

Phonological Theory. The Essential Readings, ed. by JOHN A. GOLD-SMITH. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers. 1999. Pp. viii + 438.

Reviewed by Eugene Buckley

This volume brings together 22 important writings in phonological theory, most dating from the period following the publication of *The Sound Pattern of English (SPE)*¹ in 1968, which serves as a defining moment in the development of generative phonology. The first selection, in fact, is a short excerpt from this book. Nearly all the other readings are articles that have appeared in various journals and book collections, most of them similarly excerpted rather than reproduced in full, thereby permitting a greater number of selections in a single reasonably sized book.

It is impossible in a short review to discuss every reading included, and such an effort would be redundant given Goldsmith's informative introduction. Instead, I will provide some comments on the way in which current students are likely to find these selections relevant. Whenever I confront a collection of important readings in a field, I am reminded of Joos' *Readings in Linguistics*; that volume brought together many classic works in structural linguistics, but had the misfortune to appear in 1957, the same year as Chomsky's *Syntactic Structures*, the founding document of the generative approach that was destined to displace structuralism as the leading paradigm in the field. As a result, most of the papers in Joos (1957) came to be read for an historical understanding of the field and the analytical issues raised, rather than for their more direct relevance to later theoretical investigations. Goldsmith's volume fares considerably better on the whole, but some parallels remain: many selections represent the current standard view of some part of phonology, but others have more of a dated feel. Consequently, the relationship of the student to the various readings is likely to be inconsistent.

For example, the selections on syllable structure can largely be read as current expositions of argument method and relevant evidence for the syllable, though, of course, details will vary, such as whether subconstituents of the syllable (onset, rhyme, etc.) have a formal status, and, if so, what that may be. Some ap-

¹ Editor's note: Noam Chomsky & Morris Halle. 1968. *The Sound Pattern of English*. NY: Harper & Row.

proaches are today less accepted (Clements & Keyser's *CV Phonology*, 1983), and, therefore, to be seen as more historical, than others more general in approach (Selkirk's "The syllable", 1982) or more recent (Hayes' "Compensatory lengthening", 1989). All three selections in the area of metrical phonology are central to the development of the field (Lieberman & Prince's "Stress and linguistic rhythm", 1977; Prince's "Relating to the grid", 1983; and Hayes' "Extrametricity and English stress", 1982), but none employs the kind of bracketed grid formalisms that are typical today. At the same time, it should be noted that the basic insights of these papers remain central to the approach, and the formal differences are minor compared to the gulf that separates metrical phonology from the approach to stress in *SPE*. Such an observation is true of many of the other papers in the book.

The major recent development in phonological theory is, of course, the move away from ordered rules and toward output constraints, especially in the context of Optimality Theory (OT) as first set forth in Prince & Smolensky (1993). Here Goldsmith's timing is better than Joos', since this book is able to include one paper in the OT paradigm (McCarthy & Prince's "Generalized Alignment", 1994), as well as Goldsmith's own "Harmonic Phonology" (1993), another alternative to traditional ordered rules. Despite the emphasis on constraints in much current work, the other selections in this book are of nearly the same relevance to students focusing on OT as to those working in a derivational framework. One reason is that OT, despite its growing popularity, has not displaced derivational phonology, and has not yet arrived at well accepted solutions to certain problems that derivational approaches tackled with considerable success; a student trained only in OT would have received an incomplete education, and the present volume can serve as a useful introduction to a variety of important issues. Independent of metatheoretical competition, however, is the fact that the conceptual break between structuralism and generative grammar in the years following 1957 was quite different from the break between derivational and constraint-based phonology, which share a generative and mentalist perspective. In addition, the greater emphasis in the 80s and 90s on questions of representation rather than rule interaction (see Anderson 1985) transfers fairly well to OT, in which many aspects of representation remain the same. This relevance, of course, is no coincidence: in the intro-

duction, Goldsmith notes that this goal is reflected in his exclusion of papers on the theory of rule ordering—a matter of limited interest to phonologists today, even in derivational frameworks.

Two papers deserve special mention. First is Kenneth & Eunice Pike's "Immediate constituents of Mazateco syllables", which first appeared in 1947 and thus predates *SPE* by over 20 years. It is the only structuralist paper in the lot, but one of considerable prescience and continuing relevance. Second is McCarthy & Prince's "Prosodic morphology", an extremely important manuscript that first appeared in 1986 but was never published as such. The version in this volume, excerpted from a 1996 Technical Report from Rutgers University, includes annotations by the authors, with helpful perspective on more recent developments and extensive bibliographic references.

It is certainly no easy task to choose the most important papers in a field over a period of more than 30 years, taking into consideration relevance to current students in a rapidly changing theoretical context. Although many phonologists would no doubt make slightly different choices than Goldsmith, nearly all their lists would be likely to overlap a great deal with the selections in this book. This collection is sure to be of use to a wide range of students seeking greater familiarity with the primary literature in generative phonology, and is an excellent first stop for anyone embarking on a serious survey of the field.

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