

## SCALING OF CERTAIN SELECTED DISTINCTIVE FEATURES IN ENGLISH

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The specific purpose of this study was to determine whether or not a hierarchical structure exists within the phonological domain of distinctive features. The secondary purpose was to determine whether the Chomsky and Halle (1968) Distinctive Feature System is relevant to and descriptive of the perceptual domain of the adult listeners in a speech processing mode. At a micro-level of speech perception, the goal of the study was to identify and describe some of the underlying strategies of distinctive feature utilization associated with subjects' perceptual judgements of certain selected speech stimuli.

#### Subjects

The evaluation of the subjects' responses was obtained through combining the experimental tasks of absolute judgment and magnitude estimation of the minimally distinct members of the stimulus sets. A stimulus set consisted of a referent CV-nonsense syllable followed by three target CV-nonsense syllables. The subjects were to order the relative similarity of each of the three target syllables in relation to the referent. The CV syllable was utilized in order to maximize acoustic and minimize linguistic effects.

#### Conclusion

The study supports a hierarchical ordering of the saliency and a perceptual organization with distinctive features. One may also conclude that the Chomsky and Halle (1968) Distinctive Feature System appears to have some relevance and descriptivity of at least some phonemes in English.

#### Reference

Chomsky, N. and M. Halle (1968): The Sound Pattern of English, New York: Harper and Row.