

Activities for developing sentence stress and intonation

1 Sentence stress and meaning: (sentence stress and intonation - receptive)

Put the possible meanings on the board:

- 1 And he did.
- 2 Not her!
- 3 Not write it down.
- 4 Not the word.
- 5 Me not you!

Put the target sentence on the board:

I wanted him to say the sentence.

Teacher says the sentence in different ways to indicate different meanings. The students listen and choose the correct meaning.

Eg:

I wanted him to **say** the sentence. 3 Not write it down.

I wanted him to say the **sentence**. 4 Not the word.

I wanted him to say the sentence. 5 Me not you!

I **wanted** him to say the sentence. 1 And he did.

I wanted **him** to say the sentence. 2 Not her!

To provide productive practise the students can repeat the activity in speaker / listener pairs.

2 Sentence stress drilling: (sentence stress and intonation - productive).

Drill the sentence normally first: Would you like a cup of coffee?

Then drill backwards but starting with only the stressed words. Once all the stressed words have been repeated add in the unstressed weak forms. Clapping a rhythm can help.

For example:

T: coffee?

Ss: coffee?

T: cup coffee?

Ss: cup coffee?

T: like cup coffee?

Ss: like cup coffee?

T: like a cup of coffee??

Ss: like a cup of coffee?

T: Would you like a cup of coffee?

Ss: Would you like a cup of coffee?

You can use almost any piece of target language. The 'cows eat grass' activity is similar to this and is another approach.

3 Contrastive stress drilling: (sentence stress and intonation - productive).

Put a sentence on the board: So, Julie went to the party of Saturday night by bus.

The teacher says the sentence but gets a piece of the information wrong. The students chorally correct the teacher.

For example:

T: So, Mary went to the party of Saturday night by bus.

SS: No, MARY went to the party of Saturday night by bus.

T: So, Julie came home from the party of Saturday night by bus.

SS: No, Julie WENT to the party of Saturday night by bus.

As with any technique, you have to teach the students how to do this. Once they get the idea, they love it. You can use almost any piece of target language.

