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Resyllabification
# … and its influence on Luxembourgish syllable structure

Workshop: Phonological Typology of Syllable and
Word Languages in Theory and Practice

- Initial question:

  - Is Luxembourgish a Syllable or a Word Language?

- General assumption (cf. Nübling 2005, Szczepaniak 2010):

  - tendency towards Word Language type

  - BUT Lux. seems to have more features of the Syllable Language type than German

- at first glance actual data shows almost no difference between German and Lux. syllable structure

Lux.

-Onset (525)
17.5 %

+Onset (2475)
82.5 %

German

-Onset (471)
15.7 %
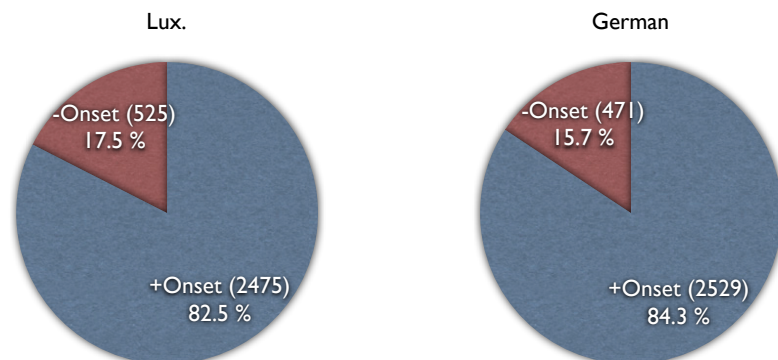
+Onset (2529)
84.3 %

- Conclusion:

  - Without considering resyllabification there is no significant difference between German and Lux. syllable structure

- Two main topics of this presentation:

  1. Resyllabification in Lux.

  2. Its influence on the Lux. syllable structure

1. Resyllabification in Lux.

- 28 min recording of 7 Lux. native speakers

- informal speech

- narration of their every day life/ description of a series of pictures showing activities of daily routine

- written transcription of the recordings

- all possible instances of resyllabification marked

- checked (auditive) which cases actually involve resyllabification

- Results:

  - 631 possible resyllabification contexts

  - 546 actual resyllabifications

  - 85 not resyllabificated

  - resyllabification ratio: 86,52%

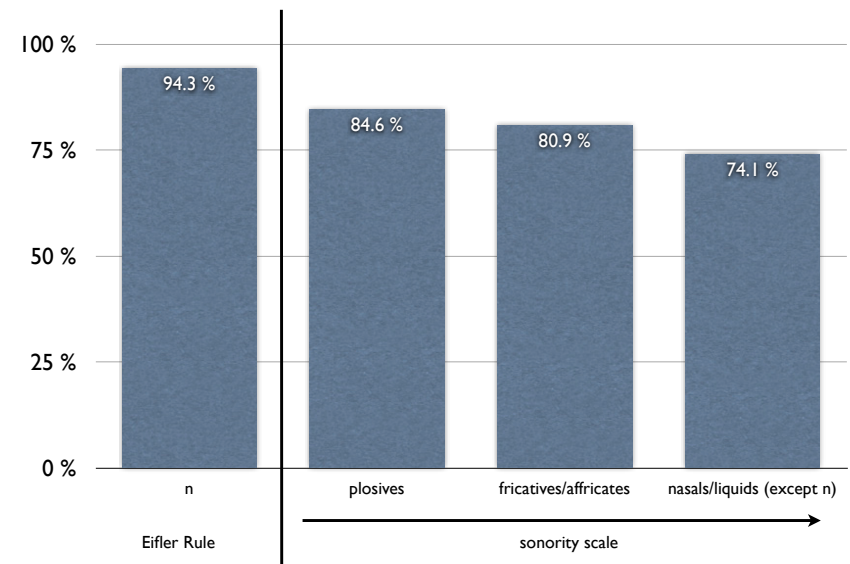 - frequency of resyllabification varies

speaker	resyllabification	number	relative frequency
speaker 1	yes	57	68.7%
	no	26	
speaker 2	yes	21	75.0%
	no	7	
speaker 3	yes	111	85.4%
	no	19	
speaker 4	yes	83	86.5%
	no	20	
speaker 5	yes	53	93.0%
	no	4	
speaker 6	yes	154	95.7%
	no	7	
speaker 7	yes	67	97.1%
	no	2	

- Variation of resyllabification between different sounds:

  - Vowels: Most frequent resyllabification before *e*, least frequent before *a*

Lux.

