FALAS NO LABFON

Sessões de trabalho do Laboratório
de Fonética & Lisbon BabyLab
(CLUL)

29 de Março, 10.30-11.30
Sala Lindley Cintra

10.30h-11.30h
Eduard Artés (Freie Universität Berlin, Germany)
Syllable well-formedness requirements on the exponence of gender in Pallarese Catalan

In Pallarese Catalan, 3rd person singular masculine accusative clitics have two different shapes depending on the phonological context, [l] or [lo], where –o is a marked exponent for masculine gender (the default exponence for masculine is -[Ø]). Since inflection is located word-finally in Pallarese, I argue that right-edge epenthesis is avoided in order to maintain a strict correspondence between morphological and phonological structure. Inflectional vowels, i.e., –o, may be used for syllabification purposes in word-final position instead.

A key aspect of the proposal is the idea that the exponents of gender are floating features, and thus inflection proceeds in two steps. First, the theme position is spelled out with an underspecified vowel (i.e., Th ↔ V) and, subsequently, the floating features associated with gender ([–fem] ↔ [+labial, –high], i.e., –[o], in the masculine) are attached to the V-slot of the theme position. If gender is part of the morphosyntactic composition of a clitic, as in the 3rd person singular masculine accusative clitic, these floating features can be attached to the V-slot of the theme position to improve syllabic structure under certain phonotactic conditions (otherwise they remain floating and they cannot be phonetically interpreted). This 'morphological solution' is less costly than (regular) word-initial epenthesis because it does not need to create a new skeletal position or insert new features. Even if gender is absent in the morphosyntactic representation of the clitic, as in the 3rd person plural accusative clitic, the V-slot is maintained, and the default epenthetic features of Pallarese (those associated with –e) are inserted when required by phonotactics. This forces a thematic interpretation of this vowel.

The morphosyntactic structure of the nominal system constrains epenthesis, but strict modularity can be maintained. Furthermore, the use of floating features in the input can dispense with gender allomorphy.

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