

# AN ANALYSIS OF THE INTONATION OF 'SABRINA' BY D. BOLINGER'S PROFILES (3)

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In the previous issues of the *Memoirs of Beppu University* we have examined utterance (1) through utterance (36) of a dialogue between David Larrabee and Sabrina Fairchild from the 1954 American movie 'Sabrina.' In the present paper we will begin with utterance (37) of the dialogue, analyzing the intonations for their forms and meanings by means of Dwight Bolinger's profiles.

(37) David:  $I \quad p \acute{a}_{s_s}$  (Profile A)

(38) Sabrina:  $\acute{A}u$  tomobiles ! (Profile A)

Utterance (37) as is spoken by David may be analyzed as an A profile with an accent on *pass* approached from above, i.e. the higher-pitched syllable *I*. If it is the case that there is another accent given to the syllable *I*, then the utterance should be analyzed as a B+A contour. But even so, since the A starts lower than the tail of the B, the B and the A make a tightly connected segment, and this tightly connected B+A segment can be viewed, in effect, as a single A.<sup>1</sup> As a variation of this contour the lower-pitched A could be raised above the B, but it would then show greater tension,<sup>2</sup> that the speaker is 'keyed-up,'<sup>3</sup> and it would not make an appropriate contour to be used here.

Utterance (37) could have, in addition to the possibility as a contour mentioned above, the following three variations as single profiles: (a) a form in which the accent is approached from below, (b) a form in which an accent falls on *I* rather than on *pass*, and (c) a form in which the syllable *pass* is given the quality of a C rather than an A as it is pronounced with more flatness near creak.

(a)  $I \quad p \acute{a}_{s_s}$   
(Profile A)

(b)  $\acute{I} \quad p a_{s_s}$   
(Profile A)

(c)  $I \quad p \acute{a}_{s_s}$   
(Profile C)

Of the three forms, (a) would sound that the speaker has a great eagerness and willingness to do the passing and therefore would not be an appropriate form to be used here. Since (b) with an accent on *I* would sound either that too much power is given to the whole utterance or that the speaker is singled out in a special contrastive way with someone else, it would not be appropriate, either. And (c), especially when the syllable *pass* is reduced to genuine flatness or monotone, would sound that the speaker is giving up although he is not very happy about it. There would be ‘sadness’ or ‘discouragement.’<sup>4</sup>

The meaning of utterance (37) becomes clearer if we compare (37) with (c). The semantic difference between (37) and (c) is that (c) with a C profile suggests a certain amount of discontentment on the part of the speaker, while (37) with an A profile is basically a simple announcement by the speaker that he will pass.

Utterance (38) as is spoken by Sabrina is an A profile with an accent on *Au-*. This is ‘a matter-of-fact giving of information’ or ‘an unemphatic passing of information.’<sup>5</sup> This becomes evident when we compare it with an alternative form that gives two accents to the two syllables *Au-* and *-biles* of this double-accent word to make a B+A contour. Especially when the A starts higher than the tail of the B of this contour, the speaker is ‘keyed-up,’<sup>6</sup> and the utterance would be more emphatic, not just an unemphatic passing of information.

(39) David: Óh<sup>h</sup>? Chrýs  
le<sub>r</sub>?

Yes—

(40) Sabrina: Chrýsle<sup>r</sup> and Fó<sup>r</sup>d and Géneral Mó<sup>t</sup>ors and Ró<sup>l</sup>ls-Ró<sup>y</sup>ce—

The interjection *Oh?* in utterance (39) is a B profile. Bolinger says that when *oh* is given a B profile, “it becomes a question and then it does hew to the fact, expecting an affirmative response and an explanation,” citing the following example:

Ethel turned down the job. — Oh? —Yes, she was already booked up solid.<sup>7</sup>

In utterance (39), *Oh?* has the same characteristic of a question but it is a confirmation as well, since it is a question directed to the speaker himself and the answer is to be given by David himself, conforming to Sabrina’s information that her father is in the automobile business. The response actually given by David is *Chrysler*, which is carried on an A profile as is expected.

