1   **Neutralization**

2   **Preamble**

3   **Chapter 1: The Rhyme and the Reason of Neutralization**

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5

6   Consider a language—we'll call it Babelese—with the following nine values:

7   p   t   k   i   u

8   m   n   ŋ   a

9   If all roots in Babelese contain either four, five, or six of these values in sequence, then,
10   logically, the largest possible number of phonetically unique roots in Babelese is $9^4+9^5+9^6$, or
11   597,051. That is, the free commutation of the nine values, in sequences of four, five, or six,
12   produces 597,051 unique phonetic forms.

13   Of course, Babelese won't have this many phonetically unique roots. Instead, there will surely be
14   a number of systematic limitations on its roots' phonetic content.

15   First, not every value will freely occupy every "slot"; there will be gaps. For example, if
16   Babelese roots are exclusively of the form **CVCV**, **CVCVC**, **CVCCV,** and **CVCCVC** (where
17   **C**=consonant and **V**=vowel), then only six of the values may be commuted in the first position of
18   a root (p t k m n ŋ), and only three of the values may be commuted in the second position of a
19   root (i u a), and so on. That is, roots in Babelese consist of a number of sequenced *paradigms*,
20   some with more members that might be substituted for one another, some with fewer. These are
21   *paradigmatic* limitations on root structure.

22   Second, not every value will be found next to every other value. For example, let's say root-
23   internal **CC** sequences in Babelese involve only homorganic nasal-stop sequences. Thus, the
24   only consonant clusters found morpheme-internally are of the form **NP** (where **N**=nasal,
25   **P**=plosive). Such limitations clearly reduce the number of phonetic root types. For example, due
26   to its context, there are only three phonetic values that commute in the relevant **N** paradigm:
27   m(p) n(t) ŋ(k). This is a *syntagmatic* limitation on root structure.

28   As our root-internal **CC** sequencing limitation demonstrates, the distinction between
29   paradigmatic systems and syntagmatic systems is not clear-cut: paradigmatic limitations are
30   directly affected by syntagmatic ones. Still, it is clear that, far from possessing free combinatoric
31   possibilities, roots in Babelese—and also, roots in every real language—involve systematic
32   limitations on the distribution of their values that may be characterized in both paradigmatic and
33   syntagmatic terms.

34 The morpheme-internal **CC** sequencing limitation is a *static* property of the Babelese root
35 inventory: it is *always* the case that root-internal consonantal sequences in Babelese are one of
36 three *fixed* homorganic nasal-stop sequences (mp nt ŋk). However, words in Babelese—and
37 again, words in almost all real languages—are often polymorphemic. Let's suppose that
38 Babelese words are maximally bimorphemic. Moreover, let's suppose that cross-morpheme **N+C**
39 sequences are necessarily homorganic as well. Derived **C+C** clusters may thus take twenty-four
40 different forms:

41 p+p   p+t   p+k   t+p   t+t   t+k   k+p   k+t   k+k
42 p+m   p+n   p+ŋ   t+m   t+n   t+ŋ   k+m   k+n   k+ŋ
43 m+p   n+t   ŋ+k
44 m+m   n+n   ŋ+ŋ

45 Due to this morpheme boundary condition, some nasal consonants that come to immediately
46 precede a heteromorphemic consonant *alternate* with values that differ with respect to their oral
47 configuration. For example, if a morpheme that is **n**-final when at the end of a word finds itself in
48 a word-internal context where a **k**-initial morpheme immediately follows, the **n** will alternate
49 with ŋ: n̲# - ŋ̲+k (where underlined symbols indicate values in alternation). This sort of
50 alternation pattern serves to reduce the number of configurations in the relevant context.
51 Consequently, Babelese words have only three contrastive **NP** configurations, though they each
52 come in two rather different varieties: mp nt ŋk and m+p n+t ŋ+k.

