

Right-Edge Faithfulness in Squliq Atayal

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It has been known that the distribution of consonants and vowels at word edges can be different from that in word-medial position (Broselow 2003, and references therein); many Austronesian languages, however, remain under-described with respect to this aspect of phonology. This paper investigates Squliq Atayal, an endangered Austronesian language spoken in northern Taiwan, based on data from previous studies (e.g. Egerod 1980, Li 1980, Yamada and Liao 1974, among others) and first-hand data collected by the author. The paper attempts to show that the need to avoid changes at the right edge of a word unifies two related observations regarding the language: the restricted distribution of closed syllables in word-final position, and the blocking of vowel epenthesis word-finally in its diachronic phonology. Such a constraint is embodied by ANCHORING-R (McCarthy and Prince 1995) in the proposed Optimality-theoretic analysis, which demands that the right edge of a word align with the right edge of a syllable in the output. In addition, the paper shows that pre-tonic strings are subject to another ANCHORING-R constraint that refers to an affix.

An examination of the distribution of Squliq consonants and vowels suggests that closed syllables are not allowed except in word-final position (and except in *in*-affixed forms described below). Such a pattern presumably comes from the failure of a diachronic vowel insertion process to apply at the right edge, as justified by the comparison between Squliq and the more conservative dialect Mayrinax Atayal:

- (1)
- | | <i>Squliq</i> | <i>Mayrinax</i> | |
|----|---------------|-----------------|---------|
| a. | ʔə.nux | giʔ.nux | ‘tooth’ |
| b. | bə.qə.niʔ | baq.niʔ | ‘bone’ |

The blocking of vowel epenthesis in final position is attributed to the ranking of ANCHORING-R-*Word* above Dep-IO-V in the proposed analysis.

This right-edge faithfulness effect is observed in another morphological process, the affixation of *in* (‘realis marker’). When the prefix *in* appears after word-initial C of a CV prefix due to the Onset requirement, the vowel following *in* is deleted accordingly:

- (2)
- | | | | | |
|----|-----------------|-----------------|--------------|---------------------|
| a. | /mV, in, ɲilis/ | → /m<in>Vɲilis/ | [min.ɲi.lis] | ‘cry, AV, Realis’ |
| b. | /mV, in, nbuw/ | → /m<in>Vnbuw/ | [min.nə.buw] | ‘drink, AV, Realis’ |

For younger speakers, vowel elision is observed not only in the environment described in (2), but also in cases where *in* appears after a word-initial root consonant:

- (3)
- | | | | | |
|-------------------|----------------|----------------|--------------|--------------------|
| Younger speakers: | /in, biru, an/ | → /b<in>iruan/ | [bin.rwan] | ‘write, Realis/LV’ |
| Older speakers: | /in, biru, an/ | → /b<in>iruan/ | [bə.nə.rwan] | ‘write, Realis/LV’ |

The deletion of the vowel after the affix *in* is attributed to ranking Max-V below ANCHORING-R-*in*, which demands that the right edge of the affix *in* align with the right edge of a syllable in the output. The high ranking of the two ANCHORING-R constraints suggests that morphological information plays an active role in conditioning phonological processes in the language, leading to skewed distribution of C/V toward the right edges.