**Variation in syllabification: onglides in Southwest Spanish**

**1. Introduction**

Overall, Spanish syllabification is uncontroversial. Native speakers tend to have clear intuitions about how to divide words into syllables. And yet, despite general agreement, some areas of debate have emerged in recent decades suggesting that Spanish syllabification may not be as straightforward as it is generally believed. Examples of controversial topics are the syllabification of vowel sequences as diphthongs or hiatuses and the syllabic affiliation of prevocalic glides (i.e., onglides). Some sequences of high vowel and another vowel, which are normally syllabified in one syllable as a diphthong, surface as hiatuses in some Spanish dialects. The syllabic affiliation and moraic status of vocoids (in diphthongs or hiatuses) is relevant because it has implications for the phonemic or allophonic status of glides, the nature of linguistic competence, and the mental representation of exceptional patterns (Hualde 1997, 1999, 2002). Another issue under debate involves postconsonantal glides, which have traditionally been considered part of the nucleus. Recent work, however, has challenged nuclear affiliation and argued for an onset parsing or for the possibility of both parsings.

This paper will focus on the syllabic affiliation of onglides, in particular of those in postconsonantal position, that is glides preceded by a consonant or more in the same syllable.

After a review of the literature and the arguments for onset and nuclear parsing, we argue that the debate has been oversimplified by considering either an onset or a nuclear parse. We will challenge that position by showing that, although there may be preference for a nuclear affiliation, an onset parse is also possible. We argue that an optimality theoretic model can capture and help understand the sources of variation as competing factors which result in variation in output parsing. The theoretical analysis will be supported with the results of an experimental study that show that in some Southwest Spanish varieties postconsonantal glides can go in the onset to avoid co-occurrence restrictions and limits in the number of nuclear segments.

**2. Syllabic affiliation of onglides: onset or nucleus?**

It is not surprising that glides are involved in controversial aspects of the syllabification of Spanish. Glides are opportunistic segments because of their featural composition [-consonantal, -vocalic], which makes them neither vocalic nor consonantal, and of their ability to be parsed in the margins of the syllable. It is thus their hybrid nature that makes their syllabic affiliation unclear.

In this section we provide a critical review of the affiliation arguments for postconsonantal onglides; first for a nuclear parsing, as it reflects the most common position among phonologists, followed by arguments for an onset affiliation.

The arguments in favor of the nuclear status of prevocalic postconsonantal glides have to do with co-occurrence restrictions, rhyme restrictions, diphthong/monophthong alternations, vowel harmony, hypochoristic formation, etc. (2.1-2.8 below) (cf. Hualde 2014, Shelton et al. 2012, Colina 2009).

2.1. Co-occurrence restrictions. Co-occurrence restrictions are often used as evidence that two segments cannot be part of the same subsyllabic constituent, whereas lack thereof is an indication that two contiguous segments are parsed in two separate constituents. For instance, complex onsets in Spanish have to exhibit a minimal sonority distance often described as that between an obstruent, the least sonorous of the consonants, and a liquid, the most sonorous. Therefore, a combination of a sonorant plus sonorant in an onset cluster, such as \*[ml,] \*[nl], \*[mr], \*[nr], \*[nw] would be ill-formed. That sonorant- plus-glide sequences such as [mj], [nw] [rwV] [lwV] (*miedo* ‘fear’, *nueve* ‘nine’, *rueda* ‘wheel’, *liebre* ‘hare’) are possible sequences in Spanish has been used as evidence that [j] and [w] must be in the nucleus (Shelton, Gerfen and Gutiérrez-Palma 2012). This is in contrast with ill-formed \*[nw], \*[rwV] \*[lwV] in English that are thus argued to be in the onset.

Co-occurrence restrictions can also involve point of articulation and other features such as voicing. In Spanish \*[tl] is ill-formed as an onset cluster in most dialects and \*[dl] in all, which is attributed to a prohibition against homorganic segments in the onset (coronal for \*[tl]) and also identical voicing specification in the case of \*[dl] (Harris 1983). An argument for a nuclear parsing of glides based on point-of-articulation co-occurrence restrictions rests on the well-formed status of a sequence of a bilabial stop and labial glide, such as [bw] in [bwé.no] ‘good’. Languages that parse this sequence in the onset such as English do not allow [\*bw] because both segments are labial and in the onset. Consequently, the argument is that since in Spanish [bweno] is well-formed, the glide must be parsed in the nucleus (Shelton, Gerfen and Gutiérrez-Palma 2012).

