

- HUNGARIAN SPEECH -

ARTICULATING ALL THE WAY

The first thing to learn is that **Hungarians articulate every single consonant and vowel**. English is a schwa language, Hungarian is not. Schwa means, for example, omitting the R sound at the end of a word: car, gender... It is true especially for British English. We don't do that. You say everything at all times. These few words with an H at the end are exceptions: méh, rüh, düh, cseh.

FIRST SYLLABLE ACCENT VS. SZÓLAM

NOTE! The word "szólam" means "part" in English as a part/a strand of music sung by the performer. The English "part" is an unlucky word as for what we need now. I will use the term "**strand**".

If you started to learn Hungarian, you already know that Hungarian words are stressed in the first syllable. This is true until we pronounce single words no matter how long they are: ég, kalap, kerítés, olvasandó, kiszámíthatatlan.

However, when saying whole sentences or telling stories, this rule changes a little bit because **the basic unit of Hungarian speech is A STRAND (OF THE WHOLE SPEECH) = SZÓLAM**. It means that we speak **IN COHESION = KÖTÉSESEN**, that is **word structures in cohesion and words belonging together tematically are said together like they are written together**. The words in a sentence are not sliced up when we talk. In that respect, it is the exact opposite of Chinese.

INTONATION

These strands of speech are subject to the rules of intonation. The Hungarian terms for intonation are **hanglejtés** (cadence of voice) or **szakasz dallam** (segment/section of melody).

There are **three types of intonation**:

FALLING = ERESZKEDŐ

RISING-FRONT FALLING = EMELKEDŐ-ELÜLESŐ

RISING-REAR FALLING = EMELKEDŐ-HÁTULESŐ

Falling and Rising-Front Falling intonation are **for statements, exclamations, wish, questions with a question word.**

	
Én egy magyar tanár vagyok.	I'm a Hungarian teacher.
	
Üljetek le!	Sit down.
	
Jaj nekem!	Poor me.
	
Bárcsak itt lennél!	I wish you were here.
	
Hová utaztatok tegnap?	Where did you travel yesterday?

Let's see when and where the intonation starts falling.

	
ez a kilenc illatos virág	> Demonstrative pronoun is important
	
ez a kilenc illatos virág	> Cardinal number 9 is important
	
ez a kilenc illatos virág	> Copula is important

It is the same sentence, yet their intonation is different. The first is falling because it is important to stress the demonstrative pronoun: *These* are the nine fragrant flowers/*It's these that* are the nine fragrant flowers.

The second one is rising-front falling and its peak is on *kilenc* because the demonstrative pronoun is not important now. What matters is the cardinal number *kilenc/nine*: *It's those nine that* are fragrant flowers.

The third one is rising-front falling, but its peak is on *illatos/fragrant* because we want to express that '*illatos virág*' is a compound predicate/copula: These nine *are fragrant flowers*.

That's the reason why the previous sentence above '*Én egy magyar tanár vagyok*' has its peak on *magyar*. If I say '*Magyar tanár vagyok*', the intonation is only falling without rising because the stress is on *magyar*. That is what matters. I do not want to say or stress the personal pronoun *én*.

The only exceptions are yes-no questions without a question word. Those sentences have a **RISING-REAR FALLING = EMELKEDŐ-HÁTULESŐ** intonation.



Írtál a nővérednek?
Did you write to your sister?



Megetted a levest?
Did you eat the soup?

The end of both types bend down. We never snap the end of the strand of a speech up.

TŐHANGSÚLY – ACCENT ON THE STEM

As I have mentioned before, **the accent is** not exactly on the first syllable, but **somewhere at the beginning of the strand of speech**. That can be the first, second, third syllable depending of what you want to stress. Compare:

First Syllable	<>	Third Syllable
M agyar ember vagyok.	<>	Én egy m agyar ember vagyok.

The first one starts with the important news *Magyar*, the second one starts with something that is not stressed and then *magyar*, the important news is accentuated. The drawings of the intonations show you exactly that. That's why we have **FALLING** and **RISING-FALLING** intonations.

Falling intonation is stressed on the first syllable because it starts with the important news, whereas Rising-Falling intonation rises first because the important news is somewhere on the second or third syllable.

INTONATION AND STRAND OF SPEECH WITH A SHORT STORY

The peak of a rising-falling intonation is indicated with bold letters.



 Egyszer volt, hol nem volt, volt egyszer egy király és **annak** három fia.
 Once upon a time there was a king and he had three sons.



 Délcegek voltak, daliásak, derűsek, derekasak,
 They were confident, strapping, joyful and brave,



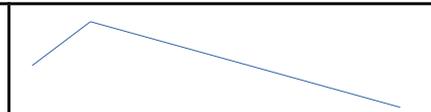
 de mind a három **olyan** kancsal volt,
 but all the three were so cross-eyed,



 hogy ha beálltak a hét közepére, egyszerre látták a két vasárnapot.
 that if they stood in the middle of the week, they could see two Sundays at the same time.

Generally speaking, the following phenomenon can be observed regarding Hungarian intonation:

It is like a creek falling downwards in two or three steps and occasionally the water flows over a bigger rock, then continues falling.

SUMMARY		
1. The verbal stress is on the first syllable when saying single words. 2. Whole sentences, stories are based on strands of speech=szólam; stress on 2nd or 3rd syllable. 3. These strands of speech are subject to falling and rising-falling intonation.		
		
FALLING: statements, wishes, exclamations, questions with question words	RISING-FRONT FALLING: statements, wishes, exclamations, questions with question words	RISING-REAR FALLING: yes-no questions