

# Tonal span



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# Tonal span and TBU

- TBU: a syllable or mora which can be associated with a tone.
- Tonal span is a segment associated with a toneme on the surface level.
- In some languages, tonal span always coincides with TBU, e.g.: Vietnamese.
- However, in other languages, it can be smaller or larger than TBU.

# Tonal span smaller than a TBU

- Tonal span =  $\emptyset$  TBU: e.g., a floating L toneme surfacing as (non-automatic) downstep. (Other cases?)
- 2 (or even 3?) tonal spans on one TBU: compositional contours on one syllable (in a language where the TBU = syllable).

# Tonal span larger than a TBU

- In some languages, it can extend to a limited number of TBU. E.g., in Lhasa Tibetan, maximum 2 syllables. In Iquito (Zaparoan, Peru), max. 5 morae.
- In some others, a tonal span can extend infinitely, e.g. in Bambara, through an open-ended mechanism of incorporation of elements.

# Tonal span and other units

- Boundaries of a tonal span, do they coincide with the boundaries of some other units of the language in question? (a syllable, a mora, a foot, a prosodic word... a morpheme, a word, a phrase?)
- A popular opinion: tonal domain coincides with a morpheme.
- My working hypothesis: cross-linguistically, tonal domain may correlate with different units, but it does not necessarily coincide with them.
- An automatic analysis of annotated texts will allow to provide precise answers about the correlation and/or coincidence of tonal spans and other units.

# Tonal spans and segmental chain

- In some languages, any segmental chain can be subdivided into tonal spans without leftovers.
- In some others, extratonal segments can remain.