A STUDY ON INTONATION IN ENGLISH AND VIETNAMESE QUESTIONS OF THIRD - YEAR ENGLISH MAJORED STUDENTS AT HANOI METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY

Bui Thu An, Le Trang Nhung, Truong Phuong Thao, Vuong Thi Hai Yen

Hanoi Metropolitan University

Abstract*: The authors performed descriptive and contrastive analytic methods in this study, and they distributed surveys, observations, data selection, and processing are all used in this study a questionnaire containing open and closed ended questions to over than 100 English majors at Hanoi Metropolitan University. This study will compare Vietnamese intonation and English intonation briefly, as well as highlight some difficulties Vietnamese speakers are likely to face when learning English due to differences between these two language intonations, and will offer some implications for teaching and learning English intonation for teachers, HNMU's English major students, and Vietnamese EFL learners.*

Keywords*: intonation, distinguish, speaking improvement, third-year English majored students, methods, differences, confident, communicate.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Pronunciation is regarded as one of the first essential and critical aspects for measuring a person's English skills since it is the earliest representation of ideas in verbal communication. Intonation is important for English learners since an incorrect intonation contour in a phrase/sentence can impact the intended meaning of the entire utterance even if the consonants and vowels are correct, intonation will make speech more colorful and varied, as well as aid listeners in communicating more natural notions. This research is to identify intonation in English questions and compare them to Vietnamese to determine the similarities and differences between the two languages in order to assist general learners and students in learning the modern English language, as well as to assist the student of Hanoi Metropolitan University in particular in speaking English with a natural and native-like manner.

2. DEVELOPMENT

2.1. Intonation

2.1.1. Intonation of English

Intonation is influenced by the voice's pitch. It is crucial because the rise and fall of your voice can have a variety of effects. Occasionally, we should all ask questions, and in these situations, the pitch of your voice is quite important since it can be just as important as the things you are saying. Rising/falling pitch is one of two types of sound in questions. Depending on the message we want to convey to the audience, we can raise and lower our voices at different points throughout our speech. A rising sound is when your voice's pitch and tone rise at the end of a word or sentence, whereas a falling sound is when they decrease. Some case sentences: "Do you wanna go to the exercise center?" or "How was the gym?". After you articulated the primary sentence, the pitch went up at the conclusion of the address. In any case, once you examined the moment sentence, the sound went down.

2.1.2. Intonation of Vietnamese

Vietnamese has not only a "word-pitch system" (tone) but also a "phrase-pitch system" (intonation). In addition to the syllabic pitch (tone), undoubtedly there must be the rises and falls of pitch which constitute intonation contour in the utterances. Đỗ (2009) indicates five main components of Vietnamese intonation, as follows:

Table 4. describes the operation of intonation in Vietnamese reduced sentences

No.	Intonation	Description	Use			Type of sentence
1	short	In this intonation pattern, the duration of the tone is shorter than its inherent duration.	finished, assertive		strongly	affirmative
2	long	In this intonation pattern, the duration of the tone is longer than its inherent duration.	with hesitation, delay			
3	high (rising)	In this intonation pattern, the pitch of the tone is one level higher than its inherent pitch.	confirm the truth			
4	very high (high rising)	In this intonation pattern, the pitch of the tone is maximum.	question, surprised, want to know more, challenge			interrogative
5	low (falling)	In this intonation pattern, the pitch of the tone is one level lower than its inherent pitch.	tentatively accept, wait to hear more			affirmative
6	rising - falling	In this intonation pattern, thepitch of the tone rises to the highest level (5), then followed by a fall.	with negativism		sarcasm,	negative, command

Table 3. Five main components of Vietnamese intonation

Component	Distinctive features
Pitch / register	high vs. low
Intensity / loudness	strong vs. weak
Duration / Length	long vs. short
Tempo	pause vs. continuous
Contour	level vs. unlevel

Kieu and Grice (…) put it that there is interaction between syllabic tones and intonation. Yet, according to Alan, C. (1986), Vietnamese pitch is utilized the same way as in other dialects. To him, the diverse tones are by one means or another "pulled in" by the sound development. Enroll tones are leveled, moo tones extend their extend, tall tones are more unequivocally checked in interrogatives. However, pitch forms appear to be a bit more "cautiously utilized" in Vietnamese than in other dialects: In questions, for illustration, there's typical declination until the vicinity of the sentence last address marker, where the rise starts; the generally enlist is however higher than in declaratives. In terms of the capacities of Vietnamese pitch, Đỗ (2009) states, "intonation is one of the conditions for a sentence/utterance to exist and work communicatively." In communication, the Vietnamese sound has such capacities as syntactic, attitudinal, implicational/logic, practical (see Đỗ 2009).

