Phonologically Conditioned Multiple Feature Mutation in Maskelynes

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1. Main Claim

- Phonologically Conditioned Multiple Feature Mutation (MFM) in Maskelynes
- ambitransitive verbs involves three different phonological changes.
- Argue for an account based on concatenative affixation of [-voice] and [-continuant] features.
- Purely phonological OT constraint *Twin and *G maintain modularity between phonology and morphology.

2. Theoretical Background

- Generalized Nonlinear Affixation (Bermúdez-Otero, 2012): Feature affixes [+voice] and [–continuant].
- Containment Optimality Theory (Prince & Smolensky, 1993): No Deletion
- Colored Containment (van Oostendorp, 2007): Morphological affixation represented as color.

3. Maskelynes Phonology

- In Maskelynes (Oceanic, Vanuatu) prenasalization is contrastive in plosives.
- Voicing is still phonologically active, as seen in voicing assimilations and final devoicing.

4. Consonant Mutation

- Ambritransitive forms of some verb stems marked by mutation of the initial consonant (Healy, 2013).
- Non-coronal fricatives /ʃ/ and /s/ become voiceless plosives /p/ and /k/.
- The voiceless plosive /t/ becomes voiced and prenasalized /mb/.
- No other sounds are changed.

5. Analysis

- Evaluation of /与众不同/ [karub³] (2)
- Labial Labio-dorsal Coronal Dorsal
  Voiceless plosives p b mp t k
  Voiced prenasalized plosives b m b w t k n ng
  Nasals m w n g
  Fricatives β ɾ b w s x
  Liquids l r
  Semivowels w j

- Consonant mutation in Maskelynes
  Example of Maskelynes mutation (Healy, 2013, 149-151)
  Transitive Ambritransitive
  t → p
  m → mb
  k → pk
  • /t/ becomes /p/ because inserting a [+nasal] is more costly than a floating [voice] feature.

- Evaluation of /与众不同/ [karub³] (5)
  a. /与众不同/ [karub³] ∗G ∗RM ∗Faith
  b. /与众不同/ [karub³] +l
  c. /与众不同/ [karub³] +l

- Evaluation of /与众不同/ [karub³] (7)
  a. /与众不同/ [karub³] +l
  b. /与众不同/ [karub³] +l
  c. /与众不同/ [karub³] +l
  d. /与众不同/ [karub³] +l

- Hypothetical evaluation of /与众不同/ [karub³] (9)
  a. /与众不同/ [karub³] +l
  b. /与众不同/ [karub³] +l
  c. /与众不同/ [karub³] +l
  d. /与众不同/ [karub³] +l

6. Alternative Analyses

- Alternatives often have to make reference to specific morphological categories inside phonology:
  - Indexed constraints (Pater, 2007; Flack, 2007)
  - Cophonology Theory (Orgun, 1996; Inkelas, 1998)
  - Allomorph listing in the lexicon.
- Cophonology Theory and Indexed constraint have to postulate a process of initial voicing and prenasalization.
- An account based on listed stem allomorphs misses the empirical generalizations about the phonological properties of the mutation.
- An account based on phonologically conditioned allomorphy of floating features has to assume more complex representations with up to four different floating features.

7. Discussion

- What about underlying /ɡ/?
  → Protected by a [+nasal] → constraint.
- What about mutation of /p/?
  → No markedness constraint parallel to ∗G possible.

8. Conclusion

- Main advantage of the present account: modular and concatenative.
- The seemingly unnatural mutation pattern can be described as the effect of
  - Suffixation of two floating features: [+voice] and [–continuant] and
  - A markedness constraint against voiced dorsal sounds and
  - The ∗Twin constraint.

References


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