

Qualitative enhancement of sonorant quantity in Celtic and beyond

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Empirical focus

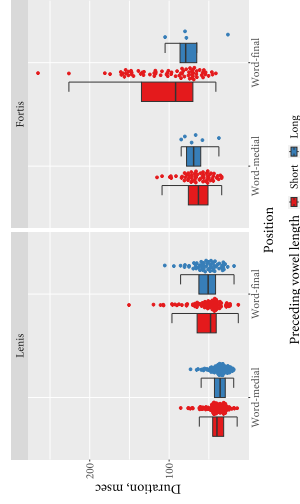
- A curious but repeating pattern in (Western) Europe
- A contrast in quantity between sonorants exists word-medially, but not word-initially
- Quantity contrast > quality distinctions
- Word-initial sonorants have **long** reflexes

Connacht Irish (Ní Chiosáin 1991)

Old Irish	Coda	Onset
<i>gel</i>	gʲel	gʲælə
'bright'	<i>geal</i>	<i>gealladh</i> VN
<i>geallaid</i>	gʲal	gʲælə
'promise'	<i>geall</i>	<i>gealladh</i> VN

- /gʲal/ 'bright' ≠ /gʲalʲə/ 'promise'
- Compensatory lengthening: /gʲalʲə/ → [gʲa_μlʲə]
- No moraic onsets: /gʲalʲə/ → [gʲa_μlʲə]

Maintained quantity



- Quantity contrasts in Gaelic sonorants may have been maintained alongside quality distinctions until recently
- Ulster (Wheatley & Iosad in preparation)
 - South Argyll (Lewin 2023)
 - Isle of Man (ibid.)

Initial position in Brythonic: Welsh

CCelt	Radical	Lenited	Gloss
* <i>lūkōf-</i>	lāgod	i: lāgod POSS.3SG.M	'mouse'
* <i>rīmā-</i>	īriv	i: rīv POSS.3SG.M	'number'

- Similar to the medial reflex for */l/
- Unlike the medial reflex for */r/

Proposed sequence of events

- Phonological quantity contrast
- Enhancement of quantity by quality
- Phonologization of quality
- Qualitative enhancement in strong positions
- Loss of quantity

Scottish Gaelic (Oftedal 1956)

	Coda	Onset
OI <i>bun</i>	pūn	pūnə
'bottom'	<i>bun</i>	<i>buine</i> GEN.SG
ON <i>hlunn-</i>	lʲūnʲən	lʲūnʲən
'launching roller'	<i>lunn</i>	<i>lunnan</i> PL

- Basically the same pattern, with a quality difference
- fortis** [N L R] for **nn ll rr*
- lenis** [n l r] for **n l r*

Initial position in Gaelic

Word-initially, singleton sonorants are **fortis**, except when subject to the **initial mutation** of lenition.

Old Irish	Radical	Lenited	Gloss
<i>náire</i>	n̪ˠaːð̪ˠə	m̪ə n̪aːð̪ˠə POSS.1SG	'shame'
<i>lepaid</i>	l̪ˠap̪ˠi	m̪ə l̪ap̪ˠi POSS.1SG	'bed'
<i>rám</i>	r̪ˠāːv	t̪aː r̪āːv NOM.DU	'oar'

Not in proclitics: [ð̪ˠiav] 'ever' < OI *riam* 'before, 3SG.M'

Word-medial position in Brythonic

CCelt	Welsh	Gloss
* <i>kannīnā-</i>	<i>cennin</i>	kʰenːɪn 'leek'
* <i>kʷello-</i>	<i>pell</i>	pʰeːɭ 'far'
* <i>karreko/ā-</i>	<i>carreg</i>	kʰarːeg 'stone'

- In this context, quantity is mostly retained
- Especially in Breton: [pɛːɭ], [kʰarːəɕ]
- Qualitative change in Welsh: *ll* > [ʃ]

The problem

- 'Fortis' sonorants generally show up in two positions
- Originally long geminate ⇒ this seems fine if they are moraic
 - Initial position ⇒ even allowing moraic onsets (Topintzi 2010), why would this happen? How does mutation work?

