Towards a model of Singaporean English intonational phonology
Adam J. Chong
Department of Linguistics, UCLA
ajchong@ucla.edu

Singaporean English Background
- Singaporean English (SgE) – Nativized variety of English
- English used along side Mandarin Chinese, Malay and Tamil
- Systematic features – different from other varieties of English (Lim, 2004; see also recording, 1994)
- Syllable-timed (Low et al., 2000)
- Diglossic model (Gupta, 1994):
  - Colloquial SgE – (low) form
  - Standard SgE – (high) form
- Here, SgE defined as Standard SgE – reading intonation

Intonational Model
- Based on a small corpus of data collected from three native speakers of SgE – 2 females and one male
- Female speakers reported being English dominant
- Male speaker reported being Mandarin dominant
- All university-educated
- Recordings analyzed using Autosegmental-Metrical model of intonation (Beckman & Pierrehumbert, 1986)
- Proposal: SgE is both head- and edge-prominence marking (Jun, 2005)
- One pitch accent (optional)
- Three levels of phrasing – AP, ip, & IP

Pitch Accent
- Only one pitch accent – L*
- Realized on the stressed syllable of a content word (Fig. 1, Fig. 2, Fig. 3)
- Appears to be optional in some cases (Fig. 4)
- Sometimes difficult to perceive a particular syllable as prominent
- Only marked when F0 is low and word is perceived as prominent

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Accentual Phrases
- Lowest level of phrasing defined by tone: Accentual Phrase (AP)
  - Characterized by general LH contour (see Fig. 3)
  - Marked at the right edge with H tone (Ha) realized on the final syllable of a word (cf. Ng, 2011)
  - Marked at the left edge by a L tone (al)
  - L tone cannot be attributed to L*
- Initial AP has a larger pitch range
- Subsequent APs have reduced pitch range
- AP-final Ha not always realized as phonetically high
- F0 plateau often seen in medial APs
- F0 stays relatively level against declination
- Gives percept of final rise
- AP ≠ Intermediate Phrase
- Length is short: At most one lexical word and preceding function words
  - Some pronouns can occupy their own AP (Fig. 4)
  - No strong juncture
  - No pitch reset

Intermediate & Intonational Phrases
- Highest level of phrasing is Intonational Phrase (IP)
- Marked with edge tone on final syllables:
  - L% and H%
- Possible evidence for intermediate level of phrasing:
  - Intermediate Phrase (ip)
    - Evidence for L- (ip-final)
    - ip characterized by pitch reset (Fig. 5)
    - Ha-ip (AP-final tone that also marks ip-final break)
    - Need more evidence for positing this level
    - Unclear if higher tones override lower ones

Sentence types
- Declarative sentences: end with L-L% (Figs. 1-5)
- Wh-questions: end with L-L% (Fig. 6)
- Yes-no questions: end with (H7+)H% (Fig. 7)
- Preliminary evidence suggest focus is marked by an expanded pitch range (Fig. 8)
- Focused word is also lengthened (see Chong 2012)

References