

Combinative Markedness in Three-consonant Clusters

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1. Introduction

Introduction

- **Moenat Ladin** - a minority Romance language
- Phonotactics of prevocalic clusters show asymmetrical patterns:

Well attested:

- sibilant + plosive (SC-), e.g. ***sparpagna***
- plosive + rhotic liquid (Cr-), e.g. ***pra***
- sibilant + plosive + rhotic liquid (SCr-), e.g. ***sprigolar***

Less common

- plosive + lateral liquid (Cl-), e.g. ***plota***

Exceedingly rare

- sibilant + plosive + lateral liquid (SCI-)

What grammatical mechanism gives rise to these asymmetrical patterns?

Introduction

- Last phonetic/phonological investigation focused on Moenat Ladin of which we are aware is by Heilmann (1955).
- We investigated the phoneme system (Yang et al. in prep) and phonotactics via interviews and acoustic recordings.

While our findings were similar to those of Heilmann in broad strokes; we seek here particularly to

1. contribute an enriched and updated characterization of prevocalic cluster phonotactics, and
2. examine theoretical implications for cumulative markedness effects in three-consonant clusters, evidenced by acoustic data.

2. Ladin Phonotactics

2.1 The Ladin Language

Ladin (aka Rhaeto-Romance) is a minority Romance language spoken in northeastern Italy.

31,000 speakers (2013); threatened status (*Ethnologue*, Simons & Fennig 2018).

Data reported here is based on recent fieldwork in the Fassa (Faschia) Valley in Trentino; 8,100 speakers in this region (2011 census; Moroder 2016).



2.1 The Ladin Language

Ladin is spoken in 5 valleys in the Dolomites; a different variety is spoken in each valley, and valleys have subvarieties.

Moenat is the Fascian subvariety associated with Moena.



2.1 The Ladin Language

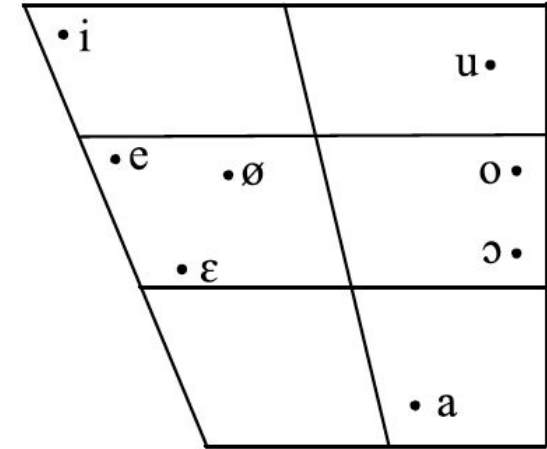
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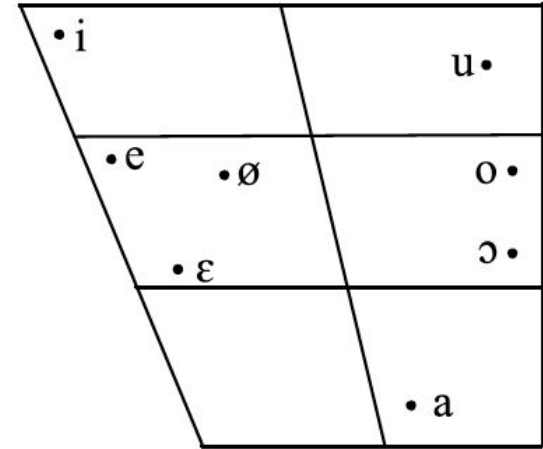
2.3 Moenat Ladin Phoneme Inventory

	Bilabial	Labio-dental	Dental/ Alveolar	Retroflex	Palatal	Velar
Plosive	p b		t d			k g
Affricate				tʂ dʒ		
Nasal	m		n		ɲ	
Trill			r			
Fricative		f v	s z	ʂ ʐ		
Lateral Appr.			l			



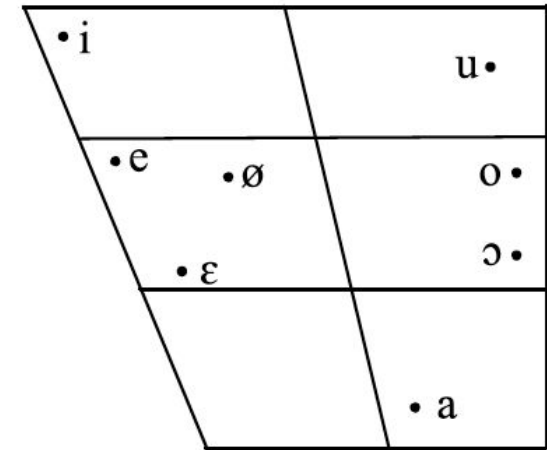
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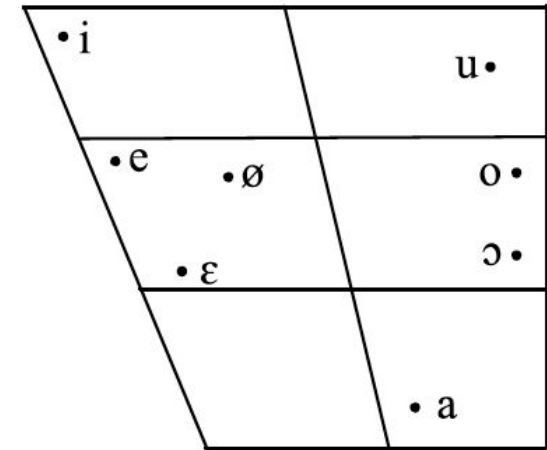
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Lateral Appr.			l			



2.4 Moenat Ladin Onset Phonotactics - Obstruent + Liquid

C onset

Any singleton consonant can form an onset.

