Reading guide: Pater 1999

Pater, Joe. 1999. Austronesian nasal substitution and other NC̥ effects. In René Kager, Harry van der Hulst, and Wim Zonneveld, eds., *The Prosody-Morphology Interface*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 310-343. [Edited version in J. McCarthy, ed., 2004. *Optimality Theory in Phonology: A Reader.* Oxford and Malden, Mass.: Blackwell. Pre-print version: ROA-160 (1996).]

Background — why we are reading this paper

This paper represents one view of the phonetics-phonology relationship in a constraint-based phonological theory. It is useful to understand this approach for its own sake, and also as a basis for comparison with some alternative or extended proposals that we will look at in the next few weeks.

Additionally, this paper is an example of how various kinds of supporting evidence can be brought together in order to justify a newly proposed constraint.

Questions to keep in mind while reading

- What phonetic motivation does Pater introduce in support of the *NC̥ constraint?

- Other than these strictly phonetic factors, Pater discusses additional evidence in §1 that the *NC̥ constraint is well motivated. What is this additional evidence?

- Why does Pater discuss the languages that he does? What do they have in common, and why is it important for his argument? (Yes, the answer to this question is as easy as you think it is, but it's also important to have in mind.)

- How complete is the typology of "logically possible" ways to repair a *NC̥ violation? Are all possiblities attested? Can you think of any additional possible repairs that Pater doesn't discuss?

- In §4, Pater uses the term "license" without defining it. However, the meaning should be fairly clear from the discussion and examples. See if you can figure this out.

- Why does Pater feel that the *NC̥ approach to post-nasal voicing is better than that taken by Itô, Mester, & Padgett (1995)? How is the phonetic motivation behind *NC̥ important in his argument here?

- Any comments on the details of the phonological analyses? Complaints, alternatives, points of confusion?

Some points for further thought and discussion

- Is phonetic grounding only relevant for markedness constraints, or could it be relevant for faithfulness constraints as well?

- Are we ever justified in proposing a (markedness) constraint with no clear phonetic basis? If yes, what kinds of evidence would justify proposing such a constraint? If no, why not?

- At the end of §1, Pater states, "One of the primary strengths of a constraint-based theory like Optimality Theory is that phonetically grounded contextual markedness constraints like *NC̥ can be directly incorporated into the phonology." Is phonetic grounding (Archangeli & Pulleyblank 1994) really specific to constraint-based frameworks, or is it more general? What are some of the similarities and differences that might arise in thinking about phonetic grounding in a rule-based vs. a constraint-based framework?

- *Bonus question, if time permits:* What is the problem with "standard" IDENT[nasal] that Pater identifies in the discussion on pp 17–20? Why is Pater's solution dependent on [nasal] being a monovalent feature? Can you think of a different way of making IDENT[F] constraints "asymmetrical" that is not dependent on monovalent features?

Update on the analysis of Austronesian nasal substitution
Pater (2001) reanalyzes the Austronesian cases of nasal substitution, using constraints other than *NC̥ . However, he argues that the other cases of *NC̥ discussed here still hold, and the arguments in favor of *NC̥ over a constraint calling for post-nasal voicing are still valid.

Pater, Joe. 2001. Austronesian nasal substitution revisited. In L. Lombardi, ed., *Segmental Phonology in Optimality Theory: Constraints and Representations.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 159-182.