

A Study of Intonation Used in the Audio Materials for Three English Textbooks Aimed at Japanese 6th Graders¹

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1. Introduction

At the end of the academic year of 2022, elementary school students who are now learning English as an official school subject in Japan are going to graduate for the first time. At the time of writing this paper, 6th graders are in their second year of English study, which began in April 2022. To begin an investigation of how English is taught in elementary school and to find whether there are any problems with teaching English sounds, Yuzawa (2022) examined sound features recorded on the CDs accompanying two selected English textbooks targeted at Japanese 5th graders and found various features, including problems with pronunciation of segments, the stress pattern of phrases, the intonation pattern, and the use of weak and strong forms.

The purpose of this paper, as a continuation of the aforementioned study, is to examine sound features, focusing on intonation, that are found in accompanying CDs of three English textbooks which are targeted at 6th graders. These textbooks are the ones published by Kairyudo, Keirinkan and Tokyo Shoseki. The main reason for focusing on intonation is that it is one of the most elusive and difficult areas in teaching English.

2. Data

The data used in this paper are sounds recorded on the CDs accompanying three English textbooks targeted at Japanese 6th graders. The names of these textbooks are as follows:

- Kairyudo – *Junior Sunshine 6*
- Keirinkan – *Blue Sky Elementary 6*
- Tokyo Shoseki – *New Horizon Elementary English Course 6*

In what follows, these textbooks will be abbreviated as:

- Kairyudo – *Sunshine 6*
- Keirinkan – *Sky 6*
- Tokyo Shoseki – *Horizon 6*

In this paper, the names of these textbooks are also used to mean the accompanying CDs. In its analysis of sound features recorded on the CDs, the paper explores three important areas of intonation: tonality, tonicity, and tone. In relation to tonicity, it also examines the stress pattern. In discussing tone, it focuses on the intonation pattern for listing. Throughout the paper, the activity performed by native speakers in the studio to make audio materials is described as ‘reading’, not ‘speaking’, because the way they produced speech sounds was based on reading the text out loud.

3. Tonality

The audio materials in the three textbooks use a low speech rate. It is assumed that the editors of these textbooks believe that this speech rate is useful and effective in helping 6th graders to understand spoken English better. Because of the slow speech rate, however, some sentences are divided into more tone-units than are necessary, as in the following:

- 'What \underline{place} | is \underline{famous} | in the 'U.S.\underline{A}.? (*Sunshine 6*)
- Do you 'have ↗ any ↗ famous /food | in your /country?² (*Sunshine 6*)
- It's a tra'ditional \underline{toy} | in Ja\underline{pan}. (*Sky 6*)
- It's a tra'ditional \underline{dish} | in Ja\underline{pan}. (*Sky 6*)
- \underline{V}Emily, | 'what T\underline{V} ·program | do \underline{you} 'usually \underline{watch} | on \underline{weekends}? (*Horizon 6*)

- So 'wool from Au\stralia | is 'very \famous | in the \world. (*Horizon 6*)

They can be read more naturally as:

- 'What 'place is \famous in the U.S. ·A.?
- Do you 'have any 'famous /\food in your ·country?
- It's a tra'ditional \toy in Ja·pan.
- It's a tra'ditional \dish in Ja·pan.
- \Emily, | 'what T\V ·program do you ·usually ·watch on ·weekends?
- So 'wool from Au\stralia | is 'very \famous in the ·world.

In addition to this, as shown in the next section, the same type of sentence is read with different method of tonality, such as 'What club do you want to join?', 'What event | do you want to enjoy?' and 'What subject | do you want | to study hard?' for no specific reasons.

In a sense, it is understandable to read slowly and divide some sentences into more tone-units than native speakers normally do for the sake of 6th graders who are in the second year of learning English as an official subject. However, it is educationally beneficial to present them with models which are much closer to the way native speakers normally speak in their daily life so that they can easily comprehend English spoken at a normal speed as they learn English further.³

4. Tonicity

According to Cruttenden (1997), in an utterance such as 'Which course did you take?', where an adjectival wh word functions as the object of the verb, the tonic syllable falls on the object noun following the adjectival wh word, as in 'Which \course did you ·take?' However, there are only a few examples which agree with this rule in these textbooks, such as 'What \sports do you ·like?' (*Sunshine 6*)⁴, and 'What \club do you ·want to ·join?' (*Sky 6*). No such example is found in *Horizon 6*.

