

Some observations on the right edge of the word in contemporary French

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In this contribution, we focus on some phenomena related to the right edge of the word in contemporary French.

The first phenomenon concerns the final affrication in French (e.g. [vits] instead of [vit]) which has been considered until now as a phonetic phenomenon with sociolinguistic or variationist approaches. However, in contemporary French, its distribution is highly constrained: affrication is possible in the final position: "vi[ts]e#" but impossible in "*vi[ts]e fait". This affrication is to be considered as a final fortition in terms of segmental complexity and phonetic duration.

The second phenomenon is found in the realization of /a/: there is the possibility of closing [a] into [æ] in two contexts: closed syllable (e.g. ch[æ]tte, cf. also Fathi & Lowenstamm 2015) and non-final open syllable h[æ]ricot, which is impossible in final open syllable *ch[æ]t.

The third related phenomenon is the middle vowels in the final position. Rizzolo (2002) proposes that in French [e] is bipositional and [ɛ] monopositional, which is in line with the fact that in final open syllables, [e]s are massively found and the rare final [ɛ]s are being lost by speakers.

We will show that these phenomena have the same phonological mechanism related to right edge, which can be formulated as the hypothesis of a phonological space at the end of the word (Charrette 2006).

The empirical part of our analysis will be based partly on the PFC corpus.