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macronetnigent@gmail.com

EDITORIAL

Every academic environment is sustained by learning through rigorous methods. Research is one and the focal points for assessment. A serious member of the academic community is measured by the quality and number of academic articles.

In spite of the desire to acquire many research reports, this edition has insisted on standards and quality. It is important to note that many articles have been rejected for not meeting our requirements.

The first and most obvious task of our journal is to provide a level playing field for researchers all over the globe in language-related disciplines, which is the vehicle for conveying knowledge. In this edition, seventeen (17) articles have undergone academic scrutiny from our blind reviewers.

To our esteemed contributors and readers, thought-provoking articles are expected and we are ready to publish them in the next volume.

NOTES TO CONTRIBUTORS

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All correspondences on editorial matters should be sent to:

Sumayyat Ibrahim Gambo (Ph.D.)
Department of Languages & Linguistics
Taraba State University
P.M.B. 1167, Jalingo, Taraba State
Email: jajolls022@gmail.com
Phone: +234803132245, +2348182312149 & +2349045724091

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Ivo Njuasi, PhD.

Department of Linguistics. University of Buea

Hiatus Resolution in the Kom Language

Abstract

Sequences of contiguous vowels belonging to separate syllables have been studied in many languages around the world. While some languages allow the free occurrence of such heterosyllabic vowel sequences, others do not. The languages that disallow vowel hiatus such as Yoruba, French, Karok, Luganda, Margi, Malay, Xhosa, Greek, Ngiti, Indonesian, and Bakossi often resort to repair strategies such as deletion, glide formation, consonant insertion, vowel coalescence, and diphthongization. In the Kom language spontaneous speech, some heterosyllabic vowel sequences are dispreferred while others are preferred. The preferred sequences are /u+a/, and /o+i/, while the dispreferred ones are /i+a/ /o+a/, /e+a/, /e+i/, /u+i/ and /i+i+a/. In this paper, using Optimality Theory, we examine how the dispreferred hiatal configurations are repaired and then, we also attempt to determine the motivation for hiatus resolution in Kom. The analysis reveals that the dispreferred sequences are dealt with by means of two hiatus resolution strategies, namely, vowel assimilation, and vowel coalescence. we argue here that hiatus resolution is impossible in the sequences /u+a/, and /o+i/ because of the articulatory distance separating them and as a consequence, in the grammar of the Kom language, the faithfulness constraints PARSE (a.u) and PARSE (o.i) outrank the markedness constraints NoHIATUS, NoDIPH, ALIGNR, ALIGN-L, UNIFORMITY and the faithfulness constraints MAX-IO, and IDENT-IO.

Keywords: *hiatus resolution, assimilation, coalescence, constraints*

Tel:+237682765749

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Corresponding Author: **Ivo Njuasi, PhD** **Email**: Njuasi.ivo@ubuea.cm

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1. Introduction

At the heart of linguistic theory is a set of principles that are shared by all languages. These principles are referred to as Universal Grammar (UG). In the light of UG, there are phonological phenomena that are attested cross-linguistically such as hiatus, a situation whereby non-identical vowels (in most cases, two) belonging to different syllables abut on

one another. While some languages allow hiatus (English, for instance: [ðiː æp̚l] *the apple*), others do not. For those languages whose phonotactic restrictions disallow hiatus, UG provides six ways of resolving the violation, namely, deletion of one of the offending vowels (see Zsiga, 2013, p. 314; Harris, 2011, p. 5; Goldsmith, 1990, p. 51) epenthesis (see Carr and Montreuil, pp. 149-150), coalescence (see Aoki, 1974, p. 239; de Haas, 1988, p. 126), glide-formation (see Kenstowicz, 1994, p. 312; Midtlying, 2005), diphthongization (see Kutsch Lojenga 1994, p. 90; Rosenthall, 1997; Hedinger & Hedinger, 1977), and vowel assimilation which Orie and Pulleyblank (1998) demonstrate to be subject to prosodic considerations in Yoruba. It is worth noting that as far as resolving hiatus via deletion, the choice of which vowel goes depends on a number of factors, (Casali, 1997), but there is a cross-linguistic tendency for the first vowel, V_1 to go.

