Squibs

The ‘name game’ and onset simplification*

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Steriade (1988) proposes a model of reduplication and templatic systems that includes a process of onset simplification. For example, in Tagalog, the first syllable of a root can undergo prefixal reduplication with onset simplification: ta-trabaho, bo-bloat. Steriade cites a number of cases of onset simplification cooccurring with syllable-based templatic systems, but provides no examples of it with foot-based systems. Here we provide an example of onset simplification applying to a foot-based templatic system. This demonstration is important for two reasons. First, it shows that the onset simplification phenomenon is more general, applying to syllables and feet. Second, these facts are of relevance to the theory of prosodic morphology (McCarthy & Prince, 1987, 1988, forthcoming). As it stands, that theory allows for the phenomenon of onset simplification only with light syllables (‘core syllables’). If the analysis below is correct, onset simplification must be countenanced with feet as well.

There is a language game of English based on a popular song from the sixties called ‘The Name Game’. The game is now played by children who have never heard the song. The game is played by inserting a proper name into the rhyme in (1) and systematically substituting different consonants for the initial consonant or cluster of the inserted name. In (1), we show how this would apply to a name like Jack:

(1)   Jack, Jack bo back,
      [jæk jæk bo bæk]
      banana fan fo fack,
      [bænæ fænæ fo fæk]
      me my mo mack,
      [mi may mo mak]
      Ja-ack.
      [ja-æk]

Not all names can be inserted in the rhyme, however. Basically, permissible names must be one, two or three syllables long with stress only on the first syllable. Names like the following are permissible: Žák, Tóny,
Sandy, Joseph, Jennifer, Gwendolyn, Brandon, Pamela, etc. Names not fitting this pattern cannot undergo the game rule: *Aunette, *Isadora, *Mirabel, *Belinda, *Olivia, etc.²

These restrictions indicate that the name must qualify as a minimal word: a ( trochaic) foot followed by an optional extrametrical syllable: [σ σ][σ].³ The permissible names fit this template; the impermissible ones do not:

(2) permissible impermissible
    [Jack]  *Annëtte
    [Tô(ny)]  *[Isa][do][ra]
    [Jennifers]  *[Mirad][bel]
    [Gwendolyn]  *O[li][y(a)

The pattern of consonantal substitution is complex. If the name begins with a single consonant, e.g. Jack, Tony, etc., then the game consonants replace that consonant as demonstrated in (1) above. If the name begins with a cluster, however, there are several different possibilities. In (3) are diagrammed the results of an informal survey. Fifteen subjects were asked to provide name-game forms for various English names. The left side of the chart gives some representative names and the columns indicate different ‘dialects’: ⁴

(3) dialects ¹ ² ³
    Steve  b  b  b
    Scott  b  b  b
    Bruce  b  b  br
    Claire  b  b  bl
    Gwen  b  b  bw
    Kyoko  b  by  by
    Beula  b  by  by

Some subjects seemed to vacillate between the dialects, but most fell into one of the three given in (3). In this note, I focus on dialect ¹. (See Hammond 1989 for discussion of the other two dialects.) Dialect ¹ involves substituting the game constants for entire onset clusters.

These data can be analysed straightforwardly by using the theory proposed by Steriade (1988). This theory allows us to state the generalisations governing the name game in a direct fashion. Steriade’s theory includes three basic components: truncation, syllable simplification and overwriting.

Steriade argues that truncation and reduplication exhibit the same properties and should therefore be treated with the same formal mechanism. She therefore proposes that all reduplication is total and that all instances of partial reduplication are a consequence of truncating the reduplicate down to a prosodic constituent.

The second component of Steriade’s model is a process of syllable simplification. Essential to our purposes is the process of onset simplification. This process can constituent. Crucially, nothing.

The third component of or reduplicated prefix contains the material associates to the material.

This three-part system a dialect ¹:

(4) a. Match names to the
    b. Simplify the word
    c. Overwrite from left

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These data thus suggest that be incorporated into the th

NOTES

* Thanks to the faculty, the University of Arizona, the University of Arizona, D. Demers. I two anonymous reviewers agrees with the conclusion. The author’s.

[¹] Carmean (1988) notes that Prosodic Phonology becomes ‘word’. Here it is argued

[²] For some speakers, these pattern. This can happen stresses (e.g. Mirabel — N. ment for the analysis below.

An anonymous reviewer secondary stress on the as. For me, these are only possible. This is very clear in exam of stress. For example, i undergo the rule if the if favouring.

[³] As is well-known, English in the text cannot be mi [³ mi] of McCarthy & Prince which can be exhaustively sc the first syllable

[⁴] The chart only shows that situations behave alike.
The 'name game' and onset simplification

This process can simplify the onset of a syllable within any constituent. Crucially, nothing in the model prevents it from applying to feet.

The third component of her model is overwriting. If a truncation form or reduplicated affix contains some constant melodic material, that material associates to the template overwriting previously associated material.

This three-part system allows for a direct description of the facts of dialect 1:

(4) a. Match names to the following template: \([\sigma \omega](\sigma)\).
   
   b. Simplify the word-initial onset.
   
   c. Overwrite from left to right with \(b\), \(f\) and \(m\).

Under the theory proposed by McCarthy & Prince, these data cannot be analysed as easily. The problem is that McCarthy & Prince exclude the equivalent of (4b) when the base is a foot or minimal word. These data thus suggest that the principle of onset simplification must be incorporated into the theory of prosody.

Notes

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[1] Carmean (1983) notes that these data constitute a problem for the theory of Prosodic Phonology because the first onset is manipulated and the base is the word. Here it is argued that the base is the foot.

[2] For some speakers, these names are possible if they can be altered to fit the pattern. This can happen by deleting syllables (e.g. Aanette – Nette) or deleting stresses (e.g. Mirabel – Miral). Such dialects constitute an additional argument for the analysis below.

An anonymous reviewer points out that in his/her dialect, disyllabic names with secondary stress on the second syllable work as well, e.g. Carkeek and Toenail. For me, these are only possible if the stress on the second syllable is suppressed. This is very clear in examples where stress-conditioned alliteration shows the loss of stress. For example, a word like chichades with final secondary stress can undergo the rule if the final stress is lost, as can be seen by the possibility of flapping of the [d]. Likewise a hypothetical name like Carteeh with final secondary stress can undergo the rule only if the second syllable loses its stress, surfacing as [kʰarxik], rather than [kʰ'arxik']. These examples thus provide even more evidence in favour of the analysis offered.

[3] As is well-known, English stress is sensitive to syllable weight. The description in the text cannot be maintained if the foot in English is the moraic trochee \([\mu \nu \zeta]\) of McCarthy & Prince (1987, 1988, forthcoming). This is because of names like Gewendlyen which can undergo the game. The problem is that Gewendlyen cannot be exhaustively scanned as a moraic trochee and an extrametrical syllable because the first syllable is heavy/bimoraic.

[4] The chart only shows the /b/-substitution pattern because the different substitutions behave alike.
References


C-command or ed.

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Kaisse (1985) presents a th
a rule may require one e
command another elemen
theory, hereafter referred
command, which is define

(1) In the structure [\cdot x]
Then x c-command

Selkirk (1986) advance
based theory, whereby s
expressed indirectly in ter
are constructed by parsing
right or left edge of som
Mwi:ni, sequences term
phonological phrases as f

(2)

Although the c-command
notions (maximal project
based theory loses some
make different prediction
logical rules. This paper
account of the syntactic
whereas the end-based tl

The tonal alternation
possessive pronouns ('m