Learner autonomy:
A guiding principle of designing a CD-ROM for intonation practice
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Background information about In Tune with English (CD-ROM)
It is a practical course in English intonation developed as part of an EU-funded EDISSON project involving the Open University in the UK (Distance Education). The CD-ROM is designed for learner learning without immediate teacher’s help.

Objectives of In Tune with English
- a CD-ROM for intonation teaching the concept of learner autonomy
  - Transfer the responsibility for the learning process from the teacher (computer) to the learners.
- Target users: Intermediate - Advanced English learners

Sub-aims of In Tune with English
- to explain and demonstrate important concepts of English intonation
- to improve overall listening and comprehension skills
- to notice regularities of English intonation and make predictions about its form and function
- to help imitate native English intonation patterns
- to raise awareness for the communicative function of English intonation
- to demonstrate how intonation depends on the speech situation
- to engage the user in analyzing native speaker intonation and its use in different contexts
- to help recognize and practice intonation patterns

The structure of In Tune with English
The CD-ROM consists of 3 main parts.
Part 1 - Text component
  - Spoken texts and videos (mainly dialogues)
  - Exercises for analyzing intonation patterns and discovering regularizes of use (inductive approach)
  - Possibility for shadow reading and recording of learners
  - Hyperlinks to: Elements of Intonation (Part 2)
Part 2 - Elements of Intonation
  - Drills and discrimination exercises for systematic practice (deductive approach)
  - Explanations of the basic concepts of English intonation (See “Basic Prosodic concepts of English”)
  - Hyperlinks to: Text component (Part 1) or Winpitch (Part 3)
Part 3 - Winpitch
  - Possibility for production and visualization of pitch movements
  - Hyperlinks to: Elements of Intonation (Part 2)
Basic Prosodic concepts of English is introduced in the Part 2 “Elements of Intonation”
- Detailed explanations of the basic prosodic concepts of English given in 2 sections

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FORM OF INTONATION</th>
<th>WORD STRESS</th>
<th>SENTENCE STRESS</th>
<th>STRESS-TIMED RHYTHM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intonation unit</td>
<td>Tonic</td>
<td>Tones</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FUNCTION OF INTONATION</th>
<th>TONES AND EMOTION / ATTITUDE</th>
<th>WORD PROMINENCE AND DISCOURSE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Showing surprise</td>
<td>- Repeated words &amp; synonyms</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Showing interest/sounding</td>
<td>- Contrastive stress</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>enthusiastic</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Showing politeness/sounding</td>
<td>- Question &amp; statement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>friendly</td>
<td>- Wh-questions &amp; yes/no-questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Showing hesitation/uncertainty/reservation</td>
<td>- Tag questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Sounding impressed</td>
<td>- Echo questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TONES AND DISCOURSE</td>
<td>- Final vs. non-final</td>
<td>- Parenthesis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>information</td>
<td>- Apposition</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**Fixed intonation patterns**
- Social rituals
- Idiomatic & other common expressions

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<thead>
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</thead>
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<tr>
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<td>expressions</td>
</tr>
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**Strengths**
1. Individualization
   - Learners can personalize the learning process, tailored to the needs and
     learning preferences of the users.
2. Bipartite approaches to intonation
   - **Deductive approach** (analytic) - Elements of Intonation component offers
     learners a theoretical explanation of a prosodic concept. Spoken Texts
     Component provides learners to practice in a specific speech situation
   - **Inductive approach** (holistic) - Spoken Text Component allows learners to
     discover regularities of use in a dialogue, then compare their findings with
     the explanation given in Elements of Intonation component.
3. Powerful Computerized Feedback
   - Possibility of visualization - visual form of feedback proves to be more
     effective than mere audio form.
   - Possibility of recording and comparing - quick and easy digital recording
     and the comparing the recorded learner version with a prerecorded original.
4. Monitoring learner’s progress
   - A cumulative score for individual units for monitoring the user’s learning
     process
5. Enhancement of learner autonomy
   - Metalinguistic awareness for learner’s production
   - Metacognitive awareness for learner’s learning process
Weaknesses
1. Inadequate feedback
   • Computers cannot provide sufficient feedback to a learner’s production in terms of automatic error detection and correction.
   • Teachers are considered as most ideal error detectors.
2. Limitation in enhancing learner autonomy
   • The concept of learner autonomy provoked by the CD-ROM for intonation sounds too ideal to accomplish

Conclusion

There seems to be a risk that proponents of new technologies may be tempted to replicate and recreated a traditional classroom. However, the CD-ROM for intonation is best used NOT as a teacher replacement but as an expert tool / medium to guide learners’ production on their way to autonomy.

Definition
1. Metacognitive Awareness:
   Insight into one’s own learning style (p.183)

2. Metalinguistic Awareness:
   Insight into how language is used and organized (p.183)

3. Learner Choice:
   Learners are given considerable freedom as to decide on the path they want to take through any particular sections (p.183)

4. Learner Autonomy:
   • Working without a teacher
   • Learners’ responsibility for their own learning.
   • Metacognitive Awareness
   • Metalinguistic Awareness

Reference
