

# REVIEWS

*Phonology, meaning, morphology.* By Sölve Ohlander. Pp. 221. Göteborg: Acta Universitatis Gothoburgensis, 1976.

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The book under review can be treated as an example of a more general trend in modern linguistics, and in generative phonology (GP) in particular, i.e. a shift from formalism of the SPE-type to functionalism (cf. Sommerstein 1976, Goyvaerts 1978). The author's approach is based on the assumption that purely formal descriptions do not reflect the objective/subjective dichotomy of language, i.e. the relation between form and meaning, hence their psychological reality is very suspect. The reliance on form and disregard of meaning in phonological theory of the SPE-type is viewed as a natural outcome of the rejection of discovery procedures in favour of evaluation procedures. One of the main aims of the book is to show that both discovery procedures and evaluation procedures should be employed in any analyses of language. In this light the role of semantic criteria in phonology and morphology is discussed. A more "concrete" approach to language derives from the author's scepticism about a strong reliance on the innateness hypothesis in linguistics. The fact that nobody really knows what is innate leads to the acceptance of a working principle in which learnability is taken as a measure. One should realize, however, what the implications of this approach are. A grammar aiming at explanatory adequacy tries to develop a mechanism which can account for the language acquisition process, i.e. a linguist is to be guided by the same principles as a child learning a language. Now, if a linguist is governed almost exclusively by the criterion of learnability, he cannot be claimed to be describing the "innate and learnable" at the same time.

Now let me pass to a brief discussion of the content of the work under review. The main aims and assumptions of the book sketched above are presented in the Introduction. There, the circumstances that led to the use of the data from Old English are mentioned. The main body of the work under review consists of two parts (followed by a summary); the first is devoted to the role of meaning in phonology, the second — to the interrelations between morphology and GP. The two parts are linked by the ever-present problem of psychological reality.

The first chapter of the book can be seen as a background to the main issue of part I. There, the mental nature of language in general, and phonology in particular, is stressed. In the latter case, the main emphasis is placed on the speaker's ability to differentiate between functionally distinctive and non-distinctive sounds. Having shown that the idea of function is mental in nature, the author presents various approaches to phoneme and accepts the view that it is a psychologically real concept. It seems, however, that though the author is successful in convincing the reader that both form and function are relevant for phonological analysis, the fact that function in phonology should be identified with taxonomic phonemic level is far from self-evident.

The first two sections of the 2nd chapter are to prepare the reader for further discussion of the phoneme problem in section 3. The author discusses the importance of

meaning in linguistics and shows that a mentalistic (non-mentalistic) conception of language does not coincide with a positive (negative) attitude towards semantic criteria. Various views on the role of semantic criteria in phonology are briefly examined, and it is clearly demonstrated that the rejection of the criteria in question does not imply that they are not employed both in the taxonomic and the generative approach. Section 3 presents a discussion of the arguments put forward by the proponents of standard GP against the notion of phoneme. One must agree that the main criticism of the concept in question (based on voicing assimilation in Russian) is deeply rooted in the idea of linguistically significant generalization measured in terms of simplicity. It is also true that the notion of the overall simplicity is not well-defined. Yet one cannot agree with the claim that the rejection of the phoneme "has been taken more or less for granted, as an article of faith" (p. 44). A discussion of the problems connected with both the acceptance and denial of the taxonomic phonemic level is presented in, e.g., Anderson (1974: Ch. 3). There, it is also shown that the contrast is an important issue within standard GP: "It is clearly necessary, if a linguistic description is to give an account of phonological structure of language, that it makes it possible to distinguish contrasting utterances from utterances that are variants" (1974: 40). The gist of the argument is that "if we take seriously that this rule governed relation (the relation between underlying and systematic phonetic representation — E.G.) is the central part of the grammar" it is only natural that "in order to determine whether or not two forms contrast, we consult not a single level of representation, but rather the rule governed relation between phonemic (understood as underlying — E.G.) and phonetic representations" (1974: 42). Thus the implicit approach to contrast (which is criticized by the author of the book under review, cf. p. 42) of standard GP has its explanation in its view of the organization and functioning of phonological competence. The author's criticism, on the other hand, takes a stand of quite a different sort on the phonological competence understood as a "language particular part" of the speaker's phonological competence, the "innate part (...), i.e. principles of phonological organization" is considered as not relevant to the discussion (cf. p. 10). The consequences of this assumption are quite clear: having shown that contrast is important for phonological analyses, the author jumps to the conclusion that it must be represented by a separate level. Let me observe also that external evidence for some of the SPE descriptions can be found in, e.g., Schnitzer (1972), hence the implicit approach to contrast seems to be psychologically valid. One must agree, however, with the author's observation that standard GP is in need of an explicit discussion of the semantic basis of phonological contrast.