Cr onset (C = plosive)

Any plosive plus [r] can form an onset.

Fr onset (F = labiodental fricative)

[fr] can form an onset, but [vr] is unattested.

[pr]	[pra]	‘meadow’	<i>pra</i>
[br]	[bratʂ]	‘arm’	<i>brac</i>
[tr]	[tro 'ar]	‘to find’	<i>troar</i>
[dr]	[drak]	‘dragon’	<i>drach</i>
[kr]	['kreda]	‘clay’	<i>creda</i>
[gr]	[grɔs]	‘big’	<i>gros</i>
[fr]	[freit]	‘cold’	<i>freit</i>
[vr]			

2.2 Moenat Ladin Onset Phonotactics - Obstruent + Liquid

Cl onset (C = plosive)

Any plosive plus [l] can form an onset, except for [tl] and [dl].

Fl onset (F = labiodental fricative)

[fl] can form an onset, but not [vl].

Summary so far

✓ – Cr, Cl, fr, fl

X – tl, dl, vr, vl

[pl]	['plɔta]	'plate'	<i>plɔta</i>
[bl]	[blok]	'block'	<i>bloch</i>
[tl]			
[dl]			
[kl]	['klampera]	'clip for tree logs'	<i>clàmpera</i>
[gl]	[glo'rjet]	'kiosk, stand'	<i>gloriet</i>
[fl]	[flɪŋk]	'finch'	<i>flinch</i>
[vl]			

2.2 Moenat Ladin Onset Phonotactics - Sibilant + X

Sibilant fricatives in prevocalic clusters

A preconsonantal sibilant fricative is **retroflex** and it **agrees in voicing** with the following consonant. (e.g. [ʂparpa'ɲa] vs. [ʐbi'ofa])

SX prevocalic clusters (S = sibilant fric.), X can be various:

- | | | |
|-----------------------------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| ✓ – sibilant plus liquid |] | <i>Rise in sonority</i> |
| ✓ – sibilant plus nasal | | |
| ✓ – sibilant plus nonsibilant fricative |] | <i>Plateau or fall in sonority</i> |
| ✓ – sibilant plus plosive | | |

2.2 Moenat Ladin Onset Phonotactics - Sibilant + X

SX prevocalic clusters (S = sibilant fric.)

Rise in sonority

✓ – sibilant plus liquid

✓ – sibilant plus nasal

[ʒr]	[ʒra'mar]	'to cut off branches from a tree'	<i>sramar</i>
[ʒl]	[ʒlon'dʒar]	'to make longer'	<i>slongiar</i>
[ʒm]	[ʒmaus]	'butter'	<i>smauz</i>
[ʒn]	[ʒnigo'la]	'cloudy'	<i>snigolà</i>
[ʒŋ]	[ʒŋao'lar]	'to whine'	<i>sgnaolar</i>

2.2 Moenat Ladin Onset Phonotactics - Sibilant + X

SX prevocalic clusters (S = sibilant fric.)

Plateau or fall in sonority

✓ – sibilant plus nonsibilant fricative

✓ – sibilant plus plosive

But Sd unattested except in Sdr

[ʃf]	[ʃfadi'ada]	'effort'	<i>sfadiada</i>
[ʒv]	[ʒvam'pi]	'careless'	<i>svampi</i>
[ʃp]	[ʃparpa'ɲa]	'widespread'	<i>sparpagna</i>
[ʒb]	[ʒbi'ofa]	'foam'	<i>sbiofa</i>
[ʃt]	[ʃtinf]	'sock'	<i>stinf</i>
[ʒd]			
[ʃk]	['ʃkazi]	'almost'	<i>scaji</i>
[ʒg]	[ʒgo'lar]	'to fly'	<i>sgolar</i>

2.2 Moenat Ladin Onset Phonotactics - Sibilant + X + Y

SXY prevocalic clusters

✓ – SCr, Sfr

[spr]	[sprigo'lar]	‘to frighten’	sprigolar
[zbr]	[zbral'dʒar]	‘to scream’	sbralgjar
[ʃtr]	[ʃtro'zet]	‘sledding’	stroset
[zdr]	[ˈzdragola]	‘a large quantity’	sdragola
[ʃkr]	[ˈʃkrɔza]	‘shell’	scrosa
[zgr]	[zgri'fjon]	‘scratch’	sgrifion
[ʃfr]	[ʃfre'ar]	‘to rub’	sfrear
[zvr]			

✗ – SCl, Sfl, rare or unattested

[spl]	[ʃplen'dor]	‘splendor’	splendor
[zbl]			
[ʃtl]			
[zdl]			
[ʃkl]	[ʃklenken]	‘unsteady’	sclenchen
[zgl]			
[ʃfl]	[ʃfladʒe'lar]	‘scourge’	sflagelar
[zvl]			

2.2 Moenat Ladin Onset Phonotactics - Interim Summary

Interim Summary: Prevocalic clusters

✓ – Cr, Cl, fr, fl (C = plosive)

OCP restrictions involving laterals

X – tl, dl

No consonants after [v]

