



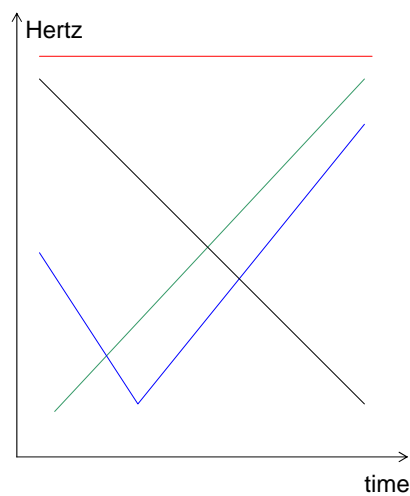
An Animated and Narrated Glossary of  
Terms used in Linguistics  
*presents*

## Tone letter/value



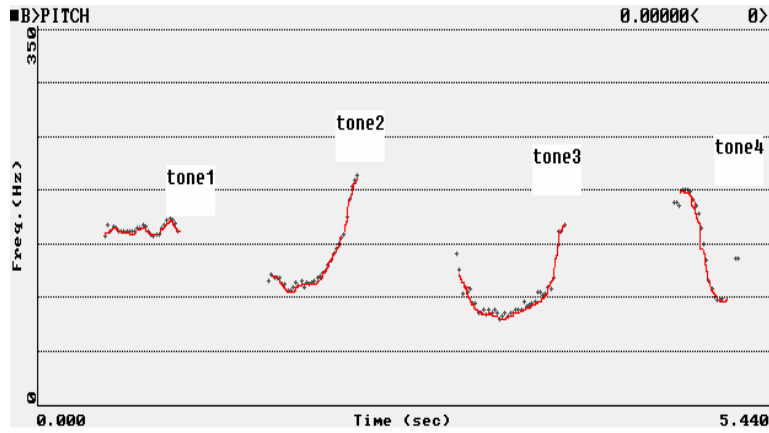
## Tones in Putonghua

- Tone 1: High flat
- Tone 2: Rising
- Tone 3: Dipping
- Tone 4: Falling





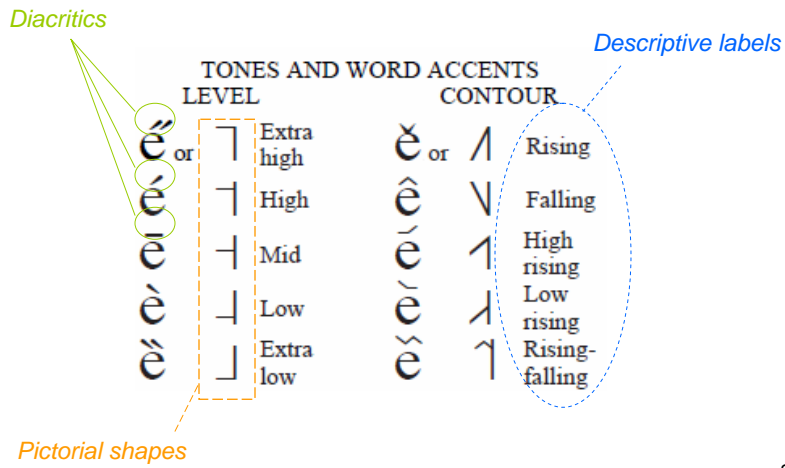
# Putonghua Tones (Wee 2004)



Slide 3



# Indicating tone



Slide 4



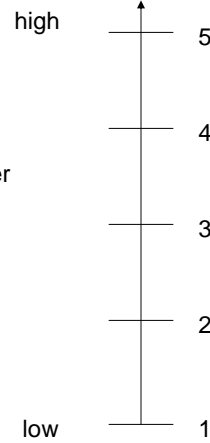
## Tone Letters (Chao 1930)

Tone contour can be expressed in terms of **sequence** of tone letters indicating **starting, turning and ending points**.

Level tones can be [55], [33], [11] etc depending on (i) the kinds of tone contrasts in the language and (ii) the pitch level of the speaker using normal phonation.

Likewise, rising tones can be [15], [35], [13] etc, and falling tones are [51], [42], ...

