

Degemination?

The traditional insight concerning Hungarian degemination is that geminates (cf. Davis 2011; Ringen & Vago 2011) do not occur in this language word initially or flanked by another consonant on either side (cf. e.g. Vago 1980; Polgárdi 2008). In other words, the occurrence of geminates, true and fake ones alike (Nádasdy 1989; Oh & Redford 2012), is often held to be impossible except intervocalically or utterance finally (if preceded by a vowel and followed by a pause). However, this traditional view is oversimplified: to be at least observationally adequate, it has to be revised and refined in a number of respects (Dressler & Siptár 1989; 1998). In an attempt to do that, Siptár (2001) proposed three different degemination rules, applying at word level, postlexically, and in the phonetic implementation modul, respectively. Furthermore, a number of cases that had traditionally been analysed as degemination were reinterpreted as lack of gemination (see also Siptár & Törkenczy 2000). In view of the recent literature (e.g. Olaszy 2006; 2007; Pycha 2009; 2010; Beke & Gyarmathy 2010; Siptár 2012), however, the hypothesis can be advanced that the whole issue should be seen in an entirely different light: as a matter of phonetic duration rather than that of phonological quantity. In particular, the hypothesis is that the familiar degemination effects are not specific to geminates; rather, they are due to the phonetic compression of CCC clusters. This is assumed to apply both to left-flanked and to right-flanked geminates, and to underlying and derived, as well as true and fake geminates alike. The present talk gives a brief overview of some former analyses first, and then it presents and discusses the new hypothesis and some results of a phonetic experiment designed to confirm (or disconfirm) it by empirical data. Six short texts involving all types of geminates and control sequences (with both short and long consonants) were created. Six consonants (two fricatives, three plosives, and a nasal) were used in the test (and control) sequences. The texts were read aloud four times by ten native Hungarian speakers (19 to 24 ys). The duration of the specific consonant and that of the consonant cluster were measured in each case by means of Praat. Statistical analysis was carried out by SPSS 19.0. The results partially support the hypotheses but raise further questions concerning geminate- and consonant-specific realizations or the role of inter-speaker differences.

References

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