

**HANOI UNIVERSITY OF INDUSTRY
SCHOOL OF LANGUAGE AND TOURISM**



NGUYỄN THỊ LƯƠNG

**A STUDY ON CURRENT PRACTICE OF TEACHING AND
LEARNING ENGLISH INTONATION FOR SECOND-YEAR NON-
ENGLISH MAJOR STUDENTS
AT A UNIVERSITY IN VIETNAM**

MASTER THESIS IN ENGLISH LINGUISTICS

HANOI, [2024]

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HANOI- 2024

DECLARATION BY THE AUTHOR

I declare that this thesis has not been previously submitted for recognition at this or any other academic institution. To the best of my knowledge, and excluding properly referenced sources, the content of this dissertation has not been published or authored by anyone else.

Date: _____

Author's signature

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ABSTRACT

English intonation, a vital component of effective communication and speaking proficiency, poses various challenges for both teachers and students. Therefore, this research was conducted to investigate the teaching and learning English of teachers and non-English major sophomores at a tertiary education in Vietnam which integrated Blended learning (BL) in their English programs. The research employed questionnaires as the main data collecting instrument and supported by class observation. The results of the study show that despite recognizing the significance of intonation, both teachers and students face obstacles in teaching and learning intonation, such as time constraints and authentic material inadequacy and the lack of confidence in using appropriate intonation patterns in the teaching and learning process. Additionally, participants expressed their preferences for techniques that involve technology, shadowing, or face-to-face conversation with native speakers to enhance English intonation.

This research endeavors to motivate educators, curriculum developers, and educational administrators to recognize and address the requirements of the students and teachers in learning and teaching English intonation, and from that develop a more active and effective learning environment for students to improve their intonation skills.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

BL: Blended learning

CD: Completely Disagree

D: Disagree

N: Neutral

A: Agree

CA: Completely Agree

INTRODUCTION

1. Rationale

In the modern era, English has been recognized as a universal language that is taught as a second language in many non-native countries. “English has been the world standard language, and there is no major threat to the language or to its global popularity” (The Economist, 1996). Crystal (1997) pointed out that no other language in the world spread as extensively as English, naming it truly an international language. English has made a tremendous contribution to connecting people from different parts of the world, regardless of dissimilar cultures and different native tongues. As English proficiency continues to be in high demand, it is imperative for language learners to not only focus on vocabulary and grammar but also on the subtleties of pronunciation, including intonation.

Intonation, the melodic pattern of pitch changes in spoken language, plays a crucial role in conveying meaning, emotions, and intentions during communication (Gussenhoven & Rietveld, 1992). By altering the pitch contour within a sentence, speakers can convey questions, statements, exclamations, and various emotions, contributing to more effective and nuanced interactions. According to Pickering (2004) and Wennerstomi (2004; 1998), the comprehensibility of a non-native speaker's English can be enhanced if the individual is able to utilize appropriate intonation patterns. Misunderstandings caused by incorrect intonation can lead to communication breakdowns, hindering successful cross-cultural exchanges.

While English learners often prioritize vocabulary and grammar, intonation is an aspect that deserves greater attention. Research has shown that the accurate use of intonation can significantly impact how messages are perceived and

understood (Bolinger, 1989). Non-native speakers may face challenges in acquiring appropriate intonation patterns due to the influence of their native language's intonation, leading to potential misinterpretations and difficulties in achieving fluency (Liu, 2019).

For Vietnamese students, acquiring correct English intonation can be particularly challenging. Vietnamese is a tonal language, where different tones alter the meaning of words. This tonal nature may lead Vietnamese learners to transfer their native intonation patterns to English, resulting in noticeable pronunciation differences that can affect intelligibility (Nolan, 2020). Through the researcher's initial observation, many students, especially non-English major students at a university have difficulty with English intonation when speaking English. Therefore, helping non-English major students understand the significance of intonation in spoken English and recognize the specific challenges which they are facing are crucial steps in enhancing language instruction and promoting effective communication skills. These facts are the inspiration for conducting a study on English intonation at a university, with the hope to shed light on the way to improve English intonation of non - English major students.

2. Aims of the study

The study aims to: [1] investigate the level of concerns, background knowledge and perceptions of non-English major students and teachers at a university towards English intonation learning, [2] figure out the problems regarding English intonation that students are facing and offer solutions to them. In addition, the research is to raise the awareness of non- English major students about the importance of intonation and suggest some possible solutions for them to improve their own practice and thrive in their academic and professional

endeavors in today's globalized world. Ultimately, this study strives to contribute to the enhancement of English intonation learning strategies and, in turn, improve the overall English language proficiency of non-English major students.

3. Research questions

To achieve the above objectives, the study addresses the following research questions:

1. What are the perceptions of non- English major students and teachers towards English intonation?
2. What are the specific problems faced by second year non-English major students while practicing English intonations?

4. Scope of the study

This study was conducted on second-year non-English major students and teachers at a Vietnamese university. These students, though majoring in various disciplines, share the educational background of having undergone two prior semesters of English language instruction (English for Business 1 & 2). The teachers are the ones who are currently instructing them in this English semester. Regarding its scope, the study aimed at investigating students and teachers' perceptions and their main challenges when learning and teaching English intonation and identifying some effective solutions to handle them. However, it's crucial to clarify that this study has certain boundaries. The study might work well for only second- year non-English major students and teachers of English Business 3 of this university or for ones who are concerned.

Moreover, due to time and experience limitation, the study only mentions favored intonation practicing techniques based on research findings and the actual implementation and assessment of these techniques for this objective are beyond

the scope of this thesis.

5. Significance of the study

This study provides a significant insight into teaching and learning English intonation of non-English major students towards English intonation at a Vietnamese university. Furthermore, the study's findings would be used for curriculum development, optimizing language programs to prioritize intonation practice. It would be a useful reference for both students and teachers who are concerning about English intonation.

6. Structure of the thesis

This study consists of Introduction, Conclusion and three main chapters followed by a list of references and appendices.

Introduction gives an overview of the research with detailed information about rationale, aim and objectives of the research, the research questions, the scope, and structure of the research.

Chapter 1 **Literature Review** presents a review of theoretical background about intonation, intonation learning and teaching and a review of previous studies related to the research.

Chapter 2 **Research Methodology** provides information about participants, instruments used to collect the data, data collection procedures and data analysis.

Chapter 3 **Findings and Discussions** gives a specific description of data analysis and a discussion of the findings of the study.

Finally, **Conclusion** summarizes the main points presented in the thesis. The limitations of the study and some recommendations for further research are also included.

CHAPTER 1: LITERATURE

This chapter provides a review on related literature. It firstly reviews various aspects of intonation such as definition, intonation system, the structure of intonation, main types of intonation and its significance in English communication. Then, some related factors are presented, including pitch, stress and rhythm. Moreover, the overview of teaching and learning intonation is also included in this part. The chapter also discusses common challenges regarding intonation and recommended solutions to enhance English intonation for EFL learners derived from previous studies. Finally, the author examines existing research to identify any gaps in this research field.

1.1. Intonation theory

1.1.1. Definition of intonation

Haycraft (1971) proposed that intonation may be seen as the melodic contour of a phrase, like the melodic rises and falls found in musical compositions. Intonation refers to vocal fluctuation, including the variation of pitch levels, specifically between high and low frequencies. The English language encompasses two fundamental intonational patterns, namely the ultimate falling tune and the ultimate rising melody.

Similarly, Wells (2006) stated that “intonation is the melody of speech”. The field of intonation studies focuses on the examination of pitch fluctuations in speech, specifically the upward and downward movements of the voice.

Roach (2000) provided a definition of intonation as the vocal pitch. In the realm of human communication, it is rare for individuals to engage in discourse with a consistent, unchanging vocal pitch. Rather, in typical circumstances, the

pitch of our voices undergoes continual fluctuations. In short, a crucial aspect of intonation analysis entails actively engaging in auditory perception to identify the speaker's pitch along with its functional characteristics.

O'Corner (1967) stated that "every language has melody, no language is spoken on the same musical note at all times" (1967:108). Furthermore, the author provided a description of the distinctions between intonation and tone language. He said, "In some languages, tune mainly belongs to the word, being part of its shape". Distinct tones of a sound may result in distinct words, for example, in the Vietnamese language as follows: "ba" means "three" or "father", "bá" means "aunt" and "bà" means "grandmother". As a result, Vietnamese is referred to as a tone language, and there are numerous other similar languages, including Chinese and Thai. In contrast, English is a distinct case of language; tune still plays an essential role in English, but in a more complex manner. Tune cannot alter the meaning of a word, but it can contribute to the speaker's emotion or attitude to it.

The research follows the definition of O'Connor. With various melodies, a word can acquire additional meaning. A simple example of intonation provided by O'Connor will help clarify the definition of English intonation. In English, "thank you" is frequently expressed in one of the two forms listed below. If the speaker's voice descends from high to low, it demonstrates genuine gratitude. If the voice increases from low to high, it indicates a rather casual acknowledgment of a relatively unimportant event, such as when an instructor acknowledges his or her students' attendance responses. This demonstrates the significance of intonation in spoken language.

1.1.2. System of intonation

Halliday (1970) provided a more detailed explanation of intonation by

discussing its components, namely tonality, tonicity, and tone. He established a differentiation between typical and exceptional instances of intonation patterns by employing the terms "neutral" and "marked" while examining concrete manifestations of tonality, tonicity, and tone. He holds the perspective that each representation of a language primarily revolves around the concept of meaning, asserting that any distinctions in meaning may be expressed through either grammatical structures or lexical elements. His proposed framework, which encompasses tonality, tone, and tonicity, has proven quite valuable in the investigation and analysis of intonation.

1.1.2.1. Tonality

Tonality refers to the process of dividing a phrase into tone groups. Tonality, often recognized as a tone group, can be considered a significant linguistic unit or a discrete unit of information.

For example: The pen that I borrowed from my best friend is on the table.

(1) // The pen that I borrowed from my best friend, / is on the table. //

(2) // The pen, / that I borrowed from my best friend, / is on the table. //

In the above sentences, the first one has two tone groups, and the second one has three tone groups. The different divisions result in distinct interpretations. In Division 1, the first tone group is "The pen that I borrowed from my best friend," and the second tone group is "is on the table." This division implies that there is only one pen, and it was borrowed from the speaker's best friend, and now it is on the table. In division 2, the first tone group is "the pen," the second tone group is "that I borrowed from my best friend," and the third tone group is "is on the table." This division suggests that there are some pens, and among them, the pen that the speaker borrowed from her friend is now on the table.

1.1.2.2. Tonicity

Tonicity means ‘location of the tonic action’ or ‘major change in the pitch direction’. Tonicity represents the central aspect of intonation. It refers to the selection of locations within an utterance or a segment of an utterance where a change in pitch starts. The alteration in pitch takes place on a specific syllable known as the tonic syllable. According to Tench (1996), the tonic syllable is the most noticeable or salient of the stressed syllables in any given intonation unit because of a combination of pitch, loudness, and length.

Example: (1) // She will meet him on Friday at the PARK. //

(2) // She will meet him on FRIday at the park. //

The capitalized letters in (1) denote the tonic action, which is on "PARK." This division implies that the meeting will take place at the park, not at any other location. The capitalized letters in (2) indicate that the tonic action occurs on "Friday." This division suggests that the meeting will be on Friday, distinguishing the specific day of the meeting.

1.1.2.3. Tone

The tonic syllable, also referred to as the nucleus, within a tone group, is the third unit in Halliday's system and represents the dynamic quality it conveys. In contrast to static or level tones, it represents a significant shift in the direction of pitch. In a tone group, an accented syllable is spoken with a level pitch, either high or low. However, the most prominent syllable within the tone group, known as the nucleus, is pronounced with a varying pitch. The phenomenon of shifting pitch, also known as tone, comprises several types, with the most significant ones being referred to as fall, rise, fall-rise, rise-fall, and level tone. The fall, rise, and

level tone can be further broken into subcategories, namely high fall and low fall, high rise and low rise, and high level and low level, respectively.