53 Unlike those observed within morphemes, distributional limitations due to morpheme
54 concatenation are not static in nature. Rather, they are *dynamic*; in Babelese, for example, as we
55 have just observed, one such dynamically-imposed limitation involves one nasal consonant
56 alternating with another just in case it comes to immediately precede another consonant; such
57 assimilatory patterns are extremely common, in fact.

58 Babelese now looks quite different from our naïve first approximation. Although we initially
59 characterized language as possessing nine values, these values do not combine freely. There are
60 both paradigmatic and syntagmatic limitations on these values' distribution, and there are both
61 statically-imposed and dynamically-imposed limitations on these values' distribution.

62 We might say that the limitations on values and their sequencing increase phonological RHYME,
63 in the sense that, due exactly to these observed limitations, distinct words necessarily end up
64 sounding more similar to each other than they would if there were no such combinatory
65 limitations. Indeed, due in particular to dynamically-imposed limitations (due to alternation),
66 there are *synchronically active* increases in phonological RHYME.

67 But despite this inevitable increase in phonological RHYME, phonological REASON is rarely
68 adversely affected. Many's the time that alternations locally reduce the number of distinct
69 configurations—that is, the syntagmatic context involves a reduction in the number of

70 commutable values in the paradigm—but such reductions are typically inconsequential from the
71 point of view of keeping elements phonetically distinct that differ in *meaning*. Phonological
72 REASON, then, refers to the successful conveyance of lexical *meaning* from speaker to listener.

73 Take one example: consider again a nasal-plosive sequence in Babelese. Nasal alternations in the
74 context **N**+**C** result in a smaller number of contrastive values here, but this reduction in *phonetic*
75 distinctness (this increase in RHYME) does not necessarily entail a reduction in *semantic*
76 distinctness (a decrease in REASON), simply because, in most cases, there will be other
77 contrastive values that function to keep morphemes phonetically distinct from each other. For
78 example, we may observe **taŋkan**# - **taŋkam**+**p** - **taŋkan**+**t** - **taŋkaŋ**+**k** versus **tiŋkan**# - **tiŋkam**+**p**
79 - **tiŋkan**+**t** - **tiŋkaŋ**+**k**. For the two words **taŋkan**# versus **tiŋkaŋ**#, despite the dynamically-
80 imposed phonetic identity (or, more precisely, near-identity) of the nasal-stop sequences in
81 particular morphologically complex contexts, the morphemes maintain phonetic distinctness due
82 to **V₁** differences, **a** versus **i**. Rather, only in those comparatively rare instances when morphemes
83 are otherwise identical are increases in phonological RHYME accompanied by a decrease in
84 phonological REASON: **taŋkan**# - **taŋkam**+**p** - **taŋkan**+**t** - **taŋkaŋ**+**k** versus **taŋkaŋ**# -
85 **taŋkam**+**p** - **taŋkan**+**t** - **taŋkaŋ**+**k**. Stated more succinctly, most alternations do not involve
86 minimal pairs such that particular alternations derive homophones. Consequently, most such
87 alternations are heterophone-maintaining and thus not function-negative; crucial phonetic
88 differences are maintained despite increases in phonological RHYME.

89 In fact, rather remarkably, an increase in phonological RHYME oftentimes correlates positively
90 with an increase in phonological REASON. Consider how this is so in Babelese. Recall that
91 morpheme-internal **CC** sequences always consist of homorganic nasal-stop sequences.
92 Consequently, whenever a sequence of consonants is encountered in the speech stream that takes
93 any other phonetic shape, a listener may safely conclude that the two consonants do not belong
94 to the same morpheme. Here, an overall increase in phonological RHYME correlate positively
95 with an increase in phonological REASON: systematic sequential limitations at the morpheme
96 level provide important clues to listeners about the morphological structure of the speech stream.

97 Oftentimes then, limitations on the distribution of contrastive values increase phonological
98 RHYME, *and* increase phonological REASON. As stated, reductions in phonological REASON are
99 limited to those rare cases in which an alternation derives homophones.

