



DIVERGENCE OPINION ON COALESCENCE IN YORÚBÀ

OLAWUWO TITILADE MUIBAT

*Department of Yorùbá, School of Secondary Education (Language
Programmes), Emmanuel Alayande College of Education, Oyo*

ABSTRACT

This paper examines the possible rule to realize coalescence in Yorùbá. Coalescence is as a result of different two vowels in a word produce another vowel which is different from the two vowels that comes together. The opinions of the scholars will be examined with example. The stand of the author of this paper will bring to bear solutions of our own ideas. The paper will give a lot of example to support our own argument which involves the use of vowels in standard Yorùbá or the vowels of some other dialects of Yorùbá. The paper will be concluded by given the reasons while the writer support opinion that their arguments support.

Keywords: *opinion, divergence, coalescence, standard Yorùbá, dialects.*

Introduction

There are various opinions from the scholars as to the attestation of coalescence in Yorùbá. The people that are the father of grammar in Yorùbá have different opinion on the production of coalescence in Yorùbá Bámgbóṣé (1965).

Vowel assimilation occur when one vowel assimilate or copy the features of another vowel to make it becomes itself. Vowel deletion is when the features of a sounds gets detected from a word which will make the remaining to come together to form a word Coalescence, is where two vowels, joined together to produce another vowel which is different from the two vowels that joined together Coalescence is our focus in this paper.

Welmers (1973:45) draw his own example from on African languages known as Bantu Languages, when he states that a rather common example of vowel coalescence occurs in many Bantu languages where is/e/ resulting from the sequence /aji/. This shows that the coalescence in this language has a stipulated

vowels that can result in another one. Welmer, further observed that a comparable coalescence is /o/ resulting from the sequence /aju/ in some languages.

Awóbùlúyì (1972) observes that vowel coalescence in Yorùbá is accepted as involving two different vowels giving rise to a third vowel. So many scholars observe that vowel coalescence in Yorùbá is not compromise with vowels coalescence as described in a wide range of languages. Scholars like Bergeman (1971) Welmers (1973), Awóbùlúyì (1972) are those that observed it.

Bámgbóṣé (1990) says that

“Gégé bi a ti ṣàkíyèsí nípa fáwẹ̀lì pipajẹ, tí fáwẹ̀lì méjì bá fẹ̀gbẹ̀kẹ̀gbẹ̀, ọ̀kan nínú wọ̀n ni a ó pa jẹ. Fáwẹ̀lì tó borí gbọ̀dò jẹ ọ̀kan nínú àwọ̀n fáwẹ̀lì méjì àkókó. Nínú àwọ̀n ẹ̀hun Yorùbá kan ó dà bí ẹnì pé ẹ̀yí kó rí bẹ̀ẹ̀ nítorí pé àbájáde fáwẹ̀lì pípajẹ máa n fún wa ni fáwẹ̀lì tí ó yàtò si àwọ̀n fáwẹ̀lì meji àkókó.”

As we observed in vowel deletion, if two vowels near each other, one out of the two will be deleted. The winning vowel must be one out of the two initial vowels. In one of the structures of Yorùbá, it seems that this is not applicable because the output vowel deletion used to produce a vowel that is different from the two initial vowels.

The observation of Bámgbóṣé is that when we talk of deletion in Yorùbá; we have three processes where two goes with the processes of deletion that retains one of the vowels while one will not retain any but to produce another vowel. The two that retain the vowels is contraction and assimilation while coalescence produce a third different vowel.

Coalescence is a phonological process where two different vowels are jointly produced another third different vowel.

1. Bamgbose believed that three phonological processes are to be attested in Yorùbá when vowels occur across word or morpheme boundary. The three phonological processes are vowel assimilation, vowel deletion and vowel coalescence.
2. He said vowel coalescence poses a different opinion as to its existence as a separate process from vowel elision.

3. He puts up the following considerations to back his divergence opinion.
 - i. Most of the instances of vowel coalescence involves the high front vowel /i/ which in combination with other vowels, results in the high back vowel /u/.
 - ii. That there is a systematic alternative between the vowel. /i/ and /u/ in several dialects of the language.
 - iii. That the output of vowel coalescence can only be /u/ when the word concerned has a reflect with this vowel in another dialects.
 - iv. That unlike known cases of vowel coalescence in other languages, identical vowels coalescence to yield on opposite vowel quality.
 - v. That there is alternation between vowel deletion and vowel coalescence in several vowel combinations.

