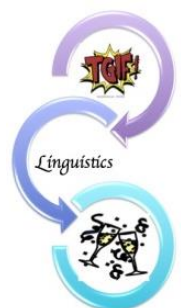


TGIF: The NTU Linguist Chatroom



**Join us! Friday, 1 March 2019, 3.30pm
@ HSS Conference Room (HSS-05-57)**

An Evidential Analysis of CSE lah *by Lee Junwen*

The Colloquial Singapore English (CSE) particle lah has been observed to convey many different, sometimes contradictory, pragmatic effects such as forcefulness or friendliness. Because it can be pronounced using several pitch contours, some analyses (e.g. Wong 2004) characterise the particle as a set of polysemous variants distinguished by pitch and function. However, even within one pitch contour, lah can still have multiple pragmatic effects. An issue with current analyses is that they often focus only on one aspect of how lah is used, e.g. for emphasis, and neglect or be unable to account for other aspects, e.g. to convey friendliness or solidarity.

In this talk, I focus on two pitch contours of lah – a low, level contour (lah21) and a high, falling contour (lah51) – and propose an analysis of lah as an evidential particle that indicates that the speaker's evidence underwriting her lah-marked assertion is completely reliable. While the issue of whether lah is polysemous will remain open in this talk, I show how this core meaning is able to better account for the particle's various effects within each pitch contour, and suggest a hypothesis about how intonation may interact with this core meaning for future work.

Speaker



After successfully defending his dissertation in 2018, Junwen will be receiving a PhD in Linguistics from Brown University later this year. His research interests include the semantics and pragmatics of discourse particles, particularly in Colloquial Singapore English (CSE), and how these particles behave in different speech acts such as assertions and imperatives. He has been tutoring at NTU since 2018.

