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Title

Allomorphy and floating segments

Abstract

The nature and treatment of phonologically-conditioned allomorphy has been the subject of much debate in Generative Grammar. Some proposals have defended the idea that allomorph selection takes place at the point of vocabulary insertion (as in Embick 2010), while other proposals, framed in Optimality Theory, have advocated the idea that a given morpheme can feed multiple inputs to the phonology so that the selection is made in the phonology proper (Mascaró 1996, 2007, Tranel 1996 a.o.). In the last years some work has denied the allomorphic nature of at least a subset of the cases by proposing that the alternations observed are due to the existence of floating segments, which are phonetically realized or not depending on whether or not they get linked to syllabic positions or timing slots (Scheer 2016, a.o.). In this talk I will review some of the cases that have been claimed to be amenable to a floating segment analysis and I will show that the analysis is too unconstrained and often gives rise to wrong predictions, a problem not found with the multiple input approach.