English in Asia

Umberto Ansaldo and Lisa Lim

1. Introduction

Can there be areal features of Asian Englishes (AEs)? And if so, can such features reveal significant facts about the nature of evolution of English in Asia? Considering that Asian English varieties span a wide and diverse region and include functionally different types of codes, the expectation of finding something akin to areal traits is perhaps quite low. Common features in an area can evolve based on a number of different, and at times not unrelated factors, of which the most widely established are the following.

1.1 'Universal' patterns

To begin with a factor that we can discount swiftly, it actually appears that the search for 'vernacular universals' or 'angloversals' (Chambers 2004, 2009; Filppula, Klemola and Paulasto 2009) is over, since a number of different approaches point to the flaws in the notion proposed in Chambers (2001; see Smzrecsanyi and Kortmann 2009; Trudgill 2009). The notion of 'vernacular universals' has proven somewhat too strong considering that there is ultimately not too great a variation among different varieties of English, and that much of the shared properties can ultimately be accounted for in terms of contact-induced changes. Mair (2003) sees 'angloversals' as characteristic of New Englishes and says that these constitute "tendencies which can be regularly observed in the formation of post-colonial standards without proven historical-genetic connections". However, as shown in Smzrecsanyi and Kortmann (2009), most tendencies observed among varieties of English are either not statistically significant: it would be difficult, for example, to explain a feature such as zero copula as an 'angloversal', considering that such a feature is unattested in 80% of varieties of English worldwide. Moreover, as will be explained in (3) below, such a feature (and others) can be often easily attributed to substrate influence in a number of AEs. A more promising option would be to look for common second

language acquisition (SLA) processes, but in the Asian regions this is difficult to establish. As noted in Ansaldo (2009b), the type simplification often attributed to SLA is ultimately about omitting redundant morphological material, something that also occurs frequently in foreigner talk strategy. It is thus difficult to establish to what extent SLA processes originate in learners or transmitters, as the latter do resort to simplifying strategies very often. If we add to this the fact that, where isolating substrates are present, they would encourage speakers to be morphologically parsimonious, rather than redundant, we find yet again that any significant observation of universalist nature may be hard to come by (see Sharma 2009).

1.2. Same/similar lexifier

Given that AEs are by definition restructured varieties of English, some variety of English was involved in the development of these vernaculars. On the one hand, one may expect a number of shared features which are a result of the same or similar lexifier, typically standard British English varieties – and there are many, as a result of a certain amount of uniformity throughout the region as a consequence of primarily English-language medium-of-instruction schools based on British models, and British administrative, legal and commercial usage, as well as television programming. It is thus unsurprising to find extensive lexical, phonological as well as morphosyntactic features that can be linked to one or another dialect of English in varieties as distant as Indian English, Singapore English and Hong Kong English. Besides the somewhat trivial nature of this observation, and the fact that, since these are inherited features from an ancestor language, this is not a useful areal diagnostic (Hickey this volume), the actual process of pinning down exactly where specific features may come from, on the other hand, is in fact a challenging task, due to a number of conspiring reasons. Firstly, in the formation of AEs, many different types of English were actually involved, from vernacular varieties of British English to American English; moreover, varieties of English spoken as L2 as well as in pidginized form were transmitted, adding yet another dimension of variation to this picture. While the detailed documentation of input varieties has been done for a number of other Englishes, this has been attempted in less specificity and systematicity for most AEs, and, as considered less interesting than contact-induced influences (see point 3 below), will not be the focus of this chapter.

1.3. Shared/similar substrate influences

Allowing for a broader interpretation of areal features, we may also consider common features which have evolved (independently) in different AEs due to contact-induced change where such features in the substrates themselves constitute areal features of the Asian region. Even while substrate languages vary widely in the region – from Hindi, Sinhala and Tamil in South Asia to Malay in insular Southeast Asia and Cantonese in Hong Kong (also see Lim and Gisborne 2009) – a number of features have been identified as areal features of the region, including topic-comment, zero copula, tone. In the Southeast Asian region one shared trait appears to be that of analyticity (see Smzrecsanyi and Kortmann 2009; Ansaldo 2010). We return to this factor shortly.

1.4. Horizontal transmission

Of course, what we really want to try to identify are typological features in various AEs that have evolved due to the influence of geographical closeness, where features from one AE spread to another AE. However, there are a number of limitations in this. Given that most AEs are relatively recent developments, emerging in no more than the last few decades (e.g. only in the mid-twentieth century in Singapore and Malaysia; though South Asian Englishes can be said to date back to the seventeenth century), with only a few of them actually attaining some measure of stability, expecting or being able to document such 'horizontal contagion' directly across different AEs is perhaps premature. Where documentation is concerned, scholars have largely been concerned with describing discrete, national varieties of Asian Englishes (e.g. chapters in Bolton 2002; Lim 2004; Bautista and Bolton 2009), or with documenting substrate influence in contact dynamics (e.g. papers in Lim and Gisborne 2009), or at most with collating shared features (which are by and large due to substrate typology) (e.g. Mesthrie 2008); and it is only in the most recent years that projects have been launched which are attempting to document a lingua franca English in Asia (e.g. Kirkpatrick 2006), and even such endeavors are more to do with collating shared features rather than horizontal diffusion.

Is there thus no hope that AEs may shed some interesting light on areal processes in the evolution of English in Asia? There is perhaps one, and for this we return to the third factor mentioned above, that of contact-induced processes from the substrates. In recent work on Singapore English (SgE), as well as pioneering work on Hong Kong English (HKE), a peculiar

incipient feature has been noted which constitutes a robust areal feature of Southeast Asia: tone. Besides being interesting as an obvious exotic feature of AEs, tone also represents a theoretically interesting development in the light of assumptions that tone, as an alleged complex – but for whom? – feature, may be lost in the evolution of new languages (see McWhorter 2005). While this assumption can be criticised, based on the observation that tone does in fact emerge in new languages (see Lim 2009a, 2011, and section 3), a Eurocentric perspective on tone as exotic or marked still implies that tone may be 'complex'. This chapter thus focuses on what we know of the emergence of tonal features of AEs as potentially the most interesting evolving feature of the region.

