
Auditory representations in Natural Phonology

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NP has long contended that phonemes are specified for their phonetic properties. However, followers of the theory have concentrated primarily on phonological processes, instead of delving into the details of pronounceable representations. In the area of representation, NP has thus failed to pursue Donegan's (2002) claim that systematic articulatory and perceptual phenomena below the level of segmental contrast must be treated phonologically. By building an explicit model of representation in NP, we may help the theory to meet one of its primary challenges: “to confirm the hypothesis that speech processing is categorical, or phonological, down to the level of the actual phonetic (pronounceable) representation” (Donegan 2002: 79).

Prominence Phonology (Schwartz, In press) is an NP-inspired model that seeks to take Donegan's call to action to heart, introducing new and phonetically explicit representations that are capable of handling both subsegmental and suprasegmental phenomena in a phonological manner. This presentation will introduce these representations, and discuss the primary assumptions from which they were borne: listener-orientation, non-binary and holistic elemental primes, and a universal CV structure.

Bibliography

- Donegan, P.J. 2002. Phonological processes and phonetic rules. In Dziubalska-Kołaczyk, K. and J. Weckwerth (eds.), *Future Challenges for Natural Linguistics*. Munich: Lincom, 57-81.
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