

A non-predictable template with subsegmental specification: diddificating truncation in Liverpool English

Languages often use phonological templates in morphological processes, in what is widely referred to as prosodic morphology (see eg, McCarthy & Prince 1986/1996). The body of ideas known as ‘Generalised Template Theory’ (‘GTT’; see McCarthy & Prince 1994, 1995a, 1995b, 1999, Downing 2006, among others) claims that the templates involved in prosodic morphology are derivable from other aspects of the phonology of the language in which they occur and from universal generalisations about markedness. If this is right, then the templates involved in such phenomena are purely derivative: they are not independent linguistic entities and cannot function as such, or be perceived as such by speakers. “In other words, templates are not primitives of morphological and phonological description” (McCarthy 2006).

In this paper, I discuss a previously undescribed case of prosodic morphology which requires a phonological template that must be positively specified in a way which is not simply predictable from the ambient phonology of the language in which it occurs. I argue from this that we must recognise the template involved as an independent phonological object, which is a fully specified part of this particular process. We can generalise from this, in line with some other strands of work on templatic phonology, that templates clearly *can be* phonological primitives, and that, therefore, the claims of GTT do not fully capture the facts (thus adding to the body of work arguing against aspects of GTT, such as Gouskova 2007 and Idsardi & Raimy 2008).

The data that I discuss are from a process found in Liverpool English (‘Scouse’) which has been called *Scouse Diddification* (‘SD’; eg, Dugdale 2008). This is a case of *i*-suffixing truncation, which arguably creates diminutives. It is thus similar to German *i*-formation (see, eg, Wiese 2001) and General English *y*-hypocoristic formation (see, eg, Lappe 2007), but, unlike *y*-hypocoristic formation, it is fully productive and freely applicable to all types of nouns. The phonology of the template involved is regular and, while it is similar to that of previously described related phenomena, it also displays certain unusual characteristics.

Ignoring some predictable surface detail (and a few extra characteristics, such as one case of narrowly defined variation, which alter nothing said here), *SD* derives forms such as those in the second column, below, from those in the first (where the material which is preserved in the derived form is underlined).

A <i>(bread and) butter</i>	<u>bu</u> tɛ	<i>butty</i>	<u>bu</u> ti	‘sandwich’
B <i>metronome</i>	<u>metr</u> əneʊm	<i>metty</i>	<u>met</u> i	
C <i>pond</i>	<u>pɒ</u> nd	<i>ponny</i>	<u>pɒ</u> ni	
D <i>splinter</i>	<u>spl</u> ɪntɛ	<i>splinky</i>	<u>spl</u> ɪni	
E <i>address</i>	<u>əd</u> rɛs	<i>addy</i>	<u>ad</u> i	
F <i>Toxteth</i>	<u>tɒk</u> stəθ	<i>Tocky</i>	<u>tɒk</u> i	(place name)
G <i>Sefton (Park)</i>	<u>sɛ</u> ftɪ	<i>Sevvie</i>	<u>sɛ</u> vi	(place name)
H <i>chestnut</i>	<u>tʃɛ</u> stnʊt	<i>chezzy</i>	<u>tʃɛ</u> zi	
I <i>casserole</i>	<u>kas</u> ərəʊl	<i>cazzy</i>	<u>ka</u> zi	
J <i>lavatory</i>	<u>lav</u> ətɪ	<i>lavvy</i>	<u>lav</u> i	
K <i>Crosby</i>	<u>krɒ</u> zbi	<i>Crozzy</i>	<u>krɒ</u> zi	(place name)
L <i>corporation</i>	<u>kɔːp</u> ərəɪʃn	<i>corpy</i>	<u>kɔː</u> pi	
M <i>trainers</i>	<u>tre</u> ɪnɛ	<i>trainees</i>	<u>tre</u> ɪni	‘sport shoes’
N <i>loose (cigarettes)</i>	<u>luː</u> s	<i>loosies</i>	<u>luː</u> si	
O <i>glue</i>	<u>gluː</u>	<i>glooey</i>	<u>gluː</u> i	

In *SD*, a template is aligned with the start of the word (not the foot, see example E), including the suffixation of /i/. This leads to the word being truncated if it contains more phonological material than can fit into the template (but not if all of the base can be accommodated, as in O). The imposition of the template requires the simplification of any medial consonant cluster, preserving only the first consonant.

As its simplest, GTT relies on otherwise-justified language-specific markedness generalisations and on ‘the Emergence of the Unmarked’ (‘TETU’; see McCarthy & Prince 1994), to predict that the template governing a prosodic morpheme will be the most unmarked phonological shape allowed by a particular language for a stem (in cases like this, which derive free-standing morphemes). The phonological minimum for a stem in Liverpool English is simply a form which is bimoraic (that is, it must have two x-slots in a rhyme, as in *buy* /baɪ/ and *eye* /aɪ/, where xx = VV, and *pad* /pad/ and *add* /ad/, where xx = VC).

Three issues arise here:

- (i) while the *SD* template truncates forms with a monomoraic vowel at two x-slots (as in B, C, D, E, F, among others), this is not the case for bases with a bimoraic vowel in their initial syllable (as in L, M, N, which preserve three x-slots worth of material from the base); the template clearly allows for more than the most unmarked prosodic form of the language to be preserved
- (ii) the full word-initial onset is preserved in *SD*, no matter whether it takes up 1, 2 or 3 x-slots (compare A, D, M); certain cases of prosodic morphology impose a template which simplifies initial onsets and imposes a maximally unmarked CV structure, as we should expect from a TETU-constrained GTT (for example, in reduplications such as that found in Gothic class VII preterite formation, which derives *fēfres* from *fresan* ‘tempt’ and *seslep* from *slepan* ‘sleep’), but this is not the case in *SD*; if we set aside empty initial onsets, the least marked initial onset in English is a single C, but *SD* derives forms with the most marked onsets possible (as in D), so the template must specify that a full onset is preserved, whatever it may contain
- (iii) most notably, Liverpool English has no general subsegmental constraints on only single foot-medial consonants; in *SD*, however, any medial fricative in the form derived by the application of the template loses its laryngeal specification to become lenis, resulting in neutralisation to the v,z-type series (as in G, H, I, J, K); this affects only fricatives, and no other analogous laryngeal neutralisation phenomenon exists in the language, showing that the *SD* template must specify a subsegmental co-occurrence restriction on |frication| and |fortisness| (however these properties are modelled)

Points (i-iii) show that the template involved in *SD* must be an independently specified aspect of Liverpool English speakers’ phonological knowledge. It is not predictable from either the prosodic minimum allowed in the language, or from language-universal markedness criteria, and it includes a construction-specific subsegmental restriction. In summary, the *SD* template (i) is aligned to the right-edge of a word, (ii) preserves any initial onset, (iii) preserves two or three x-slots of phonological material, typically including the first post-nuclear consonant, and (iv) can alter the subsegmental specification of post-nuclear fricatives. None of this is predictable, as a fully-fledged GTT would need to claim. As Idsardi & Raimy (2008) write, “[o]ne of the goals of generative phonology is to identify what are the relevant generalizations a learner has to make when acquiring a language. GTT denies that a speaker of a language makes any distinct generalization about a given [templatic] pattern.” As well as displaying an intriguing phonology of its own, *SD* adds to the phenomena which show that GTT cannot be right in this assertion.

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