

What the initial CV is initial of

**Overview.** The initial CV is found to always head a computational domain: it is therefore phase-initial (rather than word-initial). Given the diagnostic for phasehood provided by the initial CV, the comparison of phonological and syntactic footprints of phases shows that both sets do not match. It is therefore argued that syntactic phase structure defines a skeleton whose units may leave a phonological trace by projecting a CV unit. Hence the relationship between syntax and phonology is the same as what we know from the interaction of morphology and phonology: morpho-syntactic boundaries are *selectively* visible to the phonology.

**The initial CV** (Lowenstamm 1999) is a representational means of carrying morpho-syntactic information into phonology that is specific to Government Phonology (it is thus a competitor of hash marks # and the like, and of prosodic constituents). The initial CV is usually thought of being word-initial. It has the advantage of being non-diacritic: its presence automatically bears on the surrounding phonology because an additional empty nucleus needs to be taken care of. By contrast, hash marks or prosodic constituents are "sleepers" that have no phonological effect by themselves: they only produce an effect when a rule/constraint refers to them, and anything and its reverse can happen in the vicinity of a # or a PrW. It is a fact, though, that the left edge of the word does not produce just any phonological phenomenon: if it is any specific with respect to word-internal phonology at all, it has cross-linguistically recurrent properties: 1) clusters of falling sonority are prohibited, 2) the first consonant of words is strong (rather than weak), 3) the first vowel of the word cannot alternate with zero. All three properties are a direct consequence of the presence of the initial CV (Ségéral & Scheer 2008). In case the initial CV is absent, the left word margin does not impose any specific restrictions.

**Phonological footprints.** The existence of relevant processes in external sandhi in a language enforces the absence of the word-initial CV. In Belarusian for example, CVC-roots that appear in zero grade (CøC-V) occur with an i-prothesis in case 1) they are quoted in isolation or are utterance-initial (*lev* "lion Nsg" vs. *i-lv-a* "id., Gsg") or 2) preceded by a C-final word (*brat i-lv-a* "the brother of the lion"). No prothesis is observed after V-final words (*śastra lv-a* "the sister of the lion"). The i is an epenthesis into an ungoverned empty nucleus (in response of two empty nuclei in a row): into the initial CV in case 1) above /CV-løv-a/, into the final empty nucleus of the preceding word in case 2) /bratV løv-a/. Hence the existence of a word-initial CV would provoke epenthesis also in /śastra løv-a/, which is not the case. We thus face a pattern where morpho-syntax does distribute an initial CV, which however is not word-, but utterance-initial. There are thus languages where the word is headed by an initial CV, while in others the utterance is. In all cases, the CV unit heads a computational domain, i.e. is phase-initial.

**(Mis)match.** While Chomsky's (2000) initial proposal is to grant phasehood only to CP and vP, smaller and smaller pieces are held to be phase heads as phase theory unfolds: TP, DP, and even DP-internal phases are proposed (e.g. Matushansky 2005, den Dikken 2007). While the CP and the utterance are a fairly good (although not a perfect) match, there are certainly no languages on record where a phonological footprint is observed at, say, the DP boundary, but not at the AP boundary (or at the vP boundary, but not at the DP boundary). On the other hand, the typical phonological footprint that the word boundary leaves has no echo on the syntactic side: the word is not a relevant syntactic unit, and is certainly not known to act as a phase head.

**Conclusion.** Syntactic and phonological phases are not isomorphic, and there does not appear to be any hope (with a better theory or more accurate data) to make syntactic and phonological evidence for phasehood coincide. Prosodic Phonology knew that phonological and syntactic domains may be non-isomorphic, but the dramatic amount of non-coincidence is only revealed in the light of modern phase theory. This leaves us with a situation where phase structure is defined in (morpho-)syntax, but where phases do not automatically leave a phonological footprint. Which phases exactly are armed with an initial CV unit and hence produce a phonological effect is decided on a language-specific basis.