From these considerations, one can observe that the issue of this coalescence is /u/ alone irrespective of the vowels that it involves. Even if the vowels involve is a front vowel, the result will still be /u/.

Bámgbósé (1965) now proposed that vowel coalescence in Yorùbá can make use of dialectal variations in which the vowel /u/ occurs as the underlying form of a synchronic /i/ in vowel combinations and proceed to derive the resulting surface forms by a process of vowel deletion (Bámgbósé 1986) in effect, this approach will eliminate the need for vowel coalescence as a separate process in Yorùbá phonology.

This approach makes use of /u/ as a phoneme of /i/ in some dialects of Yorùbá. If /u/ is a phoneme of /i/, then the process of coalescence should be fade out and that vowel elision takes the place. For example.

Pa + iró or uró - puró

Wi + ìre or ùre - wúre

Ibi + ìgbé or ùgbé - ibùgbé.

The above data shows that the words can have initial vowels /i/ or /u/ to form the deriving words.

Bámgbósé criticizes the original vowel coalescence in Yorùbá that states that any vowel combination in which the output of the combination is different from either vowel in the combination has been analyzed as vowel coalescence

(Awóbùlúyì 1983, 1987). He gave the following output in which the result is /u/ in coalescence as:

Da + íbù - dú'bù
Jé+ ìbà - júbà
Ibi + Ìsùn - ibùsùn
Sá +eré - sùré

There is an observation to these cases of vowel coalescence in that the output vowel is different from the input ones in which they have no correlation as such. From this three things were observed.

- i. The vowel /i/ use to be the input vowels
- ii. The output vowel is always /u/
- iii. The combining vowels use to be identical i.e. usually /i/ there has been a suggestion that the alternative ways of deriving vowel coalescence is a two-step analysis by which one vowel acquires a quality similar to that of the other vowel and that other vowel is then get deleted. Therefore, the rule changes /i/ to /u/ when it occurs after a back vowel, and this back vowel is deleted. /i/ and /u/ are high vowels where /i/ appears as a front vowel and /u/ appears as a back vowel, but they are similar in the sense that both are front vowel which makes /i/ to change to /u/. for this reasons we can deduce the following formular $0+I-u$, $o+I=ou$, we can say that /i/ has assimilated to /o/ and /[because they are back and rounded vowels which we can hide under that back of rounded as the features that make the vowels to change to 'u'. But there are some vowel that we cannot attribute such claims to when like $a+i-u$, $c+i-u$ and $i+i-u$. These are data to illustrate the formular.

Gbó + ìfò - gbufò (o+i) ò u

Dá + ìbù - dúbù (a + i) ò u

Jé + ìbà- júbà (e+i) ò u

The combination of those vowels in the brackets result to /u/ despite the fact that the vowels are not the same. Then, another rule is the changes of one vowel to the required output and deletes the other in the same process. In the case of $a+i-u$, this rule will change /i/ to /u/ and then delete /a/ at the same time and resulting in /u/.

4. Awóbùlúyì (1987:11) calls this polarization i.e. roundness polarization instead of coalescence. In a language that has polarization it used to be

reciprocity, where one vowel will reprocate with another vowel. He gave an example of Hausa language that is. Characterized by tonal polarity when noun ends in a high tone, the stabilizer has a low tone; but when the noun ends in a low tone, the stabilizer has a high tone. This is direct and maintain the stats quo.

Rúwáá nèè

Yááròò née ‘it’s a boy’ has been moved. The so-called roundness polarization in Yorùbá is not directional and have no reciprocal, it is only one way drive, the non-rounded vowel always changes to a round vowel and never will the rounded vowel changes to non-rounded vowel, then where is the reciprocity? It is always /i/ that changes to /u/, there has never been a situation where /u/ changes to /i/. Vowel coalescence in Yor5bq has an unusual habit that conforms with vowel coalescence in linguistics literature. the coalescence in Yor5bq is not compromise with vowel coalescence as described in a wide range of languages (Bergman 1971:16-18; Welmers 1973:45; Aw9b6l5y8 1972:30-24). Vowel coalescence is accepted as involving two different vowels giving rise to a third. The crucial factors in vowel coalescence are differentiation and compromise.

