Tonal changes in inalienable possessive constructions and nominal compounds in Wam (Kugama)

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Overview

1. General information on Wam

2. Possessive constructions and nominal compounds in Wam

3. Tonal changes involved in the formation of inalienable possessive constructions and nominal compounds in Wam

General information on Wam

– ɲáː wàm 'the Wam language'
(KUGAMA)

- Spoken in a number of villages in Mayo-Belwa LGA and Fufore LGA of Adamawa State

- Yendang group of the Adamawa language family

- 5000 speakers (Ethnologue)

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Previous research on Wam

- First field trip conducted in Yola, the capital of Adamawa State, in January 2014 as part of research for my BA and later for my MA theses at St. Petersburg State University, Russia

- Second fieldwork mission to Wam communities in March – June 2017, and third (but not last) during April – May 2018 as part of my PhD project from Labex EFL (project LC2 "Areal phenomena in northern sub-Saharan Africa")

General features of Wam

- 3 contrastive level tones
- Nasalized vowels
- Vowel length (?)
- Labio-velar k͡p, g͡b
- Implosives ɓ, ɗ
- SVO

Types of possessive constructions (PC)

Type of construction	POSSESSOR	Word-order
Inalienable	Proper Name	[POSSESSEE – POSSESSOR]
	Common Name	
Alienable	Proper Name	[POSSESSEE + -RI + POSSESSOR]
	Common Name	

gbáā Zūrí 'horn of Zuri' (gbɛ̃ĩ 'horn', Zūrî (female name))

dzɛ́-rî Zūrí 'dog of Zuri' (dzɛ̃ĩ 'dog')

Types of possessive constructions

Type of construction	POSSESSOR	Word-order
Inalienable	Proper Name	[POSSESSEE – POSSESSOR]
	Common Name + nom. compounds	
Alienable	Proper Name	[POSSESSEE + -RI + POSSESSOR]
	Common Name	

Head noun of inalienable PC / First element of nominal compound (NC):

CVi   CVN

CVkV   CV(V)

Inalienable possessive construction with a proper name

POSSESSEE	POSSESSOR – PROPER NAME	
ɓɛ̄ɪ̄ 'stomach'	ɓáā Àlî	'stomach of Ali'
zɛ̄ɪ̄ 'leg'	zāā Àlí	'leg of Ali'
pʊ̀ɪ̄	pʊ̀ū Àlí	'face of Ali'

Inalienable possessive construction with a common name

POSSESSEE	POSSESSOR – COMMON NAME	
ɓɛ̄ɩ 'stomach'	⬆ɓáá náákī	'stomach of the cow'
zɛ̄ɩ 'leg'	zàà náákī	'leg of the cow'
pʊ̌ɩ 'face'	pʊ̀ʊ̀ náákī	'face of the cow'

⬆ɓáá Lúkpêwà 'stomach of Lukpewa (NHUM)' (e.g. Lukpewa is a dog)

