

## Swimming against the current: CVCV compensatory shortening.

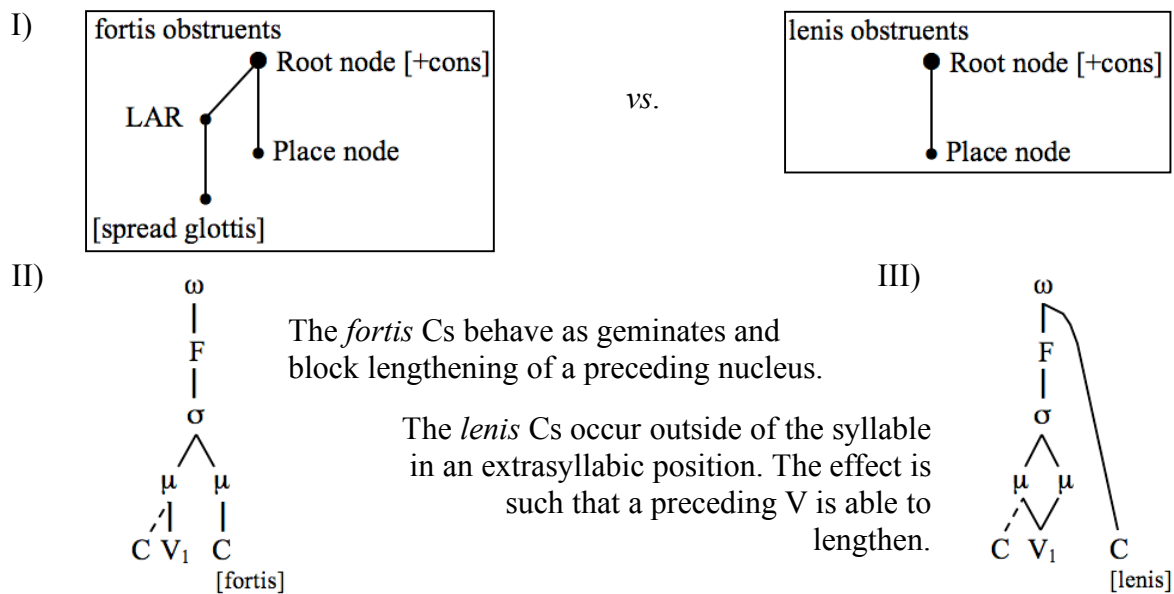
### A case study of Weert Franconian.

Maike Prehn, Meertens Instituut / Amsterdam

maike.prehn@meertens.knaw.nl

*CVCV CL in Low German.*

We find various types of quantitative phenomena in the languages of the world. A process that received much attention is compensatory lengthening (CL), or more specifically so-called *CVCV CL* (Kavitskaya 2002). This phenomenon entails that the loss of the second V results in a durational enhancement of the first V as known from e.g. Low German (LG), Friulian and Slavic. A common restriction to *CVCV CL* is that the lengthening is permitted only if the intervocalic C is voiced. Such a quantitative development is explainable by means of Mora Theory (Hayes 1989) and laryngeal features. Low German for example has a laryngeally specified moraic *fortis* series, whereas the (non-moraic) *lenis* series is left unspecified.



*Central Franconian.*

The Central Franconian dialects are generally characterized by the presence of two distinct tonal accents, i.e. tone accent 1 (TA1) and tone accent 2 (TA2). The Dutch city dialect of Weert, located at the periphery of the tone accent area, lacks this tonal distinction – at least in declarative sentence intonation (Fournier 2008; Fournier et al. 2006; Heijmans 2003; Heijmans / Gussenhoven 1998; Verhoeven 2002; Hermans p.c.). Differences in the pitch contours have been shown to be due to alignment variations of the peaks. There are basically two possibilities as to the origin of this quantity contrast:<sup>1</sup>

- a) Either Weert never had the tone accents and was quantitative at all times,
- b) or it had tone accents and went through a process of neutralization as Fournier (2008:48) and Boersma (p.c.) tentatively suggest (cf. also Heijmans 2003:34).

At first sight, it is this quantitative dialect that seems to feature a diachronic process of *CVCV Compensatory Shortening* immediately opposite to the *CVCV Compensatory Lengthening*. Originally long Middle Limburgian (ML) vowels of *CVVCə*-sequences before voiced

<sup>1</sup> The assumption that the dialect of Weert is an adaption of the dialects spoken in the vicinity, e.g. in Roermond or Baexem, is not further considered here. The reason is that we find next to word forms that match with Roermond forms, also cases that are rather on par with Venlo forms, i.e. a dialect spoken somewhat more to the north of Weert. This is also true for certain sound changes such as diphthongization of high final vowels, and the lack of palatalization in /s/ preceding /p, t, k, x/. The dialect of Weert is in so far an individual development rather than an adaption (Boersma p.c.).



