A case of spurious metathesis in Lillooet

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In a number of Lillooet words, we find a transposition of vowels and consonants that appears to be straightforward metathesis. However, internal evidence shows that, rather than just being a switch in position of two segments, this transposition results from an underlying pattern of anaptyxis, stress-shift and vowel deletion. In this paper we investigate this phenomenon, in conjunction with a similar phenomenon in Old English. We also offer a tentative explanation of the underlying mechanics in terms of metrical phonology.

1 Introduction

Lass 1984:189-190 describes a case of apparent metathesis in Old English that in fact can be better analysed as a case of anaptyxis, stress-shift and vowel-deletion (CVrC > CVrVC > CVrVC > CrVC), as discussed in section 2 below. Lillooet has an almost exact parallel to this type of spurious metathesis, which we will discuss in section 3. In section 4, a tentative analysis will also be given of the mechanics underlying the stress-shift in the Lillooet cases.

2 Spurious metathesis in Old English

A number of Old English words show an apparent metathesis of r and x (the latter traditionally written as h in the original sources). Thus, besides older be(o)rht ‘bright,’ fyrhto ‘fright’ and forhtiga ‘frighten’ we find later breht, fryht and frohtiga. However, as Lass (1984:190) points out, we find certain ‘compromise’ spellings that show a vowel both before and after the r. The examples given by Lass, and arranged in his manner are:

berht — breht 'bright'
— geberehntiga gebrehti ‘brighten’
fyrhto fyrihto fryht ‘fright’
forhtiga forohhtiga frohtiga ‘frighten’

As Lass points out, the Vrh forms are historically older, having exact formal parallels in Gothic. Also, we are justified in setting up *bereht and *geberhntiga as possible forms that would fill in the blanks in the above chart.
Although we have no evidence for a stress-shift from the vowel before $r$ to the vowel after $r$ (since stress was not marked in Old English), positing such a stress-shift is by all means reasonable. (We do know that the stress originally fell on the vowel before $r$, this being the general Germanic pattern.) Lass then summarizes the likely course of events as follows:

$$\text{CVrxC} \rightarrow \text{CVrVxC} \rightarrow \text{CVrVxC} \rightarrow \text{CrVxC}$$

Thus, the apparent metathesis that we have in Old English can be shown to be an entirely different process, involving anaptyxis, stress-shift and deletion of the originally stressed vowel.

3 The Lillooet facts

Lillooet has a number of stems $C_aCC$ and $C_\theta CC$ (collectively symbolized $CECC$). When these stems combine with the resultative prefix $ka$- (which indicates that a state or action is achieved suddenly, or after some trying, and which always requires the ‘reinforcing’ enclitic _a_), these stems show apparent metathesis by becoming $CECEC$. Examples are: $x\alpha q$ ‘to roll down’ > $ka-\chi\lambda q'_a$ ‘to roll down suddenly,’ $\tau q\alpha m_k$ ‘broken, not usable any more’ > $ka-\tau m\kappa q'_a$ ‘to break (like an old rope when pulled), to come apart (rotting hide on a carcass),’ $\chi\alpha t q$ ‘hole’ > $ka-\chi t\kappa q'_a$ ‘hole is created suddenly.’ Like the Old English cases above, however, it seems analytically more accurate to assume an intermediate stage $CECEC$ with stress-shift to the second $E$, and deletion of the first $E$, giving us, for example, $ka-x\alpha l q'_a > ka-\chi\lambda l q'_a > ka-\chi l\lambda q'_a$ > $ka-\chi l\lambda q'_a$. (Alternatively, we could also subsume that $CECEC$ underlies all its surface derivations, with stress assigned to the first $E$ in forms without $ka$-, and stress shifted to the second $E$ in the $ka$- forms, and deletion of the un stressed $E$’s.)

Evidence for the correctness of the non-metathesis analysis comes from another stress-rule involving $ka$: reduplicative stems $C_1EC_2-C_1(E)C_2$ (with the stress regularly on the first $E$, see also below), shift the stress to the second $E$ when such forms are combined with $ka$. Unfortunately, I have only two such cases in my corpus, but both obey this rule. Thus we have $m\alpha t-\alpha mnt-\alpha p$ (from underlying $*m\alpha t-m\alpha t-p$) ‘paralyzed’ > $ka-m\alpha t-m\alpha t_a$ ‘to get paralyzed.’ The second example is $ka-x w\alpha p-x w\alpha p_a$ $ta-n-q w\alpha f\acute{u}t-t\alpha n_a$ ‘my (n-) language (n-q w\alpha f\acute{u}t-t\alpha n) has come back to me,’ with a reduplicated form based on $x w\alpha p$ ‘to