1.1.3. Structure of intonation (Tone-Unit)

In spoken language, intonation is composed of distinct components that collectively contribute to meaning transmission and effective communication. These components, according to Wells (2006), are the pre-head, head, tonic syllable (TS)/nucleus, and tail. Understanding the arrangement and functions of these components is crucial for grasping the intricate nuances of English intonation patterns. The structure of the intonation unit can be presented as follows:

As Roach (2004) mentioned in his book, “tonic syllable is an obligatory component of the tone-unit”. The pre-head, head, and tail are optional. The pre-head typically consists of unstressed syllables preceding the stressed syllable of the head (Wells, 2006). It functions as a preparatory element, establishing the context and guiding the listener's expectations for the subsequent information. The head is the stressed syllable that conveys the most weight within the intonation unit. It frequently comprises the primary lexical content, such as nouns, verbs, and adjectives, and conveys essential information within the utterance. The tonic syllable, or nucleus, is the highest-pitched component of the intonation unit (Wells, 2006). It contains the nucleus syllable, which typically corresponds to the main verb or the most important word in the sentence's content. The nucleus contains vital information, such as the utterance's focal point, and can affect the overall meaning and intent. Following the nucleus, the tail concludes the intonation unit. It consists of unstressed syllables that follow the nucleus and indicate the conclusion of the utterance. The tail can provide additional data,

clarification, and emotional nuance. To understand deeply the structure of intonation, let's have a look at these examples analyzed in the table below:

	Pre- tonic segment		Tonic syllable	Tail
	Pre-head	Head		
(1)	A	house has been	demolished	
(2)		Houses have been	demolished	
(3)			Houses	have been demolished

Table 1.1: The structure of intonation

1.1.4. Intonation patterns

O'Connor (1980) indicated that "the shape of a tune is decided partly by the number of important words in the group and partly by the exact attitude you wish to express". "Important words" here refers to the words in a word group that convey most of the meaning. He proposed four basic intonation patterns with different usages. This section provides an overview of four intonation patterns and their applications.

1.1.4.1. The falling tune/ glide-down

Falling intonation, often referred to as a "glide-down," is characterized by a gradual decrease in pitch towards the end of a sentence. This pattern imparts a sense of finality or completion to a statement. It is frequently used in declarative sentences to convey certainty or closure (Crystal, 2008). In addition, O'Connor (1967) stated that the falling intonation is also used for short questions used as a response, strong commands, or strong exclamation.

1.1.4.2. Rising intonation/ glide- up

Rising intonation, also known as a "glide-up," involves a pitch that ascends towards the end of a sentence. This pattern is commonly used in yes-no questions, inviting confirmation, or seeking engagement from the listener (Ladd, 2008). It can also express uncertainty or open-endedness. According to O'conner, the glide-up is also used in exclamation when it is question and tag question when the speaker does not want to force the other to agree with him but gives his opinion.

1.1.4.3. Fall-rise intonation/ dive

The fall-rise intonation, often referred to as a "dive," starts with a downward pitch movement followed by an upward shift. This intricate pattern conveys diverse meanings such as surprise, contrast, or hidden implication (Cruttenden, 1997). It is often employed in alternative questions or statements with underlying intentions. Besides, the dive is used in a warning or in a statement which has two parts, and the first part is more important than the second one in meaning (O'Connor, 1967). The following examples demonstrate his ideas.

1.1.4.4. Rise-fall intonation

Rise-fall intonation features an ascending pitch followed by a descending pitch. This pattern can express uncertainty, politeness, or indicate that more information is forthcoming (O'Connor, 1980). It is commonly used in lists or statements presenting a sequence of items. For example, "We have pasta, salad, and dessert."

1.1.5. Significance of intonation

Intonation, also known as the melodic contour of speech, has a significant effect on spoken communication. It influences meaning, feelings, and the overall

effectiveness of the message's transmission. This section highlights the role of intonation in enhancing linguistic expressiveness and comprehension.

- Conveying Meaning and Nuance

According to Bolinger (1986), intonation is an effective instrument for shaping meaning and conveying subtle nuances in spoken language. It provides signals for listeners to distinguish between statements, queries, commands, and other grammatical structures. For example, the declarative "You're coming" and the interrogative "You're coming?" differ significantly due to intonation patterns (Bolinger, 1986). In addition to emphasizing syllables, intonation can modify the overall meaning of a sentence.

- Expressing Emotions and Attitudes

Intonation performs as an emotional amplifier, enabling speakers to convey emotions spanning from enthusiasm to skepticism (Ladd, 2008). A straightforward sentence such as "I'm so happy" can have multiple meanings when spoken with a rising, falling, or varying pitch contour. Speakers can express enthusiasm, surprise, derision, or empathy through intonation, thereby enhancing the emotional depth of communication.

- Enhancing Listener Comprehension

To comprehend the intended meaning and emotional undertones of spoken messages, listeners rely on intonation patterns (Crystal, 1969). Intonation facilitates the segmentation of speech into meaningful units, thereby facilitating information processing. It assists listeners in recognizing crucial points, inferring intentions, and effortlessly navigating conversations. In addition, proper intonation encourages engagement and active participation in communication.

- Cultural and Contextual Nuances

In communication, intonation also reflects cultural and contextual nuances (Cruttenden, 1997). Different languages and regions use distinctive patterns of intonation to convey etiquette, respect, and social dynamics. A single sentence can be interpreted differently depending on the intonation employed, highlighting the complex interaction between linguistic norms and cultural signals.

1.2. Pitch

In the context of spoken language, pitch refers to the highness or lowness of a person's voice (Crystal, 1997). Imagine a musical scale in which the pitch increases as you ascend and decreases as you descend. Similarly, the pitch of your voice can convey various meanings and emotions in discourse. Changes in pitch can alter the meaning of a sentence. Consider, for example, the query, "Are you coming?" If the final intonation rises, the statement becomes a query. If you utter it with a falling intonation, however, it may sound more like a statement of fact. Additionally, pitch helps convey emotion. When you are thrilled or astonished, the pitch of your voice may naturally elevate. Alternatively, if you are being serious or authoritative, you may lower your intonation (Cruttenden, 1997).

1.3. Stress

Stress plays a crucial role in molding the rhythm and emphasis of discourse in spoken languages. It entails emphasizing particular syllables within words, thereby affecting the overall rhythm, and meaning of sentences. Examining the complexities of stress reveals its complex effect on communication dynamics.

1.3.1. Word stress

Word stress is crucial in determining the rhythm and comprehensibility of spoken language. It is the deliberate accenting of specific syllables within words

that ultimately influences the rhythm and meaning of sentences. Stressed syllables within words are characterized by heightened loudness, increased pitch, extended duration, and distinct vowel quality, setting them apart from their unstressed counterparts (Roach, 2009). The significance of word stress becomes apparent when minute variations in stress patterns result in meaning shifts.

1.3.2. The nature of stress

A variety of phonetic characteristics limit the special feature of stress, which makes it possible to distinguish a stressed syllable from one that is nearby. Regarding the previous point, Roach (2009) indicated that the common characteristic of stressed syllables is prominence, which helps recognize them. He also pointed out four important factors affecting this prominence namely loudness, length, pitch and vowel quality.

1.3.3. Levels of stress

In English, there are only three main levels of stress which are primary stress, secondary stress and unstressed. Roach (2009) also mentioned the fourth type called tertiary, referring to an unstressed syllable that sounds less prominent than an unstressed syllable containing some other vowels. However, it is quite unnecessary. Therefore, here the author will only focus on three main types: Primary stress, secondary stress and unstressed.

1.4. Rhythm

Rhythm, a fundamental component of spoken language, orchestrates the temporal arrangement of noises, lending communication a distinctive melody and musicality. By delving into the complexities of cadence, we can discern its profound influence on the dynamics of spoken discourse. Rhythm within the

domain of language refers to the meticulously organized time intervals between speech sounds, resulting in a repeating pattern that governs the tempo and rhythmic character of speech (Roach, 2009). This rhythmic pattern permeates multiple linguistic levels, from individual phonemes to complete sentences, and profoundly shapes the auditory timbre of spoken communication.

In this research, I would like to mention 2 levels of rhythm which are word rhythm and sentence rhythm. These levels, as clarified by Crystal (1969) and Ladefoged (2012), offer a deep insight into the rich orchestration of sound patterns that are inherent in spoken language, including word rhythm and sentence rhythm.

1.5. Teaching and learning intonation

According to Celik (2000) intonation has usually been avoided in the design of syllabuses for teaching English. Crystal (1969) named it as ‘Cinderella’ of pronunciation teaching. He said, in EFL contexts, intonation is usually one small part of general English-speaking teaching which mainly focus on segmental.

In Vietnamese context, according to Ky (2007), the lack of intonation instruction in university English courses in Vietnam leads to significant language deficiencies in and outside the classroom. Ngo (2017) stated that English pronunciation in Vietnamese universities has been neglected in favor of grammar, vocabulary, and other receptive and productive language skills, despite English being taught as a subject in Vietnamese schools more than 30 years ago. She also revealed that in the university where her study was conducted on major-English students, intonation accounts for 10% of the overall pronunciation curriculum, which in turn represents approximately 5% of the total content covered in the academic program. Similarly, at the university where this research was carried out, the author observed that there is no section on intonation in the course book

designed for non-English major students.

Additionally, Nguyen, Ingram, and Pensalfini (2008) claimed that students just need to master vocabulary and grammar to pass the national high school graduation exam, leading to the ignorance of educators in English teaching. If any pronunciation is discovered, the primary focus is on instructing students on the accurate pronunciation of individual words. Griffiths (2011) attributes the neglect of teaching intonation to the lack of clear instructions and regulations provided in course materials and isolated tasks. He also suggested two main reasons why intonation is left behind are that the lack the necessary confidence to effectively demonstrate a proper intonation model to their students of Vietnamese teachers and the complexity of the Vietnamese tonal system. Doan (2005) and Ky (2007) also proposed three main reasons leading to the neglect of intonation in Vietnamese universities: the limited amount of classroom time dedicated to teaching intonation; the scarcity of reference materials and facilities, and the prevailing emphasis on traditional methods of English testing, which prioritize written assessments and overlook speaking and pronunciation.

1.6. Problems with intonation practice

Due to cross-language intonation disparities, most ESL students have several hurdles while practicing word pronunciation (Brown, Currie, & Kenworthy, 2015). Second language learners confront common mistakes and issues in their studies regardless of the target language (Atoye, 2005). Students' perception of intonation practice tasks is one of the most important factors in their intonation improvement, but language fluency, study plan, and learning objectives also play a role (Chun, 2002).

One of biggest problems is the lack of exposure to authentic materials

(Griffi, 2010). Without practicing or using this knowledge in the real world, most ESL learners who are working at low levels or inexperienced with linguistic issues might struggle in spoken contexts when the discussions' meanings diverge from their assertions (Hardison, 2013). In this instance, the speakers' intonation cannot be detected or comprehended, causing miscommunication between subjects.

Additionally, internal and external influences can profoundly impact language practice (Face, 2003). According to Verdugo (2006), students' perception, acquisition, and production processes are closely linked to their performance in acquiring foreign language intonation. Awareness of second language acquisition, particularly pronunciation, may also boost academic performance (Kennedy & Trofimovich, 2010). Most language classes involve intonation and pronunciation work in speaking practice, except for essay writing courses. Instead of intonation practice, lesson plans focus on other qualities including stress and accent (Chun, 2002).

1.7. Solutions for intonation enhancement

Several solutions have been proposed by different researchers. According to Cook (2013) different language education methods have been used to help ESL students solve challenges and improve their attitudes toward pronunciation practice. Other than discussing or advising appropriate learning styles and tactics, practical and specific steps to tackle real events are essential and achievable for certain situations.

Feedback, either directly to students or in group discussions, is a frequent teaching method in language courses (Cook, 2002). ESL and classroom teachers can provide students with several types of instructional feedback to increase intonation practice. Visual feedback can assist low-level language learners learn

and practice, but private mentorship or in-person supervision can help them overcome specific obstacles (Tyler, 2012). Visual presentation in teaching and learning intonation scenarios can improve students' awareness and language production skills (Spaai & Hermes, 1993).

