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PAUL BLACK

REGULAR METATHESIS IN GIDOLE

Metathesis is a permutation of the sequential ordering of sounds. Very often this occurs as a sporadic phenomenon in language, as in the case of the development of Spanish *palabra* 'word' from Latin *parabola* or the often cited pronunciation of English *irrelevant* as *irrevelant*. In the histories of some languages, however, metathesis has occurred as a regular sound change, extensive in application and subject to precise formulation. Cases of regular metathesis include the metathesis of liquid and vowel in most Slavic languages (e.g., producing Old Church Slavic *gradŭ* 'city' from an earlier **gordŭ*), the distant metathesis of *t...s* to *s...t* in the Philippine language Ilocano (e.g., compare Tagalog *tavis* with Ilocano *sa'vit* 'weep'), and the morphophonemically operative metathesis of consonant and vowel in Rotuman, another Austronesian language (e.g., *hula* 'moon' becomes *hual* in the 'incomplete phrase'). These examples are from Antilla (1972: 62—3, 75).

Various and scattered examples of metathesis are often found in the Cushitic languages of northeastern Africa. Indeed, in the Highland (or Burji-Sidamo) branch of Eastern Cushitic, an example of quite regular and morphophonemically operative metathesis is found. In these languages, as in the bulk of the Cushitic languages, first person plural verbal suffixes characteristically begin with *n*: e.g., Sidamo *u-* 'to give', *u-nómmo* 'we gave'; *hun-* 'to exterminate', *hun-nemmo* 'we exterminate'. Whenever the verb stem ends in a consonant which is neither a liquid (to which the *n* assimilates) or a nasal, however, metathesis, sometimes accompanied by other morphophonemic change, occurs: e.g., Si-

damo e'- 'to enter', en'ómno 'we entered'; hab- 'to forget', ham-bémno 'we forget', has- 'to seek', hansémno 'we seek' (Moreno 1940: 58—60).

In the Lowland branch of Eastern Cushitic, of which the best known members are Saho-Afar, Somali, and Galla, metathesis is generally more sporadic in occurrence. In Somali, for example, such context determined alternations as between *ne'eb* and *neb* 'hate', *šilis* and *šišl* 'fat', and *'ulus* and *'usl* 'heavy' (Andrzejewski 1969:62) are examples of metathesis. In Galla, metathesis is sometimes exemplified by variant forms even within the speech of a single individual e.g., in Borana Galla both *kofl-* (or *kobl-*) or *kolf-* may be used as the root of the verb 'to laugh'. The speech of one Borana informant from the Negelle region provided a more remarkable example of metathesis: while the verb 'to see' is generally *arg-* before vowels and *arg-i-* before consonants in Galla (including Borana), this informant used *arg-* before vowels (e.g., *an arg-é* 'I saw') but *gar-* before consonants (e.g., *at gar-té* 'you saw').

The present author recently returned from two years of research¹ in Ethiopia, which research was largely devoted to Konso and Gidole, two fairly divergent members of a dialect chain which is spoken to the southwest of Lake Chiamo in southwestern Ethiopia and which is fairly closely related to Galla. In the course of this work a number of interesting cases of metathesis were noted. For example, while Gidole *rifant* 'hair' does not show metathesis (cf. Borana Galla *rifeens^a*), metathesis may be seen in the forms in the closely related dialects of Bussa (*ñifirta*) and Mashile (*ñifirt*) in one shape, and in Konso (and Gato) *ñirfaa* in another (while Nowack (1954:59) also reports the Konso form *rifa* for 'Schamhaar', I was unable to elicit this). Also, in this area where fish are neither widespread nor important, the word for 'fish' (e.g., Gidole *KurTummét*) often appears to be borrowed from Galla (e.g., Borana *KurTummi*). Yet various methathesized forms are also used for 'fish' but more especially for 'tadpole'; these include Bussa and Southern Gidole *kurmuCa*, Mashile

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kurmuJa, Gato and Fasha Konso *kurmuJa*, and, with further metathesis, Karatti Konso *murkuuJa* and Western Gidole *murku-DDá* (note that it is the plain *k* in these forms, but not the glottalized *K* in Galla, which agrees with the presumed Somali cognate *kálluun*). In two similar cases (Konso *haalaká*, Gidole *haakalá* 'cabbage' and Konso *tapal-* 'to paint with red soil', Gidole *patal-* 'to paint a corpse for burial') there was no way to determine which of the forms had undergone metathesis.