In these textbooks, this type of utterance is mostly divided into two tone-units,⁵ with a boundary after the object noun following the adjectival wh word, as in 'What \club | do you 'want to \join?' (*Sunshine 6*), 'What e\vent

| do you 'want to en\joy?' (*Sunshine 6*), 'What \animal | do you 'want to \have?' (*Sky 6*), and 'What school e\vent | do you 'want to en\joy?' (*Horizon 6*). When an adverb comes at the end of such an utterance, it becomes the tonic syllable, as in 'What \subject | do you 'want to 'study \hard?' (*Sunshine 6*). The object noun following the adjectival wh word is read as a fall-rise as well as a fall. The fall-rise may topicalize this noun more clearly and signal better that the utterance has not finished there. There are cases in which such utterances are divided into three tone-units, as in 'What \subject | do you \want | to 'study \hard?' (*Sunshine 6*) and 'What \anime | did \you ·watch | 'last \week?' (*Sky 6*). In the second tone-unit of the latter example, 'you' becomes the tonic syllable even though this is spoken in a non-contrastive context, as in 'Look at this graph. We asked the students in our class, "What anime did you watch last week?"' It is more natural to highlight 'watch' rather than 'you'. However, it sounds more natural if this is read with one tone-unit, placing the tonic syllable on the stressed syllable of 'anime', as in 'What \anime did you ·watch last ·week?'⁶

When a wh word is not followed by a noun, as in 'What do you do?', the sentence-final verb becomes the tonic syllable, as in 'What do you \do?' In the following dialogue, however, which is taken from *Horizon 6*, 'Where do sea turtles live?', which is shown with a wavy underline, is read as 'Where do \sea turtles ·live?'

E: Hiroshi, do you like animals?

H: Yes, I do.

E: Look at this picture. We can see a lot of sea animals.

H: Yes. I can see a sea turtle here.

E: It's cute!

H: The sea is clean and beautiful.

E: That's right.

H: Emily, I have an idea.

E: What?

H: Let's play a quiz game.

E: OK. Sounds interesting.

H: Great. First question. Where do sea turtles live?

E: I got it. That's easy. Sea turtles live in the sea.

H: Good job. Second question. What do sea turtles eat?

As understood from the dialogue, there is no special reason why ‘sea turtles’ is highlighted. This is the first question, in which the default intonation pattern is normally used⁷, even though this may be because it appears in the first question about different kinds of sea animals, and ‘sea turtles’ have already been mentioned before. So, this is not an appropriate context for contrastive focus to be applied. ‘Where do ‘sea turtles \u0026live?’ sounds more natural. In fact, on a different page where this sentence is written out of context, it is read with this default intonation pattern. On the other hand, the second question ‘What do sea turtles eat?’, which is also shown with a wavy underline, is read as ‘What do ‘sea turtles \u0026eat?’ Superficially this is the default intonation pattern, but it reflects contrastive focus between ‘live’ and ‘eat’. Later in this dialogue, Emily asks Hiroshi similar two questions ‘Where do eagles live?’ and ‘Where do lions live?’. In these two questions, ‘eagles’ and ‘lions’ are highlighted as contrastive focus in comparison with ‘sea turtles’. In a similar dialogue, which is divided into four small scenes, Emily and Hiroshi discuss where sea turtles, lions, eagles and frogs live and what they eat. They use the same intonation pattern as in the above dialogue. In the first question ‘Where do sea lions live?’, the tonic syllable is located on ‘sea’, but it should be placed on ‘live’.⁸ Another misleading intonation pattern is found in ‘What do frogs eat?’ The tonic syllable should be placed on ‘eat’ because this question comes after ‘Where do frogs live?’. There is no need to highlight ‘frogs’ again.