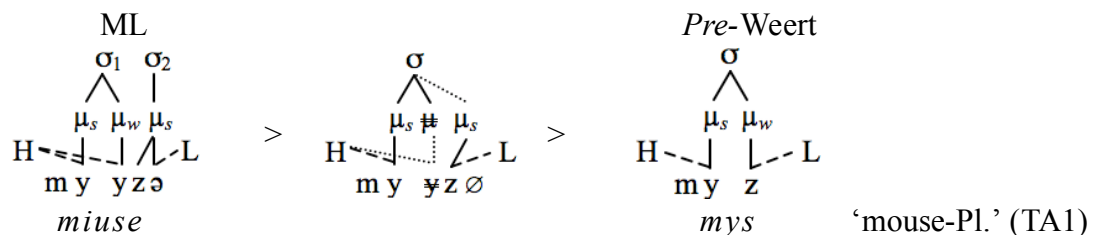
preceding V. Rather, what would be possible in connection to the voiceless C is CL – a common but not obligatory process in the event of loosing a segment. Overlong vowels would result, and with them a system of ternary vowel quantity that has been argued in the literature to be particularly unstable (cf. Schmidt 2002). Although phonetically quite unusual, we see that the shortening can be analyzed phonologically by means of laryngeal features and moraic weight.

### *Tonal neutralization.*

The second possibility for the diachronic development of the binary quantity contrast in Weert does not primarily relate to quantity. What we might assume instead is rather a process of *tonal* neutralization. Weert is located at the northwestern periphery of the tone accent area. This geographical fact brings along the increased odds for the occurrence of neutralization processes. All surrounding Franconian varieties do clearly comprise the tonal distinction described above. These tone accents are indeed also able to explain the shortening.

The ML final schwa holds a low tone L while the main syllable  $\sigma_1$  has a high tone H. Deleting the schwa does not do away with the mora and the L of  $\sigma_2$ . Being a morpheme, it seeks to remain incorporated in the PrWd and associates to the voiced /z/ that links as a coda to  $\sigma_1$ . We attain a TA1 contour of H\*L in the mono-syllable. The weak mora of  $\sigma_1$  is deleted in favor of the strong mora of the second syllable. A binary configuration (i.e. adherence to MAXBIN) is preferred above a ternary one. This alternative, tonally based change of ML *miuse* ‘mouse-Pl.’ is illustrated below.

### VI. Diachronic tone in the dialect of Weert



The resulting mono-syllable contains one mora on the V and one mora on the coda C. The tonal development of TA1 therefore effectively results in the shortening of the originally long vowel of the nucleus.

Voiceless Cs are in comparison to voiced Cs inherently unable to bear the L of the schwa-syllable (cf. Bradshaw 1999). The prosodic / morphological content of the  $\sigma_2$  cannot associate and is therefore deleted along with the final schwa. The vowel of the  $\sigma_1$  remains long with a tonal contour of H\*H for TA2. The tones are abandoned synchronically in Weert, yielding an almost completely opposite system to LG with shortened Vs in connection to apocope.

### *Conclusion.*

Both of the analytical roads we have seen above – diachronic quantity and diachronic tones – have their appeal. They are equally viable from a phonological point of view. The tonal account appears to be the typologically more obvious solution when looking at the neighboring, exclusively tonal dialects. It is also better in line with phonetic universals. The vowel shortening is here regarded a secondary development and does not directly relate to the [voice] status of the succeeding coda C. I therefore tend to agree with Fournier (2008) in the assumption of a tonal neutralization process for the dialect of Weert. The synchronic result is in any case a binary quantity contrast short vs. long in the vowel system.

*References.*

- Bradshaw, Mary (1999). *A crosslinguistic study of consonant-tone interaction*. <<http://linguistics.osu.edu/research/publications/dissertations/>> (15 April 2009).
- Fournier, Rachel (2008). *Perception of the tone contrast in East Limburgian dialects*. PhD diss. Nijmegen: Radboud Universiteit.
- Fournier, Rachel / Verhoeven, Jo / Swerts, Marc / Gussenhoven, Carlos (2006). Perceiving word prosodic contrasts as a function of sentence prosody in two Dutch Limburgian dialects. In: *Journal of Phonetics* 34, 29-48.
- Gussenhoven, Carlos (2007). A vowel height split explained: Compensatory listening and speaker control. In: Cole, J. / Hualde, J.I. (eds.). 145-172.
- Hayes, Bruce (1989). Compensatory lengthening in moraic phonology. In: *Linguistic Inquiry* 20, 253-306.
- Heijmans, Linda (2003). The relationship between tone and vowel length in two neighboring Dutch Limburgian dialects. In: Fikkert, Paula / Jacobs, Haike (eds.). 7-45.
- Heijmans, Linda / Gussenhoven, Carlos (1998). The Dutch dialect of Weert. In: *Journal of the International Phonetic Association (JIPA)* 28, 107-112.
- Hendrickx, Jacques (1978). *Morfofonologische variantie in substantieven en adjectieven van het Weerts*. M.A. thesis. Amsterdam: Universiteit van Amsterdam.
- Kavitskaya, Darya (2002). *Compensatory Lengthening. Phonetics, Phonology, Diachrony*. New York / London: Routledge.
- Kohler, Klaus J. (2001). Überlänge im Niederdeutschen? In: Peters, R. et al. (eds.). 385-402.
- Schmidt, Jürgen Erich (2002). Die sprachhistorische Genese der mittelfränkischen Tonakzente. In: Auer, Peter / Gilles, Peter / Spiekermann, Helmut (eds.). *Silbenschnitt und Tonakzente*. (Linguistische Arbeiten. 463). Tübingen: Niemeyer.. 201-233.
- Verhoeven, Jo (ed.) (2002). *Phonetic work in progress*. Antwerpen: Universiteit Antwerpen.
- Verhoeven, Jo (2002). The phonetics of tonal contrasts in Weert revisited. In: Verhoeven, Jo (ed.). *Phonetic work in progress*. Antwerpen: Universiteit Antwerpen. 191-197.