

RISING CONTOURS IN SOUTH ASIAN LANGUAGES TOWARDS A COMPARATIVE INTONATIONAL PHONOLOGY

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BACKGROUND

- South Asia is called a “**linguistic area**” (E56)
- “Typical” South Asian lgs (SALs) have:
 - Retroflexes, breathy-voiced Cs, few fricatives
 - Echo reduplication, no inflectional prefixes
 - SOV order, non-nominative experiencers
- Over time, linguists have identified **exceptions** and **regional patterns** (S12)

Is there a “**typical**” SAL intonation?

Are there **exceptions** / **regional patterns**?

- Féry’s comparative work **proposes a single model** for Bng, Hnd, Mlm, Tml (F10)
 - Very simple repetitive pattern of rising contours
 - L_p...H_p marking the edges of each ph-phrase
 - No effect of prominence (no pitch accents)

L*	HaL*	HaL*	HaL*	HaL*	HaL*	HaL*	L%
rumu	nepaler	ranir	malider	namgulo	mone-rakhte	pare	ni
Rumu	Nepal-GEN	queen-G	gardener-G	name-DEF	mind	keep-	can-3
	EN	ENPL	PL	LO	INF		NE
							G

- The current study also finds evidence of **repeating rising contours** across SALs
- But, I propose that even in this property, **SALs show systematic variations**:
 - L tone** generally aligns with **prominence**
 - H tone** can also align with **prominence**
 - V & word length** can generate a **2nd H tone**
 - Onset C** notably **raises L tone**

METHODS

- Comparative work**
- Tests applicability of a single model on multiple SALs (F10)
- Applies **B-ToBI** **conventions** (K08/K14)
- Adjustments as needed

Recordings of **North Wind fable** from *JIPA* illustrations (M12, K10, O99, K09, K04) and in *Prosodic Typology II* (K14, K14; in J14)

Indic lgs

- ASM Assamese
- BNG Bengali
- HND Hindi
- NPL Nepali
- PNJ Punjabi*
- SND Sindhi*
- SYL Sylheti*

Dravidian lgs

- MLM Malayalam*
- TLG Telugu
- TML Tamil

 *work in progress

L TONE ALIGNMENT

General pattern

- Word-initial L target**
- Marks prominence (L*), edge (aL / L_p), or both
- Follows B-ToBI and Féry

L*	Ha	L*	Ha
uttôrôr	bôtaH	aru	xu
north-GEN	wind	and	sin

Rightward shift of L tone in Asm, Hnd

- Hnd** L* optionally shifts right to stay on prominent σ (D01)
- Sounds like PA! Contra Féry

L*	Ha	L*	Ha
eek	musaafir		
one	traveler		

Asm variation is unsystematic

- Doesn’t always line up with prominence patterns (M01)

L*	Ha	L*	Ha	L*	Ha
ximan	zûrêrê	nizôr	s	û	v
that much	strength-INS	self-GEN			

H TONE ALIGNMENT

H is phrase-final: Ha / H_p

- H marks edge** in Indic lgs
- Follows B-ToBI and Féry

L*	Ha	L*	Ha	L*	Ha
suuraj	teezii	kee	saath	n	
sun	sharpness	GE	with	e	

H is part of PA: L*+H

- H target is 2nd σ** (Tml) or **2nd-3rd V mora** (Tlg): L*+H

L*	Ha	L*	Ha	L*	Ha
kambaLii	vippiveeseDu				
cloak	open-PRF-throw-PST-3MSG				

Phrases can have both H tones

- Plateau** in Tlg: L*+H...Ha
- 2nd H target (Ha) on **last long V**

L*	Ha	L*	Ha	L*	Ha
baaTasaari	daLasari	kambaLii			
traveler	thick	cloak			

Minor pattern in Tml

- Possibly conveys a higher level of salience

L*	Ha	L*	Ha
pantayam	pooTTaaGka		
wager	compete-PST-3PL		

Minor pattern in Bng, Npl

- Possibly conveys a higher level of salience

L*	Ha	L*	Ha
kampaLiye	poottikITTu		
blanket-ACC	wear-PRF-near-PRF		

EFFECT OF ONSET CONSONANT

- L* is raised** in σ with **voiceless** or **null** onset
- Seen in all SALs studied
- Most exaggerated with **initial sibilants**
- Phonologization** of f0 x voicing interaction (K11)?

Also seen in Pnj, which had tonogenesis (K&R16) →

L*	Ha	L*	Ha
kaattum	cuuriyanum		
wind-CNJ	sun-CNJ		

SUMMARY

- So... is there a typical SAL intonation?**
- In some ways, **yes**:
 - Sequences of L → H
 - L raised with voiceless & null onsets
 - (Prior work: prominence location not contrastive)
 - (Prior work: no audible stress on prominence)
- But there are **major systematic variations**:
 - L and H tones can mark edges and/or prominence
 - Word-length-sensitive double rise in Tml
 - V-length-sensitive H plateaus in Tlg
- Connected to other areas of phonology:
 - Role of **σ weight** (i.e. V peripherality) in Hnd
 - Role of **V length contrast** in Tlg
 - Lack of either in Asm, Bng, Npl

FURTHER QUESTIONS

- What blocks L* shift** in Hnd?
 - Likely: overriding from IP boundary tones
 - Other cases: free variation? And Féry’s data?
- How perceptible** is L* shift in Asm?
 - Do speakers perceive L on prominent σ anyhow?
- Beyond Tlg, **how pervasive is V-length-sensitivity** in Ha alignment? Not Tml or Mlm?
- Are double rises in Tml only possible with **morphological complexity**?
- How perceptible is the onset-induced raising of L*? **Emergent tonogenesis**?
- Currently transcribing *JIPA* illustrations of **2 more SALs**: Snd (N99), Mlm (N&G16)
- Currently comparing with **SALs that have undergone tonogenesis**: Pnj, Syl
 - At the moment: words in isolation
 - North Wind recordings in process

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