

**TEACHING TIP**  
**USING GLOTTODRAMA FOR TEACHING**  
**FINAL INTONATION IN ENGLISH**

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The goal of this teaching tip is to present an introduction to teaching basic final intonation patterns in statements, interrogative forms, and question tags with a drama method called Glottodrama. With its five-step course of action, Glottodrama is a practical method to integrate drama into the teaching of foreign languages (Nofri, 2009). This paper introduces these steps and offers practical ideas for adaptation to pronunciation teaching. These suggestions include a contextualized presentation of target intonation patterns, imitation of the teacher's text-based oral presentation by learners, discussion of target patterns, and the performance of the students' own drama. The paper also outlines discussions regarding the advantages of using Glottodrama in pronunciation teaching, challenges that can be encountered, possible solutions, and suggestions for online implementation.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Drama is an effective teaching strategy that promotes meaningful, active, and reflective thinking as well as the development of communication skills (Kalidas, 2014). Using drama in language classes is also associated with affective and psycholinguistic aspects on part of the learners. Stern (1980), for instance, underlines that drama brings several psychological factors into play in learning, such as motivation, empathy, sensitivity to rejection, self-esteem, and spontaneity. Without a doubt, creating meaningful classroom activities and opportunities to help learners improve their oral communication skills is a challenge for teachers. At this point, drama is usually considered a useful alternative. According to Celce-Murcia et al. (2010), drama fosters communicative competence by providing learners with contextual and emotional involvement.

More specifically, drama can be used in the teaching and learning of a variety of pronunciation and prosodic features in a contextualized and communicative way (Wessels, 1987). Several studies investigated the link between drama and pronunciation and reported different gains for learners, such as improved pronunciation accuracy (Bora, 2021; Korkut & Çelik, 2018), L2 oral fluency (Galante & Thomson, 2017), and decreased concerns about learning pronunciation (Atas, 2015).

Glottodrama, a method originally designed to teach Italian as a foreign language, offers a framework for applying drama resources and techniques into foreign language teaching (Nofri,

2009). A Glottodrama project involves turning a common language classroom into a theater stage and uniting classroom members with a project work (Anca et al., 2013). However, it is necessary to bear in mind that the main goal of a Glottodrama project is to diminish the use of the target language with its metalinguistic functions, but instead promote its use with a purpose of achieving genuine communication (Arhip, 2014). According to Nofri (2009), the teaching structure in Glottodrama involves a circular pattern with five stages listed as follows:

- **Textual or situational input:** The presentation and analysis of a text proposed by the teachers with audio-visual support;
- **Linguistic reflection:** Discussing and providing explanations about grammar and vocabulary issues encountered within the presented text;
- **Performance:** Rehearsing with the investigated text and acting it out with performances recorded;
- **Actor studio (rehearsal):** Evaluating and discussing the acting aspects and reflecting on the gestures, postures, and pragmatic aspects in the recorded performances;
- **Back to the performance:** Performing the text with different roles and characters.

Following these five stages, Glottodrama can be adapted to pronunciation teaching, particularly the teaching of prosodic features. This sample activity aims to propose an adaptation of Nofri's (2009) framework into the teaching of final intonation patterns in English because we considered the fall and rise intonation patterns in basic sentence forms an ideal target for implementation in EFL and ESL settings. Therefore, we explored final *fall* intonation in affirmative sentences and Wh\_ questions, *rise* in yes/no questions, and *rise* and *fall* final intonation alternatives in question tags considering them as manageable targets in this Glottodrama project. Teachers should remember that the depth and level of detail in terms of the coverage of the target language forms are bound by several possible factors, such as group size, proficiency of learners, and allocated time for this activity in the syllabus. In our case, we assume our hypothetical target population to be B1 level learners of English and consider the basic final intonation patterns in the above-mentioned sentence types a suitable goal.

## THE ACTIVITY

### Stage 1: Textual or Situational Input

The class begins with the presentation of an input in this step. Because our goal is to teach final fall and rise intonation patterns in English, we recommend using a conversation that contains different sentence types, i.e., affirmative, interrogative (Wh\_ and yes/no questions), and question tags (fall and rise final intonation with slight meaning changes). For this purpose, a sample conversation can be created by the teacher or adapted from a different source. The level of detail that a teacher will go into also depends on the time and proficiency levels of learners. For instance, the final fall intonation in affirmative sentences might be varied with the listing of items as in the following examples:

*David is going to visit Hyde Park* ↘ .

*David is going to visit the London Eye ↗ , Tower of London ↗ , and Hyde Park.* ↘ .

Teachers are supposed to initiate this stage by acting out the conversation and highlighting the target fall and rise intonation patterns with pitch differences. The purpose here is to draw learners' attention to target forms implicitly and help them notice the differences in intonation according to different sentence types. We recommend two teachers working together while acting out the conversation, and one teacher should ideally be experienced in drama, this way, s/he could be of extra help to the English teacher. For a more effective in-class presentation, a few rehearsal sessions are recommended before class.

We find conversations useful in this activity, as it gets easier to integrate sentences with different final intonation patterns into a medium-length conversation; however, it is possible to use different types of text such as songs or short stories in which target intonation patterns can be integrated easily as well. Also, the presence of two teachers is not a must if the English teacher is aware of and willing to use drama techniques in presentation. The final consideration is the length of the text and, therefore, the amount of time to be spent in this stage. There is no specific answer to this question; however, we suggest allocating around two to five minutes to present the text.

