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**MINIMALITY, WEIGHT AND MELODIC  
CONTENT:  
THE VIEW FROM FRENCH AND BERBER  
HYPOCORISTICS**

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This paper, mainly devoted to the French hypocoristic formations, offers a Strict CV account for word minimality. It argues that the shape of the truncated forms can be analyzed without appeal to any prosodic hierarchy. The template that the truncated forms use minimally consists of two CV units, which correspond to the minimal domain where Proper Government applies, hence the Minimal Word. In line with previous studies, prosodic weight is viewed as function of the number of vocalic positions each form contains. Moreover, it is claimed that complex onsets may contribute to weight, provided that their second consonant contains a closure element: obstruent+lateral behaves as a genuine cluster that encloses a metrically-active V position, while obstruent+rhotic forms one single segment. In support of the proposed analysis, a brief account for the structure of Tashlhiyt Berber hypocoristics is provided.

Hypocoristics, French, Berber, word minimality, weight

## INTRODUCTION

A great deal of research has been devoted to hypocoristic (nickname) formations over the last four decades. One of the main aspects that has attracted the attention of researchers in phonological theory relates to the truncation process targeting the base form. Many attempts have been made in order to address this phenomenon in light of recent phonological theories, mobilizing among other devices fixed and minimum size templates as prosodic targets. Proponents of the prosodic hypothesis (McCarthy & Prince 1986 et seq., Nespor & Vogel 1986, Selkirk 1980) argue that truncation is driven by a minimality condition, which is defined in terms of the authentic units of prosody ( $\mu$ ,  $\sigma$ , Ft,  $\omega$ ). Under this condition, a well-formed prosodic word must contain at least one binary foot, either at the syllabic or moraic level, depending on the language (see among others Mester 1990 on Japanese; Plénat 1982, 1999 and Nelson 1998 on French; Colina 1996, Piñeros 2000, Plénat 2003 and Torres-Tamarit 2021 on Spanish).

Bisyllabic and bimoraic hypocoristics are by far the most attested type across languages, though monomoraic and trisyllabic forms may be found in some languages such as Portuguese (e.g. *Barnabé* > *Bé*, *Ána* > *Ná*, see Grau Sempere 2006: 125), Sardinian (e.g. *Servatore* > *Vatore*, *Margherita* > *Gherita*, see Cabré et al. 2021), and Spanish (e.g. *Jose María* > *Joséma*, *Catalina* > *Catína*, see Martínez-Patricio & Torres-Tamarit 2019). French hypocoristics do not depart from this trend, using truncation either alone or with reduplication (1a,b) in order to meet the minimal size requirement. However, like Portuguese, French has also developed monomoraic hypocoristics (1c).

## (1) FRENCH HYPOCORISTIC FORMATIONS (Plénat &amp; Huerta 2006)

	<i>Base</i>	<i>Hypocoristic</i>		<i>Weight</i>
a.	ʃaʁlɔt	ʃaʃa	‘Charlotte’	2σ, 2μ
	mikaɛl	mika	‘Michael’	
	gabʁijɛl	gabi	‘Gabriel’	
b.	viktwaʁ	vik	‘Victoire’	1σ, 2μ
	kʁistjɑ̃	kʁis	‘Christian’	
	fʁɛdɛrik	fʁɛd	‘Frédérique’	
c.	florɑ̃s	flo <sup>1</sup>	‘Florence’	1σ, 1μ
	klod	klo	‘Claude’	
	ʒoana	dʒo	‘Joanna’	

Despite their relatively limited number, the forms of the type in (1c) challenge the Word Minimality hypothesis, since they contain only one light syllable whose onset though complex does not contribute to weight in its standard sense (see Hayman 1985, Hayes 1989, Morén 1999, *contra* Topinzi 2008, 2010, 2011).

This paper combines the strict CV approach to syllable structure (Lowenstamm 1996, Scheer 2004) with the Word Minimality hypothesis. It argues that all hypocoristics of the type in (1) are formed by means of a unique template which consists of two CV units, and which corresponds to the minimal domain where Proper Government holds. There are forms (1a) that require that both CV units are entirely identified with their own segments, while others (1b,c) allow some slots, typically vocalic ones, to remain empty and phonetically unpronounced. On this view, prosodic weight is a mere function of the number of vocalic slots each form contains; complex onsets like any consonant cluster contribute to weight because they contain an empty nucleus which

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<sup>1</sup>French song connoisseurs are referred to a famous song by Pierre Bachelet and Florence Arthaud.

may project a weight unit (see Scheer & Szigetvári 2005, and Faust & Ulfsbjorninn 2018 on how vocalic slots count in stress assignment).

Of further interest to our purpose here is the melodic content that complex onsets display. One can legitimately ask why forms like [kχistjã] and [fχederik] behave differently from the ones in (1c). Why aren't their hypocoristic forms simply \*[kχi] and \*[fχe]? Why do they need to display a postvocalic consonant if their initial cluster were a complex onset whose empty nucleus can be metrically active? Conversely, why are [flo] and [klo] acceptable forms? Is there any reason for their containing a metrically active nucleus? Building on previous work (Hirst 1985, Lowenstamm 2003, Rennison 1998, Rennison & Neubarth 2003, Ségéral & Scheer 2007, among others), I will assume that French hypocoristics display two types of so-called *mutæ cum liquidā* sequences: One of the form obstruent + rhotic, and one whose obstruent is followed by a lateral consonant. The first behaves as a complex segment, it is underlyingly monopositional; the latter is bipositional. The closure element [ʔ] present in /l/ but not in /r/ (see Harris 1990, 1994, Backley 2011, among others) requires the consonant to be associated to its own C-slot. Under this analysis, the reason why pre-vocalic obstruent + liquid in French hypocoristics may or not contribute to prosodic weight ceases to be puzzling: Only a subset of these sequences behaves as a genuine cluster, precisely the one whose liquid consonant contains a closure element.

The paper is organized as follows. Section 1 reviews standard approaches to prosodic weight. Section 2 turns to the French hypocoristics; a brief overview of previous accounts is provided. Section 3 presents a strict CV analysis of the truncated forms. Section 4 addresses the hypocoristic formations in Tashlhiyt Berber. They are analyzed in the same manner as in French.

## 1 TRUNCATION AS A PROSODICALLY-DRIVEN PROCESS

Roughly defined, truncation is the process by which the shape of an input form is reduced to a certain size, which is often argued to be determined by the authentic units of prosodic hierarchy, mainly the foot (Ft), the syllable ( $\sigma$ ) and the mora ( $\mu$ ). The minimum size to which this process leads corresponds to a bisyllabic or bimoraic foot, according to standard analyses. Hypocoristic formations have been extensively used in support of this minimal parsing (i.e. the Minimal Word), and thereby as evidence for prosodic hierarchy (McCarthy & Prince 1986 et seq., Nespor & Vogel 1986, Selkirk 1981). The next subsection provides an overview of standard approaches to prosodic weight and word minimality, and discusses some of the issues they may raise.

### 1.1 STANDARD APPROACHES TO WEIGHT

The study of quantity-sensitive phenomena arose noticeably during the late seventies as part of a general theory of metrical structure (see Liberman 1975, Liberman & Prince 1977, Halle & Vergnaud 1980, Hayes 1981). The central idea was that certain linguistic phenomena such as stress assignment, poetic meter, reduplication, compensatory lengthening and word minimality rely on a core distinction between heavy and light syllables, which is dependent essentially on whether the syllable's internal constituents branch at the nuclear or rhyml level. Although there are various versions of metrical theory, a general consensus emerges on the relevance of syllable quantity in capturing a number of generalizations about several grammatical systems, and its ability to fit into larger structures such as prosodic hierarchy (McCarthy & Prince 1986, et sq.), metrical grids (Liberman 1975, Liberman & Prince 1977), and the like. The distinction between heavy and light syllables has for instance been of much importance in determining stress placement in English and Latin, to name but these two languages. In Latin, any syllable ending with a long vowel or with a vowel plus a coda consonant is viewed as

heavy; all others are light. Words containing three or more syllables assign stress to the penultimate syllable if it is heavy (e.g. *amá:re* ‘bitterly’, *arísta* ‘beard, spike’), otherwise the antepenultimate (e.g. *dígítu*s ‘finger’). Many scholars have capitalized on this kind of phenomena in order to introduce further levels of representations above and below the syllabic level.