The profiles used for utterance (40) are listed below under their respective accented syllables:

*Yes, Chrysler and Ford and General Motors and Rolls-Royce—*  
                   C                  B                  B                  B                  B          B

This is a list of the names of four car makers. The first one is given a C profile, while the rest are given a B profile or a B+B contour. Is there a difference between the first one and the other three? Examining their forms first, the first one *Chrysler* is different from the rest in that it is approached from above, i.e. the syllable *Yes* is higher-pitched, while the other three are all approached from below, i.e. the syllable *and* is lower than the following accented syllables. Accordingly the first one is a C while the rest are all B's.

Is the difference in forms paralleled by a difference in meaning? Of the four car makers, only *Chrysler* has been mentioned previously by David, so that it is not a newly introduced item. It is not that a C can not be used to bring in new information. "Profile C can be used, as A is, to bring in new information, but usually not *as* new information. That is, it suggests familiarity of some sort or other."<sup>8</sup> In other words, the C here is appropriate because it implies 'foreknowledge.'<sup>9</sup> In this particular utterance, it may have such implications as 'You mentioned it yourself, so I see you already have that knowledge' or 'You're right in mentioning Chrysler,' which can also be interpreted as 'reassuring approval,' another implication that Bolinger describes for a C.<sup>10</sup>

The remaining three items *Ford*, *General Motors*, and *Rolls-Royce* have either a B or a B+B. The B+B contours are used for unity of the compounds and they are equivalent to single B's. So the sequence of five B's after the C in utterance (40) is virtually a succession of three single B's on three coordinated items, the second and fourth B's being employed for their tying-in effects<sup>11</sup> with the third and fifth B's, respectively. Concerning the use of a succession of B's Bolinger states: "The multiple B's are most conspicuous in successions of coordinated elements, typically series."<sup>12</sup> To mention one minor point, the last item *Rolls - Royce* in the series has a dropback between the two B's that make up the compound. Bolinger says "A succession of monosyllabic B's will tend to have intrasyllabic dropbacks because of the need to reset for height."<sup>13</sup>

- (41) David: Is your           fáther           Bóard           réctors           álI those cómpaniēs?  
                   on the           of Di           of
- (42) Sabrina: Well you           míght sáy           rúns  
                   he           thínɡ<sup>s</sup>.

In utterance (41) we see the use of B's for a question. Bolinger says, "Successions of B

profiles are common, especially on questions, and as the principal motion is in a single direction—up—some accommodation in the form of a dropback is often necessary.” In this utterance there are three dropbacks, so no additional height need be gained in the second B on *Board* or in the third B on *directors* or in the fourth B on *all*, but the fifth B on *companies* carries the motion up.<sup>15</sup>

Before analyzing the intonation of utterance (42) we will first examine the lexical meaning of *well* as is used in utterance (42). Bolinger lists 11 different meanings of *well* and we will find that the fifth on the list, namely, ‘extenuation’<sup>16</sup> fits in with utterance (42), where Sabrina implies that David will find she is not entirely wrong if David could grasp the real sense of her words. In accordance with Bolinger’s description that “the usual intonation is B+AC, common in expressions of diffidence (‘will what I am saying be accepted?’),”<sup>17</sup> utterance (42) has basically the same B+AC. It has nearly the same shape as the utterance Bolinger illustrates:

You didn’t wash the car!—Well, I put out the garbage. (Wasn’t that enough?)

Well I put out the garbage. <sup>gar</sup> (B+AC)  
<sup>18</sup>

In both utterances, *well* is unaccented and it forms part of the ground for the following B.<sup>19</sup> The only minor difference is that in utterance (42) both of the two words *run* and *things* seem to be accented, so that the original AC part is replaced by two profiles A+C. Bolinger admits that there are pairings that reveal a close kinship between AC and A+C.<sup>20</sup>

(43) David: I bet my brother Linus knows him.

