Voice assimilation in Hungarian
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(1) The data
monomorphemically

\textit{afgán} [vg] ‘Afghan(istani)’ \textit{Agfa} [kf] id.

across a morpheme boundary

\textit{háztől} [st] ‘house-abl’ \textit{hatből} [db] ‘six-elat’
\textit{polgazdáként} [stk] ‘as political economy’ \textit{lisztből} [zdb] ‘flour-elat’
\textit{smaragdfélé} [ktf] ‘emerald-like’ \textit{receptbe} [bd] ‘recipe-illat’

across a word boundary

\textit{kék bélyeg} [gb] ‘blue stamp’ \textit{zöld kutya} [ltk] ‘green dog’

(2) The representation of voicing

a. laryngeal elements: L and H.
\textit{L}=[slack vocal folds], \textit{H}=[stiff vocal folds] (KLV 1990:216), but
(i) these two features cannot cooccur in a segment (Halle & Stevens
1971, Kaye 1995:325), i.e. they are not really unary features, (ii) if \textit{H}
is responsible for aspiration (Harris 1994:133ff), it is not [stiff vocal
folds] but [spread glottis]

b. a binary laryngeal contrast is either \textit{H} vs. \text{Ø} or \text{Ø} vs. \textit{L} (cf. Harris 1994:
133ff). Hungarian (probably) has \text{Ø} vs. \textit{L}

c. regressive VA is the spreading of \textit{L} from the trigger ([tb] → [db]) or the
delinking of \textit{L} from the target ([jt] → [st])

d. The meaning of \textit{L}
\textit{L} does not mean that the segment containing it exhibits vocal fold
vibration, but that it is markedly voiced: an effort has to be made
to produce vocal fold vibration (Chomsky & Halle 1968:300f, Hayes
1984). Thus nonobstuvants do not contain \textit{L}, they exhibit spontaneous
voicing, which is phonologically irrelevant.

e. problems:
\textit{α}. why does \textit{L} delink? more on this in (3)

\textit{β}. what stops the spreading of \textit{L}?

standard assumption: \textit{L} can only spread if the target has a
Laryngeal node, \textit{L} links to the skeleton by the mediation of this
node.
f. If (2d) is true, all and only obstruents have Lar, i.e. either [−son] or Lar is redundant in the representation of obstruents. Proposal: Lar is equivalent to h, the [noise] element inherent in obstruents (Harris 1990: 263). Representations:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>voiced obstruent</th>
<th>voiceless obstruent</th>
<th>sonorant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h</td>
<td>h</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

g. L spreads backwards until it finds an h on the superficially adjacent segment. (In Russian h-less nonvowels can be skipped: o[d] mzdy ‘from the bribe’ (Hayes 1984:320); vowels cannot: taza *[daza] ‘of the pelvis’.)

h. Voiceless sonorants are aspirated (Lombardi 1995b:51), from which it follows that H is not dominated by Lar (h here). Note that regressive spreading of aspiration is not as obvious as that of voicing (Greek spelling has φθ and χθ, but πφ, τθ, κχ).

(3) The site

a. becoming voiceless = loss of L

b. lenition site:

L is unlicensed in coda (Lombardi 1995a)
L is unlicensed in coda and pre-empty-nuclear onset (Brockhaus 1995)
ablak ‘window’, abrak ‘fodder’ vs. poplan ‘quilt’, apró ‘tiny’;
hab ‘foam’, habnak ‘foam-dat’ vs. ha[p]tól ‘foam-abl’;
ha[j]ma ‘onion’ vs. fi[c]ma ‘prepuce’;
bab ‘bean’, bableves ‘bean soup’ vs. babszem [ps] ‘a piece of bean’
⇒ loss of L only occurs before a voiceless obstruent:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>*</th>
<th>x</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>h</td>
<td>h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

c. problem: the constraint above makes an implicit reference to the absence of a feature: the first position cannot license L only if the second has h without L.
conclusions:

a. the site of VA cannot be captured by making reference to syllabic constituents: neither coda, nor pre-empty-nuclear onset position

β. in the formulation of VA the absence of L must be referred to

e. a temporary solution: of two adjacent h’s the first is identified with the second (“identified with its governor” (Brockhaus 1995:133; though whether it is its governor is doubtful in most cases, cf. Lukács 1997)

(4) Nonobstruents in VA: v, j, h

(a) prevocally v [u], j and h are sonorants

(b) non-prevocally v and h are obstruents [v] and [x], j is an obstruent [ɪ]/[ɛ] only when not next to a vowel

c. data

| ásvány | [u] | ‘mineral’ | elvtárs [ɛf] | ‘comerade’ |
| kőzleten | [ɛft] | ‘depressed’ | két Wrangler [tvɛr] | ‘two pairs of W. jeans’ |
| cégbeli | [ɛxb] | ‘guildman’ | egyház [ɛhɛ] | ‘church’ |
| bój | [ɛjt] | ‘tassel’ | rakj át [ɛkɛj] | ‘put-imp over’ |
| dobó | [ɛbj] | ‘throw-imp’ | rakj [ɛkɛ] | ‘put-imp’ |
| dobó kí | [ɛpɛkt] | ‘throw out’ | rakj be [ɛgbɛ] | ‘put in’ |
| szomj | [ɛmj] | ‘thirst’ | féj [ɛfɛ] | ‘husband’ |
| szomj ról | [ɛmjɛ] | ‘thirst-delat’ | féj ról [ɛfɛrɛ] | ‘husband-delat’ |

d. problems:

α. how do v and h become obstruents in non-prevocalic position?

β. why does [x] not become voiced (if an obstruent)?

γ. why is obstruentized [v] and [ɪ] voiced (where does their L come from)?

e. attempts at answers and further details:

ad α. does h get into the representation? if yes, what is its source and is this a case of coda-fortition? if no, how can [v] become voiceless

ad β. assuming that [h] is H (and not h, cf. Szigetvári 1996), it does not get voiced because H and L are incompatible in Hungarian (i.e. there are no voiced aspirates; Szigetvári 1997)

ad γ. ??? (cf. Cyran 1997:198ff; but he describes a historical fortition with reanalysis, while here we have a synchronic alternation)
(5) Claims made
a. there is no Lar node, its job is taken over by h
b. H is not [stiff vocal folds], but [spread glottis]
c. H is not dominated by h (i.e. by Lar)
d. [h] is not h, but H (h is [s], especially if there is no R)
e. VA (in Hungarian) is not describable with reference to syllabic constituents, a linear formulation is simpler and more precise (cf. Rubach 1996)

REFERENCES


