

Lexical Conservatism as a window into the grammar and lexicon

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Lexical Conservatism (Steriade 1997) is a phenomenon whereby the distribution of stem allomorphs in a paradigm influence how that paradigm accommodates new members. An example comes from the differing behavior of *cómpensate* and *inundate* under affixation with *-able*: *cómpensate* yields stress-shifted *compénsable*, repairing the lapse created by affixation, while *inundable* remains faithful to the input. Lexical Conservatism holds that this difference comes not from the forms *inundate* and *compensate* themselves, but rather from the fact that *compensate* has a morphologically-related form *compénsable* which has stress on the final syllable of the stem, while no such related form exists for *inundate* (**inúnd-*). In other words, the presence of a phonologically-optimizing stem allomorph elsewhere in the paradigm licenses phonological repair in the newly-affixed form.

Although traditionally discussed as a correlation between existing lexical items, recent research has shown that the dependency is represented in the synchronic grammar. I will present experimental evidence from American English and Mexican Spanish about the scope and strength of the influence of phonological characteristics of the non-local paradigm member (i.e. *compénsable*, in the example above), and demonstrate that we can use variation in the influence of this form as a window into relationship between the grammar and lexicon. This empirical discussion will motivate a model of the phonological grammar which is inherently probabilistic, and which is underpinned and influenced by a dynamic, psycholinguistically-detailed lexicon.