

form in unselfconsciously-produced English and other languages. Chapter 8 looks at varieties of English not covered in Chapter 4 (from Scotland, East Anglia, Jamaica, Kenya), and Chapter 9 deals with acoustic phonetics. Following is a glossary of phonetic terms.

This is a book which repays the attention of the intermediate or advanced student of phonetics who enjoys pondering the complexities in the analysis of sound and sound systems. It will be an eye-opener for those who have not considered the medium and long-term effects produced by articulators of different sizes and shapes moving at different speeds and with different constraints while producing a so-called string of speech sounds.

References

- Firth, J. R. 1948. Sounds and prosodies. *Transactions of the Philological Society* 1948. 127–152.
 Harris, Zellig H. 1944. Simultaneous components in phonology. *Language* 20, 181–205.

GEOFFREY S. NATHAN, *Phonology: A Cognitive Grammar introduction* (Cognitive Linguistics in Practice). Amsterdam & Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2008. Pp. x + 171. ISBN: 0789019097 (pb), 9789027219084 (hb).
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Speaking as a teacher of phonology, I have always found two things difficult: (i) explaining the difference between phonetics and phonology so that the students can really understand and use the difference, and (ii) describing phonological alternations without intimidating students so much that they switch off completely. This book may have provided solutions to both. Using analogies with architecture, Geoffrey Nathan makes a clear distinction between phonetics and phonology (presumably in the belief that ambiguous examples can be handled later, as in Chapter 8, where phonologisation is introduced) and explains what is expected and what is not in a phonological system without committing himself to any particular descriptive format.

The term ‘cognitive’ in the book’s title relates to the notion that phonological systems are not a result of random and unpredictable combinations of oppositions but are shaped by the abilities of the human production and perception systems. In this, as in other ways, Nathan adopts a stance championed by Roman Jakobson and others, including David Stampe, whose *Natural Phonology* is mentioned frequently in the discussions of the forces which shape a phonological system.

In the first four chapters, Nathan begins with a condensed history of phonology, briefly describing the traditional schools of analysis. Next, he does a quick once-over through articulatory phonetics, though quite rightly insisting that his book is not intended as a phonetics tutor. He then dives into the central subject matter: segmental phonology at several levels – the individual segment, the syllable, the foot, the word – touching on how these can differ across languages.

Chapter 5 points out that phonological features are the traditional units of description in this field of study, despite the fact that the phoneme is the minimal unit of awareness for the ordinary language user. It then introduces the Stampian notion of PROCESSES: automatic and exceptionless variations which govern casual speech but which apply to any type of speech. These include such English features as aspiration (prominent for plosives in stressed syllables, less prominent elsewhere). Nathan argues that these processes occur ‘online’ and do not reflect the retrieval of alternative forms from our mental databases.

Chapter 6 deals with phonological alternations and Chapter 7 looks at casual speech processes in English and other languages. Chapter 8 is about historical phonology and the phonologisation of speech processes. Chapter 9 points out the importance of phonology to first- and second-language acquisition, and Chapter 10 is a bird's-eye view of modern phonological theories.

Exercises are included for each relevant chapter.

This book can be recommended to anyone who needs to know about phonology but has no need to embrace a particular theory: students are introduced to phonological principles without being burdened with elaborate formalism. They are also encouraged to realise the importance of human cognitive functions in shaping phonological systems. I would regard Nathan's book as ideal for students of foreign language teaching or for prospective speech and language therapists (for use along with other sources on disordered phonology).