The above are examples of sporadic metathesis, and not being subject to more rigidly formulated and more general rules, they imply little about the general structure or historical development of these languages. In Gidole, however, a small number of forms appear to have developed through a more systematic type of metathesis, and one which bears a strong relationship to the phonotactic patterns of even present day Gidole. In each of these cases a sequence of two consonants AB may be shown, by means of comparative evidence from Konso and other Lowland East Cushitic languages, to have resulted from an earlier sequence *BA and to the extent that sequences similar to the earlier *BA now occur in Gidole, such sequences may usually be explained as the results of such processes as analogy or borrowing. These cases of metathesis will therefore be presented within the context of cooccurrence restrictions within Gidole consonant clusters.

Gidole has the following consonantal phonemes²:

	Labials	Dentals	Palatals	Velars	Glottals
plain stops	<i>p</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>c</i>	<i>k</i>	
implosive stops	<i>B</i>	<i>D</i>			
glottalized stops		<i>T</i>	<i>C</i>	<i>K</i>	<i>ʔ</i>
fricatives	<i>f</i>	<i>s</i>	<i>š</i>		<i>h</i>
nasals	<i>m</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>ñ</i>	<i>ŋ</i>	

plus the labials *r* and *l* and the semivowels *w* and *y*

² In addition, Gidole and the other languages mentioned here can generally be transcribed using a system of five vowels (*i*, *e*, *a*, *o*, and *u*) written singly or doubly, plus an acute accent. Konso phonology differs from that of Gidole in that it lacks *T* and *n*, has the implosive *J* instead of the glottalized *C*, has the uvular *q* instead of the glottalized *K*, and in addition has the velar fricative *x*.

Of these, the velar nasal *v* only occurs before velars and *h* (in which cases it does not contrast with the other nasals) and in first person preverbal morphemes (e.g., as in *am hev-úp-a-m* 'I don't know'). The glottal stop' does not occur either initially or finally. In addition, *T*, *B*, *c*, and *ñ* are relatively rare. Aside from these restrictions, consonants may occur singly in initial, intervocalic, and final positions and in sequences of not more than two consonants in intervocalic and final positions; e.g., *ál?alt* 'protuberance on the neck of a goat', *BuBBá* 'egg', *cócca* 'weaver's place', *ñadña* 'tomato', *locc* 'wide bladed axe', *lé?ot* 'type of dance', *máhh* 'name', *arha?as-aD-* 'to clear the throat', *amBúšš* 'saliva', and *añš* 'leader of a group of baboons' (more typical examples are found in the text below).

The cases of Gidole metathesis described below only occur in clusters containing two different consonants. Within these clusters there are fairly general restrictions, allowing for few exceptions, on the relative order of the consonants:

1. Semivowels must precede all other consonants.
2. Liquids must precede all consonants except semivowels.
3. Nasals and fricatives must precede stops.

Metathesis in Gidole consonant clusters will be explained in terms of these restrictions as amplified below.

1. There are many attested examples of clusters which contain the semivowels *w* and *y* as their first element: *pawrá* 'two bladed digging stick', *káwla* 'canine tooth of the warthog', *kaws* 'chin', *Kawh* 'Amhara', *awtám* 'when?', *máyra* 'harmonica-like instrument', *aylét* 'digging stick', *áyno* 'who?', *ayhitt* 'grass for making roofs', *áyka* 'a spring'. The only known case of a semivowel as the second element of a cluster is in *wárwara* 'fancy clothes', and due to the reduplicative form (if not formation) of this stem the *rw* cluster could have been restored or retained through analogy between the syllables. In verbal formations where heterogeneous clusters with a semivowel as their second element might be expected [such as when a semivowel-initial verb root follows the first (*hev-*) or second (*he'-*) person prefixes], such clusters are avoided through morphophonemic rules which convert them into geminate semivowels: e.g., *hev-waat-ém* 'Did I roast (it)?' [cf. *hev-*

uk-ém 'Did I drink (it)?' and *hey-yooK-tém* 'Did you grind (it)?' [cf. *he?-uk-tém* 'Did you drink (it)?'].

There are no known cases of metathesis involving semivowels.