2. Tone as an areal feature of Southeast Asia

The area known as Mainland Southeast Asia (SEA), which encompasses former Indochina as well as Southern China, has by now become an accepted linguistic area in which a number of traits are shared by languages which are not genetically related, such as Sinitic, Thai, Vietnamese, Khmer, etc. (see Matisoff 2001; Enfield 2003; Ansaldo 2009a, 2010). Amongst these, tone systems comprise one of the most striking features, occurring in genetically unrelated languages spoken by the geographically contiguous speech communities in Southeast Asia (as well as in Africa) (Nettle 1998; Svantesson 2001), in other words, an areal feature, with tone – along with other suprasegmental features – susceptible to being acquired in contact situations (Curnow 2001), often acquired in a non-tonal language by borrowing or imitation due to the presence of tone in the broader linguistic environment (Gussenhoven 2004: 42ff). Tone systems of the SEA region usually show a combination of contour and pitch systems, as well as complex sandhi patterns.

Though it may first seem strange to talk about tonal properties of AEs, and one may be tempted to relegate whatever influence to the realm of intonation patterns, we should not forget that the presence of tone, or some kind of mixed prosodic system, in creole languages is in fact not an especially difficult idea to accept. A number of well-known creoles whose substrates involve tone languages — in particular languages arising from contact situations involving European accent languages and African tone languages — have been documented as possessing tone. One oft-cited example is Saramaccan, which is English- and Portuguese-based, with Gbe and Kikongo as substrates; it has been shown to have a split lexicon, with the majority of its words marked for pitch accent, and a significant minority

marked for true tone (Good 2004a, b, 2006). Just as widely acknowledged is Portuguese-lexified Papiamentu, which shows the use of both contrastive stress and contrastive tonal features that operate independently from stress (Kouwenberg 2004; Rivera-Castillo and Pickering 2004; Remijsen and van Heuven 2005). The Austronesian language Ma'ya:Ma'ya has also been documented as a hybrid system involving both contrastive stress and tone, the result of contact with tonal Papuan languages (Remijsen 2001: 43).

What is interesting is that such findings have been widely accepted for creoles for a while now; but because New Englishes are considered varieties of English and not bona fide – whatever that means – 'creoles' (or 'creoloids'), there tends to be resistance in English linguistics circles to the idea that tone exists in New Englishes (but see Lim 2009a, 2011). Nonetheless, 'non-creole' languages have also been observed with similar manifestations of tone: Roermond Dutch has been found to have a Germanic-style stress system but also a lexical tonal contrast, in that words may have no tones or a single H tone (Yip 2002: 257); and the prosody of Nigerian English is suggested to be a mixed system that stands 'between' an intonation/stress language and a tone language (Gut 2005), with its pitch inventory reduced compared to Standard British English, and the domain of pitch being the word, with high pitch triggered by stress, thus resembling a pitch accent language.

In the ecologies of a number of Asian Englishes such as Singapore English (SgE) and Hong Kong (HKE), the linguistic feature of tone is certainly present. The languages which are recognised as dominant in Singapore's ecology are Bazaar Malay and Hokkien in the earliest era, which were inter- and intra-ethnic lingua francas respectively; later, Mandarin and Cantonese came to dominate (Lim 2007a, 2010a; Ansaldo 2009a, b). As the latter three languages are Sinitic varieties, tone languages are clearly in the majority. Hong Kong's ecology is similarly Sinitic-dominant, with Cantonese as the native and dominant language of the majority of the population, with Putonghua (Mandarin) as an additional official and increasingly used language in particular since HK's return to China. Tone is thus a salient typological aspect of the feature pools of both Singapore and HK; in other words, it is high in type- and token-frequency in the internal ecology. Other work has shown that dominant traits do influence the output (Thomason and Kaufman 1988). For example, considering the word order of the adstrates in Sri Lankan Malay, while Pidgin-Derived Malay is SVO, Sinhala and Tamil are both SOV, and the resulting Sri Lankan Malay is also SOV. Similarly, agglutinative morphology emerged in Sri Lankan Malay because it is salient in two of the three adstrates, Sinhala and Tamil (Ansaldo 2008, 2009a, 2010). Moreover, if we

consider external ecology, in both Singapore and HK it is the Chinese who form the largest ethnic group, accounting for 78% and 97% of the population respectively, and they have been a majority since the early twentieth century. On both counts, then, namely the proportion of tone languages and the proportion of speakers of these languages, tone dominates in the ecology. Moreover, tone is high in markedness, in the sense that the feature bears a heavy functional load; in other words, put in terms of Matras's (2000) model of categorial fusion, it is pragmatically dominant, which also makes it a more likely target for acquisition (Matras 2000: 577). Overall, it is thus very likely for tone to be acquired in SgE and HKE, given the feature's dominant presence in the ecology, both internal and external.[1]

3. Tone in Asian Englishes

This section presents a summary overview of the evidence of tone in the Asian Englishes Singapore English (SgE) and Hong Kong English (HKE) on a number of fronts: word and phrase level and discourse particles. The apparent brevity of the literature addressed is due to the fact that little work has been done to date in the area.

3.1. Tone at word and phrase level

It appears that in both SgE and HKE, English stress patterns are reinterpreted through tonal assignment following the Sinitic languages that are the dominant languages of a majority of speakers. In the case of HKE, the

[1] Some clarification is perhaps necessary here. The observation above and elsewhere that SgE has prosodic patterns that generally resemble an intonation language may in fact need elaboration: Alongside such patterns, which resemble other StdEs, one also notes a number of "characteristic CSE [Colloquial Singapore English] forms" (Lim 2004a: 42), such as the sustained level steps and tone patterns at word level, as illustrated above. This is not a contradiction, but instead can be understood on two levels: First, SgE is capable of displaying a continuum of possibilities in prosodic phonology, of more mesolectal and more basilectal features; and second, in line with Singapore's extremely dynamic ecology (Lim 2007, 2008, 2010a), SgE may in fact be viewed as changing, in the more Sinitic-dominant ecology of the recent era, to display more Sinitic features, including tone.

influence is undoubtedly from Cantonese; in the case of SgE both Cantonese and Hokkien need to be taken into account (see section 3.2).