Proponents of the subsyllabic level of representation argued that the mora ( $\mu$ ) is the relevant prosodic unit for weight calculation. As a weight-bearing unit, it redefines the light vs. heavy dichotomy as function of the number of moras the syllabic node dominates: A syllable with one mora counts as light, and a syllable with two moras is heavy (Hayman 1985, Hayes 1989, Zec 1988). Supra-syllabic levels include the foot and the prosodic word, the first of which served as a means to define the notion of minimal word and to distinguish among grammatical systems those which use iambs from those which are trochaic.

The minimal word hypothesis, of direct concern to us here, disallows prosodic words which consist of just one light syllable (equivalent to one mora). It states that “any instance of the category Prosodic Word (PrWd) must contain at least one foot” (McCarthy & Prince 1995: 323), which in turn consists of two syllables or moras (Foot Binarity, McCarthy & Prince 1995: 321).

With some noticeable exceptions, some of which are presented in the next sub-section, almost all generative studies of weight and quantity-sensitive phenomena come together on one and the same observation: Weight is a property of the nucleus and the coda (i.e. the rhyme). Onsets never contribute to it.

## 1.2 ONSETS

Weight-by-Position (Hayes 1989: 258) explicitly states that “prevocalic consonants must be parsed as non-moraic onset elements and thus can never receive weight by position”. All quantity-sensitive systems should comply with this statement; and if there



were variation it is at the rhymal level that it should occur. Many cases have been reported in this respect, including languages where the coda consonant does not count in syllable weight (e.g. Lardil where a CVC syllable counts as light, Hayes 1989: 255, Hyman 1985: 8), and others where “only [+son] segments within the rime would be projected as weight-bearing” (Hyman 1985: 11). Since then, several studies have challenged the hypothesis that onsets are weightless. Topinzi (2010, 2011) provides a substantial survey in this respect. In addition to languages where the presence or absence of an onset seems to play a role in stress placement (e.g. in Arrernte, C-initial words assign stress to the first syllable, while V-initial stress the second syllable), she has argued that (initial) geminates can be moraic in languages such as Turkese and Pattani Malay, where “words must satisfy a bimoraic minimality criterion” (2008: 6). More recently, Ryan (2014) has argued that complex onsets can affect weight in quantitative meter, and stress in English (distinguishing empty onsets from those with one, two and three consonants).

The present paper provides another piece of evidence in support of the idea that complex onsets may contribute to weight. It will be argued that certain French hypocoristics require their onsets to be weighted in order for them to meet the minimum size requirement. Contrary to the aforementioned studies, which rely on standard hierarchical versions of syllabic structure, and where the onset barely interacts with other constituents, I will show within Strict CV that only nuclei count in weight; any consonant cluster, whether it corresponds to a coda+onset sequence or to a complex onset, contains an empty nucleus which may project a weight unit.

## **2 FRENCH HYPCORISTICS: AN OVERVIEW OF PREVIOUS ACCOUNTS**

The first studies of French hypocoristics within the generative phonology appeared in the early eighties. The accounts have constantly evolved in line with the theoretical innovations in the field, moving from standard syllabic to hierarchical prosodic analyses,

and from representational to computational. Plénat (1982, 1984) proposed that truncated forms like *Toto*, *Fanfa*, *Totor* and *Guiguitte* use a disyllabic template of the form ONO(R), where O, N and R stand for Onset, Nucleus and Rime, respectively. The segmental identification of this template obeys standard association conventions, the basic tenets around which autosegmental representations were organized at that time; The (R) in brackets indicates the optional identification of the rimal position. Twenty years later, the author reinterprets in a joint work with Huerta (2006: 342) the disyllabic template as an emergent object, which results from the interaction of a set of constraints, including FOOT BINARITY, ANCHORING, CONTIGUITY and LINEARITY. These constraints explain, among other things, the size variation in the truncated forms (e.g. *Dominique* → *Dom*, *Domi*) and the choice of segments in the input forms (e.g. **Sebastien** vs. **Honorine** vs. **Emmanuel**, the bolded portion corresponds to the hypocoristic form).

In the same line of thought, Nelson (1998: 186) argued that the French “hypocoristic maps to a bi-syllabic foot”, viewed as “an Emergence of the Unmarked effect (McCarthy & Prince 1994)”. Her OT-based analysis further addresses the constraints underlying the mapping of the left or right edge of the base into the hypocoristic form. Two constraints are used: ANCHOR LEFT and ANCHOR RIGHT, which in interaction with other constraints allow selecting the optimal candidates: for example, *Caroline* → *Caro*, *Dorothée* → *Doro*, *Elisabeth* → *Zabet*, *Emmanuel* → *Manu*.

The common point to which these studies lead is that the analysis of the prosodic shape of French hypocoristics requires the use of prosodic hierarchy, through which the notion of minimal word is characterized.

While I remain agnostic as to whether the notion of minimal word has any phonological status *per se*, I will argue in the remainder of this section that there is no need for any hierarchical structure in order to account for the binary character (either syllabic or moraic) of French hypocoristics. I will subscribe to Scheer & Szigetvári’s (2005) take that “nuclei and only nuclei” can contribute to weight, whether contentful or empty. The strict CV is one such theory in which both types of nuclei exist.



In both examples, word final V positions are licensed to remain empty because French is one such language where words can end in a consonant at the surface form, as opposed to Italian where words must end in a vowel (see Kaye 1990: 314 on domain-final V positions). In (2a), the schwa between /d/ and /l/ can be omitted, since its position is properly governed by the following vowel. In contrast, in (2b) the schwa between /g/ and /r/ resists deletion for it must govern the preceding empty vocalic position. Its deletion would have led to the form \*[maʁgʁit], which displays an illicit three-consonant cluster, in reference to Grammont’s law (Grammont 1933: 359).

The computation of empty positions proves also interesting in accounting for stress placement, particularly in systems which distinguish between light and heavy syllables. In languages like Latin where stress is traditionally said to fall on the penultimate if it is heavy, otherwise the antepenultimate, Scheer & Szigetvári (2005: 58) propose that “stress falls on the vowel that is associated with the third nucleus from the right edge of the word”. This is because the coda consonant in standard syllable theory is represented within Strict CV as the onset of a syllable whose nucleus is empty. It is precisely this nucleus which counts in weight, and not the preceding consonant, as traditionally assumed under moraic analyses. On this view, *fácere* ‘do’ and *arísta* ‘ear, spike’, to take but these two examples, are uniformly stressed on the antepenultimate vocalic position (V<sub>3</sub>), as shown in the representations in (3).

(3) [fákere] vs. [arísta] (Scheer & Szigetvári 2005: 58)

a.	b.
C V <sub>3</sub> C V <sub>2</sub> C V <sub>1</sub>	C V <sub>4</sub> C V <sub>3</sub> C V <sub>2</sub> C V <sub>1</sub>
f a k e r e	a r i s t a

The reader is also referred to Faust & Ulfsson (2018) for a similar account for stress assignment in Palestinian Arabic. In this language, both contentful and empty nu-

clei are analyzed as metrically-significant, to the exclusion of domain-final empty nuclei. Of particular interest is the ability of nuclei to project a metrical grid. Empty nuclei project to level 1, and contentful nuclei to level 2. An incorporation mechanism (Ulfsbjörninn 2014) allows grouping together a contentful nucleus and its neighboring empty nucleus in order to project a higher metrical line (Line 3), where stress is assigned.