Martínez-Gil (2016: 156), however, argues for the opposite position—glides are parsed as part of a complex onset—on the grounds that there exist co-occurrence restrictions in point of articulation between a palatal and a high front glide. Thus, while a palatal lateral or fricative can be followed [w] as in [ʝweβe] ‘it rains’ or [poʎwelo] ‘chick’, they are ill-formed if followed by a [j] front glide because it shares the same point of articulation [+high], \*[ʝweβe] \*[poʎwelo].

While it is possible to question the extent of the restrictions on palatals on the basis that they could be lexically restricted or due to historical reasons (palatal laterals in Spanish derive from complex segments, e.g. [lj], geminates, etc.), it is also reasonable to challenge Shelton et al.’s argument that glides are nuclear because a sonorant + glide onset cluster would violate sonority restrictions. While that is true, sequences in which the consonant preceding the glide is not a sonorant, such as obstruent, abide by minimal sonority distance and thus the glide could potentially be in the onset.

The number of permissible onset segments serves the basis of another argument for nuclear parsing of glides in Spanish. Many languages, including Spanish and English, limit the number of onset segments to two (unless one is /s/ in the case of English, which then permits three onset segments). Consequently, the postconsonantal glides in [trweno] ‘thunder’ and [pljeɣo] ‘fold’ in Spanish must be nuclear because an onset parse would result in a three-member cluster. However, this argument does not rule out the possibility of an onset glide when the onset has only one constituent and it is not homorganic (as in the experiment described in Section 4).

A final phonotactic argument for a nuclear parsing consists of contrasts such as *escuela* ‘school’, with an epenthetic [e] before [s], vs. *sierra* ‘mountain range’, where epenthesis is not needed (\**esierra*). Shelton et al (2012) interpret this to mean that the high glide after [s] in *sierra* must be in the nucleus, and therefore it does not have an effect on the composition of the onset. Although one cannot argue with nuclear affiliation of the glide in *sierra*, the strength of the argument for a nuclear parse of glides can be questioned because of contextual differences in the two examples. An epenthetic [e] is inserted in *escuela* to repair a decrease in sonority (from [s] to [t]) in a potential onset cluster; however, this issue is not at stake in *sierra* where sonority rises from [s] to [j]. As seen in the case of co-occurrence restrictions on onset clusters, where sonorant + glide cannot be in the onset, but an obstruent + glide could, it sometimes is the case that a restriction and its derived argument apply only to a subset of segments or to a specific context, and, therefore, cannot be used as evidence against onset glides in general.

2.2. Diphthong/monophthong alternations. Spanish has glide-plus-vowel sequences that alternate with monophthongs in unstressed morphologically related forms such as *cuello* 'neck', *collar* 'necklace'*, ciego* 'blind person', *ceguera* 'blindness'. This fact is presented as evidence for a nuclear affiliation of the glide since it is a realization of a monophthong that can be said to have a tighter connection with the nucleus than with the onset (Shelton 2012). Martínez-Gil (2016) counters this argument by pointing out that some of these alternations result in an onset glide, as demonstrated by their consonantization, as in *helar* and *hielo* [ʝelo]. However, it should be noted that, as in some of the arguments summarized above, the phonological contexts are not the same in these two sets of examples: the glide/fricative in *hielo* [ʝelo] is not postconsonantal as it is in *cuello* and *ciego* and therefore the glide could be in the nucleus in *ciego* and in the onset in [ʝelo].

2.3. Hypochoristics. Hypochoristics such as *Dani* and *Javi,* from *Dan*[je]l and *Jav[je]*r respectively, are presented as evidence for the nuclear affiliation of the glide because it appears as a full vowel in the hypochoristic (Colina 2009, Shelton, Hualde 2014, Prieto 1992), alternating thus with a full vowel. If it were in the onset, an additional vowel would be required as can be seen in examples such as \**Petr, Petro* from *Petronio*. However, Martínez-Gil (2016) contends that this cannot be considered definitive evidence for a nuclear parsing since forms like *Loli* (from *Dolores*, *Lola*) and *Pili* (from *Pilar*) indicate that [i] can form hypochoristics independently of the presence of a diphthong in the base.

2.4. Vowel harmony: Some dialects of Northwestern Spain have a high harmony process in which a stressed high vowel raises all unstressed vowels to its left, (Hualde 1991). In these varieties a prevocalic high glide behaves like a high vowel in that it triggers high harmony, as *mi lu djó* ‘he/she gave it to me’ vs. *me lo compró* ‘he/she bought it for me’ and can therefore be argued to be in the nucleus. This type of evidence is considered weak by some as it refers to a minority dialect seen distantly related to general varieties.

