

METAPHONY MEETS IDENTITY AVOIDANCE IN BRAZILIAN VENETO

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1 BRAZILIAN VENETO (BV)

- ▶ Veneto-based koiné, also called *Talian* [1]. Origin: Italian immigration to Brazil (19th century)
- ▶ **Stress system**: rightmost trisyllabic window. **Vowels**: 7 stressed, 5 unstressed [2]
- ▶ Overall similar to Central Veneto: both display **metaphony**

1.1 Metaphony in BV

- ▶ In some varieties of Veneto (Italo-Romance), **metaphony** is observed (Central Veneto, BV)
- ▶ Stressed /e o/ become [i u] when the final vowel is /i/
- ▶ Final vowel = masculine plural suffix or 2nd person inflection

☞ **Examples**: ['pesi] ~ ['pisi] 'fish.PL'; ['kori] ~ ['kuri] 'run.2PRS.SG'

1.2 Key properties

- Variable process** (not categorical): ['ovi] ~ ['uvi] 'egg.PL'
- Stress**: ['zoveni] → ['zuvin] 'young.PL'; ['bevi] → ['bivi] 'drink.2PRS.SG'; [fa'zoi] → [fa'zui] 'bean.PL'
- In loanwords**: ['boli] → ['buli] 'cake.PL'
- In suffixed words**: [ka'neti] → [ka'niti] 'dog.DIM.PL'; [formi'goni] → [formi'guni] 'ant.AUG.PL'

3 ANALYSIS

3.1 Adjacency constraint

- ▶ Metaphony blocked if trigger and target are **adjacent and identical**: *[ka'vii]
- ▶ Allowed in variants with intervening consonant: [ka'vedʒi] ~ [ka'vidʒi]

☞ Constraint resembles **OCP** (*Obligatory Contour Principle*) [7, 8]

3.2 Lookahead effects

- ▶ Must anticipate if OCP will be violated to determine if output surfaces
- ▶ Grammar compares procedures and evaluates their outcomes

☞ Similar to root fusion in Sino-Japanese: fusion is blocked if voiced geminates are generated [9]

3.3 Comparative Markedness

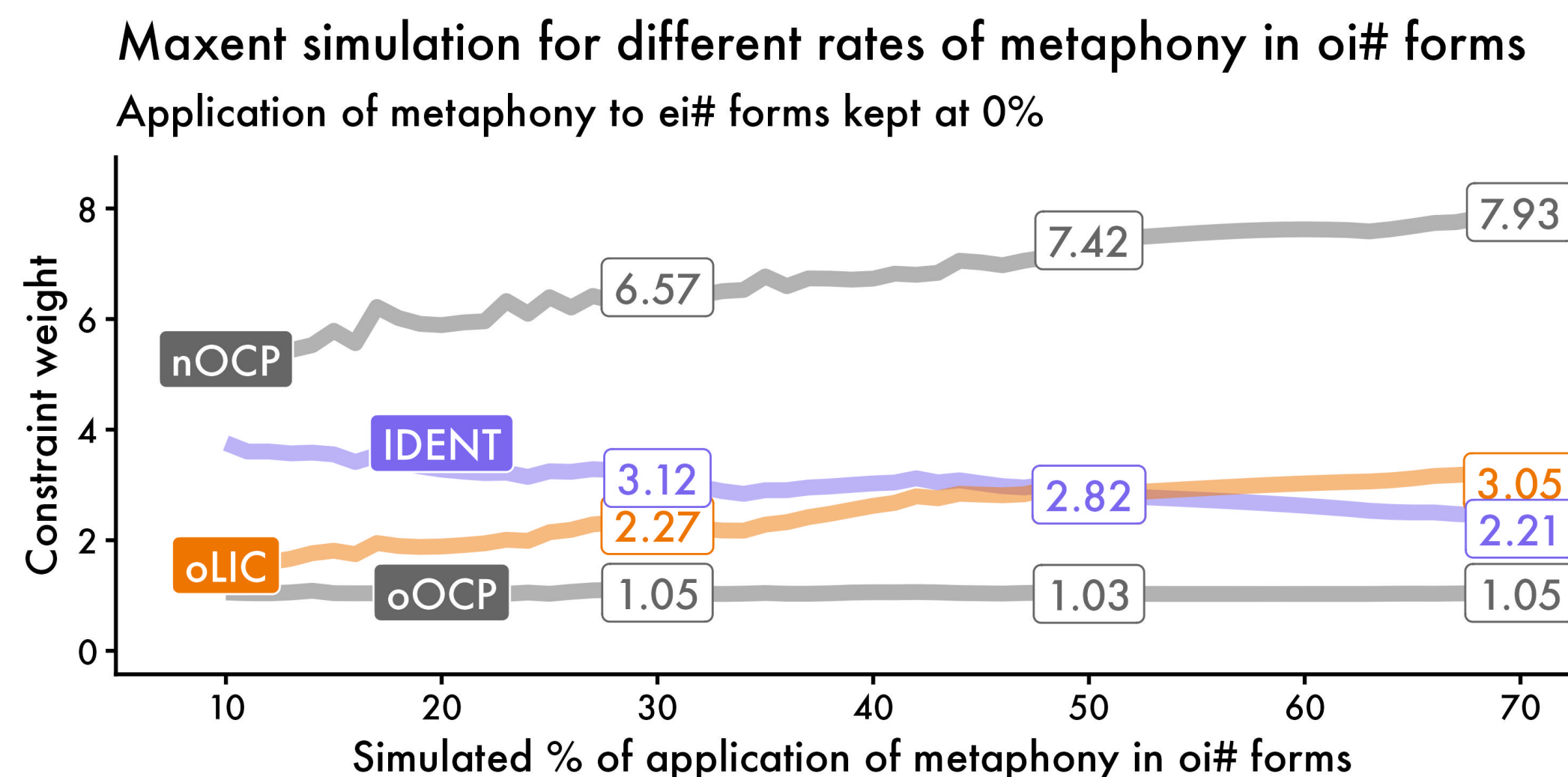
- ▶ OCP split into **N**OCP (new) versus **O**OCP (old):
 - N**OCP → blocks *new* identical segments (e.g., from metaphony)
 - O**OCP → blocks *inherited* identical segments (i.e., already present in fully-faithful candidate)