2.2. Tone

In certain circumstances, the pitch level identifies a word, but in others, the pitch movement does. (Roach, 2001). These pitch qualities are referred to as "tone ". Tone may thus be defined as any of the pitch levels or pitch contours at which a syllable can be uttered. Tone, on the other hand, functions differently in different languages.

2.2.1. Vietnamese tone

"Vietnamese is a tonal language where changes of the pitch levels signal a change in meaning" (Ngo, 2004). Tones in Vietnamese, according to this definition, are the rise and fall of the voice inside a syllable, forming and identifying the sound of a word or morpheme. Vietnamese is a tonal language, which means that variations in pitch and/or contour indicate a change in meaning. The presence of tones enhances the communicative and expressive qualities of speech. The table below lists the tone descriptors and associated symbols.

Tones	Symbols	Description	Examples
Ngang (midlevel)	Unmarked	high-mid tone	Ba (dad)
Huyền (low-falling)	\	low-falling tone	Bà (grandmother)
Sắc (high rising)	/	high, rising and tense tone	Bá (uncle)
Hỏi (low-falling-rising)	?	mid low-rising tone	Bả (bait)
Ngã (high-rising broken)	~	High, rising and glottal	Bã (waste)
Nặng (low-falling broken)	.	low, dropping, glottal, tense	Bạ (whatever)

2.2.2. English tone

English is classified as an intonation language, which means that it uses tone for intonational meanings rather than lexical meaning changes. Tones in English can only be determined on a small number of notable syllables. As a result, English tones have been characterized as "the contrastive pitch movement on the tonic syllables" (Tench, 1996) or "the main pitch movements within a tone unit" (Tench, 1996). (Kelly, 2000). These are the four fundamental forms of tone in English.

    a. Falling/Fall/Glide-down

In its simplest form. The Falling tone begins quite high and then falls downward. If there are several stressed syllables, it begins rather high on the first stressed syllable. The second stressed syllable is slightly lower, and the third stressed syllable is much lower until the nucleus is reached, at which point the fall occurs on the nuclear syllable, which is also known as the tonic syllable.

    b. Rising/The First Rising Tone/Glide-up

In its most basic form, the Rising tone is an increase in voice pitch from a low to a high pitch. The increase is on the stressed syllable or from the stressed syllable to the one after it.

    c. Falling-Rising/Fall-Rise/Dive

In its most basic form, the Dive consists of a fall followed by a rise to a position just above the middle of our voice. The Dive might occur on a single syllable or over multiple syllables. The Dive can be employed in hesitant sentences such as:

    d. Rising – Falling

The pitch of the Rising - Falling tone increases and then lowers. The Rising-Falling tone is used to express powerful emotions such as approbation, displeasure, or surprise.

2.3. Different intonation in English and Vietnamese questions

In comparing Vietnamese intonation and English intonation, a big difference between the pitch feature of them can be found. Generally, varying the pitch to differentiate the meanings of utterances occurs in every language, but such variations in pitch are not all alike in all human languages. Vietnamese has two kinds of pitch contours: syllabic pitch for individual syllables and intonational pitch for longer utterances or sentences, whereas English only holds the latter feature of pitch. The English intonation patterns over longer stretches of speech have a fundamentally different function from those on individual syllables of Vietnamese speech. In one respect, the intonation contours of both languages are similar in that they do not make any difference in the "dictionary meaning" of an utterance; three basic intonation patterns (falling, rising, rising-falling) of both languages just tell the hearer something concerning the emotional attitude of the speaker or the apparent purpose of making the utterance. However, the English intonation patterns are not completely apparent to the Vietnamese EFL learner. The pronunciation aspect in Vietnamese of producing words with different tones may cause the Vietnamese speaker to make unnatural intonation contours when he/she produces English sentences.

