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A look at the interaction between intonation and genre moves in academic spoken English

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Academic speaking is one of the main skills needed in international scientific communication online, as attested by the growing number of studies on both traditional and emergent spoken and multimodal academic genres (Charles, 2021; Luzón & Pérez-Llantada, 2019). Still, although intonation is an inescapable feature of spoken discourse, few studies have addressed it analytically. This study looks at the contribution of intonation to spoken academic discourse by analysing the most frequent intonation groups in a small ad-hoc corpus of 47 videos where researchers present methodological procedures. The intonation groups are analysed drawing from Hafner's (2018) move analysis and the functions of intonation as described in Tench (1996, 2011) and Gussenhoven (1984, 2004). The analysis shows that frequent intonation groups are used functionally in the same moves, fulfilling similar communicative purposes. This is shown by a detailed analysis of the division of speech into these groups, the emphasized words in each group, and the tunes used to present the information they convey. These findings are relevant to highlight the importance of using intonation actively in academic speaking for the purposes of the speaker and the furtherance of their communicative aims, arguing that a neglect of the use of intonation might result in delivering the messages in a less efficient way, as the data suggest. This line of thought favours the idea that intonation needs to be taught in courses that deal with speaking in English for Academic Purposes.

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