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Repartitioning the skeleton: VC phonology

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(1) Lowenstamm 1996: CV phonology

- i. claim: the phonological skeleton is made up of strictly alternating C and V slots; apparently adjacent CC and VV is always separated by an empty V or C slot, respectively: no branching constituents

ii. selected arguments

a. compensatory lengthening—without violation of the Projection Principle:

Proto-Greek *[esmi] 'I am' > Attic [esmi], > Aeolic [em:i]

C	V	C	V	C	V	C	V	C	V	C	V	C	V
e	s	m	i	e	m	i	e	m	i	e	m	i	e

b. stress assignment—without reference to heavy vs. light syllables:

phenómēna, aréna, agéndá

C	V	C	V	C	V	C	V	C	V	C	V	
f	ə	n	ɒ	m	ə	n	ə	ə	r	i	n	ə

C	V	C	V	C	V
ə	ʔ	e	n	d	ə

- c. C₁C₂ & C₂C₁: The simultaneous existence of a given C cluster and its mirror image is symptomatic of an empty V between the members of (at least) one of the two clusters.

(2) Scheer & Ségéral 1998: Coda mirror

- i. aim: to explain the location of lenition sites

ii. definitions

- a. LICENSING backs up segmental expression
 b. GOVERNMENT inhibits segmental expression
 c. a non-empty V licenses the immediately preceding C
 d. a non-empty V governs the preceding V if it is empty or the immediately preceding C if the preceding V is non-empty

iii. hypothesis: words begin with an empty CV pair (Lowenstamm 1997)

iv. consequences

a. strong position—no lenition: licensed and ungoverned C

α. #CV, licensed by V, ungoverned because government is absorbed by the word-initial empty V

β. C.CV, licensed by V, ungoverned because government is absorbed by the internal consonantal empty V

b. weak position 1—lenition: licensed and governed C

VCV, licensed by second V, governed by second V because government is not absorbed by non-empty first V

c. weak position 2—lenition: unlicensed and ungoverned C

α. C.C, following empty V neither licenses nor governs

β. C#, idem

v. problems

a. The word-final empty V is functionless: it neither licenses, nor governs. Its origin function (Kaye 1990), to distinguish word-final consonants from word-internal codas becomes void with a CV skeleton. (Cf. also Polgárdi's (1998) uneasiness with this position.)

b. The word-final empty V is different from the word-medial empty V: *or@ta-orr@at@ka-*at@k@, an@ta-an@t@.

c. The word-initial empty CV pair is rather stipulative (pace Lowenstamm's (1999) proposals for its use). Its C part is functionless in any case. In fact, one would why it does not cause the gemination of any word initial consonant.

d. There is no restriction to the proliferation of empty CV positions in the skeleton.
 e. There is only a formal difference between the two types of lenition, nothing is predicted about their outcome.

(3) VC phonology, preliminaries

i. restriction: branching onsets are (temporarily?) excluded

ii. conventions

a. C: non-empty C position

b. c: empty C position

c. V: non-empty V position

d. v: empty V position

iii. axioms

a. C hosts consonantal segments

b. V hosts vocalic segments

c. consonantalness is mute, Cs aim at remaining silent

note: the prototypical C is a stop, a brief period of silence, also cf. Dependence Phonology

d. vocalicness is loud, Vs aim at being pronounced

iv. definitions

- a. LICENSING enhances the nature of the target
 - b. GOVERNMENT destroys the nature of the target
 - c. a CORE UNIT is VC or non-marginal
 - d. a PERIPHERAL UNIT is VC (word-initially) or Vc (word-finally)
- v. constraints (language specific?)
- a. V and v are licensed
 - b. government and licensing is uniformly right-to-left (but branching onsets!)
 - α. licensed V or v governs the preceding v, C or c
 - β. licensed V or v licenses the preceding C or c
 - γ. C may govern the preceding C across a v, which in this case is “buried” — coda cluster (absence of C government —bogus cluster)
 - c. governed position must be licensed in order to govern or license (cf. Charette 1990)
 - d. governed or buried v loses its inherent license

vi. The Empty Category Principle

An empty category loses its inherent properties iff governed or buried.

- a. v remains silent (losing its inherent loudness) iff governed or buried
- b. c is pronounced (losing its inherent muteness) iff governed or buried

vii. further conventions

- a. licensing: licensee ←- licensor
- b. government: $\overset{f}{\leftarrow} V$
- c. buried v: $f \leftarrow v$
- d. bogus cluster: no relation between the parties (*tn*), C v C
- e. coda cluster: right-headed relation between the parties (coda-onset, *rt*), $C^f \leftarrow v \leftarrow C$
- f. onset cluster: left-headed relation between the parties (branching onset, *tr*), *tr*??

(4) VC phonology, the theory

i. The skeleton is made up of VC units.

- a. no word-initial empty CV, no word-final empty V
- b. more constrained skeleton: *vc, q.v. below

ii. visceral aversions

- a. What about unmarked syllable structure/language types?
 - α. #C ≫ #V: V or v prefers to dispose of its licensing/governing power, it can only do so if there is a preceding C or c (cf. OT's ONSET constraint)
 - β. V# ≫ C#: *unlicensed & ungoverned C
 - note: we predict that *C# languages lack bogus clusters
 - γ. unmarked skeleton: vC-[VC]⁺-Vc (also cf. the minimal word, q.v. below)
- b. What about onset maximization?
 - This makes little sense once we do not have syllables and all C positions are “onsets.”

iii. types of C

- a. ungoverned & licensed: word-initial & second in bogus cluster
- b. ungoverned & unlicensed: word-final & first in bogus cluster
- c. governed & licensed: intervocalic & second in coda cluster
- d. governed & unlicensed: first in coda cluster

iv. goodies

- a. government and licensing power is not a function of melodic content, it only depends on skeletal relations
- b. the stop paradox resolved: consonantal properties (noncontinuity, nonsonorance GP's \mathcal{P}) are dispensed with; it is by virtue of being linked to a C position that segments are stops/obstruents (cf. Rennison 1996)
- c. two types of lenition (Scheer & Ségéral's (1998) type 1 and 2), can now be distinguished as regards their outcome
 - α. unlicensed, ungoverned C loses melody but remains consonantal: word-finally at in bogus clusters we find debuccalization ([? h]); call this consonantal lenition
 - β. governed C loses its consonantalness: intervocalically we get sonorization/vocalization; call this vocalic lenition

v. coda clusters vs. bogus clusters (in Hungarian)

- a. *#rt, *#tn: word-initial v ungoverned, hence should be pronounced

*v C^f ← v ← C *v C v C
 | | | |
 r r t n

- b. rt# vs. *tn#: coda cluster's buried v is fine, bogus cluster's v needs government

V C^f ← v ← C V C *v C
 | | | |
 a r t a t n

- c. arta, atna: coda cluster has buried v, bogus cluster has governed v; coda cluster's first C is governed and licensed, it lenites vocally (like if intervocalic), bogus cluster's first C is ungoverned and unlicensed, it lenites consonantly (like if word-final)

V C^f ← v ← $\overset{f}{\leftarrow} C \leftarrow V$ V C v $\overset{f}{\leftarrow} C \leftarrow V$
 | | | | |
 a r t a t n a

- d. artna, *atnta: v cannot govern v

V C^f ← v ← C $\overset{f}{\leftarrow} C \leftarrow V$ V C *v C $\overset{f}{\leftarrow} C \leftarrow V$
 | | | | | |
 a r t t n a a t n t a