In HKE, two observations are clear in how English words are acquired through assignment of Cantonese phonological patterns (Luke 2000, 2008; Chen and Au 2004; Wee 2008a):

i. Each syllable is assigned equal length
ii. Stressed syllables are assigned High level tones (55).

In addition, the other syllables of the a word tend to be assigned either Mid level tone (33) or Low falling (21) following the basic template M-H-L: the syllable to the left of the stressed one is pronounced in Mid tone, the one to the right is assigned a Low tone, as shown in the following examples (1) to (6) (from Luke 2000):

(1) *`do* H (2) *`sure* HL (3) *`apple* HL
(4) *con`sider* MHL (5) *`physical* HLL (6) *encyclo`paedia* MMMHLL

Moreover, there seems to be a tendency towards assigning High tones to content words, as in (7) and (8) below, and Mid tones to form words, as in (9) and (10); this generates variation among speakers, as different individuals can vary in their interpretation of functional items in certain contexts, for example in the case of pronouns (Luke 2000):

(7) *good* H (8) *card* H (9) *the* M (10) *and* M

At phrase level, HKE has a pattern involving a sequence of tones as in (11), based on the basic LHL! template and subsequent computation (Luke 2008).

(11) *I saw the manager this morning* LHHHHHHHL!

In SgE, at word level, some very recent work has suggested that SgE has tone in addition to stress, with tone being predictable from stress (Ng 2008a), and with a high level tone assigned to the final syllable (Ng 2008a; Wee 2008a), as can be seen in the words in examples (12) to (18) (from Ng

2008b; Wee 2008a, 2008b).[2] This word-level tonal pattern has been shown to be independent of sentence position (Ng 2009).

(12) `*cat* H
(13) `*manage* MH
(14) *in`tend* LH
(15) `*Singapore* MMH
(16) *bi`lingual* LMH
(17) *se`curity* LMMH
(18) *o`riginally* LMMMH

This word-level tonal pattern has been shown to be independent of sentence position (Ng 2009), as illustrated in the following figure.

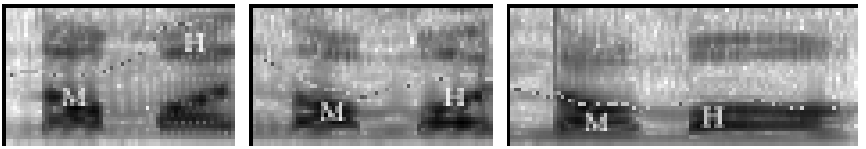

Figure 1. MH tones in SgE word `normal, in sentence-initial, -medial and -final position (from Ng 2008b)

When compared to HKE, the phonological patterning of SgE is clearly distinct: while in HKE H tones are located on stressed syllables and L tones on unstressed ones, in SgE H tones are located on the final syllable (Lim 2009a, 2011). SgE's pattern, which actually goes against the default pattern of H tones being assigned to 'stressed' syllables as attested in other contact varieties of English involving tone languages, e.g. Nigerian English, as well as in the English of Chinese second-language learners, has been argued to be attributable to the influence of a founder population, the Peranakans, where their vernaculars, Peranakan English and Baba Malay, have pitch prominence in word- and phrase-final position (Lim 2010b, 2011).

At the phrase level, the characteristic pattern in the intonation contour of SgE may be analysed as comprising sequences of sustained level steps or level tones which step up or down to each other, rather than glide more gradually from one pitch level to another (Lim 2004a). An illustration of such a pattern is provided in Figure 2, which depicts the intonation of the utterance *I think happier*, where it is evident that the pitch steps up abruptly to a high level pitch for *think*, and then steps down again for *happier*. Similarly, in Figure 3, the utterance *You told me* moves in a series of

[2] The tones on each syllable in the examples in section 3.1 are represented in the phonological tradition where L = Low tone (or in Asianist pitch level numbers 11), M = Mid tone (33), and H = High tone (55).

sustained level tones, each of which is at a slightly higher pitch than the previous one.

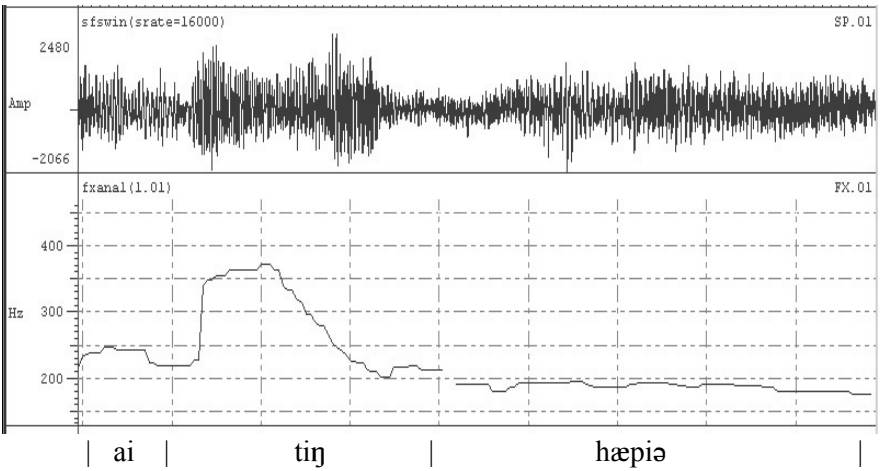

Figure 2. Sustained level step pattern in SgE utterance *I think happier* (from Lim 2004a)