X – vr, vl

S before any nonsibilant singleton or cluster

✓ – Sr, Sl, SN, SC, SCr, Sfr

*Except SCl, which is rare or absent
even though Cl is attested*

2.2 Moenat Ladin Onset Phonotactics - Frequency

Further investigation - Frequency of cluster combinations

A fully documented lexicon of Moenat Ladin is not yet available, but based on our fieldwork with a Moenat consultant, we verified that:

- [kl-, gl-]: very rare
- [ʃpl-] and [ʃkl-]: one word only each; an Italian borrowing (*splendor*) and a word in a Moenat dictionary that was unfamiliar to our consultant (*sclenchen*)
- [ʃfl-]: only two words identified (*sflagel*, *sflagelar*)
- [zbl-, zgl-, zvl-]: unattested

2.2 Moenat Ladin Onset Phonotactics - Summary

Based on our fieldwork and description in literature:

	<i>Labial</i>		<i>Coronal</i>		<i>Dorsal</i>		<i>Labiodental</i>	
Cr	pr	br	tr	dr	kr	gr	fr	vr
Cl	pl	bl	tl	dl	kl	gl	fl	vl
SCr	ʃpr	zbr	ʃtr	zdr	ʃkr	zgr	ʃfr	zvr
SCl	ʃpl	zbl	ʃtl	zdl	ʃkl	zgl	ʃfl	zvl

- **Cl-** clusters are less frequent in general (Heilmann 1955)
- **SCl-** is even more marked

- *Well-attested*
- *Rare*
- *Unattested*

2.2 Moenat Ladin Onset Phonotactics - Summary

Based on our fieldwork and description in literature:

	<i>Labial</i>		<i>Coronal</i>		<i>Dorsal</i>		<i>Labiodental</i>	
Cr	pr	br	tr	dr	kr	gr	fr	vr
Cl	pl	bl	tl	dl	kl	gl	fl	vl
SCr	ʃpr	zbr	ʃtr	zdr	ʃkr	zgr	ʃfr	zvr
SCl	ʃpl	zbl	ʃtl	zdl	ʃkl	zgl	ʃfl	zvl

- *Well-attested*
- *Rare*
- *Unattested*

- **Cl-** clusters are less frequent in general (Heilmann 1955) **Why?**
- **SCl-** is even more marked **Why?**

Possible organization of pre-consonantal Cs **external** to the syllable?

➤ Acoustic investigation

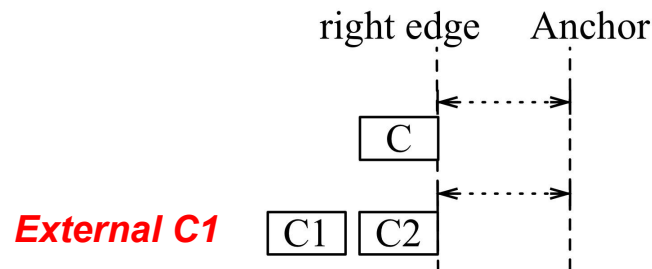
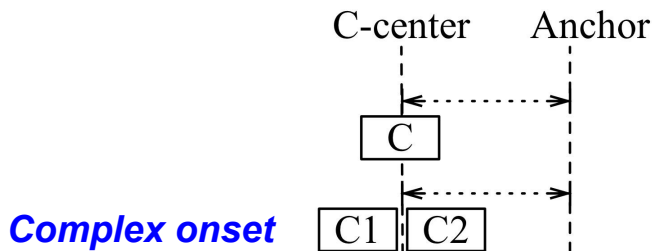
3. Acoustic Study

3.1. Cluster organization and C-Center effect

- Diagnosis of Cs belonging to a complex onset: temporal coordination of the consonants in a prevocalic cluster with a later **anchor** point, e.g. end of V.

- **Complex onset shows C-centering effects** (Browman & Goldstein 1988, 2000; Marin & Pouplier 2010; Marin 2011; Pouplier 2012, etc.)

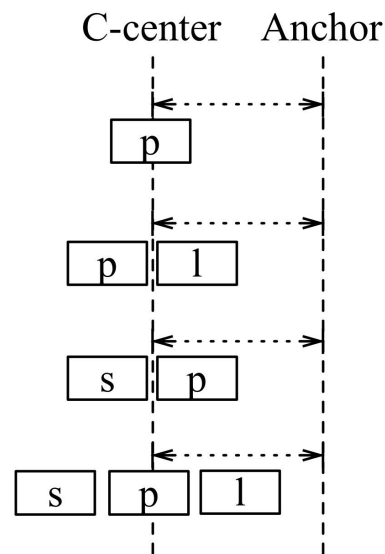
- **Consonants external to the onset do not show C-centering effects** (Shaw et al. 2009, 2011; Hermes et al. 2013; Ruthan et al. 2018, etc.; on extrasyllabicity see e.g. Green 2003)



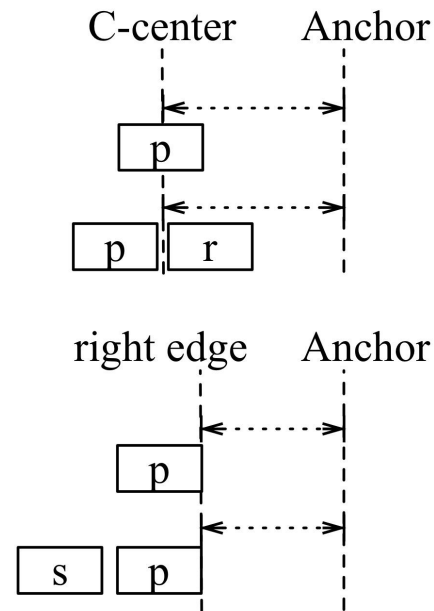
3.1. Cluster organisation and C-Center effect

