

A New Model of Intrasegmental Consonant Structure:
Evidence from Prevocalization and Related Processes

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This work is a detailed cross-linguistic and theoretical study of prevocalization, or the development of a vocalic prearticulation by consonants. The proposed analysis of prevocalization is couched in terms of articulatory phonology (Browman and Goldstein 1986 et seq.), while also incorporating relevant insights of other frameworks, most notably dependency phonology (Anderson and Ewen 1987). It is argued that prevocalization consists in the breaking up of a consonant into a sequence of its internal components, ushering in a vocalic element not present in the original sound chain. It is suggested that the specification of the consonant's vocalic element is present in its underlying gestural score. This makes all consonant-sized units underlyingly bigestural in that they include both a consonantal and a vocalic gesture. The vocalic gesture is identical to the secondary articulation in the case of secondarily modified consonants, and coincides with the position of the tongue body (and, secondarily, lips) in the case of plain consonants. The suggested model of intrasegmental consonant structure makes strong predictions relevant to various areas of phonological theory, diachronic linguistics, and articulatory evolution. The detailed study of prevocalization provided in this work also opens up new vistas for experimental and theoretical research in the areas of syllabic consonants, postvelar consonants, consonant gemination, retroflexion, and the synchronic and diachronic mechanism of such processes as umlaut, vocalization, vowel intrusion, metathesis, and compensatory lengthening, among others.