NEITHER AMPHICHRONY NOR READJUSTMENT: 'WEAK SUPPLETION' AS ROOT-SPECIFIC GNA

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The paper proposes a novel analysis of stem-specific morpho-phonological alternations of the type attested in English verbal system (cf. 'ablaut'-like *s*/ɪ/*ng* - *s*/æ/*ng* - *s*/ʌ/*ng*). The said type of changes has been analysed in two ways: as involving readjustment rules (see Halle 1990, Halle and Marantz 1993, Harley and Tubino Blanco 2013 among others) or as genuine stem allomorphy, i.e. suppletion (e.g. Siddiqi 2009, Haugen 2015).

The adversaries of the readjustment approach point to the unconstrained nature of this device and its incompatibility with the general requirement of modularity (e.g. in the form of Bermúdez-Otero's 2012 *Morph Integrity Hypothesis*). The researchers expressing scepticism as to the stem-listing approach claim that by assuming that the relation between forms such as *s*/ɪ/*ng* and *s*/æ/*ng* is the same in nature as the relation between *go* and *went* some non-trivial generalizations about language are lost. The speaker-hearer, the argument goes, is bound to take advantage of the strong resemblance in the segmental make-up observed in the case of pairs such as *s*/ɪ/*ng* and *s*/æ/*ng*. This argument has recently been countered by Haugen (2015) who, in the spirit of Kiparsky's (2006) amphichronic programme for linguistics, points to the history of the forms showing 'weak suppletion' as the reason behind their similarity. Still, the amphichronic argument as used by Haugen is not easily extendable to those stem-specific alternations which are robust enough to be carried over to new forms e.g. English 'ablaut' in *sn*/iː/*k* - *sn*/ʌ/*ck* or Polish *o*-raising in *Sk*/o/*d+a* - *Sk*/u/*d* 'Skoda (car), nom, sg. - gen. pl.'.

I am going to claim that both approaches to stem-specific morpho-phonological alternations are on the right track but, for abovementioned reasons, none of them is completely satisfactory. I am going to argue that the said alternations are in fact cases of root-specific Generalized Nonlinear Affixation (Trommer 2011, Bermúdez-Otero 2012).

I assume the representation of an English verb is presented in (1). The relevant vocabulary items realizing the representation in (1) are presented in (2) and (3).

(1)   [SING *v*] *Tns*+past]   (2)   SING   /sɪŋ/;

(3)   *v*   [vocalic]   / LIST⁀___⁀[+past] Where: LIST = { SING, RING, SIT *etc.*}
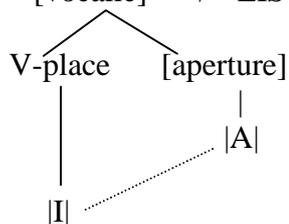
Assuming the subsegmental architecture argued for by Clements and Hume (1996), and existence of asymmetrical relations between features, the structure realizing the *v*-head in the relevant contexts will derive /æ/ by anchoring onto the closest vowel (i.e. the /ɪ/ of the root).

This approach effectively circumvents the problems of the previous approaches: (i) the type of possible alternations is kept in check by language specific phonological constraints on anchoring of autosegments (e.g. licensing constraints known from the Government Phonology literature); (ii) since the alternations are the consequence of the translation of the morpho-syntactic information into phonological information we no longer have to do with the violation of modularity; (iii) the similarity between *s*/ɪ/*ng* and *s*/æ/*ng* is naturally accounted for as both are derived from a single underlying representation (unlike *go* and *went*).

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