
Templatic morphology in Mansfeld German

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Mansfeld German (MG), the northern most variety of the Thuringian dialects, possesses a unique feature, namely *extended strong preterites*. Whereas strong verbs in Standard German (SG) form their preterites only via ablaut, strong preterites in MG additionally feature the suffix *-ə*, exemplified in (1).

- (1) *šnidə* ‘cut’ [SG: *schnitt*]; *bləwə* ‘stayed’ [SG: *blieb*]

The standard analysis (Spangenberg 1993: 262) that this is due to analogy to make strong verbs similar to weak verbs, all of which end in *-ə* in due to the suffixation of *-tə*, is incorrect. An inspection of dialect texts (Bernhardt n.d.; Stucki 1996a, 1996b; Zeising 2002) reveals that strong preterites are only extended if the stem vowel is short, as in (1), but remain unextended if the stem vowel is long, and if the stem vowel is followed by the velar nasal [ŋ], as shown in (2a-b), respectively.

- (2) a. *sahk* ‘saw’ [SG: *sah*]; *kahm* ‘came’ [SG: *kam*]
b. *jing* ‘went’ [SG: *ging*]; *schbrang* ‘jumped’ [SG: *sprang*]

In order to derive this pattern, I claim that in addition to ablaut, strong preterites in MG are formed via templatic morphology, as stated in (3).

- (3) *Strong preterite stems must contain exactly two vocalic morae.*

(3) interacts with ablaut. If the preterite stem has a long vowel derived via ablaut, (3) is already fulfilled. If the ablauted vowel of the preterite stem is short, however, the epenthetic default vowel *ə* is inserted, providing the missing mora. For the case where the short ablauted vowel is followed by [ŋ], I follow Hermans & van Oostendorp (2006) that [ŋ] contains a vocalic element, which provides the second mora.

The alternation between extended and non-extended strong preterites does not reflect a general bimorcity requirement, for many words in MG only have a single short vowel. A context sensitive rule adding *-ə* if the stem vowel is short is unexplanatory (why not add *-ə* if that vowel is long?). Finally, concatenative approaches (e.g., Zimmermann 2017) to (3) fail to give a uniform account. (2a) requires high-ranked MAX and low-ranked DEP, but then wrongly predicting vowel lengthening for (1). Fixing this gives the reverse problem: (2b) is wrongly predicted to feature *-ə*. The templatic analysis in (3) provides a uniform analysis for the alternation between extended and non-extended strong preterites and is therefore superior.

Selected references • Hermans, B. & M. van Oostendorp (2006). Against the sonority scale: evidence from Frankish tones. In: H. Broekhuis et al. (eds.). *Organizing Grammar*. Berlin: De Gruyter, 206-221. • Spangenberg, K. (1993). *Laut- und Formeninventar thüringischer Dialekte*. Berlin: Akademie Verlag. • Zimmermann, E. (2017). *Morphological Length & Prosodically Defective Morphemes*. Oxford: OUP.