

Identity and consonant correspondence

William Bennett (Rhodes University)

Recent work in Agreement By Correspondence (ABC) has drawn on the notion of a correspondence relation between surface segments, in certain respects mirroring the more well-established conceptions of Input-Output and Base-Reduplicant correspondence. But are these various notions of 'correspondence' somehow the same? Are long-distance segmental agreement effects in essence a kind of reduplication? Is such agreement merely a restricted form of striving for total identity? This talk claims it is not. Some of the formal properties of ABC are strongly reminiscent of other kinds of correspondence, and some other characteristics emerge as natural consequences of basic differences between the levels of representation concerned. But, a distinctive characteristic of ABC theories of agreement is a split between two kinds of constraints: those that enforce correspondence, and those that require agreement. This split is an empirically valuable one: it allows the theory to explain disagreement – dissimilation. Specifically, it allows us to have a theory that unifies assimilation and dissimilation in a different way than previous attempts, by connecting them in a mismatched way, and not as mirror images. This result is an appealing one, supported by typological evidence, which justifies maintaining a formal distinction between true reduplicative processes and ABC-esque agreement.