There are many ways to classify English question. According to the grammar structure, English questions are divided into 5 types (Vương, par. 2):

a. Yes/No question   d. Declarative question

b. Wh-question   e. Tag question

c. Alternative question

Besides that, in Vietnamese, we also have four types of questions

a. Yes/No questions   c. Alternative questions

b. Wh - questions   d. Declarative questions

2.3.1. Yes/No question

Yes/no interrogatives are questions that can be answered with a "yes" or a "no" response. You probably ask or are asked these questions every day.

- **In English:**

Form:

$$\left[\begin{array}{l} \text{auxiliary} \\ \text{be} \\ \text{do/does/} \end{array} \right] \quad + \quad S \ + \ V$$

Yes + positive verb   No + negative verb

For example:

1. Is she beautiful? Yes, she is

2. Does he work? No. he doesn't

3. Are you ready to go? Yes, I am

4. Have you had breakfast? No, I haven't

→ The verbs are inversed and the tone is raised at the end of the question.

- **In Vietnamese:**

The word order is the same as that of a statement and some particles are added, such as "có…chưa", "phải không", "hả"…

For example:

✓   Hôm qua bạn nghỉ học **phải không**?

✓   Mẹ bạn bệnh **hả**?

      ✓ Bạn **có** làm bài tập **chưa**?

There is no inversion and no raising tone

a. Similarities: confirm the information

For example:

   1. Are you a student? (Bạn là học sinh phải không?)

     Yes, I am (Ừ, mình là học sinh)

   2. Are they your parents? (Họ là cha mẹ của bạn hả?)

     No, they don't (Không, họ không phải là cha mẹ của tôi)

Moreover, in some cases, we can also answer these questions by rejecting if the assumption is unreasonable.

For example:

In English

A: Is Miss Ann from America?

B: I even don't know who Miss Ann is

In Vietnamese

A: Hôm qua cô cho làm bài kiểm tra phải không?

B: Hôm qua có đi học đâu mà biết

b. Differences:

- The way answering questions

• **In English:**

   1. Do you want to eat now? (Con muốn ăn bây giờ không?)

     YES, I do (Dạ, con muốn ăn bây giờ)

     NO, I don't (Không, con không muốn ăn bây giờ)

   2. Don't you want to eat now? (Con không muốn ăn bây giờ sao?)

     YES, I do (Dạ, con muốn ăn bây giờ)

     NO, I don't (Không, con không muốn ăn bây giờ)

• **In Vietnamese:**

Vietnamese people usually use "vâng/dạ/có" and "Không" để express if theyagree with the question.

   1. Con muốn ăn chưa? (Do you want to eat now?)

     Dạ. Con muốn ăn bây giờ (Yes, I do)

     Không. Con không muốn ăn bây giờ (No, I don't)

   2. Con không muốn ăn bây giờ sao? (Don't you want to eat now?)

     Vâng, con không muốn ăn bây giờ (Yes)

Không, con muốn ăn bây giờ chứ (No)

- *The way forming the questions*

With all information mentioned above, in English, the order in the interrogative sentence is deserted. In Vietnamese, the order is the same as the statement (Subject + Verb), then, combining with some parts: "à", "hả", "ạ", "có…chưa", "có…không"…. Especially, in English, we raise voice at the end of the question, that doesn't presentin Vietnamese question.

2.3.2. Wh-Questions

A Wh-question is one that asks for information by using an interrogative pronoun. The chart below provides some straightforward formats for this type of query.
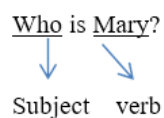
Question Word	Function	Example
What	Asking for information about something	What is your name?
Who	Asking about the information about someone	Who is she?
When	Asking about time	When will we submit this project?
Where	Asking about the place	Where are you from?
Why	Asking for the reason	Why do you take the IELTS exam?
How	Asking about the manner or the quality	How did your final test?

Additionally, to obtain the precise information, the aforementioned interrogative inquiries will be expanded into numerous forms.
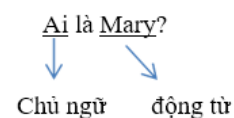
a. Similarities:

The order when forming the question with interrogative words which become Subject:

In English: *In Vietnamese:*

Who is Mary?   Ai là Mary?
 ↓   ↓   ↓   ↓
Subject verb   Chủ ngữ   động từ

b. Differences:

 - When the interrogative word is not the topic, the English question requires the operator or requires an inversion.