(44) Sabrina: He certainly does. As a matter of fact, they quite often drive →

into town together.

(45) David: They doo?

Utterance (43) is A+A+A+A. The third A is given the highest pitch since this carries the most important message. The first sentence of utterance (44) *He certainly does* is A+AC with accents on *cer-* and *does*. Concerning the use of AC, Bolinger states: "The inconclusiveness of the AC. . . leaves it up to the hearer to draw his own conclusions."<sup>21</sup> Here Sabrina does not conclude her statement with finality employing an A, but leaves it up to David to draw his own conclusions. In other words, Sabrina suggests that David could easily get access to his brother to make sure.

The second sentence of utterance (44) *As a matter of fact, they quite often drive into town together* may be analyzed as A+B+B+B+CA. The phrase *As a matter of fact* has A+B, with accents on *mat-* and *fact*, and the B at the end links this phrase to the following main sentence *they quite often drive into town together*. Concerning this use of B Bolinger states:

Probably the most frequent linkup is between a B and any other following profile, since B by definition does not contain any downmotion steeper than a tilt, and generally rises. Example of B+B+A:

To <sup>mó</sup>rro<sup>w</sup> I'm <sup>stá</sup>yíng <sup>hó</sup>m<sup>e</sup>. <sup>22</sup>

The main part of the second sentence of utterance (44) *they quite often drive into town together* has accents on *quite*, *drive* and *town* carried on a B+B+CA contour. There is no dropback between the two B's so that the second B is on a higher pitch than the first. The utterance ends with a CA profile. "CA is an intensification of A, common in emphatic discourse"<sup>23</sup> and this applies to utterance (44) making it an emphatic statement. The CA of this utterance also "occurs as the final turn in a conversation."<sup>24</sup> Thus Sabrina does not reply to David's question *They do?* which follows. The CA gives an 'I'm telling you this because I am quite sure about it, so you need not ask me any further question concerning this matter' nuance.

Given utterance (44) with CA by Sabrina, utterance (45) is not so much a question that expects an answer as a signal of agreement or acceptance. And the high pitch of B at the end is to be understood as 'keyed-upness' of the speaker.

(46) Sabrina: <sup>Straí</sup>ght <sup>throú</sup>gh  
to the ga , <sup>plé</sup>ase.  
rage,

Utterance (46) consists of a B+B+C contour with accents on *straight*, *through*, and *-rage* for the main part of the utterance which is a direction, and a B at the end for the accented tag *please*. The accented syllable *-rage* of *garage* is somewhat prolonged and the

quality of a monotone may be noticeable. According to Bolinger a B+C downskip with monotone suggests ‘indifference’<sup>25</sup> and it “is encountered on utterances where the speaker assumes imperturbability.”<sup>26</sup> Sabrina apparently assumes calmness in contrast with David’s perturbability, and she is being indifferent by not responding to David’s utterance above. The tension of the final pitch of the B on *please* “registers as a particular degree of emotion under control,”<sup>27</sup> Sabrina being quite imperturbable and joyfully concerned only with being brought home.

(47) David: I feel so stupid I could kill myself.

(48) Sabrina: You’ll be all right in a minute. Here we are.

Utterance (47) is an A+A+A contour with accents on *feel*, *stu-* and *kill*, and it has the shape of a typical “unmarked” utterance. Like many such utterances, the last accent is the most important having the status of a rhematic accent.<sup>28</sup>

The first sentence of utterance (48) *You’ll be all right in a minute* is A+AC. Among the various uses of AC, Bolinger lists ‘emphasis’ including ironic emphasis, and ‘admonition.’<sup>29</sup> The second sentence *Here we are* has a C+A contour, with accents on *here* and *are*. To quote Bolinger regarding this contour, “the ultimate effect is that of the A: the speaker starts out with restraint but his feelings get the better of him and he explodes an A.”<sup>30</sup>

(49) David: look— not pull old line “Hav<sup>en</sup>’t we met →  
 Now I’m just ing that of we  
 some You  
 where be f<sup>o</sup>r<sup>e</sup>?” We h<sup>a</sup>v<sup>e</sup> met some... don’t live h<sup>e</sup>re?  
 Y<sup>és</sup>,

(50) Sabrina: I d<sup>o</sup>’o.