2. Welmers (1973:45) states that “A rather common example of vowel coalescence in many Bantu languages is /e/ resulting from the sequence /a-i/. in some languages, a comparable coalescence is /o/ resulting from the sequence /a-u/.
3. Kenstowitz and Kisserberth (1979:374) states that the vowel that appears on the surface is not identical to either of the two original vowel but is instead a kind of compromise vowel”. Then Aw9b6l6y8 (1972) bought this idea of differentiation and compromise to work on Qwõn Afa dialects to dig not coalescence from it. The rule states:

$V + V2 - v3$

Height – a + I – e

Dà + ìwé – dèwé

Buy book buy book

The vowel (a) is raised, while the vowel /i/ is lowered to yield the compromise vowel /ei/

Height and Backness – e + u – o

Bè + ùjú – bọjú

‘look for’ ‘pounded yam’ ‘look for pounded (The vowel /e/ is moved from front to back, while the vowel /u/ is lowered to yield the compromise vowel /oi/
In the vowel coalescence attributed to roundness polarization in Yor5bq like:

a+i – u

i+i – u

The surface output is certainly not a compromise vowel, and differentiation may then be lacking when high front vowels are said to coalesce. The data above are all front vowels that result in back vowel as an output.

Let us assume that there is a polarization-induced vowel coalescence in Yor5bq such that the vowel /i/ in combination with any other vowel results in /u/, the test of such coalescence will be that it is predictable. But there is a lot of evidence in Yor5bq that there is no polarization induced vowel coalescence. For this reason, let us consider the following.

a. Polarization – induced coalescence occurs in free variation with vowel deletion as follows:

sá + iré – sáré ‘Irun’

pa + iró ó paró/puró ‘tell lies’

ò gbó + ifò – ò-gbifò/ò-gbufò ‘inter preter’

So + ìpá – sòpá/sùpá ‘develop swollen testicles’

Considering the examples above, there are two different output of the combined vowels, one output reveals deletion of a vowel while the other output reveals coalescence and the two usage is acceptable and meaningful in Yor5bq context.

b. Polarization-induced coalescence contrasts with vowel deletion in identical combinations, with the coalescence output associated with the pejorative meaning only.

ìlò + kí + ìlò – ìlókílò/ìlòkúlò ‘any use’ /’bad use’

ìṣẹ kí + ìṣẹ – ìṣẹkíṣẹ/ìṣẹkúṣẹ ‘any doing’/’bad doing’

ìta kí + ìta – ìtakità /ìtakità/ìtakità ‘any selling’/’bad selling’

The above data has two different output with different meaning also. One denotes vowel deletion while the second one shows vowel coalescence in Yor5bq which is the and unrounded vowels to yield the output but they are not conform with the linguistic polarization because of non-uniformity.

c. Polarization –induced coalescence is blocked

Ìṣu kí + ìṣu – ìṣukíṣu (Aṣukúṣu) ‘any yam’ /’bad yam’

Iró kí + iró – irókíró (irókúró) ‘any he’/’bad he’.

Igi kí + igi – igikígi (igikúgi) ‘ any tree’ /’bad tree’

The above data has the same output in (b) but the output in (b) has meanings. Considering the output of this (c), one will actually see that one has meaningful output but the output with has no meaning in Yor5bq context. This shows that the coalescence of (i+i) that yields /u/ here does not conforms here, that is why we have no meaningful words.

d. Polirization-induced coalescence is optionally blocked in homonyms.

Sá + iré – sùré ‘rum’

Şe + iré – siré (şuré) ‘play’

Şe + erè – şéré (şuré) ‘play’

All these data reveals that the rules does not applicable to all words in Yorùbá. All these cases will constitute exceptions or irregularities in the coalescence analysis.

According to Bamgbose (1987) he observe that the output vowel /u/ is not and should not traced to vowel coalescence but rather to a dialectal vowel /u/ which is retained after vowel deletion, the physical irregularities of vowel coalescence are immediately resolved as follows;

Alternation in vowel elision.

The alternation in (a) can be traced to the fact that two variants of the same noun, one /i/ initial and the other (u). initial are involved in each combination, it is the alternative deletion of either vowel that leads to the observed alternation.

