Laurentian French Affrication (LFA) in external sandhi: the facts, and a CVCV analysis

What is Laurentian French Affrication?

Affrication across word boundaries

Example sentences

Dem/N: Il est évident que cette image vaut mille mots.
C'est/Det: C'est une grande illusion...
Adj/N: ...pas gentil de traiter quelqu'un de petit ivrogne.
d/N: ...pas d'huile, pas d'œuf!
Numeral/N: ... il y avait huit images, pas sept images.
Dem/H: Je l'aime beaucoup, cette hippie révolutionnaire.
N/Adv: La lettre, je l'ai envoyé à la poste hier.
N/Adj: Je jure, elle avait une tête immense.
N/V: Mario a dit que la petite ignore ce qui t'attend.

To listen to some recordings: see QR code

Decoding the analysis

Solid lines = phasal domains
Dotted lines = uncertain phases

Orange CV = Phase edge CV*)
Yellowed CV = empty VC across a non-nested phonological domain (not deleted)

Greyed VC = deleted empty syllable structure
Blue * = liaison consonant (no lexicalized syllabic space)

*) These are phase-edge CVs where the uncertain phase is not problematic for the purpose

The Syntax-Phonology interface: CVCV Phonology vs Prosodic Phonology

Advantages of CVCV (Scheer 2004) as a domain delimiter, in comparison to the Prosodic Hierarchy (ex. Selkirk 2011):

- It is a ‘regular’ phonological object, therefore makes regular phonological predictions. A CV is a phonological object that makes identical phonological predictions to word-internal empty syllabic space.
- It is modular.
- It distinguishes between left and right edges. Left edges are marked (variably) with empty syllabic space (a CV). Therefore, nested phase-hood predicts no CV boundary between suffixes and bases (at the right edge of domains).
- N.B. while both the PH and CVCV can offer analyses of various phonological processes, we must look for arguments that distinguish them.

Conclusions

- LFA is variable in external sandhi
- But it seems to be predictable to a certain extent.
- There is a clear link with the well-known variability seen with liaison, although there is less affrication in formal contexts.
- Therefore, further study of LFA may allow a clearer view of phonological domains in French than that offered by liaison, as LFA is not complicated by the theories of how liaison consonants are lexicalized / whether liaison has been fossilized in certain cases.

References: see QR code

The experiment: Methodology

- 35 participants (20W, 15M; 26-75 y.o.)
- Native speakers of Laurentian French
- Various sociocultural and professional backgrounds
- Recruited via social media
- Covid! Home recording via smartphone
- Design: Round 1: 24 sentences
  Round 2: 31 sentences

Some interesting results

Glide [u]: inconsistencies before and after the glide.
"huit images, de huile"

Interference of contrastive focus:
Lack of affrication in the environment of focus, often combined with a shift of the French fixed (final) accent.
"sept images pas huit images, tête immense"

Numerals: variabilities
"huit images vs. sept images"

To do for Round 3

- More examples of each environment
- More participants
- Recordings in the lab/controlled
- Look into the ‘interesting’ results
  - Glides/syllabification
  - H-aspire effects
  - Syntax of numerals and temporal adjuncts in French
- Look at complex vs simple adjuncts
- Look into the socio-phonological distinctions between aspiration and liaison.

Please leave us suggestions online! see QR code