The analysis presented in the next sub-section is a continuation of the effort to analyze weight as function of the number of vocalic positions rather than byproduct of prosodic hierarchy. No appeal will be made to feet, syllables or moras.

### 3.2 CVCV AS THE MINIMUM SIZE TEMPLATE

The data briefly presented in the introduction are repeated in (4) for the sake of convenience.

#### (4) FRENCH HYPOCORISTICS

	<i>Base</i>	<i>Hypocoristic</i>	<i>Weight</i>	
a.	ʃaʁlɔt	ʃafa	2σ, 2μ	"Charlotte"
	ʒeʁaʁ	ʒeʒe		"Gérard"
	mikaɛl	mika		"Michaël"
	gabʁijɛl	gabi		"Gabriel"
b.	viktwaʁ	vik	1σ, 2μ	"Victoire"
	kʁistjɑ̃	kʁis		"Christian"
	fʁɛdɛrik	fʁɛd		"Frédérique"
	sebastjɛ̃	sɛb		"Sébastien"

c.	florãs	flo	1σ, 1μ	"Florence"
	klod	klo		"Claude"
	ʒoana	dʒo		"Joanna"

Hypocoristics of the type in (4a,b) are widely attested in French. They consist of either one heavy syllable or two light syllables (sometimes through reduplication of the base's initial syllable). Moraic theory assigns these hypocoristics two moras, under the assumption that nuclei and coda consonants project weight. Of further interest is the mechanism which underlies the selection of the truncated form from the base name. The careful reader will have noticed that all bases in (4) begin with a consonant, which is why they copy the first syllable into the hypocoristic form (left anchor), Nelson (1998) and Plénat (1999) argue. This is in contrast to vowel-initial bases which resort to right anchor: for example, *Amélie* → *méli*; *Emmanuel* → *manu*; *Élodie* → *lodi* (though *Elo* is also attested). I will not dwell much on the description of these hypocoristics (cf. section 2). Rather I will focus on their prosodic shape.

The proposal is as follows:

(5) MINIMAL TEMPLATE (version 1)

The minimum size template which French hypocoristics use consists of two CV units.

Under this hypothesis, the forms in (4a) and (4b) do not require any appeal to light or heavy syllables. As shown in the examples represented in (6), both types fit into the proposed template, except for [kχis] and [fχɛd] to which we will turn soon.

(6) a.

C V C V  
 | | | |  
 ʃ a ʃ a

b.

C V C V  
 | | |  
 s ε b

At this stage, the analysis makes the same predictions as moraic theory, except for one crucial thing: Unlike moraic analyses, Strict CV states that only nuclei project weight, whether contentful as in (6a) or empty as final V in (6b). There is no need to resort to the coda consonant as a weight-bearing unit (a thorough argument is provided in Scheer & Szigetvári 2005). As mentioned in section 3.1, French, like many other languages in which words can end in a consonant, allows word-final nuclei to remain empty.

The hypocoristics in (4c) display a complex onset, to which standard syllabic and moraic theories deny any contribution to weight. Within Strict CV, complex onsets are represented as a sequence of two simplex onsets which enclose an empty vocalic position. This position is licensed to remain empty since properly governed by the following vowel. In French, and possibly in other languages where similar phenomena are sensitive to onset quantity, the governee and the governor may equally contribute to weight. The representations in (7) illustrate the analysis.

(7) a.

C V C V  
 | | | |  
 k l o  
 PG

b.

C V C V  
 | | | |  
 f l o  
 PG

Another outcome of the Strict CV analysis arises immediately: The minimum size template corresponds exactly to the minimal domain where Proper Government holds. There is no need to resort to any higher prosodic constituent such as the foot. The minimal word, which prosodic theories derive from foot binarity, is fully defined under the

Strict CV analysis. It directly follows from Proper Government. The minimal template in (5) is restated as follows:

(8) *MINIMAL TEMPLATE* (version 2)

The minimal template which French hypocoristics utilize strictly corresponds to the domain where a Proper Government relation holds, viz. CVCV.

Let us now turn to the forms [kχistjã] and [fχedeɐik] in (4b). One question arises immediately:

- Why aren't their hypocoristic forms simply \*[kχi] and \*[fχɛ]?

The reason why these forms are unattested lies, I argue, in the underlying nature of the obstruent-rhotic cluster. This cluster behaves as a complex segment, which is associated to one C slot. This is not a new idea, as many scholars including Fujimura & Lovins (1978), Hirst (1985), Rennison (1998), Lowenstamm (2003), and Duanmu (2008) have already investigated this line of thought. In its most radical conception, a complex segment is viewed by Duanmu (2008: 26) as the result of the merger of two sounds, provided that the combination does not entail the repetition of one articulatory feature twice in the same sound. As to Lowenstamm (2003: 06), he claimed that the so-called *mutæ cum liquidā* “make no difference in stress assignment because they are monosegmental”. Under his analysis, /tr/ in English *attrition* [ətɾɪʃn] “is no more a branching onset than that in *addition* [ə'dɪʃn]” (p. 8).

I take this view as a starting point, but I claim that in French hypocoristics only obstruent+rhotic sequences can merge into a single complex segment. On the contrary, Obstruent+lateral behave as genuine clusters. Their second member contains a [- Continuant] feature, which allows distinguishing it from the rhotic consonant (Halle



& Clements 1983). In Element theory (Harris 1990, 1994, Backley 2011, among others), the lateral consonant has a closure element, represented as |ʔ|, while the rhotic lacks it.<sup>2</sup> French requires the element |ʔ| to be associated to its own C- slot, as opposed to /r/ which may merge with the preceding obstruent to form a single segment. Under this view, the illformedness of \*[kχi] and \*[fχε] is ascribed to their failure to comply with the minimal CVCV template. The situation is depicted in (9).

(9) a. */fe/	b. /fɛd/	c. /flo/
C V	C V C V	C V C V
f e	f ɛ d	f l o

The monopositional nature of the onset in /fe/ yields the identification of only one CV unit (9a). In order to meet the minimal template requirement, an additional segmental material is needed from the base name, hence the postvocalic /d/ (9b). The closure element |ʔ| present in the lateral consonant prevents it from merging with the preceding obstruent into a complex segment which would require only one C-slot (9c).

The role of closure, viewed here as a decisive feature, has been highlighted in hypocoristics other than French. It has been studied in several unrelated languages, such as Gadsup (Papua New Guinea), Soninke, and Tamazight Berber (see Ulfsbjorninn & Lahrouchi 2016), but has also been put forth in Spanish hypocoristics. Piñeros (2000) and Plénat (2003) noted the tendency for hypocoristic formations to change the base's fricative which appears in the onset position into a stop: For example, **fransisko**, **alfonso**, **delfina**, **awyusto**, and **xasinto** are truncated as **panʦo**, **ponʦo**, **pina**, **katʦo**, and **kuto**, respectively (the affected segments are in bold). They analyze this within OT framework as the emergence of the unmarked.

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<sup>2</sup>Although Backley's version of Element Theory slightly differs from the one proposed by Harris, both agree on the fact that the closure element |ʔ| is present in /l/ but not in /r/ (see Backley 2011: 169-177, Harris 1994: 171).

