a higher pitch than the second, which is not the case in RP. Seriously is more pitched on the initial syllable. Though the rise is on the final syllable, it is not higher than the preceding syllable. This reveals that the take-off may not feature in Nigerian intonation.

### 7.1.3 The High Bounce

In statements, it is used for questioning, to elicit a repetition, casual, tentative.

Though PNE, like RP, uses the rising tone for questioning, the high point reached on the tone is not the same in the two varieties of English. In PNE the low rise

is preferred especially because there is no excitement attached. For He's coming? PNE will prefer Is he coming? which is more like a question in grammatical arrangement. The low rise is placed on the last syllable lengthened and said with moving pitch even though the vowel is a short one which should not be accented, especially because it is a suffix having a weak vowel.

PNE 1	PNE 2	RP
/hi:s kɒmi:nj/	/is hi: kɒmi:nj/	/hɪs kʌmɪnj/
He's coming?	Is he coming?	He's coming?
/əlɒn/, /elon/		/ələʊn/
Alone?		Alone?

In RP, WH-questions place the nuclear tone on the interrogative word. It is used to call for a repetition of the information already given, with the nuclear tone following the interrogative word. It may echo the listener's question before going to the answer.

Table 7

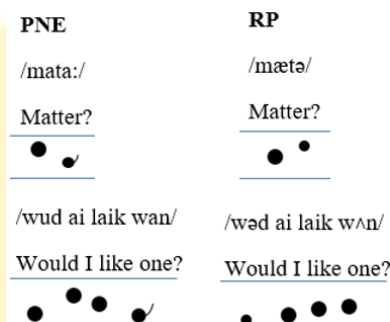
Statement	Respondents' response	Rising tone	Falling tone
That \big one's mine.	Which one?	9	41
\These flowers are for \you.	Who are they for?	13	37
He \sat on the \floor.	On what?	43	7
I am \flabbergasted.	You're what?	46	3

66% used the rising tone, and 44% used the falling tone.

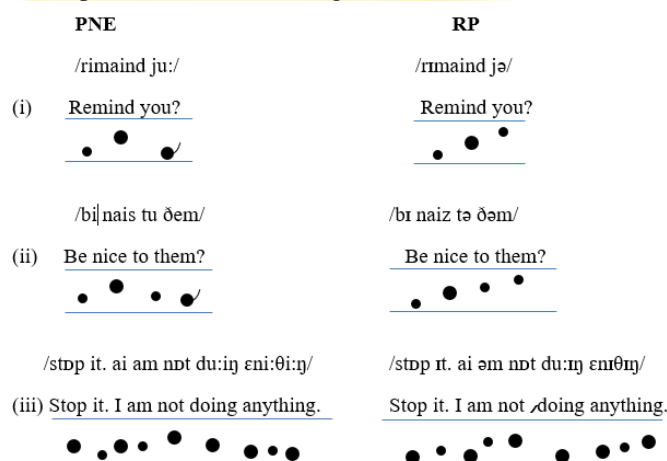
The result here shows that in PNE, the rising tone is used to call for a repetition of earlier given information, but not in all cases. The reason for the use of rising tone in Which one? and Who are they for? is probably because the expressions and situations seem a bit calm. Most Nigerians find it strange to use the rising tone for them, except if they are expected to receive yes/no response. On what? and You're what? are more like surprise; as if to say You mean he sat on the floor?.

PNE 1	PNE 2	RP
/wɪf wʌn/	/wɪf wʌn/	/wɪf wʌn/
Which one?	Which one?	Which one?
/hu: ə ðe fɔ:/	/hu: ə ðe fɔ:/	/hu: ə ðeɪ fə/
Who are they for?	Who are they for?	Who are they for?

