0 Introduction

– Received view: Typologically relevant rhythmic differences between Romance and Germanic.
– No (clear) evidence for type-specific isochrony tendency (Roach 1982).
– “Syllable language” type as an abstraction from the original rhythmic intuition (Auer 1993, Auer 1994).
– Alternative phonetic correlates: \(\{%V,\Delta C\}\), PVI, ... (Ramus, Nespor & Mehler 1999, Grabe & Low 2002).

But: Correlates designed to match pre-established rhythm types (Kohler 2009).

– This talk:

1. Rhythm typologies and metrical typologies.
2. Problems of ‘syllable-timing’ phonological and metrical types.
3. Alternative accounts of French and Spanish rhythm and meter.
4. Case studies.
5. Conclusion: Verseform as independent evidence for prosodic typology and prosodic change.
1 Rhythm typologies and metrical typologies


(1) Properties typically assumed for rhythmic prototypes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>syllabic rhythm</th>
<th>accentual rhythm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>syllable structures</td>
<td>simple</td>
<td>complex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ambisyllabicity</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>distinctive stress/</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>accent</td>
<td>vowel reduction</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>segmental quantity</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>limited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tone</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sandhi</td>
<td>external = internal</td>
<td>external ≠ internal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Open issues (Dufter 2003):**
  - Moraic rhythm?
  - Contribution of melody to rhythmic phrasing?
  - Properties tolerated by a rhythmic type ≠ properties that actively enhance rhythmicality.

- **Metrical typologies:**

(2) Lotz (1960):
1. pure syllabic meters
2. complex meters: syllabo-prosodic
   2.1 dynamic type: heavy vs. light syllables
   2.2 quantitative type: long vs. short syllables
   2.3 tonal type: contour vs. flat tones on syllables

- **Underlying assumptions:**
  - Dominant prosodic category determines metrical type.
  - If there is no dominant category, then pure syllabic meter.

(3) Levý (1971):
1. accentuating verse: fixed number of beats
2. accentual-syllabic verse = foot verse: fixed number of accents and syllables
3. syllabic verse fixed number of syllables

- Based on isochrony types of Pike (1945). Isochrony of lines metrical target.
(4) Tsur (1998): Metrical types in the western tradition
   1. syllabic: fixed number of syllables per line
   2. accentual: fixed number of accents per line
   3. quantitative: fixed number of feet and fixed arrangement of long and short syllables within feet
   4. syllabotonic: fixed number of syllables and accents

(5) Hanson & Kiparsky (1996):
   Parametric theory of meter: $\mu$, $\sigma$, $\Sigma$ or $\omega$ maximal size of metrical positions.
   Claim: Universality of metrical feet. (Cf. also Fabb & Halle 2008.)
   $\rightarrow$ No pure syllable- or mora-counting meters.

   OT metrics: binarity constraints, faithfulness as one-one mapping between metrical positions and syllables.

(7) Aroui (2009):
   1. tonal meters:
      – patterning frame: Chinese
      – tone counting frame: ?
   2. moraic meters:
      – patterning frame: Classical Greek, Classical Arabic...
      – mora counting frame: Japanese...
   3. accentual meters:
      – syllabo-tonic counting frame: English, Russian, Italian...
      – stress counting frame: Old English, Icelandic...
   4. syllabic meters:
      – counting frame: French, Spanish, Hungarian folk verse...

   – Poetic tension: deviations between metrical form and prosody in recitation.

   – **Relationship between rhythm type and metrical type:**
     – Poetic meter as “artistic reranking of the natural order of constraints”
       (Golston & Riad 2000: 107).
     – Natural Versification (Sapir 1921, Vennemann 1995).
     – But: Degrees of freedom in the mapping of phonological units to metrical positions (Küper 1988: 254).
Cf. different phonological instantiations of universally unmarked eight-position metrical verse scheme.

2 Problems of phonological and metrical ‘syllable-timing’ types

– Traditional opinion:
Since there are languages with syllable-based rhythm, pure syllabic meters are to be expected.

– Other linguists:
Since there are pure syllabic meters, purely syllable-based rhythm is to be expected.

– While there is at least some evidence for accent-based and mora-based typespecific rhythmic tendencies, no positive syllable-based rhythmic tendencies have been found.

– Alternative reasoning: Pure syllabic meters exist because the uniform number of syllables is a metrical gestalt.

– Our claim: In longer lines, syllabic count alone is never sufficient for meter.

