

A representational account to morphologically conditioned junctural harmony Morphologically conditioned junctural effects, as the subtype of morphologically derived environment (MDE) effects, arise when phonological processes only apply across morpheme boundaries. Finnish assibilation, for example, is triggered by suffixal [i] but not root-internal [i] (/tilat-i/ → [tilas-i] ‘order-PAST’, Burzio 2011: 4). According to Łubowicz (2002), such processes are motivated by the misalignment of a syllable across a morpheme boundary. However, the exemplified phenomena overwhelmingly involve the interactions between stem-final Cs and suffix-initial Vs. It remains an issue if syllable-based accounts indeed articulate a valid generalization, or simply capture a structural coincidence. I will demonstrate that this is a genuine structural requirement, by exemplifying a process where stem Vs interact with suffixal Vs: in Dagur (Mongolic), rounding harmony applies to V-initial suffixes, when they are attached to C-final stems.

Dagur has five short vowels /i u ə a ɔ/ and six long vowels /i: u: ə: a: ɔ: e:/.¹ Targets of RTR harmony (RTRH) surface with [-RTR] when there are no [+RTR] triggers ([xuk^hr-ə:r-ə:] ‘ox-INSTR-RFL’ cf. [am-a:r-a:] ‘mouth-INSTR-RFL’). Rounding harmony (RH), on the other hand, is triggered by /ɔ/ ([kɔt^hɔ:r-ɔ:r-ɔ:] ‘boots-INSTR-RFL’). Non-high suffix vowels are also subject to palatal assimilation (PA) and labial assimilation (LA): the former is triggered by stem-final palatalized consonants or plain palatals ([sɔrp^j-ɛ:r-a:] ‘stick-INSTR-RFL’, xək^j-e:r-ə: ‘head-INSTR-RFL’), the latter by stem-final labialized consonants or plain labials ([turk^{hw}-ɔ:r-ɔ:] ‘string-INSTR-RFL’).

An underspecified non-high vowel is hence expected to have a five-way alternation, [ə:]~[a:]~[ɔ:]~[e:]~[ɛ:]. However, when a suffix-internal consonant intervenes, the suffix vowel following it only shows a two-way alternation between [ə:] and [a:]: [mɔ:t-ta:] (vs. *[mɔ:t-tɔ:]) ‘wood-LOC’, [pɔs-ɔ:tʃa:r] (vs. *[pɔs-ɔ:tʃɔ:r]) ‘get up-CONV CONCOM’. When a consonant is inserted ([j] or [ɣ]) to break hiatus, a suffix vowel (as in RFL /-EE/) which originally exhibits five alternations will only have a two-way alternation: [tʃə:-jə:] ‘nephew-RFL’, [tʃ^hɔ:mɔ:-ja:] ‘ball-RFL’ (Engkebatu 1988: 161-2). Hence Dagur RH is not only sensitive to morpheme boundaries, but also the morphemic affiliations of intervening consonants: stem-final consonants are ‘transparent’, while suffix-internal or inserted ones are ‘opaque’ to RH.

The notion of position-conditioned consonantal ‘transparency’ can be dismissed if (i) RH is treated as a MDE effect, and (ii) MDE is characterized by the structural requirement identified in Łubowicz (2002). Hence RH only applies when V-initial suffixes are attached to C-final stems but not elsewhere. The definition of MDE further requires the non-applicability of RH in root-internal environments, which is precisely the case (in comparison, RTRH applies throughout a PrW). Diachronically speaking, the merging of *u and *ɔ to /ɔ/ disrupted root-internal RH but not RTRH: the original sequence of *a...*u was

¹ /a/ has an allophone [ɛ], /e:/ has an allophone [ɛ:].

rendered into the co-occurrence of synchronic /a/ and /ɔ/. Suffix vowels, on the other hand, remain subject to the myopic searching of [round]. When the original domain-span process became constrained to morphological junctures, a structural requirement (i.e. C-final stems and V-initial suffixes in the case of Dagur) occurred simultaneously as it is entailed by MDE.

Furthermore, PA is subject to the same structural requirements. PA is triggered by stem-final palatalized consonants or plain palatals, but not by suffix-internal palatals (/tʃʰEE/ DEG → [-tʃʰa:] ~ [-tʃʰə:] but *[tʃʰɛ:] or *[tʃʰe:]). Neither does j-insertion trigger PA ([tʃə:-jə:] but *[tʃə:-je:] ‘nephew-RFL’), which surfaces as a counterfeeding-type opacity. If MDE entails a structural requirement, this explains the underapplication of PA without referring to other mechanisms.

Nevertheless, such structural requirement was only identified for morphologically conditioned junctural harmony, but not phrasal junctural harmony (see Kimper 2011 for Vata; Kügler 2022 for Anum). To provide a unified solution to both, I adopt a strict CV analysis: morphological junctures are defined as including an empty VC sequence (Kula 2008), while phrasal junctures are sensitive to the empty CV slots (Scheer 2004). In Dagur, the consonant to be inserted ([j] or [ɣ], depending on the exact suffix) floats in vowel-initial suffixes. As shown in (1), when there is no hiatus, the floating /j/ is not associated to an empty C. RH applies to the initial but not the second syllable of the suffix, since only the former satisfies the structural requirement of RH.

(1) [pɔs-ɔ:tʃa:r] ‘get up-CONV CONCOM’

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|----------|---|----------|---|---|----|---|---|---|---|---|----------|
| C | V | C | <u>V</u> | - | <u>C</u> | V | C | V | C | V | C | V | C | <u>V</u> |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| p | ɔ | s | ∅ | | ɣ | E | | tʃ | E | | r | ∅ | | |

While harmony is canonically viewed as a domain span process (Downing & Krämer 2022), this work shows how vowel merging can lead to morphologically conditioned junctural harmony. This justifies the analyses that MDE has a structural entailment. As harmony is a V-to-V assimilation process, this dismisses the concerns indicated in Burzio (2011) that such structural descriptions are merely coincidence, since MDE effects discussed in previous works (Łubowicz 2002; Kula 2008) mainly involve the interactions between consonants and vowels. More broadly speaking, this shows that structural requirements are cross-linguistically less variable, whereas melodic features are emergent, substance-free, and tolerate more phonological ‘craziness’ (Chabot 2021).

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