BBN–ANG–141 Foundations of phonology
9. Stress, accent, & intonation

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outline

- what is what?
- stress and vowel quality
- stress patterns
- stressless "words"
- multiply stressed words
- accents and the tonic
- intonation
  - parts of the tone unit
  - types of nuclear tone

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- stress is stable: a stressed vowel does not become unstressed, an unstressed vowel does not become stressed (we must assume that *átom* and *atómic* are not related phonologically; note that apart from m, they are totally different: átəm vs əthómık)

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- many dictionaries use different symbols for stressed and unstressed ə and ij: *agree* ə'griː vs *ugly* 'ʌgli; *Kennedy* 'kenədi vs *Kentucky* ken'tʌki (dictionaries using different symbols for other stressed–unstressed vowel pairs are rare)

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generalizations

- no word without ‘s’: Stress Requirement
- no word beginning with ‘ww’: Early Stress Requirement

stressless “words”

Jane can swim well dʒéjn kən swím wél vs dʒéjn kán swim wel

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- some monosyllabic function words do not have a weak form: *off, on, my, I, they, may, might, ought*

multipy stressed words

ss	campaigned	Cam reigned
sws	contradict	Cohn's a dick
swws	catamaran	Pat had a plan
swsw	Madagascar	Maddy asked her
swwswsw	telecommunication	Terry can fetch the children
swswsww	indivisibility	Indie Vickie's billing me

accents and the tonic

the tonic is always the last accent, which is typically (but not always) the last stress:
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reasons for not having an accent on a stressed vowel

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- w w ś Ś: It's a blackBIRD (not a blackboard)

accent clash

s (w) ś (w)	ś (w) s (w) ś . . .
thirtéen	thírteen mén
sardíne	sárdine sándwich
Heathrów	Héathrow Áirport
left hánd	léft-hand dríve
black bírd	blácк bird's nést (= bláckbird's nést)
kangaróo	kángaroo párk
Waterlóo	Wáterloo Státion
académic	ácademic yéar
fundaméntal	fúndamental érror
chicken-héarted	chícken-hearted héroes
intercontinéntal	íntercontinental flíght
CIÁ	ĆIA ágent

note: retúrn tícket, lagóon páradise (since *return, lagoon* are ws, not ss)

noncompounds stressed like compounds

compound	
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noncompound

śs	cohort, ally, decade
śws	apricot, satisfy, renegade
śsw	ancestor, Chewbacca, orgasm
śwsw	alligator, pomegranade, Schwarzenegger

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phonologically

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- modalities, attitudes, (non)completeness in intonation languages (like English or Hungarian)

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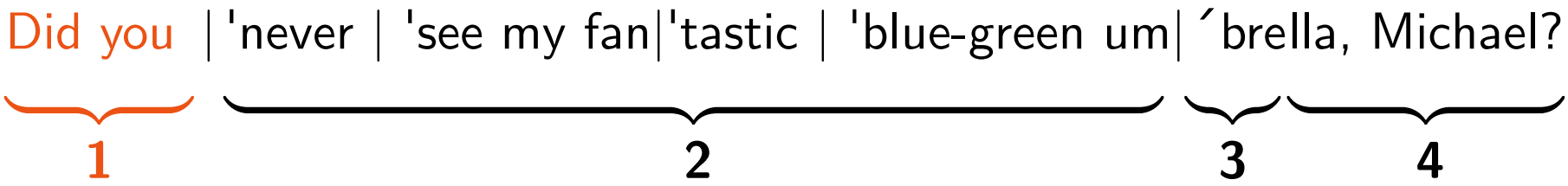
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- modalities, attitudes, (non)completeness in intonation languages (like English or Hungarian)
- lexical words in tone languages (like Mandarin)
  [mā] ‘mother’, [má] ‘hemp’, [mǎ] ‘horse’, [mà] ‘scold’

