

Scottish Gaelic svarabhakti: Not evidence for prosodic identity in copy epenthesis

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It has been claimed that copy vowels and their hosts stand in correspondence with one another (Kitto & de Lacy 1999), but this is said to predict unattested processes in which an epenthetic vowel seeks to match its host for prosodic properties (Kawahara 2007). Stanton & Zukoff (to appear, S&Z) claim that such processes *do* exist, using evidence from Scottish Gaelic (SG), Selayarese and Ho-Chunk. I show that their analysis of SG is incorrect, and offer an alternative analysis drawing on Köhnlain's (2016) proposals for Franconian tone-accent dialects.

In SG, an epenthetic copy vowel (*svarabhakti* vowel, SV) breaks up an underlying heterorganic cluster whose first member is a sonorant, as in (1). Words containing SVs are prosodically distinct (*tone 2*, rising) from those containing underlying vowels (UVs, *tone 1*, falling). The host vowel must be stressed (SG is mostly stress-initial) and cannot be long.

- (1) i. /pa_lʲk/ → [²pa_lʲak] 'bellows' (cf. /pa_lʲak/ → [¹pa_lʲak] 'skull')
ii. /ɸ_u:rɔst/ → [ɸ_u:rɔst] 'Leurbost (village)' * [ɸ_u:rɔpst] * [ɸ_urɔpst] * [ɸ_u:rɔpst]

As part of this tonal contrast, SVs bear higher pitch and longer duration than UVs (Bosch & de Jong 1997), suggesting that they carry stress in addition to the host vowel. S&Z attribute this to a host-epenthetic (HE-)correspondence constraint HE-IDENT(stress). Moreover, they attribute the blocking of epenthesis after long vowels to a constraint HE-IDENT(length), working alongside constraints that prevent the shortening of underlying long vowels in initial syllables and prevent the occurrence of long vowels in non-initial syllables.

S&Z view svarabhakti in isolation. However, the *same* tonal contrast occurs elsewhere in SG, distinguishing diphthongs and long vowels (*tone 2*) from underlying hiatus sequences (*tone 1*), as in (2) (Ladefoged et al. 1998). Dialects vary in their realisation of the tonal contrast (pitch, glottalisation, or overlength), but each dialect realises the contrasts in (2) in the same manner as the contrast produced by svarabhakti (Ternes 2006). Since these examples do not involve copy epenthesis, HE-correspondence cannot be responsible for the tonal contrast in general.

- (2) i. /tuan/ → [²tuan] 'song' vs. /tu.an/ → [¹tuan] 'hook'
ii. /po:/ → [²po:] 'cow' vs. /po.ə/ → [¹po:] 'reef'

In addition, S&Z's explanation of the blocking of epenthesis after long vowels hinges crucially on the assumption that long vowels are banned in non-initial syllables, even when stressed. This assumption is false: numerous items with exceptional non-initial stress show that length is licensed by stress, not by initial position, e.g. [pə'ɸ_uʰa:hə] 'potato', [tʰə'ma:rɪst] 'Tuesday'.

Morphological evidence and speaker intuitions have led many authors to link the tonal contrast to syllable count: *tone-2* words are monosyllabic and *tone-1* words are disyllabic (e.g. Ladefoged et al. 1998, Iosad 2015). In the case of svarabhakti the epenthetic vowel does not project a new syllable, and the form therefore carries the rising tone of a long monosyllable. I derive this using Köhnlain's (2016) constraint HEADMATCH(Σ) (the head of a foot in the output must match that of its input correspondent) coupled with his proposal that the level at which the head occurs depends on the level at which branching occurs (i.e. the head of [Σ σ_μ σ_μ] is the first syllable, and that of [Σ $\sigma_{\mu\mu}$] the first mora). If the input to svarabhakti is taken to be [Σ $\sigma_{\mu\mu}$], then highly ranked HEADMATCH(Σ) prevents epenthesis from bringing about resyllabification to [Σ σ_μ σ_μ]. Under this analysis, the blocking of epenthesis after long vowels can be motivated by constraints against superheavy syllables and the shortening of underlying long vowels.

I also cast doubt upon S&Z's two other analyses. Their account of Selayarese is dependent on an unsafe assumption about the synchronic underlying representations of loanwords and their account of Ho-Chunk uses forms that contradict those attested in their sources. I conclude that processes in which an epenthetic vowel seeks to match its host for prosodic properties, such as stress or length, remain unattested in accordance with Kawahara (2007).

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