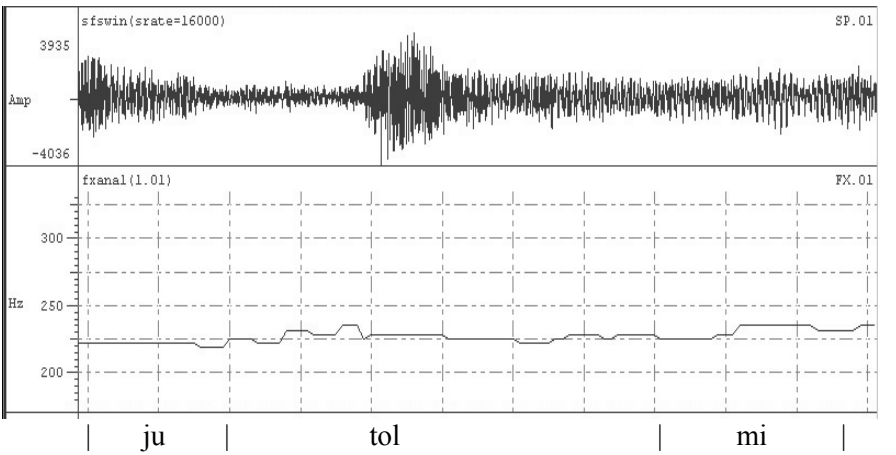

Figure 3. Sustained level step pattern in SgE utterance *You told me* (from Lim 2004a)

Compared with HKE seen in (11), SgE tends to prefer prominence on the phrase-final syllable such that the pitch is perceived as relatively high (Lim

2009a), with no significant decrease in fundamental frequency is measured compared to the initial syllable of the phrase-final word (Low 2000).[3]

3.2. Tone in discourse particles[4]

The most obvious presence of tone in SgE is perhaps that found in discourse particles. These SgE particles have long been acknowledged in most scholarship as coming from the (southern) Chinese languages (e.g. Platt 1987; Gupta 1992), though no specific language(s) tended to be identified or acknowledged as the source(s) of the particles (but see Lim 2007, 2009b for a comprehensive overview of their origins). Since the Chinese languages are tone languages, it is not surprising that in early scholarship on the particles the question of whether the particles themselves carry (lexical) tone was posed (Platt 1987); what is surprising is that this question was not investigated further. It is only in very recent work that these two issues have been seriously addressed (Lim 2007, 2009a, b). It has been argued that, compared to the earlier particles *lah, ah* and *what,* the larger set of SgE particles, namely *hor, leh, lor, ma* and *meh*, have their origins in Cantonese, and were acquired in SgE in a later era. In contrast to the earlier set, which either (a) came by route of Bazaar/Baba Malay and thus were transferred without Sinitic tone, or (b) have lost their tonal qualities over time, since they appeared in SgE earlier (Lim 2007, 2009b), the particles of the later, larger set (for convenience, referred to as the 'Cantonese set') have carried their original Sinitic tone into Singlish (Lim 2007, 2009a, b), and are thus of more direct interest to this chapter.

We therefore focus here on this Cantonese set, two examples of which are provided below in (19a) and (20a), from the Grammar of Spoken Singapore English Corpus (GSSEC) (see Lim 2007, 2009b for the full set). Note that, in contrast to most other scholarship on SgE, which does not represent the particles with tone, here the particles are transcribed together

---

[3] Experiments investigating emphatic and contrastive stress in SgE also demonstrate that speakers do not place prominence on the contrastive element as in 'standard' Englishes but systematically locate pitch prominence utterance-finally (Lim 2004b).

[4] If one considers discourse particles themselves, these may also be seen to comprise an areal feature of Asian Englishes, with particles from the substrates, such as *yaar* from Hindi, also found in Indian English (Lange 2009), in addition to the more well-known particles in SgE and HKE. We do not however address this areal feature in this chapter, but keep our focus on the areal feature of tone.

with their tones, represented as pitch level numbers, a practice proposed in Lim (2007).[5] These examples are accompanied in each case by an example of the corresponding particle in Cantonese from which each one derives (from Matthews and Yip 1994).[6] A comparison of the SgE and Cantonese particles in the (a) and (b) pairs (the relevant particles are in boldface), as well as in the complete set summarised in Table 1 (a slightly abbreviated version of that from Lim 2007), reveals striking parallels in segmental form, tone and meaning. In (19), for example, the SgE particle *hɔ24*, which always occurs with a rising tone, and which asserts a proposition, making it clear that a positive response from the addressee is expected (Lim 2007; Wee 2004: 124), is matched by the Cantonese *hó* particle, which has the same rising tone and also indicates an expectation of the addressee's confirmation (Matthews and Yip 1994: 347).

(19) a. A: But it's beautiful in that… how… I mean,
Finn got a chance to realise himself, right? SgE
B: He's quite innocent *la21* ***hɔ24***? Innocent.
'He's quite innocent, don't you agree?'
[asserting proposition, expecting agreement]

b. A: *Géi leng a* ***hó****?* Cantonese
quite nice PRT PRT
'Pretty nice, huh?' [expecting confirmation]
B: *Haih a.*
is PRT 'Yes, it is.'

The SgE particle *lɔ33* in (20a), which occurs with mid level tone, and which indicates obviousness, and in negative contexts inevitability or resignation (Lim 2007; Wee 2004: 123), is similarly matched by the Cantonese particle *lo* in (20b) with mid level tone and suggesting resignation (Matthews and Yip 1994: 352).

---

[5] SgE data for particles and utterances derive from the naturally occurring data in the Grammar of Spoken Singapore English Corpus (GSSEC; Lim and Foley 2004). The tones of the particles are represented as pitch level numbers 1 to 5 where, in the Asianist tradition, the larger the number the higher the pitch; thus *55* represents a high level tone, *24* represents a rising tone, and so on.

[6] The transcription of Cantonese examples follows the source (Matthews and Yip 1994), which uses the Yale system. Rising and falling tones are shown by rising and falling accents; high level tone is indicated by a level accent; no tonal indication is given for the mid level tone, and <h> is inserted after the vowel to indicate all low-register tones (low rising, low level and low falling).