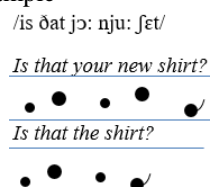
In RP, yes-no questions can be used for echoing the listener's question in a light and casual manner. Like in most other rising tones, in PNE the rising is reserved for the last syllable; and instead of a high bounce, a take-off or low bounce is preferred. Though the rise is lengthened, it does not go as high as the preceding syllable.



In RP, commands and interjections can be used for querying all or part of the listener's command or interjection, but with no critical intention. Using interjection and command to query a listener's command or interjection in PNE sounds like a yes/no question if it takes the question form. For that reason, it is said with a rising tone almost all the time. For instance after the command Stop it., the response is stop it? But I'm not doing anything. The second part would probably come after the question has been answered; or since the speaker already knows what the answer would be, he/she goes on to the second part after a brief pause, and then the second part is said with a falling tone.



In PNE, it is observed that in a situation where the penultimate syllable in a tone phrase is stressed, the rise is placed on the final syllable, and usually a take-off or low rise. The rise can start from the penultimate syllable if it is unstressed. For example



In (i) the penultimate syllable –mind is stressed, and there is a drop down in other to make way for the rise on you. In (ii) the antepenultimate syllable is stressed but the penultimate is not. So the rise starts from the weak penultimate to. In (iii) the first tone phrase stop it? has its rise on the tail which is made longer and tense (whereas in RP, it is very short and lax). The above examples show the nucleus in Nigerian English always shifting to the final syllable (whether or not it is accented) and starting its rise very low and ending as low-rise, as opposed to that of the RP which starts its rise on the last accented syllable raised to midlevel and goes even higher. The respondents did not observe the high bounce pattern in any of the utterances.

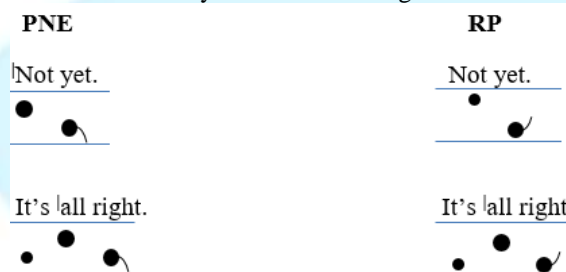
Low Bounce

In RP, in statements, it is soothing, reassuring, hint of great self-confidence and self-reliance, great expectance about what is to follow.

Table 10

Statement	Respondents' response	Rising tone	Falling tone
I Have you posted those letters?	I Not yet.	0	50
I I hate climbing ladders.	It's all right. (You won't fall.)	6	44

In these responses, there is 24% use of the falling tone and 6% of the rising tone. In PNE, to sound quite reassuring and confident, the falling tone is usually used. The tone is rather mildly authoritative; and authoritative statements are mostly said with a falling tone.



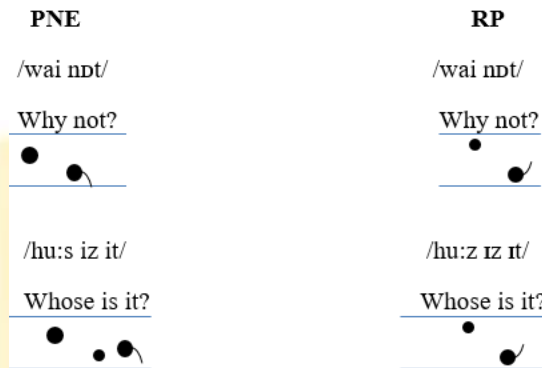
In RP, WH-questions shows that one is puzzled, disapproving, sympathetically interested.

Table 11

Statement	Respondents' response	Rising tone	Falling tone
I I don't think I will go.	I Why not?	0	50
I Look at this painting.	I Whose is it?	0	50

100% of the respondents used the rising tone. This is most probably because the questions do not sound like yes/no questions. To express puzzle, disapproval and sympathetic interest in general, PNE does not find the rising tone very suitable. Instead of a rising tone at the end, the entire phrase is said with a higher pitch and still

maintaining a fall, and there is a facial expression to go with it. So rather than the tone, the countenance shows the speakers attitude.



