

# The Indian Subcontinent

Aditi Lahiri, Holly J. Kennard

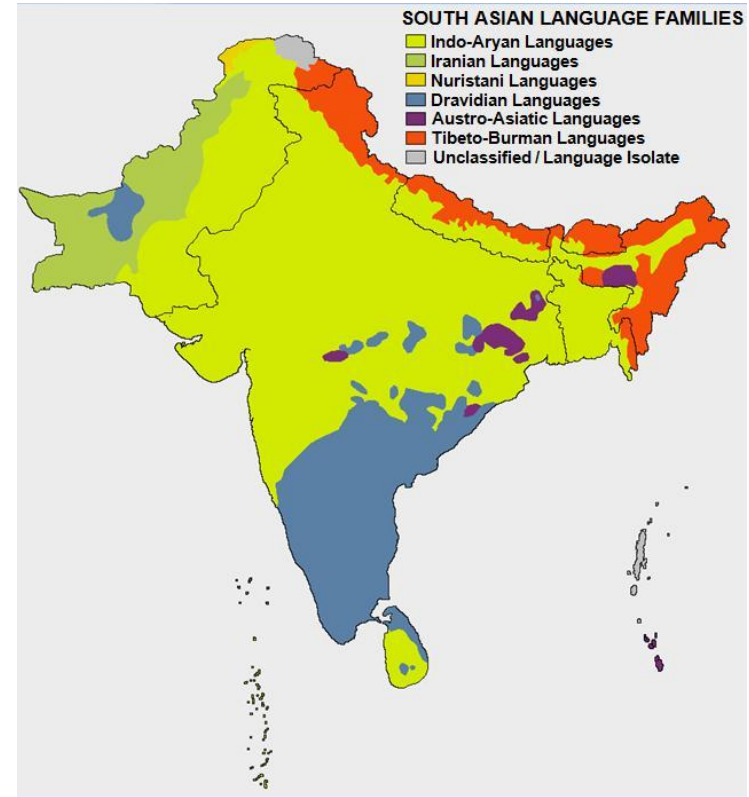
As presentation by  
Sree Harsha Sunaye

ਖਨਥੀਆ ॥ ੪੫  
ਸੁਦੇਵਸਰਬਤਮੈ  
ਠਾਇ ॥ ਅੰਤਰਿਥਾ  
॥ ਨਾਨਕਕਾਇਦੁਰਾ  
ਕੀ ॥ ਵਫਾਵੈਰੁਕਾਕ  
ਦਘਦਅੰਤਰਿਥੁਰ  
ਸੁਦੇਵਜਲਥਲਮਾ

178  
187  
ਗਿਗਵਿਆ  
ਮਨਤੇ ॥ ਹਰਿ  
ਨਮੁਨਤੇ ॥ ਵਰ  
ਰਹਤਾ ॥ ਨਾ  
ਖਿਜੈਕਹਤਾ  
ਉਕਹਤਖਿਹ  
ਅਜਾਨ ॥ ੩

# Introduction

- Quantity contrasts, Intonation, and word stress. (Lexical tone only in Punjabi)
- Many language families: Indo-Aryan, Dravidian, Austro-asiatic, Tibeto-Burman, isolates etc.
- Examples using Representatives.



# Quantity: Vowels

- Mostly consonant Quantity contrast present across Indo-Aryan.
- Vowel Quantity contrast is rare.
- However, lax/tense distinction exists in vowels.
- e.g.: Bengali, among Morphologically related words & unrelated words:

## Vowel quantity alternations in Bengali

[na:k] 'nose' ~ [nak-i] nose-ADJ, 'nasal'  
[ka:n] 'ear' ~ [kana] 'blind'

# Quantity: Consonants

## Geminates: “double” consonants

- Indo-Aryan: all consonants have geminates.
- But, mostly only in medial position, rarely in final or initial positions.
- Monomorphemic word pairs with obstruent and sonorant phonemes:

Selected examples of singleton–geminate obstruents and sonorants

a. Bengali

[aʈa] ‘wheat’      [aʈ:a] ‘eight o’clock’      voiceless unaspirated retroflex stop

[ʃobʰa] ‘beauty’      [ʃobʰ:o] ‘civilized’      voiced aspirated labial stop

[keɽe] ‘dream’      [keɽ:e] ‘falsehood’      alveolar lateral approximant

[meri] ‘again’      [mer:i] ‘banyan tree’      alveolar trill

# Quantity: Consonants

**Geminates: common during concatenation, sometimes through assimilation.**

Also, to mark emphasis, especially in time adverbials.