2.5. Children’s games: Data from children’s games has been used to support the nuclear affiliation of prevocalic glides. Hualde (2014: 199) refers to a game of *jerigonza* in which [k] is inserted after each vowel in a word and followed by a copy of the vowel, for instance, *pasa* ‘it happens’ becomes *pa-ka-sa-ka* and *están* ‘they are’ is *e-kes-ta-kan.* In this game a second member of an onset cluster is not copied, however a prevocalic glide is, as seen in *proclama* ‘it proclaims’ pro-ko-cla- ka-ma-ka vs. *puente* ‘bridge’ *pu-ku-e-ken-te-ke* or *tiene* ‘it has’ *ti-ki-e-ke-ne-ke*. However, in other varieties, which insert [p], as reported by Piñeros (1998), the prevocalic glide is omitted, *canción* ‘song’ *cam.pa.cióm.po* (61) and thus behaves like an onset consonant. Shelton et al (2012: 331) mention other types of *jerigonza* in which off glides and codas are maintained, but onsets and onset glides are not: *estoy* ‘I am’ *e-pes-to-poy*, but *también* ‘also’ *ta-pam-bie-pen* and *puerta* ‘door’ *pue-per-ta-pa* also supporting the position that prevocalic glides behave like onsets and are not nuclear. While the evidence seems contradictory, it is important to notice that it is drawn from different dialectal varieties which could exhibit differences in syllabification. This is a noticeable aspect in the literature that reviews the arguments for nuclear or onset parsings, which often does not discriminate between dialects, combining data from various dialects.

2.6. Acquisitional arguments: Studies of children with phonological delay, who simplify onset clusters to singletons, offer information regarding the syllabic affiliation of onglides. Researchers hypothesized that if CGV sequences are structurally related to CLV sequences then treatment with one group would generalize to the other. Anderson (2002) found that treatment of CGV sequences resulted in improvement of CLV sequences, suggesting that glides and liquids are syllabified in the same manner, as onsets. Other studies, however, report the opposite findings. Barlow (2005), for instance, indicates that performance on CLV sequences improved following treatment but performance on CGV sequences did not. In support of an onset parse, Kehoe et al. (2008) report that the production of rising diphthongs and branching onsets patterned similarly for the children in their study. Overall, these findings suggest variation in parsing and that at least for some children during the early stages of acquisition prevocalic glides can be part of a branching onset

2.7. Intervocalic glides. Glides in intervocalic position (when not preceded by a consonantal onset) become consonantal in most varieties of Spanish, with realizations that range from a fricative to a stop or affricate, e.g. [-jendo] *comiendo*, [ko.mjen.do] vs. *creyendo* [kre.ʝen.do]. This fact has been referred to by some (Martínez-Gil 2016) as evidence that glides are in the onset; others (Colina 2009, Hualde 2005) have taken the opposite position, contending that glide consonantization is proof that prevocalic glides are not possible onsets (unless they become consonantal) and must therefore be nuclear. The contrast in argumentation is reflective of a difference in theoretical assumptions. Martínez-Gil (2016) is framing the matter in a serial understanding of phonology in which the glide must be in the onset to become a consonant, while Hualde (2005) and Colina (2009) conceptualize the issue in a parallel framework in which consonantization is a repair mechanism to avoid an ill-formed glide in onset position. In other words, Martínez-Gil's argument presupposes a derivational account in which a glide is syllabified in the onset at some point in the derivation, and then becomes an obstruent. The glide, however, never surfaces in the onset in these dialects, weakening support for onset glides. We will return to this argument in Section 3.

Once again context is shown to have a confounding effect on the debate over the syllabic affiliation of onset glides, as the pertinent position is not intervocalic, rather postconsonantal and prevocalic: this is the position where a glide can be potentially parsed in a complex onset or a complex nucleus, as in *comiendo*, [ko.mjen.do].