Chapter 3, which prepares the reader for a more detailed discussion of the role of semantic criteria in phonology, deals with the relations between form and meaning, and their relevance for the distinction between some of the phonological and lexical phenomena in particular. Two types of form-meaning relations are considered: one-to-one and one-to-many, the former being viewed as the bi-uniqueness norm, the latter — as deviations from it. Neutralizations of the phonetic contrast, the first type of deviation, cover homonymy and polysemy. Attempts by various linguists to differentiate between the two are discussed. It becomes clear that unless the notion of semantic relatedness has been defined, polysemy and homonymy cannot be separated in a principled manner. Moreover, the situation makes the treatment of polysemy as a lexical (understood as unpredictable) phenomenon inevitable. In spite of the difficulties just mentioned, the author proposes a hierarchy of homonymy. The relation between underlying representations of putative homophones and their phonetic realizations is taken as a scale (at the top of the scale are the homophones the underlying representations of which share all the allomorphs). The author rightly stresses the fact that although the hierarchy of homony-

my is established on a purely phonological basis, one must remember that homonymy is "not primarily a phonological concern" (p. 54). One may only add here that the development of a semantic theory (and the definition of semantically distinct morphemes or words) may bring quite a different hierarchy.

Neutralizations of semantic contrast (synonymy) are analysed as another type of deviation from the bi-uniqueness norm. The author makes it clear that the existence of synonyms has been doubted by many linguists and provides arguments against the rejection of this concept. Semantic neutralization (used in a very broad sense to cover allomorphs of the same morpheme) is briefly presented as a phenomenon with various degrees of context-sensitivity and discussed as a phenomenon with different levels of phonological motivation. Synonyms with systematic phonological motivation, i.e. allomorphs of the same morpheme, are the only type of semantic neutralizations that lies within the domain of phonology, the other two, i.e. completely and partially accidental synonyms being placed within the lexicon.

In the final section of the chapter various aspects of bi-uniqueness norm viewed as "iconic tendency" of language are discussed. One-to-one form-meaning correspondence, a basic feature of natural grammar, is analysed as a strategy in the language acquisition process. The author stresses the fact that the absolute bi-unique form-meaning relation is never found in a natural language. The context-sensitivity of the human mind, understood as "our ability to see things — for example, linguistic signs — not as isolated entities, but in relation to other things, whether present or absent" (p. 67), makes the absolute one-to-one correspondence between form and meaning "excessively contrastive for normal human communicative needs" (p. 66) or, putting it in terms of the principle of economy — uneconomical. The role of the conflicting functional principles of contrast and economy for the explanation of language change and the process of neutralization of phonetic or semantic contrast (i.e. homonymy, polysemy, synonymy) is clearly demonstrated. The author observes that functional considerations are characteristic of the performance-based theory while formal ones — of the competence-based approach of the SPE-type. One must agree here that functional criteria are not found in Chomsky and Halle (1968), yet one may well doubt whether all competence oriented phonological theories disregard functional principles. If this is taken into account, the conflict between the function/performance approach and the form/competence approach, strongly stressed by the author, can be seen in quite a different light.

