Opacity and Optionality in the Morphology-Syntax-Phonology Mapping: the Case of *ni*-insertion and *lla*-displacement in Quechua

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The suffix *-lla* appears in a number of Quechua dialects. One of its meanings is 'just, only', although it has a range of more subtle uses which are much harder to translate (Weber 1989:357). In some dialects, *-lla* simply attaches to the word it takes scope over, or to the last word of the phrase it takes scope over. This is the case in the Cajamarca variety:

(1) a. Qo-wa-y   ashl-ita-ta-lla
       give-1o-imp   bit-dim-Acc-just
       'Give me just a little bit'
        (Quesada 1976:147)

   b. Kay ishkay wasi-kuna-lla
      this two   house-plural-just
      'Just these two houses'

In other varieties, however, the position of *-lla* is more variable, as in Huallaga (Weber 1989) and Bolivian Quechua (Bills et al. 1969; Lastra 1968). The following examples from Huallaga show that *-lla* can appear outside of the possessive and plural suffixes or inside them. No semantic difference obtains:

(2) kiki-n-kuna-lla
    self-3-plural-just
    'only themselves'
    (Weber 1989:358, his 1491a)

(3) kiki-lla-yki-kuna   ka-ku-pti-ki-qa
    self-just-2-plural   be-refl-sub-2-TOP
    'If you are just yourselves...'
     (Weber 1989:362, his 1505)

This meaningless morphotactic optionality interacts in a striking way with the phonological process of *ni*-insertion. This process applies to break up super-heavy syllables which arise when a suffix which begins with a consonant cluster or consists solely of a single consonant or glide is added onto a stem which ends in a consonant, glide or long vowel. Where *-lla* is displaced such that it breaks up an environment for *ni*-insertion, *ni*-insertion nonetheless applies (obligatorily in Bolivian Quechua, optionally in Huallaga). This constitutes an instance of overapplication opacity of the sort usually accounted for by a counterbleeding rule-ordering in derivational frameworks. Many LFG-based approaches to morphophonology assume a two-level model (Ofluzer 1995; Nelson 2004) which will have difficulty modelling opaque interactions. The only other discussion of the interface of phonology with other parts of the grammar that I have been able to find in the LFG literature concerns prosody (Butt and Holloway King 1998), and it appears that much work in LFG has assumed that phonology proper is separate from the other structural representations assumed in the theory. The phenomena described here show non-trivial interactions between morphotactics and phonological rules, indicating that the role of phonology in the LFG architecture must be rethought.