(20) a. A: But um I might stop working for a while if I need to, if I need to *la21*, especially for looking after kids. SgE
B: But for me, I won't stop working ***lɔ33***. The most I won't give birth to kids ***lɔ33***. For the most I don't marry ***lɔ33***.
'In my case, (even if I have children to look after) I won't stop working. In the worst of cases, I won't have children. In the worst of cases, I won't get married.'
[indicating obviousness, resignation]

(20) b. *Ngóh mjī dím syun* ***lo*** Cantonese
I not-know how act PRT
'I really don't know what to do'
[indicating resignation]

Table 1. Particles in Colloquial Singapore English, Bazaar Malay, Hokkien, Cantonese and Mandarin (abbreviated from Lim 2007)

Singapore English	Bazaar Malay	Hokkien	Cantonese	Mandarin
lah draws attention to mood or attitude and appeals for accommodation; indicates solidarity, familiarity, informality ***[la24]*** is more persuasive ***[la21]*** is more matter-of-fact	***la*** provides emphasis (like Malay *lah* emphatic marker); softens command; indicates solidarity, familiarity, informality	***la*** indicates finality, completion, exclamatory or confirming meaning, emphasis, persuasiveness, dismissiveness, listing	***la55*** indicates general lack of definiteness or forcefulness; softens command ***la33*** like *la55* but less suppliant	***la*** gives emphasis
ah ***[a24]*** signals continuation (in narratives or explanations) and keeps interlocutors in contact; softens command; marks a question expecting	***a*** indicates interrogative, exclamatory, and indicative moods; signifies continuation of utterance	***a*** indicates completion, finality, slightly exclamatory; indicates interrogative, exclamatory, and indicative moods	***a23*** checks addressee's meaning or intention ***a21*** checks validity of an assumption; turns declarative into question,	***a*** reduces forcefulness in A-not-A and Qn-wd questions; gives emphasis

agreement ***[a21]*** marks a question requiring response			presupposing a positive answer; may suggest surprise, scepticism, disapproval	
what [wat21] indicates that information is obvious, contradicting something previously asserted		***ma*** indicates obviousness	***wo21*** indicates noteworthy discovery ***ma33*** (from *a55ma33*): indicates obvious reason, excuse	***ma*** provides emphasis (in listed items)
lor [lɔ33] indicates a sense of obviousness as well as resignation		***lo*** indicates obviousness	***lo33*** indicates obviousness, inevitability, irrevocability ***lo55*** points out what is obvious	***luo*** indicates obviousness
hor [hɔ24] marks a question asserting a proposition and trying to garner support for the proposition		***ho*** marks a question with expectation of agreement	***ho35*** expects confirmation of a statement or suggestion	
leh [le55] marks a question involving comparison		***ne ~ ni*** emphasises contrasts; ***le*** marks informality and intimacy	***ne55 ~ le55*** forms question; has comparative function; indicates 'what about?'	
meh [mɛ55] marks a question involving scepticism		***me*** acts as general question particle (in some Minnan varieties)	***me55*** indicates a highly marked 'surprise' question, checks truth of unexpected	

			state of affairs	
ma [ma33] indicates obviousness		***ma*** indicates obviousness	***ma33*** (from *a55ma33*) indicates obvious reason or excuse	***ma*** indicates emphasis, with disapproval, annoyance

The data presented above clearly show that the 'Cantonese set' of SgE particles were acquired in the SgE system in their entirety, including the tone they have in Cantonese; further, they must be used in that form, and not with any other pitch pattern, for the meaning required, regardless of the intonation pattern of the utterance in which they are found. These tonal items are situated within what is possibly a different prosodic system—one that may be more of a stress/intonation language, in which pitch functions in a system of intonation relatively comparable to the forms and functions identified in other 'standard' varieties of English such as StdBrE (Zhu and Lim 2002; Zhu 2003; Lim 2004a: 39-42). Such a phenomenon is noted by Gussenhoven (2004: 46) as one of three typologically special cases where tone languages are concerned, namely when there is lexically specified tone in intonation-only languages. An example of this situation is when there are tonal specifications in the 'segmental' lexicon for particles that invariably appear with a particular intonation contour, such as Dutch sentence-final [hɛ], which expresses an appeal for agreement and always appears with H after the pitch accent H*L on the preceding word (Kirsner and van Heuven 1996). Similarly, Bengali has focus-governing particles which come with their own pitch accent (Lahiri and Fitzpatrick-Cole 1999), i.e., they must be lexically specified for tones, which crucially constitute morphemes in their own right and do not form part of the representation of the segmentally represented morphemes, unlike lexical tone (Gussenhoven 2004: 46). The observation of tone at the SgE word level, which specifies an H-tone on the final syllable of each word, corresponds to the second of the typologically special cases identified by Gussenhoven (2004: 45-46) in which languages have non-distinctive word-based tone. An example of this is Noon, a language of Senegal, which predictably has an H-tone on the penultimate syllable of every word (Soukka 2000).

For HKE, work on Cantonese particles in English has tended to highlight electronic discourse, where users of icq[7] use particles liberally in

[7] 'icq' is an instant messaging computer service, popular in the late 1990s and early 2000s; the letters are homophonous with the phrase 'I seek you':

their Cantonese-English code-mixed text, that "almost every sentence they write ends with the little tag of a romanized particle" (Yang 2004: 110), as seen in (21) to (25) (from James 2001; Yang 2004).

(21) eat quick D *la*
(22) bad *ga* don't like *ar*
(23) I like this day *ga*
(24) I really have to go *la*
(25) may be LG1 [Lower Ground 1st Floor] is much better *wor* …
noisy *ma* … at G/F … also u seem used to study there *ma*

Unfortunately, in such icq data, tone is not reflected; however there is some pioneering work on spoken discourse of Cantonese-English bilinguals, from the Multilingual Hong Kong Corpus,[8] where, as in SgE, Cantonese particles are used in HKE with their full phonetic form including tone, and meaning, as seen in K's turns in (26) and (27).

(26) M: How are you? Good? You're …
K: Okay *a55*
okay PRT 'I'm okay'

(27) K: How are you *a33*?
PRT
M: I'm good *a33, hou24 gui11 a24*, but *dim24 hok11 gwong24dung55wa24, tung21 maai21* Tammy
I'm good PRT very tired PRT but how learn Cantonese together with Tammy
'I'm good, very tired, but how to learn Cantonese, with Tammy'
K: Tammy *hai11 bin55 go33 a33*?
be which CL PRT 'Who's Tammy?'