2. The liquids *r* and *l* also occur quite commonly as the first elements cluster: *ármayt* 'snot' or 'a cold', *irfét* 'wooden part of a plow', *érhayt* 'adopted child', *hirp* 'a dance', *hólma* 'front half of the neck', *Délsa* 'anus', *ilhitt* 'tooth', *palD* 'wide'. In general liquids do not occur as the second element of a cluster except after semivowels, and similar morphophonemic rules of assimilation as apply to semivowels prevent this from happening in verbal formations: e.g., compare *her-reeh-ém* 'Did I separate (them)?' and *hel-leef-tém* 'Did you sharpen (it)?' with the above examples. There are four attested exceptions: *CaflaaK-* 'become sour (like a lemon)', *CoflooK-* 'become lukewarm' (no explanation is proposed for these exceptions), *tufle* (the name of a Gidole queen of some dozen generations ago; note that by custom she must be a non-Gidole and is probably from Bussa), and *Diklét* 'elbow'. With regard to this last exception, note that there is another word for 'elbow', and that this is the first case of metathesis which will be discussed:

(1) *Dilk* 'elbow': cf. Konso *Diklá*, Borana Galla *CiKile*. It is clearly the metathesized form in Gidole which is cognate to the Konso form because both of these are masculine nouns which, aside from the metathesis, show completely regular sound correspondences. Gidole *Diklét*, on the other hand, agrees quite well with the Borana form: both are feminine nouns, and the final *-ét* in Gidole (and *-etta* in many Konso nouns) frequently corresponds to final *-e* in Borana. But whereas Gidole *Dilk* is not likely to have been borrowed (there is no known source), Gidole *Diklét* could have been borrowed from a neighboring dialect which had retained the apparently earlier feminine form (restructured as a masculine in Konso and Gidole). In particular the source of this borrowing could have been the dialect of Mashile, adjacent to Gidole on the southwest, in which the form for 'elbow' has been recorded as *Dikilét*.

There are several other attested cases of apparent metathesis in Gidole involving liquids:

(2) *malk* 'pot handle': cf. Konso *maklá* 'brow', 'pot handle'.

(3) *silp* 'metal': Konso *siplá*, Borana Galla *sibíla*.

(4) *hols-* 'to laugh': Konso *xosal-*, Borana Galla *kobl-*, *kofl-*, or *kolf-*, Somali *qosl-*. The fact that metathesis may also be observed in Galla may detract slightly from the argument that metathesis occurred independently in Gidole.

(5) *Dílha* 'charcoal': Somali *DúHúl*. Cognate Konso (*Dílaa*) and Borana Galla (*Cíle?*) forms have zero reflexes of the presumed original *H and thus offer no evidence about whether the metathesis was unique to Gidole.

Especially in regard to the last two cases of metathesis, it should be noted that metathesis involving liquids is not unique to Gidole. In particular, Gidole, Konso, and Borana Galla all show metathesis in *arf-*, the derivative stem for *afúr* 'four'. Case (5) especially shows that it is not always possible to distinguish such earlier metathesis, whether sporadic or regular, from metathesis unique to Gidole.

3. Clusters of a nasal followed by a fricative and of a fricative followed by a nasal both occur, although the former type is perhaps somewhat more common. When the nasal is the first element, the cluster is almost always homorganic: e.g., *amf-aD-* 'to look after children', *famfayyá* 'ladder', *haansaamó* (man's name), *háñsaalt* 'thick mixture of flour and hot water, used in preparing beer', *iñšar* 'younger brother', *kaansit* (clan name), *kánsarayt* 'oribi', *káñšira* 'red millet', *šeñšayt* 'type of predatory bird', *ámfaaDitt* 'sweat', *Daavh-aDa* 'gourds', and clusters formed by prefixing the first person marker *hev-* to a verb root (e.g., *hem-faD-ém* 'Did I look for it?'). The one attested nonhomorganic cluster is in *Damh-aaD-* 'become cold (for weather)'. The only attested clusters of a fricative followed by a nasal are *hášma* 'millet stalks left after harvesting', *hušmaal* 'to pound (using mortar and pestal)', *Kahn* 'thin', *masmas-* 'become happy', *nóhnitt* 'top of head', *tášmale* (place name), *asme* (a Gidole queen of the last century; she came from Zaysse), and clusters formed by suffixing first person plural morphemes (all of which have initial *n*) to verb roots (e.g., *haf-* 'to pant', *hev-haf-ném* 'Did we pant?').

More generally, however, both nasals and fricatives precede, but do not follow, stops: e.g., *amB* 'breast', *ánDot* 'peace', *ávkas*

'(man's) elder brother', *ófoft* 'granddaughter', *iskatt* 'woman', *tašKanát* 'black, hairy millipede', *málaht* 'flooding caused by rain'. One class of exceptions occurs: clusters of stop followed by *n* may be formed when first person plural suffixes are added to stop final verb stems, e.g., *uk-* 'to drink', *hev-uk-ném* 'Did we drink?'. In fact, however, only the cluster *kn* is commonly formed in this way because of morphophonemic rules which commonly after other sequences of stop plus *n* (e.g., cf. *up-* 'to know', *hev-uf-nám* 'Do we know?', *pat-* 'to disappear', *hem-pan-ném* 'Did we disappear?', *kaass-aD-* 'to ask', *hev-kaass-an-ném* 'Did we ask?', *kiD-* 'to say', *hev-ki-i-ném* 'Did we say?').