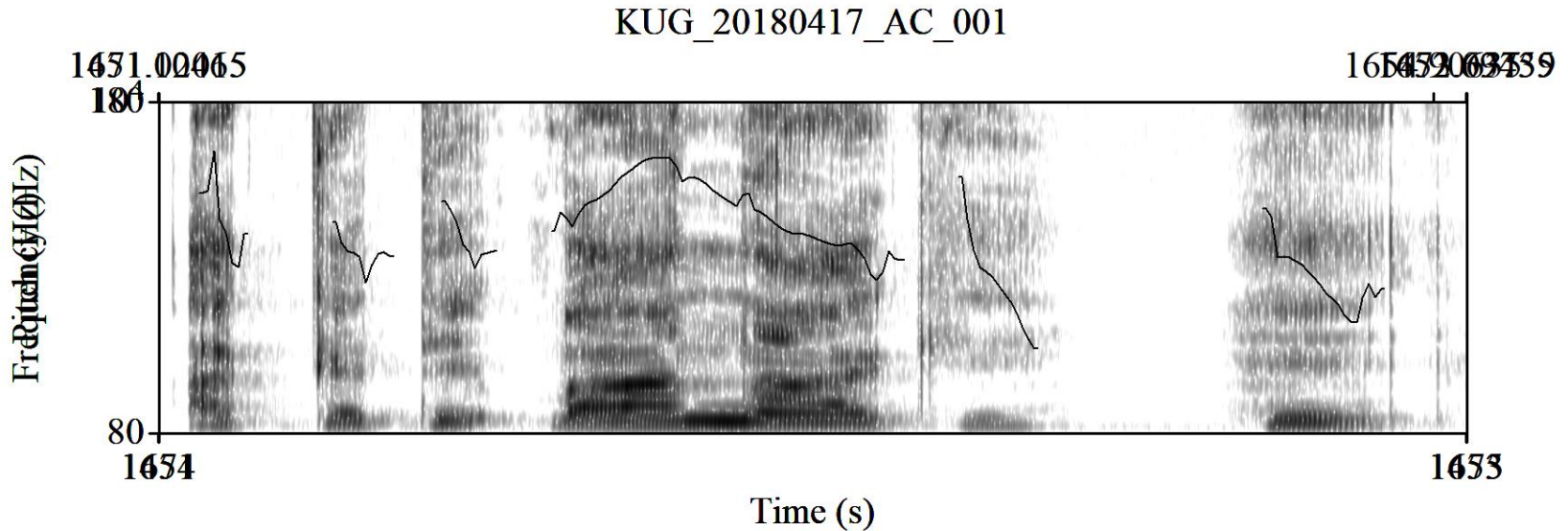# CVi stem with H lexical tone
as a head noun of inalienable PC

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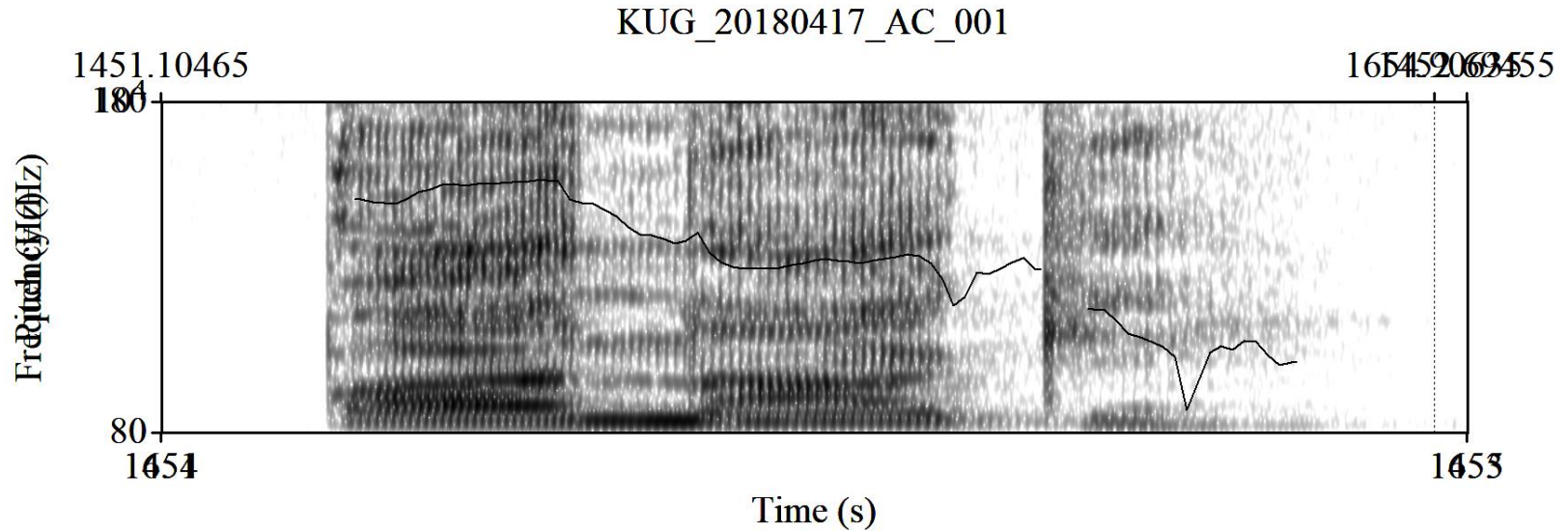
ɓɛ́ī 'stomach'   náákī 'cow'

⬆ɓáá náákī

'stomach of the cow'

