

Making phonology natural

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Increasingly interdisciplinary nature of the 21st century research makes Natural Phonology a suitable candidate for a modern phonological theory. It has always relied on external evidence and is thus particularly well prepared to incorporate the newest developments in such disciplines as phonetics as well as speech technology, language acquisition, neurolinguistics or psycholinguistics. Its holistic approach to language allows for a wider perspective of a phonological study, from semantics and pragmatics, via syntax and morphology, through acoustic, auditory as well as articulatory phonetics. The theory is not hermetic and thus open to enrichments and modifications which do not violate its principles as long as the language user remains at its core.

In this workshop we will look for good examples of two main types of natural phonological processes, i.e., lenitions (weakening or backgrounding processes) and fortitions (strengthening or foregrounding processes). We will search for them in formal and casual speech, child speech, second language speech and pathological speech. Since lenitions are speaker-friendly and fortitions are listener-friendly, they compete; but the language user is speaker and listener in one, so the processes must trade off to arrive at a comfortable balance allowing the user to communicate in the language. We will try to illustrate such trade-offs.

Prospective participants are welcome to contribute examples of phonological processes from a variety of languages.