100 *All these systematic limitations on morpheme structure—be they paradigmatic or syntagmatic,*
101 *be they static within morphemes, or dynamic due to morpheme concatenation, be they*
102 *homophone-deriving or heterophone-maintaining—fall under the general rubric of*
103 *"neutralization". Broadly interpreted then,* neutralization is a conditioned limitation on the
104 distribution of a system's contrastive values. *It is these sorts of patterns that are the focus of the*
105 *present study.*

106 And although I will continue to discuss all these sorts of systematic limitations on morphological
107 and phonological structure as neutralizing in nature, I ultimately refrain from suggesting a
108 definition of neutralization in these terms. Rather, in this study I move towards a strictly
109 *functional*—more specifically, *function-negative*—definition of neutralization, one of
110 NEUTRALIZATION as derived homophony. (When used in this formal sense, the term appears in
111 small caps.)

112 It bears repeating: throughout, I use the term "neutralization" when discussing any and all of
113 systematic limitations on morpheme structure, both lexical and derived. Nonetheless, I ultimately
114 define the term with respect to its sole genuinely function-negative consequence:
115 NEUTRALIZATION results from an alternation that derives homophones.

116 It is not (or, rather, not *only*) for polemical reasons that I limit the formal definition of
117 NEUTRALIZATION to this strictly function-negative sense. Rather, strange as it may initially seem,
118 this definition of NEUTRALIZATION requires the fewest assumptions to be made about the nature
119 of phonological structure; defining NEUTRALIZATION as derived homophony is maximally
120 theory-neutral, despite (or, I'd like to think, exactly because of) its strictly functional orientation.

121 To see how this works, let's now return to our discussion of Babelese, considering in a bit more
122 detail how we might phonologically characterize the observation that its morpheme-internal **NP**
123 sequences are always homorganic.

124 First, we could say that nasals do not contrast in place-of-articulation when a stop follows. That
125 is, the oral properties of the nasal can be "read off" the oral properties of the following plosive.
126 This is an especially common characterization, because it is often the case that nasal-plosive
127 sequences that occur *across* morpheme boundaries induce the neutralizing alternation of the
128 nasal itself (just as in Babelese), and so it feels right to group the two patterns—**NP** and **N**+**P**—
129 into one, claiming that the nasal's oral properties are always a consequence of the following
130 plosive's, and consequently, such nasals' oral properties need not be lexically specified.

131 Second, we could say that plosives do not contrast for place-of-articulation when a nasal
132 precedes. That is, the oral properties of the plosive can be "read off" the oral properties of the
133 preceding nasal. Although evidence from both alternation and from sound change are discrepant
134 with this characterization (since it is typically nasals that assimilate to following plosives, and
135 not plosives to preceding nasals), it must be emphasized that patterns of (dynamic) assimilation
136 (for example, m+p, n+t, ŋ+k) are irrelevant to the analysis of (static) morpheme-internal sound
137 structure (for example, mp nt ŋk), regardless of their phonetic comparability.

138 Third, we could say that **NP** sequences possess oral place contrasts at a paradigmatic level of
139 analysis, but not at a syntagmatic level of analysis. That is, we could characterize one **NP** span
140 (say, nt) as engaging in oral contrast with other **NP** spans (say, mp ŋk).

141 Regarding the first and second alternatives, it must be emphasized that, due to the strict non-
142 alternating quality of morpheme-internal **NP** sequences, there is no motivation for either value to
143 be "read off" the other. For any given morpheme-internal **NP** sequence (ᵐp ⁿt ᵑk), oral qualities
144 strictly co-vary with each other, and so "reading off" one oral quality from the other is wholly
145 arbitrary from both the language analyst's perspective, and from the language user's perspective.