A wh word followed by a noun can also be accompanied by a be verb, as in ‘What prefecture is this?’ (*Sky 6*). This question is asked nine times on two continuous pages, but three intonation patterns are used as follows:

- Pattern 1: ‘What ↗prefecture is \u0026this?’ (4 times)
- Pattern 2: ‘What \u0026prefecture is :this?’ (3 times)
- Pattern 3: ‘What ↘ ↗prefecture is \u0026this?’ (2 times)

In this sentence, ‘this’ becomes the tonic syllable (Patterns 1 and 3) more often than the stressed syllable of ‘prefecture’ (Pattern 2), in six out of nine cases. In Patterns 1 and 3, a moving head is used: a rising head in Pattern 1 and a falling-rising head in Pattern 3. The falling-rising head is less common, but there is no clear tone-unit boundary in

the two examples belonging to Pattern 3, so the first part is not regarded as a separate tone-unit.

What is important here is that this sentence does not seem to have the same intonation pattern as the type of sentence that was discussed above, such as ‘What sports do you like?’ even though both types begin with ‘what + a noun’. The reason lies in the verb used in each type: a main verb⁹ or a be verb. In the former case, these sentence-initial two words function as a direct object of the main verb and in the latter, they work as a subjective complement of the be verb. Sentences belonging to this latter case tend to have the same intonation pattern as sentences such as ‘What is this?’, in which a sentence-initial ‘what’ is directly followed by a be verb. This difference in intonation pattern for sentences beginning with ‘what + a noun’ is thought to be logical because in a context where a sentence such as ‘What prefecture is this?’ or ‘What is this?’ is asked, there will probably be focused items in front of speakers and the questioner may point at a specific item that he/she has chosen. So, in a context where ‘What prefecture is this?’ is asked, there will probably be a map of Japan in front of the speakers, and ‘prefecture’ itself is not new information between them and is deaccented. Instead, ‘this’ becomes the tonic syllable (Patterns 1 and 3). However, when this question is asked many times, the stressed syllable of ‘prefecture’ can also be tonic because of contrastive focus (Pattern 2). This can be the main reason why two different tonic patterns are used to read this sentence. However, these three types of reading can be simplified for 6th graders to aid the learning of the main features of English intonation. Only Pattern 1 serves the purpose adequately, but it may be much easier to use static pitch, rather than this moving pitch. A high head is a good candidate here, as in ‘What ‘prefecture is \u0026this?’ The use of Pattern 2 is not necessarily required if it is used at random as found in the current reading.

There are some examples whose tonicity does not seem appropriate. In *Sunshine 6*, ‘You can see beautiful things in the night sky.’ is read as ‘You can ‘see ‘beautiful \u0026things in the night ‘sky’. However, words like ‘things’ are regarded as empty words and do not normally become the tonic syllable.¹⁰ It is better to read this as ‘You can see \u0026beautiful things in the night ‘sky’. Another example

from *Sunshine 6* is ‘Long time no see’. This is read by two speakers in a dialogue. The first speaker places the tonic syllable on ‘see’, which is the normal intonation pattern in daily greetings. However, the second speaker puts it on ‘no’. This speaker tries to avoid highlighting the same words again, but this usage is unnatural and should be replaced with the normal pattern. In *Sky 6*, ‘Who am I?’ is read as ‘\Who am ·I?’ and ‘Who \am ·I?’ in the same context, but the latter intonation pattern is appropriate.

There are cases in which contrastive focus is properly applied. In a dialogue (*Sunshine 6*) ‘What ‘food is \famous | in the ‘U.S.\A.?’ – ‘\Hot dogs. They are de\licious. ‘What \food is ·famous | in \Thailand?’’, the word ‘famous’ spoken by the second speaker is deaccented as shared information and ‘food’ is accented as focused information. In the utterance (*Horizon 6*) ‘We have a ‘summer /un\iform | and a \win\ter ·uniform’, the default stress pattern is not used for ‘winter uniform’. In the dialogue (*Horizon 6*) ‘In \Swit\zerland, | we ‘use ‘four \lan\guages.’ – ‘Four /lan\guages? | ‘What ‘languages do you \spea\k?’’, the second speaker deaccents ‘languages’ as old information. This type of deaccenting may not be easy to use spontaneously in an appropriate manner, but these examples will help students to be aware of the flexible use of tonicity depending on the context.