#### 4 AN EXCURSUS INTO BERBER

Berber has two types of hypocoristics: syllabic and templatic. By syllabic I mean truncated forms of the type discussed in French. Templatic ones use Semitic-like patterns, with an ordered sequence of consonantal and vocalic segments. Some examples of the latter type are given below in (10).

(10) BERBER TEMPLATIC HYPOCORISTICS (Taïfi 1991: 878, Boudlal & Yeou 2019: 58)

ɣisa	ɣ <sup>(ə)</sup> ssu
hmad	ħ <sup>(ə)</sup> mmu
ɣbd <sup>s</sup> ullah	ɣ <sup>(ə)</sup> bbu
χadiɣ	χ <sup>(ə)</sup> dduɣ
rqiɣja	r <sup>(ə)</sup> qquɣ
m <sup>(ə)</sup> ħfud <sup>s</sup>	ħ <sup>(ə)</sup> ffu

The superscript and bracketed schwa is either omitted as in Tashlhiyt or realized as in Tamazight. All forms in (10) display the same prosodic pattern of the form  $C_1^{(ə)}C_2C_2u$ , the last vowel of which is followed by a consonant in the case the base noun is triconsonantal. Formations of this type are also found in Arabic: for example, *basma* → *bassu:m*, *hasan* → *hassu:n*, *salma:n* → *sallu:m*, *ri:ma* → *ramru:m*, *zaki* → *zakzu:k* (see Davis & Zawaydeh 1999, Prunet & Idrissi 2014, and Boudlal & Yeou 2019 for further data and analysis).

The other type of hypocoristics is found in many Berber varieties including Tashlhiyt (see Boudlal & Yeou 2019 for similar data in Tamazight<sup>3</sup>). It exhibits the same minimal size as in French. Tashlhiyt, the variety investigated here, is well-known for its exten-

<sup>3</sup>The authors present similar data from the Tamazight variety of Figuig, in Eastern Morocco: e.g., r<sup>f</sup>abiɣa → biɣa, lmadani → dani, ɣiɣa → ɣɣa, χadiɣa → χχa.

sive use of consonant clusters, resulting in utterances without any vocalic segment. Since the mid 1980's, it has been proposed that in this variety any segment, even a voiceless obstruent, can be syllabic (see Dell & Elmedlaoui 1985, 2002, and Boukous 1987). This hypothesis has been taken up by several scholars in the analysis of various prosodic phenomena, such as in the imperfective and the causative formations (see Jebbour 1999, and Bensoukas 2001, Hammane 2010, and Lahrouchi 2018b). It will be of paramount interest to us in the analysis of the hypocoristic forms given in (11).

(11)	<i>Base name</i>	<i>Hypocoristic</i>
a.	brahim	bihi
	fad <sup>ʕ</sup> na	fad <sup>ʕ</sup> n
	zajna	zajn
	ʕbd <sup>ʕ</sup> ollah	ʕabd
b.	muħmmad	muħ
	ʕifa	ʕif
	lħusajn	hus
c.	blʕid	blʕ
	blqasm	blq
	ʕbd <sup>ʕ</sup> ollah	ʕbl
	rqiija	rqq

The examples are sorted into three classes based on whether they display a mono- or bi-syllabic foot. Within the standard syllabic theory, the forms in (11a) display two light syllables, the second of which may have a syllabic consonant. Those in (11b,c) display one heavy syllable. Under the strict CV analysis, all of these forms uniformly fit into a two-CV template, except for the form *rqq*, whose geminate requires an additional C slot.

Analyses diverge as to whether syllabic consonant are monopositional, associated to one V position, or bipositional, branching into VC (left-branching) or CV (right-branching). The reader is referred to Blaho (2004), and Scheer (2004: 302) for details and analysis within the framework of Government Phonology and Strict CV. For the purpose of the present study, I adopt the following ideas put forth in Hammane (2010): (i) Tashlhiyt syllabic consonants attach only to one vocalic position, and (ii) sonorants take precedence over obstruents in the competition for the syllabic position (referred to as SonPriority below). In addition, I assume that final nuclei may remain empty in Tashlhiyt (see Lahrouchi 2001, 2018a, b, among other works). The representations in (12) illustrate the analysis.

(12) a. $\text{ʕabd}$	b. $\text{muħ}$	c. $\text{blq}$	d. $\text{ʕbl}$	e. $\text{rqq}$
$\text{CVCV}$	$\text{CVCV}$	$\text{CVCV}$	$\text{CVCV}$	$\text{CVCVCV}$
				\ /
$\text{ʕ a b d}$	$\text{m u ħ}$	$\text{b l q}$	$\text{ʕ b l}$	$\text{r q}$

The final V in (12a) and (12b) is licensed to remain empty. SonPriority allows the association of /l/ to the final V in (12d) and to the medial V in (12c). This proves necessary especially in (12c), since it determines which of /q/ and /l/ is syllabic. As to the form in (12e), it shows how an extra CV is need for the association of geminated /q/. This does not really challenge the analysis, since the proposed CVCV template stands for the minimum size, which hypocoristic forms may display. Tashlhiyt, like many other languages, does not disallow hypocoristics which exceed the minimum size requirement: for example,  $\text{lħusajn} \rightarrow \text{lħus}$ ,  $\text{mrjam} \rightarrow \text{mrjm}$ ,  $\text{blqasm} \rightarrow \text{blqs}$  (in variation with  $\text{blq}$ ),  $\text{ʕbdlqadr} \rightarrow \text{ʕblq}$ .

The representations in (12) may raise issues relating to the way syllabic consonant are selected. SonPriority may be seen as a kind of constraint which appeals to sonority in order to identify among segments the ones which sit in the nucleus position (see Dell

& Elmedlaoui 2002: 73 for Tashlhiyt). It is used in order to achieve the same syllabification patterns as in the model proposed by Dell & Elmedlaoui.

The relevant literature highlights two pieces of evidence in favor of Dell & Elmedlaoui's model, namely (i) gemination in the imperfective stem and (ii) poetic meter. The sonority-driven syllabification in their analysis proves interesting in that it predicts which of the initial or medial consonant sits in the onset. This position is then triggered by gemination in the imperfective, the authors argue (Dell & Elmedlaoui 1988). From this point of view, Tashlhiyt appears as an extremely rare typological case because, as far as I know, no other language has been reported with a morphological operation that triggers the syllable onset. As to poetry, the authors argue that their syllabic algorithm allows determining the nature and the number of syllables required by the meter (Dell & Elmedlaoui 2002: 339).

An alternative to the authors' account for gemination in the imperfective is proposed in Lahrouchi (2010). It is claimed that vowelless verbs, the ones which typically resort to gemination in the imperfective, display a binary head-complement structure, where the head consonant (equivalent the onset in Dell & Elmedlaoui's 1988 analysis) is the target of gemination in the imperfective.

In Government Phonology and Strict CV, sonority has no phonological status; it is a derived category rather than a phonological prime, according to Scheer (2004: 51). A thorough discussion of this issue will stray from the main subject of this paper. Whether sonority is used or not does not affect the analysis proposed here. In either case, the Tashlhiyt hypocoristics fit into exactly two CV units.

One way to address the problem of syllabification in Tashlhiyt within Strict CV is to simply use Proper Government as a means to identify the syllabic consonant. We leave it to future work the question of which of the standard syllabic or the strict CV approach yields the accurate syllabification in the language. The representations in (12) are re-stated in (13), without recourse to sonority.

(13) a. ʕabd	b. muħ	c. blq	d. ʕbl	e. rqq
CVCV	CVCV	CVCV	CVCV	CVCVCV
				\ /
ʕ a b d	m u ħ	b l q	ʕ b l	r q

As shown in (13a,c,d), ungoverned empty positions host syllabic consonants. These consonants function as vowels, as they can govern the preceding empty V (13c,d). In the end, only the syllabification of the form in (13c) changes in comparison with (12c): /l/ is syllabic in (12c), while in (13c) it is /q/ which appears in the nucleus position.

