

## **Vowel length in Romance: how layered feet and uneven trochees interact**

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By way of comparative historical reconstruction and cross-dialect synchronic comparisons, Loporcaro (2015) arrives at establishing that contrastive vowel length in stressed syllables in Northern Romance is metrically-governed, and that its distribution is implicational. The presence of contrastive vowel length in proparoxytones implies it in paroxytones, but not the other way around. Likewise, the presence of contrastive vowel length in paroxytones implies it in oxytones, but not vice versa. The same distribution is found for derived vowel length through open syllable lengthening and for stress-dependent gemination. Building on Loporcaro (2015), in this talk I will show that by combining layered feet with uneven trochees, an OT foot-based analysis of the distribution of contrastive vowel length in Northern Romance is not only descriptively adequate, but has explanatory power in that it avoids both over- and undergeneration problems, as opposed to analytical alternatives that exclude layered feet. The theoretical contribution of this investigation is to give additional support for minimal layering of feet, an issue that has recently received attention in the literature on metrical theory.

### References:

Loporcaro, Michele. 2015. *Vowel length from Latin to Romance*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.