Sá + iré – sáré ‘ run’

Sá + ure – sùré ‘ run’

So + ìpá – sòpá ‘develop swollen testicles’

‘develop swollen testicles’

So + ùpá – sùpá the above data reveals the combination of words that yields the output. If one examines the output the words it is being used in the output in Yorùbá language. But the output of each words depends on the dialect of the speaker of each output. Since we have /u/ as a phoneme of /i/ in some dialect to standard Yorùbá. it means that ‘ir3’ 8pq are words from standard Yorùbá while ‘ure’ and ùpá are from dialects of either Èkìtì or Ìjẹ̀şà.

Dialectal variants in vowel coalescence and deletion. The scholars who are working in Yor5bq usually put their judgment or observation on standard Yor5bq but not considering dialects. The underlying assumption in a coalescence analysis in Yor5bq is that vowels occurring in present day lexical

items in the language are the ones involved in the various vowel combination. No account is taken of the possibility that dialectal variants containing other vowels may have been borrowed into the standard dialect, thus forming the input into whatever rules are postulated. Evidence of such borrowing exists in several personal names (see Odùyoye 1972:24). These are some of the examples in which dialectal /u/ initial vowel instead of the standard dialect /i/ as an initial.

(i). fá gba ùlú – fágbùlú ‘ifá took the town’

ọbá ẹ uyì – ọbáşuyi ‘ the king gives honor’

Awó nẹ ùsi – Awónùsi ‘cult has fame’

Adẹ nẹ ùgà – Adénùgà ‘Crown has a palace’. These names are from different dialects, no one has suggested that the /u/ vowel in their surface forms is a result of vowel coalescence. As it is with the rule of deletion of the vowel preceding /u/ that results in the surface forms of the names.

If we are to consider the standard Yorùbá language, our assumption will be that all those nouns that starts with vowel /u/ suppose to start with vowel /i/ as it is in the standard Yorùbá and have the believe that coalescence is the phonological process that takes place and not deletion as the data has show. But in this type of analysis we cannot do away with dialects of the language because standard Yorùbá itself various Yorùbá dialects it is a derivation of Yorùbá.

Another compelling evidence of the dialectal origin of /u/ is the constraint on regressive assimilation in the nominalization with the agentive prefixes on7-, oni- in (standard dialect) and ol7 some dialects like Ìjẹ̀bù, Ègbà and Ọ̀họ̀rì dialects. In the derivation of these nominalizations, regressive assimilation takes place as follows (using, as an illustration, the noun, 4x6 as the base for the nominalization).

Underlying form – oní -, oni – olí- + ẹ̀şù.

Vowel /i/ deletion – on on ol + ẹ̀şù will give

The followings #onẹ̀şù # onẹ̀şù #olẹ̀şù.

Denasaliation ol ol + ẹ̀şù will give the followings #onẹ̀ ẹ̀şù # onẹ̀şù #olẹ̀şù.

Assimilation el el el + ẹ̀şù will give

Elẹ̀şù elẹ̀şù elẹ̀şù

On + ẹ̀şù - onẹ̀şù

On + ẹ̀şù - onẹ̀şù

Al + ẹ̀şù – elẹ̀şù

The resulting nominalizations for the three prefixes are:

Eléšù ‘owner of devil’

Eléšù ‘stumbling block’.

Eléšù ‘owner of devil.

From the data above, one can deduce that some of the dialects and the standard Yorógbq has agentive prefixes that can be used to form a nominalization that the meaning is not even lost. That is what the above data prove. We have oni, oni and oli with esu, the three products has the same meanings

Another similar examples is noun beginning in other non-high vowels which still result in similar regressive assimilation: On7 +

- a. Oni + aṣo ó aláṣo ‘owner of cloth’
Oni + eja – eḷéja ‘owner of fish’
Oní + akò ó oḷókò ‘owner of vehicle’
- b. Oní + ààyè – aláàyè ‘living person’
Oní + ègàn – eḷégàn ‘detractor’
Oni + òtè – oḷòtè ‘rebel, conspirator’
- e. Olí + aṣo ó aláṣo ‘owner of cloth’
Olí + eja – eḷéja ‘owner of fish’
Olí + okò ó oḷókò ‘owner of vehicle’

In the above data the words that prefixes with oni and oli has the same output and mean the same thing in Yorógbq because /n/ and /i/ has the same allophone. But there are some nominalizations with the prefixes that we have discussed above where the regressive assimilation is blocked when the noun begins in a high vowel or a consonant. Therefore, the vowel /o/ of the prefix remains unchanged in the output of such nominalizations;

- a. oni + igi – onígi ‘owner of tree’
oni + filà – onífila ‘owner of cap’
- b. oni + ùyà – olùyà ‘suffer-head/artist
- c. oli + igi – oligi ‘owner of tree’
oli + iṣu – olíṣu ‘owner of yam’
oli + filà – olífilá ‘owner of cap’

The above data are borne out of standard Yorógbq and also a dialects of Yorógbq.

