One grammar fits all.
The representation of variation in Dutch, German, and Yiddish

Marc van Oostendorp (Meertens Instituut / Leiden University) & Björn Köhnlein (Leiden University)
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The issue: division of labor between representation and computation

Representations variable	**Our proposal**	Mainstream
Representations stable	Nobody	Government phonology
	Computation stable	**Computation variable**

Differences between languages arise from different representations; the grammar is the same for all.
A child only has to learn the representations for each language; the grammar follows automatically.

The Case Study
Final Devoicing (FD) and Regressive Voice Assimilation (RVA) in Dutch, German, and Yiddish

1. Background and assumptions

Two types of languages with FD: a) Phonetically voiced vs. plain obstruents **(voicing languages, VL**)
b) Phonetically plain vs. aspirated obstruents (**aspiration languages, ASL**)

Debate: Should FD be regarded as weakening or fortition?
Should the phonetic realization of the contrast be reflected in the phonology?
See e.g. Wetzels & Mascaró 2001; Honeybone 2005; Iverson & Salmons 2007, 2011; Van Oostendorp 2008; Harris 2009, among many others

Our assumptions: FD in **Dutch** and **Yiddish** is **weakening**, FD in **German** is **fortition**
Monovalent features - active in **Dutch, Yiddish: [voice]** / active in **German: [spread glottis]**

2. Data

FD at the end of the word

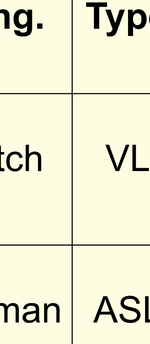
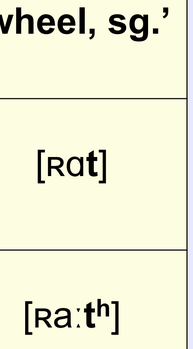
Lang.	Type	FD	'wheel, stem'	'wheel, sg.'
Dutch	VL	Yes	/rɑ**d**/	[rɑ**t**]
German	ASL	Yes	/ra:**t**/	[ra:**t^{h}**]
Yiddish	VL	No	/rɔ**d**/	[rɔ**d**]

Regressive Voice Assimilation

Lang.	Underlying voicing	Surface voicing	Underlying form	Surface form	Translation
Dutch	VO + Ø	Ø + Ø	/zœy**d**/ + /**p**ol/	[zœy**t.p**ol]	'south pole'
	Ø + VO	VO + VO	/frœy**t**/ + /**b**om/	[frœy**d.b**om]	'fruit tree'
German	SG + Ø	SG + Ø	/o:ps**t**/ + /**p**aum/	[o:ps**t^{h}.p**aum]	'fruit tree'
	Ø + SG	SG + SG	/zy:**t**/ + /**p^{h}**o:l/	[zy:**t^{h}.p^{h}**o:l]	'south pole'
Yiddish	VO + Ø	Ø + Ø	/ʃrai**b**/ + /**k**raiz/	[ʃrai**p.k**raiz]	'writing circle'
	Ø + VO	VO + VO	/ba**k**/ + /**b**ein/	[ba**g.b**ein]	'cheekbone'

3. Analysis

Language-specific representations

Dutch	German	Yiddish
		

Universal processes

[VOICE] → ONSET: Delete the feature [voice] if it is not licensed in the onset

CODA → [SPREAD GLOTTIS]: Specify a coda consonant for [spread glottis]

SPREAD (LAR, L): Spread laryngeal features from right to left

The effects

Constraint	Dutch	German	Yiddish
[VOICE] → ONS	**Applies (FD)** [voice] not licensed in the onset	**Does not apply** No feature [voice]	**Does not apply word-finally** [voice] licensed in the onset **Applies word-medially (FD)** [voice] not licensed in the onset
CODA → [SG]	**Does not apply** No feature [spread glottis]	**Applies (FD)** Consonant in the coda	**Does not apply** No feature [spread glottis]
SPREAD (LAR, L)	**Applies (RVA)** [voice] spreads	**Applies (RVA)** [spread glottis] spreads (FD applies anyway)	**Applies (RVA)** [voice] spreads