The Kom language is among the languages that disallow certain heterosyllabic non-identical vowel sequences. In the literature on hiatus resolution, four views have been espoused as to what triggers hiatus resolution, namely, Rosenthall (1994, 1997), de Haas (1998), Orie and PulleyBlank (1998), and Borroff (2003). We will briefly explain each in turn. Rosenthall (ibid.), using data from Yoruba, argues that hiatus resolution is driven by the need to repair a syllable structure violation. To him, the canonical syllable structure of a Yoruba syllable is CV. When a vowel-final morpheme abuts on a vowel-initial one (an onsetless syllable), hiatus resolution mechanisms are set in motion to repair the violation. He essentially sees hiatus resolution as a consequence of the interaction between the markedness constraint ONSET and faithfulness constraints. This is an onset-driven approach to hiatus resolution.
Orie & Pulleyblank (1998) present a prosodically-driven account of hiatus resolution and argue compellingly against an ONSET-oriented explanation. Using disconforming evidence from Yoruba, they demonstrate that hiatus resolution is triggered by monomoraic CV verbs brought into morphological or syntactic concatenation with vowel-initial morphemes. Orie & Pulleyblank (ibid.) posit a foot binarity constraint which monomoraic CV verbs must satisfy in the language before qualifying as vowel assimilation candidates. They present data showing that only monomoraic CV verbs lose their vowels before vowel-initial words into which they criticize. Multi-moraic words that end in vowels have their final vowel assimilated to the following vowel-initial word.

Haas (1998) sees hiatus resolution as a strategy employed by the grammar of languages to prevent a sonority clash or plateau. It should be noted that vowels frequently constitute sonority peaks in syllables. Haas (ibid.) argues that when two vowels of approximately the same sonority are juxtaposed at morpheme boundary, some strategy is employed to ensure that a transitional sonority trough follows each sonority peak.

The last view of hiatus resolution comes from Borroff (2003) who argues that hiatus resolution stems from the articulatory need to avoid a situation where contiguous vowels produce a mutual co-articulatory interaction that interferes with the distinct qualities of each of the hiatus vowels. This is based on phonetic evidence indicating that mutually adjoining vowels tend to influence each other and hence the need to insert a hiatus interrupter. None of the four apparent motivations for hiatus resolution seems to hold true for the Kom language, hence, the need to find out what motivates hiatus resolution in this language and which hiatus resolution mechanisms are employed by the phonology of the language. The major trust of this paper, therefore, is threefold: first, to identify which options the Kom language draws from among the universal hiatus resolution strategies, second, to account for the choices of hiatus resolution within the theoretical orientations of Optimality Theory (Prince and Smolensky, 1993/2004) and the Correspondence Theory of McCarthy and Prince (1995), and third, to determine the motivation for hiatus resolution in Kom.

2. Methods

The participants for this research were Kom native speakers conveniently sampled across the three Subdivisions in Boyo Division of the North-West Region of Cameroon where the language is spoken. They were all adults between the ages of 19 and 50 years resident in Fundong, Njinikom and Belo, and they were all speakers of the mainstream dialect of Kom. Participants were sought based on two major criteria: (a) that they acquired Kom as their first language and still use it in most of their daily interactions with other Kom speakers, and (b) that they speak the mainstream dialect of Kom spoken in Belo, Njinikom and Fundong Subdivisions. It should be noted that there are dialectal variations between the dialects spoken in Ake, Ajung and Baicham, and the mainstream Kom dialect (Shultz, 1993).

The corpus consisted of different hiatus configurations collected over a period of three years in the form of field notes taken when observing participants interact with each other. The notes were recorded using a Samsung Galaxy Note 10+ note pad. We used a combination of participant and non-participant forms of observation. With respect to the former, each time we listen to participants involved in a conversation, we would look out for hiatus configurations in their speeches and how the participants handled them and then we would pull out a Samsung Note 10+ and use the S Pen to record descriptive and reflective field notes. Being, a native speaker of Kom, we didn't face any challenges identifying hiatus configurations in the speeches of the participants. With regard to the latter form of observation, we would quickly note any hiatus configurations in the speeches of the Kom people we interacted with, and subsequently take them down in my field notes. After we had gathered a reasonable corpus, we verified the accuracy of the pronunciations of hiatus sequences with competent native speakers. This was done via grammaticality judgements carried out in the form of interviews. Sentences with hiatus configurations were read out to participants who were asked to give categorical judgements as to whether the resulting structures were well-formed or ill-formed. Triangulating between these two data sources, as suggested in Creswell and Creswell (2021) helped a lot in ensuring the accuracy of our interpretation of the data before the formal analysis. This formed the basis of the classification of the data into two, namely, hiatus configurations usually resolved in spontaneous speech and those usually left unresolved.