- Previous articulatory studies on **English** and **Italian** prevocalic clusters

	English	Italian
Obs+Liquid (e.g. pr-)	complex onset (C-Center)	complex onset (C-Center)
S + Obs (e.g. sp-)	complex onset (C-Center)	S external (Right-edge)
S + Obs + Liq (e.g. spl-)	complex onset (C-Center)	-



English (adapted from
Browman & Goldstein 1988)



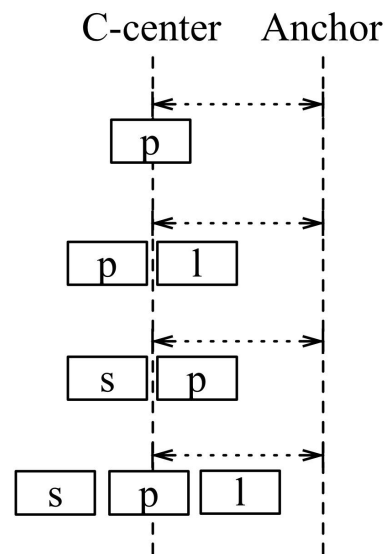
Italian (adapted from
Hermes et al. 2013)

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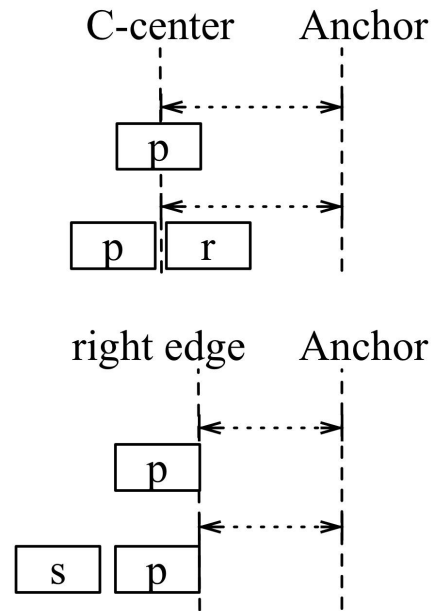
- Previous articulatory studies on **English** and **Italian** prevocalic clusters

What about Ladin?

- Do Ladin consonant clusters behave like English or Italian, or something else?
- Do Cl- and SCl- exhibit special patterns of temporal coordination? (C = plosive)



English (adapted from Browman & Goldstein 1988)

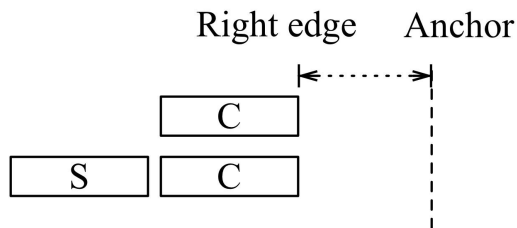


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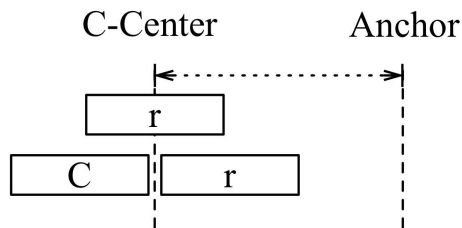
3.1. Cluster organization and C-Center effect

- **Hypotheses**

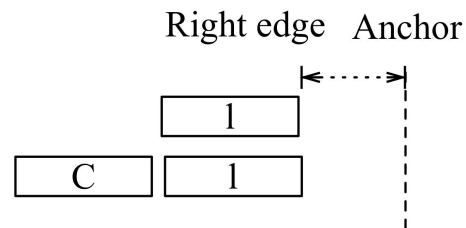
- **H1:** Sibilant in SC(X)- is external to the onset (R-anchored), similar to Italian.
- **H2:** Cr is a complex onset (C-centering), while Cl organization is less stable or C is external in Cl (R-anchored);



Right-edge effect
(external S)



C-Center effect
(complex onset)



Right-edge effect?
(external C?)

3.2. Design and analysis

- Selkirk & Durvasula (2013) have developed a technique using **acoustic data** to study the temporal coordination between segments (see also Ruthan et al. 2018).
- We applied this technique to conduct a pilot investigation of the coordination of sibilants in prevocalic clusters in Moenat Ladin:

stimuli design - recording - acoustic analysis

3.2. Design and analysis

- **Stimuli**

- 8 minimal sets (real and nonce words)
 - 4 sets for '*R-series*': C ~ r ~ Cr ~ SC ~ SCr
 - e.g. ['pita] ~ ['rita] ~ ['prita] ~ ['spita] ~ ['sprita]
 - 3 sets for '*L-series*': C ~ l ~ Cl ~ SC
 - e.g. ['bata] ~ ['lata] ~ ['zlata] ~ ['zbata]
 - 1 set for Cl ~ SCl
 - [plen'dor] ~ [splen'dor] (*splendor* is only 'spl-' word in Moenat)

3.2. Design and analysis

- **Method**

- Data were collected in Fassa Valley in January 2019.
- 1 native speaker of Moenat Ladin (< 30 in age)
- Each word has 12 repetitions (randomized), embedded in a carrier sentence
 - “dimo _____ ,Maria” (“say _____ , Maria”)
- Recordings were made using Praat 6.0.43, with a Sennheiser microphone headset.

