

Liaison consonants are word-final

A reply to Marie-Hélène Côté

Marc van Oostendorp

For Glyne Piggott

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Arguments against W1: vocalic and on syllable structure

- ▶ It is the vocalic processes (laxing, diphthongisation, ε opening) that argue against affiliating the liaison consonant to the first word.
- ▶ All these processes are triggered by syllable structure: the liaison consonant does not close the preceding syllable.
 - ▶ *vite* 'quick' [vit], *maudit amie* 'damn-FEM friend' [modzit ami], *maudit ami* 'damn-MASC friend' [modzit ami]
 - ▶ *était* 'was' [etæ], *parfait imbécile* 'perfect-MASC idiot' [parfætēbesil] (variable), *parfaite imbécile* 'perfect-FEM insult' [parfætēsylt]

Arguments against W2: consonantal and on linear string

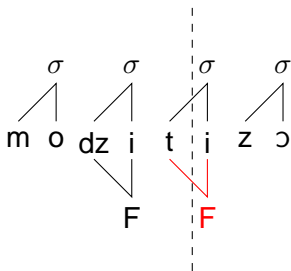
- ▶ It is the consonantal processes (aspiration, affrication) that argue against affiliating the liaison consonant to the first word.
- ▶ All these processes seem defined by the linear string rather than by syllable structure.
 - ▶ *trente isoaloirs* 'thirty polling booths'
[trãtsizɔlwar]/[trãtizɔlwar], *grand isoaloir* 'big polling booth'
[grãtsizɔlwar]/[grãtizɔlwar], *grand tisonnier* 'big poker'
[grãtsizɔnje], *[grãtizɔnje]

Topic of this talk

- ▶ Saying that liaison consonants are 'in the middle' between W1 and W2, for instance in a construction, sheds no light on the remarkable split between vocalic and consonantal tests.
- ▶ I propose a solution based on more conservative principles: the liaison is a floating segment belonging to W1.
- ▶ The solution is representational, but has some similarities to derivationalism based on the PIC.

The basic paradox

- ▶ We will take *maudit isoloir* [modzitizɔlwar] as our basic example.
- ▶ A paradox arises: the [t] is integrated into the syllable structure of W2, whereas at the same time affrication (which I assume is spreading of a feature from the vowel to the consonant) can be blocked (more on optionality later)



Mirroring

- ▶ There is a long tradition in phonology assuming that (hierarchical) structure in phonology serves to mirror morphosyntactic structure.
- ▶ Van Oostendorp (2002) proposed a theory of morphological domains for the way in which (i) syllable structure and morphological structure are mapped onto each other
- ▶ This theory will be extended here for (i') segmental structure and (ii') syntactic structure

A prefix-suffix asymmetry in Dutch (and German)

1.
 - ▶ *ode* ‘ode’ [o.də]
 - ▶ *er+en* ‘to honour+INF’ [e.rən]
 - ▶ *ont+eer* ‘dis+honour’ [ɔnt.er]

2.
 - ▶ *elite* *elite+air*
 [e.li.tə] [e.li.tɛr] / *[e.li.tə.ɛr]
 ‘elite’ ‘snobbish’
 - ▶ *adem* *be+adem*
 [a.dəm] [bə.a.dəm] / *[ba.dəm]
 ‘breathe’ ‘breathe upon’

Unsatisfactory solutions

- ▶ *Suffixes are morphologically attached before prefixes are.* The problem with this solution is that it is arbitrary; furthermore in a case like *ont+eer+en* (dis+honour+INFL), the suffix is inflectional and the prefix is derivational, which makes it somewhat harder to adopt this solution.
- ▶ *Dutch adopts a ranking ALIGN-L* \gg *ALIGN-R.* This solution is also arbitrary; does not take into account the fact that this ranking is universal, or otherwise it merely postulates this universality. Furthermore: do morphemes really have left and right edges?
- ▶ *“Processing pays special attention to the left edge.”* Even this solution is arbitrary, since it does not explain why this influences grammar; processing also pays attention to the right edge.

Alignment should be symmetric

- ▶ $PR \approx LX$: Morpheme boundaries should coincide with the boundaries of prosodic constituents (i.e. a phonological word).

Morphological domains

- ▶ $[_V[_V \text{ɔnt} [_N \text{er}]_N]_V \text{ən}]_N$
- ▶ The *morphological domain of a segment S* is the smallest morphological word in which S occurs.
- ▶ The *morphological domain of a syllable T* is the morphological domain of the segment heading T.

