

Why isn't syllabification contrastive? A new account of moraic faithfulness.

The syllable weight account of Optimality Theory (OT) relies on the prosodic faithfulness constraint DEP- μ (McCarthy 1997) that bans insertion of a mora. However, this constraint predicts unattested syllabification patterns. This paper proposes replacing DEP- μ with a new constraint, N-DEP- μ , which distinguishes between regular syllabification of segments and lengthening phenomena. This leads to a new account of compensatory lengthening (CL) as preservation of segments instead of moras.

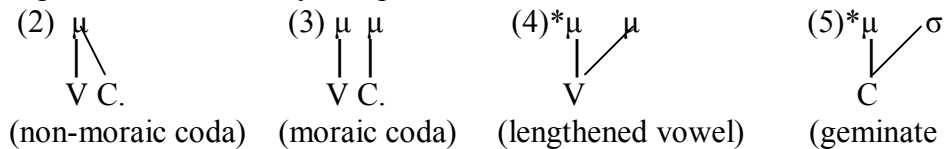
The interaction of the constraints, Weight-by-Position (WBP “coda consonants must be moraic”), and $*\mu/C$ (“no moraic consonants), determines the coda weight. Whenever WBP dominates $*\mu/C$ in any given language, coda consonants are moraic. However, DEP- μ can block assignment of a mora by WBP. These two constraints can be ranked with $*\mu/C$ and $*ComplexOnset$ to predict unattested syllabification patterns such as *ak.la* vs. *a.kla*, depending on whether /k/ is underlyingly moraic or not. See tableaux (a,b).

I propose that DEP- μ should be replaced by N-DEP- μ , which penalizes insertion of a mora only if the result is lengthening of the segment. An inserted mora that is the only prosodic unit linked to a particular segment—a positional μ -licenser (cf. Bermúdez-Otero (n.d.))—does not violate this constraint. This is incorporated in the definition of new-DEP- μ :

(1) N-DEP- μ

If a mora is inserted, it must be a positional μ -licenser.

The following representations show how N-DEP- μ works. Assuming that the moras are inserted, (2) and (3) do not violate the constraint, while (4) and (5) do, since these segments are headed by two prosodic units.



This approach is extended to DEP-LINK- μ , which bans insertion of association lines from a mora to a segment. This constraint gives rise to nonexistent reduplication copy patterns. So I propose to replace it with N-DEP-LINK- μ , following the definition of N-DEP- μ .

An immediate consequence is that without DEP- μ , CL can no longer be analyzed as conservation of a mora. Further evidence against the moraic approach comes from Piro and Samothraki Greek (Kavitskaya 2002) that show onset deletion resulting in CL. This is not predicted by the moraic conservation account. However, building on Selkirk's (1991) theory of gemination, I present an approach to CL as segment root number preservation that satisfactorily handles both issues.

(a) moraic /akla/ → [ak.la]

(b) non-moraic /akla/ → [a.kla]

/a ^μ k ^μ la ^μ /	Dep-μ	WBP	*CO	*μ/C	/a ^μ kla ^μ /	Dep-μ	WBP	*CO	*μ/C
<p>a. a k.l a</p>		*!			<p>a. a k.l a</p>		*!		
<p>b. a k . l a</p>				*	<p>b. a k . l a</p>	*!			*
<p>c. a.k l a</p>			*!		<p>c. a.k l a</p>			*	

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