

Phonology-Morphology Interface in Malay

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The aim of this paper is to examine the interface between phonology and morphology in Malay prefixation and suffixation. It is apparent that the phonological behavior of prefixation in this language is quite distinct both in character and degree of generality from suffixation. Phonological rules that are visibly active at the stem-prefix juncture are not permissible at the stem-suffix juncture, and vice versa. For instance, regular rules such as nasal assimilation, nasal coalescence and glottal epenthesis that are applicable in the domain of prefixation are generally inapplicable in the domain of suffixation. On the contrary, gemination and glide formation rules that are active at the stem-suffix juncture are inactive at the stem-prefix juncture. In previous studies, the asymmetry was accounted for by rule applications that are conditioned by morpheme boundaries (Farid 1980), and by phonological representations that postulate distinct underlying representation of morphemes (Teoh 1994). The present study offers an account based on the theoretical framework of Lexical Phonology (Kiparsky 1982, Mohanan 1982). It is claimed that suffixation and prefixation operate at different levels or strata with the former precedes the latter. The rule of nasal assimilation, nasal coalescence and glottal epenthesis apply at the prefixation stratum, while the rules of gemination and glide formation apply at the suffixation stratum. The phonological rules apply accordingly because the relevant environments are available at that particular stratum.

References

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