## **Stage 2: Linguistic Reflection**

This stage entails a more explicit presentation of the target intonation patterns, yet it should still not be too direct or rule oriented. We suggest using a perception activity with several sentences that end in fall or rise final intonation. Elicitation will be the key in getting learners' responses which will ultimately involve learners figuring out the intonation rules. Our recommendation is to provide every learner in the class with colorful up and down arrows (*up* will refer to a rise, and *down* will demonstrate a fall intonation) and ask them to indicate the final intonation with them upon hearing the sentences. This visual support will also facilitate the elicitation procedure and encourage all learners to share their answers. A few example sentences are provided below:

*Last Winter, we visited Thailand for a short break. ↘ .*

*What time will you be calling her? ↘ .*

*Is there any coke left in the fridge? ↗*

*You called to say that we were on the way, didn't you? ↗*

*It's cold in here, isn't it? ↘ .*

An important component of this stage is the creation of a Pron Corner in the classroom. The purpose of the Pron Corner is to list target fall and rise intonation patterns according to sentence types for future reference. To this end, an additional board, a separate panel, or a part of a wall can be used, and creativity should be encouraged. Learners can be provided with different size, colored paper, markers, visuals or pictures, and other stationary materials for this task. Our suggestion is to guide and monitor the creation of the Pron Corner. It stays in the class for the rest of the activity as a reference spot for learners so that they can visit it and check the rules while roaming around the class in the following stages.

### **Stage 3: Performance**

In this stage, the teachers are expected to return to the conversation presented in the first stage. This time, learners will practice the same conversation using the print texts provided. This stage entails controlled practice without much guidance from the teachers. Learners act the conversation out with their peers in front of their friends on the stage and their performances are recorded for use in the following stage. According to Nofri (2009), learners will have the opportunity to view their performance and make self-evaluations, and teachers will be able to analyze individual performances and provide a more personalized support to learners. Learners' consent is needed at this stage; therefore, teachers need to prepare a consent form that outlines the purpose of the recordings and get learners' approval beforehand.

### **Stage 4: Actor Studio or Rehearsal**

In the Actor Studio or the Rehearsal stage, all recorded performances of learners are watched together, evaluated, and discussed in terms of acting aspects (Nofri, 2009). For instance, learners can be guided about their dramatization techniques, or the use of gestures and postures. If learners seem to have issues regarding the use of fall or rise intonation patterns, they should be encouraged to visit the Pron Corner again.

### **Stage 5: Back to the Performance**

Back to the Performance is the most productive stage for learners as it allows for free practice using the target language. We recommend putting learners into groups of three to five and initiate a group task to create their own drama texts, rehearse, and act them out on the stage. However, teachers should guide them with some basic creative writing tips such as coming up with a location, creating characters, and writing a story with a conflict and a resolution. In addition, they should be encouraged to include sentences with different final intonation patterns, as practiced earlier in the previous stages. Groups should be closely monitored, and instant feedback should be provided when necessary.

Once each group completes their text, they begin to practice the play with their friends freely in the class. Again, learners are encouraged to go to the Pron Corner whenever they need during rehearsal. The activity is completed with the acting of the learner-created plays on a stage, ideally a real one.

## **DISCUSSION AND FURTHER INSIGHTS**

The use of Glottodrama in teaching pronunciation features, particularly suprasegmentals and intonation as proposed in this study comes with several advantages. First, a class designed around the five-stage action plan of Glottodrama clearly promotes creativity, dramatization, and the use of spoken language in a stress-free, fun, and collaborative environment, which might ultimately result in reduced speaking anxiety in EFL and ESL settings. Another benefit is the learner-centered nature of the activities. Teachers pass the ball to learners most of the time, encouraging more implicit learning instead of teaching intonation rules explicitly. This type of a classroom can potentially facilitate the presentation of intonation patterns in a natural and creative way. The final advantage is its adaptability. A Glottodrama activity can also be adapted to the teaching of specific segmental targets (e.g., vowels and consonants, problematic sounds

for learners, voiced and voiceless sounds) as well as other suprasegmental features (e.g., word stress, prominence, rhythm) if used with different age groups.

In addition to the benefits, there are challenges to overcome or areas to reconsider. Recording learners in the Performance stage could potentially lead to increased anxiety among learners. This procedure would also bring about a bit of formality since consent forms and signatures will be required. Such issues could be easily overcome in classes where there is an established trust and confidence among the teachers and learners. Also, Glottodrama activities require the participation of motivated teachers who are interested in drama and dramatization. Teachers should also have sufficient time to allocate for such an activity in their syllabuses. Finally, as Nofri (2009) suggests, Glottodrama should ideally be implemented in real stages; thus, such spaces in school buildings are recommended in the first place. Teachers should also make additional arrangements in classes to create a Pron Corner and comfortable seating arrangements for pair and group work activities.

We also believe Glottodrama activities, especially stages from one to four, can be adapted to online if carefully planned. Breakout rooms can be used for rehearsal and creative writing activities. In Stage 2, Linguistic Reflection, a virtual Pron Corner could be created on platforms or applications such as Google Jamboard or Padlet. Acting or the use of body language will naturally be limited online; however, learners can still be encouraged to use their gestures or intonation to deliver their messages or make use of accessories or clothes to dramatize the texts. Video recordings can also be made through online meeting platforms.

In general, Glottodrama offers a practical, project-based, and adaptable method for teaching pronunciation. The success of the implementation in classes will be shaped by the contributions of teachers and learners who embrace the importance of drama in language teaching.

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