

Elastic s+C is the idea that s+C clusters are always interludes (which they should be given their sonority slope), except when for some reason the coda-onset parse is impossible, in which case the s branches on the empty nucleus that occurs within the s+C cluster as a last resort repair (Scheer & Ségéral 2020). The most trivial s+C effect is the simple occurrence of s+C word-initially in languages that do not otherwise tolerate non-rising sonority slopes in this context (English, Italian, etc.). In many cases this is complemented with positive evidence that word-internal s+C is an interlude (e.g. there is no tonic lengthening before s+C in Italian, mid vowels are -ATR in Southern French in this context, etc.). In these cases, the s branches in #s+C in order to avoid ill-formedness, but has no reason to do so word-internally. Another type of s+C effect occurs when s+C clusters follow long vowels in languages where super-heavy rhymes are prohibited (as in Faifi Arabic, Alfaifi & Davis 2021): the ill-formedness of VVs.C is repaired by the branching of the s, which makes it an onset (its nucleus is filled) and VVsC inoffensive. Finally, a third type of repair is triggered when s+C comes to stand after another consonant. In the evolution from Latin to French, yod metathesis $Cj > jC$ occurs when the preceding syllable is open and the yod can become a coda ($rat\bar{i}one > raj.tson > raison$), but is blocked when it is closed, in which case the yod is lost ($can.ti\bar{o}ne > chantson > chanson$, not *chainson). Only s+C can accommodate the yod to its left: $ang\bar{u}.sia > ^\circ ang\bar{u}.tsia > ^\circ angoj.stse > angousse$). Here again, branching is on demand due to the illegal sequence Vj.s.CV created by metathesis: s becomes the onset of a filled nucleus and a preceding coda (yod) is no problem.

Import. The criminal record of the phonological object of wonder s+C is notorious (Goad 2011), and all attempts to understand its workings as a unified phenomenon have been to no avail thus far. Elastic s+C is based on the insight that s+C may have different syllabic identities in the same language, depending on context. There are three s+C mysteries: i) the syllabic mystery (what is its syllabic status?), ii) the singleton mystery (why is s only special when followed by a C, but never when occurring alone?), iii) the segmental mystery (why is only s (in fact, s,z, ʃ,ʒ, ɛ,ʒ) and no other fricative able to do what it does?). Elastic s+C answers i) and ii): since s+C effects occur when s branches on the following empty nucleus, there can be no effect when the following nucleus is filled, i.e. when s is followed by a vowel.

A striking argument in favour of elastic s+C comes from cases where the C of s+C shows intervocalic behaviour. This appears to be outlandish in an sCV sequence since C is preceded by a consonant. Under elastic s+C when s branches, though, the C is in intervocalic position, as it is surrounded by filled nuclei. In the French case mentioned, the C indeed shows intervocalic behaviour: $^{\circ}ang\bar{u}.tsia$ should produce $^{\circ}angoj.stse$ after yod metathesis, but the ts appears as s in Old French: *angousse*. It has undergone regular intervocalic spirantisation like all other intervocalic stops of the language.

Customary analyses of s+C are mute wrt the singleton mystery, specific to the (left) word edge (extrasyllabicity, appendix), cannot account for the fact that s+C may show bipositional behaviour (contour segment) or are self-contradictory (Kaye's 1992 analysis whereby word-initial s+C is an interlude, though this is an ill-formed structure by his own standards).

The contention is that elastic s+C provides a uniform analysis for all s+C effects and identifies their *raison d'être*: an ill-formed structure that requires repair. In order to see whether the record of s+C effects can be fit into the elastic s+C pattern, I have undertaken a compilation of s+C effects that are reported in the literature: they are classified according to the different patterns and contexts (word-initial, word-internal) and regarding the phenomena producing them (reduplication etc.). It is shown that the empirical record massively supports elastic s+C. Of the many cases that are considered, here is just one: in Eastern Armenian (Vaux & Wolfe 2009), the plural suffix has two allomorphs, *-er* and *-ner*, the former occurring after monosyllabic ($k^h ar - k^h ar - er$ "rock"), the latter after plurisyllabic ($moruk^h - moruk^h - ner$ "beard") stems. But sCV stems take *-ner* (*spa - spa-ner* "officer"): s spreads on the following nucleus, which thus counts.