– Comparative poetological evidence:
Upon closer scrutiny, purported instances of pure syllabic meters turn out to be subject to additional metrical regularities:
– Mordvinian [only example in Lotz 1960]: additional metrical groupings (Jakobson & Lotz 1979)
– Polish [Levý 1971]: fixed obligatory caesurae (Stankiewicz & Brogan 1993)
– Welsh englyn penfyr [only example in Fabb 1997]: obligatory caesura (Dunn & Brogan 1993)
– Ganda [Bantu]: moraic organization (Katamba & Cooke 1987)
– Haussa: moraic (Schuh 1989)
– Classical Somali: moraic (Johnson 1979)
– Yoruba (syllable-timing according to Abercrombie 1967): tonal regularities, syntactic parallelism (Olabimtan 1977)
– Tamil: moraic (Balasubramanian 1980)
– Dyirbal gama poetry: accentual regularities (Dixon & Koch 1996)
– Ponapean [Micronesian]: moraic (Fischer 1959)
So-called ‘pure syllabic meters’ are either moraic (Ganda, Haussa, Somali, Tamil, Ponapean), accentual-syllabic (Dyirbal), or regulated by tone (Yoruba) or fixed caesurae (Mordvinian, Polish, Welsh).

Cf. comparative poetics: pure syllable-counting meters “esoteric” (Brogan 1993: 770).

Lines of more than 9 syllables have internal groupings. These groupings are recognized as such by the members of the respective literary traditions. (Küper 1988: 88)

3 Alternative accounts of French and Spanish rhythm and meter


Phrase-based rhythm, rather than syllable-based rhythm, as a prosodic type (Kleinhenz 1996).


Phonological status of durational marking of phrase endings is reflected in metrics:

“Unlike the English caesura, the French is neither pause nor break, nor an event which takes place after the caesural syllable; it is a feature of the caesural syllable [. . . ].” (Scott 1998: 47, his emphasis)

Constraints on liaison and enchaînement at caesura are not part of the meter, but rather a consequence of the metrical status of the caesura (pace Coenen 1998).

Metalinguistic evidence for phrase-based rhythm since 16th c.:

“[. . . ] ma tante a disné se prononce ma tanta disné; mon père et ma mère ont soupé se prononce monpéretmamérentsoupé. Toutefois, en faisant une légère pause on peut dire: mon père, et ma mère ont soupé. Mais si l’on s’habitude à cette prononciation on comprendra les livres, mais bien peu la conversation des Français. (Sainliens 1580, apud Livet 1859: 502)

‘Ma tante a disné is pronounced ma tanta disné; mon père et ma mère ont soupé is pronounced monpéretmamérentsoupé. In fact, one can also say, making a small pause: mon père, et ma mère ont soupé. But if one gets accustomed to that pronunciation, one will understand books, but hardly the conversation of Frenchmen.’

Pre-boundary lengthening and intonational marking of left phrasal edges (Hualde 2003) do not disturb but rather establish rhythm.
→ Phrase-based rhythm of Modern French (Dufter 2003).
– Old and Middle French: higher prosodic relevance of stresses/accents.

– **Spanish:** Phonetic characterizations of rhythm range from “segment-timed” (Pointon 1980) to predominantly stress-timed (Kimura 1999).
Rhythmically relevant phonological characteristics include lexically contrastive stresses and pragmatically contrastive pitch accents. (Hualde 2003).
– In Medieval Spanish, accentual verse of varying number of syllables is much more frequent than in other medieval varieties of Romance, especially so in the *arte de juglaría* designed for oral recitation (Henríquez Ureña 1933, Baehr 1996: 453).

→ Less prosodic change from Old to Modern Spanish than from Old to Modern French.
– Whence the ubiquitous assumption of pure syllabic Romance verse?
  – Fixed syllable count in epic poetry of medieval Romance
    – as imitation of Christian Latin meters (Lote 1949: xxix) and/or
    – as an intentional deviation from Classical Latin meters. (Baehr 1996)
  – Beda’s *De arte metrica* makes syllable count the defining criterion of metricality.

### 4 Case studies

#### 4.1 Old French and Old Spanish octosyllabic verse

– Within the isosyllabic meters, octosyllabic verse is by far the most popular in French and Spanish.
– In Medieval French octosyllabic verse, accentual regularity decreases over time (Noyer 2002).