As to the procedure of analysis, we first grouped the data according to various types of hiatus configurations or heterosyllabic vowel sequences as follows: (1) /u/+/i/ (2) /e/ + /a/ (3) /e/ + /i/ (4) /o/ + /a/, and (5) /o/ + /i/. After this grouping we examined the type of resolution strategy employed to get rid of each of the hiatus configurations. Next, we examined the distribution of the hiatus vowels on the articulatory space of Kom vowels. This helped in revealing the acoustic distance between the hiatus vowels in each hiatal configuration. Subsequently, we formulated constraints to account for the various resolution strategies, following Prince and Smolensky (1993/2004), Casali (1997), (Orie and Pulleyblank (1998), and Rosenthall (1994) within Optimality Theory (OT), an offshoot of Generative Grammar that seeks to explain the kinds of alternations that are possible in any given language without recourse to rules and derivations. In a very interesting way, it provides answers to the question "What is an acceptable structure?" in each language using constraint interaction instead of rule application. Its core components are the (a) the lexicon, (b) a set of universal, grounded, violable, and freely rankable constraints, (c) the generator, which serves to generate plausible candidates, and (d) the evaluator, which assesses the candidates based on their adherence to and violations of the constraints and determines the optimal output (the candidate that conforms the most to the phonotactic restrictions of the language).

The Correspondence Theory of McCarthy and Prince (1995) was also used. It is a further development within OT that provides deeper insight into the correspondence relation between an input and output candidates. It proposes three faithfulness constraints (MAX, DEP and IDENT) on input-output correspondence. These can be explained as follows: X_1 and X_2 are input and output respectively, (i) every segment of X_1 must have a correspondent in X_2, (ii) every segment in X_2 must have a correspondent in X_1, and (iii) if α is a segment in X_1 and β is a segment in X_2, then β is γ if α is γ.

3.1 Results/Analysis

Hiatus resolution by coalescence

/u/+/i/ → /ɛ/

	Input form		**Output form**	**Gloss**
(1)	a. /ātú + ǐkɔ̂ŋ/	→	[ātɏ́kɔŋ]	‘expert lover’
	b. /ātu + ǐŋgɔ̀m/	→	[átɏ́ŋgɔ̀m]	‘banana/plantain bunch’
	c. /ātú + ǐsáŋ/	→	[ātɏ́sāŋ]	‘corn head’
	d. /āwú + ǐfɔ̀/	→	[āwɏ́fɔ̀]	‘cutlass handle’
	e. /ākú + ǐŋgɔ̀m/	→	[ākɏ́ŋgɔ̀m]	‘banana forest’
	f. /ǐlû + ǐ + wûl/	→	[ǐlɏ́wûl]	‘someone’s banishment’
	g. /ātú + ǐsóm/	→	[ātɏ́sōm]	‘palm cone’

/e/ + /a/ → /ɛ/

Input form			**Output form**	**Gloss**
(2)	a. /ābé + ābɔ́ʔ/	→	[ābɛ́bɔ̀ʔ]	‘Name of a royal compound in Kom)
	b. /bé + ātú/	→	[bɛ̀tū]	‘someone with a large head’
	c. /nsē + ātúm/	→	[nsɛ̀tum]	‘foreign soil’
	d. /ānsē + ātējn/	→	[ànsɛ̄tējn]	‘The file’
	e. /ābé + ātējn/	→	[ābɛ́tējn]	‘The compound’
	f. /nsē + ātējn/	→	[nsɛ̀tējn]	‘The file’

Hiatus resolution by assimilation

/e/ + /i/ → /e/

	Input form		**Output form**	**Gloss**
(3)	a. /ànsē + ǐfɔ̀/	→	[ànsēefɔ̀]	‘cutlass file’
	b. /ābe + ǐbǐ/	→	[ābéebǐ]	‘cutlass file’
	c. /ābe + ǐŋgɔ̀m/	→	[ābéeŋgɔ̀m]	‘cutlass file’
	d. /nsē + ǐtó/	→	[nsēètō]	‘hard soil’
	e. /ǐfe + ǐŋgɔ̀m/	→	[ǐféēŋgɔ̀m]	‘the falling of a banana’

