

## What kind of (epi?)phenomenon is sonority? Universal Logic of Segment Types as a framework for studying phonotactic patterns

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At least since Jespersen (1897-99: 521ff, for a longer pre-history, cf. Ohala 2008) a "sonority hierarchy" or "strength hierarchy" has been used to account for segment order in the syllable (cf., e.g., Laver 1994: 503ff and Blevins 1995: 211ff).

John Ohala has insisted (e.g. Ohala 1992, Ohala & Kawasaki-Fukumori 1997, Ohala 2008) that "As explanations for syllable shapes they are circular...terms such as sonority, etc., are just labels for the rank ordering of segment types; they do not explain it" (Ohala & Kawasaki-Fukumori 1997: 344).

I have been developing a Sonority Syllable Model (first presented in 1973, developed e.g. in 1999, see now 2005: 173-201) which I claim is neither circular nor ill defined. I shall therefore briefly present the basic foundations of the model and then show that Ohala's claims about circularity do not apply to my model. I shall also attempt to demonstrate that my model does contribute to a better understanding of segment order in the syllable than standard versions of such hierarchies.

Specific issues I shall discuss are: distinctive features relating to sonority; levels of abstractness (phonetic-phonological) relevant for phonotactics (including phonotactic typology); and particular restrictions at the margins of syllables and words (where I give a solution to the /st/-problem stated in Ohala & Kawasaki-Fukumori 1997: 348).

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