[8] The *Multilingual Hong Kong Corpus* is in the process of being constructed, based on English-Cantonese bilingual data collected in Hong Kong in 2004-2005, and we are grateful to Katherine Chen for making these examples available to us. In these examples, the relevant data are that of K's, a locally raised and educated Hong Kong Cantonese, English and Putonghua trilingual, while M's data is to be discounted as M is a native English speaker learning Cantonese. As with the SgE examples, the tones of the particles are represented here as pitch level numbers 1 to 5 where, in the Asianist tradition, the larger the number the higher the pitch; thus *55* represents a high level tone, *24* represents a rising tone, and so on.

4. The significance of tone

It is obvious that, at this stage, SgE and HKE are not tone languages the likes of Chinese varieties (though see Lim 2009, 2011, for arguments for such Englishes as tone languages). In comparison to these, they show selected and restricted use of lexical tone in specific functional domains, i.e. discourse particles, or at word (and phrase) level but without contrastive meaning. It is often the case that the most salient discourse categories are the first to be affected in contact situation (Matras 2000), and this might explain the type of categorical transfer observed here. In other areas of the lexicon, we observe a more general reinterpretation of tonal features as intonation patterns, which could develop further in the future. However, in relation to English it is clearly a fact that AEs are tonally far more complex, having evolved a set of suprasegmental features normally not found in standard varieties.

That tone is a strong areal feature, easily transmitted through contact, is beyond doubt in typological and contact literature (Matisoff 2001). Whether tone spreads early or late in contact situations may be more difficult to establish. It may be argued that, since tone is traditionally not observed in early stages of contact language formation, it could be a feature that appears only later in evolution, when robust substrate transfer is occurring. This is possible, though it fails to take into account two methodological problems: (a) the notorious difficulty with diagnosing tone from a Eurocentric perspective, and (b) the high degree of variation in contact language formation between varieties spoken by the lexifier speakers and those used by the substrate speakers (see Ansaldo, Matthews and Smith 2010). Moreover, one could ask whether early stages of contact language formation are really indicative of any stable grammatical system, or whether they should be treated as highly unstable patterns of code-mixing. In this sense, the question of time-depth is not easy to resolve. However, SgE and HKE do already provide tentative answers. While SgE is at this point in time a stable nativized variety of English (e.g. categorised as in Phase 4 of endonormative stabilization in Schneider's 2007 Dynamic Model), with a wide Sinitic substrate, spoken as one of two dominant languages by a majority of young Singaporeans (the other being Mandarin for ethnically Chinese Singaporeans), HKE is arguably not variety of English at all (though categorised as attaining Phase 3 of nativization in Schneider 2007, and argued for as a legitimate New English in e.g. Bolton 2002). English in HK does not have an extended and homogeneous speech community, but is spoken along a continuum and to different degrees by a limited amount of the population. HKE as a mixed code is largely restricted

to higher education, university students who are exposed to English as medium of instruction, and internationally educated Hong Kong professionals. In the middle and higher generation of high social status, standard English is spoken, with extremely few HKE features. In this sense, HKE is closer to an unstable system of code-mixing patterns than to a nativized variety. Nonetheless, it does feature a transfer of tonal features, reinterpreted as MHL patterns in its vocabulary. This suggests that suprasegmental features can indeed spread very early in contact situations. This is however speculative for now, and much more needs to be understood about this peculiar feature of AEV.

5. Final remarks

This chapter has argued that it may be difficult to identify significant areal features in the English varieties of Asia, due to the fact that (a) the contact situations in which they evolve vary greatly, thus rendering observations of contact-induced change hardly comparable and (b) the by now accepted theoretical weakness, both in universalist and typological perspective, of the notion of anglo- or vernacular universals. Nonetheless, when we narrow down our search to areas where the dominant languages are of the isolating and tonal type, as is the case for China and Southeast Asia, we see that indeed the Asian varieties that evolve in such ecologies show (i) a tendency towards isolating morphology and (ii) reinterpretation of stress and intonation through tonal values, as well as retention of tonal distinctions in subsets of the lexicon. Observation (ii) has been shown to hold for SgE and HKE but can reasonably be extended to comparable ecologies, from Thailand and Vietnam to Northern China and Japan, for example. As for observation (i), already discussed in Ansaldo (2010), and noted in Smzrecsanyi and Kortmann (2009), we have pointed to a methodological difficulty, based on the competition between two possible explanations: while Ansaldo (2009b) clearly argues for isolating tendencies as a result of the typological matrix in which a variety evolves, traditionally loss of morphology is advocated as a result of SLA process more generally (or standardization, see Trudgill 2009), and it is quite likely that, in the case of AEs, these two explanations combine, weakening thus the claim of isolating morphology as an areal feature only. Finally, we have suggested that the fact that HKE, in its instability and early stages of formation, already displays tonal features can be taken as an indication that tone is indeed selected even in the early stages in contact-induced ecologies if it is a dominant feature of the matrix in which a given variety evolves.

In the future evolution of Asian Englishes, we predict that we will see more horizontal diffusion from one AE to another, considering that speakers of English in Asia are increasingly using their own varieties, rather than a more colonial or international variety, to communicate in intra-Asian contexts. A number of features, especially those more pragmatically dominant (as discussed in section 4) and/or susceptible to contact-induced diffusion, such as discourse particles, and intonation patterns which are dominant in some respect (e.g. used by a prestigious group, dominant in discourse, etc), are envisaged as likely to spread across AEs, especially when reinforced by common or similar substrate typology. Already there are the beginnings of anecdotal reports of features being transmitted from one AE to another: for example, the donation of educational software CDs from Singapore to rural schools in the Philippines has led to Filipino children acquiring the characteristic Singapore English particle *lah*, Aurelio Vilbar, p.c. October 2009). Whether tonal features may in future spread beyond ecologies where tonality is present in the feature pool remains to be seen. The possibility is certainly there.

