

# Intonation 1

<sub>1</sub> *Lecture 16*

# Introduction

- The subject of phonology includes not just what is called **segmental phonology** (**phonemics**).
- Stress and intonation are said to be part of **suprasegmental phonology** of English.

# Lexical Tone

- In modern Standard Chinese the word **[ bi ]** it can mean *pen* or *nose* depending on your pronunciation of the tone.
- Such languages are referred to as **tonic languages**.
- **Lexical tone languages** are found throughout Asia, in many parts of Africa and in the Americas.

## Cont.

- Languages like English, French, German are not **lexical tone languages**. There are **no** pairs of words in these languages that are distinguished solely by pitch pattern used to say them.
- However, all languages, as far as known, use **pitch variation** to communicate meaning.

# Intonation

- The use of pitch pattern variation that **does not** affect the meaning of individual words, but **does** affect the way in which utterances are interpreted, is known as intonation

# Intonational Phrases

- One of the functions of intonation is divided what we say into manageable-sized chunks known as **intonational phrases** or **IPs**.
- A speaker has a considerable freedom of choice about how many **IPs** to use and where they start and end.

# Cont.

- In English and other languages it is possible to use **IP boundary placement** to signal which of these two possible meanings an utterance has.

# Cont.

- **For example:**
- The sentence *Those who spoke quickly got an angry response* is **ambiguous**.
- Is it the speaking that is quick or the response?



# Cont.

- **If it is the first, then the sentence is likely to be uttered as:**
  - **Those who spoke quickly | got an angry response.**
- **But the second meaning is much more likely to be signalled by:**
  - **Those who spoke quickly got an angry response.**

## Cont.

- In general, the **placement of the IP boundaries** is used by the speaker to signal his / her judgement of what belongs with.
- Here is another pair of examples:

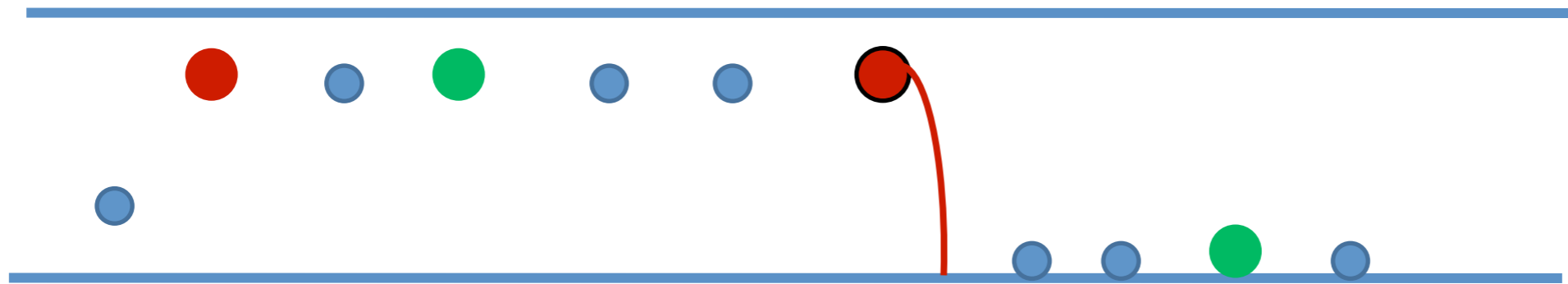
**Old men and women**

**Old men | and women**

# Accent and Nucleus

- **In the following figure (a) and (b) are schematic representations of the pitch contour of two utterances of the sentence:**
  - **I don't remember his telephone number.**

(a) I **don't** remember his **telephone** number.



(b) I **don't** remember his **telephone** number.



# Accent and Nucleus



Each is introduced as **one IP**.



The **large circles** represent **stressed syllables** and the **smaller ones** **unstressed syllables**.

# Accent and Nucleus



**The tail** attached to a circle indicates that there is a very noticeable glide in pitch during the production of that syllable.