## Gemination

### a. Concatenation

|         |  |   |                        |                        |                                  |        |                         |                         |
|---------|--|---|------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------------|--------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Bengali | /k <sup>h</sup> el-l-am/                   | > | [k <sup>h</sup> el:am] | 'play-SIMPLE PAST-1PL' | Adverbs and emphatic germination |        |                         |                         |
|         | /ʃat t̡ola/                                | > | [ʃat̡:ola]             | 'seven floors'         | Bengali <sup>4</sup>             |        |                         |                         |
| Marathi | Glide gemination (Pandharipande 2003: 725) |   |                        |                        | [æk <sup>h</sup> on]             | 'now'  | [ek <sup>h</sup> :uni]  | 'immediately'           |
|         | /nəu-wadzta/                               | > | [nəwwadzta]            | 'at nine o'clock'      | [t̡ok <sup>h</sup> on]           | 'then' | [tok <sup>h</sup> :uni] | 'right after that time' |
|         | /nahi-jet/                                 | > | [nahj:et]              | 'does not come'        |                                  |        |                         |                         |

### b. Derived via r-CORONAL ASSIMILATION, whereby /r/ assimilates completely to the following dental, palatoalveolar, and retroflex consonants, leading to geminates.

|         |                       |   |                       |                         |
|---------|-----------------------|---|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| Bengali | /kor-t̡-am/           | > | [kot̡:am]             | 'do-HABITUAL PAST-1PL'  |
|         | /t <sup>h</sup> ordi/ | > | [t <sup>h</sup> oɖ:i] | 'youngest older sister' |

# Word Stress

**Contentious topic in Indo-Aryan (Bengali):** lexical prominence on the first syllable, but considered hardly perceptible, or “weak”. More evenly distributed.

**Constraints based on stress:**

1. vowels /ɔ/ and /æ/ only occur in word-initial position, as in [kɔt̪ʰɑ] ‘speech’
2. Each vowel has a nasal counterpart, which is always at first syllable.

**Loan Words:**

- Bengali has loans from English and Portuguese (with variable word stress), but has always maintained stress on the first syllable.
- Portuguese ananás, alfinéte, espáda, bálde have been borrowed into Bengali as [ˈanarɔʃ] ‘pineapple’, [ˈalpin] ‘pin’, [ˈiʃpaɫ̪] ‘steel’, [ˈbal̪t̪i] ‘bucket’.

# Word Stress

## In Hindi:

- Unlike Bengali, variable stress position.
- For comparison: Arundhati carries **antepenultimate** stress in **Hindi** [ə'rundhəti] but not in **Bengali**, where the stress is on the **first** syllable [ʔorundhəti].
- **Hindi** [ga'rīb]; [nuk'sān] 'poor'; 'loss' vs. **Gujarati** ['garib], ['nuksān'].

# Lexical tone

- Punjabi is the only Indian language to exhibit lexical tone.
- Tone can affect the meaning of words.

ਕੋਰ (kōr) with a high tone could mean "deaf"

ਕੋਰ (kòr) with a low tone could mean "bride's side"

- Other Indian languages use pitch variations primarily for intonational purposes (e.g., to indicate questions, emphasis, or sentence boundaries)

# Intonation and tunes: Declarative

- In Neutral: No sequence of identical tones in most indian languages.
- Repetitions of LH, and ending with HL, **regardless** of word order or focus.

