

GOOD, EVIL, THEIR BALANCE AND WHAT THEY TELL US ABOUT LANGUAGE

- (1) a very large-scale convergence between Natural Phonology and (our kind of) CVCV (Ségeral & Scheer 2001):
 existence of two basic forces that counterbalance each other.
- a. NP (and more generally functionalism):
 ease of X (articulation, life, ...) vs. need for creating/ maintaining contrast
 - b. GP (CVCV): Government vs. Licensing

brief illustration: the Strong Position preserves from damage

evolution of Latin obstruents in French

	Strong Position		Weak Position					
	a. #__	b. Coda __	c. Coda _C		d. V__V			
p	<u>porta</u>	porte	<u>talpa</u>	taupe	<u>rupta</u>	route	<u>lup(u)</u>	[lu]
b	<u>bene</u>	bien	<u>herba</u>	herbe	<u>cub(i)tu</u>	coude	<u>ub(i)</u>	où
t	<u>tela</u>	toile	<u>cantare</u>	chanter	<u>plat(a)nu</u>	plane	<u>marit(u)</u>	mari
d	<u>dente</u>	dent	<u>ardore</u>	ardeur	<u>advenire</u>	avenir	<u>nud(u)</u>	nu
k	<u>cor</u>	cœur	<u>rancore</u>	rancœur	<u>facta</u>	faite	<u>*verac(u)</u>	vrai
g	<u>gula</u>	gueule	<u>angustia</u>	angoisse	<u>rig(i)du</u>	raide		
f	<u>fame</u>	faim	<u>infernu</u>	enfer	<u>steph(a)nu</u>	Etienne		
s	<u>serpente</u>	serpent	<u>versare</u>	verser	<u>musca</u>	mouche	<u>nos</u>	[nu]
								cause [z]

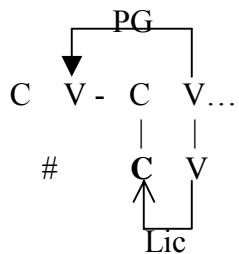
- (3) every vowel can
- a. govern - Government inhibits the segmental expression of its target.
 - b. license - Licensing enhances the segmental expression of its target.

(4)	structural description		segmental effect		syllabic analysis	
	Coda	__{#,C}	=	weakness	=	before empty Nuclei
		vs.		vs.		vs.
	Coda Mirror	{#,C}__	=	strength	=	after empty Nuclei

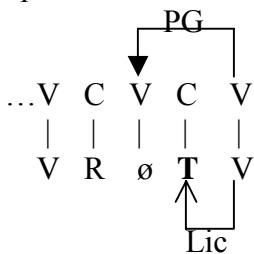
(5)	Licensing	Government	gloss	segmental health
				according to predictions
	+	-	Coda Mirror	splendid
		+	V__V	unfavourable
	-	-	Coda	unfavourable
		+	<i>impossible</i>	---

- (6) why consonants are strong in the Coda Mirror

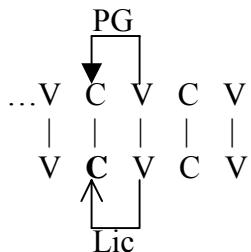
a. initial consonant #_



b. post-Coda consonant C._

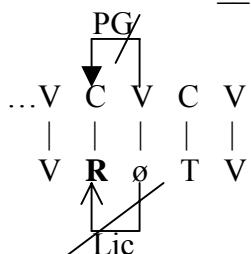


- (7) (1) intervocalic consonant V_V

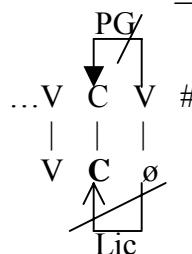


Finally, the situation of Codas with respect to Government and Licensing is as under (8).

- (8) (2) a. internal Coda _C



- b. final Coda _#



- (9) Lenition - Fortition are the result of a conflict resolving system: the same object - a consonant - is subjected to conflicting forces.

the system is

- discrete : 4 and only 4 positions are distinguished, cf. (5).
- predictive and thus falsifiable: there can be lenition in strong positions, but they cannot be stronger lenition in strong than in weak position(s).
- example: a language where consonants spirantise in Codas and in the Strong Position, but not intervocally, is not human.

- (10) what is Government, what is Licensing?

we can give a technical description, describe their effect, but we do not know what they actually are.

Our best guess lies outside of phonology: good vs. evil.

- (11) what phonology cannot and must not do
where do phonological processes occur? - YES
what happens in case they occur ? - YES
why do they occur ? - NO
Why is the age-old trap: mountain climbing/ hunger/ juvenile vigor of the German(ic)
people causes Grimm's Law, vowel raising occurs in cold countries because people
closed their mouth...
==> the identity of Government and Licensing is an interesting issue, but not for
phonologists.

- (12) questions for Natural Phonology from a naïve point of view:
- a. higher principles that are explicitly non-linguistic but more generally human:
"cognitively simple, easily accessible (especially to children), elementary and
therefore universally preferred, i.e. derivable from human nature, or unmarked/
less marked" (Dressler 1999:135)
 - b. "Preferences of Natural Linguistics are explicitly based on extralinguistic
fundaments" Kolaczyk (2001:74)
 - c. are there hard predictions of the kind "X cannot exist" in NP? Or are there only
preferences whereby the balance can go way one way, and way the other?
Attitude towards a language where words must begin with at least 5 consonants?
Will natural phonologists say that this is unlikely and be surprised the day they
discover such a language, which is a possible human language? Or will they say
this is not a human language?
Notion of "possible language"?
 - d. well-/ ill-formedness: is there something like that in NP?
Linguistic structures are not possible/ well-formed or impossible/ ill-formed, but
just more or less probable: this is the very essence of what a Preference is.
This property is shared by OT ("I assure you, this constraint exists in the brain of
every human being, but unfortunately you can never see it in any language because
it is so low ranked").
 - e. nothing is ever discrete, linguistic structures are only gradual (?)
 - f. non-discreteness, non-predictiveness and absence of conditions of falsification in
Natural Phonology stem from its non-linguistic foundations (?)
 - g. discreteness:
we believe that the human brain is not equipped for handling graduality: all objects
that are manipulated by our cognitive system are discrete. One aspect of the
Chomskian research programme is to explain how "infinite states can arise from
finite means"
 - h. empiricism vs. rationalism
NP stands on the empiricist/ behaviourist side, and therefore is not generative:
"nothing in language is specifically linguistic". Rather, linguistic behaviour is but
one facet of more general human behaviour, i.e. the strive toward naturality.

i. UG:

Natural Phonology has to deny the existence of any specifically linguistic endowment that is transmitted by the human genetic code: infants do not build on any linguistic knowledge in order to acquire natural language. Rather, the capacities that they use in order to acquire language are of more general, non-linguistic kind (induction, categorization etc.). They are the same as those that are used for the acquisition of bipedal movement or the ability to drive a car. Thereby, Natural Phonology takes the behaviouristic stance, in both acquisition and adult practice of natural language. (?)

j. Saussure: Langue - Parole

NP also stands outside of the Saussurian paradigm:

Saussure holds that there is a level of analysis (Langue) that obeys exclusively its own rule and remains entirely unaffected by any external influence that may arise through social pressure etc. (Parole). Not only does such a level that is purely linguistic and obeys only the linguistic rule exist, but the study of language, says Saussure, cannot possibly succeed if this level, i.e. the Langue, is not studied independently and before all other things.

The Chomskian equivalent, of course, is competence/ I-language vs. performance/ E-language. Now the higher principles that control the content of Preferences in Natural Phonology clearly fall into the Parole, if anything: they are non-linguistic. Natural Phonology thus appears to deny the existence of the Saussurian opposition Langue vs. Parole since nothing in language is Langue, and hence no such thing is genetically encoded, which means that infants do not use any such information in order to acquire natural language.

References

- Dressler, Uli 1999. What is Natural in Natural Morphology (NM)? Prague Linguistic Circle Papers 3, 135-144.
- Dziubalska-Kolaczyk, Katarzyna 2001. Phonotactic constraints and preferences. Constraints and Preferences, edited by Katarzyna Dziubalska-Kolaczyk, 69-100. Berlin, New York: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Ségeral, Philippe & Tobias Scheer 2001. La Coda-Miroir. Bulletin de la Société de Linguistique de Paris 96, 107-152.
Older English version available at <http://www.unice.fr/dsl/tobias.htm>.