

WORKING GROUP: THE SYLLABLE IN PHONOLOGICAL THEORY

Organizer: Alan Bell

ALAN BELL'S SUMMARY

The Working Group met twice during the Congress to discuss selected issues related to the controversial unit of phonetics and phonology. The discussions largely concerned questions raised by the following papers, which the authors had exchanged among themselves and a few other researchers before the congress.¹

- Árnason, Kristján: "A diachronic look at the syllable"
 Bell, Alan: "The syllable as a constituent versus organizational unit"
 Bell, Alan: "The role of segment bonds in phonological organization"
 Brend, Ruth: "The syllable in tagmemic analysis"
 Coates, Richard: "A point of universal phonotactics?"
 Coates, Richard: "The categories of real phonology in relation to the syllable"
 Coates, Richard: "Some allegro syllabic consonant processes in English"
 Coates, Richard: "Reservations on the origin of syllabic consonants"
 Cochran, Anne M.: "Notes on current research on the syllable in Papua New Guinea languages"
 Cochran, Anne M.: "Ampeeli-Wojokeso consonant clusters--a study in syllable complexity" (with Edith and Dorothy West)
 Galton, Herbert: "Interrelations between the open syllable and the phonological system as illustrated in Slavic"
 Mikuš, Radivoj: "Vers une nouvelle phonétique"²
 Price, Patti Jo: "What is the syllable anyway?"

The workshop was also fortunate to have the participation of the following Congress attendees with research experience on the syllable and related matters: H. Andersen, B. Andrésen, C.-J.N. Bailey, R. Bannert, H. Basbøll, R.A.W. Bladon, J. Bybee Hooper, W. Dressler, O. Fujimura, J. Gvozdanović, J.T. Jensen, C.-W. Kim, I. Lehiste, B. Lindblom, L. Menn, L. Papademetre, E. Pike, L. Selkirk, E. Strangert, S. Vater and K. Williamson.

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- 1) Requests for copies of papers should be addressed to the individual authors.
 2) R. Mikuš was unfortunately not able to attend the Congress.

The first session opened with discussion of Price's experiments on the acoustic cues sufficient to shift identification of tokens prepared with the aid of speech synthesis among prayed-parade-braid-bereted and among plight-polite-blight-belight. This led to a general discussion of a wide variety of such phenomena, including some of particular interest mentioned in Cochran's paper, and of acoustic cues involved. Some comment on the different ways judgements on the number of syllables can be obtained also followed. Discussion then turned to the concept of the relative "resistance to coarticulation" of segment classes presented by Lindblom and Bladon and to a theory of the internal structure of the syllable sketched by Basbøll. The session concluded with discussion of Coates' proposal that the syllable functions as a domain of feature timing in a phonological theory in which time rather than sequence is the basis of phonological representation.

The first topic of the second session was the role of the syllable in diachronic phonology, under which three cases were taken up. These were Galton's contention that the open syllable canon of Slavic was a principal factor in the development of the correlation of palatalization, Árnason's study of vowel shortening and lengthening in Icelandic, which he concluded to be inadequately explained by several different theories of syllabic representation, and the case of cluster formation in Modern Greek presented by Papademetre. The final topics of the workshop were Bell's proposed framework of segment bonding as an alternative to current syllabic models and the general question of the hierarchical nature of the syllable as described in tagmemic theory by Brend.