/o/ + /a/ → /o/

	Input form	**Output form**		**Gloss**
(4)	a. /āfó + ātúm/	→	[āfɔ́otūm]	‘foreign thing’
	b. /āfó + ā + kɔ́m/	→	[āfɔ́okɔ̄m]	‘kom thing’
	c. /ǐló + ābájn/	→	[ǐlɔ́obājn]	‘palp licking’
	d. /ǐbó + ātú/	→	[ǐbɔ́otū]	‘hair plating’
	e. /ābó + ābájn/	→	[ābóobājn]	‘fufu biscuit’

f. /ɨ́wó + āsáŋ/ → [ɨ̄wóosāŋ] ‘maize peel’

Neither coalescence nor assimilation (No vowel alternation)

(5) a. /āfó + ɨ̄kɔ̂ŋ/ → [āfó.ɨ̄kɔŋ] ‘love object’
b. /ɨ́bó + ɨ̄fú?/ → [ɨ̄bó.ɨ̄fù?] ‘basket weaving’
c. /ɨ́ló + ɨ̄lémí/ → [ɨ̄ló.ɨ̄lēmí] ‘tongue licking’
d. /ābó + ɨ̀ŋgɔ̀m/ → [ābó.ɨ̄ŋgɔ̀m] ‘strand of plantain stem’
e. /ātú + ābé/ → [ātú.ābē] ‘flanking a compound’
f. /ātú + āsóm/ → [ātú.āsōm] ‘palm tree top’
g. /ātú + ākʉ̄m/ → [ātú.ākùm] ‘mask’
h. /ākʉ̄ + āsóm/ → [ākú.ásōm] ‘palm forest’
i. /ɨ́wó+ɨ̄bájn/ → [ɨ̄wó.ɨ̄bāin] ‘word of light’
j. /ɨ́fô+ɨ̄tém/ → [ɨ̄fô.ɨ̄tēm] ‘cutlass for clearing’
k. /bò+ɨ̄bɨ́/ → [bò.ɨ̀bɨ̀] ‘kola nut bag’

Constraint set

- PARSE(u.a): Assign a violation mark for any input hiatal sequence [u.a] that does not appear in the output.
- PARSE(o.i): Assign a violation mark for any input hiatal sequence [o.i] that does not appear in the output. PARSE (feature/segment) is used to determine which vowel candidate wins out in the output (Casali, 1996a, p. 17). Thus, PARSE works against the loss of features.
- NoDIPH: Do not diphthongize hetorosyllabic vowel sequences.
- NoHIATUS: Heterosyllabic vowel sequences are disallowed.
- ALIGN-R: Assimilation proceeds from V_1 to V_2. This indicates the directionality of assimilation (Orie and Pulleyblank (1998).
- ALIGN-L: Assimilation proceeds from V_2 to V_1.
- MAX-IO: Every input segment should have a corresponding element in the output.
- IDENT-IO: Every output segment should have a corresponding element in the input.
- UNIFORMITY: Do not merge segments

Tableau 1

nse.atum	PARSE (u.a)	PARSE (o.i)	NO-HIATUS	NO-DIPH	MAX-IO	ALIGN-R	ALIGN-L	IDENT-IO	UNIFORMITY
a. nsetum					*!				
b. nse.atum			*!						
c. nseatum				*!			*		
d. nsatum					*!	*	*	*	
e. nsɛɛtum ☞						*	*	**	*

Tableau 1 captures coalescence. With the two input vowels reduced to one, candidate (a) fatally violates the faithfulness constraint MAX-IO. The markedness constraints ALIGN-R and ALIGN-L, which determine directionality in assimilation, are irrelevant since candidate (a) is but a deletion candidate. With input vowels heterosyllabified, candidate (b) fatally violates the high-ranked constraint NOHIATUS. Although it fails to violate NODIPH and MAX-IO which are relatively high-ranked, it is already kicked out of contention by its

violation of NOHIATUS. Candidate (c) avoids a violation of NOHIATUS by diphthongizing the two hiatus vowels. However, the diphthongization leads to a fatal violation of NODIPH and therefore, (c) is booted out of contention. Candidate (d) avoids violating NOHIATUS and NODIPH, but fatally violates MAX-IO and gets eliminated. Although, candidate (e) violates ALIGN-R, ALIGN-L, IDENT-IO, and UNIFORMITY, it still emerges as the optimal candidate thanks to its satisfaction of the more high-ranked constraints, NOHIATUS, NODIPH and MAX-IO.