2.8. Stress. Stress facts have been brought to bear on the glide debate (Núñez-Cedeño 2014). Spanish stress can fall on the last, penultimate or antepenultimate syllable. This three-syllable window for stress placement is however reduced to two when the penultimate contains a prevocalic glide or a coda, a fact that has been presented as evidence that the prevocalic glide must be part of the rhyme (i.e., nucleus) because it counts for stress purposes, \**Venézwela* *Venezwéla*. Nonetheless, in what runs counter to a nuclear parse for the prevocalic glide, the stress data also support a difference in behavior between prevocalic and postvocalic glides: a postvocalic glide in final position always attracts stress, e.g., *convóy*, ‘convoy’, while this is not the case for a prevocalic glide in the same position, *família*, ‘family’ vs. *Meliá*. The contradictory evidence derived from stress facts becomes irrelevant for the glide debate if, as Hualde (2005) does, the above generalizations are interpreted not as the consequence of a difference in parsing of the glides, but rather as a historical remnant from Latin. Spanish inherited stress in the same position it had in Latin. The unmarked antepenultimate stress of Latin became penultimate if the penultimate had a long vowel of a closed syllable, which explains the preference for the reduction of the syllable window when the penultimate has a heavy syllable. Latin also had no rising diphthongs like Spanish, which were pronounced in hiatus. This explains why forms like like *família* are possible. In sum, under the historical explanation of the stress patterns in Spanish, the stress data do not offer solid evidence for or against the nuclear parsing of glides, as the different behavior of glides with regard to stress can be attributed to a historical fact.

2.9. Experimental evidence on stress and diphthongs also supports a difference in behavior between on and off glides, that in turn are different from monophthongs. Shelton (2007), Shelton, Gerfen and Gutiérrez Palma (2010) and Shelton, Gerfen and Gutiérrez Palma (2012) found that speakers who were asked to pronounce nonce words made more errors in antepenultimately stressed syllables when the penultimate contained a falling diphthong than with a rising one, and rising diphthongs had in turn more mistakes than monophthongs (e.g. *loteiga > lotiega > lotega*). These differences can be ascribed to the position of the glide with respect to other components of the syllable, as a postconsonantal glide can move into an unoccupied onset or into a singleton onset as the second member of a cluster, whereas a postvocalic glide can only move into a nuclear position, remaining in the rhyme (cf. as proposed also by Colina and Simonet 2014, for Galician coda clusters, who argue that a nasal glide is parsed in the nucleus to avoid a complex coda clusters).

In summary, despite a predominance of phonological argumentation favoring a nuclear affiliation of postconsonantal glides, some evidence suggests that an onset parsing is also possible. We argue that the debate in the literature has been oversimplified by examining the arguments for one position or the other and trying to resolve the matter in favor of either an onset or a nuclear parse, rather than allowing for both possibilities under different conditions (cf. Shelton 2010, Hualde 2014, Martínez Gil 2016, etc.). As mentioned above, an onset parse can be an option for preconsonantal glides to avoid ill-formed configurations incurred by a nuclear parse. For instance, if the nucleus consists of a vowel followed by a glide and a coda consonant, an onset parse may help avoid having three segments in the nucleus. Similarly, dialectal variation is also possible for syllabification, and some varieties of Spanish may prefer a complex onset consisting of consonant and glide to a complex nucleus, as will be seen below. Finally, some variation may be due to lexical and postlexical distinctions. This is what Martínez-Gil (2000, 2016) proposes for syllable merger in Chicano Spanish, in whose analysis prevocalic glides and demorification of the first vocoid in a sequence is said to be the result of an onset parse postlexically.

Variation in syllabic affiliation, although not frequently considered, should not be entirely unexpected, especially in view of the non-phonemic, predictable status of syllabification in Spanish. We argue that prevocalic and postvocalic glides are opportunistic in ways not yet fully considered, in that their parsing can fluctuate depending on phonological context (such as the composition of the onset preceding it and the rhyme following, *ciego*, *jelo*), dialectal variation, and lexical and postlexical considerations, thus explaining the lack of clear-cut categorical intuition on syllabic affiliation. While Shelton et al. (2012) propose that this “inconsistent patterning of on-glides reported in the various kinds of literature... might also be best interpreted from a probabilistic perspective (341).”, other frameworks such as optimality-theory are ideally suited to account for conflicting constraints that produce different syllabic affiliation of glides.

**3. Glides in Sonoran Spanish**

In this paper we investigate an example of variation in the syllabic affiliation of postconsonantal, prevocalic glides, to determine whether the glide can be in the onset.

As mentioned above, in most varieties of Spanish, when the glide is prevocalic, but not postconsonantal (i.e., the onset is empty), the glide becomes a consonant, generally an obstruent (with various degrees of aperture/constriction, e.g., approximant, fricative, stop, affricate) and it is parsed in the onset, e.g., *-iendo* [-jen.do] ‘-ing’, *com-iendo* [ko.mjen.do] ‘eating’, vs. *creyendo* [kre.ʝen.do] ‘believing’ (Hualde 2005, Colina 2009). In other words, glides are not possible onsets. The ill-formedness of glides in the onset is one of the arguments used to support the nuclear parsing of prevocalic glides (Hualde 2005, Colina 2009). However, some Spanish varieties, such as the Spanish of Sonora, Mexico, allow glides in the onset (Canfield 1981, Alvar 1996), i.e., *creyendo* ‘believing’ [kre.jen.do], which do not consonantize. Consequently, if glides are well-formed single onsets, a glide preceded by a consonant (e.g., *i* in *tiara*) could in principle be parsed as the second element in the onset [tj] (i.e., an onset cluster), rather than in the nucleus [ja] given that it conforms to sonority restriction on onset clusters. In Section 4 we describe two experiments that set out to test this hypothesis regarding the parsing of glides in an onset cluster.