5. Stress pattern

Intonation, especially tonicity, is closely related to the stress pattern of compounds and phrases because accent is applied to a stressed syllable. Basically, the stress pattern is used properly in the textbooks, but there are cases in which its use is not consistent even when contrastive focus is not applied. In *Sunshine 6*, ‘Milky Way’ is read as both ‘Milky Way’ and ‘Milky Way’ on the same page. Also, ‘school trip’¹¹ appears many times, but it is read as both ‘school trip’ and ‘school trip’. The incorrect stress pattern is found in ‘brass band’ and ‘the U.K.’ In *Sky 6*¹², ‘school camp’ is read as both ‘school camp’ and ‘school camp’. Also, ‘school marathon’ is read as both ‘school marathon’ and ‘school marathon’. In *Horizon 6*, ‘school trip’ is read as both ‘school trip’ and ‘school trip’.

There are also cases in which the standard pattern is not used. In *Sky 6*, ‘Italian food’, whose standard stress

pattern is ‘Italian food’ as a noun phrase, is read as ‘Italian food’ in a non-contrastive context. In the case of ‘Japanese food’ and ‘Japanese *anime*’, the main stress falls on the second word just like ‘Italian food’, but no stress shift is used in ‘Japanese’ and they are read as ‘Japa’nese food’ and ‘Japa’nese *anime*’. It is true that some native speakers pronounce them in this way, but it is educationally desirable to read ‘Japanese’ by moving the main stress to the first syllable to maintain good rhythm of English as a stress-timed language. In *Horizon 6*, ‘the Eiffel Tower’ and ‘*miso* soup’ are read as ‘the Eiffel Tower’ and ‘miso soup’.

In the following dialogue (*Horizon 6*), the stress pattern of ‘X curry’ is properly used:

L: \Sakura, | ‘what did you ‘eat for \din\ner ·last ·night?

S: I ate ‘curry and \ri\ce.

L: ‘What \kin\?

S: \Beef curry, | my \fa\vorite.

L: ‘Oh, /re\ally? Do ‘you usually ‘eat beef ‘curry at /ho\me? \So\metimes | I \ea\t beef ·curry. But I ‘usually eat \po\rk curry.

The default stress pattern of ‘X curry’ is ‘X curry’. In S’s second utterance, however, ‘beef’ is read as the tonic syllable to answer the question ‘What kind (of curry)?’ In L’s third utterance, this word is shared information, so it is deaccented, but when he mentions ‘pork curry’, ‘pork’ is the focused word and becomes the tonic syllable. It may not be easy to teach 6th graders the mechanism of the stress pattern, but they should be encouraged to imitate the model intonation as accurately as possible so that they can be aware of this important feature of English intonation. That is why it is essential for those involved in making textbooks of this kind to present learners with the best possible intonation patterns.

6. Tone for Listing

When a list of items is spoken, the general rule is that all items are spoken with a rise before the last item, which is spoken with a fall. This rule is explained in books on phonetics or teaching English, such as Roach (2009) and Rogerson-Revel (2011), and this intonation pattern is also

described in the *Course of Study* (MEXT 2017) by using arrows. A good example is found in *Sky 6*, where a waiter confirms the food ordered by customers, by saying, ‘O/K, | 'one /steak, | 'one spa/ghetti, | 'one /orange juice, | 'one /tea, | 'one /ice cream, | 'and 'one \pudding.’

As pointed out in Yuzawa (2022), however, this rule is not always observed. Some of such examples found in the three textbooks are¹³:

1. (↘ You can 'see \three big ·stars | in the 'summer night \sky.¹⁴) They are \Vega, | \Deneb, | and \Al-tair. (*Sunshine 6*)
2. (You can 'join 'interesting club ac\tivities.) The 'dance /team, | the \science club, | the \basketball team, | the ca\lligraphy club, | the \badminton team, | the 'track and \field team, | the \baseball team, | the \tennis team, | the \kendo team, | the com\puter club, | the \softball team, | the \volleyball team, | the 'brass \band, | the \chorus, | the \soccer team, | and the \newspaper club. (*Sunshine 6*)
3. In 'this \place, | we can 'see 'many >animals, | >elephants, | >tigers, | and \monkeys. (*Sky 6*)
4. 'This 'place has 'many ex'citing \rides, | for e/xample, | a \roller ·coaster, | \tea cups, | and a \Ferris wheel. (*Sky 6*)
5. (In 'this /place, | we can 'learn about \sea ·animals.) ‘We can see \fish, | \sea otters, | and \dolphins ·here.’ (*Sky 6*)
6. I can 'speak \English | and Chi\nese. (*Horizon 6*)
7. We 'all 'like \singing | and \eating. (*Horizon 6*)
8. The 'salmon was from \Norway, | the 'carrots were from \Hokkaido, | the 'onions from 'Awaji-\shima, | and the 'eggplants from \Kochi. (*Horizon 6*)

