Stress Uniformity in Albanian: Morphological Arguments for Cyclicality

In Albanian, uninflected words (e.g. nominative indefinite nouns) have final stress if the final syllable is closed (1a), or ends in a non-reduced non-mid vowel (1b,c), while stress falls on the penultimate syllable if the final syllable ends in a mid vowel (1d,e) (Bevington, 1974; Trommer, 2005). In forms with inflectional affixes (e.g. accusative definite nouns), stress is on the same syllable as in corresponding uninflected forms, even when the phonology would trigger a different stress position. Thus for *adetin*, we expect final stress, but stress is on the penultimate syllable:

1. | a. ‘habit’ | b. ‘cherry’ | c. ‘doom’ | d. ‘swing’ | e. ‘midwife’ |
   |---|---|---|---|---|
   Nom indef. | adét | qershí | hatá | hóle, | bábo |
   Acc def. | adét-in | qersh-in | hatá-n | hóle-n | bábo-n |

In this paper, I argue for a cyclic analysis (Kiparsky, 2000) of the Albanian data, where stress is assigned at the stem level and retained by input-output faithfulness at later levels, and show that morphological details are crucial for the evaluation of alternative analyses.

First, verbs seem to provide evidence for an output-output analysis since according to standard analyses of many verb classes (2a,b) there is no stem which would predict the correct stress position. E.g. interpreting *thelój* as the stem *thello* and the suffix -j, we expect incorrectly penultimate stress since *thello* ends in a mid vowel, while stress assignment based on the full form *thelój* generates correct final stress which can then be enforced by output-output (OO) constraints (Benua, 1997; McCarthy, 2005) on other forms such as *thellonj*.

2. | a. ‘deepen’ | b. ‘deepen’ | c. ‘drink’ | d. ‘open’ | e. ‘kill’ | f. ‘deepen’ |
   |---|---|---|---|---|---|
   1sg | theló-j | theló-j | pi-Ø | hap-Ø | vras-Ø | thelój-Ø |
   2sg/3sg | thello-n | theló-n | pi-Ø | hap-Ø | vret-Ø | thellon-Ø |
   1pl | theló-jm | thelój-m | pi-m | háp-im | vrás-im | thelój-m |
   2pl | theló-ni | theló-ni | pi-ni | háp-ni | vrít-ni | theló-ni |
   3pl | theló-jn | thelój-n | pi-n | háp-in | vrás-in | thelój-n |

However, there are morphological reasons for the alternative segmentation in (2f) where n and j are part of the stem. This allows to unify the analysis of plural markers in vowel-final stems, the status of j and the singular markers which are Ø in other vowel-final (2c) and all consonant-final stems (2d,e). Moreover, morphological stem change is a pervasive phenomenon in Albanian verbs (2e). Crucially, under (2f), stress assignment is fully compatible with a cyclic approach, since the stem ends in all cases in a closed syllable motivating stem-final stress. Secondly, I discuss deponent verbs (e.g. *pendó-hem*, ‘I regret’), where morphology doesn’t provide paradigm forms with active inflection motivating the observed stress position. I argue for a cyclic analysis based on deletion of stem-final j in the context of h (*pendoj-hem → pendo-hem*). The third data set crucial to the account of stress uniformity consists in a small set of irregular nouns which form the only exception to the statement that stress is immovable across paradigms:

3. | a. ‘man’ | b. ‘head’ | c. ‘snake’ | d. ‘sickle’ | e. ‘river’ |
   |---|---|---|---|---|
   sig | njeri | kalli | gjárpor | drápør | lim |
   plu | njërak | kálıza | gjarporínj | drapínj | luménj |

Under an OO-account, these data are simply exceptions. Under a cyclic approach they follow straightforwardly if we assume that they involve different singular and plural stems. Thus (3b) has the singular stem *kalli* and the plural stem *kálıza*, both receiving regular phonological stress (final schwa syllables are unstressed, cf. (3d)). -a is independently attested as a plural suffix (e.g. sig *shpi*, plu *shpí-a, ‘hous(es)’). The plural forms in (3c,d,e) involve stem extensions ending in n triggering final stress and the plural suffix j, also found without these extensions (e.g. sig *kalamá*, plu *kalamá-j, ‘child(ren)’).
References


