Reading guide: Hyman (2003), part 1

For this assignment, focus on sections §1-§3 of this paper.

- Terminology note: *Phonotactic constraints* are requirements in the *phonological* component of the grammar of a particular language, stating which speech sounds can appear in which order/in which position. (Example: In English, if [p] and [l] occur at the beginning of a syllable, they have to be in the order [pl] and not vice versa.) The term *morphotactic constraint* that Hyman uses is based on this idea from phonology…can you work out for yourself what the definition of a morphotactic constraint would be?

If you've never worked with Optimality Theory (OT) before, what you need to know in order to follow this paper is:

- There is a set of **constraints** that specify what linguistic forms are supposed to be like (usually assumed to be a universal set, but Hyman weakens this claim)

- Different languages rank (prioritize) constraints differently; sometimes you have to violate a lower-ranked constraint to satisfy a higher-ranked constraint

- The winning (optimal) output form in a given language is the one that best satisfies the constraints as they are ranked in that language; therefore, by seeing *what form wins* over plausible alternatives, we can determine *how certain constraints are ranked*

- A constraint tableau (see Hyman's ex (7)) indicates:
    - **input form** (essentially, UR) in upper left cell
    - competing **output candidates** down the left side
    - **constraints** across the top, ranked from **highest/left** to **lowest/right**
    - the **winning candidate** is marked with a pointing finger (☞)
    - in this paper, the **cells of the tableau** show when a candidate's morpheme structure **satisfies** a particular constraint — this is actually non-standard, since it is usually violations that are shown in a tableau

---

(1)   [not for RR, but prepare to be called on for discussion!] Which of these two claims is Hyman arguing for? Based on what evidence? What are the implications for the Baker (1985) model if Hyman is right?

   (a)   Bantu verb suffix ordering is fundamentally determined by the Mirror Principle, and exceptions to that can be independently explained as template effects.

   (b)   Bantu verb suffix ordering is fundamentally determined by a morphological template, and exceptions to that can be independently explained as Mirror Principle effects.

(2)   What is significant about the behavior of the causative suffix in Chichewa? Give an example. What are the theoretical implications of this behavior?

(3)   Explain how the OT constraints Template and Mirror are defined in Hyman's ex (6), and under what conditions these constraints are violated.

(4)   What is *asymmetric compositionality*, and how does it relate to the question of template morphology?

(5)   Give an example that shows *suffix doubling*. What is the importance of suffix doubling for Hyman's model?

(6)   In §3, Hyman discusses Chimiwiini (i.e., ChiMwi:ni in the Baker paper).

    (a)   Is Chimwiini, as described by Hyman, more compatible with a template morphology or a Mirror Principle approach?

    (b)   What can we tell about Hyman's view of the nature of the morphology/syntax interface from the discussion in this section?

(7)   Recall that Chimwiini was an important case study in Baker's argument about the "syntactic" approach over the "lexical" approach to a combined morphological/syntactic model. Does the additional information that Hyman presents affect the conclusions that Baker should be able to draw from this language? Why or why not?

(8)   [not for RR] If you're familiar with OT, here's something to think about: How do you feel about Hyman's claim that the TEMPLATE and MIRROR constraints used here are specific to Bantu? More generally, when there are constraints that refer to specific morphological material, to what extent is there justification for making them language-specific? (Thinking of Alignment constraints and the famous example of Tagalog *um*-infixation may be useful here.)