Section 2 reviewed the literature on syllabic affiliation of glides. The following paragraphs focus specifically on proposals for glide affiliation in Sonoran and more broadly on Southwest Spanish. Southwest Spanish is a variety of Spanish spoken in the southwest of the United States, in states such as Texas, Arizona, and California. Some authors also refer to it as Chicano Spanish (Martínez-Gil 2000, 2016). Southwest Spanish encompasses the variety of Sonoran Spanish spoken in border regions of Southern Arizona and in the state of Sonora, Mexico. Glides in these varieties have received significant attention in the context of across-the-word vowel merger (Hutchison 1974, Clements and Kayser 1980, Martínez-Gil 2000, 2016, Bakovic 2006, Colina 2009) and are relevant to the debate on glide affiliation, to the phonotactics of high vocoids and to dialectal variation in phonotactics.

In Southwest Spanish vowel merger, postconsonantal, prevocalic high and mid vowels surface as high glides (1a), and are deleted when they agree in backness with the following vowel (1b). A low vowel is deleted in the same context (1c). The vowel affected is always the first one in a sequence.

(1) Vowel merger in Southwest Spanish vs. Peninsular Spanish

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Southwest Spanish | Peninsular Spanish | Gloss |
| a. me iría | [mi.rí.a] | [mej.ría] | 'I would go' |
| b. me usó | [mju.só] | [me̯u.só] | 'S/he used me' |
| c. habla inglés | [a.βliŋ.glés] | [a.βlajŋ.glés] | 'S/he speaks English' |

Colina (2009) interprets this as a sonority-based preference for high glides (over mid) in this Spanish variety, in contrast with others like Peninsular Spanish, and for a complex nucleus rather than a complex onset. Like Bakovic (2006), Colina (2009) assumes the at-that-time standard position (and standard arguments) for the nuclear affiliation of glides (Colina 2009: 21; Colina 2010: 141-142). Martínez-Gil (2000, 2016), however, argues for an onset position, in which it is the onset parsing of the first vowel that drives the ban on mid vowels as well as the selection of the first vowel as the target for gliding and demorification. In other words, Martínez-Gil’s explanation of the dialectal differences in vowel merger is that Sonoran Spanish repairs an onsetless syllable (the one in word-initial position) through the onset parsing of the first vocoid, while other accounts claim that this is done through the creation of a complex nucleus. A robust argument in favor of Martínez-Gil’s proposal is that onset affiliation explains why it is the first vowel, not the second, that glides. Colina (2009: 59-65) points to a preference for a complex nucleus over a coda (domination of the constraint \*Coda over \*Complex Nucleus); yet no mention is made in the analysis of an alternative parse which violates \*Complex Onset, because this possibility was ruled out through the arguments in favor of the nuclear parse.

Another piece of evidence in favor of onset parsing of glides in Sonoran Spanish presented by Martínez-Gil relates to the lexical/postlexical distinction. He states that, although arguments for lexical syllabification of postconsonantal glides favor the nucleus in many dialects, this does not affect the postlexical level. Spanish varieties that ban high glides in onset position allow them, however, when they are the result of across the word resyllabification (2). In derivational terms, in these dialects, onset glides are ill-formed lexically, but they are permitted postlexically. As Martínez-Gil (2000, 2016) indicates, vowel merger in Southwest Spanish is a postlexical process which applies across words.

(2) ley [lej] leyes [le.ʝes] ley alguna [le.jal.ɣu. na]

A final argument in support of Martínez-Gil’s analysis is that Sonoran Spanish has glides in singleton onset positions, that is, they do not consonantize as in other dialects. As discussed in Section 2, Martínez-Gil (2001) resorts to consonantization to support his view of an onset parsing for the glide, indicating that, because the glide is strengthened, it must be in the onset. The reader will recall the objection that this argument is framework dependent and that it only shows that glides are not well-formed in the onset (at least lexically), and therefore must become consonants. Nonetheless, Martínez-Gil’s (2001) consonantization argument for onset affiliation of glides turns out to be unnecessary as Sonoran Spanish does in fact allow onset glides without consonantization when they are the only segment in the onset. Whether glides are allowed as the second member of an onset cluster remains to be investigated and it is the goal of the experiment described in this paper.