Increase practice hours and optimize target language contact through oral activities and class procedures to develop students' understanding of English intonation functions and production processes (Mitrofanova, 2012). Language use, communication context, and conversational settings should be considered. Thus, the more familiar ESL students are with a speaking scenario or communication setting in real life, the better they can understand and comprehend discussions. However, pupils may not always understand daily meanings (Siemund, 2018). In the same sentences, intonations and other language elements can be used to understand the underlined meanings (Alameen & Levis, 2015).

Leveraging the power of the Internet is a dynamic method for mastering intonation, as proposed by Carter and Nunan (2001). The digital era has opened avenues to diverse language resources, including precise descriptions of intonation patterns. Online platforms like YouTube offer a wealth of instructional videos providing learners with comprehensive guidance on intonation usage. There are several apps and tools which can help to enhance intonation (Elsa Speak, Google Text-to-Speech)

Exposure to foreign speakers and engaging in direct conversations with them, as advocated by Roach (2000), enhances learners' ability to grasp and reproduce these nuances. Additionally, the "Shadowing Technique," where learners closely mimic native speakers' intonation patterns while listening to recorded speech, provides a practical way to internalize intonation variations.

Learners should raise awareness of intonation structures and patterns to understand and apply them to real context.

1.8. Previous studies

As more people recognize the significance of intonation in oral proficiency, more research on intonation, especially intonation mistakes and solution has been recorded Vietnam and other countries. They are valuable references for further research and especially for this thesis.

Yulie Saito (2017) examined how suprasegmental-based training affects English comprehensibility, word stress, rhythm, and intonation in Japanese first-year university students learning English as a foreign language to help students avoid some intonation mistakes. However, suprasegmental instruction typically involves intermediate-to-advanced ESL learners (Derwing et al., 1998, 2014), and this study was conducted in Japan, where learners' challenges and the method's effectiveness are likely different from Vietnamese ones. Purba (2020) studied intonation issues at SMP Negeri 2 Pematangsiantar. Due to a lack of basic intonation background knowledge, participants had problems employing rising tone in yes-no questions, falling intonation in compound sentences and Wh-questions, and detecting pitch and stress syllables.

Koichi Kumaki revealed in "A study of English intonation in high school textbooks in Japan" in 2003 that teaching intonation is not usually a part of teaching English in Japan's upper secondary schools and high schools. So, she carried out the research to find out what aspects of rhythm are taught most often and how they are handled in Japanese high school TEFL classes. The results showed the main intonation approaches, especially discourse intonation. The official English textbooks treat intonation mainly from a grammatical point of

view, not an attitude or discourse point of view.

Ngo published research on employing individual language learning approaches to teach intonation in 2011. The training paradigm lets students choose their best strategy. When combined with written reports, field notes, group discussions, and interviews, this strategy generated great outcomes during the training program. The study found that Vietnamese English learners' perceptual skills in tonicity and tone improved after the training session. Le (2022) suggested using Google text-to-speech to improve intonation using in-text shadowing. Rising intonation in Yes-no questions improved significantly after a 10-week training course.

While existing studies often assess the effectiveness of singular techniques, limited studies have delved into the comprehensive examination of students' and teachers' perceptions and challenges within the context of blended learning, where both classroom interaction and technology-mediated instruction converge. Therefore, the study is expected to fill this gap and contribute to the intonation development of learners.

CHAPTER 2: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter is devoted to presenting some aspects of methodology of the research. It firstly introduces the research design, followed by a description of research context, including the research site and research participants. Subsequently, details of the instruments used to gather data are presented, including questionnaires and observations. Finally, the author explains the process of collecting data and data analysis.

2.1. Research design

In this research, the author employed a mixed-method design which combines both quantitative and qualitative approaches, a strategy that has gained popularity in educational settings (Creswell, 2012). Quantitative research includes collection and analysis of numerical data via techniques such as surveys, experiments, and statistical analyses which is efficient to identify broad trends in behavior. Qualitative research, on the other hand, employs non-numerical data collection methods including interviews, focus groups, and observations, providing in-depth insights into the underlying reasons, motivations, and context that drive participant behavior. Therefore, the combination of two research gives comprehensive understanding of a phenomenon or research question (Creswell, 2012).

In this study, the author utilized an explanatory sequential approach in mixed methods research which prioritizes the gathering and analysis of quantitative data followed by the collecting and analysis of qualitative data. It is as follows: the author adopted questionnaires in the first phase and observation in the second. The main reason for choosing this sequence is that although questionnaires function as a primary tool for investigating the perspectives, difficulties, and solutions pertaining to English intonation as expressed by both teachers and students, the observational phase provides more detail

and context to the questionnaire results.

2.2. Research context

2.2.1. Research site

The research was carried out in a university located in Hanoi, Vietnam. The institution is a publicly funded university that offers a diverse range of educational programs across several academic disciplines. English is a mandatory course for students who do not major in English at this institution. The teaching and learning equipment in the language classrooms is characterized by its modernity, since it includes screens, projectors, and wireless Internet connectivity. Since 2009, this institution has used a blended-learning methodology for English language instruction. The English courses offered at this university are designed to cater to the occupational needs of students, with the aim of enhancing their future career prospects. The English curriculum has four primary language skills, with a predominant emphasis on the development of speaking abilities. To graduate from this university, students are required to fulfill a total of six English courses. The Placement Examination is not administered at the beginning of each semester; therefore, students' English skill levels vary in every class.

In this university, each English blended-learning course has 75 sessions (35 online and 40 offline). Students have 35 periods to learn vocabulary, grammar, listening, writing, and reading online at home using the University's online learning management system, "EOP" (English for Occupational Purposes), under teachers' supervision. In classroom classes, students spend 50 minutes working on speaking skills with their teachers. The entire course is 5 credits. Students must spend 150 hours preparing for online and book exercises in 10 weeks. This means

15 hours of preparation every week. The number of pupils varies per subject. Most classes max out at 35. Most students are first- to third-year non-English majors. Only a small percentage are last-year students. The subjects can considerably affect the gender division of a class. Business English classes have more girls than boys, whereas technical subjects have more boys.

2.2.2. Participants

2.2.2.1. Students

The questionnaires were first distributed to 255 students, however only 241 responses were received. These participants are currently enrolled in the "Basic English for Business 3" course, which represents the third level out of six in their English language curriculum at this university. Most of the respondents, comprising 73.4%, identified as female, while the remaining 26.6% were male. Notably, around 56.3% reported to have extensive learning experience (over 10 years). About 32% indicated studying for 5 to 10 years and only 12 % for less than 5 years. Figure 2.1 shows students' experience in English learning.

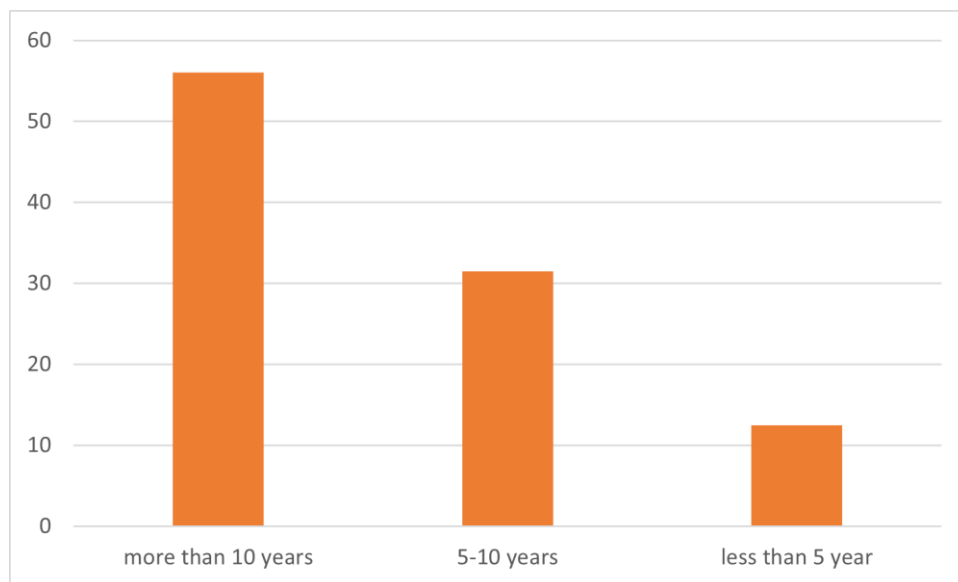


Figure 2.1. Students' experience in learning English

Furthermore, the students are from a wide range of majors including Business Administration, Accounting, Logistics, Banking and Finance, Marketing, Human Resources Management and Economic Investment. Most students participating in this research major in accounting (45.5%) and Business Administration (21%). Figure 2.2 presents the summary of all students' majors.

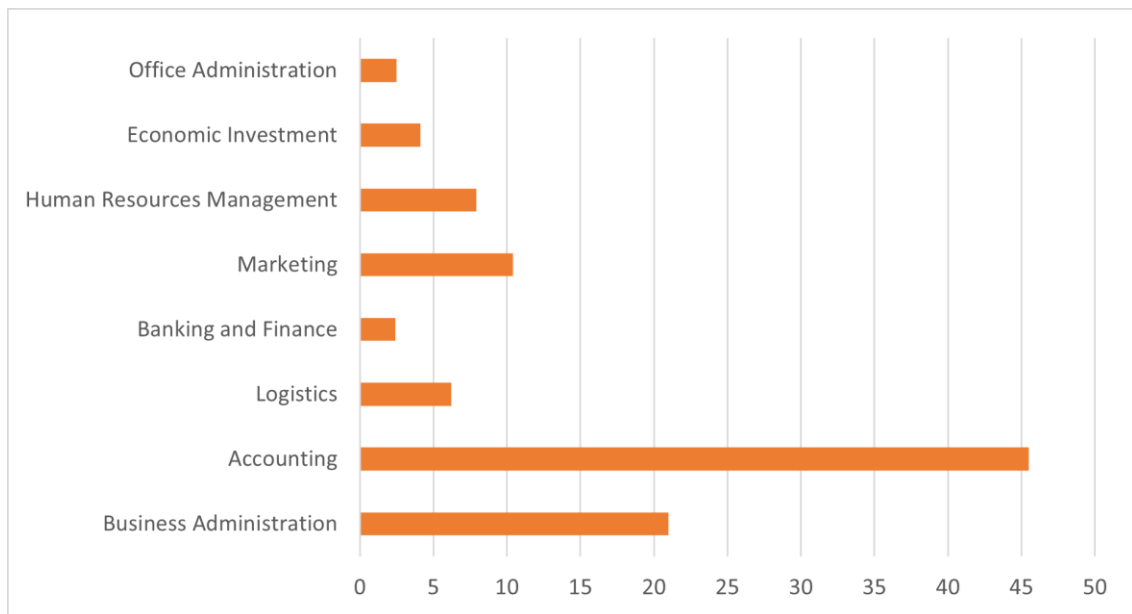


Figure 2.2. Students' majors

2.2.2.2. Teachers

Initially, the author distributed questionnaires to 22 teachers who are actively engaged in teaching the "Basic English for Business 3" course at this university. However, since some teachers were occupied with other commitments, only 18 responses were collected. Among them, 16 are female (88.9%) and 2 are male (11.1%). In terms of teaching experience, nearly 78% of teachers possess more than 5 years of English teaching experiences. Half of them have experienced more than 10 years and only 22% have had less than 5 years of teaching. Academic

qualifications also varied. Specifically, two respondents (11.1%) reported having a Doctorate while 33.3% holding a bachelor's degree in English and the majority, 55.6% completed a master's degree in education (Figure 2.3). This diversity of academic degrees and levels of experience implies a rich pool of knowledge and pedagogical skills among the participants.