Chapter 4 provides further evidence for the view presented in Chapter 2. In the first section of the chapter some reasons for a non-semantic approach to phonology are critically examined. It becomes clear that the argument against the use of semantic criteria for establishing contrast based on a kind of a local determinacy condition, i.e. the idea that "every «local decision» involving semantic criteria (...) must reflect the overall pattern of the language" (p. 76), is missed since it is valid only for an ideal language with one-to-one correspondence between form and meaning, i.e. a language in which semantic neutralizations are not found. According to the author, in a natural language "two sounds are said to be phonologically distinctive in relation to each other when lexical doublets and other types of semantic neutralization are vastly outnumbered by those cases in which the sound distinction in question is used for semantic purposes" (p. 77). The other type of the criticism of the meaning-based conception of phonological contrast which derives from the idea that "semantic criteria *alone* should be decisive in determination of contrast, regardless of phonological considerations" (p. 78) is also rejected: "proving, like Chomsky, that semantic criteria cannot *alone* give all the answers in phonology is a far cry from proving that semantic criteria must not *at all* be employed in phonological analysis" (p. 78). Semantic criteria are said to constitute a kind of organ-

izing principle, a procedure for discovering a phonological structure of a language, in the process of acquisition and description of language. Both a child and a linguist take a bi-unique form-meaning relation as a point of departure. The author rightly observes that the rejection of semantic criteria does not mean that they are not actually employed in the analysis. It is claimed that since no one has shown so far that non-semantic techniques for establishing phonemic contrast, such as the pair test, are based on form-form judgements, the form-meaning relations (hence semantic criteria) are crucial for phonological analysis. It seems, however, that showing that meaning functions as a guiding principle in language acquisition and language description is not the same as convincing the reader that the idea of contrast should be introduced by classical phonemic level of some sort. The argument presented can be also taken as evidence for the treatment of contrast in an indirect way (cf. the discussion of Chapter 2 above). Similarly, diachronic evidence for the use of semantic criteria in phonology provided in the second section of the chapter can be treated as further support of the indirect approach to contrast. The argument is based on the assumption that if meaning is disallowed from synchronic analysis, it cannot be treated as an explanation of language change. The data from OE and the development of Swedish compounds clearly show that meaning does function as a stimulus of phonological change, though the actual change depends on the phonological structure of a given language. Having read the section, the reader should have no doubts that both formal and functional considerations are important for phonology. Yet, as suggested above, this does not mean that function should be identified with the notion of phoneme in the generative approach.

The main conclusion of Part 1, namely, the dependence of phonology on semantic criteria, appears to be crucial for the understanding of the interrelations between generative phonology and morphemic analysis, which is the main aim of Part 2. Chapter 5 establishes the connection between morphology and GP in an excellent way. The decline of interest in morphology (in contrast to American structuralism) is said to be a natural consequence of the search for evaluation procedures and disregard of discovery procedures (section 1). The author rightly observes that in order to evaluate a description, a linguist should have some clear idea of the way in which the description is arrived at. In the case in point, the analysis of morphophonemic alternations which is crucial for establishing URs and phonological rules presupposes some morpheme identification procedure. The author strongly attacks the phonological bias of standard GP which in result has weakened interests in morphemic analysis. One may note here that syntactic bias of generative grammar has led to an almost total rejection of word formation as a separate field of study. It seems that the 70s, which, as the author rightly observes, announce a recognition of a separate morphological level, lead to a new treatment of both morphemic analysis and WF (cf. Aronoff 1976).

Section 2 discusses the way in which allomorphic variations are treated in standard GP. The author clearly demonstrates that the lack of explicit criteria for defining synchronic relatedness between morphemes and their realizations has undesirable consequences for the description of URs and phonological rules. The analysis of the data from OE proves that the extended comparative method, the outcome of the lack of the explicit criteria for morpheme identification, leads to very abstract and totally ad hoc solutions in the analyses proposed by standard GP. Some problems of the abstractness controversy are examined in the final section of the chapter. The author shows why highly abstract URs are postulated by standard GP: they lead to the simplification of the inventory of underlying segments, lexical redundancy rules, and phonological rules. Putting it differently, simplicity being the final goal of GP of the SPE-type, abstract underlying

