

Hiatus blocks syncope in Modern Hebrew

Several morphological scenarios in Modern Hebrew (MH) lead to optional syncope in open syllables [CV₁CV₂] => [CCV₂]. This syncope is blocked by hiatus, such that [CV₁V₂] ≠> [CV₂]. This talk provides a Strict CV account of this phenomenon, and then takes a step back

(1)	natn-u 'they gave'	le-χa ~ l-χa la-χem ~ l-χem	'DAT-2MSG' 'DAT-2MPL'
(2)		la-em, *l-em	'DAT-3MPL'
(3)	natan 'he gave'	ot-am ~ t-am ot-aχ ~ t-aχ ot-i ~ t-i	'ACC-3MPL' 'ACC-2FSG' 'ACC-1SG'
(4)	natn-u 'they gave'	otam, *tam otaχ, *taχ oti, *ti	'ACC-3MPL' 'ACC-2FSG' 'ACC-1SG'

to discuss the predictions of different theories with regards to interaction between hiatus and syncope.

The first phenomenon to be discussed is syncope in cliticized inflected prepositions. In (1), the vowel of the dative preposition is optionally syncopated in C_CV (and after a V-final base). Syncope is excluded in (2), where the vowel of the preposition is

V₁ in the hiatus configuration. Similarly, the vowel of the accusative preposition is optionally syncopated after C-final bases in (3), where it is the C_CV configuration. But after V-final bases (4), where it would be the *second* vowel of a hiatus, its syncope is blocked.

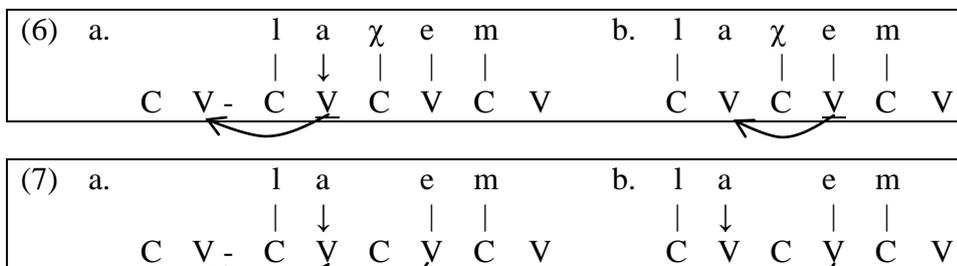
The same phenomenon is attested in initial clusters. The template QT_iLa involves an initial cluster. MH allows for TT and TR initial cluster (5a,b; T=any obstruent, R=any

(5)		Action N QT _i La	def+QT _i La
a. TT	'attack'	tkifa	a-tkifa
	'betray'	bgida	a-bgida
b. TR	'build'	bnija	a-bnija
	'wean'	gmila	a-gmila
c. *RC	'sip'	legima	a-legima ~ a-lgima
	'rebel'	mexida	a-mexida ~ a-mxida
d. *C?	'kick'	be.ita ~ be?ita	a-be.ita ~ a-be?ita; *a-b?ita
	'aspire'	ʃe.ifa ~ ʃe?ifa	a-ʃe.ifa ~ a-ʃe?ifa; *a-ʃ?ifa

sonorant). RC clusters, on the other hand, are resolved through epenthesis (5c), as are cases for which the second consonant in the cluster is optionally realized as [ʔ] (5d).

In the latter case, a hiatus is created. For this talk, it is the rightmost column that is of interest. The epenthesis of an initial RC cluster is optionally undone if the preceding word ends in a vowel, e.g. after the definite article /a/. But the epenthesis in (5d) cannot be undone: Again, syncope is blocked in the hiatus configuration.

Adopting a Strict CV approach (Lowenstamm 1996), I assume that between any heterosyllabic phonetic [v.v] sequence, there is an empty C-slot. Following Scheer and Ségéral (2008), the governing potential of nuclei is always dispensed with if it can be: accordingly, in the hiatus configuration, the empty C-slot is governed by the following V (which cannot govern the preceding, contentful V; governed C-slots also figure in Pagliano 2003, Charette 2003). V-to-C government, I will show, explains why syncope is blocked by



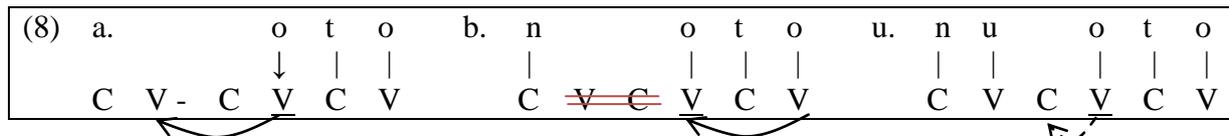
hiatus.