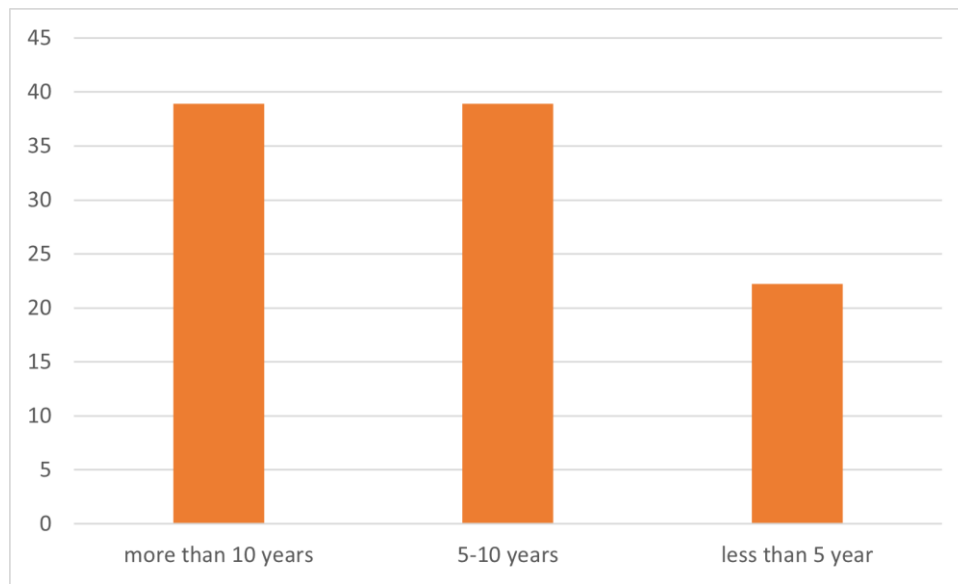


Figure 2.3. Teachers' experience in teaching English

Five out of 18 surveyed teachers were randomly chosen to observe by the author and all of them expressed agreement and enthusiasm when approached for observations. The real names of the observed teachers will be kept confidential. There were 3 female and 2 male teachers. Among them, one has had more than 10 years of teaching experience while three have had 5-10 years and one has had less than 5 years, as detailed in table 2.1 below:

Teacher	Gender	Teaching experience
01	Female	More than 10 years
02	Male	5-10 years
03	Female	5-10 years

04	Female	5-10 years
05	Male	Less than 5 years

Table 2.1: Summary of teachers' characteristics for class observation

2.3. Data collection instruments

2.3.1. Questionnaires

Questionnaires are the main instrument. To investigate perceptions of both students and teachers, two distinct survey questionnaires are conducted, including student survey questionnaire and teacher survey questionnaire. Creswell (2012) defined it as an instrument that "measures positive or negative effect for or against a topic". Therefore, the study employed questionnaires as the main instrument to collect data. These questionnaires encompass a range of closed-ended questions employing a Likert scale, allowing participants to indicate their level of agreement as (1) completely disagree, (2) disagree, (3) neutral, (4) agree, and (5) completely agree. The Likert scale, first devised by Likert (1932) and frequently employed for attitude measurement (Sullivan & Artino, 2013), allows respondents to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with statements presented in the questionnaire. In addition, the surveys included "other responses" and one open-ended question, allowing participants the chance to provide further details or explanations in their answers, if needed. The surveys provided valuable insights into teachers and students' perspectives towards English intonation and intonation practice which informed the creation of observation checklist for the qualitative phase.

The student questionnaire was used for main purposes which are exploring students' attitudes towards intonation and main techniques to improve English intonation, getting their feedback on current intonation teaching and materials

provided in English class, and finding out their current main challenging about English intonation learning. It was constructed with closed-ended items and an open-ended question which were organized into 2 main parts. The first part gathered personal information including students' gender, their learning experience and their major. The second part was divided into small sections to explore students' perceptions toward intonation, intonation teaching and material, current problems with intonation, preferred solutions to practice intonation and one opened-ended question to identify students' expectation from intonation practice sessions in their English class.

Similarly, the teacher's questionnaire included two main parts. Part 1 collected information about teachers' gender, teaching experience and academic background of teachers. Part 2 was divided into small sections to explore teachers' perception of intonation, their current intonation teaching, their feedback on intonation materials, their challenges in teaching intonation and their opinion about some proposed solutions to overcome challenges in teaching intonation. Besides, one part related to teachers' perceptions towards some main techniques for practicing intonation was also added, combined with students' survey's results to find down appropriate solutions for students.

2.3.2. Observation

Observation techniques are essential in qualitative research since they provide valuable information on behaviors, interactions, and surroundings (Creswell, 2012). Since the research is to explore the current practice of teaching and learning intonation, using observation as a supplementary technique of collecting data is quite beneficial. The major goal of observation was to gather live data regarding teachers' practices in integrating intonation into English speaking

lessons and to assess students' willingness to engage in related speaking activities to improve their intonation skills. To collect data, the researcher mainly used field notes since it offers in-depth and contextually rich information for future analysis (Creswell, 2012). In addition, the observation checklist with 8 Yes/No questions constructed based on the survey questionnaires served as guidelines for what the observer would document during the classroom observation. As Cunningsworth (1995) already mentioned, the process of evaluating materials through the checklist is distinguished by its proactive aspect, as it involves actively seeking information pertaining to the materials in accordance with a predetermined agenda.

2.4. Data collection procedures

The study adopted a two-phase design, employing questionnaires as the main instrument and supplementing it with classroom observations. Table 2.2 below outlines the data collection process.

Phase		Time	Data collection procedure
1	Quantitative phase	15 th September, 2023	Prepare survey questionnaires
		10 th October, 2023	Pilot the questionnaires
		11 th October- 1 st November, 2023	Deliver questionnaires to participants and collect the responses
2	Qualitative phase	Week 1, November 2023	Contact the teachers and arrange observation time, prepare the checklist
		Week 2, November 2023	Conduct the observation (5 classes)

		Week 3, November 2023	Transcribe the data
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Table 2.2. Data collection procedure

Initially, online questionnaires were created with Google Form. Then, to enhance the validity and reliability, the questionnaires were piloted with a specific group of teachers and students prior to distribution to all participants. After that, the author got a list of names and contacts of teachers who are currently teaching basic English 3 and got in touch with them online. The author offered clear explanations regarding the survey's objectives for teachers' consent. Then, online questionnaires were distributed to all participants and 18 responses were recorded with valid data. Upon collecting data from teachers' questionnaires, the author sought permission from teachers to visit their classes in person to provide a comprehensive explanation of the survey's purposes before they complete the online forms. Due to some absentees and invalid responses, a total of 241 responses were gathered from 8 classes.

After completing the first stage, the author actively contacted five teachers to ask them for permission for class observation. Luckily, they all agreed and provided with their available time for actual observation. Each teacher was observed for a duration of 50 minutes. During the observation, the author discreetly observed from the rear of the class to limit interference. The focus of this observation was on instructor-student interactions during English classes, specifically examining how teachers and students incorporate intonation into their classroom activities.

2.5. Data analysis

Quantitative analysis of the questionnaire data included coding and processing

Likert scale responses using Microsoft Excel software. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies and percentages, were derived to present a comprehensive overview of respondents' attitudes, perceptions, and challenges regarding English intonation. Simultaneously, qualitative analysis of open-ended responses enhanced the interpretation by gathering valuable insights.

Regarding observation data, qualitative analysis of field notes and checklist responses provided variations in teachers' practices and students' engagement concerning intonation during speaking activities. The mixed-methods approach, facilitated by Microsoft Excel ensured a thorough analysis and enhanced the clarity and significance of the study's findings.

CHAPTER 3: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter provides a comprehensive overview of the research results derived from both questionnaires and observations, followed by a discussion of the main findings. First, the data collected from the questionnaires and observation are reported and analyzed, providing valuable insights into both quantitative and qualitative aspects of the research. After that, a thorough discussion of the research results according to the research questions and the major findings are presented.

3.1. Findings

3.1.1. Findings from the student questionnaire survey

3.1.1.1 Students' perception towards intonation in English speaking skills

This part aimed to explore students' perceptions towards the significance of intonation in oral skills. Table 3.1 shows the numeric data of response regarding this each questionnaire item.

No	Statement	CD		D		N		A		CA	
		No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No.	%
1	I believe that learning English intonation is important for effective communication in English.	9	3.7	1	0.4	4	1.7	69	28.6	158	65.6
2	I enjoy practicing English intonation.	6	2.5	10	4.1	73	30.3	85	35.3	67	27.8
3	I find English intonation challenging.	6	2.5	4	1.7	45	18.7	85	35.3	101	41.8

4	I believe that improving my intonation will help me speak English more fluently.	8	3.3	2	0.8	11	4.6	67	27.8	153	63.5
5	I am more confident when I can pronounce words with correct intonation.	11	4.6	3	1.2	10	4.1	64	26.6	153	63.5
6	It is time-consuming to practice intonation only.	27	11.2	46	19.1	91	37.8	49	20.3	28	11.6
7	I only work on my intonation when it's required.	51	21.2	62	25.7	74	30.7	34	14.1	20	8.3
8	I think English intonation is as important as grammar and vocabulary in speaking English.	8	3.3	4	1.7	29	12.0	89	36.9	111	46.1

Table 3.1: students' perceptions towards intonation in speaking skills.

First and foremost, the data presented in statements 01, 04, and 08 collectively underscore the critical importance that students place on intonation throughout their English language acquisition process. A majority of participants (94%) agree that English intonation is an essential element of effective communication, demonstrating their profound awareness of its significance. Furthermore, regarding the role of intonation in enhancing English speaking fluency, it can be seen from the table that 91.3% of respondents agree that

improving their intonation abilities will result in enhanced English-speaking capabilities. Moreover, when comparing intonation with grammar and vocabulary in statement 08, it becomes apparent that a significant proportion of students (83%) consider the two to be equivalent. The correlation between intonation and these two fundamental components of language usage underscores their recognition of the critical importance attributed to intonation in spoken English.

Furthermore, regarding students' interest in learning intonation (statement 2), a notable 63.1% express their enjoyment in learning intonation while 30.3% remain uncertain and a minority of 6.6% express their disagreement. These findings collectively reinforce the notion that students are well-informed about the significance of intonation in language communication and show their interest in improving their intonation. Additionally, 90.1% of students assert that their confidence increases significantly when they can pronounce words with correct intonation (statement 05). Their positive attitudes towards learning intonation, reflected in the majority's enjoyment, further indicate their willingness to invest effort in mastering English intonation.

In relation to the difficulty of intonation (statement 03), 77.1% of respondents agree that English intonation is challenging while 18.7% express uncertainty and only 4.2% disagree with the statement. These data demonstrates that students generally recognize English intonation as a complex part of language learning. Regarding the time required for intonation practice, a significant 30.3% of students feel that practicing intonation is not time intensive while 31.9% of students think it takes time to practice intonation and 37.8% of students feel unsure. These findings show that while some students consider intonation practice to be time-consuming, many others are undecided, implying the need for clearer

instruction and techniques for incorporating intonation training into their language learning routine. Statement 07 reveals that 46.9% of students disagree with the idea that they should only work on their intonation when it is required while 30.7% remain unsure and 22.4% agree with the statement. The data indicates that even though students have substantial awareness of the importance of intonation in language learning, many might struggle to find the motivation to dedicate time to studying intonation.

3.1.1.2. Students' feedback on intonation teaching and materials in English class

This part aims to investigate students' opinions on intonation teaching as well as their leaning materials in English class. Data was shown in table 3.2 below.

No	Statement	CD		D		N		A		CA	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1	In my English classes, teachers spend adequate time teaching intonation.	12	5.0	24	10.0	87	36.0	86	35.7	32	13.3
2	In my English classes, teachers provide clear explanations of intonation principles	11	4.6	29	12.0	67	27.8	89	36.9	45	18.7
3	In my English classes, teachers actively identify and correct our mistakes in intonation.	9	3.7	16	6.6	52	21.6	100	41.5	64	26.6
4	The course materials (e.g., textbooks, audio recordings)	10	4.1	48	19.9	76	31.5	73	30.3	34	14.2

	adequately support intonation learning.										
5	Teachers provide enough resources to practice intonation effectively.	8	3.3	29	12.0	73	30.3	83	34.4	48	20.0
6	I receive sufficient guidance on how to practice intonation outside of class.	20	8.3	45	18.7	97	40.2	42	17.4	37	15.4

Table 3.2: Students' perceptions on intonation teaching and materials in English class

Data from statement 01 through 03 aims at collecting information about the students' attitudes toward current intonation teaching in class with the support of teachers. In terms of the adequacy of time spent on teaching intonation (statement 01), while 49% of students agree that adequate time is dedicated to teaching intonation, more than one-third of respondents express uncertainty and 16% disagree. This collective uncertainty and disagreement, amounting to nearly half of the surveyed students, demonstrates a potential inadequacy or insufficiency in the time allocated specifically for teaching intonation skills.