**The upper and lower lines** represent the limits of the speaker's pitch range.

# Cont.

**As you can see in both (a) and (b) :**

- **Both contain 4 stressed syllables.**

## BUT in (a):

- The stressed syllable **–mem–** and **–num–** are at the same pitch level as the preceding and the following syllables.
- The stressed syllables **don't** and **tel-**, however, are different:
- They both **initiate** a new trend in pitch contour.
- They are not only stressed, but also **accented.**



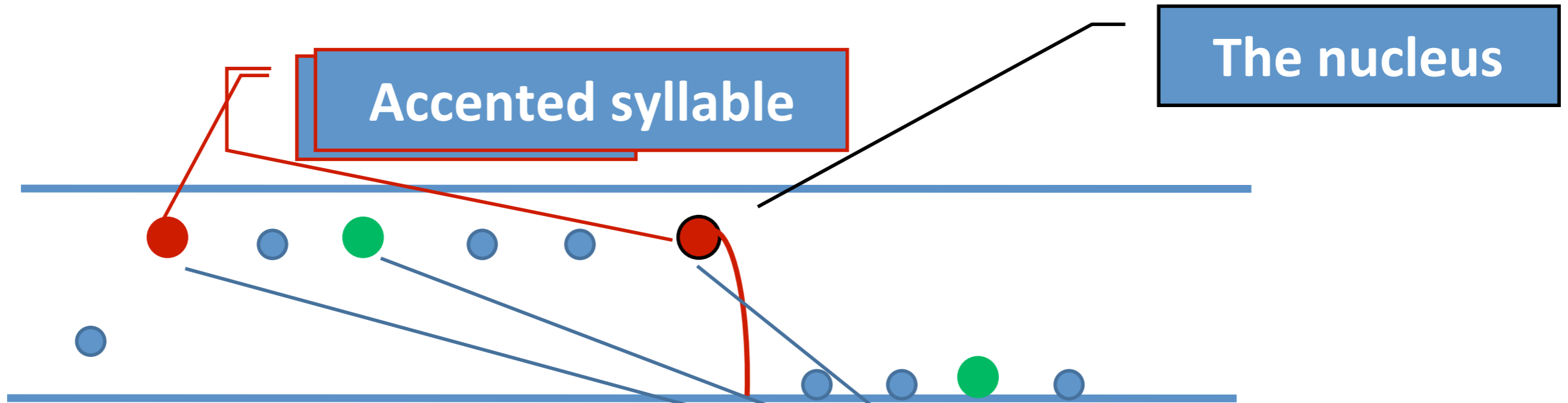
## As you can see in (b):

- There are also two **accented** syllables-  
**don't** again and **–mem-**
- The final accented syllable in an IP is known as the nucleus and its placement is very important for the interpretation of an utterance.

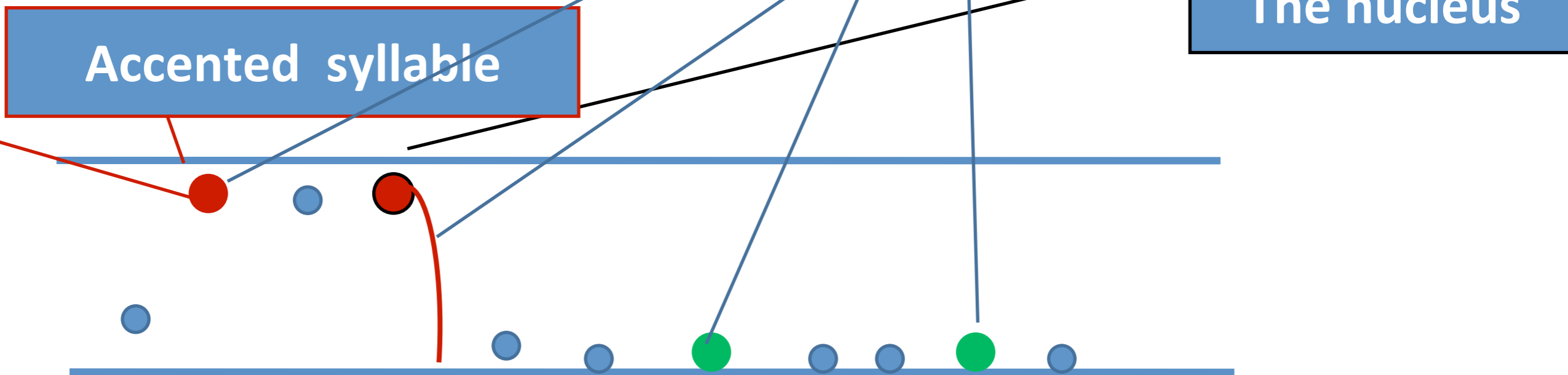
# Cont.