☞ **Key**: If **N**OCP >> **O**OCP, we generate ['zii] but not *[ka'vii]

- ▶ **What triggers metaphony?** One possibility: **O**LIC (license [+hi] post-tonic) [10]
- ▶ IDENT[hi] resists vowel change. **Outcome if O**LIC >> **IDENT**: metaphony applies

☞ **Assumption**: categoricity (tableaux), but see Fig. for a MaxEnt grammar (Fig.) [11–13]

/fa'zo-i/	N	O	IDENT[hi]	O
[fa'zoi]		*		
☞ [fa'zui]			*	
/ka've-i/	N	O	IDENT[hi]	O
[ka'vii]	*		*	
☞ [ka'vei]		*		
/zi-i/	N	O	IDENT[hi]	O
☞ ['zii]				*
[ziu]			*	



4 CONCLUSION

- ▶ Metaphony blocked when creating **identical adjacent vowels**
- ▶ **Comparative markedness** accounts for asymmetry:
 - **N**OCP versus **O**OCP distinction is essential to the context in question
- ▶ BV contrasts with other dialects, which allow [ii] stemming from metaphony
 - In such grammars, **O**LIC >> {**O**OCP, **N**OCP}

☞ **Future/current work**: experimental + probabilistic modeling

2 THE ASYMMETRY

- ☞ **Previous study** using corpus data [3]:
 - ▶ 2,521 target words for metaphony [4]
 - ▶ **Metaphony** with penultimate stress: **18.3%** /o/>/e/: more likely to undergo metaphony

- Asymmetry by word length (2 versus 3 σ)
 - 3-syllable words: more metaphony than 2-syllable words (especially with /e/)
 - This mirrors vowel distributions in the lexicon for penultimate position

- And morphological domain:
 - More likely when /e/ not in root

2.1 Another asymmetry observed

Metaphony generates [ui] strings, but **not** [ii] strings in BV

Case 1: /oi/ → [ui] ✓

- ▶ From *l*-ending words that are pluralized [5]:
[fa'zol] → [fa'zoli] → [fa'zoi] ~ [fa'zui]

Case 2: /ei/ → [ii] ×

- ▶ /e/ in root followed by theme vowel:
[e'breo] 'Jewish.SG' → [e'brei], *[e'brii]
[mu'zeo] 'museum.SG' → [mu'zei], *[mu'zii]
- ▶ /e/ in *l*-ending words that are pluralized:
[ka'vel] 'hair.SG' → [ka'veli] → [ka'vei], *[ka'vii]

2.2 But [ii] sequences *are* attested

- [zio] 'uncle.SG' → [zii]
- [imbam'bio] 'stupid.SG' → [imbam'bii]
- [fi'nio] 'finish.PART.SG' → [fi'nii]
- ▶ So identical sequences are not prohibited

☞ **Why is *[ii] from metaphony blocked, but attested elsewhere?**

- ▶ We propose an account based on **comparative markedness** [6]

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