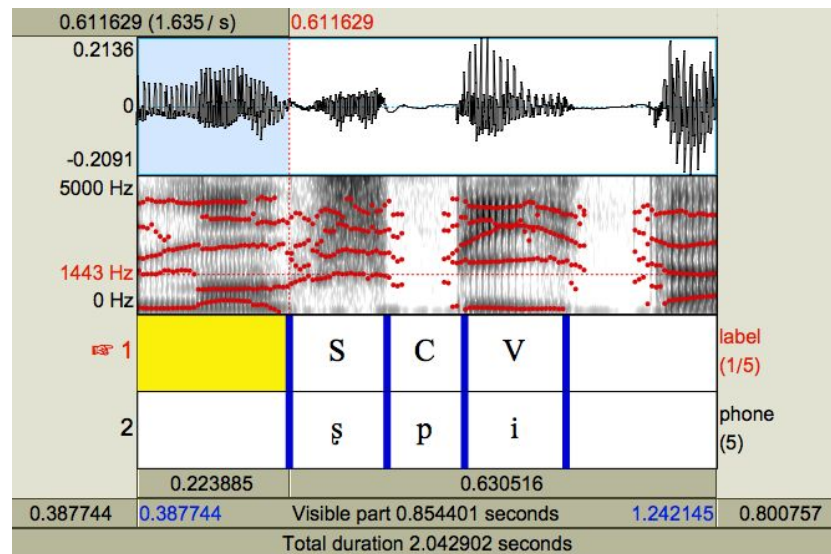
3.2. Design and analysis

- **Analysis**

- Each token was segmented in Praat
- The following crucial time points were marked in textgrid:

- **Left edge:** end of the preceding vowel
- **Right edge:** release of the last prevocalic consonant
- **Anchoring point:** end of the following vowel

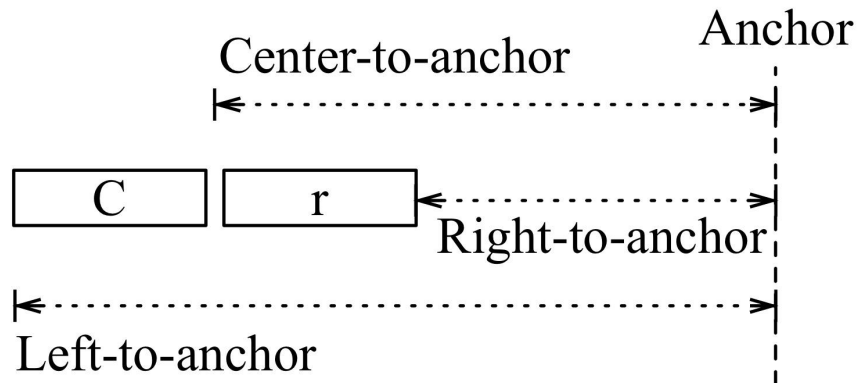
C-Center: mean of midpoints of Cs in a cluster



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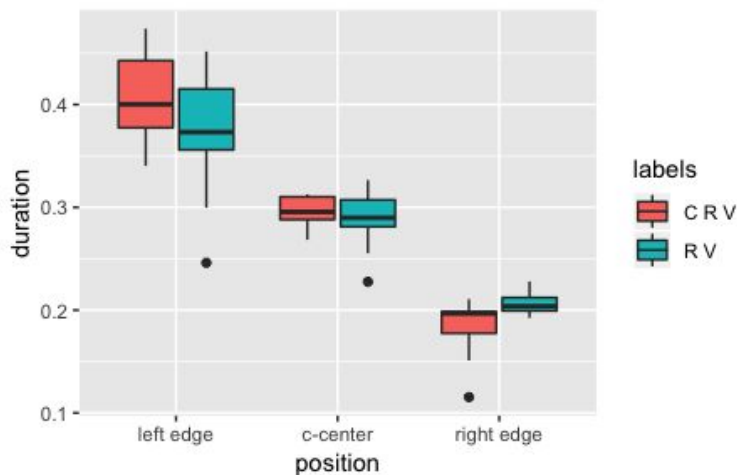
- **Analysis (continued)**

- *Left-to-anchor duration, right-to-anchor duration, and center-to-anchor duration* are calculated for each token
- Relativized Standard Deviation (RSD) of the durations was calculated for each comparison:
 - $r \sim Cr$
 - $C \sim SC$
 - $Cr \sim SCr$
 - $l \sim Cl$
 - $Cl \sim SCl$



3.4. Results and discussion

- $r \sim Cr$



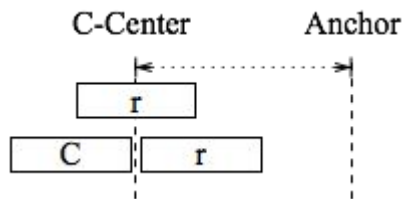
Plot: *rama ~ brama*

RSD value for each doublet
(least RSD, least variability)

	left edge	c-center	right edge
<i>rita ~ prita</i>	6.146	5.009	10.403
<i>rama ~ brama</i>	13.912	7.939	12.166
<i>raz ~ gras</i>	11.235	9.350	10.412
<i>rata ~ brata</i>	12.328	10.066	10.616

