

“Unmotivated” consonant gemination in the Hungarian Foreign Accent

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1. TRUE GEMINATES IN HUNGARIAN

- Restricted distributional criteria (cf. Polgárdi 2008).
- True underlying geminates are sporadic in the native vocabulary:
 - Monosyllables: *kedd, meggy, menny, épp* etc.
 - Onomatopoeic words: *hoppá, brummog, robbant* etc.
 - Dialectal word forms: *bakkancs, szállag, szöllő, köppeney* etc.
- The “functional load” of the length-opposition is rather low (cf. Siptár 1994).

however/deviszont

- Geminates also appear in [+foreign] words (cf. Nádasy 1989), e.g.:
 - Spelling pronunciation (?): *desszert, gleccser, hobbi, koffer, kollázs* etc.
 - Different spelling: *dajjer, dopping, maffia, Guttenberg, vikkendház* etc.
 - Monosyllables: *blöff, flöss, passz, sakk, szett, tipp* etc.
- A possible motivation: “estrangement effect” (distancing or alienation)?

2. “BORROWED CONSONANT LENGTHENING” RELOADED

- Nádasy (1989)’s proposal: “Borrowed Consonant Lengthening” (BCL).
- A phonological rule which makes singleton consonants geminate in [+foreign] words, when preceded (and/or followed) by short vowels.

BCL: [+foreign] C_i → C_iC_i / V₋(V)

- BCL works for a great part of the occurrences, e.g.:

Table 1:

Source lang.	Input	Output (Hun.)
Italian	<i>mafia</i> [ˈmaːfja]	<i>maffia</i>
English	<i>doping</i> [ˈdowpin]	<i>dopping</i>
English	<i>sweater</i> [ˈswetə]	<i>szvetter</i>
German	<i>Wecker</i> [ˈveke]	<i>vekker</i>
German	<i>Gletscher</i> [ˈgletʃe]	<i>gleccser</i>

however/deviszont

- Too many exceptions to BCL as a rule, e.g.:
 - Preceding long vowel rather than BCL: *kréker, Vénusz, májer, bootol* etc.
 - BCL with following long vowel: *kolléga, frittöz, venti[ll]átor* etc.
 - No BCL between short vowels: *ko[l]éga, szu[g]erál, e[s]encia, pi[k]oló* etc.

2.1. Nádasy (1989)’s diachronic explanation for BCL:

- Language contact with South-Eastern German dialects (Austria-Hungary).
- These Germanic varieties have intramorphemic geminates.
- Most of the relevant borrowings arrived with a similar Germanic mediation, the pronunciation of other words might have been influenced by analogy.

2.2. Huszthy (2016)’s synchronic observations:

- BCL is older than the impact of the Austrian Empire to Hungary: it is also present in medieval Hungarian names of foreign origin: *Attila* [ɒtillb] (← *attila*), *Brigitta* (← *Brigida*), *Gizella* (← *Gisela*), *Julianna* (← *Juliana*) etc.
- BCL is present in today’s loanwords as well without South-Eastern Germanic influence, e.g. *Comple[tt]a, Wa[ff]elini, flo[pp]y, Umberto E[kk]o* etc.
- BCL is also present in the typical foreign accent of Hungarians (see later).
- Similar effects to BCL appear in Italian as well (without any Germanic pronunciation influence), e.g. *magazzino* (← *magazine*), *Barce[ll]ona, Li[ll]ipu[ttə], fashion* [ˈfɛʃʃon], *tu[nn]el, club* [ˈklɛbbə], *tram* [ˈtrammə] etc. (cf. Domokos 2001).
- There must be other motivations of BCL rather than language contact: the real motivation must be found in the **productive phonology of Hungarian**.

3. WHERE CAN WE FIND GEMINATES CONSTANTLY?

- **HYPOTHESIS:** Unexhaustible data are offered by the Hungarian Foreign Accent (henceforth HFA): the typical way how Hungarians tend to pronounce foreign languages (henceforth L2) spontaneously.
- Data collection during visits in different language courses in two high schools (Óbudai Gimnázium & Páduai Szent Antal Gimnázium) and two universities (ELTE BTK & PPKE BTK), hidden recordings of four L2s: English, German, Italian and French.

Table 2:

Source lang.	Input	Output (Hun.)
English	<i>immediately</i>	[imˈmiːdjetli]
German	<i>ich hoffe</i>	[içˈhoffe]
French	<i>bicyclette</i>	[bisikˈlett]
Italian	<i>gufo</i>	[ˈguffo(:)]
Italian	<i>litorale</i>	[littorˈraːle]
Italian	<i>tappeto</i>	[taˈpetto(:)]

however/deviszont

- Gemination depends on the level of L2 acquisition (it is more prominent in high schools compared to universities).
- Gemination may also depend on the specific L2: it is more frequent in Italian and German compared to English and French.

4. THE PHONOLOGICAL MOTIVATIONS OF BCL

- The effects which require gemination in the HFA may be expressed through **various constraints**:
- **SWP (Stress-to-Weight Principle):** Originally stressed syllables in L2 are heavy in the HFA (even if stress is subsequently replaced in the accent).
- **HEAVY-CLOSED:** Heavy closed syllables are preferred to heavy open ones (i.e. gemination is better than vowel-lengthening in order to make a syllable heavy by SWP; cf. *maffia, vikkend, ammen* etc.).
- **EDGEMOST-RIGHT:** When L2 is Italian, the stressed syllable is aligned to the right edge of the prosodic word.
- ***H.H:** There are no adjacent heavy syllables.
- ***HEAVY:** There are no heavy syllables.

Table 3:

(ol.) /tapˈpeːto/	SWP	EDGEMOST-R	HEAVY CLOSED	*H.H	*HEAVY
a) [tappeːto]			*!	*	**
b) [tappetto]				*!	**
c) [tapeːto]			*!		*
d) [tapetto]					*
e) [tappeto]		*!			*
f) [tapeto]	*!	**			

5. CONCLUSION AND FURTHER RESEARCH

- As opposed to the title, the phenomenon is phonologically not unmotivated: it may have a great number of motivations: different constraints.
- Fortition-constraints are in interaction with Lenition-constraints, since beside gemination, in certain positions degemination appears as well.
- Constraint rankings depend on L2 and on the level of L2 acquisition.
- Metrical constraints may also be compromised, since certain word rhythms (typically TROCHEE) are preferred by the informants, which often results gemination or degemination.

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