

## Talk: Reconstructing the Kugama tone system

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The paper presents the first results of the internal reconstruction of the tone system of Kugama, an Adamawa language of Nigeria. The Kugama tone system distinguishes three tone levels: High (H), Mid (M), and Low (L). I argue that the three-level tone system in Kugama originates from a two-level tone system. The current three levels have emerged primarily through the phonologization of an earlier phonetic raising of H and L in certain environments. Thus, the H level of the current three-level tone system goes back to the phonetic raising of H before a tautosyllabic L. For instance, this is suggested by the following synchronic tonal rule: M becomes H before a floating <sup>L</sup>, as in (1). The H tone of the two-level system that did not precede a tautosyllabic L was reinterpreted as M in the present-day Kugama tone system.

- (1)
- |         |                  |                     |
|---------|------------------|---------------------|
| /vélí   |                  | ‘ɲōōkī/             |
| vélī    | <sup>L</sup>     | ɲōōkī  <sup>1</sup> |
| husband | GEN <sup>2</sup> | daughter            |
| ‘groom’ |                  |                     |

The L tone of the two-level system was equally phonetically raised before a raised H and subsequently this phonetically raised L was also reinterpreted as M. For example, nouns with an MH<sup>L</sup> tone pattern in their Free Form (main allomorph) have an LM tone pattern in their Construct Form 1 (a secondary allomorph): *kǎm* |kǎm<sup>L</sup>| ‘body hair’ and *kǎm* ‘body hair.CF1’, as in (2).

- (2)
- |                   |  |           |
|-------------------|--|-----------|
| /kǎm              |  | púūpī/    |
| kǎm               |  | púūpī     |
| body_hair.CF1     |  | whiteness |
| ‘white body hair’ |  |           |

I will discuss other relevant phonetic and phonological properties of the current Kugama tone system as well as provide further evidence for the proposed internal reconstruction.

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<sup>1</sup> Vertical bars |a| represent the morphophonological level.

<sup>2</sup> CF1 - Construct Form 1, GEN - Genitive