

## Finding branching onsets in your croissant

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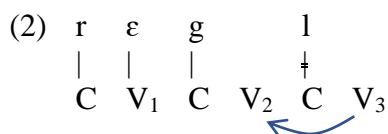
The French village of Nouzerines (postal code 23600) is located in the west of “The Linguistic Croissant”, a Croissant-shaped area where the two historical “languages” of France, langue d’oc and langue d’oïl, intermingle. In the vernacular of this village, henceforth nouzerinois, when a verbal stem ends in a Consonant-Liquid (CL) sequence, that sequence is broken by a stressed vowel [œ] (in bold in 1i, cf. and 1ii,iii). Interestingly, in nouns, there is never epenthesis: the noun [rɛg] ‘rule’ shares the same root as (1d), but is never pronounced [regœl]. A similar morpheme-internal alternation is illustrated by the verb in (1c), which will be regarded as CC-final (i.e., underlyingly /ʒt/).<sup>1</sup>

A related alternation occurs in the future conjugation. The exponent of future tense is [r]. When it is followed by an inflectional affix (1iv), CL and CC-final stems appear with the same morpheme-internal epenthesis as in (1i). But in the FUT.3SG, there is no inflectional suffix (unlike in Standard French *chanter-a*): in that case, all C-final stems (i.e., CL, CC and VC final stems like 1d [ʃāt]), occur with a vowel [œ] *between* the stem and the future exponent (again in bold in 1v). Importantly, verbs such as (1e), whose stems are consistently followed by a theme vowel -i, do not exhibit the last effect in the FUT.3SG: there is no suffix *and* no stem-internal change.

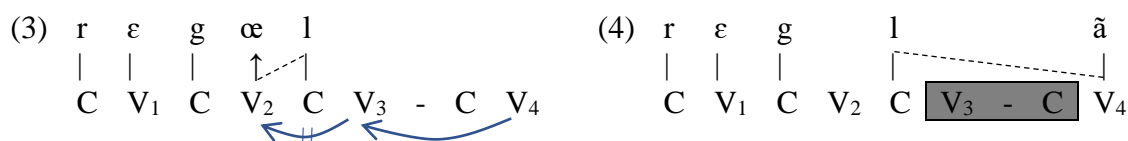
(1)		a. ‘pay’	b. ‘enter’	c. ‘throw’	d. ‘sing’	e. ‘end’
i.	IND.SG	reg <b>œ</b> l	rāt <b>œ</b> r	ʒœt	ʃāt	fin-i
ii.	IND-1/3PL	regl-ā	rātr-ā	ʒt-ā	ʃāt-ā	fin-is-ā
iii.	INF	regl-a	rātr-a	ʒt-a	ʃāt-a	fin-i-r
iv.	FUT-1SG	reg <b>œ</b> l-r-e	rāt <b>œ</b> r-r-e	ʒœt-r-e	ʃāt-r-e	fin-i-r-e
v.	FUT.3SG	regl- <b>œ</b> r	rāt- <b>œ</b> r	ʒt- <b>œ</b> r	ʃāt- <b>œ</b> r	fin-i-r

I propose an analysis of the facts in the Strict CV framework (Lowenstamm 1996, Scheer 2004). I show that the IND.SG and the FUT.3SG do in fact carry a suffix: an empty CV unit with no segmental material.

The analysis begins by making two assumptions about nouzerinois. First, final empty nuclei can govern (words like [ʃarʃ] ‘look for’ are attested). Second, /r,l/ must branch onto a realized nucleus in order to be realized themselves. Thus, in a noun such as [rɛg] ‘rule’ (2), the final empty nucleus V<sub>3</sub> governs V<sub>2</sub>; /l/ is engulfed by empty nuclei, and therefore cannot be realized.