Eg: Why did you go to the cinema lately yesterday?

Operator

- However, in Vietnamese, there is no operator used in the question.

- Intonation:

+ In English: There must be a falling intonation at the end of question

+ In Vietnamese: It is no need to use intonation.

2.3.3 Alternative Questions

An alternative question is a question that presents two or more possible answers and presupposes that only one is true.

Eg: Would you like chocolate, vanilla, or strawberry ice cream?

a. Similarities: use "or" (hay là, hoặc….) between option.

For example, in English, "Are you listening to music or watching TV?" is to express surprise this information because before hearing this sentence, everyone thinks that he doesn't want to go there. In Vietnamese, it usually combines with some words such as "à, hả, á, ứ" at the end of the sentence. For example, the speaker thinks the hearer wants to eat "Mày không ăn thật hả?"

b. Differences:

In English: need to raise the voice at the end of the question.

In Vietnamese: don't do that or it's difficult for people to do that

2.3.4. Declaration Questions

A declarative question is a question used to express surprise or ask for verification. It is used in informal speech and it has a rising intonation at the end

- Eg: Wow, you ate that whole thing?

→ To express surprise

a. Similarities: To check information or express feeling

- In English:

For example: You have already bought all tickets?

→ To express surprise this information because before hearing this sentence, everyone thinks that he doesn't want to go there

- In Vietnamese: it usually combines with some words such as "à, hả, á, ứ" atthe end of the sentence. For example: Mày không ăn thật hả?

→ The speaker thinks the hearer wants to eat.

b. Differences:

In English: need to raise the voice at the end of the question.

In Vietnamese: don't do that or it's difficult for people to do that

2.3.5. Tag Questions

A question used after a statement when seeking or expecting confirmation of that statement. The intonation in most tag questions is going down to create agreement and rapportbetween the speakers. The structure of tag question:

Subject + Verb (affirmative), Verb (negative)?

Subject + Verb (negative), Verb (affirmative)?

Eg: You love me, don't you?

        She doesn't want to go with me, does she?

There is no tag question in Vietnamese that is formed following this rule. The only possible way to form this kind of question is to add "phải không" after a declarative question. For instance, Cô ấy đẹp, phải không? (She is beautiful, isn't she?), and especially no intonation is added.

In conclusion, since the present literature on Vietnamese intonation is quite modest and the framework for describing Vietnameseintonation and that for describing English intonation are incompatible in some respects, not many aspects of intonation can be easily compared in this study.

2.4. Intonation problems faced by third-year English- major students of HNMU and suggestions in Language Teaching and Learning

2.4.1. Some factors affecting students' learning Intonation at HNMU

Since English is a second language, students are prone to making mistakes. I'd like to mention a few typical errors, though.

1. Because Vietnamese lacks intonation, Vietnamese students in general and English-major students of HNMU often speak English with a flat intonation similar to how they speak Vietnamese. When speaking English in various situations, they somehow have an incorrect tone. Without intonation or with the incorrect intonation, the listener may feel uncomfortable or misunderstand what is being said, which will make the conversation boring.

2. Recognize that students often struggle with how to respond in the negative form to a yes-or-no query. They find them challenging because they are unsure of how to respond to these kinds of inquiries. It's difficult to respond to a typical question.

3. The learners usually forget the operator or inversion when they form the question. For instance, they ask "where you live?" instead of "where do you live?" or "How long you have been there?" instead of "How long have you been there?".

4. As knowing the weak aspect of Vietnamese student, teacher should give student more chances to practice to make them form question correctly and naturally by using the formof role-play in a variety of contexts.

2.4.2. Research Methodology

This research was done through questionnaires and interviews. The questionnaires were the Yes/No questions and Multiple choice questions, while the interview questions were the first two questions of the survey. In the questionnaires part, question 5-8, 10-12 was given with multiple choices. The survey we made has reached over than 100 people who are third-year English- major students of HNMU and we worked on this research from September 2022 until February 2023.

