

PLM2026 plenary lecture

Realizing a comprehensive model of diachronic phonological typology: Promises and challenges

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A comprehensive model of diachronic phonological typology seeks to investigate and account for the dynamic properties of sound patterns. Observed distributions and behaviors of common and rare patterns alike are influenced by a wide array of dynamic properties related to their processual origins, frequencies, and inherent stabilities. Developing such a model requires the careful identification, delineation, and systematic investigation of each of these influential factors.

In this talk, I illustrate through broad crosslinguistic investigation a diachronic typological framework whose core components were initially developed by Greenberg (1978), Nichols (2003), and Bickel (2013) and further elaborated upon by Grossman (2016) and Grossman et al. (2018). Presenting findings related to the dynamic properties of glottalized consonants, complex syllable structure, and gaps in basic consonant inventories, I discuss the promise and ongoing challenges of realizing a comprehensive model of diachronic phonological typology, an endeavor which has important implications for typology, historical linguistics, and theoretical phonology.