

The convergence of labor between phonology and morphology

Moira Yip, UCL

The conference theme, “The division of labor between phonology and morphology”, implies that by and large these operate independently of each other. In fact, most truly phonological (as opposed to phonetic) rules make reference to morphology either directly, or indirectly. Consider the simple fact that the definition of a lexical rule is that it applies within but not across words. Its non-application thus signals the presence of a word boundary.

In many cases rules can refer to either morphological or prosodic entities. For example, in Chinese, most rules can refer to either syllable or morpheme. This correspondence between morpheme structure and prosodic structure is of course not always so perfect, and is often blurred by later processes...but it is functionally very useful, and thus widespread. In OT, it is often handled via alignment statements. Cross-linguistically, there is substantial evidence for preferences like the following:

(i) Cross-linguistic preference for morphological entities to be prosodic entities. True of roots, words, reduplicative affixes:

σ	Chinese: morpheme; MinWd = Heavy syllable
μμ	Japanese hypocoristics
φ	MinWd in most languages
φ (trochee)	English nouns
φ (iamb)	Sesquisyllabic languages
σσ	Chinese preferred word; Mixtec roots; Japanese loan truncations

(ii) Cross-linguistic preference for edge-based processes that signal the ends of morphological entities, especially words:

- Initial/final stress
- Initial strengthening / final weakening, such as devoicing and debuccalization
- Final lengthening

(iii) Cross-linguistic preferences for the domains of processes to be morphologically / prosodically defined:

- Vowel Harmony
- Tone spreading
- nasal harmony
- OCP effects

(iv) Cross-linguistic traces of morphological structure retained inside larger words and compounds :

- cyclic and OO effects.
- Opacity.

Much effort among phonologists goes on constructing arguments that some process MUST be described prosodically and not morphologically, but this may be the wrong direction to come from: maybe the more interesting and important observation is precisely that they usually coincide??