representations are justified. As the author points out, the notion of overall simplicity, a highly valued evaluation measure, has not been defined explicitly. This situation has led to the inconsistent application of the assumption just mentioned, which not infrequently was identified with the phonological simplicity. One must agree here that explicitness is crucial for any analysis. Similarly, the fact that linguistics, being an empirical science and aiming at psychological reality, must seek for external justification of its internally-based descriptions is beyond doubt. It is surprising, however, that some abstract solutions of SPE, based on a non-explicitly stated criterion of simplicity, have found empirical support (cf. Schnitzer 1972), hence can be claimed to be psychologically real. The paradox of the situation certainly requires further investigation (though its existence should not encourage a linguist to avoid explicitness in his analysis!). At present, however, one must disagree with the author's claim that all abstract solutions of the SPE-type should be rejected. This considered, the constraints on abstractness proposed by the author (two types of abstract URs are permitted: mixed representations and representations in which the environment for possible though non-existent alternation is present on the surface, all other representations being concrete in the sense that they are based on the form-meaning relation between allomorphs, form-form correspondence being disallowed) call for further empirical support as well. The idea of gradual phonological change (possible under the constraints on abstractness just mentioned), in contrast to the stability of URs assumed by standard GP, seems intuitively correct: it shows that language is developing constantly. But, no doubt about it, more research is necessary to validate it.

The main aim of Chapter 6 is to show that explicit criteria for morpheme identification are necessary for phonological analyses. Section 1 relates the problem to the discovery and evaluation procedures. It is claimed that the replacement of discovery procedures, such as the principles for morpheme identification, by evaluation procedures has led to an ideal of simplicity whose psychological reality is very doubtful. As in the previous chapter, it is argued that both a linguist and a child learning a language should have some principled means for discovering and evaluation of linguistic structure. The author rightly notes that neither evaluation procedures nor discovery procedures have been defined so far and that this does not mean that the notions just mentioned should be taken for granted.

Section 2 discusses the nature of discovery procedures. The author stresses the fact that in the process of language acquisition form and function cannot be separated, and that an all-formal approach to language places a child in a situation never found in reality: "in some kind of all-linguistic, formal vacuum having no connection with the outside world" (p. 135). Now, if a grammar is to be psychologically real, a linguist cannot avoid functional considerations. The latter, in the case in question, can be understood as semantic criteria for morpheme identification, i.e. a discovery procedure. The indispensability of meaning in morphological analysis is clearly demonstrated by examples taken from the SPE. It becomes obvious that the descriptive practice of Chomsky and Halle (1968) involves semantic considerations, in spite of claims to the contrary. One must agree also that it is the lack of the explicit criteria for morphemic analysis in the SPE that transformed the notion of "overall simplicity" into some kind of "phonological simplicity". The consequences of this situation become apparent in the course of the discussion of the use of morphological boundaries in the SPE (section 3). Numerous examples demonstrate that the placement of both morpheme and word boundaries in URs not infrequently serves the purpose of phonological simplicity only. The prefix boundary (=), being introduced on phonological grounds exclusively, is under the severest attack. The fact that



the use of boundaries in the SPE leads to the complication of morphological level of some sort becomes obvious. The problem is whether in the view of overall simplicity the situation is well-motivated. One has to agree also that the meaning-based definition of morpheme provides a strong constraint on the boundary placement, which in result may lead to a more consistent conception of the "overall simplicity".

Chapter 7 discusses some factors that condition the existence of various degrees of psychological reality of morphemes on the basis of derivational suffixes taken primarily from OE. As observed by the author, the notion of psychological reality is still very vague. This does not mean, however, that the assumption that morphemes differ in their psychological reality is not worth further discussion and empirical investigations. Seen in this light, the value of the chapter is very high.

Section 1 demonstrates that suffixes may differ both in formal and functional distinctiveness, and that the two work as communicating vessels, e.g. "low functional distinctiveness is compensated for by very high formal distinctiveness" (p. 159). However, the main classification of suffixes into primary and secondary is based on the principle of distribution, considerations of the general distinctiveness being important only for less clear-cut cases and further subdivisions. It is not surprising, therefore, that the question whether the principle "once a morpheme always a morpheme" should be extended so as to cover secondary suffixes constitutes the main problem of the section. The constraint on the application of this principle in the form of a tentative definition of secondary suffixes as "those suffixes which are represented by less than three phonemes, and whose function is little more than a mere word class marker" (p. 164) is checked with the help of the quantitative constraint of typicalness (section 2). There, the distinction between distinctiveness and typicalness is drawn, the former referring to "the relation between grammar and extralinguistic world" (p. 170), the latter to "the purely grammatical relations between grammatical markers and grammatical categories" (p. 169). The case of the Feminine gender suffix *-e* in German seems to prove the psychological reality of the notion of typicalness (p. 170), yet in view of the similarities between the language acquisition process and the way in which the language functions one should be rather sceptical about a more general application of the principles based on statistics. The investigations of first language learning not infrequently prove a relatively low relevance of quantitative factors (cf. Brown 1972). This does not mean, however, that they cannot be treated as additional support for claims based on other principles (and this is the way the notion of typicalness has been used by the author).