In the case of the first example, the immediate utterance delimits the number of stars under discussion. This delimitation may influence the continuous use of a fall for the three items, but this explanation does not work in the fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth examples. It may be inferred, however, that the definiteness that a fall can signal¹⁵ makes the speaker more confident in the items he/she

presents. However, the use of a fall should be discouraged.

As for the second example, instead of a rise, a fall-rise is basically used. This use of a fall-rise is also common in real communication because the final pitch movement is a rise, which can also imply that something more is to follow. This use of a fall-rise is noticed in the eighth example, where the third item ‘Awaji-shima’ is read with this tone to signal to the hearer that the following item is the last item. However, it may be educationally more desirable to use a rise in textbooks targeted at beginners like Japanese 6th graders. The basic stress pattern of ‘the A club’ and ‘the B team’ is ‘the A club’ and ‘the B team’, respectively, as the first two items show (‘the dance team’ and ‘the science club’), but contrastive focus shifts the tonicity of ‘the B team’ to ‘the B team’.

In the case of the third example, instead of a rise or a fall-rise, a level is used. It is true that this tone is also used in this way in real communication, but it should be replaced with a rise in these textbooks.

7. Others

There are many cases in which the sentence-initial pronoun is pronounced with a higher pitch level than is necessary. Some examples are:

- ↘ I get 'up at \seven. (*Sunshine 6*)
- ↘ I 'want to be a \baseball ·player. (*Sunshine 6*)
- ↘ I 'went to the \mountains | with my 'family 'last \Sunday. (*Sky 6*)
- ↘ I'm 'good at 'playing the pi\ano. (*Sky 6*)
- ↘ I 'want to 'join the hai\ku club.¹⁶ (*Horizon 6*)
- ↘ I 'want to en'joy \sports ·day. (*Horizon 6*)

In many cases, such sentence-initial pronouns are pronounced with a lower pitch level than the following verb. In fact, the author notes from his teaching experience that many Japanese university students tend to pronounce such pronouns with a higher pitch level than is necessary. This higher pitch is likely to be perceived as contrastive focus by the hearer by mistake.

In teaching intonation, arrows are generally used to make it easier for learners to understand. In *Sunshine 6*, for example, the following examples are given:

Do you like soccer? (↗)

– Yes, I do. (↘)

What do you do now? (↘)

– I'm a doctor. (↘)

This diagram is not good enough not only because it is not clear where each of these arrows start and but also because the way ‘Yes, I do.’ is read shows that there is only one fall, not two. Immediately above this, there is a section where sentence stress is displayed, as follows:

↗ ↗ ↗
Where do you want to go?

↗ ↗ ↗
– I want to go to India.

Once sentence stress is taught, it would make sense pedagogically to teach intonation with the knowledge of sentence stress. An easy way of indicating both sentence stress and intonation of these three dialogues may be like the following:

Do you 'like ↗ soccer?

– ↘ Yes, I ↘ do.

'What do you ↘ do now?

– I'm a ↘ doctor.

'Where do you 'want to ↘ go?

– I 'want to 'go to ↘ India.

This is one of the simplest ways of using the tonetic stress marks. Stressed syllables are shown with the superscript vertical line. Tones are shown with arrows. What is important is to place the arrow before the accented syllable, not after. This position is visually easy to process because it matches the direction of reading, which is from left to right.

In *Horizon 6*, ‘Where is the pork from?’ is read as ‘Where is the 'pork ↘from?’ in two instances. In the first instance, this utterance is used in a dialogue in which ‘pork curry’ is discussed. Therefore, ‘pork’ is not new informa-

tion and deaccented, and as a result, this intonation pattern is possible. In the second instance, this sentence is taken out of the context. In this case, it should be read as ‘Where is the ↘pork from?’ These two different intonation patterns may confuse students, but it is important to use the most appropriate intonation pattern in any context.

