

Bartos Huba (NYTK)

### On the differential behavior of postnuclear glides under *er*-suffixation in Mandarin Chinese

The phenomenon of *-er* suffixation (儿化, *erhua*) widespread in Beijing (and surrounding area) speech, but also present in many Chinese dialects, as well as in Mandarin Chinese, has received much attention and numerous analyses already. However, there is still a recalcitrant problem point: the **differential behavior of postnuclear glides (*j* vs. *w*) under *erhua***. (1) below summarizes the chief cases of phonological change induced by *erhua* (*V* is any main vowel, *r* represents the rhotic item that realizes the *er*-suffix – phonetic adjustment details are ignored here):

- (1)    a.  $V \rightarrow Vr$  *except*:  $V[\text{high, front}] \rightarrow \text{ər}$     e.g.: 湖 hu  $\rightarrow$  hur, 把 ba  $\rightarrow$  bar, BUT 鸡 ji  $\rightarrow$  j[ə]r  
      b.  $Vj \rightarrow Vr$ ,  $Vn \rightarrow Vr$ ,  $Vng \rightarrow V^{[\text{nas}]}r$     e.g.: 牌 pai  $\rightarrow$  par, 根 gen  $\rightarrow$  ger, 空 kong  $\rightarrow$  k[ǒ]r  
      c.  $Vw \rightarrow Vwr$     e.g.: 好 ha[w]  $\rightarrow$  ha[w]r, 勾 go[w]  $\rightarrow$  go[w]r

Thus, crucially, postnuclear *w* is retained, while *j* is deleted. In this talk I'll focus on precisely this issue, showing that 'standard' accounts of *er*-suffixation fail to properly capture this dual pattern, and proposing that what lies at the heart of the matter is the difference in consonantality/vocality between postnuclear *j* and *w* in Mandarin (and maybe also in the other varieties of Chinese displaying *erhua*).