- The nucleus in (a) is **tel-**
- The nucleus in (b) is **–mem-**

I don't remember his telephone number.



I don't remember his telephone number.



# The Nucleus

- **The main reason for choosing a particular position for the nucleus is to focus the hearer's attention on important or **new information** in the IP.**

## Cont.

- If the speaker considers that all the information is new to the hearer (this is called *broad focus*), then the nucleus will be placed in a ‘**default**’ position.
- For most IPs in English the **default position is the primary stressed syllable of the last content word.**

## Cont.

- **If the speaker considers that some of the information is old or unimportant because it is inferable from the context in which the conversation is taking place, then narrow focus will be used and the nucleus is likely to be placed in a position other than default.**

# Notice:

- The position of **accented syllables** will be indicated by using **capital letters** and **underling** will be used to mark **the nucleus**.

## For example:

- First **a broad focus** utterance :

**Fred:** WHY are you looking so anNOYed?

**Bill** : I've LOST my WALLet.

**Fred's** question doesn't mention losing things or wallets, so **Bill's** reply has **broad focus** and the **nucleus** falls on *wallet*, which is the last content word in the IP.



# Remember:

- Again, the speaker, at least in English, has a good deal of **choice** where to put the nucleus within IP.
- In addition to two places we have already mentioned, the nucleus could be any of the following:

