

What *actually* delimits the context for allomorphy?

I. BACKGROUND: Research in Distributed Morphology has found that some patterns of allomorphy can be explained if allomorph selection is done cyclically; cyclic spell-out is governed by the Phase Impenetrability Condition (1), and the categorizing morphemes (*v*, *n*, *a*) are the relevant phase heads. What (1) means for the structure in (2) is that the root and the second phase-head *y* cannot interact for the purposes of allomorph selection because they are in separate spell-out domains (though see III below for some qualifications); the root is accessible to the first phase-head *x* and any intervening non-phase-heads (*Z*, *W*).

(1) **PHASE IMPENETRABILITY CONDITION** (Chomsky 2001:14): Given the structure [ZP Z ... [HP α [H ' H YP]]], where H and Z are phase heads, the [complement] domain of H is not accessible to operations at ZP.

(2) [yP ... [WP ... [ZP ... [xP ... [ROOT]]]]]

Additionally, two notions of adjacency have been argued to delimit allomorphic interactions, linear adjacency (Embick 2010, a.o.) and structural adjacency (Bobaljik 2012, a.o.). Moskal (2015) rejects both proposals, arguing that (root-conditioned) allomorphy is limited to elements within the Accessibility Domain of the root, which is delimited by (but includes) the first node above the categorizing morpheme (*Z*, but not *W* in (2)).

II. CLAIM: Data from Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian (BCS) are compatible with the claim that cyclic spell-out imposes a limit on the context of allomorphy, while showing that none of the other proposed mechanisms govern allomorphy in the general case. Evidence from BCS deverbal nominals reveals that linear adjacency cannot be a prerequisite for allomorphy (contra Embick 2010). Evidence from negative comparative adjectives reveals that the root is accessible to the second non-phase-head above the categorizer (contra Moskal 2015) and provides an argument against structural adjacency as a constraint on affixal or root allomorphy (contra Bobaljik 2012).

III. NOMINALIZATIONS: Consider the BCS secondary imperfective (SI) morpheme, used to imperfectivize perfective (or telic) verb stems, (3). Certain agentive (person-denoting) nominals contain the SI suffix. (I assume SI to be in Asp, but the only important thing is that SI is above *v*, which is confirmed by the ordering of the verbal theme vowel—the exponent of *v*, see e.g., Milosavljević & Arsenijević 2022, Bešlin 2023—and SI.) The nominals in (4) are derived with the allomorph *-telj* (often interchangeable with *-lac*), (5) with *-ač*, (6) with *-(a)c*. There are no discernable meaning differences for these suffixes; it is reasonable to assume that they realize the same head, *n*_[+AGENT]. The minimal structure of the nominals in (4)-(6) is given in (7) for *proučavatelj* ‘researcher’.¹

(3)	a.	da-∅-ti give-V-INF ‘give’	b.	da-∅-va-ti give-V-SI-INF ‘be giving’	c.	osigur-a-ti secure-V-INF ‘secure’	d.	osigur-a-va-ti secure-V-SI-INF ‘be securing’
(4)	a.	izda-∅-va-telj issue -V-SI-N ‘issuer’	b.	prouč-a-va-telj examine-V-SI-N ‘researcher’	c.	osigur-a-va-telj secure-V-SI-N ‘insurer’		
(5)	a.	preda-∅-va-ač lecture-V-SI-N ‘lecturer’	b.	ugnjet-a-va-ač opress-V-SI-N ‘oppressor’	c.	usmer-a-va-ač direct-V-SI-N ‘direction-giver’		
(6)	a.	proda-∅-va-ac sell-V-SI-N ‘seller’	b.	posl-o-da-∅-va-ac job-LINKER-give-V-SI-N ‘employer’	c.	zakon-o-da-∅-va-ac law-LINKER-give-V-SI-N ‘law-maker’		

¹ I represent so-called lexical prefixes (LPs) as part of the root for simplicity. LPs introduce a result state and may completely change the lexical meaning of the root. LPs have been argued to be low in the structure, below ‘big V’ (i.e., the root, see Svenonius 2004, Ramchand 2008, Tatevosov 2011, a.o.). Alternatively, LPs are part of the root in the synchronic grammar; this has no consequences for the present analysis. What is important and argued for at length in the literature is that LPs are found in the root domain, rather than in Asp.

(7) [*nP* -**telj** [*AspP* -**va-** [*vP* -**a-** [\sqrt{P} $\sqrt{\text{prouč}}$]]]]

The *n*(ominalizer) is separated from the root by at least *v* and *SI*. Still, the choice of the *n* allomorph (-*telj*, -*ač*, -*ac*) is sensitive to the identity of the root. For Embick, the structure in (7) is linearized before allomorph selection takes place, so that we get *ROOT-v-Asp-n*. Since the choice of the *n* allomorph depends on the identity of the root, across *v* and *Asp*, **the linear adjacency requirement on allomorphy cannot be maintained**. Note that, since *n* is the second phase-head from the root, certain further assumptions about head movement are needed to maintain the idea that cyclic spell-out delimits the context for allomorphy. It has been suggested that head-movement can drive phase extension à la den Dikken 2007 (see e.g., Fenger 2020); if the root moves at least to *v*, this allows the root to be accessible to *n* while maintaining (1).