3.4. Results and discussion

- $r \sim Cr$



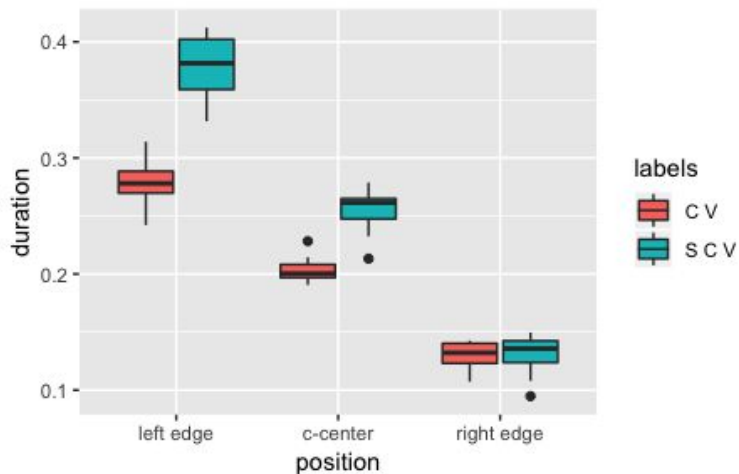
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3.4. Results and discussion

- C ~ SC



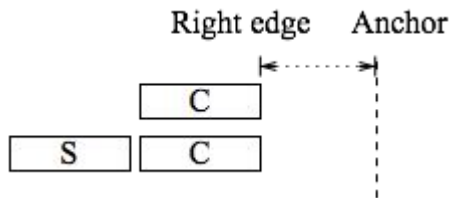
Plot: *pita ~ spita*

RSD value for each doublet
(least RSD, least variability)

	left edge	c-center	right edge
<i>pita ~ spita</i>	17.190	13.175	9.216
<i>bama ~ sbama</i>	4.206	5.207	6.778
<i>gas ~ sgas</i>	13.004	10.471	6.075
<i>bata ~ sbata</i>	10.706	8.728	8.243
<i>cozza ~ scoza</i>	10.605	9.019	8.243
<i>bos ~ sboz</i>	11.711	7.862	5.611

3.4. Results and discussion

- $C \sim SC$



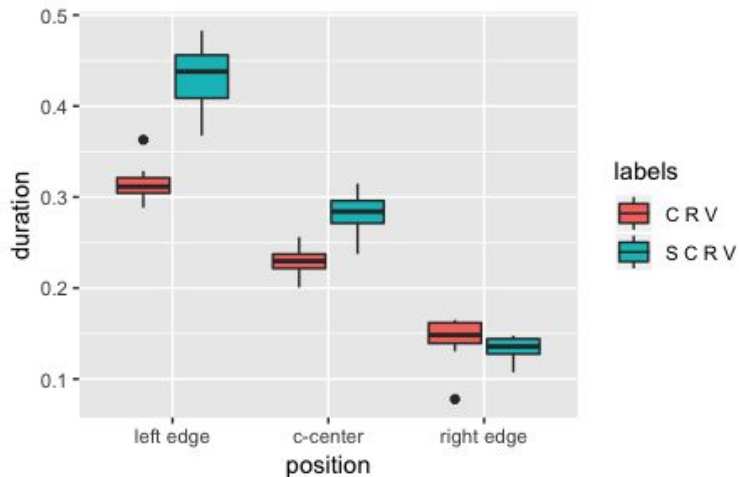
Right-edge effect
(external S)

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3.4. Results and discussion

- Cr ~ SCr



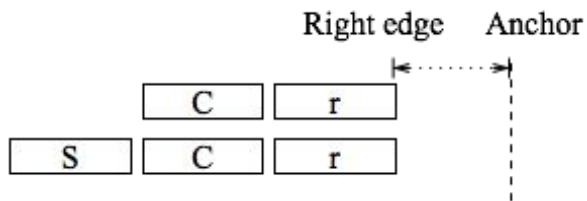
Plot: *prita ~ sprita*

RSD value for each doublet
(least RSD, least variability)

	left edge	c-center	right edge
<i>prita ~ sprita</i>	17.514	12.729	10.569
<i>brama ~ sbrama</i>	9.097	3.567	5.677
<i>gras ~ sgras</i>	12.306	9.269	7.093
<i>brata ~ sbrata</i>	14.885	12.059	10.346

3.4. Results and discussion

- $Cr \sim SCr$



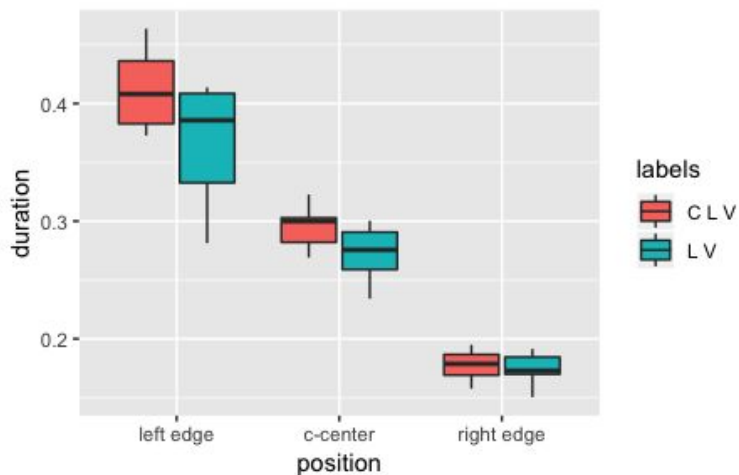
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3.4. Results and discussion

