

LTR: A Reply to Schuh

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Some twenty years ago Leben proposed that Hausa had a productive, essentially exceptionless P rule ("LTR") to the effect that any word final L L sequence automatically changed to L H if the final vowel of the word was long. Since that time, LTR has become accepted as a phonological rule of Hausa alongside such well-established rules as vowel shortening in closed syllables or palatalization of coronal consonants before front vowels. The aim of our paper was to demonstrate that there are in fact far too many counterexamples to the LTR rule to continue to accept it as a fully active synchronic rule in Hausa.

In his response, Schuh contends that if one were to eliminate verbs (which were at the heart of Leben's original demonstration of the significance of LTR), allow for a more sophisticated—and probably correct—approach to tonology, in which languages could contrast singly-linked vs. multiply-linked sequences of identical surface tones, and ignore all remaining exceptions as having the wrong vowel (for whatever reason) or just generally being a nuisance, then LTR could be saved after all. Of course, if one is intent on it, one can always find ways to eliminate counterexamples to some supposed linguistic rule; but this is a scientifically peculiar way to operate. It is particularly puzzling why Schuh should want to do this since, as he openly states, "I agree with [Newman & Jaggat] that LTR is not a rule" (p. 253). Schuh does, however, raise two legitimate issues.

The first question is whether our counterexamples are really all of the same status or whether they need to be grouped into different categories, which we acknowledged was a possibility. As Schuh rightly observes, some of our "exceptions" to LTR, e.g. the reduplicative forms in §§1.2-5 may indeed be inconsistent with LTR as described by Leben in its most general form, but they do not necessarily invalidate LTR as such. One could argue that what these examples require is that LTR be reformulated rather than rejected. In other words, even if

LTR were operative, it might not be expected to apply to reduplicative words such as *fankamaa-fànkàmaa* 'broad (pl)' or *jinaa-jì nàa* 'bloody', which have fixed segmental, syllabic, and tonal patterns.

Some of the other "exceptions", however, *are* true counterexamples which undermine the validity of LTR as such (*pace* Schuh). The L L imperatives (§1.1), the results of monophthongization (§1.7), and the loanwords (§1.6), for example, indicate in no uncertain terms that LTR does not constitute an active, functioning tone rule in modern Hausa. (It should be emphasized that loanwords such as *fifaamàrèe* 'primary school' and *ƙeelùwèe* 'railroad' are now "true" Hausa words, fully accepted by monolingual Hausa speakers.)

Schuh's second, and perhaps more interesting, question is whether LTR ever was operative in Hausa. Because our paper was concerned exclusively with the synchronic status of LTR, we purposely avoided discussing the historical question (see our footnote 18). We did, however, implicitly endorse the idea that the phonotactic restrictions observed by Leben had resulted from the operation of LTR at an earlier period. Now that we are faced directly with the question, we would assert that this does seem to be the most likely explanation for the general absence of basic, non-derived L L long final vowel words in Hausa. Schuh proposes that the L L to L H shift was due to a morphologically conditioned tone polarization rule associated with a determiner. But in that case, why wasn't there a H H to H L change parallel to the L L to L H change? From a comparative Chadic perspective, it is not unreasonable to suggest that early Hausa might have had some kind of general determiner on nouns with tone polarizing properties. The problem here is simply that Schuh presents no evidence to indicate that this in fact was the case. Under the circumstances, the simplest and most likely explanation is that the L L to L H shift affecting words with long final vowels—what we might call "historical LTR"—was strictly phonological in nature. As evidence of an ongoing drift in Hausa away from final L L sequences, it is interesting to observe that in northwest [NW] dialects, the tendency for L L to alter into L H has extended to words with short final vowels, e.g. Standard Hausa [SH] *màcè* = [NW] *màce* 'woman'; [SH] *àkwàati* = [NW] *àkwàati* 'box'; [SH] *gaadòn-kà* = [NW] *gaadòn-ka* 'your (m) inheritance'.

In sum, we see Schuh's "response" to our paper not as a real rejoinder—he accepts our essential conclusions—but rather as an additional commentary. He adds a valuable analytical perspective on the surface counterexamples we provided, and he opens up the historical question of the cause of the general phonotactic bias in modern Hausa against words ending in L L tone and a long final vowel. We think that LTR as a formerly functioning rule is the reason for the phonotactic constraint and that Schuh's alternative hypothesis is wrong, but we agree that this is not something that one can simply accept as a given. Before a final decision is reached, the historical status of the LTR rule must be subjected to the same careful scrutiny that we provided for it synchronically.