

Uwe Reichel

Established phonological theories postulate uniform syllable constituent structures. From a traditional hierarchical point of view, syllables are right branching implying a close connection between the nucleus and the coda. Articulatory Phonology in contrast suggests a stronger cohesion between onsets and nuclei than between nuclei and codas. This claim is empirically supported by the c-center effect which initially has been observed for onsets only. Nevertheless, recent studies revealed that this effect does not occur in all complex onsets and can also be observed in codas. To account for this structure non-uniformity, we propose an information theoretic approach to measure connection strengths between syllable constituents in terms of their pointwise mutual information. It turned out that the derived constituent structures correspond well to the empirical c-center findings on American English and German data. The results are discussed from a Usage-based Phonology perspective considering c-centers to be a frequency effect.