

https://dspace.org/

Some repair strategies in Xitsonga

Vratsanos, Alyssa Vida Castrillon

2018

https://hdl.handle.net/10539/26327

Vratsanos, Alyssa Vida Castrillon (2018) Some repair strategies in Xitsonga, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, <http://hdl.handle.net/10539/26327>

Downloaded from a DSpace repository. https://dspace.org/

Some Repair Strategies in Xitsonga

Abstract

Every language has its own unique set of preferred phonological structures, along with an array of strategies that it can employ to ensure that these structures are maintained. This study examines repair strategies used in Xitsonga in relation to syllable structure and Prosodic Word (PWord) minimality. Evidence gleaned from loanword adaptation supports claims by previous work (Vratsanos and Kadenge, 2017) that Xitsonga prefers a CV syllable structure. When words from English and Afrikaans are adapted to suit the Xitsonga phonological structures, several repair strategies may occur: segment substitution ensures that the phonemic inventory of Xitsonga is adhered to; vowel epenthesis is used to eliminate codas and break up consonant clusters; diphthongs are repaired using glide epenthesis and, in some cases, monophthongisation; and prenasalisation resolves NC consonant clusters. Secondly, Xitsonga requires words to be minimally disyllabic, and uses the epenthesis of a semantically null morpheme in order to achieve this.

The analysis is couched within Optimality Theory (OT: Prince and Smolensky, 2004), with additional insights gleaned from Feature Geometry (FG: Clements and Hume, 1995). OT allows for strategies to be accounted for by means of constraint interaction, and for variation to be accounted for by means of constraint rerankings. The aim of this study is to present what is thought to be the first comprehensive account of repair strategies used in Xitsonga syllable to maintain preferred phonological structures, highlighting the importance of the syllable as a level of phonological analysis in this language and others like it. Additionally, the results of this analysis are compared to

those of other Southern Bantu languages in an effort to situate Xitsonga within its language family, thereby contributing to linguistic typology.

Key words: repair strategies, loanwords, rephonologisation, prosodic word minimality, Optimality Theory, Feature Geometry, constraints, candidates, input, output, Bantu languages