Reading guide: Steriade (2001b)

Steriade, Donca. 2001b. The phonology of perceptibility effects: The P-map and its consequences for constraint organization. Ms., UCLA.

Background

    In our discussion of Steriade (2001a), we have already seen some of the ideas behind the P-map, and some of the perceptual evidence that similarity and cue availability are important in explaining phonological patterns.

    So as we read and discuss this paper, let's focus in particular on *what the OT model looks like* under Steriade's implementation of the P-map.

Questions to keep in mind while reading

(1)   What does Steriade mean by her statement that the P-map *projects correspondence constraints*?

(2)   What is the "Too-Many-Solutions Problem"? What is the P-map model's response to this problem? How successful do you think the P-map model is in this respect?

(3)   In Hayes' (1999) Inductive Grounding model, constraints refer only to formal/symbolic phonological categories, and the effects of gradient, non-categorical phonetics are felt only in the Inductive Grounding process. In Kirchner's (2000) and Zhang's (2004) proposals, there are at least some, and perhaps many, constraints that are themselves able to refer to gradient, non-categorical phonetic measures.

    (a) As Steriade presents her P-map model here, what aspects of phonology (if any) are symbolic and what aspects (if any) are gradient or direct-phonetic?

    (b) Can we imagine a P-map model that involves different assumptions about symbolic phonology vs. direct-phonetic phonology? To what extent do the insights behind the P-map model depend on decisions about the categorical/gradient nature of phonology?

(4)   Is the P-map universal in Steriade's view? What differences might we expect between a universal P-map and a language-particular one?

(5)   Any comments concerning the last paragraph on p 43 (continued on p 44)?

Some points for further thought and discussion

(6) When we discussed Zhang (2004), we decided that the strongest cases among his arguments for the influence of phonetics in phonology had to do with these points:

▸ The kinds of contexts that license contour tones are not necessarily the kinds of contexts that have special licensing abilities for other featural contrasts.

▸ In a given language, the context that most enhances sonorant rime duration is the context that is best able to support contour tones, even though other kinds of contexts may be better at supporting contour tones in other languages.

Can we use the P-map to capture these observations without any direct-phonetic constraints such as those that refer to the $C_{CONTOUR}$ value of a syllable?