

Plenary Talk #2 (Saturday, October 10, 5:00–6:00 pm)

What kinds of processes are postlexical (and how powerful are they)?

Ellen Kaisse, University of Washington

The literature on phonological processes that apply between words is full of cases like tone sandhi in Chinese languages, tone spread in Bantu, the placement of intonational boundary tones, and local cases of resyllabification, vowel deletion, voicing assimilation, or place assimilation between the final segment of one word and the initial segment of the next. But some kinds of processes are profoundly underrepresented. Initial stress assignment always seems to be word-bounded, or clitic-group bounded at the most. Vowel harmony likewise rarely extends beyond the word or clitic group, and in the very few cases reported to continue into the next word, it extends only one syllable onward, rather iterating so as to affect the whole word, as its lexical counterparts do. In this paper, I will report on an initial survey of processes in the phonological literature described as applying across words, and I will speculate on why postlexical application is so strongly skewed towards certain kinds of processes and not others.