CVi stem as a head noun of inalienable PC
with H lexical tone

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á	kā-tí	ꜛɓáá	náákī	hɛ̃́
1SG	see-PFV	stomach	cow	here

'I saw [the] stomach of the cow here'

CVi stem as the first element of the NC
with H lexical tone

úī 'head'   ɲáī 'mouth'   ꜛú ɲáī 'lip'

KUG_20180417_XC_004
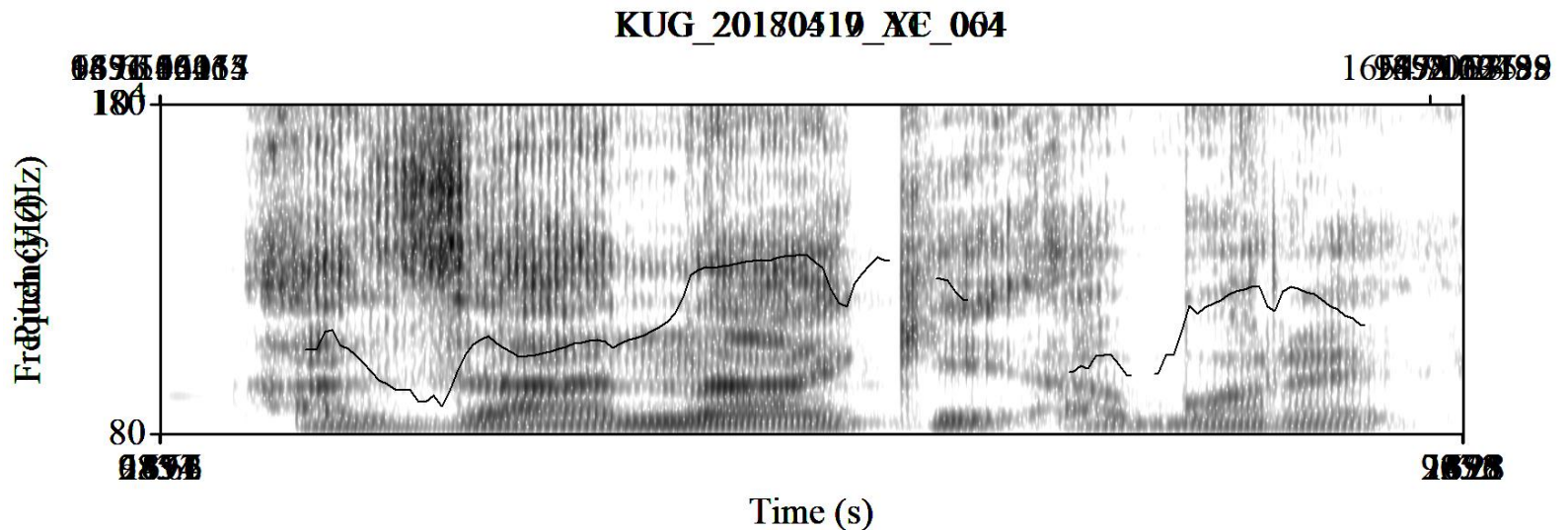

Àlî   vēē-rí   ꜛú   ɲáī   nə̀
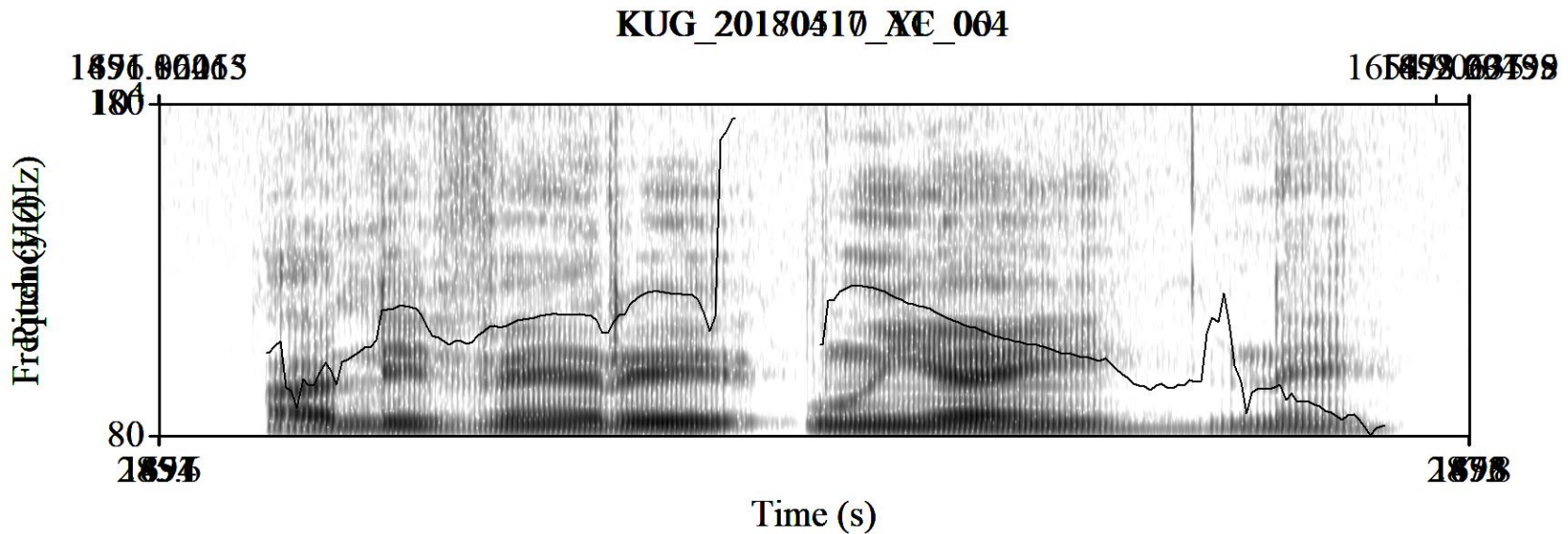
1SG   write-PFV   head   mouth   there

'Ali wrote lip there'

CVi stem with M lexical tone
as a head noun of the inalienable PC (zɛ̄ī 'leg')

KUG_20180419_XC_064

à	zàà	náákī	à	ɓɔ̄rɛ̄
FOC	leg	cow	FOC	DEM.SG.NHUM

'This is the [leg of the cow]'

