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ProSeg: A comparative corpus of spoken L2 French

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1. Introduction

Advantages of speech corpora in L2 acquisition studies [2]

- They represent of the oral dimension in an L2 in an **ecological** way (i.e. with spontaneous speech);
- They put in perspective several explanatory factors affecting the L2 acquisition process and competence, such as L1 transfer, speech style (reading vs. spontaneous speech), age of acquisition. [5, 6]
- They can be used for cross-comparisons between language pairs, especially when using the same recording protocol [6]
- Given these advantages, many current studies are based on speech corpora. But different procedures may be used for data collection, each having its advantages [3]
 - **Experimental data** targeting specific linguistic phenomena;
 - **Naturalistic speech** from an oral corpus. **ProSeg (Prosody Segmentals)** combines the two procedures.

2. Main features of ProSeg

General features

The *ProSeg Corpus* has been designed to allow for :

- prosodic and segmental descriptions of L2 French
- comparison of potential effects of L1 transfer
- contrastive analyses of the oral productions in L1 and L2 with a comparable set of data
- analyses of task effects

Procedure

1. Background questionnaire
2. Placement test (DIALANG, yes-no vocabulary task, [1])
3. Reading tasks in L2 French (several texts including a dialogue)
4. Picture description task
5. Free speech (summary: book/ movie)
6. Reading task in the L1

Pierre : Bonjour, je cherche un pull en laine pour cet hiver.
Vendeuse : Bien sûr Monsieur ! Juste une chose : les animaux ne peuvent pas entrer dans ce magasin. J'espère que ça ne vous gêne pas.
Pierre : Mais ma chienne est inoffensive et bien maîtrisée.
Vendeuse : Je suis désolée Monsieur, mais c'est la politique du magasin.
Pierre : D'accord !



Participants

- 65 participants (so far)
- Recorded both in L2 French and in their L1
- All learners are university students

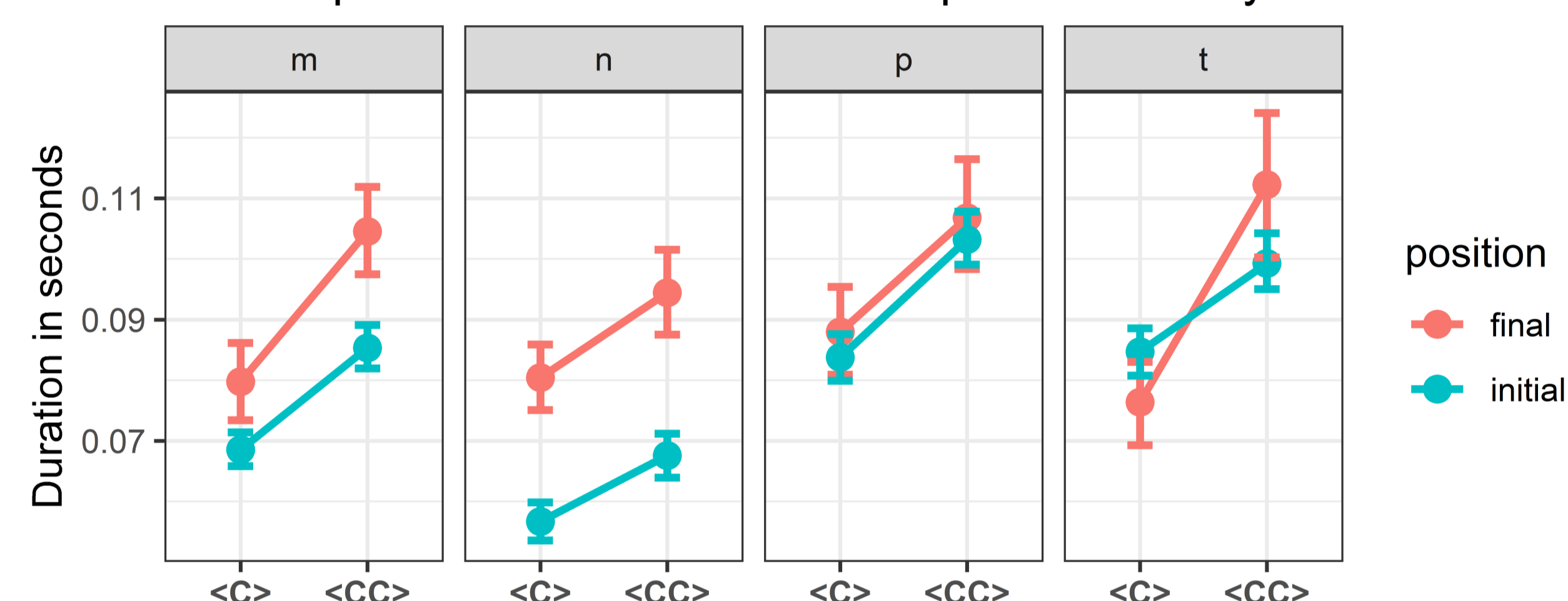
L1	University	N	Age	Proficiency Level
Italian	Turin	25	25.2 (SD = 3.7)	B1-C1
German	Konstanz	21	24.6 (SD = 6.5)	B1-C2
Swedish	Lund	5	25 (SD = 5)	B2 -C1
French (controls)	Paris 8	14	26 (SD = 5)	Native

3. Studies in progress/preparation

(Non-native) gemination in L2 French

- Analysis of <CC> vs. <C> spelling, e.g., *immigrés*, (immigrated) vs *'imiter'* (imitate)
- **Results:** Italians produce geminate consonants in L2 French due to L1 transfer and, specifically, of L1 orthography [4]

Cons. spelled with 1 vs 2 letters as pronounced by Italian learners



Foreign Accent Rating

- Two sentences extracted from read texts with no self-repairs or hesitations
- Judgments by native and non-native speakers of French (including teachers of French) in terms of
 - (i) accent strength
 - (ii) accent source (L1)

Prosodic phrasing and rhythm

- Prosodic analysis of the segmentation, durational and tonal patterns in accentual phrases (APs)
- Data taken from the long text and the monologues. Comparison of L1 German, L1 Swedish, L1 Italian and L1 French speakers.
- **Hypothesis:** L1 Swedish learners have advantages in producing e APs in L2 French due to the existence of a tonal accent in Swedish.

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