References

Ansaldo, Umberto

2008 'Revisiting Sri Lanka Malay: Genesis and classification', in: K. David Harrison, David Rood and Arianne Dwyer (eds) *A World of Many Voices: Lessons from Documenting Endangered Languages*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, pp. 13-42.

2009a 'The Asian typology of English: Theoretical and methodological considerations', in: Lim and Gisborne (eds), pp. 133-148.

2009b *Contact Languages: Ecology and Evolution in Asia*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

2010 'Contact and Asian varieties of English', in: Raymond Hickey (ed.) *The Handbook of Language Contact*. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, pp. 498-517.

Ansaldo, Umberto, Stephen Matthews and Geoff Smith

2010 'China Coast Pidgin. Texts and contexts', *Journal of Pidgin and Creole Languages* 25.1: 63-94.

Bautista, Ma. Lourdes S. and Kingsley Bolton (ed.)

2008 *Philippine English: Linguistic and Literary Perspectives*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.

Bolton, Kingsley (ed.)

2002 *Hong Kong English: Autonomy and Creativity*. (Asian Englishes Today.) Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.

Chambers, Jack K.
2004 'Dynamic typology and vernacular universals', in: Kortmann (ed.), pp. 127-145.
2009 'Cognition and the linguistic continuum from vernacular to standard', in: Filppula et al. (eds), pp. 19-32.
Chen, Charles C. Jr. and Ching-Pong Au
2004 'Tone assignment in second language prosodic learning', Speech Prosody 2004. Nara, Japan. http://www.isca-speech.org/archive/sp2004/sp04_091.html Accessed 5/2/2009.
Curnow, Timothy Jowan
2001 'What language features can be "borrowed"?', in: Alexandra Y. Aikhenvald and Robert M. W. Dixon (eds) *Areal Diffusion and Genetic Inheritance: Problems in Comparative Linguistics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 412–436.
Enfield, Nicholas J.
2003 *Linguistic Epidemiology: Semantics and Grammar of Language Contact in Mainland Southeast Asia*. London: Routledge Curzon.
Filppula, Markku, Juhani Klemola and Heli Paulasto (eds)
2009 *Vernacular Universals and Language Contacts: Evidence from Varieties of English and Beyond.* London: Routledge.
Good, Jeff
2004a 'Split prosody and creole simplicity: The case of Saramaccan', *Journal of Portuguese Linguistics* 3: 11–30.
2004b 'Tone and accent in Saramaccan: Charting a deep split in the phonology of a language', *Lingua* 114: 575-619.
2006 'A twice-mixed creole? Tracing the history of a prosodic split in the Saramaccan lexicon', Ms, Max-Planck-Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology, Leipzig.
Gupta, Anthea Fraser
1992 'The pragmatic particles of Singapore Colloquial English', *Journal of Pragmatics* 18: 31–57.
Gussenhoven, Carlos
2004 *The Phonology of Tone and Intonation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Gut, Ulrike
2005 'Nigerian English prosody', *English World-Wide* 26: 153-177.
Hoffmann, Thomas and Lucia Siebers (eds)
2009 *World Englishes: Problems, Properties, Prospects.* Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
James, Gregory
2001 'Cantonese particles in Hong Kong students' English e-mails', *English Today* 17.3: 9-16.
Kirkpatrick, Andy
2006 'English as a lingua franca in Asia: Implications for research and teaching', in: Azirah Hashim and Norizah Hassan (eds) *English in*

Southeast Asia: Prospects, Perspectives and Possibilities Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, pp. 21-40.

Kirsner, Robert S. and Vincent J. van Heuven

1996 'Boundary tones and the semantics of the Dutch final particles *hè*, *hoor*, *zeg*, and *joh*', in: Crit Cremers and Marcel den Dikken (eds) *Linguistics in the Netherlands* 13, pp. 133–145.

Kortmann, Bernd (ed.)

2004 *Dialectology Meets Typology: Dialect Grammar from a Cross-Linguistic Perspective*. Berlin and New York: Mouton de Gruyter.

Kouwenberg, Silvia

2004 'The grammatical function of Papiamentu tone', *Journal of Portuguese Linguistics* 3: 55–69.

Lahiri, Aditi and Jennifer Fitzpatrick-Cole

1999 'Emphatic clitics and focus intonation in Bengali', in: Wim Zonneveld and René Kager (eds) *Phrasal Phonology*. Nijmegen: Nijmegen University Press, pp. 119–144.

Lange, Claudia

2009 '"Where's the party yaar!" Discourse particles in Indian English', in: Hoffmann and Siebers (eds), pp. 107-226.

Lim, Lisa

2004a 'Sounding Singaporean', in: Lim (ed.), pp. 19–56.

2004b 'Everything you wanted to know about how stressed Singaporean Englishes are', in: Somsonge Burusphat (ed.) *Papers from the Eleventh Annual Meeting of the Southeast Asian Linguistics Society*. Arizona: Program for Southeast Asian Studies, Arizona State University, pp. 429-444.

2004c (ed.) *Singapore English: A Grammatical Description*. (Varieties of English Around the World G33.) Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

2007 'Mergers and acquisitions: On the ages and origins of Singapore English particles', *World Englishes* 26: 446–473.

2008 'Dynamic linguistic ecologies of Asian Englishes', *Asian Englishes* 11.1: 52–55.

2009a 'Revisiting English prosody: (Some) New Englishes as tone languages?', in: Lim and Gisborne (eds), pp. 218-239.

2009b 'Not just an "Outer Circle", "Asian" English: Singapore English and the significance of ecology', in: Hoffmann and Siebers (eds), pp. 179-206.

2010a 'Migrants and 'mother tongues': Extralinguistic forces in the ecology of English in Singapore', in: Lisa Lim, Anne Pakir and Lionel Wee (eds) *English in Singapore: Modernity and Management.* Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, pp. 19-54.

2010b 'Peranakan English in Singapore', in: Daniel Schreier, Peter Trudgill, Edgar Schneider and Jeff Williams (eds) *The Lesser Known Varieties of English: An Introduction*. (Studies in English Language.) Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 327-347.