Inalienable possessive construction

POSSESSEE	POSSESSOR – PROPER NAME	
ɓɛ̄ɩ̄ 'stomach'	ɓáā Àlî	'stomach of Ali'
zɛ̄ɩ̄ 'leg'	zāā Àlí	'leg of Ali'
pʊ̀ɩ̄	pʊ̀ū Àlí	'face of Ali'

POSSESSEE	POSSESSOR – COMMON NAME	
ɓɛ̄ɩ̄ 'stomach'	⬆ɓáá náákī	'stomach of the cow'
zɛ̄ɩ̄ 'leg'	zàà náákī	'leg of the cow'
pʊ̀ɩ̄	pʊ̀ʊ̀ náákī	'face of the cow'

CVi stem as the first element of NC

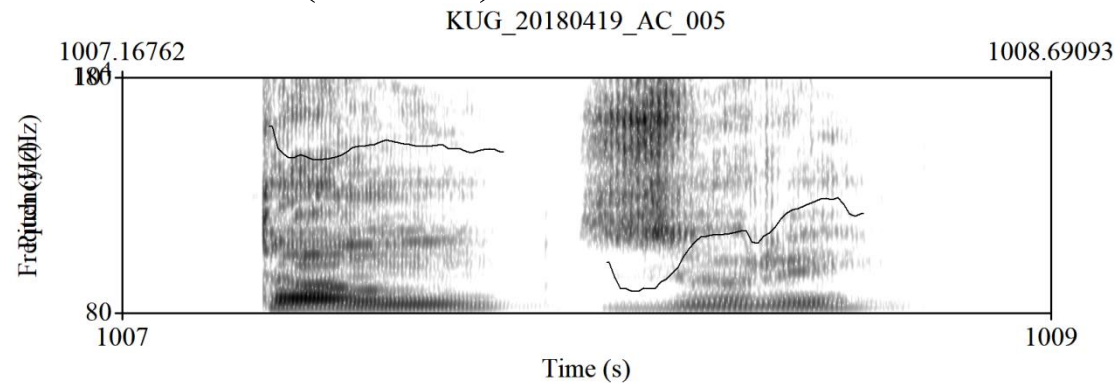|		
hɔ̃ɪ̄ 'calabash'	kɔ̃ɪ̄ 'neck'	ꜛhɔ́ kɔ̃ɪ̄ 'larynx, Adam's apple'
gbɛ̃ɪ̄ 'horn'	náákī 'cow'	ꜛgbáá náákī 'cow horn'
pūɪ̄ 'hole'	kɔ̃ɪ̄ 'neck'	pùù kɔ̃ɪ̄ 'throat'
pūɪ̄ 'hole'	mɛ́ɛ̄ 'water'	pùù mɛ́ɛ̄ 'well'
yēɪ̄ 'wind'	lyɛ̄ 'rain'	yàà lyɛ̄ 'storm'