## 5 CONCLUSION

In this paper, largely devoted to the hypocoristic formations in French, I have argued that the minimum size that these formations display corresponds to two CV units, which constitutes the exact domain within which Proper Government applies. Prosodic weight is calculated based on the number of the vocalic positions each form contains; there is no need to appeal to any prosodic hierarchy, neither subsyllabic nor suprasyllabic.

I have further proposed that among the obstruent-liquid clusters, only those which contain a lateral consonant behave as complex onsets; the empty V slot they contain counts as a weight-bearing unit. On the other hand, I have claimed that obstruent-rhotic sequences underlyingly form one single segment, which is associated to one C slot. The closure element present in the melodic structure of the lateral explains why this consonant cannot merge with the preceding obstruent to form a single segment.

In support of the proposed analysis, I have provided a brief account for the structure of Tashlhiyt Berber hypocoristics. I have suggested that they fit into the same template as in French, provided syllabic consonants are used.

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**DISCUSSION WITH GABRIEL BERGOUNIOUX**

(UMR 7270 LLL/UNIVERSITÉ D'ORLÉANS)

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**COMMENTS**

**1. L'hypocoristique comme mot minimal.** Les hypocoristiques présentent l'avantage d'un emploi holophrastique qui en fait des unités prototypiques d'observation pour raisonner sur le concept de mot minimal. Isolés en fonction d'appel, sans nécessité de déterminant ou d'adjectif (qui ne sont pas exclus mais réalisent des emplois marqués), ils tendent à privilégier un format bisyllabique selon des principes de transformation en nombre limité qui portent sur une catégorie relativement fermée d'items, auxquels s'ajoutent quelques noms de famille (*Chirac > Chichi*) ou de lieux (*Paris > Paname*). La forme de départ et la forme d'arrivée sont connues et la métamorphose ne résulte pas d'un changement diachronique mais d'un jeu de langue, opératoire en temps réel. L'étude de ce jeu est révélateur des procédés licites et des limites de plasticité des unités lexicales. À ce titre, l'étude des hypocoristiques offrirait des conditions idéales pour apprécier les différences d'efficacité entre les théories. Il reste à vérifier la portée de l'explication, au-delà des exemples cités, sur l'ensemble des formations existantes. L'article n'en donne pas en annexe la liste ni ne renvoie vers une base documentaire qui permettrait de confirmer définitivement, sur l'ensemble des attestations, la pertinence des solutions proposées qui n'appellent pas, en dehors de cette réserve, de remarques particulières.

**2. Une trace d'emprunt ?** Au rebours de ce qui vient d'être écrit, et à l'instar d'autres sous-ensembles au fonctionnement proche, tels que les emprunts, le verlan ou les onomatopées, les hypocoristiques pourraient ne pas constituer une catégorie idéal-typique pour l'analyse phonologique. On relève des formations idiosyncrasiques comme la paragoge (accroissement syllabique : *Jean* > *Jeannot* ; *Paul* > *Paulo*) d'ordinaire réservée à la confection de diminutifs (*mur* > *muret* ; *ville* > *village*) – mais dans ce dernier cas la référence à une « diminution » n'implique pas le nom mais la référence –, et plus encore le redoublement (*Bernard* > *Béber* ; *Éliane* > *Lili*) typique du LAE (Langage Adressé à l'Enfant). Ainsi, la question serait autant de rendre compte du produit que d'observer la façon dont la phonologie d'une langue est amenée à s'ajuster à des patrons non standard. Est-il indifférent à l'analyse que les mots étudiés soient employés (i) presque exclusivement à l'oral, (ii) souvent en vocatif et (iii) dans un contexte de grande familiarité ? Sans incliner vers une sociophonologie, ces particularités ne sont pas sans conséquence et pourraient expliquer pourquoi *Christian* s'est abrégé de façon médiane en *Chris* bien qu'il s'agisse d'un dérivé de *Christ* où le /t/ est prononcé alors qu'il ne l'est plus, pas plus que le /s/, dans *Jésus-Christ*.

La question de l'emprunt, non pas d'une forme perçue comme étrangère (encore que la présence d'une affriquée à l'initiale du diminutif de *Johanna* l'écarte du système consonantique) mais comme intégration d'une forme d'origine non latine dans une langue issue du latin et constamment relatinisée, semble se poser dans la mesure où la différence de traitement concerne d'une part des prénoms en {Consonne + R} et d'autre part des prénoms en {Consonne + L} qui ne se situent pas sur un même plan.

Soit une liste des prénoms donnés depuis une cinquantaine d'années un nombre significatif de fois et qui ont été d'usage depuis quelques siècles, en regroupant en une forme variantes graphiques (*Lise/Lyse*), genre (*Brune/Bruno* ; *Jacques/Jacqueline*), dérivés (*Claude/Claudette*) et variantes étrangères (*Victoire /Victoria*), on note que seuls dix prénoms commencent par :

- BR- Brice (celt.) ; Brigitte (celt.) ; Bruce (germ.) ; Bruno (germ.) ;
- TR- Tristan (celt.) ;
- GR- Grégoire (grec) ;
- CR- Christian (grec) ; Christophe (grec) ;
- FR- François (germ.) ; Frédéric (germ.).

Aucun prénom n'est d'origine latine alors que toutes ces séquences y sont dûment attestées (*brevis* – mais les mots dont la première syllabe est *bri-* sont plutôt celtiques –, *tristis*, *gregarius*, *crispo*, *frango*). On mentionne pour mémoire *Grâce* et *Priscilla* : leurs attestations sont récentes, leur introduction résultant d'une imitation d'un modèle anglo-saxon. On relève l'absence de prénoms en PR- (sauf *Prudent/Prudence*, plus guère employés), DR-, VR-. Tous ces prénoms ont une phonotaxe conforme aux constructions du français mais, à l'exception de *Christian* et de *Christophe*, ils sont opaques en termes d'étymologie, donc de morphologie. Par ailleurs, la coupe effectuée à la consonne (*Frank*, *Greg*, *Fred*, *Chris*) n'est pas obligatoire (le diminutif traditionnel de *Brigitte* est *Bibi*).

À l'inverse, les prénoms en {Consonne + L} sont surtout d'origine latine :

- BL- *Blaise* (lat.) ; *Blanche* (germ.) ; *Blandine* (lat.) ;
- CL- *Claire* (lat.) ; *Clarence* (lat.) ; *Clarisse* (lat.) ; *Claude* (lat.) ; *Clément* (lat.) ; *Cléo* (grec) ; *Clotilde* (germ.) ; *Clovis* (germ.) ;
- GL- *Gladys* (celt.) ; *Gloria* (lat.) ;
- FL- *Flavie* (lat.) ; *Flore* (lat.) ; *Florent* (lat.) ;
- VL- *Vladimir* (russe).

Seul manque l'initiale PL-. L'exemple de *Placide* (lat.) n'a pas été retenu. Si la signification de certains de ces prénoms n'est plus comprise – ainsi de *Blaise* ou *Claude* à l'inverse de *Claire*, *Clément* ou *Flore* –, ils se démarquent nettement de *Vladimir* ou de



*Clotilde* qui, dans leur composition, conservent la marque d'une origine non romane dans des séquences de type #Vl- ou -ld-. La forme *Clovis*, à l'origine du prénom *Louis*, révèle une certaine fluidité de la séquence à la différence de la très grande stabilité des formes latines. Ainsi, jusqu'à quel point la différence entre {Consonne + R} et {Consonne + L} ne pourrait-elle pas refléter, dans la création d'hypocoristiques, des modalités qui garderaient une trace de l'emprunt comme la présence d'un « s » (muet) dans *Charles*, *Jacques* ou *Gilles* témoigne d'un ancien système casuel et non d'un marquage du pluriel auquel on serait enclin à l'identifier dès lors que l'hypocoristique l'écarte dans la paragoge (*Charlie*, *Jacquot*, *Gillou*) ? Cette explication permettrait de n'avoir pas à justifier la différence par des qualités phonétiques ou par une règle ad hoc d'insertion de noyaux vides.