parts of the tone unit



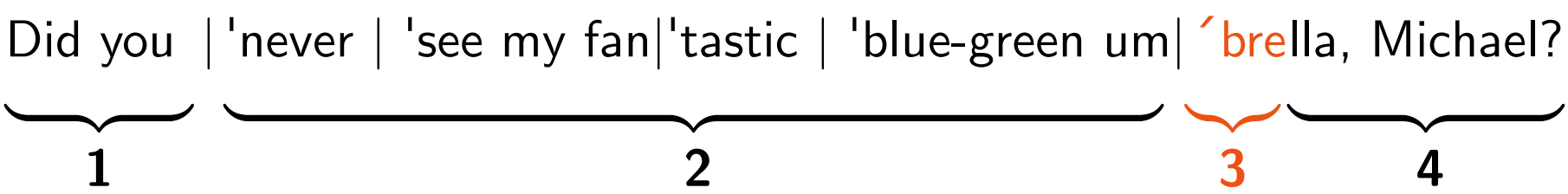
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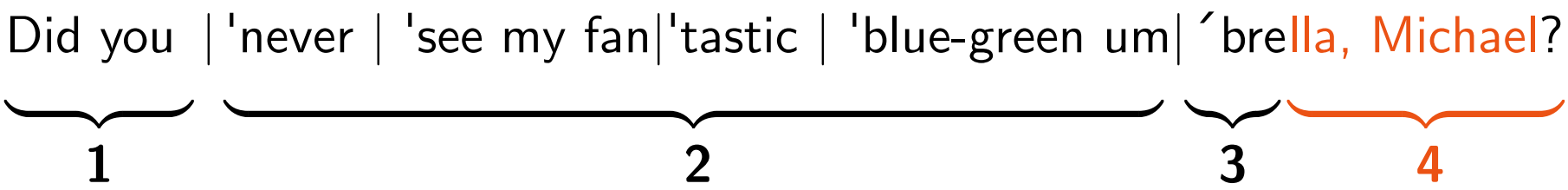
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parts of the tone unit



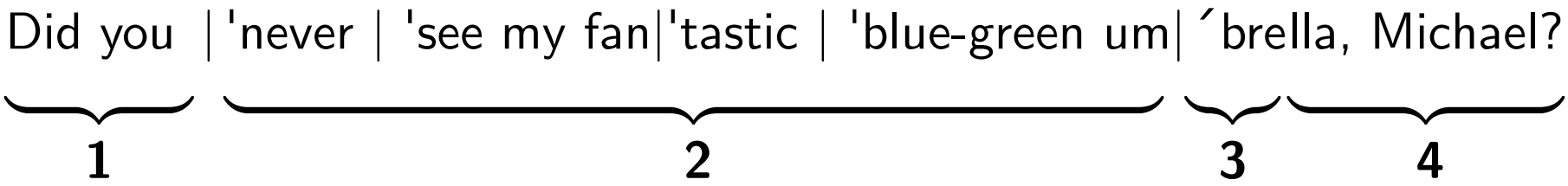
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4. the tail, all unaccented syllables after the tonic

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- ▷ tone-units may lack one or other of these parts: *did you ´eat?* (1+3); '*sar`dines* (2+3), etc.; only the tonic is obligatory: *ˌme?* (3)

types of nuclear tone: falling tone

also known as long fall

typical of completed statements, wh-questions, confirmation-seeking tag questions, exclamations, eg

- you 'always 'make such a `mess, John
- 'what can you 'see on the `blackboard
- 'that was a 'nasty ˇsurprise | `wasn't it
- what a `disaster

types of nuclear tone: high-rising tone

also known as long rise

typical of polar (ie yes-no) questions, echo questions (tonic always on wh-word), information-seeking tag questions, eg

- is it 'you who 'made such a ´mess, John
- are you ´ready
- you're ´ready
- (uninterpretable noise) ´what did you say
- 'this is `Schubert, | ´isn't it

types of nuclear tone: low-rising tone

also known as short rise

typical of uncertainty and parentheticals, eg

- 'maybe the 'baby's a ˏsleep
- it 'looks very 'much like the ˏother one
- `today | says ˏMary | we'll `leave
- `Richard | 'often 'called the ˏLionhearted | 'returned from Je`rusalem

types of nuclear tone: falling-rising tone

also known as fall-rise

typical of incompleteness or non-finality, in subordinate clauses, main clauses followed by another main clause, lists, personal opinions, eg

- when we ˇget there | we'll have a good `meal
- I'd `buy you it | if I could ˇafford it
- I 'opened the ˇdoor | and `went in
- ˇone | ˇtwo | ˇthree | `four
- 'John could ˇdo it for us
- he's not ˇthat bad

sample exam questions

which stress pattern is impossible in English?

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2. ssw
3. wws
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