

Left Aligned XPs in French: Evidence from Coordination

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General assumption:

French prosodic phrasing is commonly assumed to abide by Right Alignment constraints:

- the right edge of phonological phrases is aligned with the right edge of lexical heads.
- the right edge of intonational phrases is aligned with the right edge of root sentences and constituents such as left dislocated XPs or parentheticals.

Analyzed Corpora:

Corpus A: An elicited corpus of 126 sentences with ternary coordination of NPs or PPs. The varying parameters were the type of coordination (simplex, omnisyndetic, asyndetic), the conjunction ('et' 'ou' 'ni') and the position of the coordinate phrase within the sentence.

Corpus B: Sentences with coordinate constructions extracted from the Ester corpus (radio speech material).

Corpus C: An elicited corpus of 40 sentences devised for testing of the occurrence of "enchaînement" in coordinate constructions (pre- or post- verbal).

But...

Coordination structures allow **two types of phrasing**, the first one following usual prosodic phrasing with right alignment, the second one showing the effectiveness of Left alignment.

Pattern 1: The **RIGHT** edge of each conjunct is included in a phrase whose right edge hosts a prosodic boundary:

XP] XP] ...XP]

Je conseille (]) le vélo [le jogging] et la nage] à mes patients]

Pattern 2: The **LEFT** edge of each conjunct hosts a major boundary:

[XP [XP ...[XP

Je conseille [le vélo [le jogging [et la nage à mes patients

Arguments to distinguish Pattern 1 from Pattern 2:

1) Eurythmicity:

Pattern 1 is sensitive to eurythmicity while pattern 2 is not (see 1a and 1b).

For **Pattern 2**, the first conjunct cannot be phrased with the lexical material on its left (even if the result would be more eurythmic), while the last conjunct can be with the lexical material on its right (see 1c)

- (1) a. (Il a présenté Jean) (à la sœur de Marie) 'He presented Jean to Mary's sister'
 b. # (Il a présenté) (Jean) (à la sœur de Marie)
 c. (Il a présenté) (et Jean) (et la sœur de Marie)

2) Enchaînement:

Pattern 1 allows enchaînement (and liaison).

In **Pattern 2**, enchaînement is forbidden between the first conjunct and the material that precedes it or between conjuncts, while it is allowed between the last conjunct and what follows (2).

- (2) *Il doit révéler sa cachette // ou à Jeanne // ou à Elise _ à midi*
 (// enchaînement forbidden; _ enchaînement allowed)

No counter-examples found in Corpus C.

3) Interaction with phonological leaners

Pattern 2 prevents leaners to the left to be phrased with the first conjunct (3a). In (3b), weak prep. **à** and **de** can be phrased with the incidental to their right, which makes pattern 2 grammatical.

- (3) a. *Il devrait parler (à | de) et Jeanne et Jean-Marie
 b. Il devrait parler (à | de), à mon avis, et Jeanne et Jean-Marie

4) Initial rises

Both Pattern 1 and 2 are compatible with initial accents realized on one of the first syllables of the lexical word making up the conjunct. For **Pattern 2**, prototypically the left edge of each conjunct anchors an initial rise.

- (4) a. ET à DEAUville ET à Llvourne ET à VallauRIS, il y avait déjà... (2c Rand65)
 b. LA VERanda, LA BUUnderie OU le greNIER peut être visité. (2b Rand25)

Evidence from Corpus A and B.

5) Resetting and Pauses (work in progress, Corpus A/B)

Pattern 2 favors resetting and pause before each conjunct.

Mapping prosodic pattern / coordinate structure:

	Pattern 1	Pattern 2
Omnisyndetic coordination Et Paul et Jean sont venus	-	+ (Compulsory)
Simplex coordination Paul et Jean sont venus	+	+
Asyndetic coordination Paul, Jean sont venus	+	+

Corpus observation

	Initial Rise On the conjunct	Phrasing C1 is phrased with what precedes	Presence of Enchaînement	Pauses before C1
Simplex coordination	28% (Corpus A)	50% (Corpus A)	Work in progress	12% (Corpus A)
Asyndetic coordination	33% (Corpus A) 3cases/7 (Corpus B)	33% (Corpus A)	Work in progress	30% (Corpus A)
Omnisyndetic coordination	89% (100% for post-verbals) (Corpus A) 100% (Corpus B)	0% (Corpus A)	0% (Corpus C)	72% (Corpus A)

Theoretical consequences:

- Left or right alignment are options in the same language.
- The choice between the left or right alignment depends on the syntactic type of the phrase.

Open question:

Is Left alignment restricted to Coordination in French?