The first sentence of utterance (49) *Now look, I’m not just pulling that old line of “Haven’t we met somewhere before?”* is not ambiguous as to the placement of accents. The speaker is obviously sure where to place accents and the hearer can identify them. The

accents are on *look*, *not*, *pull* -, *old*, *line*, *have*, *met*, *some*-, and *-fore*. But “ambiguity is found between whether to interpret a profile as a B or an A.”<sup>31</sup> Thus with the given configuration above, one cannot tell whether to regard *look* as A or as B. As A, it relies on the following syllable *I’m* for the downskip required by A. But that fall in pitch could as readily be a dropback from a B.<sup>32</sup> With *old* there is no such ambiguity; the profile is B, since it is closely linked with *line* which follows. The sentence ends with *before*, which is unambiguously an A profile, since it is an assertion with finality.

The second sentence *We have met some...* is cut short when David finds something else to say. This is an A profile with an ‘accent of power’ or ‘accent-for-affirmation’<sup>33</sup> on *have*. The use of an ‘accent of power’ makes the whole sentence emphatic although the tail of the A has a truncated fall<sup>34</sup> due to its being cut short.

The third sentence of utterance (49) *You don’t live here* could be A+C, but “The C of the A+C may develop an extra B profile on the upglide.”<sup>35</sup> Thus *here* is given an independent B profile and is “accented by length and intensity as well as by configuration [i.e. by pitch]”, and the “implication: it has not been mentioned before”<sup>36</sup> becomes clearer by this addition of a B profile. That is to say, David emphasizes that it is like a new information to him since he never thought that Sabrina lives there.

Utterance (50) *Yes, I do* may be analyzed as B+C or as A+C, depending on how you consider the unstressed syllable *I* (i.e. whether it is a dropback from a B or a downskip required by A). It is probably better to consider it as B+C, since among the examples of utterances given by Bolinger we find *No you don’t* analyzed as having B+C, where the speaker assumes imperturbability.<sup>37</sup>

(51) David:             $\overset{\prime}{I}$  live h $\overset{\prime}{e}$ r $\overset{\prime}{e}$ .

(52) Sabrina:        H $\overset{\prime}{i}$ ,            b $\overset{\prime}{o}$ r!  
                               $\overset{\prime}{i}$ ,            n $\overset{\prime}{e}$ igh

Utterance (51) *I live here* may be analyzed as A+A, with accents on *I* and *here*. But since the first A gets the greatest separate attention, the contour may have been reduced to a single A on *I* for sacrifice of an accent to a nearby focal meaning.<sup>38</sup>

In utterance (52) *Hi, neighbor!* the last syllable *-bor*, which is ordinarily unstressed, is given an accent. As a result, the vocative *neighbor*, usually carried on a single C profile, develops an extra B profile so that this utterance as a whole has the contour A+C+B with accents on *Hi*, *neigh-* and *-bor*. We had A+C+B for the the sentence *You don’t live here* of utterance (49) above. In (49) the B had a rising tail, whereas in utterance (52) the B has a level tail. While the rising tail of a B may suggest arousal or enthusiasm, the level tail or monotone “is most appropriate in an ‘I told you so’ sense,” as Bolinger describes with the following example:

You see?<sup>39</sup> [the underscore indicates that it is a monotone]

This concludes an analysis of the intonation of a dialogue from the 1954 American movie 'Sabrina.' The text of the dialogue was taken from Watanabe, Y. et al., *Films and English* (1992) listed in REFERENCES. Intonation transcriptions are mine.