Il resterait encore à examiner s'il est envisageable d'établir une régularité morphologique de relation entre les séquences initiales et la forme prise par l'hypocoristique. Est-ce qu'il serait possible de déterminer dans quel cas le produit aboutira à une troncature ou à un redoublement en fonction de la forme initiale ? La réponse, qui se situe en dehors des objectifs que s'est assigné l'article, poserait de nouveau la question des emplois et de l'emprunt, notamment dans l'engouement pour des prénoms à consonance étrangère dont certains (*Toni*, *Jim*, *Sandra*, *Greta*) sont eux-mêmes des hypocoristiques.

## REPLY

Tout d'abord, je tiens à remercier les deux relecteurs pour leurs commentaires qui ont permis d'améliorer le contenu de l'article et qui me donnent l'occasion ici de répondre sur quelques points liés aux données et à l'analyse proposée.

1. Bien que les formations hypocoristiques mobilisent des opérations (morphologiques et phonologiques) moins fréquentes dans "le fonctionnement ordinaire de la langue", elles restent un objet d'étude particulièrement intéressant pour ce que non seulement

elles servent à appréhender la structure des langues qui y ont recours mais démontrent aussi, de manière claire, que les locuteurs ont accès à des niveaux de représentation abstraits de leur langue (McCarthy 1991, Lahrouchi & Ségéral 2009). Les formations hypocoristiques, à l'instar d'autres jeux de langue, permettent ainsi d'éclairer sous un angle différent la question de la nature des processus ("mentaux") que les locuteurs mettent en œuvre (Chomsky & Halle 1968 : viii, 50, voir aussi Hombert 1986), et celle non moins pertinente de ce qu'est une forme possible ou impossible. Qu'est ce qui fait qu'en français *Valérie* peut être réduit à [val] ou à [vava] mais jamais à \*[va], de même que *Christian* peut aboutir à [kχis] ou [kχikχi], mais aucunement à \*[kχi] ? A quoi peut-on attribuer les régularités morpho-phonologiques relevées dans les formations hypocoristiques à travers les langues ? Le français et le berbère sont des exemples pertinents dans ce sens : deux langues génétiquement éloignées mais qui recourent *grosso modo* aux mêmes procédés dans la formation des hypocoristiques.

2. Cette étude reprend les données fournies dans les nombreux travaux dédiés à la formation des hypocoristiques en français, notamment ceux de Plénat (1982, 1984, 1999) et Plénat & Huerta (2006). Le lecteur pourra se référer aussi à Nelson (1998) et au *Répertoire des prénoms familiers* (Enckell 2000). Plénat se base dans ses travaux sur un corpus de plus de 11000 occurrences, recueilli au début des années 1980, mais qui est à ma connaissance indisponible en ligne.

3. L'étude se limite aux hypocoristiques formés par troncation dans le but précis d'interroger la notion de « mot minimal », chère aux adeptes de la hiérarchie prosodique (McCarthy & Prince 1986, et sq.). Est-ce que le « pied » comme constituant prosodique suffit à définir la taille minimale du mot ? L'auteur de cet article pense que non. Son étude vise à montrer qu'il est possible de rendre compte de la taille minimale du mot sans recours aucun à la hiérarchie prosodique. L'accent est mis sur les formes de type *Flo* (← Florence) et *Clo* (← Claude) que les analyses classiques ne peuvent compter

comme pied binaire sans déroger à l'hypothèse communément admise que l'attaque de la syllabe ne contribue pas au poids.

Comme le note fort judicieusement le relecteur, les hypocoristiques en français recourent à des procédés multiples et variés. Certains ne tronquent que légèrement la forme de base ou bien ne redoublent que quelques segments de la portion retenue (*Robert* → *Béber*, *Victor* → *Totor*) tandis que d'autres subissent un accroissement syllabique (*Jean* > *Jeannot*). Les hypocoristiques peuvent naturellement varier en forme et en taille, mais ils doivent nécessairement contenir dans le cadre théorique retenu ici au moins deux unités CV, domaine minimal où le gouvernement propre s'applique.

4. Les prénoms empruntés massivement depuis quelques décennies à des langues étrangères se conforment à cette taille minimale (CVCV) : *Emmy*, *Jessy*, *Romy*, *Théo*, *Noé* sont autant d'exemples qui vont dans ce sens. Quand bien même seraient-ils d'origine non latine et contiendraient des groupes consonantiques initiaux de type {Consonne + R}, ceux-ci se comportent comme un segment complexe associé à une seule position : *Bruno* → [brubru], et non pas \*[bru] ; *Brigitte* → [bribri] ou [bibi], jamais \*[bri] ni \*[bi] (Plénat 1999 : 198) ; *Grégoire* → [greg], \*[gre] ; *Frédéric* → [fχɛd] ou [fχɛfχɛ], \*[fχɛ] ; *Christine* → [kχikχi] ou [kiki], \*[kχi] (Plénat 1984 : 168).

L'hypothèse selon laquelle la différence de traitement des prénoms contenant des suites {Consonne + R} et des prénoms en {Consonne + L} refléterait une différence d'origine soulève le problème de la dimension diachronique dans l'analyse des systèmes phonologiques, de son impact sur la computation synchronique, et de sa place dans le savoir (compétence) linguistique du locuteur. Sans aller dans le détail des débats autour de cette question, il convient de rappeler la position forte dès la fin du 19<sup>ème</sup> siècle et début du 20<sup>ème</sup> de Saussure en faveur d'une étude synchronique, même si son ouvrage posthume (1916) consacre aussi une bonne part à l'étude diachronique et que l'idée que cet ouvrage constitue une rupture radicale avec la linguistique historique et comparatiste reste discutable (Bergounioux 2013). L'approche synchronique fut néanmoins présentée

comme une réaction aux études exclusivement diachroniques et comparatistes des néogrammairiens. L'étude synchronique des langues vivantes, la plus à même de révéler leur structure et leur fonctionnement, prend alors son essor (surtout chez les structuralistes américains). Elle se perpétue chez générativistes pour qui les règles, les représentations ou les contraintes sont fondamentalement synchroniques, même si là encore plusieurs linguistes accordent dans leur travaux une part importante à la dimension diachronique (voir Kiparsky 1965, et Blevins 2004). Si information diachronique il y a, elle ne peut être distinguée ni traitée différemment de ce qui relève du domaine synchronique (Scheer 2015 : 314).

En réalité, peu de prénoms en français commencent par un groupe consonantique. Ceux en {Consonne+R} semblent, comme le suggère le relecteur, se distinguer par leur origine non latine. Après une recherche rapide, j'ai pu trouver d'autres prénoms en {Consonne+R}, d'usage plus ou moins rare mais bien d'origine latine : *Prune, Promesse, Prosper, Priscilla, Francine, Crépin, Crescent, Grâce, Gratien* sont autant de prénoms dont la forme hypocoristique ne peut être réduite à une séquence CCV, à l'inverse de ceux comme *Florence* et *Claude*.

Il serait surprenant que le traitement morpho-phonologique des groupes consonantiques tienne compte de l'origine seulement des prénoms, à l'exclusion d'autres mots où les séquences {Consonne+L} et {Consonne+R} sont pourtant bien attestées.