CVN stem as a head noun of inalienable PC

tɔ́ŋ 'father'   Zūrí (female name)

tɔ́ŋ Zūrí 'father of Zuri (HUM)'
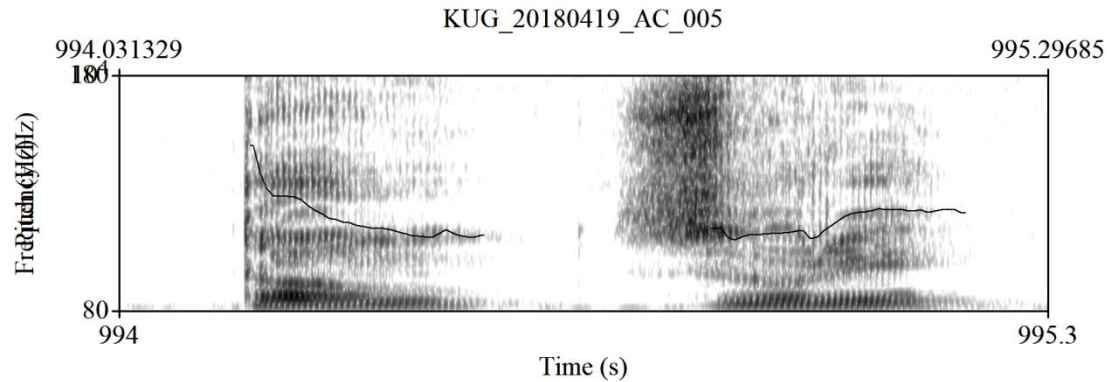
ꜛtɔ́ŋ Zūrí 'father of Zuri (NHUM)'
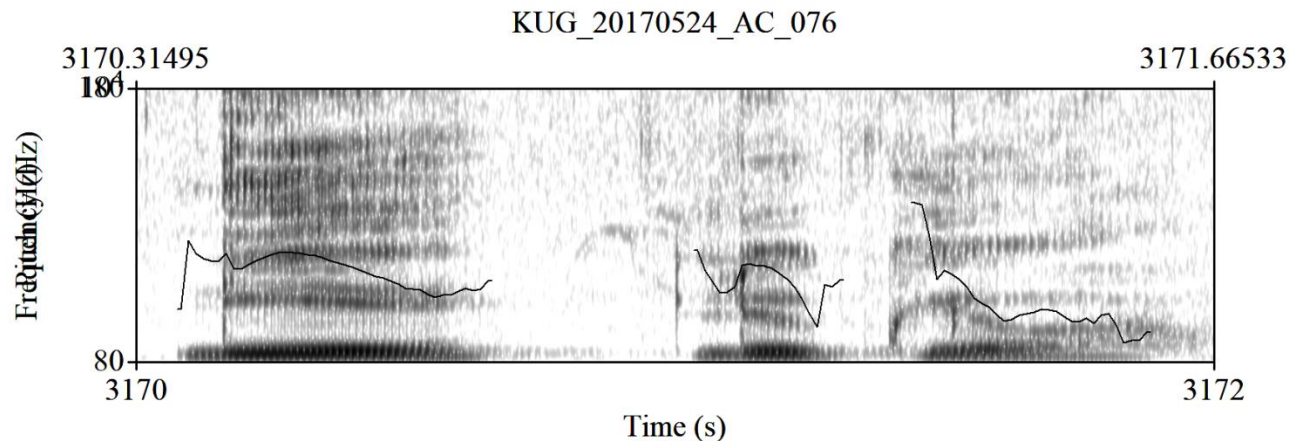
CVkV stem as a head noun of inalienable PC