Section 3 relates the notions of distinctiveness and typicalness to the idea of productivity. The status of productive secondary suffixes (such as the OE adjectival suffix *-ig* and the nominal suffix *-ð*) constitutes the main problem. Evidence is presented in support of the view that only productive secondary suffixes which are syllabic can be treated as primary. The classification of derivational suffixes based on principles of distinctiveness, typicalness and productivity is presented. One can observe here that the nature of a suffix itself is of primary importance. Let me mention that quite a different generative approach to derivational morphology where the interdependencies between a base and a suffix are crucial has been initiated by Aronoff (1976). It is interesting to note that the two views, though based on totally different principles, have some similar results. One can say that generative rules of Aronoff account for primary suffixes proposed in the book under review (here the principle "once a morpheme always a morpheme" may be said to operate), while redundancy rules seem to refer to low distinctive suffixes. There is no doubt that both approaches to derivational morphology just mentioned deserve further studies.

The above discussion should, hopefully, convince the reader that the book under

review abounds in very important hypotheses and conclusions, and though some of them have not been accepted by the present reviewer, they all constitute a very promising line for further investigations. And in this the chief value of the book lies.

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*An introduction to the articulation of RP English*. By X. Dekeyser and P.D. Scott Sheldon. Pp. 145. Antwerpen/Amsterdam: De Nederlandsche Boekhandel, 1977 (second edition).

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The purpose of the *Introduction to the articulation of RP English* by Xavier Dekeyser and Patricia D. Scott Sheldon is, as stated in the foreword, "to give advanced learners of English an insight into various theoretical aspects of the articulation of RP" (V). It is understood from the foreword that those learners of English are first-year students of the Department of English with no previous knowledge of phonetics. The authors' purpose is to provide the students with the knowledge of "underlying theoretical aspects of the subject" (V) as a basis for the development of practical skills. In other words, the theoretical background of the *Introduction* should facilitate practice. Consequently, Dekeyser and Sheldon's course can be termed as one which is prescriptive and articulatory with elements of phonology introduced to make it a "coherent whole, rather than [...] a mere description of the RP sounds". However, even when structural reasons are given to justify certain classifications, a clear-cut division is made between a strictly phonetic description and a phonological classification (e.g. the assignment of /j,w,r/ to the class of approximants on phonetic grounds and to the class of consonants on structural grounds).

*An introduction to the articulation of RP English* consists of eight chapters, including the table of the RP phonemes with distinctive articulatory features and critical bibliography at the end. In chapter one, the basic notions of phonetics and phonology (the term "phonemics" is preferred) are introduced, together with the description of the organs of speech and of "what is commonly covered by the term RP". Some reasons are also given as to why RP is considered the most appropriate model of English pronunciation for teaching purposes. Chapter two discusses the differences between the phonetic (allophonic) and phonemic transcription and gives an evaluation of four chosen types of phonemic transcription. Chapters three, four and five deal with the English consonants, semivowels (the term "approximants" is used) and vowels respectively, usually

starting with the general and then proceeding to a more detailed description. In chapter six, some elements of suprasegmental phonetics are introduced and discussed, namely the units of catenation and rhythm. Chapter seven discusses the relations between the phonemic structure and its graphemic representation, and in chapter eight, a more detailed account of phoneme theory is given. The transcription used in the book is that of Gimson's *Introduction to the pronunciation of English*.