2.4.3. Current situation
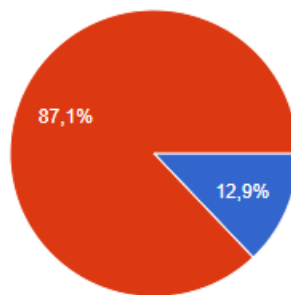
🔵 The pitch of the voice, that is, raising the voice or humming when speaking.

🔴 The rise and fall of the voice when speaking, make your speaking skills more fluent, attractive and natural

Fig 1. *How do you understand intonation?*

According to the pie chart (Fig1) " How do you understand intonation?" We can get the following data: 87.1% of students participating in the survey have the answer is "The rise and fall of the voice" . The remaining 12.9% have the answer to this question is "The pitch of the voice, rasing or humming when speaking".
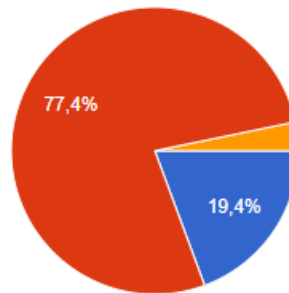
🔵There is no difference, intonation in Vietnamese and English is based on context

🔴Both Vietnamese and English have obvious differences

🟠Both Vietnamese and English are context-based, but English is more rely on stress

.**Fig 2.** *What is the difference in intonation between English and Vietnamese?*

The difference in intonation between English and Vietnamese per student, 77.4% of the total number of students participating in the survey have the answer is "There is no difference". 19.4% choose that "Both Vietnamese and English have obvious differences". The remaining 3.2% feel "Both Vietnamese and English are context-based, but English is more rely on stress".
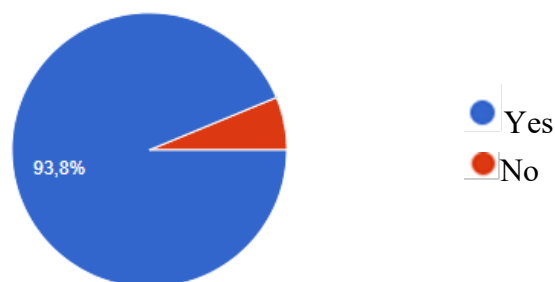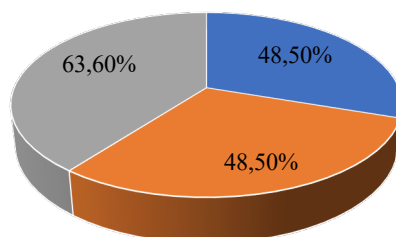

Fig 3. *Do you find intonation plays an important role in conveying information when communicating?*

Based on Fig 3, 93.8% of students participating in the survey agree with the vital role in transfering information when speaking. The remaining 6.3% of the students participating in the survey feel that intonation is not essential.

2.4.4. Findings and solutions

Fig 4. *What are the strengths of using intonation in narrative sentences in general and questions in particular?*

Moving to Fig 5, 48.5% of students believe that the strengths of using intonation are speaking skills enhancing and help candidates get good mark in Speaking tests. The remaining 63.6% of students think that using intonation avoid causing disconnecting from feelings and meanings.

Question 5: What kinds of difficulties do English -major students at HNMN face when learning English communication?

■ Poor pronuncition and grammatical structures
■ Lack of vocabulary
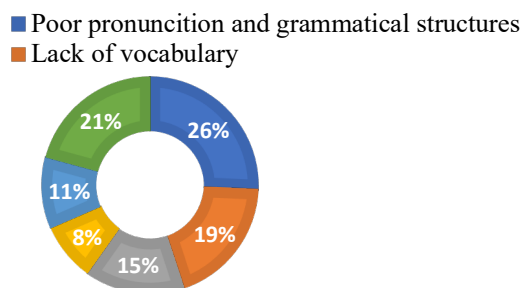
They all meet five difficult issues when learning English communication as pronunciation accounted for 26% of the total number of students participating in the survey. The number of students lack of vocabulary and grammatical structures accounted for 19%. And then, the anxiety with take 15% of the total. Next is that the excessive use of mother-tongue with 11% and another 21% feel lack of confidence accounted for 21%. A small number of students, about 8% lack of motivation. Some people even feel that they face all of the above difficulties.

