

## Reading guide: Hyman (2001)

Hyman, Larry M. 2001. On the limits of phonetic determinism in phonology: \*NC̥ revisited. In Elizabeth Hume and Keith Johnson, eds., *The Role of Speech Perception in Phonology*. New York: Academic Press, 141-185.

### Background

So far, every paper we have read assumes that the phonology is influenced by phonetic patterns, although the various authors disagree over how direct this influence is. Hyman (2001), and the next few papers after this, will take a very different view of the phonology-phonetics interface than what we have seen so far.

### Questions to keep in mind while reading

- (1) Hyman gives the Noni pattern in (2) as evidence that "phonetics ≠ phonology". However, this statement can be interpreted in a number of ways.
  - (a) Phonology, as a formal/symbolic system, can be distinguished from phonetics.
  - (b) Not all phonological constraints have a phonetic basis.
  - (c) Phonological constraints never have a phonetic basis.
  - (d) There is no effect of phonetics on the phonological grammar at all.
  - (e) ...?

For Noni and for all relevant later examples, try to determine just what sense of "phonetics ≠ phonology" is supported.

- (2) Do you agree with Hyman's claim that "the synchronic analysis of phonological systems is not equivalent to going through the historical changes that produced them" (p 147)? Why or why not?
- (3) Why, according to Hyman, does phonetically driven phonology not "help us with" the goals of synchronic phonology (p 149)?
- (4) Why is the existence of synchronic post-nasal devoicing phenomena important for Hyman's overall argument?
- (5) How convincing is Hyman's claim that Tswana has a *synchronic* process of post-nasal devoicing?
- (6) What does Hyman present as the *diachronic* motivation for post-nasal devoicing in Tswana?
- (7) What important points about the \*ND constraint are contributed by the other languages that Hyman discusses in section D?

- (8) Think through Hyman's list of "processes and counter-processes" in section E. How many examples of non-phonetically-motivated processes are there?
- (9) Hyman argues against the view that \*ND could be a perceptually motivated constraint. Any comments on the argument he makes here?

**Some points for further thought and discussion**

- (10) On p 144, Hyman quotes Hale & Reiss (1998: 6–7):  
"Phonology is not and should not be grounded in phonetics since the facts which phonetic grounding is meant to explain can be derived without such grounding."  
  
Comments?
- (11) If we have to acknowledge that there are some constraints are not directly rooted in articulatory and acoustic factors, can we still define some broader sense of "functionally grounded" that takes the additional cases into account?
- (12) Can you think of any phonological alternations or patterns (in languages that you know) that do not seem to be functionally motivated?