INTERACTION OF TONE AND INTONATION IN LHASA TIBETAN: A WORKING HYPOTHESIS.
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Whether or not phonological tone exists in Lhasa Tibetan (LT) and, if the answer is positive, how many tones are phonologically distinctive in this language, has been a subject of considerable controversy (Kjellin 1972, Duannu 1992, Meredith 1990 to name a few). As many as 8 lexical tones have been proposed and as few as none. According to the hypothesis advanced here, the reality has been obscured by the fact that Lhasa tonal contour is produced by the interaction of lexical and intonational modules of grammar. This talk examines interaction of these two components and suggests a plausible direction for an account.1

Tibetan tonal system: I am in agreement with those researchers who propose that LT has a simple 2-tone system. The value of each syllable’s lexical tone corresponds diachronically to the voicing features of the syllable’s onset: H_lex generally developed from voiceless onsets while L_lex from voiced ones. The T_lex appears only on the initial syllable of the word (tonal distinctions are neutralized on all following syllables) and is followed by an H tone. This next tone is assigned to stressed syllables and thus is an exponent of metrical prominence (accent or stress). Since LT prosody is based on syllabic trochee meter, this tone (which I will indicate as *H) is associated to the initial syllable. However, as a repair of tonal crowding (due to the presence of the lexical tone), it de-links and re-associates to the 2nd syllable within the foot if it is available. 1.2 a) [ʔa kan] "temple" b) [ a mr] [ ri gi] "America" c) [kan] [ga ri] "bicycle"

Dephrasing: The T_lex+*H sequence appears once per domain that I will call αP. A lexical item may be merged into the αP formed by the preceding lexical item (under certain syntactic conditions) in the process losing this tonal sequence. This way a sort of "deaccentuation" is achieved for functional or semantically impoverished lexical items or for those that represent old, redundant, presupposed or predictable information (see Jun (1993) for a similar phenomenon in Korean as well as Pierrehumbert & Beckman (1988) for Japanese). Some lexical items, when "de-phrased" in this manner, acquire purely functional properties. For example, words ’de. "this" and chig. "one", when dephrased, are interpreted as definite and indefinite articles correspondingly (compare 2(a) and 2(b)); similarly, locational nouns in Dative are dephrased when used as postpositions (compare 3(a) and 3(b)).

2. a) (αp d(e)b)(αp c'i?) "one book" b) (αp par - c'i?) "picture.INDEF"

3. a) (αp naŋ- la) "inside.DAT" b) (αp lingāi: -naŋ - la) "park.GEN inside.DAT"

Full lexical items may be dephrased as well when they represent predictable or redundant information. For example, the word ming.la "name" in (4a) or the word nyo. "buy" in (4b):

4. a) (αp njī: mīŋ - la) (αp losan - se-r-gi-yā) b) (αp fumā - cī:-njā - gi - jī):

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1 Among other simplifications, I am ignoring boundary tones of larger constituents for the purpose of this abstract.
2 Tones in parenthesis are those assigned by default. The square parenthesis here indicate foot structure.
Pitch accents and pitch range: LT does not have an inventory of intonational Pitch Accents the way that English does. Instead of supplying the pitch contour with particular tonal elements, the intonational module of LT grammar modifies the height of the accent peak (\(^*H\)) associated with the stressed syllable. The pitch range is boosted in \(\alpha P\) containing focused and emphasized items, as well as new topics.

This view of LT intonation can help explain several phenomena that have been observed in this language. Denwood (1999) reports that when verbs are placed in narrow focus, some syllables of the stem (those which may carry H-tone) are pronounced in high pitch. On the other hand, according to Denwood as well as Sprigg (1954), topics placed after the verb, i.e. right-dislocated arguments, are pronounced in low flat pitch. Having conducted my own investigation, I conclude that tonal distinctions are preserved in right-dislocated arguments but the pitch range is contracted sharply after focus. According to my observations, old preverbal topics also peak low and have limited tonal range. I interpret these findings as indicating that even though these items form their own \(\alpha Ps\), either no pitch accent is assigned to their metrically prominent syllables or a kind of pitch accent that contracts the range of the peak instead of boosting it (indicated by the H with * in parenthesis).