- $I \sim CI$



Plot: *lata ~ blata*

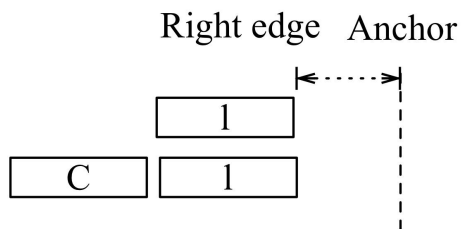
RSD value for each doublet
(least RSD, least variability)

	left edge	c-center	right edge
<i>lata ~ blata</i>	9.798	8.216	6.450
<i>lossa ~ clossa</i>	5.960	5.856	10.331
<i>los ~ blos</i>	12.715	9.568	9.134

(Right-edge effect? variation?)

3.4. Results and discussion

- $I \sim CI$



Right-edge effect?
(external C?)

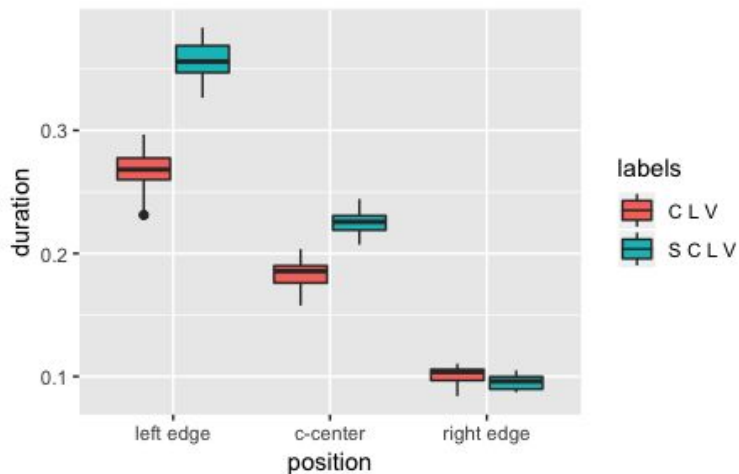
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(Right-edge effect? variation?)

3.4. Results and discussion

- CI ~ SCI



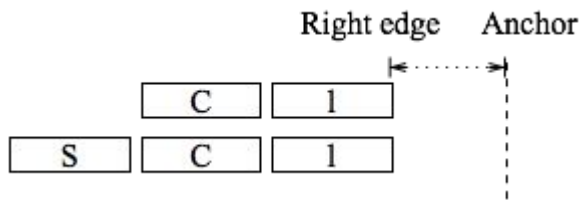
Plot: *plendor ~ splendor*

RSD value for each doublet
(least RSD, least variability)

	left edge	c-center	right edge
<i>plendor ~ splendor</i>	15.661	11.773	7.905

3.4. Results and discussion

- CI ~ SCI



Right-edge effect
(external S)

RSD value for each doublet
(least RSD, least variability)

	left edge	c-center	right edge
<i>plendor ~ splendor</i>	15.661	11.773	7.905

3.4. Results and discussion

- Summary

	Results	Notes
C ~ SC	Right-edge effect	except for <i>bama ~ sbama</i>
Cr ~ SCr	Right-edge effect	except for <i>brama ~ sbrama</i>
CI ~ SCI	Right-edge effect	
r ~ Cr	C-center effect	
I ~ CI	Right-edge effect?	seem to show variation

3.4. Results and discussion

- Tendency shown in the results; **Hypothesis 1**

	Results
C ~ SC	Right-edge effect
Cr ~ SCr	Right-edge effect
CI ~ SCI	Right-edge effect
r ~ Cr	C-center effect
I ~ CI	Right-edge effect?

- Sibilant could be viewed as an external element of syllable structure, similar to Italian.

3.4. Results and discussion

- Tendency shown in the results; **Hypothesis 2**

	Results
C ~ SC	Right-edge effect
Cr ~ SCr	Right-edge effect
CI ~ SCI	Right-edge effect
r ~ Cr	C-center effect
I ~ CI	Right-edge effect?

- Cr could be viewed as a complex onset
- CI behaves differently from Cr
- Potential right-alignment effect of CI suggestive of unstable coordination between C and I and possibility that C is external to syllable.

4. Formal analysis

4.1 Proposal

Our claim:

The avoidance of SC/- clusters arises as a **cumulative markedness effect** deriving from parsing consonants external to the syllable, driven by:

- $^*_\sigma[\text{CI}]$
- $^*_\sigma[\text{SC}]$

These constraints can be understood as marked on the basis of sonority (e.g. Clements 1990, note also Krämer, this conference)

- SC by Sonority Sequencing Principle
- CI by Minimum Sonority Distance

4.2 Constraints

*_σ[Cl: Assign a violation to a tautosyllabic obstruent-lateral sequence

Support for *_σ[Cl

- A historic sound change in Italo-Romance caused lenition of /l/ to [j] following an obstruent (Maiden 1995, Krämer 2009).
- Evidenced in Faschian (but not other Ladin varieties) in 19th c. (Salvi 2016)
 - [fi'ɔk] 'flake' (snowflake) < *floccum* (Latin), [ki'au] 'key' < *clavis* (Latin)
 - Cl clusters are nevertheless represented in the lexicon of the present-day language
- In Campidanese, /l/ → [r] in Cl clusters (Frigeni 2009), interpreted as support for a markedness relationship Cl > Cr in onset (Baertsch & Davis 2009)
 - [prus] 'more' < *plus* (Latin)

4.2 Constraints

*_σ[**SC**: Assign a violation to a tautosyllabic sibilant-obstruent sequence]

- After Coetzee (2004)
- OCP restrictions in English morphemes involving SC sequences provide cross-linguistic support (Davis 1991, Lamontagne 1993, Coetzee 2004).