146 The third alternative is more plausible. There is indeed something fundamentally correct in
147 asserting that the observed morpheme-internal limitation involves a commutation of oral values
148 across of a span of the speech stream involving a change from nasal-channeled airflow to a
149 complete cessation of airflow (giving us ᵐp ⁿt ᵑk). The motivation, again, is the fixed status of
150 the various phonetic states within this span such that no one phonetic subcomponent of the
151 complex is different in status from any other phonetic component: as all components are
152 necessarily fixed throughout the span, there is every reason to treat the complex as a whole, a
153 *Gestalt*. (Note that, by "fixed", I don't mean static or unmoving—indeed, the soft palate is in a
154 state of motion, from open to closed, across this span—but rather, by "fixed", I refer to any
155 phonetic content that co-varies over an expanse of the speech stream: <labial nasal - labial stop>,
156 <alveolar nasal - alveolar stop>, <velar nasal - velar stop>.)

157 At this point then, I need to emphasize that the IPA symbols we have been using (and will
158 continue to use) should be interpreted as cover terms, or shortcuts, for the constellation of motor
159 routines and their attendant acoustic cues—*whatever their shape or size*—that possess genuine
160 linguistic status, readily encompassing more—or less—of the temporal span represented by
161 single IPA symbol. Thus, IPA symbols are not isomorphic with *Gestalten*. Rather, they are mere
162 visual expedients.

163 Now, once we acknowledge the fact that particular expanses of the speech stream may be fixed
164 with respect to their phonetic properties, the next step is to see how far we can push the idea.
165 Clearly, *any* stretch of the speech stream that possesses fixed phonetic content (again, in the
166 sense that the phonetic content co-varies for an expanse of the speech stream) is amenable to this
167 sort of analysis.

168 What elements of the speech stream meet this criterion for *Gestalt* status? We might first
169 consider those elements of the speech stream that are cycled and recycled in a phonetically stable
170 manner, due to their serving a single linguistic function: morphemes, and collocations of
171 morphemes that tend to recur together in their patterning (words, and perhaps rote phrases). As a
172 first approximation then, we might propose that morphemes, exactly because of their fixed
173 phonetic properties, should be regarded as *Gestalten*.

174 Obviously, this won't do. Morphemes are not always phonetically fixed, of course. Rather, there
175 may be systematic changes that morphemes undergo, depending on their context. These are the
176 synchronic alternations that result in allomorphy that we have already discussed. So, we must
177 retreat from the claim that morphemes are indivisible, fixed wholes. Rather, it is only those

178 components of morphemes that are not subject to alternation for which phonetic properties are
179 strictly fixed. For example, in Babelese, we have allomorphic patterns like **taŋkan** - **taŋkam**+**p** -
180 **taŋkaŋ**+**k**. Here, part of the morpheme is phonetically fixed, but also, there is a systematic
181 pattern of alternation that is not fixed with respect to other elements of the morpheme. This part
182 of the morpheme co-varies (is fixed) with respect to elements *outside* the domain of the
183 morpheme (specifically, the following plosive). Indeed, since nasals at different places of
184 articulation differently coarticulate with preceding vocalism, the alternation here no doubt
185 encompasses more of the speech stream than is implied by the mere change in IPA symbol,
186 incorporating at least a sizable portion of the preceding vowel: **taŋkan** - **taŋkam**+**p** - **taŋkaŋ**+**k**.

187 Consequently, in general, we may indeed treat non-alternating components of morphemes—
188 whatever their shape or size—as wholes, as *Gestalten*, and further recognize that components in
189 alternation—again, whatever their shape or size—are *Gestalten* as well, ones that are set in high
190 relief against their phonetically fixed morpheme-internal backgrounds. *These* are the proposed
191 elements of phonological contrast. Indeed, as I write in my 2006 book, "there is no reason to
192 assume that language users subdivide the words they learn into distinct sound-components unless
193 there is evidence from alternation to do so".

