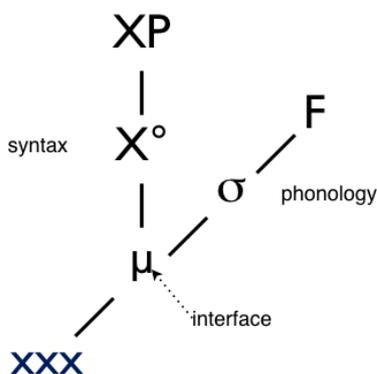


Empty syntactic categories can be phonologically filled

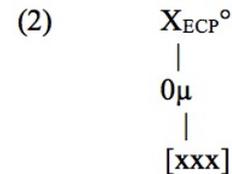
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A typical rule in the Principle and Parameter framework of GG that functions on the Syntax-Phonology interface, is the Empty Category Principle (ECP), which says that a phonologically empty position must be properly governed in the syntax. Thus far, syntacticians did not bother very much about the nature and definition of 'emptiness'. Usually it was seen as an entity "without phonological matrix", probably understood as a segmental matrix. On further thought, however, this emptiness cannot be formulated with respect to its segmental zeroness of its content because it would open the door for Syntax to refer to the segmental level. This creates a too powerful grammar with reduced modularity unless zeroness comes about by a wholesale DELETE operation. This is however not standardly assumed for empty pronouns (pro).

While we make the uncontroversial assumption of a modular architecture of language consisting of a phonological, a morphological, a syntactic and a semantic module, which have *interfaces* with each other, we will assume the more controversial claim on the nature of this interface: we defend an interface between the modules M_1 and M_2 to be a layer that is part of both $Module_1$ and $Module_2$, i.e. we assume *ambiterritory* of the interface (rather than *no man's land*, Scheer 2011). This is illustrated in the representation below.



As it is undesirable for the segmental layer to be part of syntax, xxx cannot be part of the interface. Hence, we must formulate its emptiness in terms of some higher phonological domain. Possible, and more probable, candidates are the moraic layer, the CVCV-layer (Scheer 2004), the foot-layer (Fikkert 2000), or the syllable layer. We claim that the interface layer of syntax and phonology is the lowest prosodic layer, i.e. the moraic layer μ . As an illustration of the empirical consequences of this proposal, suppose we define zeroness of



pro in moraic terms, as $pro=X^\circ$ under (2). It predicts that segmentally filled pronouns are analyzable as *pro* as long as they are moracally zero, and therefore subject to the ECP. In itself, the phonological representation rules out these pronouns without prosodic licensing, unless the segmental material can act as adjuncts, i.e. as (complex) onsets. Consider the case of the Dutch pronouns. It is standardly assumed that Dutch, contrary to a language like Italian, does not allow for null-subjects.

- | | | | | | |
|-----|---|-------------------------|-----|---|-----------------------|
| (3) | a | 't/* \emptyset regent | (4) | a | 't regent |
| | b | *Lui/ \emptyset piove | | b | * \emptyset tregent |
| | | 'it rains' | | | 'it rains' |

Interestingly, if we formulate \emptyset in terms of the moraic layer, it would be possible to consider 't as a 0-moraic pronoun, provided that [tr] really forms one onset [tregent]. Now, complete merger with the verb is felicitous in some cases, but infelicitous in others: *dan zal/val ik 'then fall/shall I' → dan *valk/^{ok}zalk → dan *vak/^{ok}zak*. In terms of prosodic structure, contraction of an enclitic pronoun does not import an extra mora (c.q. syllable), which implies that pro is allowed with the auxiliary *zullen*, but not with the lexical verb *vallen* 'fall'. Similar data with proclisis: *het is/^{ok}tis moeilijk 'it is difficult', het eet/*teet lekker hier 'it eats nicely here', 'k heb/^{ok}keb 'I have', 'k erger/*kerger me 'I am irritated'*). A moraic rephrasing of the pro-drop parameter characterizes Dutch as pro-drop in (some) auxiliary constructions, and a non pro-drop language in lexical verb constructions.