Hindi: SOV focus (Féry 2010: 294)

|                |                |                |                |                |                |
|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| L <sub>p</sub> | H <sub>p</sub> | L <sub>p</sub> | H <sub>p</sub> | H <sub>p</sub> | L <sub>1</sub> |
| adhaypak       | ne             | moorti         | ko             | banaaya        |                |
| teacher        | ERG            | sculpture      | ACC            | make.PAST      |                |

Malayalam (Féry 2010: 307)

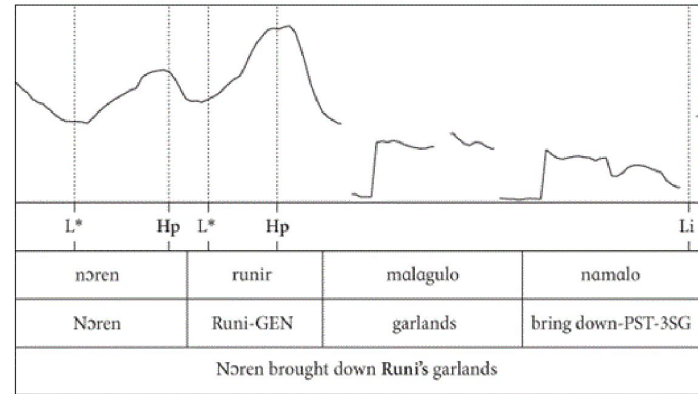
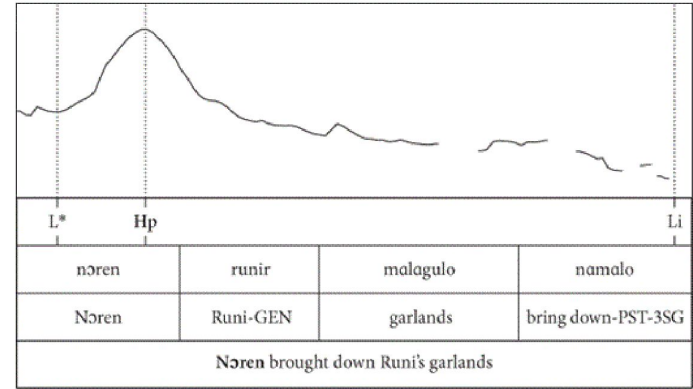
|                       |                |   |                         |                                      |                |                |                |
|-----------------------|----------------|---|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| L <sub>p</sub>        | H <sub>p</sub> | L <sub>p</sub>                              | H <sub>p</sub>          | L <sub>p</sub>                       | H <sub>p</sub> | H <sub>p</sub> | L <sub>1</sub> |
| [[Peter] <sub>p</sub> | [oru           | [rasakaram-aya] <sub>p</sub> ] <sub>p</sub> | [pustakam] <sub>p</sub> | [vaichu] <sub>p</sub> ] <sub>1</sub> |                |                |                |
| Peter                 | one            | interesting                                 | book                    | read                                 |                |                |                |

'Peter read one interesting book.'

# Intonation and tunes: Focus

- Focus in Bengali: initial L\*Hp pre-nuclear accent.
- L\*Hp is the focus tune, as well as the prenuclear.
- Final non-focused tune is H\*Lp, sentence-final verb.
- Can discriminate words even within compounds:

$L^*H_p$   
 nirməl    lal    bari-r    malik  
 Nirmal    **red**house-GEN    owner  
 ‘Nirmal is the owner of the **red** house



# Intonation and tunes: Focus

## Focus in Dravidian: Tamil, Malayalam

- In neutral sentences, LH pattern ending with HL on the verb.
- But, when an element is in focus, the end becomes LH:

Tamil (Féry 2010: 306)

|                          |                                    |                       |         |                      |                |       |       |
|--------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------|---------|----------------------|----------------|-------|-------|
| $L_p$                    | $H_p$                              | $L_p$                 | $H_p$   | $L_p$                | $H_p$          | $L_p$ | $H_I$ |
| [[[niRaiya] <sub>p</sub> | [ceer] <sub>p</sub> ] <sub>I</sub> | [[meeri] <sub>p</sub> | [vaank- | in-aaL] <sub>p</sub> | ] <sub>I</sub> |       |       |
| many                     | chairs                             | Mary                  | buy-    | PAST-PNG             |                |       |       |

‘Mary bought *many chairs*.’

# Conclusion

- Diverse Languages, at least 4 language families.
- Stress is not important in lexical contrast, no minimal pairs.
- But, stress crucial to pitch accent.
- Rare tonal contrasts, only found in Punjabi.
- Intonational systems seem common, basic contour LH ( focus, prenuclear).
- Pitch-accents aligned to prominent syllable, might not be word-initial.
- End of Focus marked by H boundary tone.
- Sequences of identical tones disallowed.