There are two cases of metathesis involving a nasal:

(6) *tavk* 'honey': Konso *takmá*, Mashile *taxma*, Borana Galla *dámm^a*.

(7) *sunk-* 'to fall, topple': Konso *sukm-* 'to roll'.

In both of these cases the presumed metathesis of *km to *mk was accompanied by assimilation to result in the attested *vk*. This metathesis is regular to the extent that the sequence *km does not occur in Gidole, but it is irregular to the extent that the sequence stop followed by nasal (i.e., *kn*) does. But these later cases only occur when a first person plural marker is suffixed to a verb stem, in which cases a sequence that might have been lost through metathesis could easily have been reintroduced through analogy, just as such Spanish forms as *dad-los* 'give them', which had become metathesized to *daldos* in Old Spanish, were reintroduced into modern Spanish through analogy (Antilla 1972:98).

Note also that while Gidole *hunD* 'ten' (cf. Konso and Borana Galla *kuDán*) is surely a case of metathesis, it cannot be considered to be a case unique to Gidole because Konso similarly has the form *kunD-* as the derivative stem of *kuDán*. Similarly Gidole *kána?at* shows metathesis in relation to Somali *gá'án* 'hand', but the long *aa* in Konso *kánaata* 'palm' suggests that this metathesis is also not unique to Gidole (Borana Galla *gana* offers no evidence despite its final glottal stop).

There is only one attested case of metathesis involving a fricative /h/:

(8) *piht-ót* 'left': cf. Somali *bidiH*. Again the cognate Konso

(*pitt-itta*) and Borana Galla (*bita?*) forms offer no particular evidence as to whether the metathesis was unique to Gidole.

While the evidence is thus rather scanty, it does seem to indicate that metathesis did occur sometime in the prehistory of Gidole but independently of its closest known relatives, and that this metathesis was the result of regular sound change which resulted in the reduction of the number of different consonant clusters which were allowed by the phonological structure of the language.

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HANS-JÜRGEN SASSE

EIN SUBJEKTSKASUS IM AGAW

O. Alle bisher eingehender untersuchten ostkuschitischen Kasussysteme zeigen eine ungewöhnliche Struktur der folgenden Art: Der Grundkasus („Absolutus“, die morphologisch unmarkierteste Kasusform und Nennform des Nomens) ist Objektskasus im weiteren Sinne und gleichzeitig die Erscheinungsform des Nomens als Prädikat und z. T. als Vokativ. Zur Bezeichnung des Subjekts dient ein speziell markierter Subjektskasus. Die Funktion des Grundkasus als Objekts- und Prädikatskasus erinnert an die in Ergativsprachen zu beobachtenden Verhältnisse: der wesentliche Unterschied ist jedoch, daß die ostkuschitischen Sprachen echte Subjekt-Objekt-Sprachen sind, d. h. daß es eine Subjektivierungsregel („Topikalisierungsregel“ im Sinne Fillmores)¹ gibt, wohingegen echte Ergativsprachen gerade durch das Fehlen einer solchen Regel charakterisiert sind. Die zugrundeliegenden semantischen Verhältnisse zwischen Nomen und Verb in einem Satz werden in Ergativsprachen an der Oberfläche meist direkt reflektiert. Es gibt keinen Subjektskasus bzw. Nominativ im Sinne der lateinischen Grammatik; andererseits haben Ergativsprachen die in unseren Sprachen unbekannte Kasusfunktion des Agentiv (auch „Ergativ“, „Aktivus“ o. ä. genannt), der, grob gesprochen, den Ausführenden oder Veranlassenden einer Handlung bezeichnet, und zwar gewöhnlich dann und nur dann, wenn sich die Handlung auf ein Objekt richtet. Mit anderen Worten, der Agentiv entspricht größtenteils unserem Nominativ bei transitiven Verben. Was in

¹ S. Charles, J. Fillmore, *The Case for Case*, in: Emmon Bach, Robert T. Harms, eds., *Universals in Linguistic Theory*, London—New York—Sydney—Toronto 1968, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, S. 1—88. Zur „topicalization“ speziell S. 57 ff.