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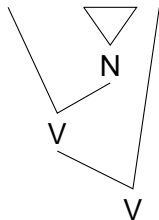
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Integrity

- ▶ Morphological syllable integrity (INTEGRITY):
All segments in a syllable should be in the same domain as that syllable.
 \forall segment S: \forall syllable T dominating S: the morphological domain of S \subseteq the morphological domain of T.

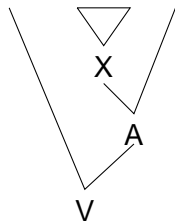
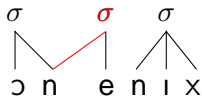
Dishonour

dis+honour+INF



Disputing

un+one+ish 'disputing'



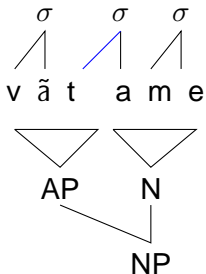
Asymmetries in liaison

- ▶ We find similar left/right asymmetries in the phonology-syntax interface
- ▶ E.g. in liaison (or enchaînement), one typical context are prenominal adjectives; but postnominal adjectives are never a context.
- ▶ An (admittedly rather artificial) classical example is:
 - ▶ *savant anglais* “learned Englishman” (liaison)
 - ▶ *savant anglais* “English scholar” (no liaison)

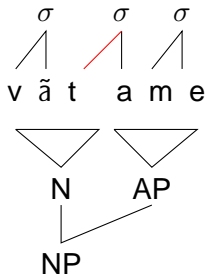
Integrity

- ▶ Syntactic syllable integrity (INTEGRITY):
All segments in a syllable should be in the same phrase as that syllable.
 \forall segment S: \forall syllable T dominating S: the syntactic domain of S \subseteq the syntactic domain of T.

Learned Englishman



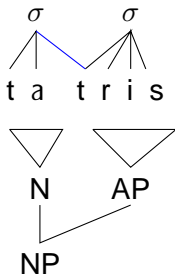
English scholar



Asymmetries in Raddoppiamento

- ▶ Another asymmetry can be seen in the comparison to Italian Raddoppiamento
- ▶ One difference between the two languages is that postnominal adjectives do not undergo liaison, but they do undergo liaison, but the undergo RS
- ▶ Why? Liaison is about a syllable looking for an onset on its left, RS is about a syllable looking for a consonant to fill the mora on its right.
- ▶ In other words, the asymmetry is in the phonology proper, not in the interface.

Cittá t(ɪ)riste



Extension to features

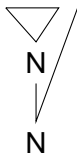
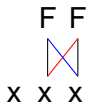
- ▶ The examples so far involve syllables as constituents of segments.
- ▶ We can extend this to segments as constituents of features as well.
- ▶ This can account for stem control phenomena in harmony

Feature Integrity

- ▶ Morphological segment integrity (INTEGRITY):
All features in a segment should be in the same domain as that segment.
 \forall feature F: \forall segment S dominating F: the morphological domain of F \subseteq the morphological domain of S.

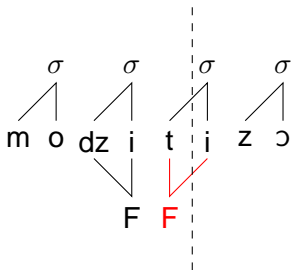
Stem controlled vowel harmony

- ▶ In stem controlled vowel harmony, features spread outward, but not inward.



Back to liaison

- ▶ We are now well equipped to understand the ‘dual’ status of liaison consonants.
- ▶ Consider again our original representation; the word on the right (isoloir) is a N and the head of the construction, whereas the word on the left is an AP
- ▶ The head of the syllable is the segment in the noun, the head of the segment for spreading is in the AP



Variability

- ▶ What about variability?
- ▶ Affrication if variable, but this is also true if the consonant is unquestionably word-final
- ▶ This merely indicates that adherence to segment integrity itself is variable
- ▶ As a matter of fact, a ‘construction’ analysis cannot account for the fact that the variability is similar to that of real word-final consonants

Conclusions

- ▶ The data on Laurentian French in Côté (2011) show that the behaviour of liaison consonants is subtle.
- ▶ However, they can be analysed in a rather conservative way, viz. as final consonants, provided we have a sophisticated analysis of the phonology-morphology interface.
- ▶ The analysis given here is put in representational terms; a derivational counterpart would capitalize on the fact the phonological head looking for something to dominate is always in the head of the morphosyntactic structure.
- ▶ We leave this as an exercise for those who believe in a derivational interface.