Next, the provision of clear explanations for intonation principles seems to be perceived more positively. Nearly 60% of students agree that teachers provide clear explanations. However, there remains 27.8% of students are unsure and 4.6% of students express disagreement, suggesting that there is a minority with negative perceptions regarding the clarity of explanations. Moving on to the active identification and correction of mistakes in intonation from teachers during the

lessons, 68% of students agree that teachers actively point out their intonation mistakes and help them correct. This strong agreement underlines the clarity in instruction and emphasizes the significant role of teachers in enhancing students' intonation.

Data from statement 04 to 06 aims at finding out how students think about materials and resources related to intonation in their English courses. Regarding the adequacy of course materials (e.g., textbooks, audio recordings) in supporting intonation learning (statement 04), the responses vary. While 44.5% of students agree that the materials are supportive for their English intonation learning, a notable portion (24%) express dissatisfaction (disagree) and nearly 31.5% remain uncertain, indicating room for improvement in the materials used for intonation instruction.

Concerning the provision of resources by teachers to practice intonation effectively (statement 05), while many students agree that they are provided with sufficient resources to practice intonation (54.4%), there are more than 30% of students who remain uncertain (neutral), and 15.3% disagree with this statement. This suggests that while there is some provision, there might be room for additional resources or guidance to enhance the effectiveness of intonation practice. With regards to receiving sufficient guidance on how to practice intonation outside of class, unexpectedly, only 32.8% of respondents agree with this statement. There's a substantial percentage that remains neutral (40.2%) and 27% express disagreement, suggesting that students need more support from teachers outside the classroom to facilitate autonomous practice and improvement in their intonation skills.

In conclusion, students generally perceive supplementary resources as

helpful, but there is room for improvement in the adequacy of course materials and the provision of resources and guidance for intonation practice, both in the classroom and for self-study.

3.1.1.3. Students' current problems with intonation

Data from table 3.3 illustrates students' main challenges in the intonation learning process.

No	Statement	CD		D		N		A		CA	
		No	%	No	%	No	%	No.	%	No	%
1	I find it challenging to distinguish different intonation patterns.	9	3.7	8	3.3	53	22.0	103	42.0	68	28.9
5	I often make mistakes in using intonation while speaking English.	7	2.9	12	5.0	42	17.4	104	43.2	76	31.5
2	Recognizing intonation in spoken English is difficult for me.	9	3.7	13	5.4	51	21.2	94	39.0	74	30.7
3	I struggle to use appropriate intonation when speaking English.	10	4.1	22	9.0	56	23.2	94	39.0	59	24.7
4	Understanding the purpose of intonation in communication is hard.	11	4.6	23	9.5	64	26.6	85	35.3	58	24.0
6	I feel unsure about where to place stress in sentences.	10	4.1	16	6.5	40	16.6	107	44.4	68	28.4

7	I do not have enough time to practice my English intonation.	9	3.7	38	15.8	93	38.6	67	27.8	34	14.1
8	I want to improve my English intonation but do not know how to.	10	4.1	13	5.4	36	14.9	90	37.3	92	38.3

Table 3.3: Students' current problems with intonation

As we can see from the table, approximately 75% students admit that they frequently make mistakes in using intonation while speaking English (statement 01), while 17.4% are unsure and only tiny proportion of students (2.9%) are confident in using intonation. The result corroborates the finding that intonation poses a prominent challenge to students. Additionally, it highlights that students are conscious of their errors in using correct intonation. Besides, the data reveals that many students are uncertain about various aspects of intonation usage. A considerable 73.2% feel unsure about where to place stress in sentences, highlighting their difficulties in this critical aspect of spoken language. Additionally, 63.7% admit to struggling to use appropriate intonation when speaking English, indicating their uncertainties about effectively applying intonation principles while 23.2% remain unsure.

Furthermore, when asked if they understand the function of intonation in communication, approximately 60% of students find it challenging, while 26.6% are unsure. Regarding the time devoted to learning intonation (statement 07), nearly 42% express that they don't have enough time to study while 38.6% remain neutral, suggesting that time constraint is a potential barrier in students' learning

intonation. Despite the challenges, there is a strong desire among students to enhance their intonation (statement 8). A significant 75.6% express a clear desire to improve their English intonation but they do not know how to handle it.

The "Other" responses from students provide valuable insights into the challenges they face in mastering English intonation. Some participants mentioned that they are struggling with pronunciation and adjusting intonation during communication, highlighting the integral connection between accurate pronunciation and effective intonation. Some expressed uncertainty about where to place sentence stress ("*don't know how to punctuate sentences, where to go up and down, weak in accent*"). For some, *shyness* is a significant obstacle, preventing them from practicing intonation due to concerns about being mocked or feeling self-conscious. Another reported difficulty is finding a *practice partner*, especially a native speaker or someone who can provide corrections and guidance. Several students admitted to *intermittent motivation*, stating that they tend to practice intonation only when inspired. *Peer pressure and mockery* from friends can deter some students from practicing intonation in social settings, emphasizing the importance of a supportive and encouraging environment for language learning (*When I'm embarrassed to to speak English with intonation because my friends will laugh at me. / I just like to practice listening and imitating in videos or simple topics or topics I like*). Many respondents mentioned feeling overwhelmed by the *abundance of intonation training resources*, each with their unique style and approach, making it challenging to choose the most effective methods.

In general, the results of this study demonstrate that while students recognize the significance of intonation, they face numerous obstacles when attempting to mastering intonation, specifically regarding correct stress

1	Imitate a native speaker I like (shadowing technique)	17	7.1	40	25.5	37	10.4	87	25.0	60	32.0
2	Communicate with foreigners/native speakers	30	3.5	63	40.5	33	10.3	61	15.3	54	30.4
3	Watch/Listen more conversations/talks in English	4	1.7	25	10.4	43	17.8	99	40.0	70	30.1
4	Attend English intonation training courses	25	10.4	85	35.3	50	20.7	40	16.6	41	17.0
5	Learn basic English intonation rules	30	12.4	44	18.3	40	16.6	67	27.8	60	24.9
6	Practice talking with my friends/classmates in English	10	4.2	36	15.0	51	21.2	90	37.2	54	22.4
7	Ask my English teacher for help	9	3.7	41	17.0	47	19.5	83	34.4	61	25.4
8	Listen to recordings of themselves	9	3.7	30	12.4	46	19.1	89	36.9	67	27.9
9	Do more exercises about intonation	24	10.0	55	19.1	50	19.1	71	29.4	55	22.4

Table 3.4: Students' perception towards main techniques to improve English intonation

The table above illustrates the techniques that students prefer for improving their intonation skills. "Watch/Listen to more conversations/talks in English" and

"Imitate a native speaker I like (shadowing)" emerge as the most highly recommended strategies, respectively. Students frequently utilize the *"repetition after the teacher/CD players"* method as well. Self-guided methods, like *"Recording my intonation and correcting it myself"* and *"Improving intonation by practicing alone at home"* are also used by many students, indicating increasing preference for self-directed learning.

One interesting finding is that while "Communicate with foreigners/native speakers" is a technique that is highly recommended (30.4%), 40.5% of students confess that they have heard about it but never use it before, suggesting a gap between awareness and practical application. This technique seems to be an effective way to improve students' intonation, however the unavailability of native speakers makes it difficult to meet their preferences.

Techniques that require talking to a teacher or a peer, like *"Ask my English teacher for help"* and *"Ask for advice from acquaintances"* or *"practice with my friends during English speaking lessons"* show moderate usage and suggestions. Even though in the previous findings, students express the need for more support from teachers, they seem not directly requesting such help. The data also suggests that students are interested in reading more books and completing more exercises about intonation. These diverse preferences show that students value having a variety of resources accessible for their intonation practice, whether through written material or exercise-based approaches. "Attend in a course to practice my English intonation" is the least recommended technique among students.

In the "other" category of responses, several students mentioned various applications, including Elsa Speaking, Doulingo, Cake, and Mochimochi, which they found beneficial for practicing English intonation. These mentions highlight

the active role of technology in students' language learning endeavors, with technology-driven applications being embraced as practical tools for honing their intonation skills. In summary, students' clear preference for intonation practice techniques that leverage technology underscores the changing landscape of language education in the digital age.

3.1.1.5. Students' expectations from their intonation practice sessions

This section aimed to find down students' expectations from their intonation practice in English class. The author makes it an optional part so all students will feel free to express their opinion. A number of responses were recorded and categorized into specific areas, including “games and activities”, “materials and supports from teachers” and “time spent on intonation in class”.

Regarding “games and activities”, a significant number of students express a desire for their intonation practice sessions to be more engaging, incorporating games and interactive activities. Here are some statements from students: *“I think games will be helpful”*, *“I want to have more activities in the classroom”*, *“I like online games”*. *“I think teachers should increase speaking activities.”*, *“adding games to our intonation practice would be great”*, *“I like more games”*. This reflects a preference for a dynamic and enjoyable learning environment that goes beyond traditional teaching methods.

Furthermore, many students indicate that they expect more support from their teachers during intonation practice sessions, highlighting the significance students place on the active involvement of teachers in refining their intonation skills (*“I hope to receive more help from teachers”*, *“teachers can give more feedback and correction”*, *“I need more feedback”*, *“I want teacher to correct my mistakes carefully”*, *“more assistance from teachers”*, *“Correcting mistakes carefully”*,

“Extra feedback from teachers”, “More guidance and careful correction from teachers”...). This suggests that students value the guidance and assistance of their instructors in mastering this aspect of language learning. As noted by Phan (2012), a significant majority of participants in the study expressed their expectation that teachers would actively engage with them by listening to their speech and providing feedback.

In addition, many students express a need for more handouts and materials to support their self-study at home. This signifies a proactive approach to learning, with students seeking additional resources to enhance their practice outside of the classroom. This finding aligns with Ngo's study in 2017, which found that students demonstrated significant improvement in intonation skills after completing a 10-week training program. During this training, students were supplied with comprehensive and well-prepared materials designed for both in-class and self-guided practice. This highlights the importance of handouts and materials in improving English intonation. Doan's study conducted in 2005 also reveals that the lack of authentic materials poses a significant challenge to learning English intonation. This emphasizes the need for educational institutions to provide students with genuine and contextually relevant resources to facilitate effective intonation learning. Besides, students express desire to have more practice hours in class.

3.1.2. Findings from the teacher questionnaire survey

3.1.2.1. Teachers' attitude towards intonation, current intonation teaching and intonation materials

Table 3.5 below demonstrates teachers' perceptions towards the

significance of English intonation (statement 01 to 03), their current intonation teaching (statement 04 to 10) and intonation materials for teaching and learning intonation (statement 11 to 13).

No	Statement	CD		D		N		A		CA	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1	I consider intonation equally important to grammar and vocabulary in developing students' speaking skills.	0	0	0	0	3	16.7	13	72.2	2	11.1
2	Improving students' intonation significantly enhances their spoken English fluency.	0	0	0	0	1	5.7	8	44.3	9	50.0
3	Students should prioritize learning intonation as much as grammar and vocabulary.	0	0	1	5.7	4	22.2	10	55.7	3	16.4
4	Effective intonation teaching enhances students' overall English language proficiency.	0	0	0	0	3	16.7	9	50.0	6	33.3
5	I feel confident in my ability to teach English intonation effectively.	0	0	0	0	5	27.8	9	50.0	4	22.2

6	I provide clear explanations of intonation principles in my English lessons.	0	0	1	5.7	4	22.2	9	50.0	4	22.1
7	I spend enough time on teaching intonation.	0	0	2	11.1	10	55.5	5	27.8	1	5.6
8	I actively correct students' intonation mistakes during speaking activities.	1	5.7	1	5.7	5	27.8	8	44.4	3	16.4
9	I use multimedia or visual aids to teach intonation.	0	0	2	11.4	5	27.8	8	44.4	3	16.4
10	I provide students with guidance on how to practice intonation effectively outside of class.	0	0	0	0	10	55.7	5	27.8	3	16.4
11	The current course materials (e.g., textbooks, audio recordings) are effective in supporting intonation teaching.	1	5.6	1	5.6	8	44.4	6	33.3	2	11.1
12	Teachers have access to sufficient resources to teach intonation.	0	0	2	11.1	7	38.9	6	33.3	3	16.7
13	There is a need for additional training or resources for teachers to improve their intonation teaching skills.	0	0	0	0	4	22.2	9	50	5	27.8

Table 3.5: Teachers' attitudes towards intonation, current intonation teaching and teaching materials

When comparing the role of intonation in English communication with two fundamental aspects of English named vocabulary and grammar (statement 01), the majority of teachers (83.3%) agree and strongly agree that intonation should be treated equally to those two and none of them express the disagreement. Besides, in statement 03, more than two-thirds of respondents agree that students should prioritize studying intonation as much as grammar and vocabulary. Additionally, 94% of teachers support the statement that improving students' intonation will lead to the development of their proficiency in spoken English. These findings reveal that teachers possess a distinct understanding and recognition of the significant influence of intonation on language competency.