Finally, there are some problems with the pronunciation of segments, and they should be corrected in the next edition of the textbooks. In *Sunshine 6*, the vowel of ‘book’ sounds like /ʌ/. The word final /l/ of ‘school’ is realised as /w/. This /l/-vocalisation is used by some native speakers, but the standard pronunciation is more preferable. The word-final /t/ of ‘want’ in ‘want to’ is pronounced as a clear plosive or as an unreleased stop with a slight pause, but the use of deletion sounds more natural. Similarly, in *Sky 6*, the /t/ of ‘went’ in ‘went to’ is clearly pronounced. In *Horizon 6*, the first syllable of ‘tournament’ is pronounced as /tɔ:r/. The speaker is supposed to be a Chinese student in the textbook, but either /tɜ:/ or /tʊr/ is recommended. The former is prioritised in Jones et al. (2011) and the second in Wells (2008) as American English pronunciation. ‘Picture’ is pronounced as /pɪkʃə/ by deleting /t/. The second /t/ in ‘tourists’ is deleted. In the last two cases, the recorded sounds may not sound unnatural to some native speakers, but in this kind of recording, the pronunciation transcribed in dictionaries, especially pronunciation dictionaries, should be used.

8. Conclusion

Japan introduced the teaching of English as an official subject from Grade 5 in 2021. To make this new teaching system successful, it is important to examine the MEXT-authorised textbooks in detail, especially accompanying audio materials because they are the major source of English sounds which elementary school students use in their learning. Seven Japanese publishing companies published English textbooks for 5th and 6th graders. In this paper, three textbooks for 6th graders were selected (*Junior Sunshine 6* by Kairyudo, *Blue Sky Elementary 6* by Keirinkan and *New Horizon Elementary English Course 6* by Tokyo Shoseki) and sounds recorded in their accompanying CDs were examined, focusing on intonation, under the following items: (1) tonality, (2) tonicity, (3) stress pattern, (4)

tone for listing and (5) others. The following problems are found:

First, utterances are divided into more tone-units than are necessary. This may be related to the slow speech rate that is basically adopted in these textbooks. The slow speech rate may help students to comprehend recorded spoken English better, but as a result, recorded speech sounds patchy and fragmented. People normally speak much faster than the model presented in these textbooks and thereby sound changes occur in connected speech. To make recordings a little more challenging and stimulating to the students, making a faster version as well as a slower version could be a solution.

Second, contrastive focus is used where the default intonation pattern is preferred. Tonicity is an important element in speech to make the speaker's main point clear. When there is no special reason for using unmarked intonation patterns, the default pattern should be used. However, there are cases in which contrastive focus is used when it is not necessary.

Third, more than one intonation pattern is used for the same type of utterance. In teaching intonation, the default patterns should be used extensively. At the same time, it is also educationally meaningful to teach different patterns because of contrastive focus. However, there are cases in which contrastive focus is used at random. If there is no reason for using contrastive focus, it is better to focus on the unmarked pattern.

Fourth, the tonic syllable is misplaced. The proper use of this syllable is important in communication to convey the speaker's intention accurately. There are cases in which this syllable is placed on an obviously wrong syllable. Such misreading should be avoided.

Fifth, the stress pattern is not consistent, and syllables are not stressed properly. Basically, both compounds and phrases have fixed stress patterns, but there are cases in which the same such compounds and phrases are not stressed in the same way in a non-contrastive context. There are also cases in which some of them have incorrect stress patterns. Consistent stress patterns should be used correctly in non-contrastive contexts. Also, contrastive focus should be used properly when it is necessary.

Sixth, intonation for listing does not follow the gen-

eral rule. Not all native speakers are strict in the use of the general rule of intonation, but for 6th graders, who are in the second year of learning English in school, the prescriptive pattern should be given. As for tone, the only alternative tone in listing should be a fall-rise in place of a rise. However, the use of a rise should be recommended.

Seventh, the sentence-initial pronoun is highlighted more than necessary. Such pronouns are usually spoken in a lower pitch level than the following vowel, but there are cases in which they are pronounced much higher than are necessary. Japanese students, including university students, tend to pronounce these sentence-initial pronouns in a high pitch level, especially in 'I think'. This type of 'I think' sounds like 'Whatever others may say, I have different ideas.' even though this is not the speaker's intention.