Question 6: What would you do to fix the intonation problems

The majority of students participating in the survey chose "Shadow read with a video". But other tips are also highly-recommend:

- **Shadow read with a video:** Shadow reading is reading along with a video.

- **Mark up your text:** Mark the text to indicate where the peaks and troughs of your pitch should be.

- **Exaggerate:** Exaggerating means making something much larger than it should be in order to practice your intonation.

- **Try different intonations:** Pick one sentence randomly and say it in many different ways.

2.4.5. Solution to improve the situation:

Expanding your mindfulness of your intonation is the most excellent method to create it better and useful assets for upgrading your sound at domestic. As can be seen, intonation is a crucial component of pronunciation, but it's vital to keep in mind that most of the time, you're probably utilizing it appropriately.

2.4.6. Implications for teaching English intonation to Vietnamese learners

An educator can expect potential issues for Vietnamese English learners as they secure this component of articulation by differentiating the sound of Vietnamese with that of English.

Teachers are recommended to do the following:

This will help the teacher describe pronunciation.

- Acquire a system for explaining English basic intonation patterns. It is considered that practice, language use, and thorough, progressive, and systematic instruction will all facilitate

the development of intonation. The teacher will be better able to identify the pronunciation goals and issues of his or her students.

- Draw students' attention to the fundamental intonation patterns in English.

- Inform students of the intonational parallels and contrasts between Vietnamese and English.

- Encourage students to consider the speaker's aim in each and every speech circumstance.

- Provide feedback and exercise using educational technologies.

3. CONCLUSION

The results show that training in intonation perception and production can lead to considerable improvements among English majors at Hanoi Metropolitan University. As a result, this provides an important addition to the research of English intonation learning and instructional contexts. The study digs into a novel method to intonation training, which is thought to assist both EFL teachers and students in a variety of ways.

One of the most essential aspects impacting the success of education in general and teaching intonation in particular is the teaching technique. A contrastive analysis of two languages can also have a wide range of applications in both education and learning. We would thus urge that, if intonation is taught as a bigger component of any English language instruction, a greater emphasis be placed on providing learners with the ability to express the difference in meaning in order for them to better grasp how to apply it. Their incapacity might be attributed to a lack of understanding of the differences between the two languages. In reality, there are many variations and similarities between English and Vietnamese questions.

The findings also show that intonation is neither unteachable nor too difficult to acquire. For that, we can have a suitable technique for effectively teaching and learning English by expanding the mindfulness of intonation and asserting for upgrading sound at domestic. For many decades, innovating teaching techniques has been a source of worry and research expenditure. Yet, another possibility is that they just did not develop their abilities as a result of excessive use of mother tongue, and hence do not believe it vital, either in Vietnamese or English, to clarify what various patterns signify, or were not confident in utilizing it.

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NGHIÊN CỨU NGỮ ĐIỆU TRONG CÂU HỎI TIẾNG ANH VÀ TIẾNG VIỆT CỦA SINH VIÊN NĂM THỨ 3 CHUYÊN NGÀNH NGÔN NGỮ ANH Ở TRƯỜNG ĐẠI HỌC THỦ ĐÔ HÀ NỘI

Tóm tắt: *Trong nghiên cứu này, nhóm tác giả đã thực hiện phương pháp phân tích mô tả và phân tích đối chiếu, đồng thời phát phiếu điều tra bao gồm các câu hỏi đóng và mở cho hơn 100 sinh viên chuyên ngành tiếng Anh tại trường Đại học Thủ đô Hà Nội. Nghiên cứu này sẽ so sánh ngắn gọn ngữ điệu tiếng Việt và ngữ điệu tiếng Anh, đồng thời chỉ ra một số khó khăn mà người Việt Nam có thể gặp phải khi học tiếng Anh do sự khác biệt ngữ điệu giữa hai ngôn ngữ, đồng thời đưa ra một số phương pháp trong việc dạy và học ngữ điệu tiếng Anh cho giáo viên, sinh viên ngành Ngôn Ngữ Anh trường Đại học Thủ đô Hà Nội và những người học tiếng Anh.*

Từ khóa: *Ngữ điệu, phân biệt, cải thiện khả năng nói, sinh viên năm ba chuyên ngành ngôn ngữ Anh, phương pháp, sự khác biệt, tự tin, giao tiếp.*