The Fabulous Destiny of Certain Consonant Clusters in English
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1. Typology of two-member consonant clusters in English based on their possible word positions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>#_</th>
<th>V_V</th>
<th>_#</th>
<th>Typically:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Initial/“onset”, e.g. /tr/</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Non-homorganic rising-sonority cl.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Coda(-onset)”, e.g. /lt/</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>Homorganic and/or coronal-final non-rising sonority cluster</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bogus, e.g. /gn/</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Other 😊</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(+ sC?)

2. Vowel length in VCC(V) Part 1

a. coronal clusters:

hinder/mind, hint/paint, foster/post, elder/mild, shelter/bolt ... (medial=final, Harris 1994:73-74) (Pöchtrager 2006: further interactions between V length and V/C coronality/C voice (p.60))

b. non-coronal “ill-behaved”:

amber/chamber* (example) …

c. non-coronal:

anger*, anchor, lamp, chapter, wasp... *medial only

a-b-c.: no empty N / “deactivated” empty N sandwiched: “coda(-onset)”

a-b.: VCC can be long (i.e., “superheavy rhymes”)

coronals have more potential

1 Standard GP: interconstituent gvt, “coda”-licensing; Szigetvári (1999): C-toC gvt; BUT: Scheer (e.g., 2004): coda-onset = bogus, both require R-to-L PG; Polgárdi (2014): both require L-to-R PG.

- Harris (1994:164): post-short “codas” are doubly licensed, languages having superheavy rhymes allow for single licence
- CVCC: long V’s need licence/PG from following nonempty V; Polgárdi (2014: 9-11): trochaic PG, long V’s are (L-to-R) governing domains, governed V2 cannot govern a following empty V => no difference betw. “coda-onset” and bogus (cf. fn.1 and section 3 below)
- Pöchtrager (2006:4.2.2, etc.): A seems to have the property of licensing extra structure, it provides “extra room”

Coronal vs. non-coronal asymmetry: a summary

- /au/ can only be followed by coronal consonants (shout, crowd, south, town, etc.)
- /s/ can only be followed by alveolars (exploit, void, voice, noise, coin, coil, moist, point, etc.)
- a long vowel is only possible before a consonant cluster if the cluster is made up of coronals (mind, boost, faint, etc.)
- nasal+voicedC# is only possible if both are coronals (cf. humm#ed)
- (+ regular consonantal suffixes (-s, -’s, -ed))
- (+ universally, coronals are special)
- (+ yod-dropping (see below))

3. Vowel length in VCC(V) Part 2

“classical” bogus cluster: Atkins, chutney, atlas, magnet… (+ rarely (/not?) followed by stressed V -- Szigetvári 1999)

empty N sandwiched

VCC can NOT be long

long V’s need licence/PG from following nonempty V, etc. (cf. section 2 above)

4. Vowel length in VCC(V) Part 3

a. classical “onset”/”TR”: petrol/patron…

VCC can be long, BUT: stressed rhyme binarity/stress-to-weight/length-dependent ambisyllabicity (cf. Giegerich 1992:221)

“closed domain” created by C-to-C interaction, or CgC acting like a non-empty N (constituent gvt, C-to-C licensing, IG, etc.): licence/PG can hit R-to-L

VCC can be long
b. “R”=glide:
venue, etc.

frequent/equal/loquat, debut/zebu, prepuce/scrupulous, ague, Tokyo, uvula...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VCC can be long BUT only if CC is non-coronal</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>coronals have less potential</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>non-coronal + glide: “onset” (cf. section 4a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>coronal + glide: ??</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

c. coronal + /j/
- initial, pre-stress, post-consonantal (i.e., onset): in non-yod-dropping accents only (new, avenue, intuitive/intuition/Neptune...)
- when post-tonic, stressed V is short (venue...): **bogus** (cf. stressed rhyme bignarity)
- that is, in non-yod-dropping accents: a bogus cluster unless “forced” to form onset: word-initially (no initial bogus in “TR-only”/”restricted”/”strict” languages -- new...), before stressed V (stressed onset maximisation + bogus dispreference (cf. section 3) -- avenue...), post-consonantally (*CvCvC -- intuition, Neptune...)
- “yod-dropping”: (historical) uniformisation to bogus
  - the historical development of, e.g., /kn/
  - in Present-day English, bogus only:
    - *#kn (*kn#)
  - **VCCV can NOT** be long: acne, arachnid, cockney, picnic, technical, and just a few others: historically, a bogus cluster unless “forced” to form onset (i.e., word-initially); its word-initial simplification: uniformisation to bogus

References