Eighth, explanatory figures for intonation are not satisfactory. In Japan, it seems that sentence stress and intonation are taught separately by using different figures, but they are inseparable. Once students have learned sentence stress, it is educationally desirable to incorporate this knowledge into the figure explaining intonation. A simplified version of the tonetic stress marks is one of the best ways of describing intonation for teaching/learning purposes.

To avoid the problems detailed above, pre-recording discussion should be conducted thoroughly among textbook editors about various phonetic matters to create the best possible audio materials, and recording should be done carefully with attentive monitoring.

This paper has analysed three textbooks for 6th graders, but there are four other textbooks for these students that are published by different publishing companies. A study of them will be conducted shortly. In addition, how the actual teaching is conducted in school and the potential problems that teachers may face will also be discussed as part of this line of research.

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² The three separate continuous rising pitch forms within a

- tone-unit, the first two being interpreted as a rising head, also disrupt the natural flow of speech.
- ³ Ideally, students should continue to learn English till they can understand films without subtitles in the future, for example, till they graduate from university. In a way, films are more difficult to understand than news broadcast because of the fast speech rate and colloquial expressions used in them.
- ⁴ On another page of *Sunshine 6*, ‘What sport do you play?’ is read with the tonic syllable placed on ‘play’ in a context where there is no contrastive focus. Also, in a monologue from this textbook, ‘Welcome to Japan! What Japanese food do you like?’, ‘like’ is read as the tonic syllable, but ‘food’ should be the tonic syllable because there is no special context for ‘like’ to be accented.
- ⁵ This is a topic related to tonality, but since tonicity is also discussed, this paragraph and the following paragraph are included in this section.
- ⁶ When addressees are contrasted, it is natural that contrastive focus should override the default stress pattern. A good example is found in *Sunshine 6*, where one speaker asks, ‘What sports do you like?’ and toward the end of the dialogue, the second speaker asks, ‘What sports do you want to play?’
- ⁷ This intonation pattern may be used because it appears in the first question of a stand-alone quiz about different kinds of sea animals, but in this context, the default intonation pattern should be used for 6th graders to learn.
- ⁸ If they have decided to talk about more than one topic before they start this dialogue, then contrastive focus is also possible from the first topic. Judging from the possible difficulties in this use, however, it should be learned at least in junior high school.
- ⁹ It is also termed as a lexical verb or a principal verb.
- ¹⁰ See Wells (2006) for more details.
- ¹¹ ‘School lunch’ and ‘school life’ are read by highlighting the second word.
- ¹² ‘School mascot’ and ‘school trip’ are read by highlighting the second word, while ‘school play’ is read by highlighting the first word.
- ¹³ An utterance, which is read immediately before the utterance in question, is inserted within the parentheses to show the context when necessary.
- ¹⁴ The sentence-initial ‘you’ is read with a high falling pitch movement, which sounds almost accented, but this style of reading should be prohibited if there is no specific reason to do so. This problem is discussed in Section 7.
- ¹⁵ See Wells (2006) for more details.
- ¹⁶ ‘Haiku’ is pronounced by stressing the second syllable, but the primary stress should fall on the first syllable in this word.

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A Study of Intonation Used in the Audio Materials for Three English Textbooks Aimed at Japanese 6th Graders

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Abstract

At the end of the academic year of 2022, elementary school students who are now learning English as an official school subject in Japan are going to graduate for the first time. To begin an investigation of how English is taught in elementary school and to determine whether there are any problems with teaching English sounds, Yuzawa (2022) examined sound features recorded on accompanying CDs of two selected English textbooks targeted at Japanese 5th graders and found various features including problems. This paper, as a continuation of this study, examined sound features, focusing on intonation, under the following items: (1) tonality, (2) tonicity, (3) stress pattern, (4) tone for listing and (5) others. Data were collected from accompanying CDs of three English textbooks which are targeted at 6th graders. Eight problems were found, and suggestions were made to each of them. One of the problems is that utterances are divided into more tone-units than are necessary. This may be because of the slow speech rate. The slow speech rate may be helpful for students to comprehend recorded spoken English better, but it makes the recording sound patchy and fragmented. Recordings that are a little more challenging for the students are recommended.

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