Regarding the importance of effective intonation teaching techniques, most respondents (83.3%) express agreement or complete agreement that effective intonation teaching approach plays a significant role in enhancing students' overall proficiency in the English language. The result highlights the recognition of teachers in incorporating intonation teaching methods into English lessons in order to enhance students' overall English competence. In relation to the confidence in English intonation teaching (statement 05), the data reveals that a considerable portion of teachers, 72.2%, show confidence in their teaching skills. This high level of confidence might be associated with their extensive teaching experience as reported in the previous section. Nonetheless, it is worth noting that nearly one-third of respondents maintain a neutral opinion, supposing that teachers may need additional assistance or resources to boost their confidence in teaching intonation.

Statement 06 to statement 10 refer to respondents' current intonation teaching habits. With regard to the intonation instruction (statement 06), 72% of respondents confirm that they provide their students with clear intonation principles during English lessons, while 22.2% remain uncertainty. Only one teacher (5.7%) out of 18 respondents expressed disagreement. Furthermore, data about time allocated to intonation teaching (statement 07) indicates a noticeable uncertainty among teachers, as more than 50% remaining neutral about sufficient time spent on teaching intonation. This finding suggests the challenge of incorporating comprehensive language teaching within the constraints of a typical 50-minute lesson.

In statement 08, approximately 61% of teachers agree or completely agree on actively correcting students' intonation mistakes during speaking activities. Nevertheless, a significant portion of teachers (27.8%) remain neutral on this aspect and two of them (11.4%) confess that they do not include students' intonation correction in their teaching. This uncertainty may result from the lack of adequate time which restricts teachers from addressing all students' intonation mistakes in class. Moving to statement 09, the data collected from the survey indicates that a majority of teachers expressed agreement or complete agreement with the utilization of multimedia or visual aids for teaching intonation. In contrast, a proportion of 27.8% maintain a neutral opinion, indicating the possibility of diverse preferences among instructors or constraints related to the accessibility or incorporation of multimedia within the classroom environment. Regarding the instruction to practice intonation outside of the classroom in statement 10, 40% of teachers agree that they provide students with guidance on how to practice intonation off class while nearly 60% remain uncertain. This

emphasizes the possible deficiency in providing students with sufficient guidance for practicing intonation outside of the classroom.

Regarding the effectiveness of current materials, even though data demonstrates a notable level of agreement among respondents at 44.4%, the number of teachers expressing their uncertainty is at the same level. Two out of 18 teachers (11.2%) feel unsatisfied with the usefulness of existing intonation materials. Moreover, in relation to the sufficiency of teaching materials, while half of respondents agree that they are provided with enough teaching materials, approximately 40% of surveyed teachers are uncertain and about 11% disagree. These findings suggest an improvement in the current resources to facilitate intonation teaching. As an English teacher who directly uses English textbook, the author recognizes that intonation is treated as an optional part, with scarce additional materials available for non-English majors. Moreover, the majority of respondents (78%) agree with the requirement for additional training, workshops or resources to improve their proficiency in teaching intonation skills.

3.1.2.2. Teachers' perspectives about main challenges in teaching intonation

No.	Statement	CD		D		N		A		CA	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1	Intonation only accounts for a minute proportion of the curriculum content	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	50	9	50
2	The lack of suitable teaching materials and facilities hinders effective intonation instruction.	0	0	0	0	3	16.7	10	33.3	5	27.8
3	Time constraints make it difficult to	0	0	0	0	2	11.2	8	44.4	8	44.4

	dedicate sufficient time to intonation teaching.										
4	Students' native language challenge teachers in intonation teaching.	0	0	0	0	4	22.3	8	44.4	6	33.3
5	Teachers lack confidence in providing a good model for students.	0	0	1	5.6	4	22.3	7	38.8	6	33.3

Table 3.6: Teachers' perspectives about main challenges in teaching intonation

As can be seen from the table, the tiny amount of intonation in learning curriculum seems to be the most prominent obstacle with the collective 100% agreement among teachers. Moreover, in “others” section of this part, some respondents mentioned that *"intonation is not a compulsory part of lesson plans"* and that it remains *"optional, depending on teachers"*, underscoring that intonation is not considered a compulsory element of English teaching for non-English major students at this university regardless of significant role in communication. The absence of intonation in non-English major programs create a considerable challenge for teachers in integrating intonation in English speaking lessons.

Moving to the second major challenge, a remarkable 88.8% of the respondents agree and completely agree with the statement “Time constraints make it difficult to dedicate sufficient time to intonation teaching” while a mere 11.2% maintain neutrality on this matter. This result is consistent with the previous discovery of this study that teachers encounter limitations in a standard 50-minute English lesson, which hinders them from instructing intonation effectively. Following these two main concerns, the shortage of sufficient instructional resources emerges as the subsequent significant barrier, with 16.7% of

1	Organizing training programs which focus on intonation would be helpful	0	0	0	0	2	11.1	13	72.2	3	16.7
2	Collaborative sharing of intonation teaching strategies among teachers is beneficial.	0	0	0	0	1	5.6	13	72.2	4	22.2
3	Incorporating intonation into the official curriculum can improve intonation instruction.	0	0	0	0	0	0	15	83.3	3	16.7
4	Providing more intonation teaching materials and resources can aid teachers.	0	0	0	0	2	11.1	9	50	7	38.9

Table 3.7: Teachers' perspectives on solutions to address problems in intonation teaching

As can be seen from table 3.7, 100% of teachers expressed their agreement with suggested solutions since there is no disagreement or complete disagreement were reported. These four solutions can be categorized into two key areas: course

design and training and workshops.

The solution suggesting integrating intonation into the official curriculum is the most preferred, as indicated by 83.3% of teachers in agreement and 16.7% expressing complete agreement. This strong consent demonstrates that teachers recognize the importance of intonation and underscores their interests in incorporating it as an official element of the English curriculum. Integrating intonation basic rules into the official curriculum is expected to provide teachers with clear guidance on what aspects of intonation should be prioritized and included in their teaching methods to create a standardized and effective approach to intonation instruction. Besides, providing teachers with more intonation teaching materials and resources is considered valuable, as indicated by the fact that almost 90% of educators expressed their agreement, and only 10% showed their uncertainty. This solution proposed a necessity for a wider range teaching source, such as more authentic videos and audios that can enrich learning intonation suitable with students' level and learning contents.

The two next solutions regarding holding intonation-focused training and meetings to exchange intonation teaching strategies also gain substantial support from teachers. Nearly 90% reported that they may benefit from training programs which focus on intonation, rhythm, and stress. Furthermore, a remarkable 94.4% of respondents indicate agreement and complete agreement that collaborative sharing of intonation teaching strategies among teachers is beneficial, underscoring the significance of sharing and learning from others since each teacher has their own strengths and weaknesses.

3.1.2.4. Teachers' opinion about intonation practice techniques

This section examines teachers' perspectives on main techniques which can

help improve students' intonation (table 3.7). Their opinions about the effectiveness of these techniques are analyzed to identify which methods are preferred and considered impactful. Parallely, the author compares these results with those obtained from a survey conducted among students to identify any possible similarities or differences in viewpoints between educators and learners regarding the most favored and successful methods for enhancing intonation.

No.	Statements	CD		D		N		A		CA	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1	Imitate a native speaker (shadowing technique)	0	0	0	0	1	5.6	13	72.2	4	22.2
2	Communicate with foreigners/native speakers aids in intonation practice.	0	0	0	0	2	11.1	11	61.1	5	27.8
3	Watch/Listen to more conversations/talks in English	0	0	0	0	3	22.2	11	61.1	4	22.2
4	Attend English intonation training courses	0	0	0	0	6	33.3	9	50	3	16.7
5	Pay attention to basic English intonation rules	0	0	0	0	3	22.2	7	38.9	8	44.4
6	Practice speaking with	1	5.6	0	0	4	22.2	9	50	4	22.2

	friends/classmates in English										
7	Ask the English teacher for help	0	0	1	5.6	3	16.7	11	61	3	16.7
8	Listen to recordings of themselves and give self-feedback	0	0	0	0	4	22.2	11	61.1	3	16.7
9	Do more exercises about intonation	0	0	1	5.6	5	27.8	8	44.4	4	22.2

Table 3.8. Teachers' opinion about intonation practice techniques

The table indicates that while most techniques are considered as effective by teachers, there is a remarkable preference for methods that utilize native sources, including shadowing, watch or listen to more English conversation and communicate with native speakers. The result bears a resemblance to that of the students' survey.

Shadowing techniques, which involve the imitation of native speakers, seem to be the most favored one with an overwhelming collective agreement of 94.4%. This technique is also widely endorsed by students (student survey results indicate this), indicating its efficacy and prevalence. Prior research has demonstrated the efficacy of shadowing. The study conducted by Hsieh, Dong & Wang (2013) at National Taiwan University during an English course involving shadowing as a teaching method reported that shadowing helps students adapt to the flow of English sentences, leading to the improvement in pronunciation, fluency, and intonation.

In addition to shadowing technique, communicating with foreigners or native speakers gathers a considerable 88.9% of combined agreement, underscoring the

importance of engaging in interactions with native speakers. Similarly, watching or listening to more English conversations or talks result in a correspondingly high cumulative agreement of 88.3%. These findings emphasize the prevalent trend among educators, illustrating a clear preference for methods integrating exposure to or interaction with native speakers to enhance students' intonation proficiency. Understanding basic intonation principles and patterns is also an essential way to improve intonation proficiency as indicated by a notable 88.3% agreement among teachers. However, data from the students' survey reveals a contrasting scenario, with only a moderate portion of surveyed students reporting their active engagement in learning these crucial rules. It can be due to the inadequacy of materials available in class or the optional nature of intonation in non-English major courses as analyzed in previous section.

Regarding to the method of recording students' own voice when speaking English and then let them listen by themselves is also a good way to improve their intonation. 77.8% of teachers agree with this technique while 22.2% remain undecided. Likewise, seeking support from teachers is also recommended as teachers express their willingness to assist their students. These results are consistent with those of students' survey which indicate that students commonly ask teachers for correcting their mistakes. However, there remains a notable number of students who reported never seeking help from teachers. It can be attributed to their shyness or anxiety to share their concerns. Therefore, the study suggests that teachers should strive to create an inclusive environment which fosters active involvement and offers supplementary assistance to students who may be reluctant to engage in conversations or activities.

Practicing speaking with friends or classmates in English gathers a total

agreement of 77.2%, demonstrating teachers' belief in the importance of students engaging in English conversations with their peers to improve their intonation abilities. This finding bears a resemblance to the outcomes derived from the students' survey. Hence, it is recommended that educators should integrate more pair-speaking exercises inside the classroom setting, as well as incorporating them into homework assignments, in order to provide extra assistance to students in refining their intonation skills through consistent practice of English conversation with their classmates.

Attending English intonation training courses and doing additional exercises focused on intonation are two techniques less favored by teachers, with the total agreement of 66.7% and 66.6% respectively. There is one out of eighteen teachers express their disagreement regarding the efficacy of exercises in improving students' intonation skills. These two techniques are also less commonly favored among students, as indicated in students' survey findings.

3.1.3. Findings from class observations

As mentioned in Chapter 2, five teachers were involved in class observations regarding intonation practice during English classes. The background information of the observed classes is presented in the table below (table 3.8).

