

## The Stratal Structure of Kuria Morphological Tone

Marlo et al. (2015) claim that Kuria verbal tone morphology undermines two central phonological locality principles, the assumption that rules/constraints may specify maximally two distinct phonological objects, and the stratal organization of morphophonology into stems, words and phrases, where later strata don't have access to the internal structure of previous ones ('Bracket Erasure'). Sande and Jenks (2018) turn this claim into an argument for a new model of the morphosyntax-phonology interface which erases the separation between phonology and morphology and abandons standard locality domains in favor of syntactic phases, 'Cophonology by Phase'. In this talk, I show that these conclusions are premature: The Kuria data follow naturally from a local autosegmental phonology account couched in Stratal Optimality Theory.

**Data:** The Bantu language Kuria marks verbal TAM paradigms on stems by tone patterns of a single H-tone span, starting on the 1st stem- $\mu$  in the focused untimed past (1-a) on the 2nd mora in the past progressive, on the third in the remote future (1-c), and the 4th in the inceptive (1-d), spreading in all cases to the penultimate mora of the phrase (all data from Marlo et al. 2015, note that verbs don't have distinctive underlying tones in the language):

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| <p>(1) a. <math>\mu</math>1    n-to-o-[hóóótóótér-a]<br/>                     Foc-1<sub>PL</sub>-TA-[reassure]-FV<br/>                     'we have reassured'</p> | <p>b. <math>\mu</math>2    n-to-oka-[hoóóótóótér-a]<br/>                     Foc-1<sub>PL</sub>-TA-[reassure]-FV<br/>                     'we have been reassuring'</p> |
| <p>c. <math>\mu</math>3    n-to-re-[hootóótér-a]<br/>                     Foc-1<sub>PL</sub>-TA-[reassure]-FV<br/>                     'we will reassure'</p>      | <p>d. <math>\mu</math>4    n-to-ra-[hootóótér-a]<br/>                     Foc-1<sub>PL</sub>-TA-[reassure]-FV<br/>                     'we are about to reassure'</p>   |

Exacerbating the problem that rules or constraint enforcing the remote future and remote patterns (1-c,d) seem to require the power to refer to more than two phonological objects simultaneously, thus crucially violating standard restrictions on phonological locality (Hayes 1995, Hewitt and Prince 1989, Buckley 2009), Kuria also seems to disregard standard *morphosyntactic* locality domains of phonological processes, stems, words, and phrases. If verb stems are too short to accommodate the required position of a mora counting tone pattern and the verb has an object, the domain for the start of the H-tone span extends to the object as shown in (2) for the inceptive:

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| <p>(2) a. <math>\mu</math>4    to-ra-[rom-a eyétóókε]<br/>                     Foc-1<sub>PL</sub>-TA-[bite]-FV banana<br/>                     'we are about to bite a banana'</p> | <p>b. <math>\mu</math>4    to-ra-[ry-a eyetétóókε]<br/>                     Foc-1<sub>PL</sub>-TA-[eat]-FV banana<br/>                     'we are about to eat a banana'</p> |
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**The Reanalysis:** relies exhaustively on standard autosegmental representations (Goldsmith 1976, Yip 2002) and Stratal Optimality (Kiparsky 2000, 2015, Bermúdez-Otero 2018), a combination implying that floating tones can be 'inherited' across strata (Clements 1984, Hyman and Ngunga 1994, Paschen 2018). Following Cammenga (2004) (see also Mtenje 1987, on Chichewa), I assume that stem-initial H-tones are underlyingly simple H-tone affixes, whereas patterns with later H-tones have morphemic tonal melodies with additional leading L-tones. Thus the tonal remote future morpheme is L L H and the inceptive L L L H. As a consequence, with verb stems of sufficient length, the high tones emerge on 3rd and 4th moras without any explicit counting. Crucially, this account also predicts that in the case of shorter stems only low tones are associated and that the remaining tones may stay floating at the right edge of the verb. Under the assumption that the stem-level and word-level phonology preserve floating tones at the right edges these survive to the phrase level where they may then be associated preserving the apparent mora count since both L- and H-tones are transferred:

