

## Phonetic rarities and phonetic variation

In Ladefoged & Everett's 1996 paper 'The status of phonetic rarities' the authors suggest that "two types of features, those required for widespread phonological processes, and those that specify phonetic rarities" should be distinguished. The implicit prediction here is that rare phonetic phenomena employ different resources from common ones (rather than unfamiliar combinations of familiar features). This premise will be examined in the light of data from cross-language surveys and on individual languages, particularly the two Chapakuran languages, Oro Win and Wari', examined by Ladefoged & Everett which exemplify the celebrated case of dental stops with bilabial trilled release. These are re-interpreted here as basically doubly-articulated labial-dental stops with trilling occurring fortuitously. Labial-dental stops are rare but not unique to Chapakuran, and labial-velar combinations are relatively common (Cahill 1999). It will be shown that background assumptions about segmentation, contrast and phonetic classification play a role in creating the impression that rare segments use distinct resources. In fact, rare segments use common material, just in less usual ways. For example voicelessness, laterality and approximant production are all common properties of segments, but only a relative handful of languages are known to have voiceless lateral approximants as fully-fledged members of their consonant inventories. In fact, some phoneticians have argued that voiceless laterals are necessarily fricatives, but this is not the case as shown by Maddieson & Emmorey (1984). Further attention should also be given to the factor of variation in production. Small variations along familiar articulatory dimensions can produce substantially different outputs corresponding to the 'same' segment. In fact, small variations can be exaggeratedly taken as creating categorical differences rather than viewed as illustrating a range of approximations to a basically shared target (e.g. Khanina 2018, Khanina & Schluinsky 2016). When such variability of production is taken into account all languages probably demonstrate phonetic rarities.

Word count 302 words

## References

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