

This book presents an approach where vowel length is connected with the syntactic structure. The main idea is that there are nominal functional projections in contemporary Czech which are spelled out by vowel length, or to be more precise, by various types of prosodic affixes which give rise to different types of vowel lengthening.

The present approach is strictly decompositional on both the phonological and the syntactic side. In particular, I propose that length is to be represented separately from the melodic content of vowels. Such a dissociation of length from melody allows for the existence of lengthening morphemes that lack any melodic features. I use such lengthening morphemes extensively in my analysis of various types of phenomena where lengthening is triggered by a particular morphosyntactic environment.

Furthermore, if short vowels are made up from privative elements, which are hierarchically organized, then these elements can be manipulated individually under lengthening and as a consequence, length alternations of different types can be derived.

Once lengthening is understood in this particular way, namely as an autosegmental marking of a particular morphosyntactic category, it provides us with a new tool that can be used to probe deeper into the morphological structure of various categories where it is found.