

# The interface between phonology and syntax

Evidence from *er*-contraction and unit accentuation in Danish

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This paper explores the interaction between phonology and syntax on the basis of evidence concerning the possibility of contracting the Danish present tense form *er* (eng. *is/are*) with an immediately preceding host word. The typical phonological conditions and syntactic contexts where this contraction is possible, are charted, and subsequently the problem is raised why this contraction is completely unacceptable in other contexts. It is demonstrated that the possibility of *er*-contraction is predictable from an interplay between a simple phonological regularity of weak stress and the rules governing syntactically determined stress in unit-accentuation constructions in Danish.

The general framework employed is generative in the tradition of Government-Binding and Trace Theory, but functional and topological descriptions of the relevant data, in particular with respect to unit accentuation in Danish, are drawn upon extensively. In line with generative tradition, the approach is mainly driven by introspective data, but the hypotheses proposed are in principle straightforwardly empirically testable.

The paper concludes by proposing an informal algorithm accounting for the possible occurrences of *er*-contraction and simplifying the conception of stress assignment in unit accentuation constructions relative to previous accounts. The algorithm makes explicit that the relevant locus for phonological interpretation is the syntactic level of S-structure.