(8) **Iambicity/Trochaicity:** (Noyer 2002)
\[
\% \text{ perfectly iambic/trochaic lines of all lines}
\]
– Assumption for Old Spanish: monosyllables may be either weak or strong.

(9) Examples of octosyllabic lines with perfect mapping of accents and metrically strong positions (metrically strong syllables underlined):

  a. **OFr** *Cist ont grant joie fait de lui* [iambic] (*Troie* 2113)
  b. **OSp** *porque se amaron mucho* [trochaic] (*Hist-Troy*)
(10) Examples of imperfect mapping of accents and metrically strong positions:
  a. OFr *Et que sa honte ne li vengent* (Troie 2122)
  b. OSp *en tierras d’extrañas gentes* (Hist-Troy)

The complexity of a line is measured by the number of mismatches in it.

(12) Metrical evaluation of samples of OFr *matière de Rome* verse (Noyer 2002)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Work</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Iambicity</th>
<th>Complexity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Roman de Thèbes</td>
<td>1150</td>
<td>71.4</td>
<td>.3226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Piramus et Tisbé</td>
<td>1150</td>
<td>75.0</td>
<td>.2646</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eneas</td>
<td>1160</td>
<td>67.6</td>
<td>.3606</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lai de Narcisus</td>
<td>1160</td>
<td>73.2</td>
<td>.3346</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>→ Roman de Troie</td>
<td>1165</td>
<td>65.8</td>
<td>.4126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eracle</td>
<td>1165</td>
<td>73.6</td>
<td>.2926</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philomena</td>
<td>1172</td>
<td>57.0</td>
<td>.5246</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prose</td>
<td></td>
<td>41.9</td>
<td>.6636</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

→ These *romans d’antiquité* are significantly less metrically complex than other OFr genres (Noyer 2002).

→ Comparing the OFr *Roman de Troie* and the OSp *Historia troyana polimétrica*:

→ OSp text is a (free) translation of OFr text, with adaptation to rhythmical (and metrical) character of Spanish:
  “[…] la originalidad métrica de la *Historia Troyana* se aprecia por el hecho de que […] sólo uno de los once trozos conservados de la *Troyana*, el último, se halla en pareados, y esos son octosílabos, es decir, están adoptados a la índole rítmica de la lengua española.”

(13) Metrical evaluation of 120 line sample of OSp *Historia Troyana*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Work</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Trochaicity</th>
<th>Complexity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>→ Hist-troy</td>
<td>c1270</td>
<td>59.2</td>
<td>.550</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

→ The trochaic mapping of accents to metrical positions is almost as good in the trochaic OSp translation than in the OFr iambic original.

Most deviations in the OSp text occur line-initially. No deviations at the end of lines.

→ No diachronic loosening of accentual regularity in Spanish octosyllabic verse (Cano 1931, Suchier 1956, Myers 1967).
4.2 Renaissance French *alexandrins* and Renaissance Spanish *endecasílabo*

- Fr *alexandrins* and Sp *endécastlabos* have 12 metrical syllabic positions (and allow for posttonic syllables at the end of lines and of half-lines).
- For the history of verseform, the use of the longer meters by Du Bellay in France and by Juan de Mena in Spain has come to be regarded as canonical.

(14) Metrical evaluation of 160 line sample of Du Bellay, *Antiquitez* (1558), II–

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>5+5</th>
<th>5+6</th>
<th>5+7</th>
<th>6+5</th>
<th>6+6</th>
<th>7+5</th>
<th>others</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(15) Metrical evaluation of 160 line sample of Juan de Mena, *Fortuna* (1444)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>5+5</th>
<th>5+6</th>
<th>6+5</th>
<th>6+6</th>
<th>7+5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

→ Less variability in caesura placement in Renaissance French than in Renaissance Spanish.

→ Gradual increase of range of allowable caesura positions from 16th to 19th c. in French (Verluyten 1982).

5 Conclusion: Verseform as independent evidence

→ Both at the level of individual languages and in typology, metrics offers a window into rhythmic organization.

→ The existence of a syllable-based rhythm type in language is just as doubtful as the existence of pure syllabic meters.

→ The relative neglect of phrase-based rhythmic organization in phonology is mirrored by the reluctance to acknowledge caesurae as an integral part of metrical form in some traditions.

→ The preliminary case studies presented suggest that accentual regularities continue to be important in Spanish meters, while Renaissance French witnessed the emergence of strict caesurae. We take this to be a reflection of diverging prosodic evolutions. However, further studies are needed to draw firmer conclusions.
References


