

FROM PHONEME TO SPEECH SOUND: CONSTRAINTS IN THE LINKAGE OF
VARIABILITY IN ALLOPHONY

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In the course of analysing Hungarian consonant clusters, several correlations were discovered, which, should they prove correct, can contribute to our understanding of how competence passes into performance. This presentation will set forth some of the most important of these correlations.

Facts determining the realizations of phonemes can be linguistic or non-linguistic, the former either segmental or supra-segmental. The speech sound realizations of phonemes are fundamentally determined by the regularities of the syntagmatic and paradigmatic axes. Within the frame given by the requirements of the paradigm (maintenance of self-identity), the requirements of the syntagma (identity with other [neighboring] phonemes) operate automatically given the absence of other - especially suprasegmental and extra-linguistic factors. The status of the phonemes within the system (integrity, to use Martinet's term) bears the following relation to the speech sound: The more distinctive features mark a phoneme, the more stable, i.e. identical, are its realizations. The paucity of features is equal to the increasing influence of the syntagmatic axis. The following corollaries may be drawn from this observation: 1. The greatest influence can be perceived between those elements that differ only by one feature, though the physiological and perceptual nature of the feature determines its exact extent. 2. The nature of the speech sound is in close agreement with the nature of the producing organ. The more mobile the organ, and the fewer organs required, the more the sound in question adjusts itself to its surroundings.

This syntagmatic principle operates without constraints in the case of two features, voicing and length, that embrace the entire consonant system. The effects, however, operate unequally, depending on the marked or unmarked nature of the element in question. Thus, in the case of both voicing and length, the neutralization prefers the lesser marked member of the opposition.