Asymmetric variation

Péter Rebrus – Péter Szigetvári – Miklós Törkenczy
Research Institute for Linguistics, Hungarian Academy of Sciences (MTA)
Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE), Budapest

2 background: yod variation

2.1 Y-suffixes. j – Ё alternation in possessive suffixes (+harmonic alternations a–e, u–y):
• Yulf allomorphs, e.g. V-final stems:
  Pos. 3Sg: Vor[-e] Pos. 3Pl: Vor[-e]
  vor[a]: Vor[a] Vor[a]
  vor[e]: Vor[e] Vor[e]

2.2 variation: phonological shape underdetermines Yfulness:
• zone of variation: other C-final stems
• vacillation and lexical variation:
  Pos. 3Sg: Vor[-e] Pos. 3Pl: Vor[-e]

3 the problem

3.1 orthogonality hypothesis: harmonic variation and yod-variation are independent in terms of phonological content and conditioning predictions:
• variation in 1 dimension ➔ 2 allomorphs
• variations in 2 dimensions ➔ 4 allomorphs

3.2 attested types

(i) stem is variable in 2 dimensions, 4 allomorphs

(ii) 1 dimension, 2 allomorphs:
  [notɛs]jk, [notɛs]jyk
  [notɛs]e, [notɛs]ejyk

4 analysis

4.1 paradigm uniformity: identical sound strings in a paradigm support each other

4.2 paradigm classes: mid / low linking vowel

4.3 sequential uniformity (SU): in variation we select a string supported by identical strings in the paradigm (thereby enhancing uniformity)
• facilitates Yulf allomorph of Y-suffixes for low back stems and front stems in general
• is neutral wrt the selection of Y-allomorphs for back non-low stems ➔ variation

4.4 explanation: [Br]-stems are (a) loans & therefore also (b) lowering stems ➔ Yulf forms are facilitated and ➔ Yulf -a forms have no paradigmatic support

question 1: *hotel-a
• since hotel is non-lowering *hotel-a has no paradigmatic support
• hotel-jk does have paradigmatic support – for front stems no difference btw lowering and non-lowering
• hotel-jl & hotel-je have equal paradigmatic support (none), but recent loans facilitate Yulf forms

question 2: *notes-je, *notes-ja
• Yulf forms are out because of markedness (and have no paradigmatic support)

question 3: *hotel-ja, *hotel-ju
• both hotel-jk, hotel-uk have paradigmatic support from Poss.1Pl yulf-ja, yulf-uk, & hotel-jk & hotel-ju have no paradigmatic support, but recent loans facilitate Yulf forms

• "familiar" Br-stems are harmonically variable only with C-initial suffixes, V-initial suffixes have B-preference ➔ *haver-ju, *haver-yk (but haver-je, haver-jyk)
• Yulf forms have no paradigmatic support, but recent loans facilitate yodful forms
• *haver-a has no paradigmatic support, but recent loans do have paradigmatic support from Poss.1Pl haver-uk

bonus question: back sibilant/palatal-final recent loans, e.g. [trzut-]: *ostrich-Pos.3Sg:
• recent loans facilitate Yulf forms, but Yulf forms are out because of markedness (*jo) and ➔ Yulf back forms in -ae are not supported because recent loans are non-lowering
• nevertheless: *trzut- - is lic because defective paradigms are avoided: NoGap

Plan

1.3 harmonic consistency

• underdetermines harmonic behaviour
• vacillation and lexical variation, three classes:
  phonologically, e.g. [B]
  * front and back suffix allomorphs for all harmonically alternating suffixes: [BB]{b,br} / [BB]{w,wr} ‘wine-DAT’
  [FF]{j,je} / [FF]{e,er} ‘beer-DAT’

1.2 variation: phonological shape underdetermines harmonic behaviour

• zone of variation can be characterised phonologically, e.g. [Br]-stems
• vacillation and lexical variation, three classes:
  • indifferent: vacillation hotel-nål/naľk
  • cultural: F-preference pumflit-něk
  • familiar: B-preference haver-nuk

1.3 harmonic consistency

• harmonic behaviour is consistent throughout the paradigm of a stem: stable F or B or variable harmony within the paradigm
• familiar [Br]-stems: near-categorial B-harmo

with V-initial suffixes:
• haver-ol/*uk ‘pal-PL’
• matc-o*tl ‘matc-ACC’
• kolc-o*ran ‘student dorm-Poss.1Sg’
• frtr-od*rd ‘dad-Poss.2Sg’
• karpekv-ukj ‘dude-Poss.1PI’

* This work has been supported by National Scientific Grant KFP.109663 ‘Experimental and theoretical investigations of vowel harmony patterns’.