2011 'Tone in Singlish: Substrate features from Sinitic and Malay', in: Claire Lefebvre (ed.) *Creoles, Their Substrates and Language Typology*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, pp. 271-287.

Lim, Lisa and Joseph A. Foley

2004 'English in Singapore and Singapore English: Background and methodology', in: Lim (ed.), pp. 1−18.

Lim, Lisa and Nikolas Gisborne (eds)

2009 *The Typology of Asian Englishes*. Special issue of *English World-Wide* 30.2.

Lim, Lisa and Tan Ying Ying

2001 'How are we stressed?! Phonetic correlates and stress placement in Singaporean English', in: John A. Maidment and Eva Estebas i Vilaplana (eds) *Proceedings of PTLC2001: Phonetics Teaching and Learning Conference 2001*. London: University College London, pp. 27-30.

Low, Ee Ling

2000 'Is lexical stress placement different in Singapore English and British English?', in: Adam Brown, David Deterding, and Low Ee Ling (eds) *The English Language in Singapore: Research on Pronunciation*. Singapore: Singapore Association of Applied Linguistics, pp. 22-34.

Luke, Kang-kwong

2000 'Phonological re-interpretation: The assignment of Cantonese tones to English words', Ninth International Conference on Chinese Linguistics, National University of Singapore.

2008 'Stress and intonation in Hong Kong English', Fourteenth Conference of the International Association for World Englishes (IAWE), Hong Kong.

Mair, Christian

2003 'Kreolismen und verbales Indentitätsmanagement im geschriebenen jamaikanischen Englisch', in: Elisabeth Vogel, Antonia Napp and Wolfram Lutterer (eds) *Zwischen Ausgrenzung und Hybridisierung.* Würzburg: Ergon, pp. 79-96.

Matras, Yaron

2000 'How predictable is contact-induced change in grammar?', in: Colin Renfrew, April McMahon and Larry Trask (eds) *Time Depth in Historical Linguistics*. Vol. 2. Oxford: MacDonald Institute for Archaeological Research, pp. 563–583.

Matthews, Stephen J. and Virginia Yip

1994 *Cantonese: A Comprehensive Grammar*. London: Routledge.

Matisoff, James A.

2001 'Genetic vs. contact relationship: Prosodic diffusibility in South-East Asian languages', in: Alexandra Y. Aikhenvald and Robert M. W. Dixon (eds) *Areal Diffusion and Genetic Inheritance: Problems in Comparative Linguistics.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 291-327.

Mesthrie, Rajend
2008 'Synopsis: The phonology of English in Africa and South and South-East Asia', in: Rajend Mesthrie (ed.) *Varieties of English 4: Africa, South and Southeast Asia*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, pp. 307-319.
Nettle, Daniel
1998 *Linguistic Diversity*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Ng, E-Ching
2008 'Malay meets Chinese meets English: Where does colloquial Singaporean English word-level tone come from?', Language Contact Workshop, Bristol.
2009 'Borrowing tones: Word-level tone in Colloquial Singaporean English', Society for Pidgin and Creole Languages (SPCL) Conference, San Francisco.
Platt, John
1987 'Communicative functions of particles in Singapore English', in: Ross Steele and Terry Threadgold (eds) *Language Topics: Essays in Honour of Michael Halliday*. Vol. 1. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, pp. 391–401.
Remijsen, Bert
2001 *Word Prosodic Systems of Raja Ampat Languages*. Utrecht: LOT.
Remijsen, Bert and Vincent J. van Heuven
2005 'Stress, tone and discourse prominence in Curaçao Papiamentu', Ms, Leiden University.
Rivera-Castillo, Yolanda and Lucy Pickering
2004 'Phonetic correlates of stress and tone in a mixed system', *Journal of Pidgin and Creole Languages* 19: 261–284.
Schneider, Edgar W.
2007 *Postcolonial English: Varieties Around the World*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Sharma, Devyani
2009 'Typological diversity in New Englishes', in: Lim and Gisborne (eds), pp. 170-195.
Soukka, Maria
2000 *A Descriptive Grammar of Noon: A Cangin Language of Senegal.* Lincom Europa.
Svantesson, Jan-Olof
2001 'Tonogenesis in South East Asia: Mon-Khmer and beyond', in: Shigeki Kaji (ed.) *Proceedings from the Symposium Cross-Linguistic Studies of Tonal Phenomena: Historical Development, Phonetics of Tone, and Descriptive Studies.* Tokyo: Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, Institute for Language and Cultures of Asia and Africa, pp. 45–58.
Smzrecsanyi, Benedict and Bernd Kortmann
2009 'Vernacular Universals and Angloversals in a typological perspective', in: Filppula, Klemola and Paulasto (eds), pp. 33-56.

Thomason, Sarah G. and Terrence Kaufman
1988 *Language Contact, Creolization and Genetic Linguistics*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
Trudgill, Peter
2009 'Vernacular universals and the sociolinguistic typology of English dialects', in: Filppula, Klemola and Paulasto (eds), pp. 304-322.
Wee, Lian Hee
2008a 'Phonological patterns in the Englishes of Singapore and Hong Kong', *World Englishes* 27.3/4: 480–501.
2008b 'Notes on SgE tone', Ms, Hong Kong Baptist University.
Wee, Lionel
2004 'Reduplication and discourse particles', in: Lim (ed.), pp. 105–126.
Yip, Moira
2002 *Tone*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Yang, Suying
2004 'Globalization, tribalization and online communication', in: Kwok-kan Tam and Timothy Weiss (eds) *English and Globalization: Perspectives from Hong Kong and Mainland China.* Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, pp. 101-113.
Zhu, Shenfa
2003 Intonation in Singapore English: An auditory and acoustic analysis of four sentence types. PhD dissertation, National University of Singapore.
Zhu, Shenfa and Lisa Lim
2002 'Intonation in Singapore English declaratives: An auditory and acoustic analysis', Thirteenth World Congress of Applied Linguistics (AILA2002), Singapore.