*I, don't, his*

# Cont.

- **Now a narrow focus:**

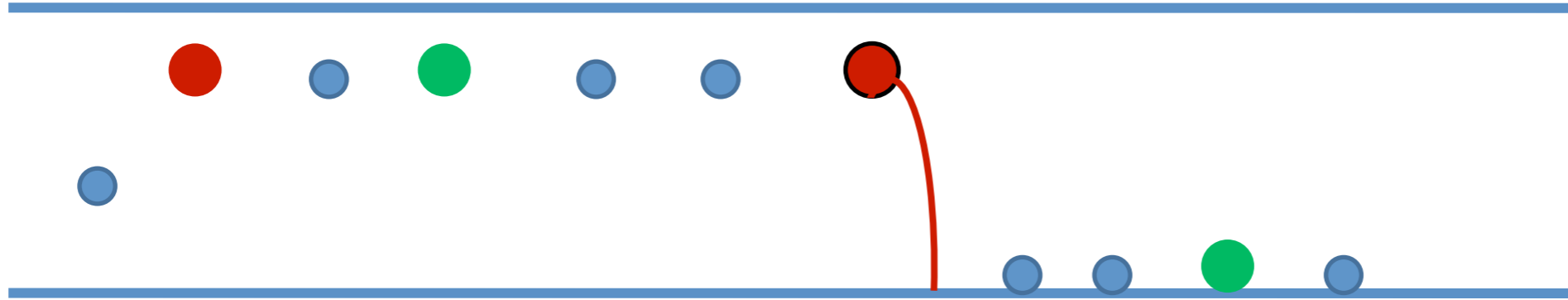
**Sue : LET'S go and see a MOVIE**

**Sally: I CAN'T afFORD to go to the  
cinema.**

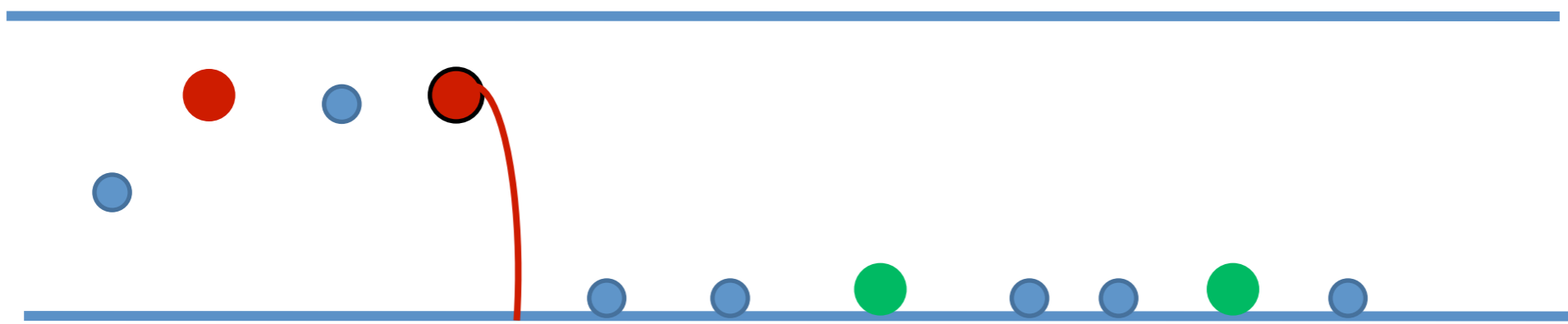
# Intonational Tone

- Both examples (a) and (b) above show **the nucleus** as having **a high falling tone**.
- However, this is not always the case.
- The following figure (c) , we have the same sentence, again produced as one IP, with **the nucleus** on the syllable *tei-*.
- However, this time **the pitch rises** from the **nucleus** to the end of the IP.

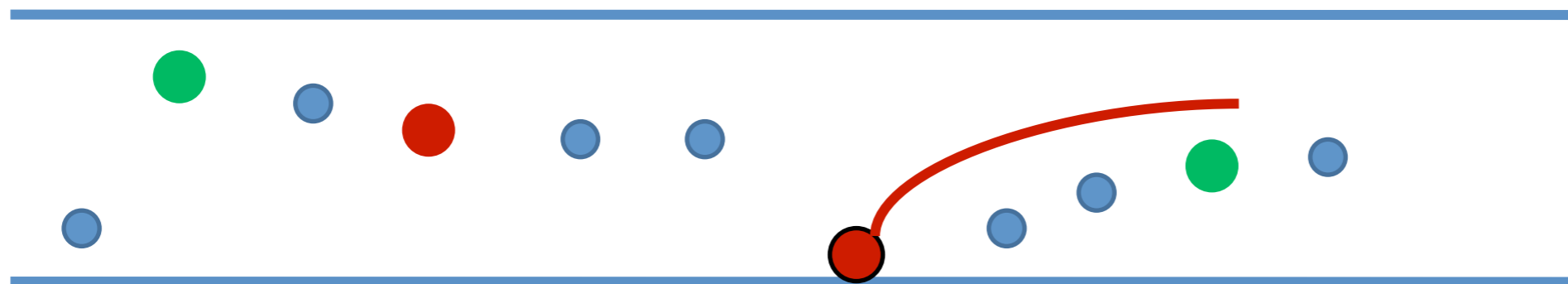
I don't remember his telephone number.



I don't remember his telephone number.