**4. Experiment**

4.1 Research questions

We set out to test the hypothesis that, since onset glides are well-formed single onsets in the Spanish of Sonora, Mexico, a glide preceded by a consonant (e.g., *i* in *tiara*) could be parsed as the second element in the onset [tj] (i.e., an onset cluster), rather than in the nucleus [ja] because it conforms to sonority restrictions on onset clusters. The research questions (RQ) are thus the following:

* RQ1: Is a postconsonantal, prevocalic glide parsed as the second segment of a complex onset in Sonoran Spanish?
* RQ2: In more general terms, are Sonoran Spanish prevocalic glides always part of a complex nucleus (preceding a full vowel, in a diphthong) or can the glide be sometimes parsed in the onset?

A positive answer to either or both RQ1 and RQ2 would support the position (presented in Section 2) that the debate in the literature has been oversimplified by trying to decide in favor of either an onset or a nuclear parse for Spanish postvocalic glides, rather than considering the possibility of onset as well as nuclear parses, under different conditions.

In addition, onset parsing would suggest cross-dialectal variation in the syllabic affiliation of prevocalic glides. It is reasonable to expect that dialectal variation will affect syllabic affiliation, but little is known about cross-dialectal variation in this area of Spanish syllabification. Onset parsing of the prevocalic glide would bear out the predictions of an optimality-theoretic factorial typology in which constraint reranking predicts possible patterns of variation, such as: (i) Onset, \*Onset/glide >> \*Complex Nuc, Max-IOm, Ident(cons) (nuclear glide) (ii) Onset, \*Complex Nuc >> \*Onset/glide, Max-IOm, Ident(cons) (onset glide) (Colina 2009). We will return to this in the Discussion.

4.2 Procedure, participants and materials

Oral data were recorded in a sound isolated booth using a Shure SM10A Head mounted microphone. The participants were10 speakers of Sonoran Mexican Spanish, 18-25 years old. They were asked to perform two tasks: (i) an oral phrase reading in which the stimulus was provided in a sentence (e.g., *Digo \_\_\_ porque sí* 'I say \_\_\_ because I say so'), and (ii) an oral syllable division task. The stimuli consisted of a total of 21 nonce words (alongside 21 fillers) with a C+G+V sequence.

Two sets of stimuli were designed according to two hypotheses.

Set 1, Hypothesis 1:

Spanish only allows a maximum of three rhyme segments (Harris 1983). If a sequence of CGVGC (Consonant + Glide + Vowel + Glide + Consonant) is allowed, the glide should be in the onset, because otherwise the rhyme would contain four segments and would be illicit. According to this, a stimulus set was created that consisted of 14 four-syllable nonce words containing a postconsonantal high vocoid followed by a diphthong and a coda consonant. This could be parsed as: (i) four-segment rhyme (ill-formed) or (ii) complex onset + three segment rhyme (well-formed), e.g., *lacap*[jaj]*sto,* *lacap*[waj]*sto* (See Appendix). Four syllable words were created to avoid a glide + vowel sequence too close to the beginning or end of the word, a position known to favor hiatuses in some dialects (Hualde 1999, 2005).

Set 2, Hypothesis 2:

If the glide is in the onset, there should be onset co-occurrence restrictions, i.e., only some combinations of consonant + glide should be possible as complex clusters. Crucially, a palatal consonant + homorganic glide [j] (e.g., \**ch*[j]*aba,* \*[jj]*ape,* \**ma*[ɲj]*ala)* should be disallowed because their articulations are too similar; in that case, one can argue that the glide is in the onset. On the basis of this hypothesis, 7 nonce words (not controlled for number of syllables or stress, all with the same G and V for GV, *ia*) were used as stimuli.

