

**There are empty positions and (lexically) inhibited empty positions:
evidence from a classless analysis of Italian**

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In this presentation, I will discuss Italian noun pluralization (Faust and Lampitelli 2009) and offer a reanalysis that entirely eschews the need for class features. I contend that these have no place in the linguistic architecture. My reanalysis does not rely on stem-storage (cf. Bermudez-Otero 2013 for Spanish), instead, I will continue to develop a decompositional analysis (Passino 2008, Lampitelli 2009), adopting many of their conclusions. Emptiness plays a central role in the reanalysis as each root shape is defined by its final CV (CV^{FIN}) which is either filled or empty. In addition to classical GP assumptions, I introduce the condition that empty nuclei come in two forms: ordinary and lexically inhibited. Inhibited ENs are not ‘needy’ (in the sense of Nevins (2010) and Oostendorp (2014)) and, like governed nuclei, they do not host floating material (cf. Faust et al. 2016). Meanwhile, uninhibited ENs readily host floating material (such as the exponents for number). This difference in the status of empty positions is key to the analysis.

Masculine					
C ^{FIN}	V ^{FIN}	SG + A	PL + I	Class/Type	Alternation
✓	U	o	i	I	[gát:o/i] ‘cat’
✓	I	e	i	III	[fjó:re/i] ‘flower’
✓	✗	a	i	V	[poé:ta/i] ‘poet’
✗	U	o	i	zero ^{CI}	[né:o/i] ‘mole (nevus)’
✗	I	e		zero ^{CIII}	[bú:e] ‘ox’
✓	Inhibited	∅	∅	zero ^{Vowel}	[gólf/∅] ‘golf (sport)’
✗	Inhibited	∅	∅	zero ^{plus}	[faló/∅] ‘bonfire’
Feminine					
C ^{FIN}	V ^{FIN}	SG + A	PL + I	Class/Type	Alternation
✓	A	a	e	II	[rá:na/e] ‘frog’
✓	I	e	i	IV	[tí:gre/i] ‘tiger’
✓	U	o	i	VII	[má:no/i] ‘hand’
✓	✗	a	i	VI	[á:la/i] ‘wing’
✗	A	a	e	zero ^{CI}	[maré:a/e] ‘tide’
✓	Inhibited	∅	∅	zero ^{Vowel}	[gólf/∅] ‘golf (car)’
✗	Inhibited	∅	∅	zero ^{plus}	[virtú/∅] ‘virtue’

Taken together, I conclude that roots in Italian must end in an impoverished CV^{FIN}. CV^{FIN} can be empty (inhibited or not), or it can contain a simplex element: |A, I, U|. The impoverished nature of CV^{FIN} is correlated to another absolute generalization of Italian: a root’s CV^{FIN} can never bear stress (unlike the vowels of nominal suffixes). In addition to fully deriving the plurals, this account also provides a straightforward explanation for three related phenomena. First, roots ending in empty nuclei cannot be pluralized: [fílm] ‘film’, [karibú] ‘caribou’, not even those ending in vowel qualities that alternate elsewhere: [tʃít:á] * [tʃít:é] ‘city’ & [ré] * [rí] ‘king’. Second, there is no remnant of class alternations in diminutives, despite the fact that these bear phi-features: [gát:o]-[gat:ino] ‘cat’, [fjó:re]-[fjóri:no] * [fjóri:ne] ‘flower’, [á:la]/[á:li]-[alí:ne] * [alí:ni] ‘wings’. Third, roots with empty onsets in CV^{FIN} cannot take the *ino/a* diminutive: [ma.ré:a] * [marei:na] * [mari:na] ‘tide’ & [tʃít:á] * [tʃít:aí:na] * [tʃít:í:na] ‘city’ (cf. [gát:o] - [gat:ino] ‘cat’ & [fílm] - [fílmí:no] ‘film’). The analysis presented here is representationally rich, to be sure, centering as it does on the distinction between two types of emptiness, but it delegates to phonology what otherwise must be done with class features (whose ontological status is ever more in doubt) and speaks to the theoretical concept of emptiness in phonology.