

## Elucidating Dogon prosodic structures: the case of liquid ‘flip-flops’ in Beni (Dogon)

In Beni (Ben Tey; Heath 2009), liquid consonants are subject to a strict linear condition in adjacent syllables across certain root-suffix boundaries. In inchoative and reversive forms in (1), and importantly (1c, f), all combinations of /l, r/ in adjacent syllables collapse onto [l<sub>root...</sub>r<sub>suffix</sub>]

### (1) /l, r/ alternations in Beni

	<i>stem</i>	<i>suffixed</i>	<i>gloss</i>		<i>stem</i>	<i>suffixed</i>	<i>gloss</i>
a.	[dugu]	[dugu-lo]	‘fat(-INCH)’	d.	[kumdʒo]	[kumdʒo-ro]	‘crumple(-REV)’
b.	[pile]	[pile-re]	‘white(-INCH)’	e.	[kɔli]	[kɔli-ri]	‘hang up(-REV)’
c.	[ɔru]	[ɔli-ri]	‘moist(-INCH)’	f.	[irɛ]	[ili-ri]	‘forget(-REV)’

In the inchoative, a non-liquid root (1a) selects an [l]-initial allomorph; a lateral root (1b) triggers an [r]-initial allomorph, without modification to the root. A rhotic root (1c) not only selects the [r]-initial allomorph but also triggers an [r] ~ [l] alternation in the root. The reversive (1f) behaves similarly, though this suffix is [r]-initial, regardless of the root; after non-liquid (1d) and lateral roots (1e), no alternations are evidenced. These patterns are particular to derivational morphology; no such alternations occur within monomorphs (e.g., [li:li] ‘accompany’), and while [l]-initial words are numerous in Beni, no native [r]-initial words appear to exist. Finally, inflectional suffixes fail to trigger stem alternations (2). (2a-c) behave as expected; rhotic roots (2d, e) fail to demonstrate a lateral when suffixed. Importantly, the same root alternating in (1f) remains unchanged in (2d).

### (2) No alternations with inflection

	<i>stem</i>	<i>suffixed</i>	<i>gloss</i>		<i>stem</i>	<i>suffixed</i>	<i>gloss</i>
a.	[jaya]	[jaya-ri]	‘fall(-PERFNEG)’	d.	[irɛ]	[irɛ-rɛ-j]	‘forget(-PERF-1SG)’
b.	[tʃe:le]	[tʃe:le:-rɛ]	‘be.good(-PERF.3SG)’	e.	[birɛ]	[birɛ:-ra-j]	‘work(-IMPF-1SG)’
c.	[tali]	[tali-ri]	‘transform(-PERFNEG)’				

We analyze the [l] ~ [r] alternation in (1b) as lateral dissimilation, affecting syllable-adjacent laterals across a morpheme boundary. As for the [r] ~ [l] alternation in roots (1f), we argue against rhotic dissimilation. Dissimilation across morpheme boundaries is thought to affect only affixes (Suzuki 1998), and input /r...l/ sequences (1c) would be well-formed according to the demands of both processes. Instead, we propose a process of lateralization, restricted to syllable-adjacent liquids across a derivational morpheme boundary. This process applies in isolation in (1f) and feeds lateral dissimilation in (1c): /ɔru-li/ > |ɔli-li| > [ɔli-ri].

In this talk, we discuss phonological motivations for both lateral dissimilation and lateralization. In addition, we look to lateralization, taken alongside other processes described in Heath (2009), such as spirantization, nasal spreading, and sonorization, as having implications for elucidating characteristics of Beni’s prosodic structure. By and large, there is little known about Dogon prosodic structure; other descriptions offer only weak support for trochaicity among these languages. The phenomena in Beni, taken together, point toward a metrical weakness in the second syllable onset position of words such that the consonant in such an onset is highly susceptible to alternation; this is in line with trochaicity. Other phenomena such as second syllable vowel reduction offer further support to this point of view.