

Preface

Recursivity in Phonology

Francesc Torres-Tamarit

UMR 7023 SFL, CNRS / Université Paris 8
francesc.josep.torres@cnrs.fr

Teresa Cabré

Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona. Centre de Lingüística Teòrica
teresa.cabre@uab.cat



One of the achievements of phonological research in the previous century was the discovery of structured patterns within the continuous flow of sounds in spoken language. In the early eighties, the exploration of such patterns gave rise to the development of Prosodic Phonology. The tenet of this field is that phonological constituency is analogous to morphosyntactic constituency, though not structurally identical (Selkirk 1982). According to Prosodic Phonology, the constituent structure of phonological forms is defined in terms of the Prosodic Hierarchy, a set of universal prosodic categories contained within each other: the mora \subset the syllable \subset the metrical foot \subset the phonological word \subset the phonological phrase \subset the intonational phrase \subset the utterance. In the early days of Prosodic Phonology, it was assumed that all prosodic representations complied with the Strict Layer Hypothesis (Selkirk 1984). This hypothesis states that a category of level i in the hierarchy immediately dominates a sequence of categories of level $i-1$. The Strict Layer Hypothesis was quickly abandoned, and recursive higher-level prosodic categories, such as the phonological phrase and the intonational phrase, were promptly advocated in the literature (Ladd 1986).

With the arrival of Optimality Theory, the Strict Layer Hypothesis was relaxed and recursive structures were posited to account for a wide range of phonological phenomena, including the prosodification of function words into recursive phonological words (Selkirk 1995). Recursive structures have also been proposed for prosodic categories below the phonological word, most notably for the metrical foot (Martínez-Paricio & Kager 2015), but also for syllables and even moras (Iosad 2013). Since the advent of Match Theory (Selkirk 2011), recursivity above the phonological word has received renewed attention. Opposed to prosodic hierarchy theory, we find work on the syntax-phonology interface that rejects prosodic constituency, and derives instead the relevant domains for phonological computation from relations established in syntax (Scheer 2012).

In November of 2019, a two-day workshop on “Recursivity in phonology: below and above the word” was organized at the Universitat Autònoma

de Barcelona.¹ The workshop featured Emily Elfner (York University, Canada), Junko Ito and Armin Mester (University of California, Santa Cruz) as keynote speakers. The following questions were addressed: does recursivity in phonology exist at all? If recursivity in phonology exists, what exactly can trigger a recursive structure in the syntax-prosody interface? Is recursivity restricted to higher-ordered phonological constituents like the phonological phrase and the intonational phrase? Does ternarity exist in phonology or should it be derived from recursive structures?

This 20th volume of the *Catalan Journal of Linguistics* presents a selection of the papers that were discussed during the workshop. In the first contribution, Chris Golston argues in “No stress systems require recursive feet” against layered feet. Layered feet have recently received renewed attention in the study of accentual systems, among other topics. Martínez-Paricio and Kager reply to Golston in their paper “In favour of layered feet: a response to Golston”. These two papers address whether layered feet predict unattested patterns. In their paper “A gradient Harmonic Grammar account of nasals in extended phonological words”, Revithiadou and Markopoulos propose an analysis of the variation in the realization of final coronal nasals in function words followed by lexical words in Greek. The analysis is framed within the theory of gradient symbolic representations put forward by Smolensky & Goldrick (2016), and further assumes recursive prosodic words. Finally, Kristine Yu shows that recursion is a logical consequence of expressing phonological patterns for both strings and trees in “Computational perspectives on phonological constituency”.

We hope that the papers included in this volume, and the diverse theoretical perspectives they provide, will contribute to our understanding of the role of recursion in prosodic phonology.

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