IV. NEGATIVE COMPARATIVES: The form of the comparative (-*ij-*, -*j-*, -*š-*, or root suppletion) is not fully predictable in the synchronic grammar of BCS (Stanojčić & Popović 1992). Consider adjectives with long (8) and short (9) monosyllabic roots; the choice of comparative allomorph is root-dependent and not phonologically predictable.

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|-----|----|-------------------------------------------------------------------|----|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| (8) | a. | slaan ‘salty’ + <i>ij(-i)</i> ‘CMPR-M’ → <i>slaniji</i> ‘saltier’ | b. | mlaad ‘young’ + <i>j(-i)</i> ‘CMPR-M’ → <i>mladji</i> ‘younger’ |
| | c. | leep ‘pretty’ + <i>š(-i)</i> ‘CMPR-M’ → <i>lepši</i> ‘prettier’ | d. | maali ‘small’ + $\emptyset(-i)$ ‘CMPR-M’ → <i>manji</i> ‘smaller’ |
| (9) | a. | sit ‘full’ + <i>ij(-i)</i> ‘CMPR-M’ → <i>sitiji</i> ‘fuller’ | b. | brz ‘fast’ + <i>j(-i)</i> ‘CMPR-M’ → <i>brzji</i> ‘faster’ |
| | c. | mek ‘soft’ + <i>š(-i)</i> ‘CMPR-M’ → <i>mekši</i> ‘softer’ | d. | zao ‘bad’ + $\emptyset(-i)$ ‘CMPR-M’ → <i>gori</i> ‘worse’ |

Now, negated adjectives can also be used in the comparative form (10). In (10), the comparative scopes over the negative (CMPR>NEG); had NEG>CMPR, the interpretation in (10) would have been weaker, namely that the second cheese is not saltier/smaller than the first. Given (8)/(9), the comparative morpheme must be able to access the root for purposes of allomorph selection, despite the intervention of *a* and NEG (11). Examples of this kind are infrequent and pragmatically marked for several reasons I discuss in the talk, but they are available for all allomorphs in the appropriate context, cf. also *nebrzi*, *nemekši*. What this means is that (i) **structural adjacency cannot be a condition on (root or affixal) allomorphy**, and (ii) **access to the root is not restricted to the first node above the categorizing morpheme**.

(10) Context: We’re at the market, looking for a block of cheese that’s not too salty/small. The seller says:

Ovaj je prilično ne-slan / ne-mali. A ovaj ti je (još) **ne-slan-ij-i** / **ne-manj- \emptyset -i**.
 this is pretty NEG-salty NEG-small and this you.DAT is even NEG-salty-CMPR-M NEG-small-CMPR-M
 ‘This one is pretty unsalty/non-small. And this one is even more unsalty/non-small (than the first).’

(11) [ϕP -**i** [*DEGP* -**ij-** [*NEGP* **ne-** [*aP* \emptyset [\sqrt{P} $\sqrt{\text{słan}}$]]]]]]

V. RAMIFICATIONS: The bolded conclusions from III and IV allow us to simplify the grammar by doing away with unnecessary conditions on allomorphy, such as adjacency. The findings reported here suggest that allomorphy may not be constrained by any mechanisms beyond phasal spell-out; any material in the relevant spell-out domain can serve as context for allomorphy. Structural adjacency has already been shown to be a too strict condition for affixal allomorphy (Bobaljik 2000, a.o.). If, as I argued, root suppletion does not require structural adjacency either, this means that root and affixal allomorphy are more similar than previously thought. Finally, since allomorphy is not constrained by linear adjacency, this leaves open the possibility that the linearization of structure occurs after Vocabulary Insertion.

SELECTED REFERENCES: Bobaljik, J. D. 2000. The ins and outs of contextual allomorphy. In *UMD working papers in linguistics 10*. • Bobaljik, J. D. 2012. Universals in comparative morphology: Suppletion, superlatives, and the structure of words, MIT Press. • Embick, D. 2010. Localism vs. globalism in morphology and phonology, MIT Press. • Fenger, P. 2020. Words within words. UConn PhD thesis. • Moskal, B. A. 2015. Domains on the border: Between morphology and phonology. UConn PhD thesis. • Stanojčić, Ž. & Popović, Lj. 1992. Gramatika srpskoga jezika. • Svenonius, P (ed.). 2004. Slavic prefixes [special issue]. *Nordlyd* 32(2).