The most straightforward case is that of the dative preposition. The susceptibility of the first vowel to syncope is

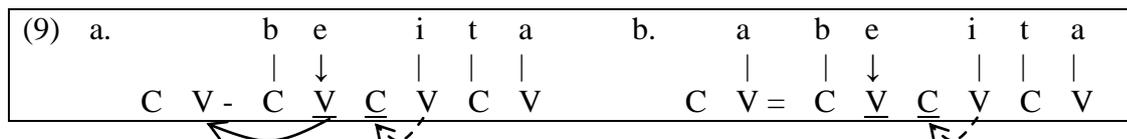
represented in (6) as floatingness. When the sequence is pronounced out of context (6a), the vowel must be associated (↓) in order to govern the initial CV (Lowenstamm 1999); in context, however, there is no initial CV (Faust & Scheer 2015), the position is governed and the /a/ remains afloat. Contrast this to the situation in the parallel form with the hiatus (7). Out

of context (7a), a government relation is created between V and the preceding empty C-slot (discontinuous arrow) and the /a/ is associated for the same reason as in (6a). In context, however, *the target of government cannot change*. The floating vowel is not governed and therefore it cannot syncopate.

The accusative marker presents only a slightly different story. At the initial stage, its initial floating vowel must associate to its V-slot in order to govern the initial CV. Therefore, this V-slot cannot be governed (8a). When the initial CV disappears in context, /o/ is no longer protected by this responsibility. If the preceding word is C-final (8b), the floating /o/ is preceded by an empty VC sequence. Such sequences are regularly deleted (Gussmann and Kaye 1993). Since /o/ is not a governor of any constituent, it is syncopated. If the preceding word is V-final, VC-deletion does not apply and /o/ ends up governing the preceding C, blocking hiatus. Importantly, VC-deletion does not apply to the initial CV.



Similarly, when a form like /lVgima/ in (5c) above is out context, its initial vowel is realized in order to govern the initial CV; but when that CV is absent in /a=legima/, the /e/ no longer has its *raison d'être*; it is governed from the /i/ and can therefore be syncopated: /a=legima/ => [algima]. Compare that to /bVCita/ from (5d), represented in (9a) below. The [e] is inserted in isolation, and the /i/ governs C. This state of affairs does not change in context, such that the /i/ cannot govern the /e/, which in turn cannot syncopate.



Two principles can be drawn from the account above. First, a government relation created in one cycle cannot be undone in a subsequent cycle, unless the target of government is elided. Second, for a sequence V₁C₂V₂, in which V₁C₂ cannot be deleted and is empty (as in 8a), it is always V₁ that absorbs the government potential of V₂.

I close by taking a step back and asking a general question. Cross-linguistically, the most common hiatus resolution strategy is deletion of V₁: /C₁V₁V₂/ => [C₁V₂]. In Strict CV this solution is expressed through VC-deletion. I show that another solution is predicted by both Strict CV and Optimality Theory: [C₁?V₂]. However, this solution is unattested. Time permitting, I provide some discussion as to why that might be.

References : Charette, M. 2003. Empty and pseudo-empty categories. In *Living on the Edge: 28 Papers in Honour of Jonathan Kaye*, ed. by S. Ploch. Berlin and New York: Mouton de Gruyter. 465-480. Faust, N. and T. Scheer. 2015. The initial CV has done its work, the initial CV may go. Poster, 23rd MMFM, 28-30 May. Gussmann, E. & J. Kaye. 1993. Polish notes from a Dubrovnik Café. *SOAS Working Papers in Linguistics & Phonetics* 3: 427-462. Lowenstamm, J. 1996. CV as the only syllable type. In Durand, J. & B. Laks *Current trends in Phonology. Models and Methods*, 419–441. Salford, Manchester: ESRI. Lowenstamm, J. 1999. The beginning of the Word. In J. R. Rennison & K. Kühnammer (eds.), *Phonologika 1996: Syllables !?* 153–166. The Hague: Thesus. Pagliano, C. 2003. *L'épenthèse consonantique en français*. PhD dissertation [ms]. Université de Nice. Available online. Scheer, T. and P. Ségéral. 2008. The Coda Mirror, stress and positional parameters. In Brandão de Carvalho, J. Scheer, T. & P. Ségéral *Lenition and Fortition*. 483-518. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.