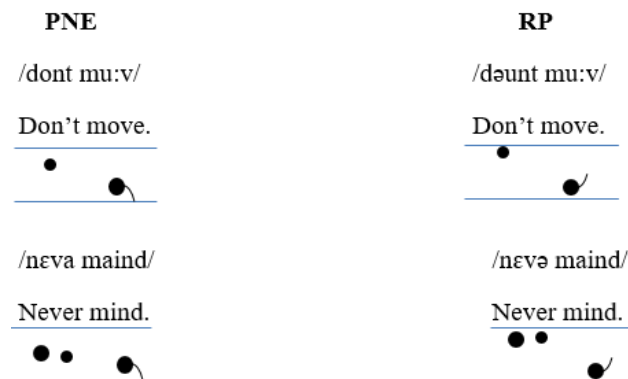
In RP, commands can be used in an expression that is soothing, encouraging, or calmly patronising.

Table 13

Statement	Respondents' response	Rising tone	Falling tone
I'm a fraid I'm in your \way.	Don't /move.	6	44
I have  broken that nice \vase.	Never /mind.	8	42

86% of the respondents in this test used the falling tone, and the 18% used the rising tone.

These are statements that could be said also as commands depending on the context or intension of the speaker. Here, the attitude may be soothing and encouraging, which is why in RP it could be said with a rising tone. In PNE, the most probable tone is falling, with a calm disposition. Don't move may be said with a rising tone but it would be a warning, especially when it is said repeatedly.

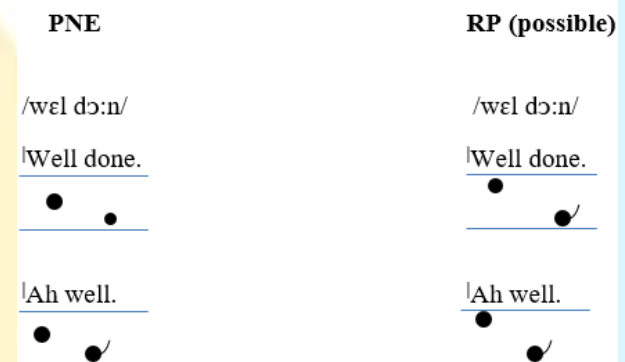


In interjections; casual yet encouraging, often friendly.

Table 14

Statement	Respondents' response	Rising tone	Falling tone
At  last I've got it \right.	Well /done.	0	50
There's  no es caping it.	Ah /well. (I don't suppose it'll kill us.)	36	14

This test shows that thirty-six per cent used the rising tone, and sixty-six per cent used the falling tone, showing that in PNE the falling tone is chosen over the rising tone to express a casual, yet encouraging and friendly attitude. Well done is usually said with a falling tone no matter what attitude it is expressed with. However, well is in most instances said with a rising tone. The difference in the use of tones here shows that in PNE, tones are usually associated with certain grammatically composed expressions so that no matter the varying attitudinal context, the same tone is used.



The above examples show how hardly the low bounce is used in NE. Even where there is a rise (usually low rise), the pre-nuclei elements are not as high as that of RP. The phrase would always fluctuate at midlevel and end with a low fall.

How the Use of Rising Tone can Affect Communication in Nigerian English

Nigerians feel that the British people speak too fast making it difficult for them to be understood. The speed in the speech is made possible through the use of intonation; and where a Nigerian expects a fall, a rise is used; or where he expects a rise, a fall is used. That could make communication between the two difficult unless the communicators understand their language differences and make effort to be understood by each other. Nigerians on the other hand are not so fast when they speak, yet their use of intonation could affect communication.

Sometimes, a Nigerian may say You did not ask me, you only said it, all because the rising tone is not used in the expected way. So where a rising tone is used it would always be taken to be a question.

