

An argument for severing stress from phonology

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According to the consensus view in generative linguistics, multiple phonological computations including the computation of word stress, tone, and segmental processes are carried out in a single cognitive module known as 'phonology'. I present an argument for a modular decomposition of phonology, where the computation of stress is carried out in a separate module with a limited interaction with the rest of phonology.

The argument is based on what I refer to as the Stress-Encapsulation Universal. Drawing on observations by de Lacy (2006) and Blumenfeld (2006), I propose a universal asymmetry between stress and segmental processes. Segmental processes are often sensitive to the position of stress: in American English, for example, [t] is flapped between a preceding stressed vowel and a following unstressed vowel, as in *polítical* vs. *politician*; but the computation of stress is never directly sensitive to segmental information: stress patterns like 'stress the rightmost vowel followed by a velar' are unattested. The unattested patterns can be excluded in the modular architecture if the input to the stress module excludes representations of segmental features.

I will discuss the nature of the interaction between the stress module and the rest of phonology and will compare the predictions of the modular architecture to the predictions of non-modular accounts of encapsulation within serial or parallel architectures.