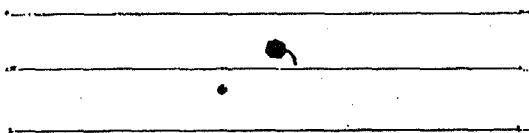


Fall, Fall—Rise, or Fall—Level?

by

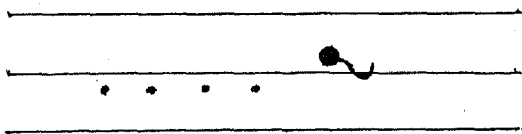
LÁSZLÓ MATZKÓ

Existence of the fall-rise tone in American English is attested in Roger Kingdon's *The Groundwork of English Intonation* and in Daniel Jones' *An Outline of English Phonetics*. Their examples, however, are doubtful. In *The Intonation of American English* Kenneth Pike gives the examples *Good bye!* *Good night!*, and *Hello!* (Light, airy greeting) as having the tune 3—^o1—2, that is, in his system, mid—extra high—high. This seems to indicate a relatively short high fall on the last two syllables. However, as Pike's book is a *phonemic* work, the reader cannot be quite certain how it is to be translated into exact phonetical terms. Jones represents it as a simple short high fall:

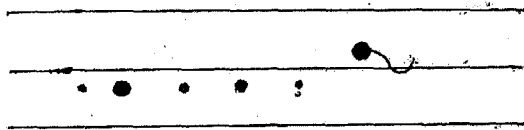


in *Good bye!* and *Hello!*

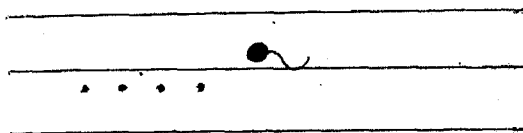
He goes on to say: „A common variant of this intonation is a tune of the type



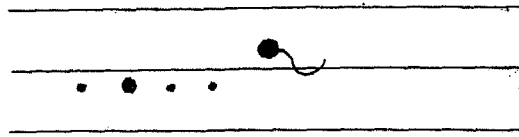
This fall-rise differs from the Southern British one in two respects: (1) the fall is much slighter, (2) the entire fall-rise is at a higher pitch-level than that of the preceding syllables.” Then he quotes as examples:



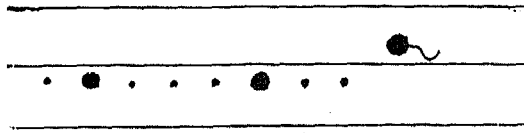
It wasn't much to ask.



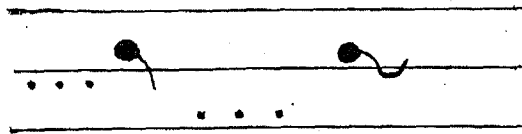
You could have been firm.



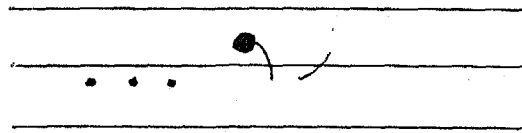
We certainly can. (Said in reply to the question 'Can you come here?')



We happened to be passing along.



We were convinced that we were right.



I wasn't ready.

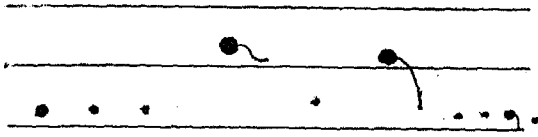
Kingdon, who in his book refers to American intonation only occasionally, says: *Cordial and American Farewells*. This type of farewell is considered to be a special or cordial one in Britain, but it is so commonly used in the United States that it must be considered as the normal one there — in other words, its widespread use has led to the attenuation and practical disappearance of its feeling of cordiality." He illustrates this intonation pattern with the examples *Good-bye*, *Good-night*, *See you later*, *So long*. That is, he records here fall-rises.

It seems that Pike's notation $^{\circ}1-2$ cannot be interpreted as a fall-rise, because that would be $1-2-1$ in his system, but it can be interpreted as a simple fall.

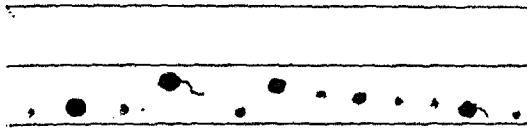
However, if we examine this "simple fall" tone more closely, we find that it is in reality not a simple fall, but what has not yet been stated in the books, a *fall-level* tone. Its acoustic effect is, under normal conditions, the same as that of a "simple fall" and it is usually hard to distinguish even from the slight fall-rise mentioned by Jones. Slow-speed playback of recordings decides the question. Jones is probably right in saying that a fall-rise may appear as a variant in similar cases. In the Linguaphone American English Course the following examples of fall-level can be found:

I. *Fall-Level:*

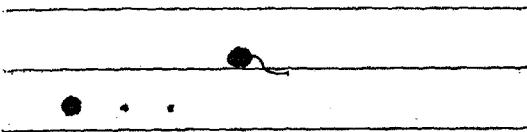
(When I talk slowly, you understand me.)



(1) When I talk fast, you don't understand me. (L. 1)



(2) The dog and cat are lying under the table. (L. 1)



(3) Have a good trip. (L. 26)



(4) Here you are. (L. 38)

II. *Fall-Rise:*



(5) Well, I've still got a few minutes to spare. (L. 26)



(6) Don't miss the train. (L. 26)

The rise in the fall-rise is so slight in these cases as to be noticeable only at slower-than-normal speed of play-back.