ɲɔ̄kē 'daughter'   Zūrí (female name)

ɲɔ̄ɔ̄ Zūrí 'daughter of Zuri (HUM)'

ɲɔ̀ɔ̀ Zūrí 'daughter of Zuri (NHUM)'

ɗyéké 'house'   Lúkpêwà (female name)
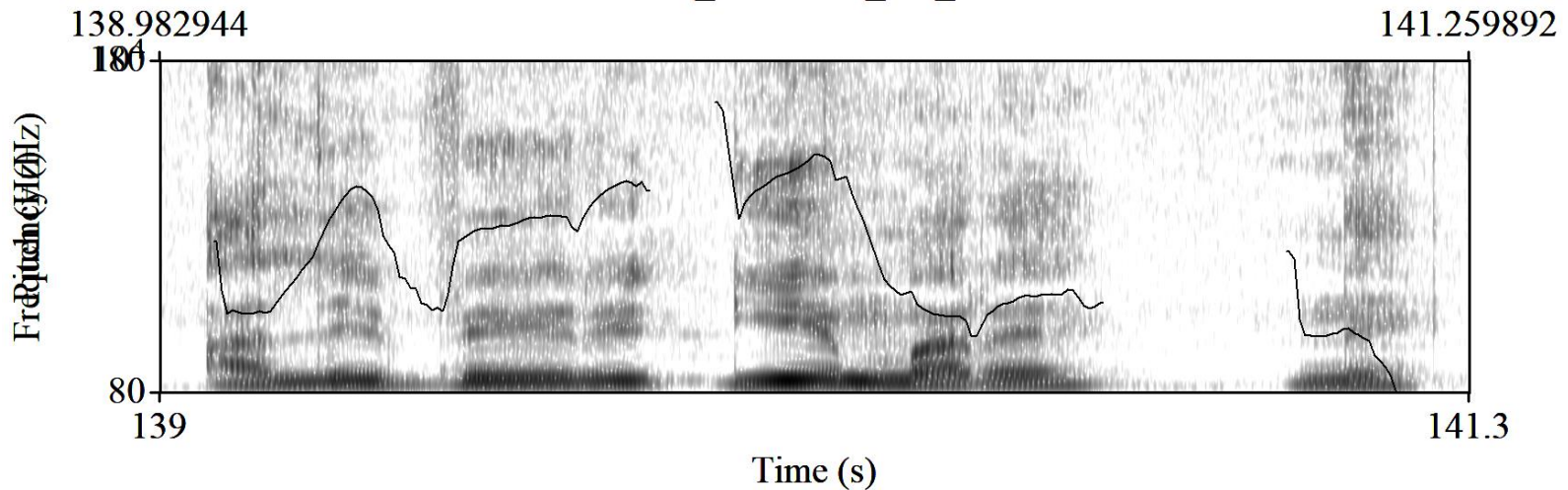
ɗyéē Lúkpêwà 'house of Lukpewa (HUM)'

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CVkV stem as the first element of NC

ɗyéké 'house'   màrē̄ 'abundance'

↑ɗyé màrē̄ 'polygamy'

KUG_20170501_AC_049

138.982944   141.259892

Frequency (Hz)

139   141.3

Time (s)

Àlî   vē̄ē̄-rí   [↑ɗyé màrē̄]   nè̄
Ali   write-PFV   polygamy   there
'Ali wrote [polygamy] there'