194 We now see just how wrong-headed our first proposals regarding Babelese root structure were.
195 Phonetic events that function as elements of contrast in one context may not serve this same
196 function in other contexts, and so, even as a theoretic straw man, it is downright silly to consider
197 their free commutation and their free combination. The spans of speech within morphemes—
198 despite phonetic appearances to the contrary, and however "recyclable" their attendant motor
199 routines—are *not* necessarily built out of smaller linguistically significant units that combine in
200 various ways. Rather, the spans of the speech stream underlain by a specific linguistic *function*—
201 morphemes, words, and perhaps certain rote phrases—are the genuine building blocks of
202 linguistic structure, blocks that may only be partitioned into smaller units if there is evidence
203 from alternation to do so.

204 Let's back up for a moment. I have been belaboring the assertion that morphemes might only be
205 analyzed into smaller components when there is evidence from alternation to do so, because I am
206 moving toward a purely function-negative definition of NEUTRALIZATION as the product of
207 derived homophony. How do my assertions about morpheme structure relate to this proposed
208 definition of NEUTRALIZATION? Well, once we (permanently) rid the morpheme of extraneous
209 submorphemic structure (distinctive features, segments, syllables, etc.), there remains no way to
210 relate components of the speech stream to each other by any other than *semantic* means.
211 Consequently, non-alternating morphemes are obviously non-distinct, but morphemes in
212 alternation are typically functionally non-distinct as well, since they do not induce a semantic
213 change. This is the result we want, because, apart from their mere *extrinsic phonetic similarity*,
214 there is no reason to group any disparate components of the speech stream together into a
215 functional set unless there is linguistic evidence that they do indeed possess some sort of

216   *intrinsic functional non-distinctness*. In phonology, the *only* instance where in which physical
217   dissimilarity is regularly overridden by functional identity comes from alternation: components
218   of the speech stream that substitute for one another, and yet morpheme meaning remains the
219   same, share an *intrinsic functional identity*.

220   This establishes the functional link among allomorphs that we're looking for, ridding phonology
221   of its emphasis on positing functional links among mere phonetic correspondents (the
222   hypothetical segment, the hypothetical distinctive feature). The result is that, for example,
223   morpheme-internal ŋk bears no intrinsic phonological relationship to any other ŋk in Babelese,
224   be the sequence found in another morpheme-internal context (ŋk), or at a morpheme boundary
225   (ŋ+k), or across a word boundary (ŋ#k). Rather, functional links may be established solely by
226   semantic criteria; allomorphs are functionally—semantically—non-distinct.

227   There is, of course, one—and *only* one—exception to the assertion that alternation maintains
228   morpheme identity, and that is when the alternation derives homophony. Here—and *only* here—
229   the allomorphs in alternation do not share a unique functional identity. Rather, in just this
230   instance, identity is forfeited—indeed it is shared, or overlapped, with another morpheme—due
231   to the absence of phonetic evidence for these morphemes' distinctness in meaning.

232   NEUTRALIZATION, then, involves an *extrinsic phonetic similarity*—indeed, a derived *phonetic*
233   *(near-) identity*—among items, but it is the consequent *intrinsic functional non-distinctness* of
234   the alternant forms that establishes the phenomenon's linguistic relevance: any phonetic
235   evidence for these items' difference in meaning is washed away. The result? Alternations that
236   eliminate the *phonetic* distinctness among morphemes also eliminate phonetic evidence for the
237   *semantic* distinctness among morphemes. By contrast, any definition of neutralization that relies
238   on the mere phonetic similarity among elements of the speech stream relies on fallacious
239   assumptions about the functional relevance of sub-morphemic content.

240   Let's now return to Babelese. Let's suppose that suffixation is a pervasive process in the
241   language. In Babelese, suffixes are monosyllabic (**CV** or **CVC**), and are subject to vowel
242   harmony, such that their vowel is identical to the final vowel of the root, for example,
243   taŋkan+ta̲k, but kupit+ti̲k.