Place as enhancement of sonorant quantity

- West Norse (Noreen 1923, Seip 1955): *l* *n* and *ll* *nn* differ in place
- Probably apical *l* *n*...
 - fulr* 'foul', *man* 'woman', GEN.SG. *fuls*, *mans*
- ... but laminal *ll* *nn*
 - fullr* 'full', *mann* 'man', ACC. GEN.SG. *fullz*, *mannz*
- Present-day dialects (Kusmenko 1997, Sandøy 1997)
 - ON *l* > [ɾ] ('thick *l*'); ON *ll* *nn* > [ʎ ɲ]

Transphonologization in Romance

- Well known as a case of transphonologization (Haudricourt & Juillard 1949), cf. Spanish

	Consonant	Singleton	Geminate
Nasal	MANU	ma <u>n</u> o	PANNU
Lateral	PALU	pa <u>l</u> o	BULLIRE
Rhotic	CARU	ka <u>r</u> o	CARRU

Iberian Romance: initial position

Also **fortis** outcomes word-initially (Martinet 1955)

VL	Italian	Castilian	Catalan	Asturian
NIGRU	<i>nero</i>	<i>negro</i>	<i>negre</i>	<i>ñegru</i>
LOCU	<i>luogo</i>	<i>luego</i>	<i>lloc</i>	<i>llueu</i>
ROTA	<i>rota</i>	[r] <i>rueda</i>	[r] <i>roda</i>	[r] <i>rueda</i>

The RR > LL > NN hierarchy

- The hierarchy also shows up in Celtic initial mutation (Humphreys 1972)
- Isn't this just the sonority hierarchy?
- Brandão de Carvalho (1989): this is the hierarchy in the loss of quantity contrasts in Western Romance

Conclusion, implications, further questions

- The pattern does not at any stage involve initial lengthening/strengthening: instead, sonorants in strong positions changed place (likely to laminal)
- Bybee & Easterday (2019): glide strengthening involves **maner** changes, but for palatal/labial glides
- Is this the counterpart of glide strengthening for non-glide coronal sonorants?
- Is sonority relevant? How?
- How did this alternation enter the mutation system?
- Breton (Falc'hun 1951) and Middle Welsh (van Sluis 2019) have been argued to show true short-long alternations in mutation: if true, can the two accounts be reconciled?

Previous approaches

- Initial 'strengthening' (Martinet 1955, Hock 1992)
- Levelling of sandhi gemination (Cravens 2002)

Proposed approach

- Place differences **enhance** quality contrasts
- Once place has entered the phonology, it can function independently from quantity
- Key evidence: 'fortis' outcomes by assimilation with no visible link to quantity
 - Welsh **ll* > *lt*: **melſion*- 'clover', MW *meillion*
 - ScG coda lateral 'fortition': *geal* [kʲalʲə] 'white' < *ged*
- NB! Morrison (2019): this fortition and moraicity interact opaquely (*[kʲalʲə]), and the change in quality follows the establishment of quantity patterns
 - Similar pattern for *n*, **but only before** *t* *d*: *lean* [ʲān] 'follow' ~ [ʲānʲtʲɪ] 'followVN' (*[ʲānʲtʲɪ])
 - Laminal assimilation ([ɲtʲ]) > rule generalization in laterals

Place enhancement as fortition

- Found in **strong** position: initial in lexical word
- Quantitative enhancement would be odd, because sonorant quality is contrastive (just not in initial position); place, on the other hand, might not (yet) be blocked in proclitics! Not initial in the right domain
- Little evidence in Celtic of sandhi gemination (recently van Sluis 2019, Stifter 2023)
- Cravens (2002) has examples of sandhi gemination with place enhancement from Italo-Romance, but the Ibero-Romance outcomes seem too regular to have resulted from levelling of these alternations

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