Pragmatic function of low boundary tone in Puyuma: question intonation and beyond
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Puyuma is an Austronesian language spoken in Taiwan and geographically often referred to as Formosan. Puyuma is verb initial and displays variations in word order, thus VOS, VSO and SVO order occur. We perform an investigation of Puyuma word order variation by integrating syntax, information structure and prosody. Here we present a functional analysis of prosodic events in Puyuma based on recordings of four speakers (three women and one men, aged between 58 and 78) of the Nanwang dialect (less than 1000 speakers) in Nanwang village in southern Taiwan from June 2011.

We propose no lexical stress in Puyuma. Two places in a word are marked for intonation purposes. Thus, almost every content word tends to build a prosodic phrase, analysed as accentual phrase (AP). AP is marked by a high boundary tone on the penultimate (H_{ap}). Word final syllable gets high or low boundary tone, indicating a major phrase (a tentative notion). The most striking contrast between the choice of low and high boundary is found in declaratives as opposed to yes-no questions. In Puyuma, declaratives end with high boundary, while interrogatives have low boundary tone, which is a typologically unusual feature. However, since the contrast between low and high boundaries is found in other cases as well in our material, we suggest that the choice of the type of boundaries is not simply governed by the sentence mood. Here are some examples of structures that trigger contrasting choice of high versus low boundary tone:

High boundary tone	Low boundary tone
[declarative] $_{high}$	[interrogative] $_{low}$
[[S] $_{high}$ [VO]] $_{high}$	[[S$_{topic}$] $_{low}$ [VO]] $_{high}$
[Head $_{high}$ + Dependent] $_{high}$	[Dependent $_{low}$ + Head] $_{high}$

We suggest that type of boundaries reflects "autonomy" status, the main meaning of low boundary being "I am not finished, the important part is coming" and high boundary signaling semantically autonomous part. Thus, while the distribution of the H_{ap} functions for prosodic chunking, the use and choice of the type of the boundary tones on the word final syllables are used for discourse purposes.
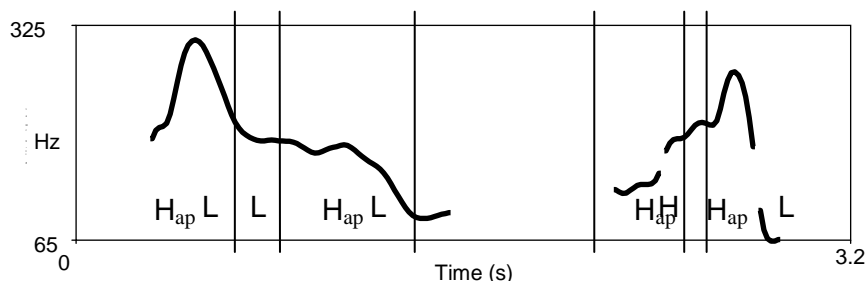

Figure 1. *Illustration of tonal course of of an interrogative utterance*
Idriyu   na   bulrabulrayan i   tremakaw   dra   belbel?
this   NOM   woman   TOPIC   steal   OBJ   banana
"Did that woman steal a banana?". Boundaries between words are shown with straight lines.
H_{ap}= rising tones of accentual phrases, L and H = major phrase boundaries on final syllables.