

# Theoretical Phonology: Suprasegmental Phonology

## Non-Linear Phonology

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# Outline

## 1 Problems with Linear Phonology

- Introduction

## 2 Phonological Hierarchy

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## 2 Phonological Hierarchy

# Linear Phonology: A critique

- Linear Phonology constitutes an extremely powerful tool for describing phonologies.
- Linear Phonology describes both lexical and post-lexical phonological processes.
- Rules are characterised by formal simplicity.

# Does Linear Phonology account for the underlying forms

Back in 1977 Hyman suggested four criteria as a guide for phonological analysis<sup>1</sup>.

- ① *Predictability*: Phonological analysis should capture regularities.
- ② *Economy*: Fewer rules, phonemes etc. are better than more rules, phonemes etc.
- ③ *Pattern Congruity*
- ④ *Plausibility*

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<sup>1</sup>Remember Chomsky's observational adequacy, descriptive adequacy, explanatory adequacy

# Linear Phonology: A critique

- Rules can account for productions that do not occur in human languages. In other words Linear Phonology does not tell which phonological processes occur in human languages and which do not occur, e.g., why the alternation [a] → [b] does not occur in human languages.
- Linear Phonology does not provide an account why some phonological procedure are more marked than others e.g., dissimilation is more marked than assimilation, in addition it does not tell there non rounded back vowels are infrequent in world languages.
- A related problem for Linear Phonology is that it did not distinguish between core phonological procedures and parametric ones.

# Towards a new paradigm?

When there are many exceptions in a theory's predictions and when the pile of the unaccounted data increases then there is a need for change.

There are two options:

- 1 Continue working within the so called *normal* science and try to improve the model, theory, etc.
- 2 Change paradigm altogether.

Usually people are left with the first option and wait for a better model.

You have to read Thomas Kuhn's *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*!

# Phonological Hierarchy



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# Summary

- The **first main message** of your talk in one or two lines.
- The **second main message** of your talk in one or two lines.
- Perhaps a **third message**, but not more than that.
- Outlook
  - Something you haven't solved.
  - Something else you haven't solved.

# For Further Reading I

-  A. Author.  
*Handbook of Everything.*  
Some Press, 1990.
-  S. Someone.  
On this and that.  
*Journal of This and That*, 2(1):50–100, 2000.