Association under control

In this contribution we explore a formal option that is offered by autosegmental representations but has lied waste thus far: the control over the association of melodic items. We argue that association in some cases is not automatic, i.e. that the decision to associate a given item or not may express (at least) three kinds of control: grammatical, lexical and socio-linguistic.

In case of grammatical control, the association line is actually a morpheme. Semitic languages offer ample illustration, both in terms of traditional description and modern implementation. Given the unmarked form I in Classical Arabic, $C_1V_1C_2V_2C_3$, form II (reciprocal) is derived by lengthening $V_1$, while form III (intensive, iterative) is produced by geminating $C_2$. Guerssel & Lowenstamm (1990) have unified both derivations by calling on an (empty) [CV] unit that is inserted in derived forms, $C_1[V_1[CV]C_2V_2C_3$, and on which either $V_1$ or $C_2$ branch. While this analysis creates the conditions for forms II and III to be derived, it needs to be further informed since the mere presence of the [CV] unit gives no indication whether $V_1$ or $C_2$ spreads. This spreading is under morphological control: form II gives order to $V_2$, form III to $C_2$. We present further illustration of this pattern from Kabyle Berber where a melodic item associates only in a specific morphological context.

The control over association may also be lexical. That is, a piece of melody is lexically specified for a particular (non-)action regarding association when it is injected into a derivation. Evidence for this pattern comes from the contrast between suffix-initial vowels that do vs. do not alternate with zero in Slavic languages such as Polish and Czech. On the assumption that morphemes always end in a nucleus (which is eventually empty), the suffixal vowel of the Polish diminutive *pies-ek* "dog, dim. NOMsg" must lexically float: it needs to end up in the root-final empty nucleus since it causes the preceding root vowel not to be deleted. The root vowel indeed alternates with zero (ps-a "dog GENsg"), and we know independently that the zero is triggered when the following nucleus is filled (as in ps-a), except if it hosts a vowel that alternates itself with zero (as in the case in *pies-ek*, whose GENsg is *pies-ok-a*). Also, the vowel of -ek must float because the difference between vowels that do and vowels that do not alternate with zero (which are phonetically identical in Polish: [ɛ]) is a matter of association (e.g. Rubach 1986). That is, the difference between the alternating vowel in *pies-ps-a* "dog, NOMsg, GENsg" and the non-alternating vowel in *bies-bies-a* "devil, NOMsg, GENsg" is represented in terms of association: stable vowels are lexically associated, while alternating vowels float.

The trouble is that there are also floating suffix-initial vowels that do not alternate with zero such as in the adjective marker -ow-. The properties of -ow- may be inspected on the occasion of a word such as *bez-cl-ow-y* "duty-free, adj.": like all suffix-initial vowels, the -o provokes the absence of the preceding alternating vowel (cf. clo - cel "customs NOMsg, GENpl") and hence must sit in the final empty nucleus of the root. It therefore must be lexically floating. At the same time, though, it must be lexically associated since it does not alternate with zero itself: the adjectival NOMsg marker -y sits in the final empty nucleus (cf. pelen - peln-"full, attributive vs. inflected form NOMsg"), but fails to provoke the absence of the -o (*bez-cel-ow-y*). In sum, then, the o of -ow- should lexically float and be associated at the same time (recall that stable vowels are lexically associated). Or, in other words, the alternating vs. non-alternating character is a lexical property of floating vowels. We therefore submit that the association of floating vowels is specified in the lexicon: the o of -ow- associates no matter what, while the e of -ek is not specified for automatic association.

Finally, French liaison without enchaînement (Encrevé 1988) is a case of association under socio-linguistic control: whether the word-final consonant attaches to the next word as in j'avai[z] un rêve "I had a dream" (with enchaînement) or to its own word (without enchaînement, which provokes a pause between avai[z] and un as well as the appearance of a glottal stop, i.e. avai[z] [ʔun] is decided by style and sociological parameters.