Empty structure is there: rare patterns connected

Diana Passino Université Côte d'Azur & CNRS, BCL

In this talk two rare patterns found in a group of Italo-Romance dialect, namely heterosyllabic *muta cum liquida* and open syllables of proparoxytonic words patterning with closed syllables, are connected. In order to connect these patterns the existence of empty structure in the underlying constituent structure must be posited, as well as the existence and action of a metrical template whereby a stressed sequence of consonant and vowel positions must be followed by two similar unstressed sequences. The advantage of such proposal, with respect to a mora-based account of the metrical pattern recorded and a diachronic account of the syllabic parse recorded (also documented in some previous stages of Latin) is that only the former accounts for the coincidence of the geographical extension of the two patterns.

Italo-Romance vowel differentiation, according to which in some dialects of Italy tonic vowels have different outcomes in open and closed syllables, displays an interesting and rare pattern in a subgroup of the Upper Southern dialects, whereby open syllables of proparoxytonic vowel pattern with closed syllables. Vowel differentiation is connected with Open Syllable Lengthening (OSL) that targeted open syllables in Proto-Romance. Length differences in some dialects eventually became differences in quality. The fact that lengthening targets only open syllables, accounts for the difference between open and closed syllables in vowel differentiation, but it does not explain the patterning of open syllables of proparoxytonic words with closed syllables: OSL should apply to open syllables regardless of the stress pattern of the word. The pattern at hand may be accounted for by representing the underlying constituent structure as a strict sequence of CVs (Lowenstamm 1996), which allows for the presence of empty structure. This move allows to regroup proparoxytonic words with open stressed syllable, like *ratikə* < RADICA(M) 'root', closed syllable paroxytonic words like *varvə* < BARBA(M) 'beard' and paroxytonic words with *muta cum liquida* clusters, like *latrə* < LATRO 'thief, since they share the same 'CVCVCV template, and oppose them to words like kɔnə <CANE(M) 'dog', where A>ɔ because of OSL applied. This template seems to be active as a minimal and maximal target shaping the phonology of these dialects in synchrony and diachrony:

- In /(…)'CVCV/ words stressed vowel break yielding /(…) 'CVCVCV/ /'rɪtə/> 'roitə 'laugh 1,2,3sg1pl'
- In /(…) 'CVCVCV/ or /'CVCV+CVclitic / vowel breaking is blocked: /'koʧə/> /'koʧə/+lu/> 'koʧəlu cook= DIR.OBJ.3SG 'cook it' vs. 'keuʧ ə cook. IMP.2SG 'cook! '
- /'CV/ becomes /'CVCVCV/ through a number of different repair strategies (Ziccardi (1910:417) for Agnone, Savoia (1989:358) for Tufillo, Popoli and Palmoli
    - *C lengthening and reduplication* ex. 'ji / jə 'I' > " jo j jə / jə j jə
      CVCvCV CVCvCV
    - *V breaking and epithetic unmarked syllable* ex. 'ʃø 'yes' > "ʃø inə
      CVcVCV
    - *V lengthening and breaking* ex. 'ti 'you' > "ti i u
      CVcVcV
    - *V lengthening and breaking* ex. 'ce 'more' >"ce e u
      CVcVcV
- In 'CVCV final C lengthens after ə deletion: *Altamura* /'tinə/>[tinn] (Loporcaro 1988:35)

OSL, in this perspective like breaking in synchrony, would have applied in 'CVCV words (minimal template effect) and been blocked in 'CVCVCV words (maximal template effect). The effects of this metrical template can be captured without allowing for empty structure, by means of a trimoraic foot whereby the head must dominate at least two moras, that are not required to be in the same syllable, such as the Germanic foot (Dresher & Lahiri 1991, Bafile 1996). *ratikə*, *varvə*, *latrə* are all trimoraic, if we allow for *muta cum liquida* heterosyllabicity, also documented in some stages of Latin, from which these dialects originate. In the latter

account, which does not presuppose empty structure, the data discussed can be accounted for independently, but cannot be connected. In a perspective whereby a trimoraic target is at work yielding/blocking OSL, *muta cum liquida* could also be tautosyllabic. It is a mere coincidence that these clusters are parsed heterosyllabic only in the part of the peninsula where a metrical structure of the kind of the Germanic foot is on record. By allowing for empty structure in the representation, the previously unnoticed correspondence of the area where two rare features in Romance, namely heterosyllabic *muta cum liquida* and open syllables of proparoxytonic words patterning with closed syllables are on record, comes as no coincidence. Words displaying the same pattern with respect to OSL (and subsequent vocalic differentiation) or synchronic breaking share the same structural identity, a 'CVCVCV template.

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