Complex tones can be expressed as a sequence, e.g. [214], [353], ...



Slide 5



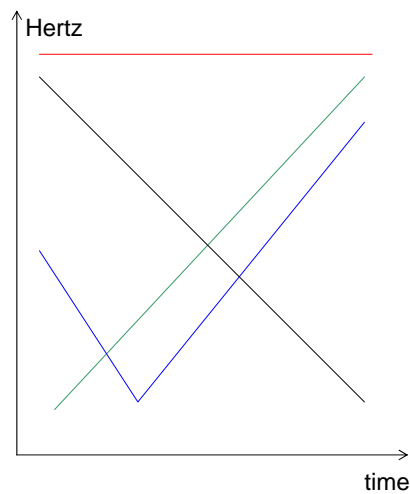
## Tones in Putonghua

**Tone 1: High flat = [55]**

**Tone 2: Rising = [15]**

**Tone 3: Dipping = [214]**

**Tone 4: Falling = [51]**



Slide 6

## Tone value

When tones are expressed in terms of tone letters [1, 2, 3, 4, 5], that expression is known as the **tone value** of that tone.

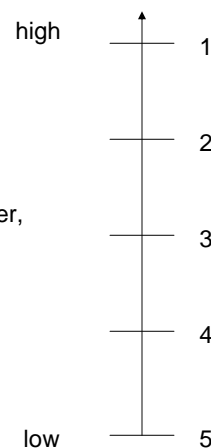
E.g. Cantonese

|             |             |              |             |            |               |             |             |            |
|-------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|------------|---------------|-------------|-------------|------------|
| 诗           | 时           | 使            | 米           | 试          | 事             | 识           | 各           | 食          |
| <i>poem</i> | <i>time</i> | <i>cause</i> | <i>rice</i> | <i>try</i> | <i>matter</i> | <i>know</i> | <i>each</i> | <i>eat</i> |
| [55]        | [21]        | [35]         | [13]        | [33]       | [22]          | [5]         | [3]         | [2]        |
| [53]        |             |              |             |            |               |             |             |            |

Slide 7

## Tone Letters (South American)

Tone contour can be expressed in terms of **sequence** of tone letters indicating **starting, turning and ending points**. Hyphens are often used to separate each tone letter, e.g. [3-5] is a low falling tone in this system.



Slide 8



## Further reading

Ashby, Michael & John Maidment (2005) *Introducing Phonetic Science*. Cambridge University Press.

Bao, Zhi-ming (1990) *On the Nature of Tone*. PhD dissertation, MIT, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Bao, Zhi-ming. 1999. *The Structure of Tone*. New York: Oxford Univ. Press.

Chao, Yuen-Ren (1930) A System of Tone Letters. *La Maître phonétique*. 45:24-27.

Shih, Chi-lin. (1988) Tone and Intonation in Mandarin. In N. Clements ed. *Working Papers of the Cornell Phonetics Laboratory* 3. pp.83-109.

Wee, Lian-Hee (2004) *Inter-tier Correspondence Theory*. PhD dissertation, Rutgers Univ.

Wee, Lian-Hee (2007) Unraveling the relationship between Mandarin tones and musical melody. *Journal of Chinese Linguistics* 35.1:128-144.

Wee, Lian-Hee (2008) Inquiry into the Musical Nature of Linguistic Tone. In Hsiao, Y, Hui-chuan Hsu, L.H. Wee and D.A. Ho (eds) *Interfaces in Chinese Phonology: Festschrift in Honor of Matthew Chen on his 70th Birthday*, pp. 139-160. Taiwan: Institute of Linguistics, Academia Sinica.

Yip, Moira (1980) *The Tonal Phonology of Chinese*. PhD dissertation, MIT, Cambridge, Massachusetts. Published 1991, New York: Garland Publishing.

Yip, Moira (2002) *Tone*. Cambridge Univ. Press.

Slide 9



## The End

Wee, Lian-Hee and Winnie H.Y. (2009)  
*An animated and narrated glossary of terms used in Linguistics*.  
Hong Kong Baptist University.