5. \begin{align*}
(\alpha P_{\text{Pre-Foc}} & j i - \text{gi} - \text{ti} - \text{re} ;) \\
L_{\text{lex}} & *H (L) (L) (L) \\
L_{\text{lex}} & *H (L) (L) \\
L_{\text{lex}} & *H (L) \end{align*}

\text{letter-ABS. send-LINK.-AUX. letter-ABS.DEF.-TOP. send-LINK.-AUX. send-LINK.-AUX. letter-ABS.}

\text{“(He)”ll SEND the letter”}

\begin{align*}
(\alpha P_{\text{Pre-Foc}} & j i - \text{ti} - \text{da} ;) (\alpha P_{\text{Post-Foc}} & \text{gi} - \text{ti} - \text{da} ;) (\alpha P_{\text{Post-Foc}} & \text{gi} - \text{ti} - \text{da} ;)
L_{\text{lex}} & *H (L) (L) (L) \\
L_{\text{lex}} & *H (L) (L) \\
L_{\text{lex}} & *H (L) \end{align*}

\text{“(He)”ll SEND (it), the letter”}

We can account similarly for the differences between realization of tonal contour in polar and wh-questions. In (6a) the wh-pronoun is in focus while the predicator is postfocal. At the same time (6b) is a polar question with the verb in focus. This difference is correspondingly reflected in the focal PA being assigned to the wh-word in (6a) but to the predicator in (6b).

6. \begin{align*}
(\alpha P_{\text{Pre-Foc}} & \text{p}^b\text{u} - \text{ti} ;) (\alpha P_{\text{Post-Foc}} & \text{k}^b\text{a} \text{re} ;) (\alpha P_{\text{Post-Foc}} & \text{gi} - \text{ti} - \text{da} ;) \\
L_{\text{lex}} & *H (L) \\
L_{\text{lex}} & *H \\
L_{\text{lex}} & *H (L) \end{align*}

\text{boy.THIS what do-LINK.-AUX.}

\text{"What does the boy do?”}

\begin{align*}
(\alpha P_{\text{Pre-Foc}} & j i - \text{ti} - \text{da} ;) (\alpha P_{\text{Post-Foc}} & \text{ta} - \text{ra} - \text{re} - \text{be} ;) \\
L_{\text{lex}} & *H (L) (L) \\
L_{\text{lex}} & *H (L) (L) \\
L_{\text{lex}} & *H (L) (L) \end{align*}

\text{letter-DEF.-TOP. send-LINK.-AUX.-INTERR.}

\text{“Did (he)”ll SEND the letter?”}

Summary: I advocate the position that tonal contour of an LT sentence is produced by interaction of several components. Leaving aside the question of boundary tones, I was able to identify the following contributing factors: 1) LT has a 2-value lexical tone system; 2) metrical prominence in a word is cued in with an H-tone; 3) a lexical item may be "dephrased" by merging into the phonological domain to its right (provided certain syntactic conditions are observed); 4) intonational pitch accents may boost or contract the tonal peaks based on the informational structure of the sentence. My current work is aimed to verify empirically the hypothesis advanced here and to flesh out the details in more precise theoretical terms.

References

Intonation in English pronunciation - rising and falling intonation patterns explained to learners. Intonation is about how we say things, rather than what we say, the way the voice rises and falls when speaking, in other words the music of the language. Just as words have stressed syllables, sentences have regular patterns of stressed words. In addition, the voice tends to rise, fall or remain flat depending on the meaning or feeling we want to convey (surprise, anger, interest, boredom, gratitude, etc.). Intonation therefore indicates the mood of the speaker. There are two basic patterns of intonation in English: falling intonation and rising intonation. In the following examples a downwar on Tone and Intonation in Europe. Lhasa Tibetan (LT), a central Tibetan language, is a SOV agglutinative tonal language. Despite the disparity of various analyses of LT tonal system (Hu:2002; Qu:1983; Sprigg:1993; Hu & Xiong:2010), this paper adopts the position where LT word has, either H and LH underlying tones, and the affixes bear either H or L underlying tones. The purpose of this paper is to introduce the phrasal intonation phonology of LT and. An autosegmental analysis of tone in four Tibetan languages Linguistics of the Tibeto-Burman Area Zang yu yan jiu wen lun (Research of Tibetan languages). Tibetology of China Lhasa tones. Jan 1992. Join ResearchGate to find the people and research you need to help your work. Join for free. ResearchGate iOS App. Less work has looked at the interaction between tone and intonation in tone languages outside East and Southeast Asia. Much of this work has looked at how intonational tones either replace lexical tones or are added after lexical tones to distinguish questions from statements [11] or to mark prominence [13]. Lhasa Tibetan [18] and Sherpa [19]. The left edge location also supports hypotheses that tones in Tibetic languages arose out of word-initial consonant cluster simplification, along with the loss of an initial voicing contrast [1], although the complete loss of a word-initial voicing contrast has yet to occur in LY and K.