Colloque inaugural du GDR 1954 Phonologie :
« La position forte » (Nice, 24–25 juin 1999)

Consonantal lenition types in VC skeletons

Péter Dienes and Péter Szigetvári
Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest
handout and paper downloadable from `http://budling.nytud.hu/~szigetva/papers.html`
in this work Szigetvári was supported by the Research Support Scheme, CEU, grant no. 1687/320/1998

(1) The starting block: issues unanswered by Ségéral & Scheer (1998)

a. why do we usually have different types of lenition in different positions?
b. why do skeletal strings begin with an empty C (if they have empty CV at the beginning)?
c. why do they end with an empty V?
d. how are coda–onset clusters distinguished from bogus clusters?
e. how are long vowels/diphthongs distinguished from hiatus?
f. why is there no lenition before a stressed vowel?

(2) Lenition types

a. consonantal: debuccalization, devoicing... ([t] → [ʔ]; [s] → [h]; [d] → [t])
b. vocalic: vocalization/sonorization ([p] → [b]; [b] → [β]; [t] → [ɾ])

(3) Conventions

$\mathcal{V}$:	any vowel position	$\mathcal{C}$:	any consonant position
V:	vowel position associated with melody	C:	consonant position associated with melody
v:	melodically empty vowel position	c:	melodically empty consonant position

(4) Primitives

a. vocalicness is inherently *loud*: $\mathcal{V}$s aim at being pronounced
b. consonantalness is inherently *mute*: $\mathcal{C}$s aim at remaining silent
note: the prototypical $\mathcal{C}$ is a *stop*, a brief period of *silence*, also cf. Dependency Phonology
c. supports the expression of the melodic elements of the target (cf. Goldsmith, 1990; Harris, 1994; Ségéral & Scheer, 1998, 1999)
d. destroys the inherent nature of the target (i.e. a $\mathcal{C}$ becomes louder if governed, a $\mathcal{V}$ loses its loudness if governed)

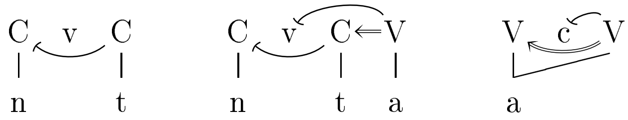
(5) Relations

a. The direction of GOVERNMENT and LICENSING is uniformly and universally right-to-left
b. LICENSING
i. $\mathcal{V}$s are inherently licensed
ii. a live $\mathcal{V}$ licenses the preceding $\mathcal{C}$ or may licence the preceding V (through c)
c. GOVERNMENT
i. a live $\mathcal{V}$
α. does not govern into a completed foot, else
β. it governs the preceding v if available, else
γ. it governs the preceding $\mathcal{C}$

ii. a C may govern the preceding C (through v)
iii. a governed v loses its inherent properties, i.e. its loudness as well as its inherent license: it becomes silent and it cannot license or govern—it is
iv. a governed $\mathcal{C}$ loses its inherent property, i.e. its muteness: it becomes louder, more sonorous—it undergoes vocalic lenition

d. : coda cluster (coda–onset), long vowel

i. a C can govern the preceding C through a v, which thus captured is and it remains silent, i.e. it is (just like a governed v)
ii. a V can license the preceding V through a c, which thus captured is buried
iii. burial is lexically determined
iv. a buried vowel may be governed under the usual conditions
v. coda clusters, long vowel



e. The Empty Category Principle (ECP)
An empty category loses its inherent properties iff governed and/or buried, i.e.,

i. v loses its inherent loudness, governing and licensing power iff governed and/or buried;
ii. c loses its inherent muteness iff governed and/or buried

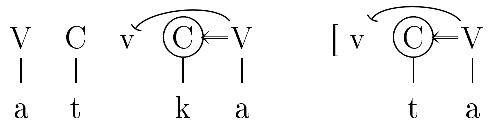
(6) Types of $\mathcal{C}$—types of lenition

LICENSED	GOVERNED	LENITION TYPE
yes	no	none
no	no	consonantal
yes	yes	vocalic
no	yes	vocalic and/or consonantal

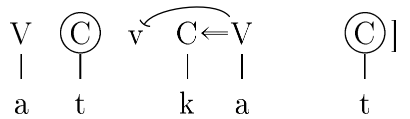
a. Generalizations

i. $\mathcal{C}$ undergoes vocalic lenition
ii. $\mathcal{C}$ undergoes consonantal lenition

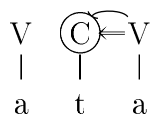
b. and $\mathcal{C}$:
second in a bogus cluster or
intervocalic coda cluster,
word-initial