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CVkV stem as the first element of NC.
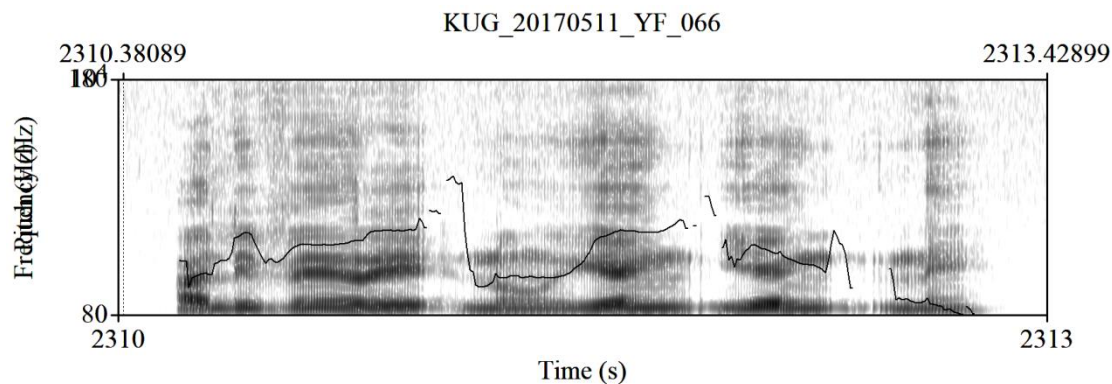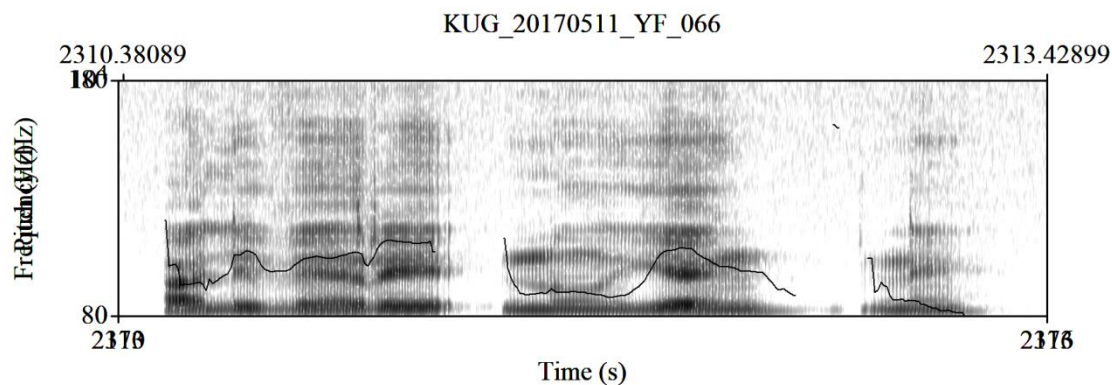## Rising L before the upstepped H

ɲɔ̄kē 'daughter'   yɛ́ŋ 'mother'   nɔ̀ yɛ̄ŋ 'sister'

nɔ̀ yɛ̄ŋ 'sister'   yɛ́ŋ 'mother'   ꜛnɔ̀ ꜛyéŋ yɛ̄ŋ 'mother's sister'

KUG_20170511_YF_066

KUG_20170511_YF_066

CV(V) stem as the first element of NC.
Rising L before the upstepped H

tɛ̄(ɛ̄) 'place'   láákī 'fishing'

tyè láákī 'fish dam'

tɛ̄(ɛ̄) 'place'   úī 'head'   gɔ̀m ?   (ꜛú gɔ̀m 'grave')

tyē ꜛú gɔ̀m 'cemetery'

hɔ̄̄(ɔ̄̄) 'food'   ɲáī 'mouth'   kā̄ī 'trunk?'   (ꜛɲá kā̄ī 'heart')

hɔ̄̄ɔ̄̄ ꜛɲá kā̄ī 'liver'

sè 'thing'   ɲáī 'mouth'   kpáā 'direction'

sē ꜛɲá kpā 'doorway cover'

