Reverse Sonority Clusters: Developing a Model for Descriptive Analysis

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Presentation Plan

SSG an overwhelming preference by languages
Clusters and Reverse Sonority Clusters
The problem of description
Preliminary suggestions
Implications
SSP [SSG]
Sonority Sequencing Principle (SSP)
Sonority decreasing when moving away from syllable nucleus [a cross-linguistic phenomenon]
(Sievers, 1881)
Between any member X of a syllable and the syllable peak p, only sounds of higher sonority rank than X are permitted
(Clements, 1990, p. 285)
Glides › rhotics › laterals › nasals › voiced fricatives ›
voiced stops › voiceless fricatives › voiceless stops
(w › r › l › n › z › d › s › t)
(Based on Jespersen, 1904; Clements 1990; Dost, 2004)
Sonority Scale

Vowels >> glides >> liquids >> nasals >> obstruents

(Bell & Hooper, 1978; Clements, 1990; Smolensky, 1995)

Fundamental to phonotactics in languages

Permitted hierarchy of consonant clusters (syllable structure) [simple, moderately complex and complex]

Sonority Sequencing Generalization (SSG)

(Selkirk, 1984)
Reverse Sonority Clusters

Polish:

/vdr/ w+drząca ‘implement’
/vzbr/ wz+bronić ‘forbid’
/fsx/ ws+chodzić ‘rise’
/zdm/ z+dmuchnąć ‘blow out’
/strf/ s+trwonić ‘waste’.

(Orzechowska, 2013)

Pashto:


/wrara/ nephew
/wɭal/ to carry
Reverse Sonority Clusters

Ladakhi:

Initial (liquid+obstruent) clusters
/lg, lz, rb, rg/

(Koshal, 1979)

Pashto:

Khan (2012) shows a number of consonant clusters
Theoretical Justification

Optimality Theoretic (Prince & Smolensky, 1993) Justification
Problems in Description

1. Experimental: (Distributional occurrence - Phonetics)

Word-Initially /wɾal/ /wɾal.ke.ɖəl/ (to carry)
Word-Medially /wər.wɾal.ke.ɖəl/ (to be carried)
Word-Finally /wər.wɾal/ (to carry to someone)

Problems: Most of them are monosyllabic (root words)
Word initially (e.g., Pashto)
(lmar, nmase, ngor)
Problems in Description

**Issues:**

The most extreme class of RSC (Beginning with a semivowel /wr, wl)

(Hammarberg, 1971; Houlihan, 1973)

Mutation?

Fricatives?

Devoiced?

**Misc.**

Longer delays?
Preliminary Suggestions

2. Data collection
   a. Carefully selected respondents
   NORMs (Trudgill, 1987)
   b. Place of recording (setting)
   c. PRAAT
   d. FormantPro Tool (Xu, 2015)
   e. Diagram
   f. Statistics
/ʃxwandaŋ/
If SSP followed

If it’s not followed
Implications

Towards a typology of RSC

Most preferred and least preferred clusters
Sonority repair strategies
Synchronic as well as diachronic

Implicational Universals

Structural dependencies
The End