4.3. Results

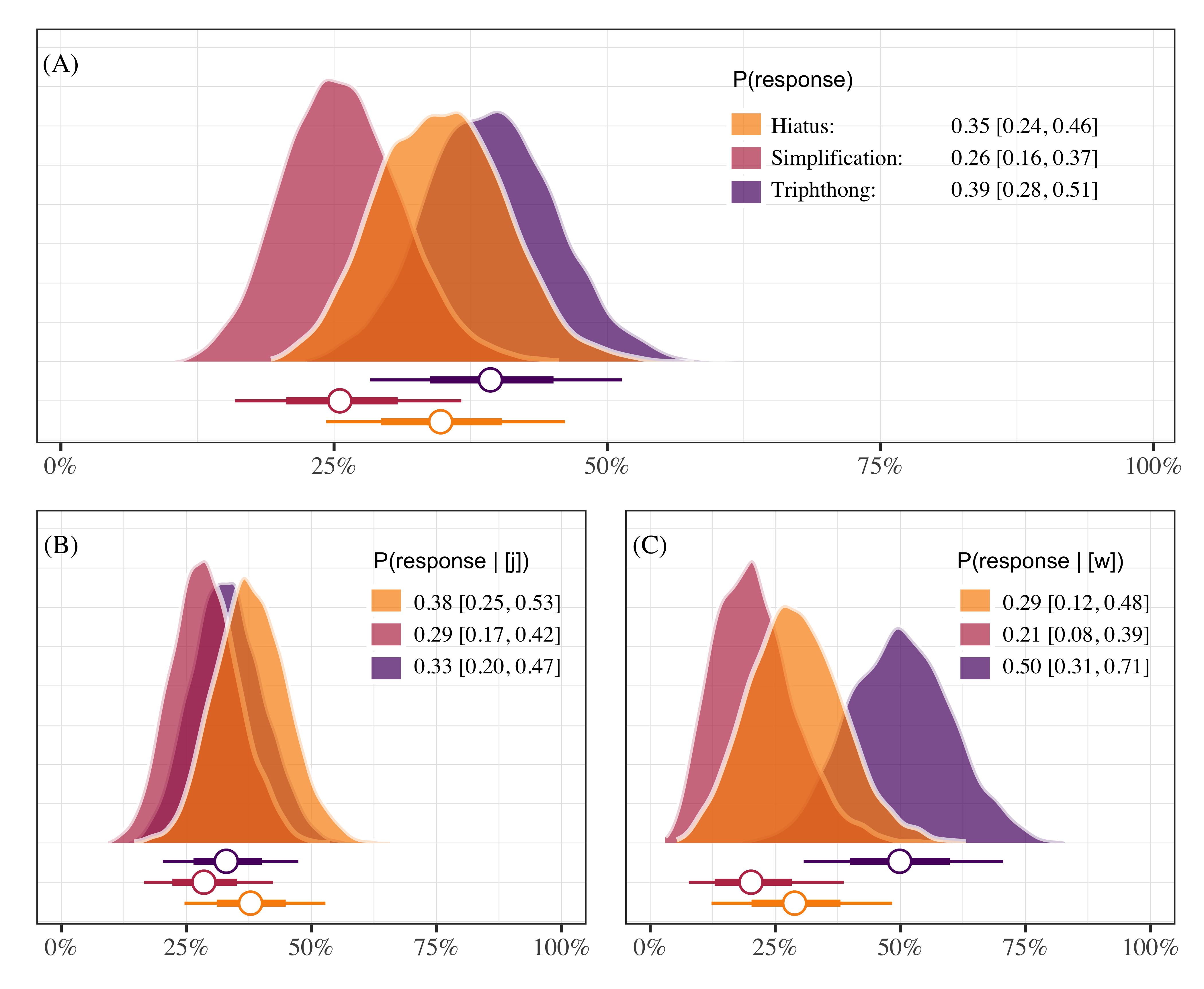
syllable division

* + Questions:
    - How do participants respond? Is GVG possible?
    - Does production depend on the glide type
  + Coding
    - Triphthong: critical sequence produced in a single syllable
      * i.e. “lakapiaisto” ⇾ [la.ka.ˈpi̯ai̯s.to]
    - Hiatus**:** vowel + diphthong (CV + VGC),
      * i.e., “lakapiaisto” ⇾ [la.ka.pi.ˈai̯s.to]
    - Simplification: a segment was elided (typically the pre-vocalic glide)
      * i.e., “lakapiaisto” ⇾ [la.ka.ˈpai̯s.to]
  + Analysis
    - Multinomial mixed-effects regression
    - Model: response ~ glide\_type
    - Random effects: by-subject/by-item intercepts with random slopes glide and preceding consonant
* Triphthongs were produced in approximately 45% of the targets.
* A production containing a hiatus made up roughly 30% of the data, followed by a simplification of some sort (~25% of the time)
* Overall, the task provides evidence supporting the hypothesis that pre-vocalic glides **can** be part of the onset in this variety of Spanish.

Main finding: we have evidence supporting the hypothesis that pre-vocalic glides can be part of the onset

Why: because the participants produced triphthongs at least some of the time.

