Interactions between Prosody and Morphology in Squliq Atayal Syllabification

Hui-chuan J. Huang

National Tsing Hua University

Squliq Atayal is an endangered Austronesian language spoken in northern Taiwan. Although there have been a few studies on the phonology of the language (e.g. Egerod 1966, Yamada and Liao 1974, Li 1980, among others), most of the previous descriptions are concerned with its phonemics and segmental processes. The paper aims to examine the ways that prosody and morphology interact in Squliq syllabification based on first-hand data. It will be shown that while syllabic considerations force some VC (vowel-consonant) prefixes to become infixes, VC affixation sometimes leads to a medial closed syllable, which deviates from the canonical open syllable in Squliq.

The paper first of all argues that Squliq has two VC prefixes, *Vm*, an Agent-Voice (AV) marker, and the realis marker *Vn*. The two morphemes have traditionally been marked as *m* and *n* (or *in*) in the Squliq literature, due to the fact that pre-tonic weak vowels between consonants are omitted in broad transcriptions, such as *q-m-alup* [qəmalup] 'hunt, AV,' *h-m-utaw* [həmutaw] 'drop, AV,' *m-n-iru* [məniru] 'write, AV, Realis,' and *k-n-tan* [kənətan] 'see, Realis, Locative Voice (LV)'. In the present study, the schwa vowels preceding the *m* and *n* markers are treated as being part of the affixes rather than being inserted to avoid consonant clusters. This VC prefix assumption allows us to state the similarity between Squliq and other Atayal dialects in terms of the shape of the two affixes, such as Mayrinax *um* and *in* (L. Huang 2000). In addition, the VC assumption renders natural the infixing behavior of Squliq *Vm* and *Vn*, since in many Austronesian languages (e.g. Tagalog, Toba Batak), prefixes are known to become infixes in order to satisfy ONSET or NOCODA constraints (e.g. McCarthy and Prince 1993, Klein 2005). It is shown in the paper that affixation of *Vm* and *Vn* in Squliq is constrained by the prosodic consideration that syllables must have onset consonants.

While the infixing behavior of *Vm/Vn* in Squliq shows that prosody may condition the placement of affixes, *Vn*-affixed forms tend to create a

medial closed syllable, which is prosodically atypical in the language (e.g. [m**in**.ŋi.lis] /mV, Vn, ŋilis/ 'cry, AV, Realis' and [q**in**.ri.qan] /Vn, quriq, an/ 'steal, LV, Realis'). In fact, there are variations in whether *Vn*-affixed forms give rise to closed syllables, depending on the ages of the consultants and the morphological structure of the words. It is observed that younger speakers tend to allow closed syllables in *Vn* affixation, and that forms in which *Vn* does not infix into the roots are more likely to contain medial closed syllables than forms in which *Vn* follows root-initial consonants (e.g. [m**in**ŋilis] but [q**ən**əriqan] for a given speaker). The data show that prosodic and morphological constraints interact intricately in Squliq syllabification: prosody outweighs morphology as far as pre-nuclear phonology is concerned (i.e. the ONSET constraint) while morphology may interfere with prosody and give rise to non-final post-nuclear consonants that are not found anywhere else in the language.