

Tone/ATR interactions in Slovenian

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We examine the distribution of tone in contemporary Central Slovenian, and show that the language's High/Low tone contrast is neutralized on [ɛ], [ɔ] and [ʌ]. We offer an Optimality Theoretic analysis, with a central role for the markedness constraint *H/–ATR (= no High tones on –ATR vowels).

The data Slovenian contrasts High and Low tone on stressed syllables: [ko'rák] 'step NOM SG' vs. [be'dàk] 'fool NOM SG'. Most commonly, roots with underlying tone keep their tone throughout the paradigm, e.g. [ko'rák-a] and [be'dàk-a] (both GEN SG).

Some nouns have tone alternations in their paradigm. One such pattern involves a Low tone in all the members of the paradigm, except the INSTR SG, which has a High: [pàmet] ~ [pámet-jo] 'wisdom'. Another example is a High tone in the NOM SG and a Low tone in the other members, e.g. [na'kúp] ~ [na'kùp-a] 'purchase'.

Nouns with [ɛ] and [ɔ] in their stressed syllable, however, *always* have a High in the NOM SG and a Low elsewhere: [léw] ~ [lèw-a] 'lion', [brón] ~ [bròn-a] 'bronze'. Since no other tonal pattern is allowed with these vowels, the tone on them is predictable. Nouns with stressed [ʌ] have the same predictable tone, but additionally, [ʌ] is allowed only word-finally: [mo'drás] ~ [mo'dràs-a] 'viper'.

The analysis Generally, both High and Low tone must be specified underlyingly for some morphemes. For example, [ko'rák] has a High underlyingly, while [be'dàk] has a Low. Nouns like [na'kúp] are underlyingly Low, but they select a NOM SG suffix that has a floating High (cf. Wolf 2005):

(1)

	/nakùp + H/	MAX(float)	MAX(tone)
→ a.	nakúp		* (L)
b.	nakùp	*! (H)	* (H)

If nouns with [ɛ] or [ɔ] are *always* Low underlyingly, then their analysis is simply as in (1). Due to Richness of the Base considerations, however, we need to make sure that the hypothetical /léw-a/ does not surface faithfully. Therefore, we must have a markedness constraint against a High tone on [ɛ] and [ɔ]: *H/–ATR. Such a constraint is phonetically grounded: Higher pitch correlates with higher vowels, and –ATR correlates with lower vowels, so the combination is dispreferred.

(2)

	/léw-a/	MAX(float)	*H/–ATR	MAX(tone)
a.	léw-a		*!	
→ b.	lèw-a			*

This constraint is dominated by MAX(float), so we do get a High tone in the NOM SG:

(3)

	/lèw + H/	MAX(float)	*H/–ATR	MAX(tone)
→ a.	léw		*	*
b.	lèw	*!		*

Slovenian allows [ʌ] only word-finally. We introduce the constraint LICENSE(ʌ) to enforce this typological oddity. The unfaithfulness to [ʌ] is a case of counter-bleeding opacity (Łubowicz 2002): *H/–ATR&IDENT(ATR) assures that surface [a]'s that correspond to UR /ʌ/'s must have a Low tone.

(4)

	/modrás-a/	LICENSE(ʌ)	*H/–ATR&IDENT(ATR)	IDENT(ATR)
a.	modrás-a	*!		
b.	modrás-a		*!	*
→ c.	modràs-a			*

The interaction of tone with vowel quality is rarely reported (Yip 2002:31); our paper makes a contribution to this under-researched area.

Selected References

- Wolf, Matthew (2005). *For an autosegmental theory of mutation*. Available as ROA-754.
 Yip, Moira (2002). *Tone*. Cambridge University Press.