Patterns in Loanword Adaptation

Nabila LOURIZ
(University Hassan II, Casablanca)

The present paper attempts to explain the reasons why some adaptations of loanwords take place in perception whereas others in phonology. This paper takes as a case study French loanwords into Moroccan Arabic which follow different routes in adaptation.

Literature reveals a disagreement concerning phonological borrowing. While some researchers claim that adaptation happens in phonology (Paradis & Lacharité; 1997; 2009) others argue that they are phonetically motivated (Peperkamp *et.al*, 2008). Besides, some scholars claim that there is an interface of both (Boersma and Hamann; 2009, Kenstowicz; 2013).

Moroccan Arabic and French enjoy different vowel and consonantal inventories as well as syllable structures. When borrowing French words with structures considered to be 'ill-formed' in MA, the latter modifies them to satisfy the constraints of its grammar. Data reveal asymmetry not only in how a structure is adapted, but also in whether it is phonetically or phonologically triggered.

Adopting the framework of Optimality Theory (Prince and Smolensky, 1993), I will examine the aforementioned data in an attempt to (i) demystify the irregularities, (ii) show how they are generated by one grammar, and more importantly (iii) explain when phonetics and phonology come into play independently of one another, and when they interface.

The scenarios I use to back my arguments come down to three. First, Fr. vowel /y/ is adapted as either [i] /byro/->[biru] 'desk' or [u] /selyl/->[silun] 'cell'. Second, Fr. syllables without onset either (i) obtain one /alymet/->[zalamit] 'matches', or (ii) are deleted /elastik/->[lastik] 'band'. Finally, after unpacking, nasal vowels appear as (i) VN /bãk/->[baŋka] 'bank' , (ii) V /gõfle/->[gufəl] 'swell', or (iii) deleted altogether /ĩfirmje/->[fərmli] 'nurse'. I will show that the first adaptation is due to perception only, the second to phonology *per se*, and the third to a division of labor between the two. Finally, I will discuss the borrower's preferences to resort to phonetics and/o r phonology to generate a wide variety of 'regular irregularities'.