The simple way to get rid of coalescence as a phonological process in Yorùbá and substituting for it vowel deletion is at cost. There are some dialectal variants of certain words which are to be listed in the lexicon, with a statement that such variants can only occur as an input to the structures identified. The only identified dialect of the initial word is /u/ at the initial, but there are some words that are dialectically variants. Let us consider the following variants.

Standard Yorùbá	Dialectical
Orí	eri ‘head’
Bí	bá líke
ìbùkún	àbùkún ‘blessing’
Wèrè	iwèrè madness
Şíwó	şéwó ‘calculate money’ but Not ‘change money’

The above lexicon is also the dialectal forms borrowed into the standard dialect that serves as input to the following combinations;

- yẹ + eri – yẹrí ‘fit head’ – ‘earning’
- bá + èwo – báwo ‘like which’-how’
- oni + àbùkún –alábùkún ‘owner of blessing ‘blessed’
- şe + iwèrè – siwèrè ‘do madness’-run mad’
Yẹ + ori – yẹrí-e+o-e
Bí + èyí – báyí – i+e – a
Oní +ìbùkún –alábùkún – i+i –a
Şe + iwèrè – şiwèrè – e+è - i

The above data shows that we have make use of dialect variants of words above to form the sets of which that follows it. If we do not make use of the dialects words above we cannot get the derived output.

If we follow the standard Yorùbá to form these words it means the standard of coalescence is out.

Yc + ori – ycr7-e+o-e
B7 + 4y7 – bqy7 – i+e – a
On7 +8b6k5n –alqb6k5n – i+i –a
Xe + iw4r4 – xiw4r4 – e+@ - i

As it has been formulated that output of vowel coalescence in Yorùbá is said to be always a back rounded vowel (Aw9b6l5y7 1987:10-11). Since we have data that are derived with dialect, all we need to do is to use dialectal variants in any case in the phonological analysis of standard Yorùbá. The speaker of such dialect that is the dialect have ‘u’ instead of ‘I’ will never regards that output as a vowel coalescence in their own dialect. This is a major support for vowel deletion, based on dialectally determined variants, as a more plausible alternative to vowel coalescence.

There are some other vowel alternations that are possible in Yorùbá. These are still another appropriate variant to be used in the derivation concerned.

Examples are:

Standard	Dialectal
a. Dá	dú
Sun	sọ
b. Dú ọpé – dúpè ‘render thanks’ - give thanks’	
Sọ ẹkún - ‘weep, weeping, - weep’.	

It is the dialectal variants in (a) that serve as an input into the vowel combinations in (b). so far, there is an evidence that dialects, cannot be ruled out of phonological processes of vowels if dialect is allowed, then there won’t be vowel coalescence in Yorùbá ;then when we look at it in the way that what we have is vowel elision. As observed above the dialects like Ìjẹ̀sà, Èkítí and Ọ̀họ̀rì will not regards combination of some vowels to produce ‘u’ as a coalescence. Also since dialects are used form standard Yorùbá, then we cannot rule it out that those noun words to form another word that begins will ‘u’ in some dialects cannot be ruled out. In teaching process they Yorùbá teachers in Ìjẹ̀sà, Èkítí and Ọ̀họ̀rì dialects will not teach coalescence (Iyọpo).

CONCLUSION

Conclusively, this work makes use of traditional approach to linguistic analysis which makes a strict separation of levels between synchronic and diachronic description and discourage a pan-dialectal approach which allows another dialects is also an aspect to be considered when a language analysis is being done. Sincere standard Yorùbá is coined and formulated from the various dialect of Yorùbá then will support those that believe that there is no

coalescence in Yorùbá what we should understand is that those nouns are drawn from other dialects apart from Yorùbá Ọ̀yọ that has 60% out of standard Yorùbá nothing to proof it that there are some features that make the third vowel to be produced from the two vowels that comes together or deleted.

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