Relativized contiguity and word-final deletion in Catalan

Abstract

In Catalan, there is a process that deletes word-final r which is preceded by a stressed vowel (1a) (Mascaró 1976, Hualde 1992). (1b) and (1c) show that the r-deletion process does not apply when the preceding vowel is not stressed (1b) or when r is not the word-final segment (1c).

(1) a. clar [klá] 'clear (m.sg.)' cf. clara [klárə] 'clear (f.sg.)'
    tirar [tirá] 'to throw'

    b. míser [mízər] 'miserable'

    c. matern [mətərn] 'material (m.sg.)'

The r-deletion process interacts differently with two morphological/syntactic processes: the plural suffixation and the cliticization. The r-deletion overapplies to plural forms (2): the stem-final r is deleted, although it is followed by the plural suffix -s and is not word-final on the surface.

(2) clars [klás] 'clear (m.pl.)'
    sensers [sənsəs] 'whole (m.pl.)'

Contrarily, the r-deletion process transparently applies to cliticized verbs: the verb-final r is not deleted when it is followed by an enclitic without regard to whether a clitic begins with a vowel (3a) or a consonants (3b).

(3) a. pensar-ho [pənsáɾu] 'to think it' cf. pensar [pənsə] 'to think'
      tirar-ho [tiráɾu] 'to throw it'

      b. voler-te [vələɾtə] 'to want you'
      tirar-la [tirəɾlə] 'to know it'

(4) cliticization => r-deletion => plural suffixation
In order to account for the deletion and non-deletion of word-final *r* in (2-3), the rule-based approach must assume the rule ordering in (4). However, the rule ordering (4) is not plausible, because a morphosyntactic process, such as cliticization, precedes a lexical process, such as inflection.

This paper provides an OT account for the (non-)deletion of word-final *r* in Catalan. I argue that the JUNCTURE-CONTIGUITY constraint (Lamontagne 1997) can be relativized to morphosyntactic boundaries as shown in (5) and the different interactions of the plural suffixation and the cliticization with the *r*-deletion are accounted for by the ranking in (6), where a markedness constraint against *r* preceded by stressed vowel is ranked between the domain-specific J(#)-CONTIG and the general J-CONTIG (A detailed analysis of the *r*-deletion process will be addressed in the talk).

(5)  

a. JUNCTURE-CONTIGUITY [J-CONTIG]:

If the elements in the input are contiguous across a morphosyntactic boundary, their correspondents in the output must be contiguous.

b. J(#)-CONTIGUITY [J(#)-CONTIG]:

If the elements in the input are contiguous across a word boundary (#), their correspondents in the output must be contiguous.

(6)  

J(#)-CONTIG >> *[V^r] >> J-CONTIG

Given the constraint ranking (6), the (non-)deletion of *r* is accounted for as follows: in cliticized verbs, where the verb-final *r* and the clitic-initial segments are contiguous across a word boundary (#), the deletion of *r* incurs a violation of the highest-ranked J(#)-CONTIG and the candidate which realizes the verb-final *r* is evaluated as optimal (7). Contrastively, in plural forms, where the stem-final *r* and the plural suffix are divided by a morpheme boundary (+), the deletion of *r* does not incur a violation of J(#)-CONTIG. Therefore, the candidate whose stem-final *r* is
deleted is selected as an optimal candidate because it only violates the lower-ranked constraint J-CONTIG (8).

(7) Deletion in cliticized verbs

\[
\begin{array}{|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
\text{a. } /\text{tira}_1\text{r}_2\#l_3a/ & J(#)-\text{CONTIG} & *'Vr & J-\text{CONTIG} \\
\hline
\text{i. } \text{ti.á}_1\text{r}_2.l_3a & * & * & * \\
\text{ii. } \text{ti.rá}_1.l_3a & *! & * & * \\
\hline
\end{array}
\]

(8) Non-deletion in plural forms

\[
\begin{array}{|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
/\text{klá}_1\text{r}_2+s_3/ & J(#)-\text{CONTIG} & *'Vr & J-\text{CONTIG} \\
\hline
\text{a. } \text{klá}_1\text{r}_2s_3 & *! & * & * \\
\hline
\text{b. } \text{klá}_1s_3 & * & * & * \\
\hline
\end{array}
\]

It is crucial for the proposed analysis that J(#)-\text{CONTIG} universally outranks J-\text{CONTIG} because of their stringent relationship: violations of the former are always a proper subset of those of the latter. The OT analysis proposed in this paper can account for the difference between the plural suffixation and the cliticization without recourse to a stipulative assumption about the order between the plural suffixation and the cliticization, which is necessary in the rule-based approach.