a: 78.5% i: 80.0% o: 86.4% u: 86.4% e: 91.1%
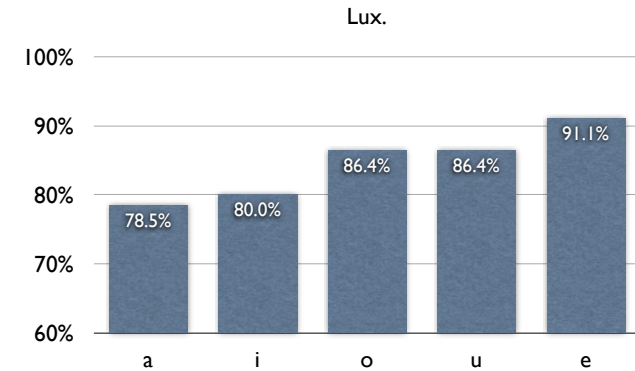
- Resyllabification frequency before consonants:

  - Consonants divided into groups according to increasing sonority:

    1. plosives

    2. fricatives/affricates

    3. nasals/liquids

    4. *n* separated

    strong ↑ ↓ weak

n: 94.3 % plosives: 84.6 % fricatives/affricates: 80.9 % nasals/liquids (except n): 74.1 %

Eifler Rule | sonority scale →

- Why are there such differences between the single speakers?

    1. Could be an indication of changes or reduction of resyllabification.

    2. Could be explained by speech pauses caused by breathing, thinking, faltering.

- To check the first assumption the speakers were divided into two groups:

    1. The three speakers with the most frequent resyllabification

    2. The three speakers with the least frequent resyllabification
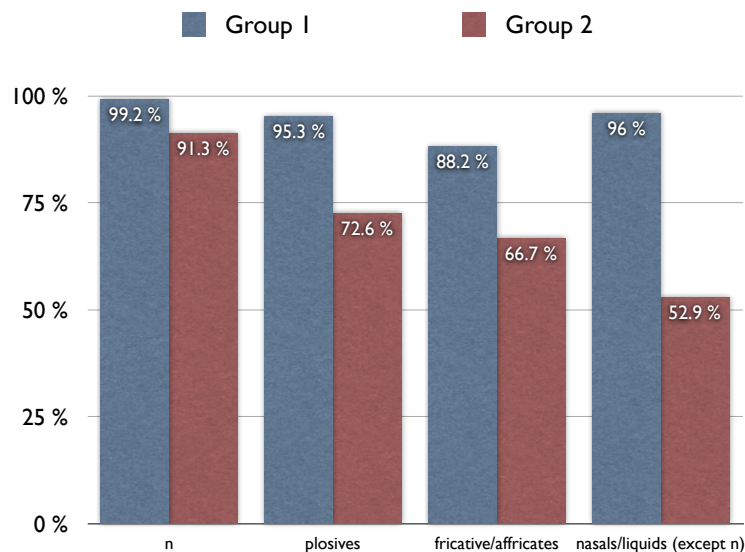
Conclusion:

- Speakers with a low resyllabification rate tend to resyllabificate plosives more often than weaker consonants.

- With increased resyllabification rate sonority becomes less important.

- This leads to the assumption, that the intonation (speech pauses) doesn't have an impact on resyllabification.

- It seems that there is an ongoing reduction of resyllabification in Lux. and it seems to be sensitive to sonority.

2. The influence of resyllabification on Lux. syllable structure

- Data bank filled with 3000 German and 3000 Lux. syllables taken from current written and edited texts (print media) regarding the following features:

  - Stress

  - Number and sonority of consonants in onset and coda

  - Quality of the nucleus

  - Extrasyllabic and ambisyllabic elements

- Main interest: frequency of different syllable types in texts

- Results:

  - The first version of the data bank (without resyllabification) shows no big difference between German and Lux. syllable structure.

  - The second version, with resyllabifications according to the ratio of 86% does actually show differences:

    - Strong influence on onset and coda regarding the average size of the consonant cluster as well as the relation between covered and uncovered syllables
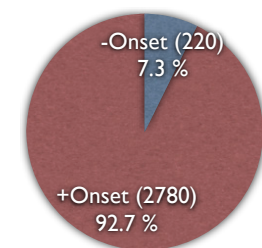
- Onset:

  - Resyllabification has an optimizing influence on the onset

  - the number of naked syllables decreases by more than 50%
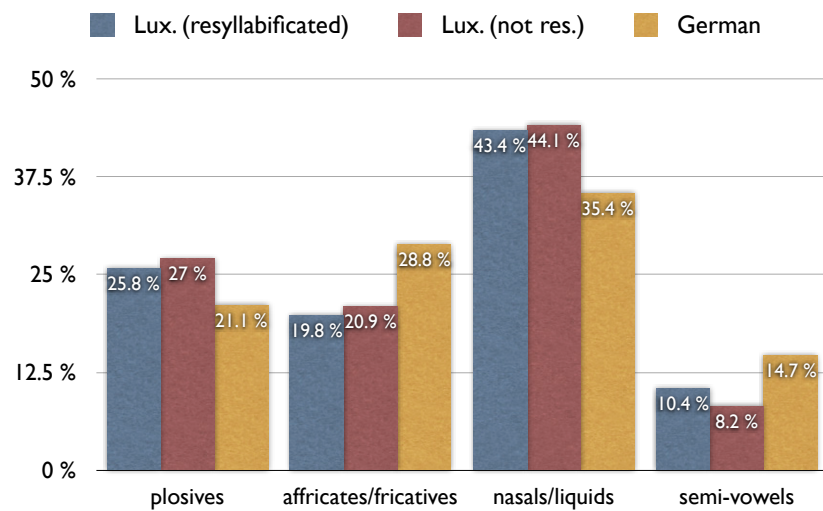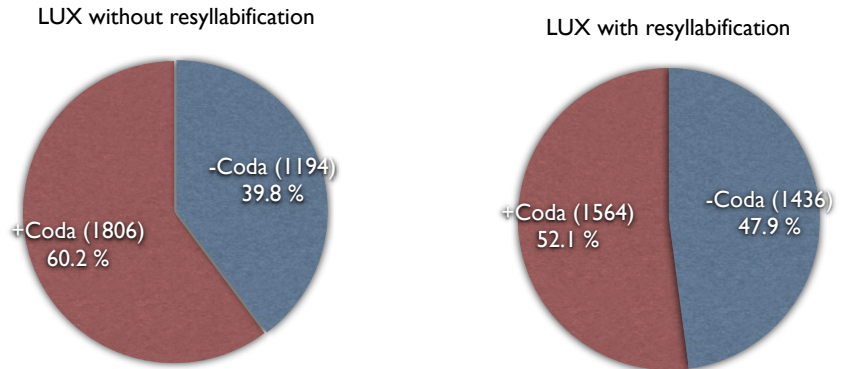
Lux. without resyllabification

-Onset (525)
17.5 %

+Onset (2475)
82.5 %

Lux. with resyllabification

-Onset (220)
7.3 %

+Onset (2780)
92.7 %
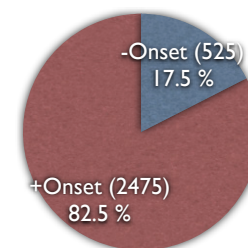
- consonants in the onset:

		?	0	1	2	3	SUM
GER	stressed	13.0%	0%	41.4%	5.9%	0.5%	60.8%
	unstressed	0%	2.4%	36.0%	0.8%	0%	39.2%
LUX	stressed		5.4%	50.5%	6.0%	0.6%	62.5%
	unstressed		1.6%	33.8%	1.8%	0.3%	37.5%

- Coda:

  - also influenced by resyllabification:

LUX without resyllabification

-Coda (1194) 39.8 %
+Coda (1806) 60.2 %

LUX with resyllabification

-Coda (1436) 47.9 %
+Coda (1564) 52.1 %

Lux. (resyllabificated)   Lux. (not res.)   German

	plosives	affricates/fricatives	nasals/liquids	semi-vowels
Lux. (resyllabificated)	25.8 %	19.8 %	43.4 %	10.4 %
Lux. (not res.)	27 %	20.9 %	44.1 %	8.2 %
German	21.1 %	28.8 %	35.4 %	14.7 %

- Size of the coda depends on stressed and unstressed position

		0	1	2	3	4	SUM
GER	stressed	18.0%	35.1%	7.1%	0.4%	0.1%	60.8%
	unstressed	28.8%	9.2%	1.2%	0.1%	0%	39.2%
LUX	stressed	26.7%	32.0%	5.4%	0.2%	0%	62.5%
	unstressed	22.7%	13.7%	1.1%	0%	0%	37.5%

Conclusion

- German is considered a Word Language (cf. Szczepaniak 2007).

- The data of this study shows no significant difference between Lux. and German syllable structure, so we can conclude that with regard to this typological parameter there is only a marginal difference between these two languages.

- Lux. appears to be slightly closer to the Syllable Language pole, therefore it can be considered a mixed type (cf. Szczepaniak forthcoming).

- Maybe drift situation.

Thank you very much for your interest!