It was an exciting experience to find how the intonations given by William Holden (as David) and by Audrey Hepburn (as Sabrina) fit in closely with Bolinger's descriptions of intonation, which in turn shows that they are not only a great actor and actress but a superb intonologist.

ERRATA TO MEMOIRS OF BEPPU UNIVERSITY, 36(1995)

- p.1. 1.13. wrong: sophisticated woman  
right: sophisticated looking woman
- p.3. 1.9. wrong: made to to stand out  
right: made to stand out
- p.3. 1.22. wrong: I'd like to question you as to *how*.  
right: I'd like to question you as to *who*.

ERRATA TO MEMOIRS OF BEPPU UNIVERSITY, 38(1997)

- p.3. ll.89. wrong: Bolinger says 'it is . . . etc.'<sup>11</sup>  
right: Bolinger says "it is . . . etc."<sup>11</sup>
- p.4. 1.22. wrong: as awhole  
right: as a whole
- p.6. 1.9. wrong: with accents on *trans-* and *por-*.  
right: with accents on *trans-* and *ta-*.
- p.6. 1.16. wrong: It's an interfer<sup>óm</sup>eter.<sup>30</sup>  
right: It's an <sup>í</sup>interfer<sup>óm</sup>eter.<sup>30</sup>

NOTES

1. Dwight L. Bolinger, *Intonation and its Parts* (Stanford U.P., 1986), p.293.
2. Bolinger, *Intonation and its Parts*, p.288.
3. Bolinger, *Intonation and its Parts*, p.48.
4. Bolinger, *Intonation and its Parts*, pp.230-31.
5. Bolinger, *Intonation and its Parts*, p.48.
6. Bolinger, *Intonation and its Parts*, p.48.



7. Dwight L. Bolinger, *Intonation and its Uses*, (Stanford U.P., 1989), p.275.
8. Bolinger, *Intonation and its Parts*, p.279.
9. Bolinger, *Intonation and its Parts*, p.278.
10. Bolinger, *Intonation and its Parts*, p.279.
11. Bolinger, *Intonation and its Parts*, p.169.
12. Bolinger, *Intonation and its Parts*, p.291.
13. Bolinger, *Intonation and its Parts*, p.291.
14. Bolinger, *Intonation and its Parts*, p.306.
15. Bolinger, *Intonation and its Parts*, p.307.
16. Bolinger, *Intonation and its Uses*, p.327.
17. Bolinger, *Intonation and its Uses*, p.327.
18. Bolinger, *Intonation and its Uses*, p.327.
19. Bolinger, *Intonation and its Uses*, p.337.
20. Bolinger, *Intonation and its Parts*, p.192.
21. Bolinger, *Intonation and its Parts*, p.325.
22. Bolinger, *Intonation and its Parts*, p.262.
23. Bolinger, *Intonation and its Parts*, p.181.
24. Bolinger, *Intonation and its Parts*, p.156.
25. Bolinger, *Intonation and its Parts*, p.320.
26. Bolinger, *Intonation and its Parts*, p.320.
27. Bolinger, *Intonation and its Parts*, p.312.
28. Bolinger, *Intonation and its Parts*, pp.49-50.
29. Bolinger, *Intonation and its Parts*, p.182.
30. Bolinger, *Intonation and its Parts*, p.302.
31. Bolinger, *Intonation and its Parts*, p.186.
32. Bolinger, *Intonation and its Parts*, p.188.
33. Bolinger, *Intonation and its Parts*, p.128.
34. Bolinger, *Intonation and its Parts*, p.146.
35. Bolinger, *Intonation and its Parts*, p.317.
36. Bolinger, *Intonation and its Parts*, p.317.
37. Bolinger, *Intonation and its Parts*, p.320.
38. Bolinger, *Intonation and its Parts*, p.295.
39. Bolinger, *Intonation and its Parts*, p.228.

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