INDIAN JOURNAL OF APPLIED LINGUISTICS
VOL. 36, NO. 1-2, JAN-DEC 2010

Sonority Effects in Telugu Aphasics

D. VASANTA
Osmania University

A. SUVARNA
J. SIREESHA
Nizams Institute for Medical Sciences

ABSTRACT

The focus of this paper is application of the concept of 'sonority' to the study of aphasic speech. An assessment tool that is capable of examining sonority effects was developed and administered to a patient diagnosed to have progressive non-fluent aphasia. This tool successfully distinguished the performance of the patient from that of two normal (control) adults with different degrees of literacy. The results based on accuracy and latency measurements in the segmentation and production tasks revealed that the difficulty of the patient is likely to lie with the integration of segmental and prosodic information of words during articulatory planning stage. The need for developing similar tools in other Indian languages and using them along with standard language assessment procedures is emphasized.

INTRODUCTION

The concept of sonority is very old and it was used to account for the most frequently occurring syllable structures in the languages of the world. The notion of sonority whether defined either in terms of ease of perception or ease of articulation has been used to characterize organization of segments within a syllable. Clements (1990) for instance stated that underlying lexical representations in any language are syllabified according to the principles of sonority theory. One aspect of this theory that received considerable attention is the sonority hierarchy (SH). SH puts Obstruents (O), that is, stops, fricatives and affricates at the bottom end of the hierarchy for they are least sonorous, and Nasals (N), Liquids (L), Glides (G), and Vowels (V) in that order towards the most sonorous end of the scale as shown below: