

## THE NEWSREADER'S HIGH FALL

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This paper examines the use of high-falling tone in one variety of Polish, i.e. the language of radio and TV news broadcasts. "High Fall" is treated as a cover term for a set of combinations of falling tone (´) with features from the simple and complex pitch-range systems (terminology and transcriptions of Crystal 1969 are employed). In news-reading, these combinations are always associated with the nuclei of sentence-final tone units.

Until recently, High Fall was hardly ever used in news-reading: its usage was confined to exclamations, commands and statements involving strong emphasis and contrast. The predominating nuclear tone associated with sentence-terminal contours in news-reading was a Low Fall, characteristic of declarative sentences and enhancing the impression of "objective reporting". At present the traditional and the new modes of news reporting exist side by side but they are mutually exclusive in the sense that they are not used as interchangeable variants by any single newsreader.

Possible sources of the newsreader's High Fall are discussed and the explanation which appears to be most convincing, although far-fetched at first sight, is that the intonation is a borrowing from English (e.g. BBC broadcasts), where the High Fall is the predominating nuclear tone associated with the language variety in question. Arguments which support this explanation come from other types of radio and TV language, e.g. the announcements of Polish disc jockeys, news headlines in music programmes, jingles and commercials; BBC and Radio Luxembourg influences in the prosodic stratum are clearly detected.

Reference

Crystal, D. (1969): Prosodic systems and intonation in English,  
Cambridge: University Press.