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## Intonation contours as signals of discourse relations in German

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It is generally agreed that intonation in German is used to distinguish declarative from interrogative sentences. However, recent studies showed (Selting 1995; Bergmann 2018; Moroni 2020) that it contributes along with other levels of language description to characterize an utterance as expressing a specific communicative activity and goal in interaction. Drawing on these insights, we argue that intonation can signal discourse relations and that this function may better explain the distribution of different intonation contours in conversational sequences than the connection with the category of sentence mode.

In our study, we investigate the role of the nuclear rising-falling contour (see Figure 1) in a private informal conversation between speakers of the urban variety of Freiburg German. This variety displays a rising-falling contour in its intonational inventory, which previous works classified as typical of isolated utterances and answers (Peters 2006: 423) or as occurring in narrative interviews as a turn-concluding signal (Gilles 2005: 111, 317-327).

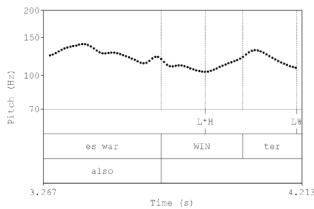


Figure 1. (FOLK\_00066, utterance in line 665)

For every collected utterance we consider the following levels of analysis: (i) syntax, (ii) position of the utterance in the conversational sequence, and (iii) type of the communicative activity. In addition, we look with a bottom-up approach for further possible relevant parameters such as recurring semantic-pragmatic features.

**References:** • Bergmann, P. (2018). Prosody in interaction. *Linguistik Online* 88, 11-32.  
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