

Correspondence and Moro [-voice] dissimilation

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1. Introduction. Theoretical analyses of dissimilation have principally relied on two main analytical tools: the Obligatory Contour Principle (OCP) (Suzuki 1998) and/or markedness (Alderete 1997). In this paper, we present an analysis of a dissimilation pattern that employs neither of these tools. In Thetogovela Moro, a Kordofanian language of Sudan, consonants dissimilate for the feature [-voice], an unmarked feature. We analyze dissimilation using Bennett’s (2013) Surface Correspondence Theory of Dissimilation (SCTD), which is based on Agreement-by-Correspondence (ABC) (Rose & Walker 2004). Dissimilation occurs as a means to avoid surface correspondence between consonants.

2. Data. Moro contrasts voiced and voiceless obstruents. Dissimilation occurs with three affixes (data from our fieldnotes). The locative prefix /ék-/ attaches to vowel-initial nouns of the g-noun class (1a), but dissimilates to [ég] if the first consonant in the stem is voiceless (1b). Dissimilation is local as it fails to apply if another consonant intervenes (1c):

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|--------|--------------|------------------------|-----------|--------------------|
| (1) a. | ék-ómón | ‘in the tiger’ | ék-ógovél | ‘in the monkey’ |
| b. | ég-afjónḡwár | ‘in the bird of prey’ | ég-ətám | ‘in the neck’ |
| | ég-ətálá | ‘in the pot for dough’ | ég-opéréá | ‘in the sword’ |
| c. | ék-órtóðéa | ‘in the trees’ | ék-órápwá | ‘in the nest hole’ |

The applicative suffix /-əḡ/ causes voicing of a final root consonant (2b-d) (it also triggers vowel raising and palatalization of a final dental (2b)):

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|--------|-------------|----------------|----------------|--------------------|
| (2) a. | l-a-log-ó | ‘they said’ | l-Λ-lug-əḡ-ú | ‘they said for’ |
| b. | l-a-waḡ-ó | ‘they sewed’ | l-Λ-wΛdḡ-əḡ-ú | ‘they sewed for’ |
| c. | l-a-ləvəḡ-ó | ‘they hid’ | l-Λ-ləvəḡ-əḡ-ú | ‘they hid for’ |
| d. | l-ap-ó | ‘they carried’ | l-Λb-əḡ-ú | ‘they carried for’ |

The durative/iterative reduplicative prefix takes the shape CaC-. The consonants are copies of the initial root consonant (3a). Dissimilation causes the first consonant of the prefix to be voiced (3b-d), sacrificing base-reduplicant identity. If the initial root consonant is voiced rather than voiceless, the same pattern emerges, as geminate obstruents are required to be voiceless (3e-f), and dissimilation prevents further devoicing.

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|--------|----------------------------|---|------------------------|
| | <i>perfective</i> | <i>iterative perfective</i> | |
| (3) a. | l-a-m ^w andəð-ó | l-a- mám -m ^w andəð-ó | ‘they asked’ |
| b. | l-Λ-p ^w əll-ú | l-Λ- báp -p ^w əll-ú | ‘they hollowed a hole’ |
| c. | l-a-kəv-ó | l-a- gák -kəv-ó | ‘they pinched’ |
| d. | l-a-tavəð-ó | l-a- dát -tavəð-ó | ‘they spat’ |
| e. | l-a-bər-ó | l-a- bap -pər-ó | ‘they touched’ |
| f. | l-a-dərn-ó | l-a- dat -tərn-ó | ‘they pressed’ |

3. Analysis. The Moro pattern resembles voicing dissimilation in Bantu languages (Dahl’s Law) in which [-voice] is also the dissimilated feature (Davy & Nurse 1982, Odden 1994). Yet, [-voice] is an unmarked feature value, and this is a challenge for frameworks that adopt only privative [voice] or marked feature values in dissimilation (Alderete 1997). Lombardi (1995) proposes a voiced affix for Kikuyu and dissimilation for [voice]. Uffmann (2013) analyzes Dahl’s Law in Kitharaka as involving aspiration instead of [-voice]. Lombardi’s proposal cannot be extended to Moro, which allows sequences of [+voice] consonants. VOT measurements of Moro voiceless stops reveal that they are not aspirated. Any analysis relying on marked feature values to account for dissimilation (Alderete (1997)) faces a problem. We take the Moro case to be evidence for the feature [-voice], in agreement with Wetzels & Mascaró (2001) and Blaho (2008).

In the SCTD model, surface correspondence is required between similar consonants. Voiceless consonants correspond due to the constraint CORR-CC[-voice]. Correspondence relationships are displayed between { } in the following tableau. In this theory, dissimilation

occurs in response to *limiter* constraints, which restrict correspondence to particular configurations. In this case, the limiter constraint CC-EDGE(STEM) penalizes correspondence across stem domain edges. Consonants in correspondence are penalized by the limiter constraint (4b-c). Voiceless consonants not in correspondence fail on CORR-CC[-voice] (4a). Dissimilation avoids both these issues (4d). Adjacency and directionality are also part of the analysis, as in ABC, but not illustrated here for space reasons.

(4)

Input: /ek-etám/	CC- EDGE(STEM)	CORR-CC[-voice]	IDENT- IO[voice]
a. ek ₁ -ət ₂ am SCorr R: {k} {t}		*!	
b. ek ₁ -ət ₂ am SCorr R: {k t}	*!		
c. eg ₁ -ət ₂ am SCorr R: {g t}	*!		*
d. → eg ₁ -ət ₂ am SCorr R: {g} {t}			*

Reduplicative identity loses to dissimilation. Dissimilation produces a change in voicing if the input consonants are [-voice], following the analysis in (4), but it also blocks reduplicative identity if the input consonants are [+voice]. A markedness constraint bans voiced geminates and causes devoicing, but CORR-CC [-voice] blocks additional devoicing of the reduplicated consonant. We consider only those forms that do not show correspondence, as candidates with corresponding consonants would be ruled out by the higher-ranked limiter constraint.

(5)

Input: /l-a-CaC-bər-ó/	*[+voice] GEM	CORR-CC [-voice]	IDENT- BR[voice]	IDENT- IO[voice]
a. → lab ₁ app ₂ əró SCorr R: {b} {p}			*	*
b. lap ₁ app ₂ əró SCorr R: {p} {p}		*!		*
c. lab ₁ abb ₂ əró SCorr R: {b} {b}	*!			

4. Conclusion. This account of dissimilation does not rely on a separate identity-penalizing constraint such as the OCP, and in this sense it is similar to Jurgec' (2011) analysis of dissimilation. However, it employs the same types of similarity-based correspondence constraints as in ABC, and does not rely on markedness-based licensing constraints to achieve dissimilation. While most cases of laryngeal harmony operate within the root and involve marked feature values, dissimilation for [-voice] operates across the root-affix boundary and in this case, involves an unmarked feature.

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