Tableau 2

ɑbe.ibi	PARSE (u.a)	PARSE (o.i)	NO-HIATUS	NO-DIPH	MAX-OI	ALIGN-R	ALIGN-L	IDENT-IO	UNIFORMITY
a. abeebi ☞							*	*	
b. abe.ibi			*!			*			
c. abebi					*!	*		*	
d. abobi					*!	*		*	
e. abibi					*!	*	*	*	

Tableau 2 shows hiatus resolution by assimilation. we assume here that MAX-IO is not violated by the assimilation candidate since every input segment has a correspondence in the output regardless of feature change. However, Orie and Pulleyblank (1998, p. 10) hold a contrary view. In their account of assimilation in Yoruba, MAX-IO is assumed to be violated by the assimilation candidate because in the feature geometry representation, an assimilated segment loses at least one root node. My account here assumes the Correspondence Theory of McCarthy and Prince (1995) which states that if α is a segment in S_1 and β is any correspondent of α in S_2, then β is γ if α is γ . The assumption here is that the elements standing in correspondence are segments and not features. As seen on the Tableau 1, candidate (a) violates only the low ranked constraints, ALIGN-l and IDENT-IO. Candidate (b) violates NO-HIATUS which is high ranked constraint. Canditates (c), (d), and (e) violate MAX-IO and ALIGN-R which are high ranked constraints in the language. In addition they violate the low ranked constraints ALIGN-L and IDENT-IO. The optimal candidate is (a) because it incurs the least costly violations.

Tableau 3

atu + akum	PARSE(u.a)	PARSE(o.i)	NO-DIPH	NO-HIATUS	MAX-IO	ALIGN-R	ALIGN-L	IDENT-IO	UNIFORMITY
a. atukum	*!				*	*	*	*	
b. atuakum			*!	*		*	*		
c. atu.akum ☞				*		*	*		
d. atakum	*!				*	*	*	*	
e. atwakum	*!					*	*	*	

Tableau 4

ifo + item	PARSE(u.a)	PARSE(o.i)	NO-DIPH	NO-HIATUS	MAX-IO	ALIGN-R	ALIGN-L	IDENT-IO	UNIFORMITY
ifotem		*!			*	*	*	*	
ifitem		*!			*	*			
ifoitem			*!			*	*		
ifo.item ☞				*		*	*		
ifwitem		*!				*	*	*	

3.2 Motivation for the choice of hiatus resolution strategy

To determine the apparent motivation for the choice of hiatus resolution strategy, we grouped the data according to various types of hiatus configurations or heterosyllabic vowel sequences as follows: (1) /u/+/i/ (2) /e/ + /a/ (3) /e/ + /i/ (4) /o/ + /a/, and (5) o + i. After this grouping, we examined the type of resolution strategy employed to get rid of each of the hiatus configurations. Next, we examined the distribution of the hiatus vowels on the articulatory space of Kom vowels. This helped in revealing the acoustic distance between the hiatus vowels in each hiatal configuration. It appears that the distance separating the hiatal vowels in the articulatory space determines which type of resolution strategy to employ. Hiatus resolution seems to be a gradient process in the Kom language. Three measures of articulatory distance are postulated to account for this gradience: a short intervening distance between the hiatal vowels leads to resolution by assimilation, a medium articulatory distance between the hiatal vowels leads to resolution by coalescence, and a long intervening distance between the hiatal members leads to no resolution (the hiatal vowels are left alone).

4. Discussion

Dataset (1) exhibits coalescence where the hiatus vowels /u/ and /i/ which are high back round and high front unround, respectively, coalesce to /y/ which is a high front round vowel combining the features of both input vowels. /atu + iŋgɔm/ 'banana bunch' surfaces as [atyŋgɔm]. Dataset (2) equally exhibits coalescence where the mid-high front unround vowel /e/ and the low back unround vowel /a/ coalesce to the mid-low front unround vowel /ɛ/ as in /abe + aboʔ/ 'a certain royal compound' surfacing as [abɛɛboʔ]. Instrumental analysis using PRAAT indicates that the coalesced vowel is nearly twice the vocalic length (280ms) of each of the two vowels (160ms) that gave rise to it. This is not very surprising because in the literature, hiatus resolution by assimilation tends to create phonetically long vowels or heavy syllables in a language where phonologically heavy syllables are unattested (Kawu, 2000, p. 30). There are no underlying long vowels in Kom, reason why hiatus resolution by assimilation seems to be phonetically motivated. As Kawu (ibid) points out, the resulting phonetically long vowels do not impact the phonologically attested syllables or phonemic inventory of the language. In other accounts of similar phenomena in other languages, this has been interpreted as an attempt by the phonology of the language to preserve the number of CV or skeletal slots of the input form.