Observed teacher	Observed lesson	Observation time	Number of students
Teacher 01 (T1)	Unit 3: Company background (lesson 2)	17:30- 18:20	33
Teacher 02 (T2)	Unit 4: Office Etiquette (lesson 1)	7:50- 8:40	34

Teacher 03 (T3)	Unit 4: Office problems (lesson 2)	17:30- 18:20	32
Teacher 04 (T4)	Unit 5: Office problems (lesson 2)	14:20- 15:10	33
Teacher 05 (T5)	Unit 6: Arrangements (lesson 1)	18:20- 19:10	34

Table 3.8: Background information of observed classes

During observations, the researcher noted things regarding teachers' and students' intonation practice, accompanied by the observation checklist. One unanticipated finding was that contrary to what most teachers indicated in the questionnaires, three out of five teachers did not incorporate intonation in their speaking lessons and five teachers did not include intonation-related exercise in their lesson plan. Table 3.9 shows the results of observations:

No	Questions	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5
1	Did the teacher include intonation in English speaking class?	v	v	x	x	x
2	Did the teacher emphasize the importance of intonation in English speaking?	v	v	x	x	x
3	Did the teacher provide specific guidance on intonation patterns?	v	x	x	x	x
4	Did the teacher correct students' intonation mistakes during the class?	v	v	x	x	x
5	Were there any intonation-related exercises or activities in the lesson plan?	x	x	x	x	x
6	Did students actively participate in English speaking exercises/activities?	v	v	v	v	v

7	Were there any students who struggled with intonation?	v	v	v	v	v
8	Did the teacher encourage students to practice intonation in speaking activities?	v	v	x	x	x

Note: v: Yes, x: No

Table 3.9: Observation checklist for teachers' and student's intonation practice

The observation checklist reveals variations in the integration of intonation practices among the observed teachers during English speaking sessions. Out of the five teachers (T1 to T5), only T1 and T2 consistently incorporated intonation into their teaching practices, emphasized the significance of intonation and offered clear guidance to students on intonation patterns. In addition, these two teachers actively corrected students' intonation mistakes throughout the lesson and motivated them to engage in speaking exercises to improve their intonation. Conversely, T3, T4, and T5 failed to properly integrate intonation into their speaking activities, lack specific instruction, mistakes correction, and motivation for students to practice intonation.

Regarding speaking activities, 5 teachers frequently conducted role-playing in which students shared information in pairs labeled as A and B and free talk based on suggested questions related to the topic. All tasks are taken from coursebook. Here are examples of role- playing and free talk activities.

CARD A

Last week, your colleague (Student B) did the following things:

Days	Problems	Reasons
Monday	Be late/ work	(1) _____
Tuesday		No Internet connection
Wednesday	Miss/ meeting	(3) _____
Thursday		Give/ him/ incorrect sales number
Friday	Not answer/ phone calls	(5) _____
Saturday		Finish work/ meet deadline

CARD B

Answer Student A's questions. Use the prompt in the card.

Days	Problems	Reasons
Monday		Car/ broken
Tuesday	Not give/ boss/ report	(2) _____
Wednesday		Be sick/ stay at home
Thursday	Make/ boss/ angry	(4) _____
Friday		Be busy/ answer/ phone calls
Saturday	Be late/ company party	(6) _____

Activity 3: Free talk

- Work individually
- Imagine there were some problems in the office you are working in.
- Prepare a short talk about one of these problems.
- Present in front of the class.

Use the following suggestions:

- What was the problem?
- When did it happen?
- How did it affect your work?
- How did you deal with it?
- What have you learnt from the problem?

Unit 5- Office problems

Notably, all students participated enthusiastically in these activities, indicating a high degree of involvement. Teachers often gave 15-20 minutes for each pair to prepare and practice independently throughout the activities. It was discovered that students spent a significant amount of time preparing the complete transcripts of the conversation. They nearly just had 2-3 last minutes to practice

speaking in pairs. Some did not even have time to practice speaking with their partners. After that, teachers invited 3-4 pairs to role play and gave feedback. As the research observed, students showed a lack of intonation as most pairs exhibited a monotonous speaking style. Students seemed to be afraid of making grammatical mistakes. Here is the transcript in a conversation produced by one pair from T1's class and T1's feedback.

SA: *Why were you late for work on Monday? (monotone)*

SB: *My car broken. (monotone)*

SA: *Did you give the sales report to your boss on Tuesday? (falling tune)*

SB: *No. I don't have an internet connection.*

SA: *Really? (falling tune). Why did you miss the meeting? (rising tune (student pronounced wrongly "meeting"))*

SB: *I am sick*

SA: *I am sorry.*

T: *Thank you. "My car WAS broken", you lack "was. We need to use past tense here. Not "don't have", it's "didn't have", "I WAS sick" or you can say "I felt sick", "meeting" is /'mi:tiŋ/ not /'me:tiŋ/. You guys speak like robots.*

SS: **laugh**

T: *I don't see any emotion here. You should raise your voice "Really" (rising tune), "thank you" (falling tune).*

Here is another feedback provided by T2 after students presented (also role-play activity)

T: *...you should raise your voice at the end of question "Do you have time on Sunday?". Like for Yes/No question, voice raised at the end and Wh-*

questions, voices falls, like “Where are you going to do? (falling tune)”.

The observation revealed significant challenges among students in terms of intonation, notably in determining whether to raise or lower their voices and emphasize on the key words. While teachers actively addressed grammar and word choice, their interventions on intonation were still limited and mostly were found in yes/no questions and Wh-questions. Additionally, there was no specific explanation students need to raise their voice in this type of sentence. It might be due to a lack of time since teachers normally conducted 3-4 activities (for both vocabulary, grammar, listening and speaking) in a 50-minute English lesson (exclude warm-up activities). Notably, during speaking activities in the classes of T3, T4 and T5, teachers primarily focused on correcting word choice and grammatical mistakes, overlooking the intricacies of intonation.

Furthermore, despite correction, some pairs still had the same intonation mistakes, and when teachers encouraged students to imitate corrected intonation patterns, they expressed shyness and hesitation. One common thing is that all 5 observed teachers skipped self-assessment activity at the end of each lesson and explained that even though they know reflection is a chance for students to express what they have or have not learned yet, time constraints was a big challenge. *“In some lessons with fewer activities, I still encourage students to do self-reflection and share their thoughts with the class in English. Since it’s students’ own experience and feeling, their voices sound more like “human”, not a “robot” as in other activities ...”*, said teacher 04. This sharing suggests an alternative strategy to boost a more natural and expressive intonation in students' speech, emphasizing the value of personal expression and reflection in language learning.

Overall, the findings revealed that despite recognizing the importance of

intonation, teachers somehow did not include it in their lesson, likely due to time constraints or a focus on other aspects such as vocabulary and grammar. Besides, it supported the idea that students have difficulties in applying intonation rules in speaking and they seem to be shy and reluctant when imitating the intonation following teacher's guidance.

3.2. Discussion

This section offers an analysis of students and teachers' perceptions toward intonation role and the current intonation learning and teaching at the research site. Specifically, it elaborates on the findings identified in the previous section by considering both sides of an issue before reaching a conclusion. In alignment with the two research questions, the following items summarize the research results and refer to the relevant previous studies.

3.2.1. Research question 1

The first research question “*What are the perceptions of non- English major students and teachers towards English intonation?*” deals with the teachers and students' viewpoints of intonation and current intonation teaching and learning in the university where the research was conducted. The answer to this question is presented below.

Regarding the role of intonation in speaking skills, both students and teachers emphasize the significance of intonation in spoken English, as the majority of teachers (83.3%) agree and strongly agree that intonation should be treated equally to vocabulary and grammar and 94% assert that improve intonation contributes to fostering students' proficiency in spoken English. Despite this recognition, most students (80%) consider intonation a challenging aspect, indicating that mastering intonation remains beyond their current ability.

Consequently, while aware of the indispensable role of intonation, many students still struggle to find the motivation to dedicate time to studying intonation. The results of this part are consistent with findings from previous studies. Mai (2015) also highlighted the importance of intonation in language learning and effective communication. In Tuan's research in 2012, approximately 79% of respondents strongly agreed on the crucial role of intonation in studying English. His research also reveals that most students agreed that studying intonation can improve their speaking skills, which underscore the consistency of students' perceptions regarding the role of intonation in improving their language proficiency, particularly their speaking skills. Purba's (2020) also indicates that students frequently encounter challenges in learning intonation.

In terms of intonation instruction, students reported to receive explanations for intonation principles and assistance from teachers in identifying and correcting their intonation errors during English speaking activities. The results align with the research undertaken by Nguyen (2017), which examined the intonation practices and student learning outcomes at a school in Thai Binh province. Results from the teachers' survey indicate that teachers possess a high level of confidence in their ability to teach English intonation rules. Although 72% of teachers claimed to provide clear intonation principles to students during speaking classes, only 40% of teachers offer help on practicing intonation outside of the classroom. As a result, most students require additional assistance from professors beyond the classroom to facilitate their self study at home.

With regard to the time allocation and materials for teaching intonation, most students and teachers agree that it was insufficient. In addition, they both express a need for an enhancement in the existing resources for learning and

teaching intonation, since a mere 44% of students perceive the current materials as beneficial for their intonation learning. The result is consistent with that found by Doan (2005) who claimed that students need more materials and facilities to improve their English intonation. One interesting finding from observation is that despite teachers' claims in the survey questionnaire that they offer comprehensive explanations of intonation rules, some still neglect this aspect in their actual teaching practice, or just spend less than 3 minutes to mention intonation patterns possibly due to time constraints in covering all activities in the course books.

3.2.1. Research question 2

The second research question “*What are the specific problems faced by second year non-English major students while practicing English intonations?*” uncovers the main challenges faced by students and figuring out some practical solutions to address those difficulties, as reported in both teachers’ and students’ survey questionnaires. In addition, teachers’ problems related to intonation teaching and some solutions to alleviate these difficulties are also figured out in this section.

3.2.1.1. Main challenges

Findings from students' questionnaires show that most of students make mistakes un using appropriate intonation in English speaking (75%). In addition to misunderstanding the use of falling tone or rising tone and their function, students also express their difficulties in placing stress within sentences. It is consistent with the results from observation as most students neglect stress sentences when speaking and many of them do not know how to chunk sentences correctly. Time constraints emerge as a significant obstacle for students since time

allocated for other aspects, particularly for vocabulary, grammar, listening, and writing skills, offer little opportunity for practicing intonation. Besides, results from questionnaires and observation show that students themselves create emotional barriers in their intonation learning process. Many often feel shy and hesitate to imitate the correct tone and they also feel embarrassed when speaking like that way. It may be due to the difference in Vietnamese and English intonation system which was pointed out clearly in Luu's research in 2010. These findings support the claims of Purba (2020), Duong (2012) and Yangklang (2013) that most EFL students are struggling in distinguishing intonation patterns and placing stress in sentence naturally. Moreover, Eghlidi's research in 2016 reinforces the challenges students encounter in placing sentence stress accurately and distinguishing between various intonation patterns. These findings also support the idea that students show their uncertainty in English speaking due to lack of confidence as found in the studies of Gilakjani (2013) and Putri et al. (2020).

Data also reveals some problems that teachers encounter when teaching intonation. The challenges include the optional nature of intonation in the English class, inadequate allocation of time and resources for teaching intonation, the difference in intonation between Vietnamese (the students' mother tongue), and a lack of confidence in providing a precise model for students to imitate. In addition, the shyness and fear of making mistakes displayed by students also pose challenges for teachers. The result further supports the idea of Griffiths (2011) who pointed out that EFL teachers might lack confidence in delivering a robust model for learners.

3.2.1.2. Solutions to address problems related to intonation teaching

To facilitate students' intonation learning process, some practical and

preferred techniques are revealed. Shadowing and engaging in conversations with native speakers have been identified as the two most favored methods for enhancing intonation, as reported by both students and teachers. However, only a few students get the chance to engage in face-to-face interactions with native speakers, underscoring their desire for more real-life communication opportunities. Besides, students express their expectation to include intonation as an official part in their English curriculum since it will raise their awareness about the significance of intonation as well as provide guideline for them to follow. Additionally, integrating technology in learning English intonation inside and outside the class under teachers' instructions is also a solution raised by students. One practical solution emerged from the observation is incorporating self-assessment in intonation learning which was proved to be effective by Seenak (2019).