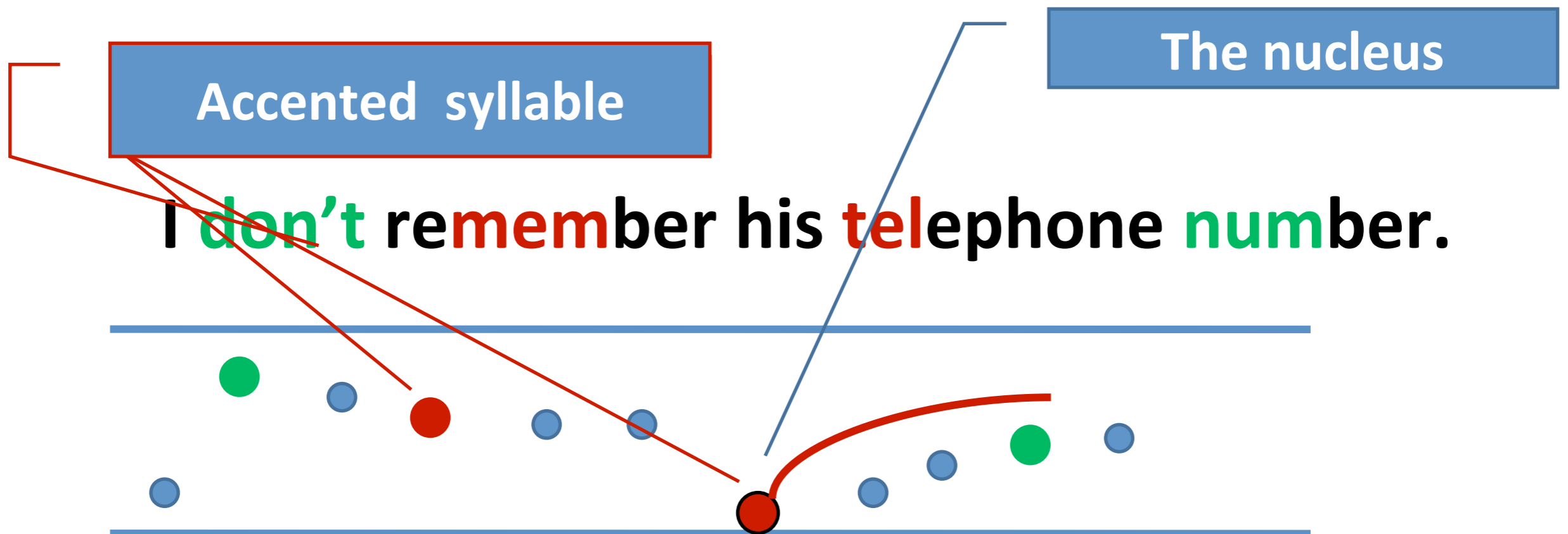


I don't remember his telephone number.



# Notice:

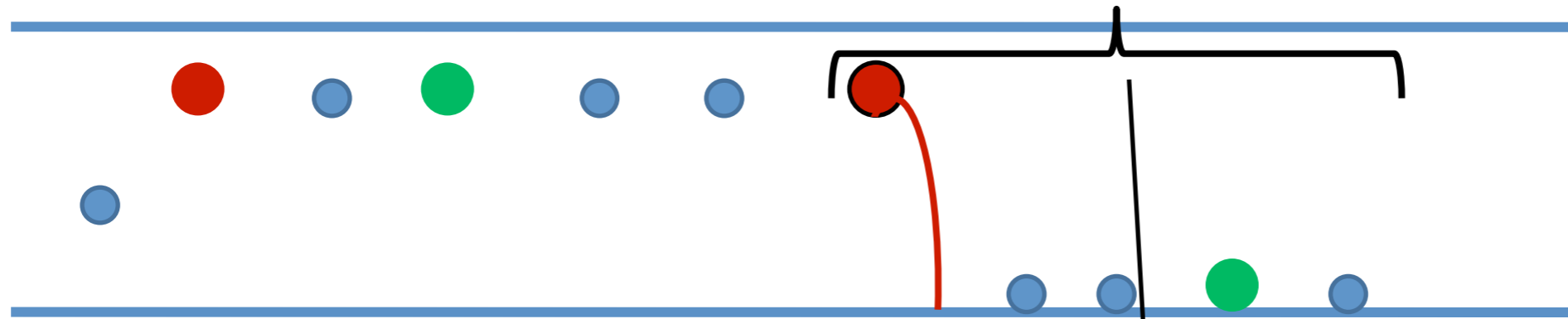
- The pitch pattern of the part of the IP before the nucleus is slightly different too.
- We have introduced an **additional** accent by making the pitch step down at the syllable **-mem-**



