

## Consonant-glide onsets do not exist in Kanien'kéha

Cross-linguistically, glides and liquids form the natural class of approximants, and, consequently, often pattern together in reference to syllabification. For example, if there are complex onsets in a language, there will be obstruent-liquid (CL) and obstruent-glide (CG) clusters (Clements 1990). However, in the Iroquoian language Kanien'kéha, CL are prohibited while CG seem to be widely permitted. These patterns are shown in 1, in which the CL [gl] is broken up by an epenthetic vowel, while the CGs [kj] and [gw] are able to surface intact.

1. /de-g-lik-s/ → ['degeliks] 'I put them next to each other'  
 /ag-ja:dawi/ → [a'gja:dawi] 'my shirt'  
 /ag-wahga:laʔ/ → [agwah'ga:laʔ] 'my bark' Michelson (1988), Martin (2023)

I argue that, despite the widespread CG sequences in the language, these sequences never form a cluster within a single syllabic constituent. Specifically, I argue that the two glides in Kanien'kéha, /j/ and /w/, either form singleton onsets, or are syllabified into the nucleus. I show this by comparing the three different contexts in which glides may surface in Kanien'kéha: word-initial, intervocalic, and in a CG sequence. When intervocalic and word-initial, (henceforth referred to as SO (singleton onset) position), there are less restrictions on the identity of the following vowel as opposed to when the glide is in a CG sequence.

In SO position, the palatal glide may be followed by five of the six Kanien'kéha vowels: /a/, /e/, /o/, /ĩ/, and /ũ/. No matter the syllabification of /j/, it may not be followed by /i/. This is very common cross-linguistically as the sequence [ji] is marked due to the Obligatory Contour Principle (OCP) (Leben 1973). /w/, on the other hand, is slightly more restricted as it may be followed by all Kanien'kéha vowels except for the back round vowels /o/ and /ũ/ (which also makes sense given the OCP, and that, historically, /o/ and /ũ/ were both mid vowels). Data illustrating these patterns for /w/ is shown in 3 (I only show data from one glide, for space reasons). Please note that [h] preceding clusters are syllabified in the coda.

2.

/a/	[waga'ts <sup>h</sup> ogwã]	'I am smoking'	[sa'gadewahdeʔ] 'I missed it'
/e/	[wedewanãhsta'jãt <sup>h</sup> oʔ]	'we planted corn'	['lahaweʔ] 'He's holding'
/i/	[wisk]	'five'	[ladi'ha:wiʔ] 'They're bringing'
/ĩ/	[wãdũ]	'ever'	[gawãna'lahsthaʔ] 'It draws words'
/ũ/, /o/	*wũ, *wo		Martin (2023), Fieldlab, DeCaire 2023

Whereas SO glides place few restrictions on the following vowel in Kanien'kéha, glides in [Cw] are much more restrictive (as shown in 3 for /swV/).

3.

/a/	[dek <sup>h</sup> ehswat <sup>h</sup> eʔ'dã:nis]	'to brighten something for someone'
/ĩ/	[ohswã:taʔ]	'coal'
/ũ/, /i/, /e/, /o/	*swũ, *swi, *swe, *swo	Michelson (1988), Martin (2023)

As shown in 3, the sequence /sw/ may only be followed by /ĩ/ or /a/. I argue that this is because, unlike other approximants in Kanien'kéha, glides are able to syllabify into the nucleus due to their higher sonority. This follows from Steriade's (1988) observation that two elements in two different syllabic constituents impose less constraints on each other than two elements within the same syllabic constituent. That is, SO glides in Kanien'kéha are syllabified into the onset, and therefore do not impose extra constraints on the identity of the following vowel, whereas when glides are in a CG sequence, the following vowel is much more constrained because both the glide and vowel are in the nucleus. Thus, the avoidance of the unmarked complex onset that patterns with CG, CL, and the fact that glides in CG sequences place restrictions on the final vowels illustrates how there are no CG onsets in Kanien'kéha.

References

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