



L. Admittedly, the signature is weak, but not weaker than the signature of L in other voiced fricatives (z,ž) in pre-obstruent position. We further believe that it is impossible that sonorant v is spontaneously voiced, since this would imply non-existence of f. (To see this, assume for a moment that vocal cord stiffness is the same in the pronunciation of f and v. Since the other articulatory gestures required for f and v appear to be the same, both sounds should either be (spontaneously) voiced or not.) We are thus forced to conclude that both sonorant and fricative v contain element L.

Although this conclusion is bad in the sense that it puts Slovenian on the list of v-problematic languages, we feel that it still has certain positive aspects. First, with respect to v–w alternation, we observe that it takes place in exactly the same environments as obstruent devoicing. Claiming that v contains L makes this less puzzling, although the details of the phenomenon remain mysterious. This view is further supported by observing that in most dialects of closely related Croatian, which have no final devoicing, v does not alternate with w (nor with f). Second, there are Slovenian dialects where v actually alternates with f and not w. Our claim therefore makes the difference between the phonological systems of Slovenian dialects smaller and thus potentially easier to account for.

## References

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