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1. The change of -$m\alpha t-p$ to -$\alpha mnt-\alpha p$ in this word (and in many structurally similar words) is also a case of spurious metathesis, this time outside the stress: we have insertion of $\alpha$ in $t-p$, in order to alleviate the final cluster, the dropping of $\alpha$ from $m-t$, and finally insertion of $\alpha$ before $m$, all within well-established patterns of Lillooet morphophonemics (for details see Van Eijk 1997:18-25).
lift up, put on one's feet.' (The reduplicated form was recorded from Martina LaRochelle of Lillooet, and in its formal and semantic aspects it may be more typical of the northern dialect than of the southern dialect, according to comments from some Mount Currie speakers.) The pattern shown by ka-mét-mátə and ka-xʷəp-xʷəp a suggests that forms like ka-xləqə a are also derived from underlying forms with two E's, the second of which then attracts the stress when ka- is affixed.

4 A possible explanation of the Lillooet facts

So far, the Lillooet facts are clear. As to why we have the stress-shift after ka-, an explanation is much harder to obtain. A possible solution is suggested, however, by another peculiar stress-rule involving ka-: in general, vowels ə ə (E) are 'weak' in that they yield the stress to any of the other Lillooet vowels (a ə i u ə, collectively symbolized A) when they are combined with these in a word, as in cəl-ix 'to exert oneself' (cəl 'strong,' -ix 'body, self'), mac-xál 'to write (mac-), intransitive (-xál),' pəq-us 'bald eagle (from *pəq-ús; pəq 'white,' -us 'face, head'). When a word has vowels E only, the stress usually falls on the first of these, as in cəl-əl 'strong,' mátərmənt-op 'paralyzed' (see above), or mátəcən 'to write it, transitive (-ən). 2

However, after ka-, stems with vowels E have E 'strengthened,' so it now attracts the stress even where it is combined with one or more vowels A. Examples are ka-cəm-s-kanə 'I managed to get it lit (after some trying), I lit it by accident' (cf. cəm-ən-əkən 'I lit it'), and ka-təq-s-kanə 'I caught it' (cf. təq-ən-əkən 'I touched it'). 3

The two stress-rules involving ka- (putting the stress on the second of two vowels E, and strengthening a single E) are probably at some point interconnected and may go back to one underlying rule. Evidence for this comes from so-called CVC-reduplication (the same type that we have in cəl-əl, mátərmənt-op above) when it is applied to stems C₁AC₂. In these cases the stress falls on the second vowel, and the first vowel is reduced to E, as in cək-cák 'cool (of weather),' nəqʷ-nəqʷ 'warm (of weather),' məkʷ- mákw 'dull (of edge; Fountain dialect),' cəqʷ-cəqʷ 'tart, bitter,' cəqʷ-cəqʷ 'red' (via *cək-cák, *nəqʷ-nəqʷ, etc.). 4 Since vowels A are 'strong' (in that they take stress-

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2. There are a number of cases where stress unexpectedly falls on a later ə, as in kʷət-kʷət 'hollow spot on top of breastbone.' Also, the ə in the passive marker -ərn is strong in that it attracts the stress after stems with E, e.g., cələrn-ən 'it was lit.'

3. The suffixes -s and -ən are transitivizers, -s generally indicating lack of control, while -ən signals that the subject largely is in control of the action. For details see Van Eijk 1997:107-128.

