

## **On exceptions to Akan vowel harmony**

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*Akan has a type of vowel harmony in which the ten vowels in the language fall into two sets of five, each distinguished by advancement versus retraction of the tongue root.*

*Dolphyne (1988) devotes a section of the book to Akan vowel harmony. She identifies six groups of words that deviate from the Akan vowel harmony rule. I have discovered that the vowel harmony in Akan can be described as a phonological process of regressive assimilation (i.e. advanced vowels assimilate unadvanced ones that precede them). The words discussed in Dolphyne (1988) as exceptions to the Akan vowel harmony rule do not break the vowel harmony rule in the language. This is because unadvanced vowels cannot assimilate advanced vowels that precede them. It is rather the advanced vowels that assimilate unadvanced ones that precede them. In effect, there are virtually no exceptions to the vowel harmony rule in Akan.*