Repertioning the skeleton: VC phonology
Péter Dienes DIENES@NYTUD.HU and Péter Szigetvári SIGETVA@NYTUD.HU
http://buding.nytud.hu/~szigetva/papers/vc_buphoc.ps

(1) Lowenstamm 1996: CV phonology

i. claim: the phonological skeleton is made up of strictly alternating C and V slots; apparently adjacent CC andVV 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 *[emil] ‘I am’ > Attic [emil], > Aeolic [emil]

b. stress assignment—without reference to heavy vs. light syllables: phonêmena, arêna, agênda

(2) Schober & 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

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

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

d. 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

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

c. 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 original function (Kaye 1990), to distinguish word-final consonants from word-internal code, becomes void with a CV skeleton. (cf. also Polgárdi’s (1998) unassessedness with this position.)

b. The word-final empty V is different from the word-medial empty V: *arêna-atëkkatëk

The claim that WFEVs have the licensing/governing properties of a full V is falsified by atëkkatëk, anêttatëk.

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

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 V (word-initially) or V (word-finally)
v. constraints (language specific?)
a. V and v are licensed
b. government and licensing is uniformly right-to-left (but branching onsets!)
   a. licensed V or v governs the preceding, C or c
   b. licensed V or v licenses the preceding C or c
   c. C may govern the preceding C across a v, which in this case is “buried”—coda
      cluster (absence of C governed—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: x \rightarrow \neg

c. buried v: \neg

d. bogus cluster: no relation between the parties (\{\}, C v C

e. coda cluster: right-headed relation between the parties (coda-onset, rt), C\rightarrow C
f. onset cluster: left-headed relation between the parties (branching onset, 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?
   a. \#C \gg \#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)
   b. V# \gg C#: *unlicensed & ungoverned C
      note: we predict that *C# languages lack bogus clusters
   c. unmarked skeleton: V C [VC]*V c (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. unlicensed & licensed: word-initial & second in bogus cluster
b. unlicensed & unlicensed: word-final & first in bogus cluster
c. licensed & 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 ? 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 (Secker & Séghély’s (1998) type 1 and 2), now be distin-
   guished as regards their outcome
   a. unlicensed, unlicensed C loses melody but remains consonantal: word-finally an
      in bogus clusters we find debuccalization (? h): call this consonantal lenition
   b. governed C loses its consonantalness: intervocically we get sonorization/voca-
      lization: call this vocalic lenition

v. coda clusters vs. bogus clusters (in Hungarian)
a. *#'rt, *#m: word-initial v ungoverned, hence should be pronounced

b. rt# vs. *#m#: coda cluster’s buried v is fine, bogus cluster’s v needs government

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
ccluster’s first C is unlicensed, it lenites sonorantly (like if word
final)

d. arta, *atna: v cannot govern v

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vi. closed syllable shortening
*Vtnt$, *Vttn, Vttn: we seem to need ungoverned C...

\[
\begin{align*}
V & \rightarrow V - C - V \\
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V & \rightarrow V - C - V
\end{align*}
\]

vii. stress assignment

Word-final consonants are extrametrical. The CV theory cannot really account for this fact. If the word-final consonant belongs to the last VC unit, this is explained: cf. consider, develop.

\[
\begin{align*}
v & \rightarrow V - C - V \\
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\]

viii. compensatory lengthening

We predict the absence of compensatory lengthening triggered by the loss of a word-final consonant.

ix. the minimal word

The minimal word contains at least a core unit.

a. A CV word is subminimal; it does not contain a core unit: vC-Vc.

b. A VC word is ok: VC.

c. A CVV word is ok: vC-Vc-Vc.

(5) The *vc constraint

i. rationale: empty skeletal units are banned (or at least strongly dispreferred), VC, vC, Vc are ok, *vc is not. This constrains the set of possible skeletons, e.g. minimal word could otherwise be vC-vc-Vc (i.e. CV). Also cf. Gusm毫mann & Kaye’s (1993) Reduction.

ii. consequences

a. headlessness:

long vowels are left-headed, long consonants (geminates) are right-headed

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(6) Summary

i. We claim that if we are to accept a skeleton made up of strictly alternating C and V clusters and that these form units (i.e., if the string begins with one, it must end with the other), then it must be made up of VC and not CV units.

ii. We elaborate on the definition of government and licensing proposed by Scherer & Segal (1998).

iii. We define what consonantalness and vocalicness means.

iv. We propose a universal version of the ECP, which accounts not only for the pronunciation of empty Vs but also for the pronunciation of empty Cs.

v. We account for the different behaviour of coda clusters and bung clusters in an explicit way.

REFERENCES