4. This stress-pattern is not without exceptions, but most of these fall into well-defined
precedence over E), we may presume that the underlying stress-structure of
forms like $*\text{cak-cak}$ is $S-S$. Now, under general rules of metrical phonology,
such combinations (i.e., of two strong vowels under the same node) are not
allowed (see Van der Hulst and Smith 1982:31), and apparently the second
vowel remains strong, while the first vowel is demoted to weak status, hence
$*\text{cak-cak} \ (S-S) > *\text{cak-cak} \ (W-S) > *\text{cak-cak} > \text{cak-cak}.$\footnote{\textsuperscript{5}} Where we have
reduplications of stems CEC, the resulting structure is $W-W$, which is not
allowed either, but since the second vowel cannot take stress the first one takes
stress by default, hence $\text{čel-čel} \ etc. \ (The \ fact \ that \ the \ first \ E \ is \ strong \ only \ by
default \ is \ proven \ by \ the \ fact \ that \ it \ shifts \ the \ stress \ to \ a \ following \ A, \ as \ in \ ɫel-
ɫel-ţkán \ ‘I \ am \ strong.’). \ The \ effect \ of \ ka- \ is \ apparently \ to \ strengthen \ all \ vowels
in \ the \ stem, \ thus \ converting \ a \ single \ E \ to \ strong \ status \ (which \ means \ it \ attracts
the \ stress \ even \ over \ the \ competition \ of \ vowels \ A, \ see \ ɫa-\‘6\‘el-s-kan \ a \ above),
and \ converting \ stems \ E-E \ to \ S-S \ status, \ with \ then \ regular \ demotion \ of \ the \ first \ S
vowel \ to \ W \ status \ (so \ that, \ for \ example, \ ɫa-\‘mēt-\‘mēt \ a \ now \ parallels \ cak-cák).
The \ above \ solution \ is, \ of \ course, \ only \ tentative \ in \ that \ it \ is \ based \ on
what \ are \ in \ essence \ theoretical \ constructs \ (viz., \ weak \ or \ strong \ status \ of \ vowels). On \ the \ other \ hand, \ these \ constructs \ are \ strongly \ suggested \ by \ the \ observable
facts \ of \ Lillooet \ stress. \ \ A \ full \ assessment \ of \ metrical \ phonology \ (or \ any \ other
theory) \ as \ it \ relates \ to \ the \ stress \ in \ Lillooet \ falls \ outside \ the \ scope \ of \ this \ article,
but \ students \ of \ Salish \ (and \ of \ stress-theories) \ are \ of \ course \ invited \ to \ explore
these \ issues \ further. \ For \ a \ general \ account \ of \ Lillooet \ stress \ in \ metrical \ terms \ I
refer \ to \ Giles \ 1988. \ This \ study, \ in \ turn, \ builds \ on \ Bates \ 1983, \ to \ which \ I \ do \ not
have \ access. \ A \ surface \ analysis \ of \ Lillooet \ stress \ patterns \ is \ given \ in \ Van \ Eijk
1997:14-17. \ This \ analysis \ supplants \ my \ earlier \ attempts, \ viz., \ Van \ Eijk \ 1981
and \ Van \ Eijk \ 1985:20-24.

\textit{semantic \ categories \ or \ show \ formal \ peculiarities \ that \ may \ account \ for \ their \ unusual \ stress
status. \ Examples \ of \ unexpected \ stress \ are \ lik-lik \ ‘unidentified \ swamp \ bird, \ probably
Common \ Snipe’} \ (and \ other \ names \ for \ animals \ showing \ the \ same \ type \ of \ reduplication),
or \ c‘ax-c‘x-ot \ ‘shameful’ \ (via \ *c‘âx-c‘ax-t) \ and \ other \ cases \ with \ the \ aspectual \ suffix \ -t.\textit{5} \ Strong \ vowels \ within \ the \ root-contour \ (i.e., \ the \ root \ with \ or \ without \ reduplicative
extensions) \ take \ precedence \ over \ strong \ vowels \ in \ suffixes, \ as \ in \ X‘iq-kan \ ‘I \ arrive
(there),’ \ ciq-in’ \ ‘to \ stab \ (ciq-) \ somebody, \ transitive \ (-in’),’ \ caq-ciq-in’ \ ‘to \ stab \ over \ and
over.’ \ Given \ enough \ extensions, \ the \ stress \ may \ move \ from \ the \ root-contour \ by \ two
vowels, \ as \ long \ as \ it \ does \ not \ fall \ on \ the \ last \ vowel \ in \ the \ root-suffix \ string, \ e.g., \ caq-
ciq-in’-itas \ ‘they \ (-itas) \ stabbed \ him \ over \ and \ over.’

The \ fact \ that \ the \ stress-rule \ for \ an \ S-S \ sequence \ within \ the \ root-contour \ (cok-
cák \ < \ *cak-Iɔ) \ is \ different \ from \ an \ S-S \ sequence \ in \ a \ root-suffix \ contour \ (as \ in \ X‘iq-
kan) \ is, \ in \ my \ view, \ an \ argument \ for \ classing \ reduplication \ as \ a \ process \ quite \ different
from \ affixation. \ In \ this \ respect \ I \ agree \ with \ Uhlenbeck \ 1992, \ to \ whom \ I \ refer \ the
interested \ reader. \ Morphological \ arguments \ for \ treating \ reduplication \ as \ different \ from
affixation \ are \ given \ in \ Van \ Eijk \ 1998.
References


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