



Iterative infixation and vowel copying in Löfflisch



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Introduction

New, naturally-occurring data from Löfflisch, a language game based on German, are consistent only with parts of Yu's (2008) analysis of iterative-infixing ludlings, in particular the rhythmic motivation of vowel copying. Licensing-inspired correspondence constraints and enriched subcategorization schema may be able to account for locality and iterativity problems stemming from the infix's fixed [ə].

Data

Löfflisch

Iterative-infixing ludling based on Standard German

Iterative application of [-ləv-] infix

Long-distance copying of source nucleus across inert [ə] in infix

Corresponding vowels agree in height, backness, rounding, but not necessarily ATR quality

Feet are correlates of single source syllables, surface as anapests

Word	Stress	German	Löfflisch
gut	σ	[gut]	[gʊ.lə.'vʊt]
Pittsburgh	óσ	['pits.bʊɐk]	[pɪ.lə.'vɪts.bʊ.lə.,vʊɐk]
Besuch	σó	[bɛ.'zux]	[bɛ.lə.,vɛ.zʊ.lə.'vʊx]
Barbara	óσσ	['bae.ba.ɐa]	[ba.lə.'vae.ba.lə.,va.ɐa.lə.,va]
verstehen	σóσ	[fɛe.'ʃte.en]	[fɛ.lə.,vee.ʃte.lə.'ve.ɛ.lə.,vɛn]

Data sources

Naturally-occurring YouTube videos created by proficient speakers
Improvement on previous studies, e.g., Yu (2008), that were not based on recordings of analyzed ludlings

Video URLs

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vq7P8dgNQTo>

Title: "loefflisch msg"

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LcOllqwIWqc>

Title: "Löffelisch"

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Analysis

Following Yu (2008)

Syllable and morpheme alignment constraints eliminate all but two possible orderings of onset, coda, affix, source nucleus, and nucleus copy; *HIATUS adjudicates between remaining possibilities

Rhythmic constraint mandates vocalic epenthesis

	/gut/, /-ləv-/	FOOT=ANAPEST	ALIGN(-ləv-,R,μ _{SH} ,L)	ANCHOR(σ)R	ANCHOR(σ)L	*HIATUS
a.	[gʊ.lə.'vʊt]					
b.	[glə.vu.'ut]					*!
c.	[glə.'vut]	*!				
d.	['gʊ.lə.vʊt]	*!				
e.	[gu.u.'ləvt]			*!		*
f.	[glə.vu.'tu]				*!	
g.	[ʊ.glə.'vʊt]					*!

DEP-IO>>INTEGRITY blocks fixed-segment epenthesis in favor of a correspondence relationship

	/gut/, /-ləv-/	DEP-IO	INTEGRITY
a.	[gʊləvʊt]		*
b.	[galəvʊt]	*!	

Problem: Locality

Vowel copying does not target the [ə] in the infix

👍 [gʊləvʊt] 👎 [gələvʊt]

Proposed solution: Approach inspired by prosodic licensing (Walker 2005)

Correspondence relation targets vowel with salient feature - stressed/unstressed, source/affix

Problem: Affixal iterativity

Per Yu, ONSET and INTEGRITY_{SOURCE}>>INTEGRITY_{AFFIX} account for iterative application of affix and sequential vowel copying in languages where infix is a single consonant

Invalid for Löfflisch: Iterative affixation alone can satisfy rhythmic constraint

Proposed solution: Enriched subcategorization schema for morpheme and/or syllable constituents

Future work

Reconcile suspected variation in diphthong copying with rhythmic account of vowel copying

Generalize to other games:

Grüfnisch (Swiss German) [gut]→[gunufut]

Räubersprache (Standard German) [gut]→[guthutləfut]

References

Walker, R. (2005). Weak triggers in vowel harmony. *Natural Language and Linguistic Theory* 23, 917-989.

Yu, A.C.L. (2008). On iterative infixation. In C.B. Chang and H.J. Haynie (eds.), *Proceedings of the 26th West Coast Conference on Formal Linguistics*, 516-524. Somerville, MA: Cascadilla Proceedings Project.