Parse: Assign a violation to any segment that is not parsed into a syllable

- Cf. Prince & Smolensky (1993/2004) but with proviso that unparsed segments are nevertheless pronounced.

4.2 Constraints


MParse: Assign a violation to null realization. (Prince & Smolensky 1993/2004)

- The Null Parse (\odot) is a candidate, representing no structural realization (Prince & Smolensky 1993/2004; see also Albright 2012).
- The Null Parse incurs a single violation of **M**Parse only (see Wolf and McCarthy 2009 for detailed discussion).
- The effect of MParse is as follows:

	Input	Markedness	M	Parse
a.	<i>cand a</i>	*		
b.	\odot			*


4.3 Analysis

- The analysis is couched in Harmonic Grammar (HG; Legendre, Miyata & Smolensky 1990; Pater 2016.)
 - Each constraint has a weight
 - The harmony score of a candidate (H): violations of each constraint are multiplied by its weight, and then all the products are summed.
 - A probabilistic version of HG, Maxent HG (Goldwater and Johnson 2003; Hayes & Wilson 2008, etc.), can be used to fit gradience in the lexicon in future work.

Input	C1	C2	
<i>weight</i>	2	1	<i>H</i>
 cand a		-1	-1
cand b	-1		-2

4.3 Analysis

- Cumulative markedness via **multiple** violations of one constraint

Input	C1	C2	
<i>weight</i>	3	2	<i>H</i>
 cand a	-1		-3
cand b		-2	-4

- *candidate a* violates a constraint with greater weight
- but *candidate b* has a lower harmony score due to multiple violations of a lower-weighted constraint

4.3 Analysis

- CI- input

	<i>/ple/</i>	Max-IO	Ident[cons]	MParse	* _o [CI]	* _o [SC]	Parse	
	<i>weight</i>	5	5	3	3	3	2	<i>H</i>
☞ a.	p _o [le						-1	-2
b.	_o [ple				-1			-3
c.	_o [pje		-1					-5
d.	⊙			-1				-3


4.3 Analysis

- SC- input

	/sp/	Max-IO	Ident[cons]	MParse	* _σ [CI]	* _σ [SC]	Parse	
	<i>weight</i>	5	5	3	3	3	2	<i>H</i>
☞ a.	s _σ [pe						-1	-2
b.	σ[spe					-1		-3
c.	σ[pe	-1						-5
d.	⊙			-1				-3

4.3 Analysis

- SCI- input

<i>/sple/</i>	Max-IO	Ident[cons]	MParse	* _o [CI]	* _o [SC]	Parse	
<i>weight</i>	5	5	3	3	3	2	<i>H</i>
a.  \odot			-1				-3
b. sp _o [le						-2	-4
c. s _o [ple				-1		-1	-5
d. _o [sple				-1	-1		-6

4.4 Summary

- We employed two constraints, $^*_o[\text{SC-}]$ and $^*_o[\text{CI-}]$, to drive consonants to be structurally organized external to the syllable in Ladin;
- SCI- is avoided by a cumulative markedness effect involving Parse.

5. Implications

5. Implications

Alternative approach to structure of SC:

SC is a complex segment with branching place/stricture (Selkirk 1982, Lamontagne 1993)

- Avoids needs to make an exception for SC with respect to sonority sequencing
- Predicts SC voicing identity
- But SC as a complex segment does not fit with the findings of our acoustic study

5. Implications

SC as complex segment: Also faces **duplication problems** in Moenat Ladin

1. Voicing

- Sibilants assimilate in voicing with any consonant, including sonorants
 - Exx. [ʒmaus] ‘butter’; [ʒlon'dʒar] ‘to make longer’
- Sibilant-sonorant (S+son) sequences are not receptive to analysis as a complex segment:
 - in Moenat, S and sonorants potentially differ in any feature besides [voice] and [consonantal].
- Voicing assimilation must therefore be independently enforced in S+son sequences, duplicating sources of voicing agreement in SX clusters.

5. Implications

SC as complex segment: Also faces **duplication problems** in Moenat Ladin

2. Free combination

- If SCs were complex segments, we could expect them to be limited in number or restricted in place of articulation.
- However, the set of SCs in Ladin is precisely that which would arise from **every combination** of S plus obstruent stop or non-sibilant fricative, as derived in a cluster treatment (excepting the SD gap).
- Furthermore, word-initial S can occur before **every sonorant consonant**, suggesting that sibilants combine freely with any following nonsibilant consonant, subject to voicing agreement.

5. Future Research

Examine other languages where SCX clusters are restricted to a subset of what would be derived from freely combining all permissible SC and CX clusters (Goad 2011).

- English: ✓ [sk], ✓ [kl] but ✗ [skl] (except loans)
- Greek: ✓ [sx], ✓ [xr] but ✗ [sxr]

Thank you