Representing phonotactics

LabPhon 16 satellite workshop

Sharing a native language with a group of speakers implies, among other things, parsing an acoustic signal in the same way, at the same time, and sharing the same set of phonological representations, amounting to a common lexicon. The purpose of this workshop is to focus on the phonotactic aspect of these shared representations: How are phonotactic representations built? What are they composed of? What is the role of phonotactics in the transmission of linguistic information?

The study of phonotactic representation has been dominated by concerns with the principle of sonority. However, while phonotactics and sonority are closely linked, understanding the question of phonotactic representation is not reducible to finding the perfect version of the sonority principle. The focus on sonority has greatly fostered our understanding of combinatorial restrictions within complex syllable onsets and codas and their phonological treatment (e.g., Selkirk 1984; Clements 1990; Berent et al. 2008). At the same time, the sonority hierarchy does not account for all phonotactic constraints. We therefore invite contributions addressing the following four aspects, bringing together all current knowledge that we have about them:

1. Typology: the extent of cross-linguistic variation in co-occurrence restrictions and syllable structure types
2. Evolution: changes in phonotactic representations over time
3. Perception-production dynamics: phonotactic effects in cross-language perception and production, and their implications for sound change and L2 or L3 acquisition
4. Beyond phonology: The contribution of different levels of linguistic structure (e.g., suprasegmental, morphological, etc.) to phonotactic representation and to the transmission of linguistic information.

Format

A total of 8 abstracts will be selected for presentation (about 2 per theme). Depending on the number of submissions, a short poster session may be included. Abstracts should follow the guidelines of the main conference (http://labphon16.labphon.org/guidelines.html). Presentations will be 15 min long (plus 5 min for questions). They will be followed by a general discussion session outlining the essential ideas that emerge from the workshop, and a 15-minute brainstorming session leading to a list of new research questions considered crucial for further study.

Workshop goals:

- to sum up the knowledge we have so far about the nature and role of phonotactics
- to initiate collaborations across different perspectives, mixing different approaches
- to further our understanding of the role of phonotactics in information transmission at multiple linguistic levels

Abstract submission deadline: February 1, 2018
Notification of acceptance: March 15, 2018
Workshop program announced: March 30, 2018
Workshop date: June 23, 2018 (9:00 – 12:30)
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