À l'analyse synchronique des séquences {Consonne+L} et {Consonne+R} pourrait s'opposer celle prometteuse de Plénat (1999 : 204) qui met l'accent sur la qualité des voyelles et sur leur valeurressive. La différence entre *Florence* et *Frédéric* serait, de ce point de vue, due une préférence pour les voyelles hautes arrondies dans les formes hypocoristiques, d'où [flo] mais pas \*[fɣe]. Une analyse approfondie de la structure des voyelles dans les hypocoristiques reste cependant à faire.

**5.** Le cas du prénom *Joanna*, dont la forme hypocoristique [dʒo] contient une consonne affriquée, est intéressant. Bien qu'absente du système consonantique du français, cette

consonne se retrouve fréquemment associée à des mots d'emprunts. Est-ce un hasard si *Jamal*, *Jellaba*, *Tchad* et *Djibouti* et autres noms de ce type sont réalisés en français avec une affriquée ? Est-ce un phénomène dont la phonologie doit rendre compte comme elle devrait le faire aussi pour des groupes consonantiques non natifs (*Vladimir*, *Srilanka*, *psycho*, etc.) ? On serait tenté de répondre par oui, mais peut-être pas au point de faire appel à un trait diacritique de type [+emprunt] (McCawley 1968).

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**DISCUSSION WITH ALEX CHABOT**

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**COMMENTS**

**Introduction.** This paper provides a phonological analysis of the formation of hypocoristics in Metropolitan French (MF) and in Tashlhiyt Berber (TB). It thus has the virtue of examining very similar processes two unrelated languages which present some important typological divergences in many respects. Superficially, the two processes do not seem to have much in common, yet the analytical tack developed by Lahrouchi is a good example of how the same tool can be used to profitably unite such seemingly divergent patterns.

The main argument is that there is no need to appeal to any prosodic hierarchy in understanding how the formation of hypocoristics in MF and TB is effected, and that in fact both languages form hypocoristics in the exact same way by defining the Minimal Word in both languages—a sequence of two CV positions, which functions as the template to which hypocoristics are mapped. The analytical tool used to do this is Strict CV, a development of Government Phonology.

Interestingly, the analysis suggests that complex onsets may contribute to weight, where Cl sequences function as a true cluster, with the obstruents enclosing a metrically-active empty V position, and Cr sequences seem to occupy a single C position, resulting in a representational difference that is not readily apparent on the surface, but that is revealed through the phonological analysis Lahrouchi develops.

Ultimately, Lahrouchi determines that weight is always a property of vocalic nuclei, and never of consonantal positions.

I'll frame my comments as a discussion of the main arguments as I understood them, the interesting ideas it sparked as I was reading, and some questions that it raised for me.

**Hypocoristics and the prosodic hierarchy.** Lahrouchi provides a brief review of apparent constraints on truncation processes, and a discussion of potential ways of conceptualizing such processes as being an effect of the prosodic hierarchy. I found the brief review useful in situating the context of the paper. Where Lahrouchi diverges from accounts that reference the prosodic hierarchy is in his suggestion that there is no need to appeal to any structure of the prosodic hierarchy, though I must say that Lahrouchi's reasons for seeming to suggest that dispensing with the prosodic hierarchy is desirable are not fully clear. I have some ideas of my own, but I would have found a discussion that makes explicit what is being gained in Lahrouchi's excising of the prosodic hierarchy; in particular, is hypocoristic formation moved out of the remit of the prosodic hierarchy which otherwise remains intact, or does this analysis supplant some aspect of the hierarchy which is no longer needed *anywhere* in phonology?

Lahrouchi's analysis of truncation only needs minimal machinery, being principally representational in nature. Indeed, while the representational solution brings with it an interesting argument (more on that below), I find myself wishing to see a discussion of the computational process that maps between full forms and truncated forms. Indeed, Lahrouchi seems to suggest on p. 7 that hypocoristics are the result of a "requirement" by the grammar that onsets "meet" a minimum size requirement. It may be that Lahrouchi intends for the relationship between full name forms and their hypocoristic homologues to be one resulting from some kind of constraint, in which there is, perhaps, no true computational process doing any mapping. Lahrouchi's analysis makes clear that there is some phonological knowledge governing the pattern of hypocoristic formation,

but that this knowledge is principally representational in nature. One question this leaves me with, then, is if the actual process of hypocoristic formation is a part of phonological knowledge, or is the only knowledge the constraint itself (in the form of the minimal word template)?

In any case, the representational solution adopted by Lahrouchi is to view truncation templates as being strictly regimented: they are always sequences of two CV units. This is an interesting conclusion, partly because it allows for an essentially stipulated constraint on truncated forms in other approaches to be dispensed with (see for example Lahrouchi's review of the literature on ps. 7-8). This is especially welcome since Lahrouchi's minimal condition on word size falls out from something that is independently motivated elsewhere in Government Phonology: a sequence of two CV units is the minimal domain where Proper Government holds.

**Consequences of Lahrouchi's analysis.** In this approach, prosodic weight is always a function of and only of the number of vocalic slots, empty or filled, in a minimal word. This has essentially two consequences that I can see. The first is that, a hazardous arrangement that is well-established in phonology is put on more solid footing. That is, weight is capricious, being the product of long vowels and codas in one language, of only one or the other in another language, of sonorants but not obstruents in a third, and so on. In Lahrouchi's view, weight is not determined by the status of the coda; since only nuclei count for weight, a much more parsimonious arrangement. The second consequence is the contribution Lahrouchi's paper makes to the argument that says complex onsets may contribute to weight. This is a result of a property of strict CV, in which the skeleton is always an invariable sequence of a single C position followed by a single V position. This means that syllabic onsets enclose an empty nucleus that, emptiness notwithstanding, still counts for syllable weight, even in what seem to be superficially light syllables, such as [flo], for example.



Now, the advantage of this setup where hypocoristics are concerned is that while other approaches do not seem to have an answer for the question of why the output of the truncation process produces unexpected forms: why do forms such as [kχistjã] and [fχederik] reduce to [kχis] and [fχed], compared to [mikael] → [mika] or [faβlɔt] → [fafa], for example. Put another way, why do some forms result in (heavy and light) [CVCV] or [CCV] outputs while others result in (heavy) [CCVC] outputs?

The author suggests that the answer lays in the representations, not in any divergent computational process, with for example the optional rhyme in Plénat's (1984) account (discussed on p. 8). Simply put, C<sub>l</sub> and C<sub>r</sub> onsets are not the same in terms of their templatic existence on the timing tier. The latter take two places, and the former take only one (in this sense they look something like affricates). This all allows for a very interesting unification of these divergent surface outputs (CVCV, CCV, and CCVC respectively): they are all surface manifestations of a single, minimal CVCV template, to which the melodic material is associated in different (but predictable) ways. Contrasted with a view that sees some consonants (codas) as weight bearing units (sometimes), and other consonants (onsets) as never bearing weight, this unification is a welcome development.

This analytical device is then profitably extended to TB, which is shown to demand the same minimal-word size as MF—a CVCV template. This allows for truncation processes in TB to be understood in exactly the same way as in MF with, at least for these two languages, no need to stipulate anything that is language particular.

**Further Questions.** In Lahrouchi's analysis, a form such as [flo] has an empty C position in between the first two consonantal segments, while [fred] does not, given that the [fr] sequence is a monosegmental object on the skeletal tier: [ɛ] occupies the vocalic position that is vacant in [flo] and other words with initial C<sub>l</sub> clusters. This is an important difference between Lahrouchi's analysis and the orthodox version of strict CV, as for example in Scheer (2004, *infra*) where the relationship between C<sub>l</sub> and C<sub>r</sub> is identical,

and regulated by infrasegmental government, which translates the notion of "branching onset" into the native vocabulary of strict CV.

