

REVIEWS

ROSE-JULIET ANYANWU, *Fundamentals of phonetics, phonology and tonology* (Research in African Studies 15). Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2008. Pp. 329. ISBN: 978-3-631-57746-2 (pbk).
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This book offers a fairly traditional introduction to phonetics and phonology. What makes it different from other similar introductory textbooks is that the focus is mostly on African languages. There are four parts: the first two, on phonetics (82 pages) and phonology (117 pages) are by far the longest, but the final two, on tonology (25 pages) and specific African sound patterns (20 pages) are also important given the focus of the book.

The author clearly has an encyclopedic knowledge and has also conducted extensive research on African languages, and it is splendid to see detailed examples covering a wide range of patterns for the vowels, consonants, coarticulation, assimilation, syllable structure, stress and tones of so many of them: Hausa, Igbo, Yoruba, Xhosa, Zulu, Bantu, Swahili, Chichewa, Etulo, Kpelle, Margi, Mende, Yukuben, Jukun-Wannu, and many, many more. Indeed, anyone teaching phonetics in Africa or else dealing with African languages will find the material in this book invaluable; and even teachers and researchers not specifically working on African languages will find it refreshing to see so much fascinating information presented about languages that are sometimes given less attention in books on linguistics.

It is a pity that there is no accompanying CD or dedicated website to allow us to hear some of the material. For instance, we are told that in singing, ‘the breathy voice is hardly perceived for example in Dinka (Nilotic)’ (p. 84), and in the absence of recorded material, I am not really sure what this means; and I would love to be able to hear the bilabial, dental and palatal implosives of Fula (p. 76), the prenasalised consonants of Swahili (p. 184), the spreading of tones in Ngizim (p. 211), the nasal labial-velar consonants of Etulo (p. 287), the contrast between downdrift for declaratives and suspended downdrift for interrogatives in Hausa (p. 269), and the patterns of vowel harmony in Igbo and Akan-Fante (p. 284). Nevertheless, even in the absence of any illustrative recordings, the range of material that is presented in this book is impressive.

However, there are rather a lot of unfortunate flaws in the material. First, some of the data is simply wrong. The table of consonants for Maori (p. 139) shows only /p t k f h/, with no mention of /m n ŋ r w/, all of which are perfectly good consonants in Maori (see Hay, Maclagan & Gordon 2008: 73); the consonants of French are listed (p. 139), but /l/ is missing; and those of English are shown (p. 140), but the dental fricatives are not there.

One hopes that the material on African languages is more accurate. One might note that /f/ is given as a consonant in Hausa (p. 141), whereas Schuh & Yalwa (1999) show the consonant as [ɸ], though they do say (on page 93) that [f] is also heard, so perhaps in this instance the material in the book is not actually wrong. And /f/ and /v/ are listed as consonants in Igbo (p. 139), whereas Ikikeonwu (1999) lists /f/ but not /v/. In cases such as this, it is hard to evaluate who is right.

Sometimes the text is confusing or occasionally incorrect. For example, in the explanation of how trills are produced, we are told that ‘articulators that can be manipulated in this way can only produce a trill’ (p. 63), which seems to suggest that any articulators that are capable of producing a trill cannot produce any other sound, and this is clearly not true. Presumably, the intended meaning is that only some articulators are able to produce a trill, but that is not what it says. Then it is stated that VOT ‘is negative if voicing begins after the obstruent is released’ (p. 86), and then /b d g v z/ are listed in the table as examples of consonants with negative

VOT, so surely voicing begins before the obstruent is released, not after. We learn that ‘in German and English vowel systems, the feature [–back], for instance cannot combine with the feature [–round]’ (p. 165), which seems to suggest that front vowels cannot be unrounded, which is obviously not true. If instead it is interpreted to mean that all back vowels are rounded, what about /ɑ:/ in English? We are told that, for Japanese, ‘[t]here is a general preference of the antepenult as an accent landing site[; t]hat is, any of the last three syllables can acquire the accent’ (p. 201), which seems to be contradictory. Next, it is stated that bounded feet ‘involve structures that are less than two syllables in length’ (p. 224), and then on the next page the English words *pity* and *belief* are offered as examples of this. It remains a mystery how these two words can be regarded as consisting of less than two syllables. Finally, in a discussion of Optimality Theory constraints, we are introduced to two constraints: a) on two consecutive sibilants and b) on changes in voicing in consecutive obstruents, and then we are told that ‘forms like *[rəuzz] and *[wɔkd] will violate the constraints in both a) and b)’ (p. 239). The intended meaning is presumably that the first form violates a) while the second violates b), but that is not what it says.

There are, in addition, quite a few typos, some of which are potentially misleading. For example, it is stated that high and low pitches occur on a continuum, so ‘we can say that *pitch* is *relevant*’ (p. 200), where presumably ‘relative’ rather than ‘relevant’ was intended. And we are told that, with the concept of strict locality within the governor–governee relationship, ‘constituents with single members are not legible’ (p. 232), where one assumes that this should be ‘legitimate’ rather than ‘legible’. Finally, the whole of the second and third paragraphs on page 208 – a total of over one hundred words – are repeated verbatim on page 220.

It is hoped that these oversights, errors, and instances of confusing text can be sorted out, as they seriously compromise the value of the book. This is a great pity, as it contains plenty of excellent material. If the problems can be fixed, then the book can realise its undoubted value as an introductory phonetics textbook with a focus on African languages.

References

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JOAN BAART, *A field manual of acoustic phonetics*. Dallas, TX: SIL International, 2010. Pp. 127. ISBN: 978-1-55671-232-6.
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The information on the cover assures us that this book provides a practical and easy-to-understand introduction to acoustic speech analysis and assumes only a basic knowledge of articulatory phonetics. So far, so familiar, since most introductions to acoustic phonetics set themselves similar objectives. However, unlike many such publications, Joan Baart’s book does what it promises.

What is most appealing in this book is conciseness and simplicity. It discusses basic concepts of acoustic phonetics ranging from reading speech waves to analyzing acoustic correlates of prosody in a content of only 119 pages. This is praiseworthy economy,