244   Patterns like this exemplify a number of trends that we observe in morpho-phonological systems.
245   First, affixes are usually shorter than roots, and also, are often subject to assimilatory phenomena
246   such as vowel harmony. The functional origin of these tendencies is well understood: since there
247   are always fewer affixes than there are roots, and since their distribution is so predictable, there
248   is less functional pressure for affixes to consist of the many and varied values found in roots. So,
249   as a natural evolutionary consequence, affixes are often shorter, and are more readily subject to
250   root-controlled assimilatory alternations.

251   Second, the vocalic alternation observed in Babelese suffixes is almost surely not localized to
252   one individual vowel. Indeed, the alternation in evidence likely encompasses any consonant(s)

253   that intervene between the root-final vowel and the suffix vowel (**taŋkan**+**tak**, but **kupit**+**tik**).
254   That is, due to its syntagmatic context, the paradigm subject to alternation consists of the entire
255   span from the second root vowel up to and including the suffix vowel, and not only suffix
256   vocalism itself. Even though we might transcribe the allomorphs with the same consonant
257   symbols, in actuality these consonants are implemented differently from each other, due to their
258   differing vocalic contexts.

259   Third, although affixes are more readily subject to assimilatory alternations, still, exactly because
260   they are members of a small set, NEUTRALIZATION is rarely an issue here. This is not just a
261   fortuitous or coincidental result. Rather, there are constant pressures on the sound pattern—some
262   quite superficial and proximal, others extremely deep and distal—that are responsible for the
263   slow-going shaping of the system such that function-negative phenomena like NEUTRALIZATION
264   are kept at bay.

265   For example, as our discussion of Babelese suffixes has suggested, certain assimilatory
266   tendencies may go largely unchecked in just those cases where NEUTRALIZATION is not likely to
267   be an issue. Since such assimilations may be seen as the diachronic "end-state" along a gradient
268   scale of coarticulation, it might be wise to back up for a moment and consider the sorts of
269   pressures that oftentimes act on coarticulation.

270   In Babelese, we can readily imagine that vowel-to-vowel (trans-consonantal) coarticulation
271   within roots is somewhat circumscribed, exactly because root vowels function contrastively: too
272   much vowel-to-vowel coarticulation might jeopardize the distinctiveness of one or both vowels.
273   In the limiting case, such coarticulation leads to vowel-to-vowel assimilation, or vowel harmony.
274   To the extent that distinctions in root vocalism are responsible for minimal pairing, complete
275   vowel assimilation would result in a decrease in phonological REASON: some roots would be
276   rendered non-distinct from each other.

277   We can, in fact, imagine several possible scenarios that might play themselves out over time,
278   depending on the "initial conditions" (or at least "preceding conditions") established by the
279   structure of the Babelese lexicon.

280   First, as just noted, if many Babelese roots are crucially dependent on vocalism for their phonetic
281   distinctness, vowel-to-vowel coarticulation may indeed be passively curtailed: since distinctions
282   in vocalism embody the crucial phonetic distinctions among many roots, coarticulation is rather
283   likely to be significantly inhibited.

284   Second, if many Babelese roots are *not* crucially dependent on vocalism (and instead rely more
285   heavily on their consonantism), we might expect vowel coarticulation to proceed relatively
286   freely, perhaps culminating in fully harmonized root-internal vocalism.

287   Third, again, if many Babelese roots are *not* crucially dependent on vowel distinctions, we might
288   see an interaction with the Babelese stress system such that vowel paradigms have fewer
289   members in unstressed contexts.

290   Fourth, we might imagine a scenario in which these unstressed syllables attrit completely,
291   culminating in a system that possesses only monosyllabic roots. This would surely result in a
292   significant reduction in the number of root shapes, and the phonology might be bereft of options
293   to countervail the threat of NEUTRALIZATION. Morphology, however, may come to the rescue: the
294   increase in RHYME among roots may be offset by the co-evolution of a root compounding
295   process, and thus REASON is never jeopardized.

296   Readers versed in the phonological patterning of linguistic systems will be able to summon
297   actual examples comparable to each of these scenarios.

