Phasal Spell-Out ⇏ Concatenation

Distributed Morphology (DM), a unified approach to word and sentence formation, regards Morphosyntax as 'a single concatenative engine', responsible for gluing together words and morphemes alike, using a single device : Merge (Marantz 1997, 2001). The view that concatenation is the only possible post-lexical morphological operation is quite widespread in DM theoretic approaches to the Morphology-Phonology interface (Marvin 2002, Samuels 2010, Lowenstamm 2011, Embick 2013, among many others). In this talk, I show that concatenation in the (morpho-)syntactic side (i.e. the application of Merge) does not always result in concatenation in the phonological side, even for post-lexical (or phasal) derivations.

Two main arguments support this claim : the first is a phonological diachronic argument. Phasal derivation has immediate diachronic corollary : if Y is post-lexically derived from X, then any change in X (be it phonological or semantic) will also affect Y. The phonological change discussed here is the phonemisation of emphatic /rˤ/ and non-emphatic /r/ in Maghrebi Arabic (MA). This phonemic split resulted in a unidirectional, systematic but *grammatically-conditioned* levelling in the verbal domain (always on the basis of the /r/-variant defined in the imperfective, as in (1)), but in no uniformisation at all in the nominal domain (e.g. *jarˤ (sing.) ~ jiran, *jirˤan (pl.)* 'neighbour' ; *mˑħrˤma (sing.) ~ mˑħarˑm, *mˑħarˤˑm* 'veil').

(1)   Imperfective   Perfective   Active Participle
       ydurˤ   *darˤ* [dɑrˤ]   *dayˑrˤ* [dɑjərˤ]   *'to turn'*
       ydir   *dar* [dɛr]   *dayˑr* [dɛjɨr]   *'to do'*

Active participles of unaccusative verbs were not subject to this levelling. Crucially, participles of unaccusatives can only be stative in MA. A DM analysis straightforwardly, and at no additional cost, explains the lexical propagation of the /r/-/rˤ/ split in MA, and correctly predicts the differences we find between its propagation in the verbal and nominal paradigms, as well as the 'exceptions' we find in the verbal domain. This shows that templates behave in Morphosyntax exactly like affixes do : they can be cyclic (i.e. introduced below the first categorising head, as is the case, I argue, for stative participles and broken plurals) or non-cyclic (introduced above the first categorising head, e.g. for eventive participles) :

(2)   Non-cyclic template : Eventive Participles : [PartP *Part* [VoiceP √CaCɨC [vP v [√P √stem]]]]
       Cyclic template :   Stative Participles : [PartP *Part* [√P √CaCɨC √stem]]
                              Broken plurals :   [nP *n* [NumP CCaCɨC [vP √stem]]]

The second argument is morphological one. I argue that a Root & Template theory is not an adequate theory of MA morphology and show that cyclic templates behave differently from non-cyclic ones in terms of lexical selection and segment-to-template association mechanisms (in terms of directionality of association, (un)separability of geminates). I conclude that not all phases are equipped with a Phase Impenetrability Condition (PIC) – at least in the (Morpho)Phonology component – and that Spell-Out is not synonymous with what can be termed 'Externalisation', corroborating the architecture of Grammar argued for in Idsardi & Raimy (2013), in (3) :

(3)   Narrow Syntax > Morphosyntax > Morphophonology > Phonology(-Phonetics)

I finally suggest that the peculiar behaviour of deaf verbs in the modern Arabic dialects, along with other Output-Output correspondences in Semitic languages (Ussishkin 1999) are all a trivial consequence of a fundamental property of the Morphophonology module : adjacency. These effects merely result from the passage of a lexical, multi-layered phonological representation to a post-lexical linear representation : this would ensure that locally adjacent segments remain adjacent during all post-lexical derivations.

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