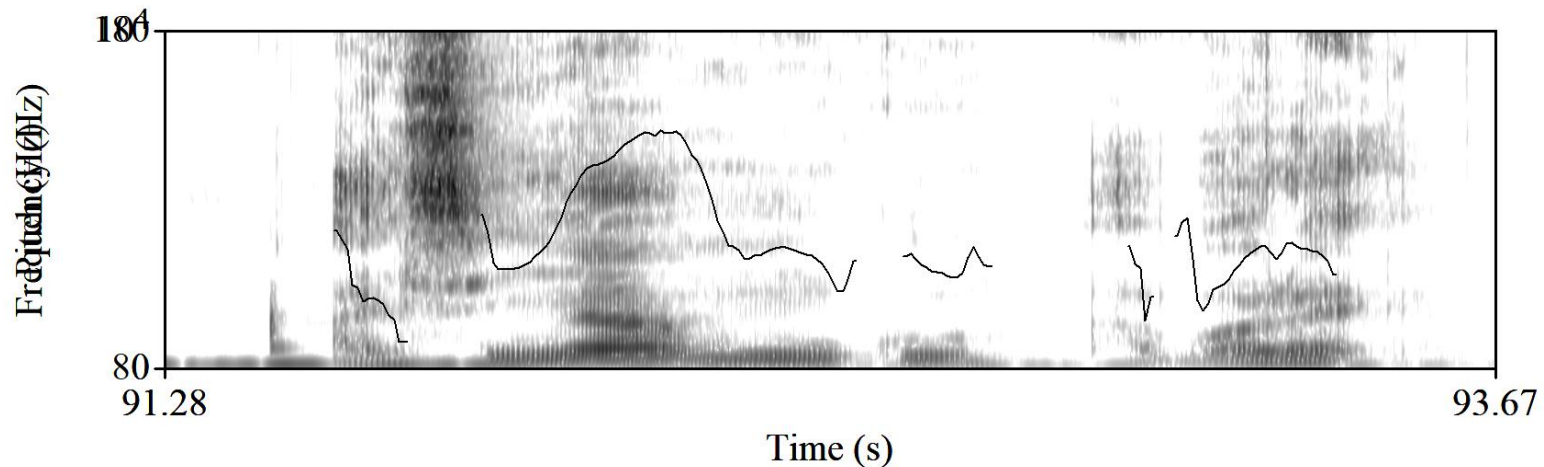# CV(V) stem as the first element of NC.
Rising L before the upstepped H

sè 'thing' ɲáī 'mouth' mɔ̄kū 'river'

sē ꜛɲá mɔ̄kū 'tale'

KUG_20170422_AC_034

à   [sē ꜛɲá   mɔ̄kū]   à   ɓɔ̄rē̄
FOC   tale   FOC DEM.SG.NHUM
'This is a tale'

Rising L before the upstepped H

dā�ā́ 'sheep'   bàā 'herd, flock'   ꜛdā̄́ bàā 'sheep of the herd'

gbɛ̀nɛ̄ 'horse'   bàā 'herd, flock'   gbɛ̄ꜛnɛ́ bàā 'horse of the herd'

tɔ̀ɔ̄ 'chicken'   bàā 'herd, flock'   ꜛtɔ̄ɔ́ bàā 'chicken of the flock'

kŭm 'body hair'   nɔ́ī 'eye'   ꜛkŭm nɔ́ī 'eyelash'

bŭm 'room'   pēērī 'straw'   ꜛbŭm pēērī 'roundhouse'

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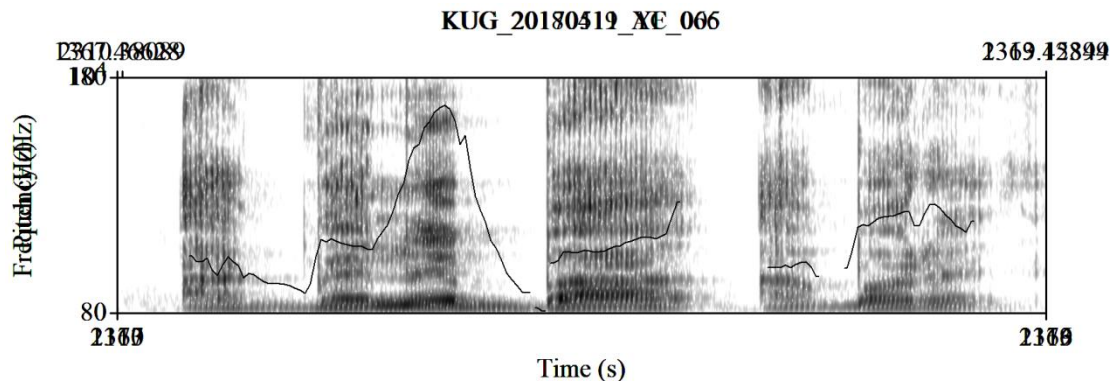
Future research

- Other stem shapes
- Alienably possessed nouns (not kinship terms and body-parts)
- Alienable possessive constructions
- Tone melodies of nouns
- Tone rules

Thank you!