Responses were variable and we cannot account for this variability with glide type nor preceding consonant



Phrase reading

* Hypothesis: Pre-vocalic glides will be disallowed if preceded by a palatal consonant
* Measure duration, F1, and intensity of the pre-vocalic glide in two environments: after a palatal consonant, after any other consonant
* If pre-vocalic glides are blocked after palatals (i.e., “**lli**ape”), when compared with pre-vocalic glides that are not preceded by a palatal segment (i.e., “**pi**ano”) we expect to observe…
  + differences in overall duration
  + formant trajectory differences related to height (F1)
* Analysis 1 (duration)
  + Linear mixed effects model
  + Model: duration ~ environment
  + Random effect: by-subject/by-item intercepts with random slopes for preceding consonant

**Differences in duration**: Why? Because something is theoretically elided

**Differences in F1**: Why? Because in one case (piano) a glide should be

produced without problems and in the other case (lliape) it shouldn’t

thus there should be differences in formant movement between the two conditions:

(F1 correlates with height)

PIANO: formant movement the high vocoid [j] to the low vowel [a]

LLIAPE: if pre-vocalic glide is blocked then we shouldn’t see the same formant movement

* If the participants are able to produce a glide in some contexts (piano) but not others (lliape) we should also see differences in F1 as a function of the preceding consonant.
* Analysis 2
  + Generalized Additive Mixed Model
  + Model: F1 ~ preceding\_consonant + time
  + Reference smooth for time, participant
  + Difference smooth for preceding\_consonant
* Participants might be producing a longer segment in the palatal condition because of the fact that they cannot naturally produce both.
* In other words, they might be trying to produce something, but because the target is illicit, they resort to lengthening.
* Prediction: intensity of the lengthened segment should be lower than that of a glide.
* Why? More consonant-like productions have lower intensity than more vowel-like productions.
* Analysis 3
  + Generalized Additive Mixed Model
  + Model: Intensity ~ preceding\_consonant + time

Summary

* Sonoran speakers used variable strategies when producing the CGVGC sequences
  + Importantly, they produced the GVG sequence at least some of the time (thus it is possible)
  + Acoustic analysis shows that pre-vocalic segments are longer after palatal consonants
  + Not shorter (i.e., elided because they are blocked)
  + Analysis of the time course suggests the duration increase could be due to lengthening of onset

Strategy to avoid illicit sequence

Answers to Research questions

* RQ1: Is a postconsonantal, prevocalic glide parsed as the second segment of a complex onset in Sonoran Spanish?

A1:Yes, at least some of the time.

* RQ2: In more general terms, the question is: are Spanish prevocalic glides always part of a complex nucleus (preceding a full vowel, in a diphthong) or can the glide be parsed in the onset in some dialects?

A2:The glide can be parsed in the onset in dialects like Sonoran Spanish, but it is not categorical

**5. Discussion**

* Acoustic analysis shows that pre-vocalic segments are longer after palatal consonants, revealing a strategy to avoid an illicit sequence. In the syllabification task, speakers produce triphthongs in 45% of the targets, so onset parsing is possible, but not categorical.
* As predicted, onset parsing suggests cross-dialectal variation in the syllabic affiliation of prevocalic glides. Furthermore, the parsing of glides also exhibits dialect-internal variation, as some, but not all glides are in parsed the onset.
* The rankings predicted by an optimality-theoretic factorial typology are variable/non-categorical: (i) Onset, \*Onset/glide >> \*Complex Nuc, Max-IO𝝻, Ident(cons) (nuclear glide) (ii) Onset, \*Complex Nuc >> \*Onset/glide, Max-IO𝝻, Ident(cons) (onset glide) (Colina 2009).
* The variable, non-categorical rankings above (underlined) can be modelled in stochastic OT (Boersma and Hayes 2001 )
* Further research is needed to study the factors conditioning the variation (they do not appear to be phonological)
* This study could be replicated with more subjects (controlled for sex, age, linguistic profile), and, for comparative purposes, also with speakers of dialects that do not allow onset glides.

6. Conclusion

* In this study we examined the syllabic affiliation of prevocalic glides in Sonoran Spanish
* Since glides are licit in the onset (i.e., no onset strengthening in Sonoran Spanish), a postconsonantal, prevocalic glide could be parsed as the second segment of a complex onset in Sonoran Spanish.
* Experimental evidence showed that Sonoran speakers produced the GVG sequence at least some of the time (thus it is possible). Acoustic analysis shows that pre-vocalic segments are longer after palatal consonants; the duration increase is shown to be due to lengthening of onset (a strategy to avoid illicit sequence).
* Glides can be variably parsed as C2 in a complex onset. Onset glides in Sonoran Spanish provide evidence for cross-dialectal and intra-dialectal variation in syllabic affiliation.

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