

The Coda-Mirror

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In early generative phonology, the disjunctive context "word-final or before a consonant" in which many processes occur has played an important role. It was one of the major arguments that led to the abandon of the linear SPE-frame. Syllabic constituents were (re)introduced, and the Coda was supposed to be the site where the phenomena mentioned occur.

I will adduce evidence that the "mirror"-situation calls for a similar move. The "mirror"-disjunctive context "word-initial or after a consonant" indeed is the structural description of phenomena such as Siever's Law, the maintain of stops in the evolution from Latin to French, the distribution of voiceless stops in Somali or the High-German consonant shift. Consider data from the latter process:

- (1) note: New High German forms first, English, a representative of the unaltered Common Germanic situation, second. z=[ts], L=Liquid

#__		L__		vs.	V__#		V__V
zehn	ten	Salz	salt		das	that	hassen hate
Pfad	path	Karpfen	carp		Schaf	sheep	Pfaffe pope

As can be seen, the High German consonant shift affects plosives, all of which undergo a change. However, the ultimate fricative result does not obtain word-initially and after Codas, where the intermediate affricate stage is preserved.

For the sake of the same arguments that gave (re-)birth to the Coda, a generalization is missed if the "Coda-mirror" context cannot be described as a single phonological object.

My proposal aims at unifying both disjunctive contexts: Coda-phenomena occur *before* an empty Nucleus (=∅), i.e. vC∅cv or vC∅#. Their mirror-events occur *after* an empty Nucleus, i.e. #∅C or v∅Cv. This approach not only supposes a strict CVCV syllable structure (empty Nuclei exist at the right edge of consonant-final words and between Codas and Onsets), but also the existence of an empty Nucleus preceding the left edge of the word. I intend to show that a syllabic analysis along these lines is called for if no generalization is to be missed.