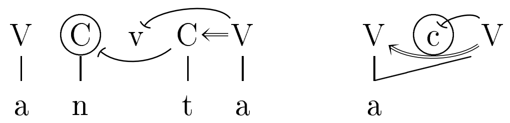
c. and $\mathcal{C}$:
first in a bogus cluster,
word-final



d. and $\mathcal{C}$:
intervocalic



e. and $\mathcal{C}$:
first in a coda-cluster,
within long vowel



(7) Claim: **The phonological skeleton is made up of $\mathcal{VC}$ units.**

a. At word edges

i. Ségéral & Scheer's word-final vs are totally inert: they neither license nor govern
ii. the situation that word-final v is licensed to remain silent by the word-boundary is strange and lacks satisfactory explanation
iii. alleged word-final vs are different from word-medial vs: e.g., they have to be treated differently for Charette (1992)'s license to govern
iv. the cs in Lowenstamm (to appear)'s word-initial empty cvs are functionless, only word-initial vs are needed
v. allowing empty cv units in a CV-theory raises the problem of the proliferation of such units (also cf. below)

b. Within the word

i. Licensing is the glue that cements the skeleton: Vs license $\mathcal{C}$s at unit boundaries, Cs do not license Vs because this is unnecessary, they are in the same skeletal unit
ii. Closed syllable shortening: a skeletal unit cannot simultaneously belong to two burial domains (the two burial domains are okay the other way around; units are linked)

V—c—V—C—v—C   v—C—v—C⇐V—c—V—c
a   n   t   n   t   a

iii. Comes handy in explaining nonlenition foot-initially (q.v. below)

c. CV...CV as the unmarked skeleton
Languages prefer to mark the word boundary by a , i.e., by a vC unit on left and by a Vc on the right. Word-initial v is governed (therefore silent), word-final c is ungoverned (therefore not forced not to be silent).

(8) The minimal word

a. CV formulation: Any content word contains at least three CV units (with the word-initial empty one).

b. VC formulation: Any content word contains a nonperipheral unit.

i. a V or C word is subminimal: only a peripheral unit, Vc or vC
ii. a CV word is subminimal: only two peripheral units, vC-Vc
iii. a VC word is ok: $\underline{\text{VC}}$
iv. a CVV word is ok: vC-$\underline{\text{Vc}}$-Vc
v. a VV word is ok: $\underline{\text{Vc}}$-Vc
vi. a CVC word is ok: vC-$\underline{\text{VC}}$

(9) Phonotactics: coda clusters and bogus clusters are different

a. *#rt, *#tn: word initially none of them is allowed
b. rt# vs. *tn#: word finally coda clusters are okay, bogus clusters are not
c. *$\bar{\text{V}}$rt, $\bar{\text{V}}$tn: closed syllable shortening only before coda clusters
d. *arnta: no adjacent coda clusters (one skeletal unit cannot belong to two burial domains)
e. *atkna: no adjacent bogus clusters (governed v cannot govern)
f. *atnta: no bugus cluster followed by coda cluster (buried v cannot govern)
g. artna: coda cluster+bogus cluster is the only possible type of CCC cluster

(10) Empty skeletal positions

- *a.* An empty position is one that is not lexically linked to any melodic material, i.e., the second position in a long vowel, the first in a geminate consonant are *not* empty.
- *b.* Empty skeletal units are not allowed: *vc (cf. Gussmann & Kaye (1993)'s Reduction; but for them it is arbitrary).
- *c.* Adjacent empty c and v are possible but not readily detectable.

(11) The absence of intervocalic lenition

- *a.* Proposal: it is not possible to govern into a completed foot
  - i. an instantiation of the Strict Cyclicity Condition
  - ii. works only if the skeleton has VC units
  - iii. foot-initial nonlenition is in fact foot-*final*
- *b.* Predictions
  - i. no syncope before stressed V: cf. *sépa̸răte* vs. **sépa̸rāte*
  - ii. no bogus cluster before stressed V: very few counterexamples (e.g., *athlétic, pragmátic*)
  - iii. unfilled hiatus is more preferable before a stressed than before an unstressed V (is this so? or is hiatus filling not phonology's business?)

(12) Summary

- *a.* We define what vocalicness and consonantalness mean.
- *b.* We elaborate on the meaning of government and licensing.
- *c.* We account for different lenition types at different sites.
- *d.* We claim that the skeleton is made up of $\mathcal{VC}$ units, not CVs.
- *e.* We explain the different behaviour of coda clusters and bogus clusters.
- *f.* We distinguish long vowels/diphthongs and hiatus.
- *g.* We explain closed syllable shortening.
- *h.* We propose a solution to the problem of foot-initial nonlenition.

References

Charette, Monik (1992). Mongolian and Polish meet Government Licensing. *SOAS Working Papers in Linguistics and Phonetics*, **2**: 275–292.

Goldsmith, John A. (1990). *Autosegmental and metrical phonology.* Oxford: Blackwell.

Gussmann, Edmund & Kaye, Jonathan (1993). Polish notes from a Dubrovnik Cafe: I. The yers. *SOAS Working Papers in Linguistics and Phonetics*, **3**: 427–462.

Harris, John (1994). *English Sound Structure.* Oxford: Blackwell.

Lowenstamm, Jean (to appear). The beginning of the word. In John Rennison & Klaus Kühnhammer (eds.), *Phonologica 1996. Syllables!?*, The Hague: Holland Academic Graphics.

Ségéral, Philippe & Scheer, Tobias (1998). The identity of #.__ and C.__. Paper presented at the 31st Poznań Linguistic Meeting, Poznań, 1–3 May, 1998.

Ségéral, Philippe & Scheer, Tobias (1999). The Coda Mirror. Ms. Université de Nice and Université Paris 7.