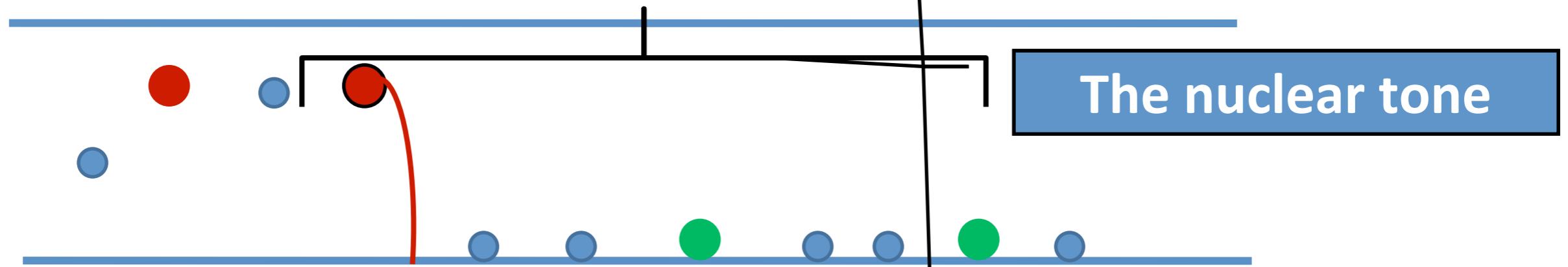
# A Nuclear Tones

- **A speaker of English may choose from a small number of pitch patterns known as a nuclear tones which begin with a nucleus and continues to the end of the IP.**

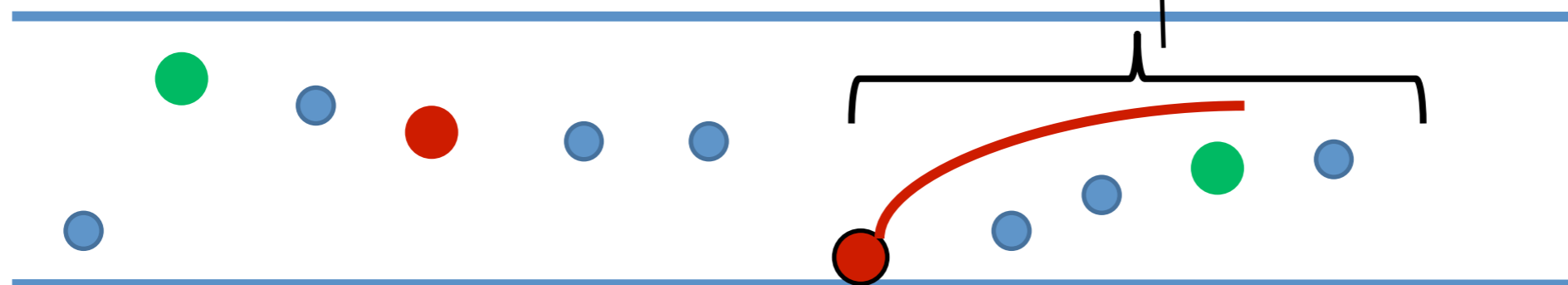
I don't remember his telephone number.



I don't remember his telephone number.



I don't remember his telephone number.



# The Function of Nuclear Tone

- By using **a nuclear tone**, hearers know that an IP has come to an end because they know how IPs can end.
- If the tune stops before its end, then we can usually tell it is **incomplete**, even if we have never heard the tune before.



# The Function of Nuclear Tone

- In similar way, we can tell that an intonation pattern is **incomplete** if we haven't heard one of the patterns of pitch that count as a nuclear tone in the accent or language we are familiar with.