

# Differences and similarities between the intonation systems of Czech and Polish

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The present study examines prenuclear and nuclear intonation patterns of Czech and Polish, two understudied West Slavic languages, within the Autosegmental-metrical (AM) model of intonational phonology ([1]). Typologically, we consider both Czech and Polish to be of a certain type of intonation languages, called “phrase languages”, which includes French, Hindi or Hungarian ([2]). Both have fixed stress (Czech on the first syllables, Polish on the penultimate syllable) and assign phrasal tones in a purely demarcative way.

Despite a long tradition and descriptive research on Czech intonation (see, e.g., [3], [4]), there is still a lack of studies modeling its properties of different types of sentences, although some preliminary proposals within the AM framework have been put forward (see, e.g., [5], [6]). As for Polish, intonation patterns have been widely discussed ([8], [9], [10], [11]), but phonological descriptions are also very limited in number ([12], [13]).

For the purposes of this comparative study, we examined data gathered by means of an intonation survey with pre-constructed *question-answer* contexts with 20 Czech and 20 Polish monolingual speakers. The material included simple SVO structures, containing words with one, two, three or four syllables (e.g., *Jan maluje lamy*, ‘John is painting llamas’). Previous studies on Czech intonation (see references above) have shown that differences in the number of syllables are important for the description of the tune-text alignment of F0 shapes within the AP. As for the analyzed sentences, we selected basic sentences types (usually reported in the literature on intonation) and added some further sentences with different pragmatic intentions. The similarity of the material, which even extends to vocabulary, allows for a transparent comparison of the intonation patterns in the two languages:

- Declaratives (non)-neutral: [F SVO], SV[F O], S[F V]O, [F S]VO
- Yes-no questions (neutral: information-seeking question; non-neutral: echo/surprise)
- Wh-questions (neutral: information-seeking question; non-neutral: echo/surprise)
- Vocative chants (neutral)
- Enumerations: [F S, S, S, V O]  
One-word sentence (in the context ‘What is this person’s name?’)
- Imperatives (neutral; requests)

The paper attempts not only to give a general overview of intonation patterns found in both languages, but also to propose their preliminary phonological descriptions in terms of ToBI. It also discusses how the data can illustrate the usages and advantages of the categorical phonetic transcription of prosody.

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