The systemic nature of linguistic theory.
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Linguistic theory is systemic the same way (we generally think) languages are. It generates analysis according to the delimitations (concepts) that are given beforehand. Once exceptions appear: or everything collapses, or we have to find accommodations (in the core or the periphery, following Lakatos 1976's terminology). The problem dealt with here is 'phonological exceptionality' in Turkish. We can pretend it only affects the periphery, and find ways to accommodate it; or try, from another core, to look back at the problem. In this talk, I will

1) discuss the following concepts:
   -Core of the theory: 'the Morpheme'
   -Typological core: the 'Agglutinative hypothesis' and the related explanation of Vowel Harmony (VH)
   -Specific problem: 'Exceptions to VH'
   -In the periphery: the 'stress rule' and its (a)symmetry with VH; the related problem of tracing the limits of the Phonological Word (PW)
   -Suburb: 'syntax';
2) show how they are related;
3) explain why accepting one of them forces us to accept the others; and
4) show the problems that emerge out of this web of connected notions, mainly because they reinforce each other.

I want to show that VH is not a phonological concept but a morphological one. This logical deconstruction starts with the notion of morpheme and with the related notion of agglutination, where morphemes are seen as signs; signs are agglutinated and harmonized; the result is a complex sign; and VH gives the frontier of this sign (PW).

Many exceptions exist to VH, mainly loans from languages that do not share Turkish's phonotactic constraints. Exceptions exist as well at the level of native and non-native suffixes, and native word-formation processes do create disharmonic forms as well. I proposed (Royer-Artuso, forthcoming) that VH was not a phonological process anymore in Turkish. But to do so, we have to accept not using the notion of the morpheme, and this is problematic when we start our analysis with the concept of agglutination.

The limits of the PW are, in the traditional framework, given by VH. But many suffixes do not harmonize and therefore do not give this indication. Generally, stress in agglutinative languages is also used to indicate these limits, and again, in Turkish, many exceptions exist to the regular pattern and we therefore cannot count on stress for this indication (Kabak & Vogel 2001, Orgun & Inkelas 2003). When we look at the literature on syntax, we see that these indicators also serve the purpose of delimitating the objects of analysis. But the problem of 'suspended affixation' (Kabak 2007, Kornfilt 2012) recently blurred the line between syntax and morphology, therefore bringing into question the status of Turkish as an agglutinative language. But because the analysis of VH and stress are accepted in their traditional form, we are forced not to make this move. And, in fact, the move is never made. The periphery is different according to the analyzed domain, but we still move (and get stocked) in the same web of notions.

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