The tendency towards employing mimicking and active listening techniques aligns with the results reported in previous research, including that of Astuti (2020) and Foote & McDonough (2017) which indicate that English as EFL learners frequently choose shadowing as a successful method for practicing intonation. This trend aligns with the findings of previous studies that highlight students' keen interest in English study applications and the potential benefits they offer in enhancing speaking skills (Pham & Cao, 2023). Additionally, research conducted by Mai (2015) at a Vietnamese university demonstrates that students can achieve significant improvements in reproducing accurate intonation contours after just two weeks of training with digital tools like WASP and Online Audio Recorder. The popularity of the shadowing technique, as observed in studies by Astuti (2020) and Foote & McDonough (2017), further reinforces the preference

of EFL learners for this method in intonation practice.

These solutions mentioned above also help address teachers' main problem in teaching intonation. Besides, organizing training programs which focus on intonation is highly recommended. Teachers also express their desire in holding more meetings to facilitate the sharing of intonation teaching strategies among teachers and to discuss effective ways of organizing speaking activities that strike a balance between vocabulary, grammar, and intonation.

CONCLUSION

1. Recapitulation

In conclusion, the study was conducted to investigate second-year non-English major students and teachers' perceptions of learning and teaching English intonation at a university in Vietnam. To summarize, one of the most remarkable findings is that both teachers and students consider intonation challenging but indispensable part of overall English-speaking proficiency. However, despite the significance of intonation, students express that they have not devoted much time to studying it due to lack of techniques and knowledge regarding intonation. Besides, students expect to receive more support from teachers, especially outside of the classroom. The study also underscores the prevalent absence of intonation instructions and corrections in some English classes.

The next major finding is about students' challenges when practicing intonation. The two biggest challenges preventing students and teachers from learning and teaching intonation effectively are time constraints and authentic material inadequacy. Besides, students expressed that despite teachers' basic instruction about intonation, they could hardly distinguish intonation patterns when listening to native speakers and place correct stress in sentences. Moreover, internal factors such as shyness, lack of confidence and motivation and the difference between Vietnamese (their first language) and English in term of intonation are also reported as big problems.

The findings also highlight a significant preference for approaches that involve native sources, such as shadowing and participating in authentic conversation practices with native speakers. Additionally, students hold a positive perspective regarding the incorporation of online learning applications into

English studies. Another technique highlighted in the study is the self-reflection activity. This method provides students with the opportunity to express their emotions and ideas in English concerning what they have or have not comprehended throughout the lesson. By employing this introspective and personal approach, their speech may appear more natural and human-like.

2. Pedagogical implications

Regarding the pedagogical implications, the research contributes valuable insights to English language education, specifically in the field of English intonation teaching and learning. To enhance students' confidence in using intonation when speaking English, the university should consider expanding English-speaking clubs which offer students opportunities to communicate with native speakers. These clubs are not only for proficient students but also for those in non-English programs. More workshops about how to use and teach English intonation effectively for teachers should also be organized. Additionally, course designers might prioritize diverse and authentic materials, including books and audio resources about real life context to provide students with exposure to genuine language usage. Besides, the author suggests that intonation basic rules be included in the course book to facilitate students' learning process. Moreover, teachers are vital in creating an inclusive learning environment by providing thorough help to students, especially those who are shy or less confident. Besides, teachers can create more speaking activities in the classroom to help students improve their intonation skills. Finally, students are encouraged to take an active role in their English learning and seeking assistance from teacher when needed. This collaborative endeavor attempts to establish a dynamic and productive English language learning environment that fosters student ability and confidence,

regardless of English skill level or major.

3. Limitations and suggestion for further studies

Despite being conducted thoroughly, the study is not without limitations due to limited time and space. Firstly, the research only focused on a particular university in Vietnam, while providing insights relevant to that context, the results may not provide a comprehensive representation of the broader academic landscape. Therefore, further studies on this issue should be conducted in various universities. Secondly, due to the time constraints, the investigation into methods for enhancing English intonation only concentrated on respondents' perceptions without exploring the practical application of their preferred solutions in the learning process. Therefore, it is advisable that further studies delve into the effectiveness of these methods in improving students' intonation as well as their overall English-speaking skills. Finally, an investigation into the long-term effects of integrating online learning applications (such as Elsa Speaking, Duolingo, Cake, and Mochimochi) in English learning process and self-reflective exercises alongside teacher instruction to improve intonation may be a promising avenue for future research in this field.

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APPENDIX 1**APPENDIX 1: SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRES FOR STUDENTS**

My name is Nguyen Thi Luong, and I am completing my research on the current practice of teaching and learning English intonation among second-year non-English major students at Hanoi University of Industry. I would like you to take a few moments to complete the following questionnaire, which is thoughtfully designed to gather insights on your experiences and perceptions related to English intonation. Your valuable responses will significantly contribute to our understanding of this important aspect of language learning and teaching. Please be assured that all provided information will be handled with strict confidentiality and utilized only for research purposes. Your participation is immensely appreciated. Thank you for your support!

Part 1. Personal information

1. Please indicate your gender:

Male Female

2. How long have you been learning English?

- Less than 5 years
 5-10 years
 More than 10 years

3. What's your major?

- Business Administration
 Accounting
 Logistics
 Banking and Finance
 Marketing
 Human Resources management
 Economic Investment

- Office administration
- Other (please specify) _____

Part 2: Particular information

Please tick ✓ in the following boxes, each question is selected once only and scored by the following criteria:

1. Completely disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neutral
4. Agree
5. Completely agree

1. What do you think about English intonation in speaking skills?

No.	Statement	Completely Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Completely Agree
1	I believe that learning English intonation is important for effective communication in English.					
2	I enjoy practicing English intonation.					
3	I find English intonation challenging.					
4	I believe that improving my intonation will help me speak English more					

	fluently.					
5	I am more confident when I can pronounce words with correct intonation.					
6	It is time-consuming to practice intonation only.					
7	I only work on my intonation when it's required.					
8	I think English intonation is as important as grammar and vocabulary in speaking English.					

2. What do you think about intonation teaching and materials in your English class?

No.	Statement	Completely Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Completely Agree
1	In my English classes, teachers spend adequate time teaching intonation.					
2	In my English classes, teachers provide clear explanations of intonation principles.					
3	In my English classes, teachers actively identify and correct our mistakes in					

	intonation.					
4	The course materials (e.g., textbooks, audio recordings) adequately support intonation learning.					
5	Teachers provide enough resources to practice intonation effectively.					
6	I receive sufficient guidance on how to practice intonation outside of class.					

3. What are your current problems with intonation?

No	Statement	Completely Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Completely Agree
1	I find it challenging to distinguish different intonation patterns.					
2	Recognizing intonation in spoken English is difficult for me.					
3	I struggle to use appropriate intonation when speaking English.					
4	Understanding the purpose					

	of intonation in communication is hard.					
5	I often make mistakes in using intonation while speaking English.					
6	I feel unsure about where to place stress in sentences.					
7	I don't have enough time to practice my English intonation.					
8	I want to improve my English intonation but do not know how to.					

Other problems (Please specify):

4. Choose an option to talk about techniques to practice your intonation.

- ① I do not know about it at all
- ② I have heard about it but have never used it
- ③ I have tried using it but do not like it
- ④ I sometimes use it
- ⑤ I highly recommend it

No.	Techniques	My opinion
1	Imitate a native speaker I like (shadowing technique)	① ② ③ ④ ⑤
2	Communicate with foreigners/native speaker	① ② ③ ④ ⑤

XII

3	Watch/Listen more conversations/talks in English	1	2	3	4	5
4	Attend in a course to practice my English intonation	1	2	3	4	5
5	Learn basic English intonation rules	1	2	3	4	5
6	Practice English with my friends/ classmates	1	2	3	4	5
7	Ask my English teacher for help	1	2	3	4	5
8	Listen to recordings of myself	1	2	3	4	5
9	Do more exercises about intonation	1	2	3	4	5

Other techniques (Please specify):

5. What do you expect from your intonation practice sessions (please write down your answers)

Thank you!

APPENDIX 2

APPENDIX 1: SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRES FOR TEACHERS

My name is Nguyen Thi Luong, and I am completing my research on the current practice of teaching and learning English intonation among second-year non-English major students at Hanoi University of Industry. I would like you to take a few moments to complete the following questionnaire, which is thoughtfully designed to gather insights on your experiences and perceptions related to English intonation teaching. Your valuable responses will significantly contribute to our understanding of this important aspect of language learning and teaching. Please be assured that all provided information will be handled with strict confidentiality and utilized only for research purposes. Your participation is immensely appreciated. Thank you for your support!

Part 1: General Information

1. Please indicate your gender (please tick one)

Male

Female

2. How long have you been teaching English?

Less than 5 years

5-10 years

More than 10 years

3. What is your academic background (e.g., BA in English, MA in Education)? _____

Part 2: Particular information**1. Attitudes Towards Intonation and Intonation Teaching**

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements by ticking the appropriate box:

No	Statement	Complete ly Disagree	Disagre e	Neutra l	Agre e	Comple tely Agree
1	I consider intonation equally important to grammar and vocabulary in developing students' speaking skills.					
2	Improving students' intonation significantly enhances their spoken English fluency.					
3	Students should prioritize learning intonation as much as grammar and vocabulary.					
4	Effective intonation teaching enhances students' overall English language proficiency.					

5	I feel confident in my ability to teach English intonation effectively.					
6	I provide clear explanations of intonation principles in my English lessons.					
7	I spend enough time on teaching intonation.					
8	I actively correct students' intonation mistakes during speaking activities.					
9	I use multimedia or visual aids to teach intonation.					
10	I provide students with guidance on how to practice intonation effectively outside of class.					
11	The current course materials (e.g., textbooks, audio recordings) are effective in supporting intonation teaching.					
12	Teachers have access to sufficient resources to teach intonation.					

13	There is a need for additional training or resources for teachers to improve their intonation teaching skills.					
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2. Challenges in Teaching Intonation

No	Statement	Complete ly Disagree	Disagre e	Neutra l	Agre e	Comple ely Agree
1	Intonation only accounts for a minute proportion of the curriculum content					
2	The lack of suitable teaching materials and facilities hinders effective intonation instruction.					
3	Time constraints make it difficult to dedicate sufficient time to intonation teaching.					
4	Students' native language challenge teachers in intonation teaching.					
5	Teachers lack confidence in providing a good model for students.					

Other problems (Please specify):

3. Solutions for Overcoming Challenges in Teaching Intonation

No	Statement	Completely Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Completely Agree
1	Organizing training programs which focus on intonation would be helpful					
2	Collaborative sharing of intonation teaching strategies among teachers is beneficial.					
3	Incorporating intonation into the official curriculum can improve intonation instruction.					
4	Providing more intonation teaching materials and resources can aid teachers.					

Other solutions (please specify)

4. Teachers' Perspectives on Intonation Practice Techniques

No.	Statement	Completely Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Completely Agree
1	Imitate a native speaker I like (shadowing technique)					
2	Communicate with foreigners/native speaker					
3	Watch/Listen more conversations/talks in English					
4	Attend in a course to practice my English intonation					
5	Learn basic English intonation rules					
6	Practice English with my friends/ classmates					
7	Ask my English teacher for help					
8	Listen to recordings of myself					
9	Do more exercises about intonation					

Other techniques (Please specify):

APPENDIX 3

Classroom Observation Checklist

Observer:	
Date:	Observation start time:
Length of the observation:	Observation end time:
Lecturer's name:	Topic:
Course:	Number of students:

Observation notes:

No	Questions	Yes/No	Note
1	Did the teacher include intonation in English speaking class?		
2	Did the teacher emphasize the importance of intonation in English speaking?		
3	Did the teacher provide specific guidance on intonation patterns?		
4	Did the teacher correct students' intonation mistakes during the class?		
5	Were there any intonation-related exercises or activities in the lesson plan?		
6	Did students actively participate in English speaking exercises/activities?		
7	Were there any students who struggled with intonation?		
8	Did the teacher encourage students to practice intonation in speaking activities?		