



MJAL 2:3 March 2010

ISSN 0974-8741

Bookreview by Mohammad Ali Salmani Nodoushan

Reviewer: Mohammad Ali Salmani Nodoushan, PhD
University of Tehran (Kish International Campus), Iran

Title: *An Introduction to Phonetics and Phonology*

Authors: John Clark and Collin Yallop

Paperback: 488 pages

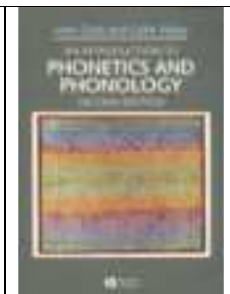
Publisher: Wiley; 2nd edition (April 28 1995)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0631194525

ISBN-13: 978-0631194521

Dimensions: 24 x 17.2 x 4 cm



About the Authors

John Clark is Chief Executive Officer of the University of Western Sydney, Hawskbury. He was previously Director of the Speech, Hearing and Language Centre at Macquarie University, Sydney.

Colin Yallop is Associate Professor in Linguistics at Macquarie and is Director of the University's Dictionary Research Centre.

1. Overview

Assuming no prior knowledge of the subject, this book offers a thorough introduction to phonetics and phonology. It is unusually comprehensive, including detailed attention to articulatory and acoustic phonetics as well as to the foundations of phonological analysis. The second edition of this highly successful textbook incorporates several improvements: a completely new chapter on speech perception has been added, the material on anatomy and physiology has been rearranged and much of the detail placed later in the book to make it less demanding on readers, and the entire text has been edited to help bring it up to date.

2. Detailed Inspection

An Introduction to Phonetics and Phonology is a brilliant tour de force. It analyzes the role, functioning and nature of phonetics and phonology and is a provocative challenge to any scholar concerned with studies of anatomy, speech production, speech articulation, speech perception, speech organization, prosody, feature systems and the existing processes in these two areas.

The book is an excellent volume for which John Clark and Collin Yallop are authors and which aims to disseminate unspoken voices. Their somewhat brief introduction to this volume spaced in chapter one presents a mass of theories and discussions about phonetics and phonology, some useful historical recapitulation and considers various options and arguments and summarizes different titles existing in these areas.

Clark and Yallop's argument draws on a daunting range of theoretical as well as physiological approaches in phonetics and phonology and their language rivals many claimants in complexity and scientific richness. The book is cerebrally demanding, but coherent, well signposted and laud. The final chapter is eminently accessible and might with profit be read initially.

In chapter one "introduction" the authors present one of their major arguments and that is the relationship between phonetics and phonology. They end the argument by mentioning that the two areas may overlap and none has superiority over the other: " it is not reasonable then to say that phonology deals with the systems and structure of



MJAL 2:3 March 2010

ISSN 0974-8741

Bookreview by Mohammad Ali Salmani Nodoushan

speech, while phonetics focuses more narrowly on articulation and acoustics. But the boundary need not be sharply drawn, nor should it be surreptitiously constructed on assumptions about the primacy of one kind of reality above others. In short, although we analyze speech by breaking it down into its several aspects, we should not forget that the true reality is one of integration."

Chapter two, "Anatomy and Physiology of Speech Production" provides the reader with a good overview of the anatomy of the speech organs and explains every nuance of them. The tables and figures given in this chapter are intriguingly specific and can clarify those finest matters which have remained vague to the adherents in this area.

The third chapter grapples with the complex issue of standards accepted in the area of segmental articulation. It raises the most complex matters in this context. This raises the groundwork for clarifying some of the points in the subsequent chapters which the readers may deem inconsistent. Another noteworthy point which emerges from the analysis is that there are minor differences among sounds regarding phonation, duration, etc.

Chapter four is titled "Units of Speech". As its name suggests, chapter four deals with different units of speech. Such information which exists in other linguistics books discusses different features belonging to sounds. What makes this chapter distinctive compared to that of other books is its comprehensiveness and inclusiveness by introducing different aspects of speech units.

In their follow-up, the authors discuss phonemics in chapter five which is believed to be a subfield of phonology or a science in itself (this is a controversial issue to decide and many scholars do not agree upon). After different contributive subjects to this field are introduced, the constraints, boundaries and rules which exist in the way phonemes are applied, are being explained.

Chapter six "The Generative Approach to Phonology" reviews the origins of generative phonology, the sound pattern of English and basic rule notation in generative phonology. Then it continues to present existing schools in this notion and some existing theories which have a direct relation to generative approach and finally to phonology.

Clark and Yallop then open a new chapter to talk about another sub-branch of phonetics i.e. acoustic phonetics. Chapter seven "the Acoustics of Speech Production" is about the way the produced speech is grasped by the hearer and introduces many features that affect it. Vibration, motion, resonance, amplitude, domain of sound waves and perceptual properties are such features.

Chapter eight extends the discussion to present prosody. In this chapter the authors confront several issues which are contributive to the understanding and production of speech in addition to the before-said features. These are called suprasegmentals which contain tone, pitch, stress and intonation. They have direct impact on our perception and production of speech. These are introduced in a distinct chapter because they go beyond letters and deal with letter combinations and sentences.

In chapter nine the features of sounds are discussed. They are deemed very important characteristics of sounds because they play a significant role in the classification of sounds. These features which consist of acoustic features, perceptual features, distinctive features, cover features, abstract features, accuracy and universality, universal feature systems are objective characteristics of speech and may be used in various ways to indicate the nature, status and function of sounds within a linguistic system.



MJAL 2:3 March 2010

ISSN 0974-8741

Bookreview by Mohammad Ali Salmani Nodoushan

Chapter ten or the final chapter is what I consider a flashback to the introduction. Commencing with the currents of theory, this chapter raises up the dispute between phonetics and phonology with the difference that these two issues are dealt with in the light of history. Rest of the chapter includes the advent of traditional phonetics and its growth.

3. Final Remark

Any one interested in English will really benefit from this valuable book. The content is so informative that almost every learner of English will find some worthwhile pieces of text in the book.

Reviewer's Bio:

Mohammad Ali Salmani Nodoushan is an adjunct assistant professor of TEFL at the English Department of the University of Tehran (Kish International Campus), Iran. His research interests include language testing in general, and testing English for Specific Purposes, Computer Adaptive Testing, and Performance Assessment in particular.

Correspondence: salmani.nodoushan@yahoo.com