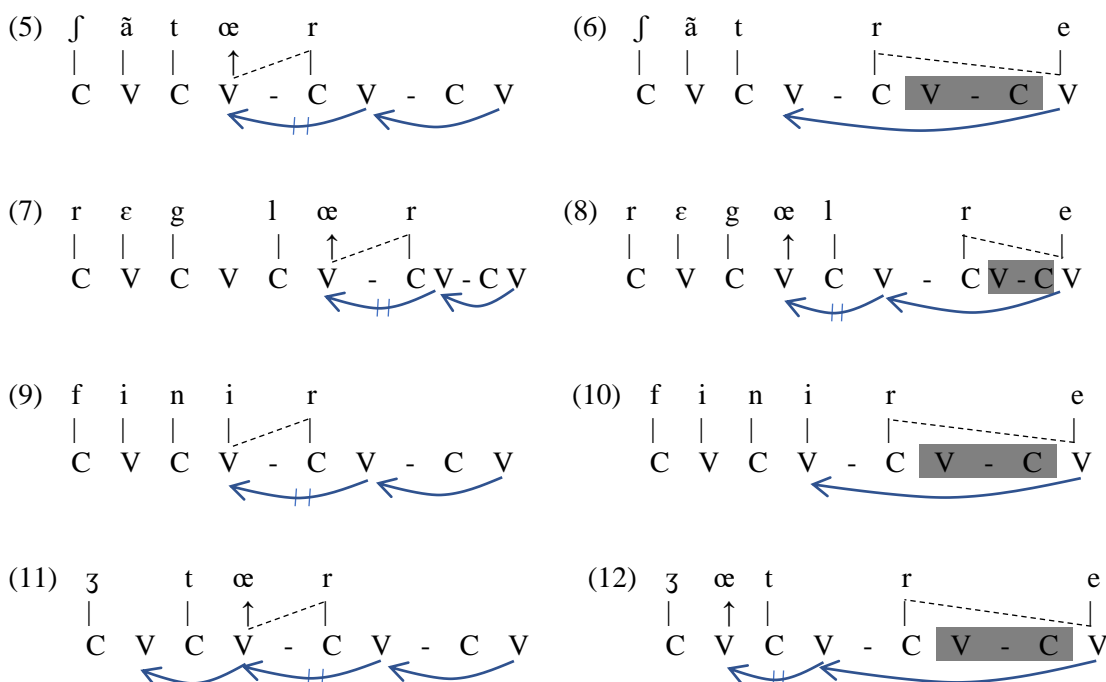


In the verb, as proposed, there is an additional CV unit (3). The final nucleus V<sub>4</sub> governs V<sub>3</sub>, which in turn cannot govern V<sub>2</sub>. V<sub>2</sub> therefore must be realized, thereby permitting the realization of the liquid. In the IND.1/3PL, the suffixal position is not empty. After the deletion of the empty VC sequence in grey (as per “VC-deletion”, Gussmann & Kaye 1993), V<sub>2</sub> is governed and therefore not realized; and the liquid branches rightwards. I assume VC deletion only occurs when the second V is contentful.



<sup>1</sup> All data originate in the authors elicitation work. Stress is always on the last vowel.

The same holds for unsuffixed (5) and suffixed (6) future bases (for reasons of space, I skip over the explanations for each and every pair). Assuming that the future suffix is /r/, the behavior of CL-final verbs in the future (3SG [reglœr], 1sg [regœlre]) is predicted (7,8); as is that of verbs with a thematic vowel [i], where there is simply no need for epenthesis (9,10). Finally, verbs like [ʒta] ‘throw’ from (1c) also fall out of the analysis, assuming – as above – that they are underlyingly vowel-less (11,12).



Having accounted for the general alternations, and if time permits, I will speculate on the motivation for the additional CV in the indicative mood, as well as comment on further configurations that were uncovered in the elicitation process. Among these are: **i.** verbs with V-final stems like [klu-a] ‘nail’, which unsurprisingly behave like (9,10), forming a 3SG.FUT [klur] ; **ii.** Short verbs like [j-a] ‘tie’ [nw-a] ‘make a knot’ [ʃw-a] ‘kill’, which surface with an additional [e] in the IND.SG [nwe] and in the 3SG.FUT [nwer] ‘make a knot’ (Quint 2021); and **iii.** the interesting case of [etrãʎ-a] ‘strangle-INF’, [jetrãgœl] ‘I strangle’.

## References

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