Dataset (3) exhibits vowel assimilation where the hiatus sequence /e/ and /i/ which are mid-high front unround and high front unround vowels, respectively, surface as /ee/ with V_1 assimilating V_2 as in /anse + ifo/ 'file'[anseefo]. Dataset (4) equally illustrates vowel

assimilation where the hiatal configuration /o+a/ surface as /afo + a + kɔm/ 'Kom thing' surfacing as [afookɔm].

There are other hiatal configurations such as /u+a/ and /o+i/ that proved controversial because of the following reasons: some participants pronounce /i+a/ as [jɛ] as in /anli+abajn/ surfacing as [anljɛbajn] 'saucer', thus, inserting a glide to replace the high front unround vowel /i/ and raising plus fronting the low back unround vowel /a/. It should be noted that an alternative account of /anli+abajn/ pronounced as [anljɛbajn] could posit the coalescence of /i+a/ to /ɛ/. However, such an account must explain the source of the palatal glide /j/. Others from the same community reject glide formation. In the same vein, some respondents pronounce the hiatal configuration /u+a/ as [wa] as in /atu+abe/ 'the higher part of a compound' surfacing as [atwabe], replacing the high back round vowel /u/ with the labio-velar glide /w/. Again, there was some disagreement about glide insertion. Most respondents pronounced it as a heterosyllabic vowel sequence. What this indicates is that hiatus resolution in Kom is not onset-driven. It is not motivated by the need to repair an onsetless syllable. The heterosyllabic sequence /i+i+a/ resulting from the concatenation of three morphemes as in /ibi+i+aku/ 'garcinia kola" seems to be simultaneously resolved by two hiatus resolution strategies, namely, the coalescence of /i+a/ and the devocalization of the first /i/, a situation that would be accounted for in a rule-based theory by ordering coalescence before devocalization.

The motivation for hiatus resolution in the language seems to stem from somewhere else. An examination of the hiatus resolution choice, and the distribution of the hiatus vowels in the articulatory space seems to point to the possibility that the articulatory distance determines which hiatus resolution strategy wins out on the constraint tableau. Vowels that are close to each other in the articulatory space viz., /e/ and /i/, /o/ and /a/ trigger assimilation. Those that are a little more distanced from each other, viz., /u/ and /i/, /e/ and /a/ trigger coalescence. Those that are considerably far from each other within the articulatory space, viz., /i/ and /a/, /o/ and /i/, /u/ and /a/ tend to require no hiatus resolution.

There appears to be vowel elision in Kom at the juncture between a CV associative marker and a vowel-initial noun in the associative construction as in /təbī̀+tə́ + ākū́/→[təbí tákù] 'bitter kola' where the associative marker loses its vowel and cliticizes into the following vowel-initial word. However, due to time constraints, we weren't able to gather enough data and incorporate this into the analysis of hiatus resolution strategies in Kom. Therefore, this presentation is far from being an exhaustive account of hiatus resolution strategies in the language. There are special cases presented here below where word-final coronals are deleted before creating a hiatal configuration that leads to coalescence, a situation that could be handled in a rule-based formalism by making recourse to rule ordering, i.e. ordering deletion before coalescence.

a. /īsás ì ndō/	→	[ĭsɛ̋ɛndò]	'base of house (foundation)'
b. /īsás ì fə́kàʔ/	→	[ĭsɛ̋ɛfə́kàʔ]	'base of a tree'
c. /ībál í ŋgɒ̀ʔ/	→	[ĭbɛ́ɛŋgòʔ]	'Valley of stone (stony valley)'

These special cases can be given further attention in subsequent research in the language. More data can be sourced and a detailed analysis carried.

5. Conclusion

The main thrust of this paper was threefold: first, to identify which options the Kom language draws from among the universal hiatus resolution strategies, second, to account for the choices of hiatus resolution within the theoretical orientations of Optimality Theory. This, we hope to have achieved to a reasonable extent. Data were collected over an extended period of several years by observing native speakers (sometimes as a participant in their speech and other times as a non-participant), and taking field notes which were subsequently verified with other native speakers. These data were analyzed and the results indicate that the Kom language resolves hiatus via assimilation and coalescence and the motivation for the choice of hiatus resolution seems to be the articulatory distance separating the hiatus vowels with the vowel space.

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