

## Another look at Dahl's Law

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Dahl's law, a regressive voice dissimilation rule which renders voiceless stop consonants (*t, k*) voiced thus becoming (*d, g*) respectively before word stems which start with voiceless consonants has been extensively discussed, especially in my own work (Studies in Kinyarwanda and Bantu Phonology, 1979) and A Tonal Grammar of Kinyarwanda : An autosegmental and Metrical Analysis, 2002). There is no prefix with the voiceless bilabial stop *p* and this consonant has changed to the voiceless velar fricative *h*. It is only found in loan-words, interjections, exclamations and ideophones. Dahl's Law affects mostly class marker prefixes (CM), tense-aspect-modality morphemes (TAM) and objects pronouns (OP).

Obtained new data show that the law also takes place in the suffix position as well. It applies with verbs only because they are the ones which allow suffixation. Regular nouns don't have suffixes except deverbal nouns. If the suffix morpheme consonant is a voiceless stop and the last consonant of the verb stem is also a voiceless stop, the latter becomes voiced. In the majority of cases, it is the voiceless alveolar stop *t* which is affected.

Dahl's Law has been found to occur in loan-words as well, not in the prefix or suffix position but inside the stem itself. Kinyarwanda like other Bantu languages is an open syllable language. Loan-words which contain closed syllables have to have them filled with vowels. This vowel assignment is done with either vowel copy or vowel default insertion. (Kimenyi, 2002). Consonants which require vowel default insertion, which in the majority of cases happen also to be voiceless stop consonants, are reanalysed as prefixes and also become voiced if the following syllable starts with a voiceless consonant.