

The prosodic licensing of vocalic features

We discuss vocalic articulations (glides, palatalization, velarization, etc.) within syllable margins (onset, coda) from a broad typological perspective and propose the following three restrictions:

(1) conflicting vocalic articulations aren't found within an onset or coda

**/pʲt̪i, jã, pʲt̪i³/*

(2) ordering of vocalic articulations isn't contrastive in an onset or coda

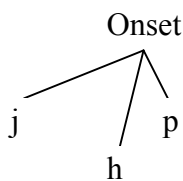
**/pʲt/ vs. /ptʲ/*

(3) segmental status of vocalic articulations isn't contrastive in an onset or coda

**/pʲ/ vs. /pj/.*

Our findings parallel those of Kehrein & Golston (2004) on laryngeal features and strongly suggest that vocalic articulations too are licensed by prosodic constituents above the segment (onset, coda). Similar considerations hold for lateral and nasal release and for ATR/RTR distinctions on consonants and we propose that these too are prosodically licensed. This leaves the *segment* pretty much gutted except for the physiologically necessary pairing of place and manner. We call such a pairing a *seglet* and propose that a model with *seglets* rather than *segments* comes closer to modelling the contrasts we find in the languages of the world: *segments* in the sense of [k^w] or [pʲ] are argued not to exist. Place is licensed by manner and everything else (including manner) is licensed by prosody.

(4) bottlebrush margins



[phj, p^{hj}, ^hpʲ, ...]

(j and h are vocalic and laryngeal features; p is a seglet consisting of [stop] and [labial]; j, h, and p are *phonologically unordered within syllable margins*).

We also discuss a number of phonological alternations dealing with vocalic articulations such as coda neutralization, coda-onset assimilation and “glide metathesis“ and show how our “bottlebrush“ model of syllabic margins in (4) adds to our understanding of these phenomena.

Reference

Kehrein, Wolfgang, and Chris Golston. 2004. A prosodic theory of laryngeal contrasts.

Phonology 21.3. 325-357.