

J.D. O'Connor, *Phonetics*. Penguin, 1973. 320 pp. Paperback 55 p.

O'Connor surveys the field of phonetics in nine lucid chapters. Chapter 1 ('The role of sound in communication') describes the central function of speech sound in relation to other types of medium (such as gestures and writing) and sketches the framework of the book, enumerating and briefly discussing the most important topics.

The section on articulatory phonetics (Chapter 2) is written within the well-known and accepted air-stream framework. The production of speech sounds is amply illustrated with clear line drawings. The sections on the vowels deserve special mention: O'Connor stresses and clearly sets forth the essentially auditory nature of the cardinal vowel chart.

Chapters 3 and 4 respectively survey acoustic and auditory phonetics in a relevant way. O'Connor tries to relate everything to the segment (speech sound), which should be the reference point in phonetics.

All of the general principles in an introductory general phonetics course mean very little to a student who has no knowledge of the sounds of his own language. Hence it is to be welcomed that Chapter 5, on the description and classification of speech sounds, is based on a fairly detailed treatment of English phonetics. This chapter in itself is a very useful introduction to the phonetics of English. However, the detailed discussion of dialectal features in British English is bound to make little sense to a substantial part of O'Connor's audience. No South African or American student would be in a position fully to appreciate the sound qualities in Birmingham, Midlands, Tyneside speech described by O'Connor.

Chapters 6 to 8 fall within the range of phonology. Topics discussed include the phoneme, suprasegmentals and phonological typology. Chapter 9 is a gem: it sketches a number of interesting problems and should go a long way towards answering the recurrent question as to the relevance of phonetics.

Writing an introductory text requires not just knowledge, but judgement and skill as well. Most scholars attempting this genre have the knowledge but some sorely lack the other attributes. O'Connor, I am happy to relate, disposes of superb judgement on

what to include and what to leave out and ample skill to bring his message over to the student at the introductory level.

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P.H. Matthews, *Morphology: An Introduction to the Theory of Word-Structure*. Cambridge University Press, 1974. x, 243 pp. Boards £4.80. Paperback £1.60.

'This is the first title in the series; there are other titles in preparation' state the publishers of *Morphology*, perhaps a little cryptically. One looks forward to hearing more about this (*Cambridge Textbooks in Linguistics*), the latest in a spate of series on linguistics to hit the market in recent years.

Although it is called 'an introduction', one does not have to read very far to realize that this book is not intended for linguistic greenhorns. An introductory work perhaps only in the sense that it is broad-based and eclectic, it is an attempt to delineate 'the state of our knowledge' with respect to morphology and as such is doubtless a very worthwhile endeavour. Nevertheless the author is highly critical in his approach and leaves a few stones unturned in his quest to assess the pro's and con's of various viewpoints and theories. This, in other respects very laudable, approach and Matthew's not-so-lucid style combine to make the book rather heavy going for the uninitiated reader.

Introducing the subject the author argues that despite the dominant position of sentence-based generative grammar today, morphology, 'that branch of linguistics which is concerned with the structure of words' must continue to be the object of serious study, particularly for investigators of little-known languages. The point made is of course a valid one: no matter what model may finally be chosen to describe a language, the linguist must be able to distinguish and give an account of units smaller than the sentence and he should therefore be au fait with the methods and problems of morphological analysis.