Where Cl and Cr have the same infrasegmental bond, they both differ from bogus clusters such as in MF [pnø] 'tire' or even [ski] 'ski'. Here, however, there seems to be no difference structurally between words like [flo] and words like [pnø], a surprising state of affairs since the onset status of [fl] seems to be well established in French and well established cross linguistically—in sharp distinction to words like [ski] for example (see Kaye 1992 and Goad 2012) where the word initial consonant cluster is a coda-onset cluster. Here the only difference between the three words I have used as examples seems to be strictly in their melodic material, and have no echo in the structure of the skeletal tier.

The distinction between Cl and Cr is an interesting one, nonetheless. An unexplored question that is raised is why forms with initial Cr clusters don't pattern with other initial monosegmental objects, such as the voiceless fricative at the beginning of [ʃaβlɔt]. Such forms are truncated by reduplicating the initial syllable, thus [ʃaβlɔt] is reduced to [ʃafa]. Put another way:



If Cr is essentially like [ʃ] in being associated to a single timing position, why don't forms like [kχistjã] and [fχederik] reduce (exclusively) to [kχikχi] and [fχefχe]?



I do note that in my own experience with MF, both [kχikχi] and [fχefχe] are possible forms, albeit marked relative to the more frequent [kχis] and [fχed] (but then, so is [kloklo], as in for example the hypocoristic used to refer to Jean-Claude François). Nothing that I can see in the representational analysis given by Lahrouchi explains this apparent divergence.

There are some conceptual issues related to these distinct representational structures of /CI/ and /Cr/ clusters. In particular, there does not seem to be any distinction between /CI/ clusters and so-called bogus clusters. All that Lahrouchi says is that /CI/ clusters are "genuine clusters" (p. 14). This is a minor detail but since it has consequences elsewhere in the phonology I believe it deserves discussion.

Since there is nothing in this account that allows us to distinguish between /CI/ clusters and bogus clusters, we should expect /CI/ clusters to function syllabically just as bogus clusters such as /pt/ as in [kap.te] `capter'; that is to say, they should close the preceding syllable. This is demonstrably not the case in French, however.

In Southern French, the quality of mid vowels is regulated by the so called "loi de position", which says that all mid vowels will be realized as mid close when in an open syllable [e ø o], and as mid open when in a closed syllable or an open syllable followed by a syllable whose nucleus is schwa [ε œ ə]. This distribution provides an ironclad diagnostic for determining the syllabic position of a consonant: a mid vowel is mid-open before a coda if the following vowel is anything other than schwa. This means that, if Lahrouchi's analysis of the bipositional nature of /CI/ clusters is correct, and these clusters are not distinct from bogus clusters, that we would expect mid vowels to be realized as mid-open when they precede /CI/ clusters. This is not the case, as words such as [e.klyz] `écluse' demonstrate, where the initial vowel is mid close and so in an open syllable, meaning that the onset status of [k] is not in doubt. In words such as \ɔp.te\ `opter', on the other hand, the initial vowel is mid open, since it is the nucleus of a syllable closed by a bogus cluster.

This demonstrates that onset clusters do have a status distinct from bogus clusters, but nothing in the account here reflects that. This is, however, a minor issue and does not change Lahrouchi's main point in any fundamental way.

**Conclusion.** One of the virtues of this paper is that it presents an opportunity to reflect on what should be considered to be phonological data. Hypocoristics are a class of phenomena that seem to share a great many properties of phonology without occupying a clear position in either the static wing of phonotactics or the dynamic wing of mappings between underlying forms and surface forms. Like *verlan*, they are tantalizingly close to being unambiguous phonological processes, but are not conditioned by phonological context; in this they occupy a kind of liminal space. Indeed, one analytic possibility is to suggest that [ʃaʃa] is not derived via some computational process from [ʃaɪɫɔt], but rather is a separate lexical object that has to be learned by speakers, and whose form is the result of historical residue, analogy, or some other extraphonological fact.

Plénat (1995) showed that the phonological structure of *verlan* was predictable if viewed through the correct lens, the minimal word. Like Plénat's treatment of *verlan*, the analysis Lahrouchi provides thus has the virtue of allowing us to view hypocoristics in a phonological framework that reveals not only the phonological status of hypocoristic formation, but tells us something interesting about phonology more generally, to wit the relationship between prosodic weight and vocalic positions. A welcome development.

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## REPLY

1. In the proposed analysis, there is a direct relationship between the base name and the corresponding hypocoristic. This relation is derivational in nature, mediated by the template, whose shape (CVCV) determines the minimum size each output form must display. Base names like *Michel*, *Charlotte*, *Brigitte* and *Christian* cannot reduce to \*[mi], \*[ʃa], \*[bʁi], and \*[kʁi] for no other reason than that they are prosodically deficient: they do not comply with the minimum size imposed by the template. Admittedly, this is what standard prosodic analyses lead to, except that they firmly exclude any contribution of the onset to prosodic weight, therefore making it difficult to account for hypocoristics such as [flo] and [klo]. The proposed analysis argues that these forms display genuine complex onsets, which enclose a metrically-active empty vocalic position. They stand in sharp contrast with forms like [fʁɛd] and [kʁis], whose obstruent-rhotic behave as one single segment, associated to one C position.

2. The article focuses on the prosodic and melodic properties of the hypocoristic forms. It leaves aside the mechanisms underlying the choice of the portion selected from the input name. The reader is referred to Nelson (1998). Even more intriguing is the fact that one single input can lead to several outputs: for example, *Isabelle* yields [iza], [bebɛl] or [zaza], while *Valérie* leads to [val] or [vava] (see Plénat 1999). This brings us to the issue of variation.

3. The templatic analysis imposes a minimum size on the truncated forms but does not require that each form be made of strictly two CV units. *Claude* may lead to either [klo] or [kloklo], and both [flo] and [floflo] are attested hypocoristics for *Florence*. The existence of [kloklo] and [floflo] does not necessarily invalidate the analysis. Instead, it points to the fact that French, like many other languages, allows hypocoristics that exceed two CV units, but clearly disallows those composed of less than two CV units.

*Frederic* and *Brigitte* may also reduce to [fʁɛfʁɛ] and [bʁibʁi] but never to \*[fʁɛ] and \*[bʁi].

4. The reviewer rightly noticed that if as argued /Cl/ are bipositional, they should pattern with bogus clusters in regard to *the loi de position*: because both types of clusters contain an empty vocalic position, the preceding mid vowel is expected to be realized as open. However, one may argue that the *loi de position* is sensitive to proper government, and more particularly to the ability of the following empty vocalic position, when there is one, to attract proper government. A mid vowel is realized as open when the following empty V is governed, typically in bogus and coda-onset clusters. /Cl/ clusters, as genuine branching onsets, can be set apart: their empty vocalic position is assumed to be invisible to proper government (the reader familiar with Strict CV can refer to the relevant studies). As a consequence, government targets the preceding vowel which then surfaces as mid close.

The situation is different when it comes to weight calculation. In hypocoristic formations, we expect any empty vocalic position to contribute to weight, whether visible or invisible to proper government. In this respect, /Cl/ clusters should pattern with bogus clusters (as well as with any cluster containing an empty V): their empty V should count as a weight unit. Unfortunately, very few hypocoristics display consonant clusters, fewer ones contain /Cl/ clusters, and none are attested with bogus clusters (to the best of my knowledge). I leave it to the linguists who are familiar with hypocoristic formations in French to verify the scope of this prediction, and check whether /Cl/ and bogus clusters behave similarly.