

Intonation in tonal new Englishes

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The title of my presentation is misleading to the extent that it suggests that the intonation systems in new varieties of English are necessarily variations of the kind of prosodic system that we know from American and British English. Often, it is not, in spite of the fact that pitch contours in West-Germanic English and new Englishes may be broadly similar. A generalization based on a few languages (Cantonese English, Nigerian English and Gã English) is that, unlike what is the case in English, the lexis and syntax fully determine the pitch pattern of the sentence, just as in a tone language, the only exception being the choice between final boundary tones, like those for the declarative and interrogative. In particular, there are no correlates of the following systemic options provided by West-Germanic English: (a) a choice from different pitch accents; (c) a contrast between phrase 'stress' and compound 'stress'; (b) an option to deaccent, for stylistic or focus reasons. These Englishes are thus tone languages, and a title like 'The tone systems of some varieties of English' would be more appropriate. Having said that, a consideration of the language without taking intonation variation into account may seriously misrepresent the phonological structure, as I hope to show for Cantonese English. My account is partly based on the literature and partly on new work.

Criper, Lindsay (1971). The tone system of Gã English. *Actes du 8e Congrès de la Société Linguistique de l'Afrique Occidentale*. University of Abidjan. 45-57.
Luke, K.K (2000). Phonological re-interpretation: The assignment of Cantonese tones to English words. Paper presented at the 9th International Conference on Chinese Linguistics. National University Singapore.