You look very happy, for instance is not intended to be a question but a Nigerian may answer, Yes, I am very happy if a rising tone is used.

The Preference for the Falling Tone in Nigeria  
Tone language influence

Like many African languages, Nigerian languages are tone languages. They use pitch to produce distinctive word-meanings, and tone is seen as a property of the lexicon, in contrast with intonation which is a feature of phrases and sentences. In this research, it is realised that most Nigerian languages use the rising tone mostly in yes/no questions, though a lot of others still do not use the



rising tone even for questions. For instance the expression will you come? Will be said thus:

Hausa: Zaka zo?



Yoruba: Se o ma wa? (Will you come?)



Although *wa* rises above the preceding syllable, it does not have a moving tone. *Se* is introduced to change the statement into a question.

Yoruba: Se o ma wa? (Will you drive?)



In Yoruba, not every yes/no question takes the rising. *She o ma lo?* which is only changing come to go is said with a neutral tone, and there is no tonal alternative. It has to be said as it is. Also, there is no tone movement at the end. There may be pitch change but it would have to cover the entire phrase; and it is usually not connected to the speaker's attitude. This has made recognition of the English rising tone difficult for Nigerians thereby affecting its use even in English language. In Izere, a language of plateau state, there is scarcely a word or phrase that is said with a rising end. Therefore, there is the likelihood that since the mother-tongue does not use tones in such dynamic ways, Nigerians find it difficult to adapt the British pattern. Also, there is a transfer of features from the mother-tongue to English.

#### Tradition

Nigeria is a very traditional society with a lot of rules. Authority is always played out in homes, offices, social gatherings etc. In a family, the father exercises great authority over the other family members; the mother does the same to the children and the children to each other according to their ages. Even in a polygamous home, the second wife is expected to respect the first wife. Eventually, respect is shown by always using a falling tone. Commands are equally expressed by the use of falling tone (but not in mother-tongues). These, to a great extent, have led to the proliferation of the falling tone against the rising tone in PNE.

The sense of finality in Nigerian expressions

There is always a sense of finality in Nigerian communication except when it is obviously a question or expressing surprise. However, this still connects with the authoritative behaviour of a traditional Nigerian society. General attitudinal approaches to issues could also be reasons for the varied use of tones. Issues that could be regarded as less important to a British person could be very serious to a Nigerian; especially one that has to do with personality, respect, craving for recognition. Therefore the choice of words or tone is bound to differ.

## 8. CONCLUSION

The rising tone can be said to be under-utilized in PNE compared to the falling tone. It is not regarded with great significance in the expression of various attitudes as in RP. In fact it often sounds odd to most Nigerians when RP uses it. The Nigerian speaker automatically is believed to be speaking like a foreigner; and in most cases, such person is derided or stigmatised and eventually discouraged. However, we cannot say that it is totally not in use. A handful of Nigerians are very recently adopting the rising tone in their communication in a way that is not conventional in Nigerian English. In whatever situations, and no matter the attitude of the speaker, the rising tone is scarcely used in Nigerian English to ask wh-questions, give command, make complete statement, express regret, and express surprise.

This research has not been a wasted effort, owing to the fact that the information gathered is very relevant to the problems identified. The advantages of attending to the meanings of intonation patterns may not be obvious, especially to a language novice, but the effect is nonetheless not negligible. Research is meant to develop our world and make it a better place to live in; and one essential asset in societal development and enhancement that cannot be disregarded is language. My desire is that a research of this nature should continue to receive attention and appreciation from other researchers and users of language around the world. After all, human languages have much in common.

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### **Author's Biography**

The author of this paper studied English Language in the University of Jos, Nigeria, where he obtained a BA and an MA in the same field. He is currently teaching English Language and Literature-in-English in a secondary school in Mangu local government area of Plateau state, Nigeria. His major research interest is English Phonology, Phonetics and Syntax.