298   The overarching proposal, then, is that phonological RHYME may increase until encountering a
299   counter-pressure that inhibits undue decreases in phonological REASON. More specifically, the
300   inventory of motor routines that a language deploys is likely to be influenced by lexical semantic
301   factors: coarticulation and assimilatory alternations may conceivably evolve rather freely,
302   provided the transmission of *meaning* between speaker and listener is not adversely affected.
303   Indeed, as a passive consequence of communicative success—of effective transmission of lexical
304   semantic content—speech with curtailed coarticulation (as opposed to uncurtailed coarticulation)
305   may emerge as the conventionalized norm. Articulatory details put in service to failed
306   communication—as when the meaning associated with overly-coarticulated or -assimilated
307   speech tokens is not effectively communicated to listeners, due to consequent derived
308   homophony—are less likely to be reproduced as listeners become speakers (since, due to derived
309   homophony, such speech may be misunderstood), and thus are less likely to become
310   conventionalized motor routines.

311   Thus, so-called "phonetic or "low-level" effects (such as patterns of coarticulation) are likely the
312   result of deep historical and systemic pressures many times removed from the physical systems
313   that proximally underlie speech; the emergent result of persistent, slow-going, interlocutionary
314   tendencies that shape and change speech conventions.

315

Conclusion

317   I began this discussion by claiming that Babelese possessed nine contrastive values. We now see
318   that this was incorrect. Babelese possesses as many contrastive values as there are components of
319   the speech stream that either alternate or are stable within morphemes. These values consist of
320   motor routines and acoustic complexes of varying shapes and sizes, involving few if any of the
321   neat, organized, phonetic "slices"—be these slices temporal (loosely, segments), or spectral

322   (loosely, distinctive features)—that linguists typically manipulate. For language users, these
323   phonetically complex values emerge when links are established between sound and meaning.

324   Indeed, almost all alternations, in fact, maintain heterophony, and are thus function-neutral; only
325   those alternations that result in ambiguity in meaning—by deriving homophony—have function-
326   negative consequences. This is NEUTRALIZATION. Still, phonological RHYME may increase—and
327   may even be function-positive to the extent that it assists in parsing—until encountering a
328   counter-pressure that inhibits undue decreases in phonological REASON.

329   Now, despite all the admittedly speculative discussion I have been engaging in (indulging in?) in
330   this preamble, I'd like to reassure the reader that the bulk of this book is dedicated to elucidating
331   various approaches to neutralization that have been discussed at length in the literature, though,
332   to be sure, we will be slowly building towards a new definition of neutralization, one of
333   neutralization as derived homophony, that is, NEUTRALIZATION.

334   In Part One, RHYME, in Section A I make *observations* about, and provide *descriptions* of,
335   patterns of neutralization, considering the "topology" (Chapter Two), the "taxonomy" (Chapter
336   Three), and the "typology" (Chapter Four) of neutralization. In Section B I take a detour to
337   discuss a few "false positives: "partial phonemic overlap" (Chapter Six) and "near-
338   neutralization" (Chapter Seven). In Section C I move on to consider various proposed
339   *explanations* for neutralization, considering, in turn, "speaker-based" (Chapter Eight) and
340   "listener-based" approaches (Chapters Nine through Eleven). Section D includes a case study of
341   NEUTRALIZATION in Korean (Chapter Twelve), then a survey of the *domains* over which anti-
342   homophony may passively exert its pressure (Chapter Thirteen). I conclude Part One by asserting
343   that "distinctions are drawn that matter" (Chapter Fourteen).

344   In Part Two, REASON, I discuss the functional value of neutralization in terms of Kruszewski's
345   "cement" (Chapter Fifteen), Trubetzkoy's "boundary signals" (Chapter Sixteen), Firth's
346   "prosodies" (Chapter Seventeen), and Saffran's "transitional probabilities" (Chapter Eighteen).

347   Finally, as a postscript, I summarize our results, and very briefly revisit Babelese (Chapter
348   Nineteen).