

Two processes or two forms? Accounting for ambiguous tone spreading in Prinmi

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Prinmi is a Qiangic Sino-Tibetan language spoken in Southwestern China that possesses a system of lexically contrastive tones with a range of tone sandhi patterns. This presentation aims to provide a unified account of Prinmi rightward tone spreading, comparing two closely related varieties of the language, Wādū Pǔmǐ (Daudey, 2014) and Xīnyíngpán Pǔmǐ (Ding, 2014), hereafter referred to as WDP and XYP.

Prinmi tone spreading involves what appear to be two separate phonological processes: contour spreading (CS) and high tone spreading (HTS). In CS (**bolded** in ex. 1, 2b, and 3), contour tones on non-tone group final syllables split into their level tone components. In HTS (underlined in ex. 2a and 2b), non-tone group final high tones, either underlying or derived from CS, spread onto one additional syllable. However, XYP also possesses words with mono-syllabic rising tones that display CS but do not undergo HTS even when additional syllables are present in the tone group (ex. 3).

Example	Tone Name	σ	$\sigma.\sigma$	$\sigma.\sigma.\sigma$	$\sigma.\sigma.\sigma.\sigma$
1	Falling (F)	σ^F	$\sigma^H.\sigma^L$	$\sigma^H.\sigma^L.\sigma^L$	$\sigma^H.\sigma^L.\sigma^L.\sigma^L$
2a	High (H)	σ^H	<u>$\sigma^H.\sigma^H$</u>	<u>$\sigma^H.\sigma^H.\sigma^L$</u>	<u>$\sigma^H.\sigma^H.\sigma^L.\sigma^L$</u>
2b	Rising & Spreading (R+S)	σ^R	$\sigma^L.\sigma^H$	$\sigma^L.\sigma^H.\sigma^H$	$\sigma^L.\sigma^H.\sigma^H.\sigma^L$
3	Just Rising (J-R, XYP only)	σ^R	$\sigma^L.\sigma^H$	$\sigma^L.\sigma^H.\sigma^L$	$\sigma^L.\sigma^H.\sigma^L.\sigma^L$

While some of the XYP Just Rising (J-R) tone words belong to the same class of verb, a number are common nouns that don't share any apparent morphological features. This implies that the tone of these words must be underlyingly distinct from the Rising and Spreading (R+S) tone words that exhibit HTS so a process could selectively motivate one to spread but not the other. Ding (2014) posits that tone in XYP is underlyingly composed of two features: syllabic position on the root and a [+/-spread] feature. While descriptive, this analysis is not explanatory or satisfying, mixing autosegmental and featural mechanisms.

Another approach is positing that the J-R tone's underlying representation (UR) is LHL, with the final L preventing HTS from taking place. However, this requires a more complex process (in terms of either constraints or rule sets) to asymmetrically prevent falling contours from surfacing when derived from CS but not prevent falling contours from surfacing on monosyllables (i.e., somehow coercing $\sigma^L.\sigma^F \rightarrow \sigma^L.\sigma^H$, but not $\sigma^F \rightarrow \sigma^H/\sigma^L$).

Alternatively, HTS may not be a separate process, but instead a consequence of more complex R+S and H tone URs. If the H tone was underlyingly HH and the R+S tone was underlyingly LHH, CS could directly account for the surface HTS patterns. While the proposed double-high UR superficially violates the OCP, this seems preferable to employing idiosyncratic and asymmetric restrictions on the otherwise predictable contour spreading process, particularly given that adjacent level H tones do not always trigger OCP violations in Sino-Tibetan languages (Tianjin Mandarin, c.f. Chen, 2000; Yu, c.f. Jia, 2021).