The second edition of the *Introduction* is the revised version of the first, which was published in 1974 under the rather awkward title *An introduction to the articulation of RP phonemes*. Apart from the change of "phonemes" into "English" in the second edition, a number of other mistakes have been corrected, e.g. in the description of /i:/ we have "any more marked glide, e.g. from [e], sounds dialectal" instead of "from [e]" (59); originally lacking stress has been marked on "shouldn't" in /'ʃʊdn't 'ju: 'gɒv/ (116). Also, the section concerning the scope of the book has been changed considerably. Originally, the *Introduction* was said to cover "the articulatory phonetics of English with special emphasis on the phonemes"; in the second edition it is intended to cover "the articulatory phonetics of English with special emphasis on its pedagogical dimensions" (4). Similar changes and improvements in phraseology can be found in a few other passages (109, 124, 126).

The *Introduction*, as stated in the foreword, "does not claim much originality" (V). The main contributor to the book, as far as phonetic theory is concerned, seems to be A. C. Gimson, whose *Introduction to the pronunciation of English* is rightly thought by the authors to be "the best account of the articulation of RP English to date" (137). Other important contributors are Jones, Abercrombie and Ladefoged (the term "approximants" for /j, w, r/); which seems a very good choice, especially if one is concerned with the description of RP only. Naturally, this preference for the British authors had to result in the virtual neglect of other methods of description, which seems here quite reasonable. Sometimes, however, the authors do make use of the terms known from structuralist analyses, i.e. "slit" (in the description of /θ, ð/) or "trill".

Dekeyser/Sheldon's book is meant chiefly for Dutch learners and as such, it could perhaps be best appreciated by a Dutch-speaking person, or a person with a considerable knowledge of this language, which the present reviewer is not. Apart from strictly contrastive passages, however, the advice given in the *Introduction* will be found useful by all non-native speakers of English, and thus the book lends itself to evaluation by students with various linguistic backgrounds.

To begin with, the arrangement of material is very clear. After several sections there is often a short summary, sometimes in the form of a simple diagram, which is an excellent device for making the students visualize and memorize the relations between different types of phonemic segments or between three kinds of phonetics (articulatory, acoustic and auditory).

The instruction given in the book is of two kinds: one is aimed at those learners of English whose native language is Dutch, the other is more general and includes warnings against any un-English pronunciations. Apart from Dutch, Flemish and German, there are occasional references to various languages, such as French, Polish, Czech, and even Chinese and Japanese. In the chapters concerned with consonants, semivowels and vowels respectively, and in discussing assimilations, elisions, linking, etc., possible mispronunciations and overgeneralizations are described and warned against.

The detailed description of the English consonant phonemes in chapter three includes the graphemic representation of the phonemes. It should be noted that the authors do well in presenting some exceptional graphemes; it seems as if a part of their strategy is to teach their students to mistrust their intuition in so far as spelling - pronunciation relation-



ships are concerned. A general articulatory description and the significant articulatory features of a given class of consonants are also included. Only with one consonant, namely /l/, do we have a subsection entitled "The distribution of the major allophones", where the three important variants of /l/ are described. This does not mean, however, that allophones of other consonants are ignored; it is only that they are usually included either in the general articulatory description or the significant features sections. Nevertheless, and this seems to be the most serious drawback of this otherwise well-organized presentation, the number of the allophones discussed does not seem sufficient, even if one takes into consideration the limited scope of the book and the unquestionable fact that some choice had to be made in order to avoid confusion. This choice was obviously affected by the number and character of the allophones of the phonemes of Dutch. Thus, for instance, the omission of the labio-dental allophone of /m/ ([*m̥*]) can be due to the fact that this very allophone occurs in the same context in Dutch. The omission, however, of the post-alveolar allophone of /n/, partially devoiced allophones of /m/, /n/ and /ŋ/ or, to a lesser extent, the post-alveolar and palato-alveolar allophones of /t/ and /d/, most probably connected with the authors' monophonemic interpretation of the English affricates, is controversial in a book the aim of which is to make the students aware of the nature of the interrelations between English sounds and the extent to which they can influence each other. Devoicing in English is a rather special process and finds no exact parallel in Dutch, in which, it may be added, we have many instances of voicing (e.g. the voicing of fricatives in the context before a nasal, liquid or /j/, or of voiceless stops when followed by voiced ones; cf. Morciniec (1977:30)). All these simplifications may be due to the fact that the authors' prime concern seems to have been with the knowledge of correct pronunciation rather than with minor allophonic variations.

