

CROSS STYLE ARGUMENTATION

WIESŁAW AWEDYK

Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań

It is generally held that Polish has no syllabic consonants. In a recent article, Dressler and Madelska (1989) claim that, in fast/casual Polish speech, vowel deletion may provoke the syllabification of a tautosyllabic consonant, e.g.,

- (1)
- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|----------------|-------------------|
| a. <i>melodia</i> 'melody' | L [melɔdja] | : F/C [mɛɔdja] |
| b. <i>tylko</i> 'only' | L [tɨlkɔ] | : F/C [tɨkɔ] |
| c. <i>na przykład</i> 'for example' | L [na pʃikwat] | : F/C [na pʃkwat] |

According to Dressler and Madelska, these syllabic consonants have a longer duration and a higher amplitude than non-syllabic counterparts. The Polish subjects also perceive them as syllable peaks, e.g., that both [na pʃikwat] and [na pʃkwat] sound trisyllabic to them.

If sonorants and even spirants are syllabic in fast/casual speech, the question now arises as to whether these consonants can perform the function of syllable peaks in slow speech in contexts such as those in (1). Let us consider the following examples, all of which violate the Sonority Principle:

- (2)
- | | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|---|
| a. <i>rdest</i> [rdest]
'knot-grass' | b. <i>krtani</i> [krtan]
'larynx' | c. <i>kadr</i> [kadr]
'film frame' |
| <i>lgnie</i> [lgɲe]
'cling' (3rd sg.) | | <i>módl (się)</i> [mudl]
'pray' (2nd sg. imp.) |
| <i>mgła</i> [mgwa]
'fog' | | <i>kadm</i> [kadm]
'cadmium' |

Final and medial sonorants in (2b.) and (2c.) are devoiced, and, in fast speech, may be deleted in the absolute final position, e.g., *myśl* 'thought' L [mɨɕ] : F/C [mɨɕ] (cf. Wierzchowska 1980:120, 127).

These observations demonstrate that sonorants, like those in (2b.) and (2c.), are not good candidates for syllabics since syllabicity favors voicing, e.g., Polish *krwi* 'blood' (gen. sg.) [krɨ] is monosyllabic while Serbian [krvi] is disyllabic (cf. Abele 1924-5).

Initial sonorants are not usually devoiced, e.g., *mżawka* [mʒafka] 'drizzle' or *rżysko* [rʒisko] 'stubble' (cf. Wierzchowska 1980:69-70).

My data from slow speech demonstrate that sonorants, in contexts like those in (2a.), do not differ from sonorants in typically non-syllabic contexts in terms of duration and intensity. In the experiment, the subject read a list of words and the resulting recording was analyzed in the Micro Speech Lab (MSL)¹. For example, the *r* in *rdest* has a duration of 105 msec. while the *r* in *kora* [kɔra] 'bark' has a duration of 104 msec.: the intensity values are 4241 and 4618², respectively. Contrary then to fast/casual speech, the slow speech sonorants in 'potentially' syllabic contexts do not exhibit any characteristic phonetic properties (cf. Awedyk 1990). It is also obvious that the words in (2a.) are monosyllabic.

Let us analyze the forms in (1c.) again. It is claimed that both [na pʃkwat] and [na pʃkwat] are trisyllabic. However, in still faster/more casual speech 'syllabic peaks can be lost with resulting resyllabification' (Dressler and Madelska 1989:86). The resyllabification results, in turn, in the shift of stress placement according to the Polish rule of penultimate stress, i.e., [na pʃkwat] with the stress on [ʃ] is trisyllabic while [na pʃkwat] with the stress on the first [a] is dissyllabic. The latter pronunciation was regarded as 'sloppy' by the subjects.

The description of the syllable in Polish must then incorporate stress analysis as well (cf. Hjelmslev 1939)³. Such a comprehensive theory would then explain why [pʃkwat] with the stress on [ʃ] is dissyllabic while [pʃkwat] and [rdest] with the stress placed on the vocalic segment are monosyllabic.

Summing up, the above discussion demonstrates how Cross Style Argumentation can contribute to the refinement of a theory (model) of the syllable in Polish. This analysis also demonstrates how the stress-rhythmic pattern is superimposed on the segmental structure and may be an argument for the hierarchical organization of the phonological component of grammar.

REFERENCES

- Abele, A. 1924-5. "K voprosu o sloge" [On the problem of the syllable]. *Slavia* 3. 1-34.
- Awedyk, W. 1990. "Is a phonetic definition of the syllable possible?" *Studia Phonetica Posnaniensia* 2. 5-12.
- Dressler, W.U. and Madelska, L. 1989. "Syllabic consonants in Polish casual speech". *Hungarian Papers in Phonetics* 21. 84-87.
- Hjelmslev, L. 1939. "The syllable as a structural unit". *Proceedings of the Third International Congress of Phonetic Sciences (Ghent, Belgium)*. Ghent: Phonetic Laboratory of the University of Ghent. 266-272.
- Wierzchowska, B. 1980. *Fonetyka i fonologia języka polskiego* [Polish phonetics and phonology]. Wrocław: Ossolineum.

¹ I wish to express my thanks to Mr. J. Rysiewicz, M.A. and Mr. A. Ciechanowicz for computing the data.

² The energy calculation is a simple measurement of the total of all amplitude values.

³ 'A syllable is a chain of expression including one and only one accent' (Hjelmslev 1939:270). Thus in *doctor* there are two syllables because the form consists of two chains of expression /dɔk/ and /tɔ/. The former carries strong stress, while the latter weak stress.