
Central Sierra Miwwok verbal templates: a direct OT account

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In Optimality Theory (Prince & Smolensky 1993), markedness can only be reduced from UR to SR. There is no mechanism that increases markedness (UR $M < SR$ M). Surface representations that appear more marked than their proposed URs, like the templatic verb stems of Central Sierra Miwwok (CSM), pose a problem for this framework.

First, I propose that two CSM verb stems were misdescribed by Freeland, and their actual structure renders a foundational assumption of Bye & Svenonius 2012 (B&S) untenable. Second, I argue that CSM templatic morphology reflects the underlying marked structure of the template itself. Analysing morphemes as constraint violation profiles (Golston 1996) achieves this without additional machinery

In CSM, TAM is exponed by stem shape (Freeland 1951). These shapes increase stem markedness. Unlike B&S, who assume lengthless URs, I take the primary stem as the UR.

(1)		Base	(CV)CVC:-	CVC:VC-	CVCCV-
	Type I	tuja:ŋ-	tujaŋ-	tuj:aŋ-	tujŋa-
	Type IV	we:k-	wek:-	wek:iʔ-	wekʔi-

I demonstrate through suffix-allomorph selection that some stems classified as Types II and III by Freeland are actually novel root shapes. V-final stems select C-initial suffixes, while l-final stems select V-initial suffixes and the i fails to surface:

kojpa+VOL → kojpa-ni BUT lakʃi+ VOL → lakʃ:-e:/*lakʃi-ni ∴ /lakʃ:-/*lakʃi-/

ham:e+ VOL → ham:e-ni BUT luf:i+ VOL → luf:-e:/*luf:i-ni ∴ /luf:-/*luf:i-/

Finally, I present an analysis of CSM verbal templates where the marked surface structure is the realization of the UR.

(2)		*GEMINATE	*CODA	ALIGNL(C,w)
	[wek:1P-]	D	D	DD

References: • Bye, P. & P. Svenonius (2012). *Exponence, phonology, and non-concatenative morphology*. • Freeland, L. S. (1951). *The Language of the Sierra Miwwok*. • Golston, C. (1996). *Direct Optimality Theory: Representation as Pure Markedness*. • Prince, A. & P. Smolensky. (1993). *Optimality Theory: Constraint interaction in generative grammar*.