As far as Dekeyser/Sheldon's treatment of the vowels is concerned, at the very beginning the reader comes across a statement that "English has five contrastive pairs based on length", which may be exemplified by the contrast of /æ/ and /a:/ as in stressed "had" and "hard". Although immediately there follows the explanation of the non-phonemic character of length in English, and the transcription symbols themselves mark the difference in quality, a sentence like this can somehow blur the picture, especially for someone who for the first time encounters a detailed phonetic description of English vowels. It would seem more convenient to speak about length separately and treat it as a "feature of the whole syllable-centres" (cf. Biedrzycki 1978:106), not of single vowels as such.

Although they include /i:/, *ɪ*, e, æ, ə, ɜ, ʌ, a: , u:, *v*, ɔ:, *v*/ in the "steady-state vowels", the authors stress the relativity of steadiness observed in the production of those sounds and they mention the realizations with glides, particularly [iɪ] and [vʊ], but also [ɔɪ], [əe] and [œe] as important variants in the idiolect "of many RP speakers" (57). Perhaps it would be more economical to treat /i:/ and /vʊ/ not as "slightly diphthongized allophones" of /i:/ and /u:/ in some varieties of RP, as this would demand a more detailed explanation of what is meant by those varieties, but as proper phonemic representations of those syllable-centres (the biphonemic interpretation).

As regards the English consonants and their general features, there is an inconsistency to be noted in the presentation of the fortis-lenis dichotomy. The authors say that "this fortis-lenis contrast is not relevant for /h/, which is always fortis; neither does it exist for the nasals and for /l/, which are normally lenis" (20). This might mean either that there is no lenis phoneme counterpart of /h/ and no fortis counterparts of the nasals and /l/, or that the fortis-lenis distinction is not a phonemic one. No arguments are given in support of either statement, and the reader might be left wondering about the character of the dichotomy. However, this ambiguity may be due not to the inadvertence of the authors themselves, but to the insufficient explanation of the fortis-lenis distinction in the

*Introduction to the pronunciation of English* by A. C. Gimson, on which Dekeyser/Sheldon's course is based.

As for suprasegmental elements, there are a few sections devoted to the rhythm of English, treated as a background against which "the true significance of the strong and weak forms of certain English words" can best be seen (101). The discussion of the intonation of English has been omitted because it "does not fall within the parameters of the aim of this book" (117). Yet, it might be argued that the intonation in English does have something to do with the "articulatory aspects of the English phonemes in isolation and in context", e.g. its influence on the length of the vowels and the relations between intonation and devoicing. However, the discussion of intonation in an elementary course like this would have to be superficial, so the authors may be right in recommending "excellent practical courses" as a necessary supplement to their *Introduction*.

Dekeyser and Sheldon distinguish 46 consonantal, approximant and vowel phonemes of English, described in this sequence; thus their order of presentation differs from that in Gimson's *Introduction*, where the discussion begins with vowels, while /r/ and /j, w/ are labelled as consonants. In the assignment of /j, w, r/ to the class of approximants the authors also differ from P. Ladefoged, who, beside those three, includes /l/ and /h/ in the class. Dekeyser and Sheldon exclude them on the grounds of "resp. [active] closure [...] and friction" (19), "approximant" in their description meaning a sound the articulation of which "involves a stricture of fairly close approximation [...], while at the same time it does not entail audible friction". Functionally speaking, however, the feature of approximation so described is not very relevant, one of the reasons for this being that it groups together non-syllabic segments /j, w/ and a segment which, under special circumstances, can acquire syllabicity. Nevertheless, Dekeyser/Sheldon's classification is made according to strict phonetic criteria and as such it cannot be up for criticism.

Summing up, the *Introduction to the articulation of RP English* is an exceptionally well-organized combination of the theoretical and the practical. The phonetic description, if not very detailed, is adequate and up to date: indeed it agrees with the authors' intention as expressed in chapter one: "A moderately advanced RP [...] will [...] be given some sort of preferential treatment in the present book" (9). Apart from its factual merits, the book, thanks to the lively, almost conversational style, makes very pleasant reading. The authors are primarily concerned with the Dutch learner of English, but not exclusively; therefore, students of English from practically any European country could profit by beginning their study of phonetics with the reading of such an introduction.

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