

NOTAS Y RESEÑAS

RESEÑAS

BRIAN MOTT (2011): *English Phonetics and Phonology for Spanish Speakers*, Barcelona, Publicacions i Edicions Universitat de Barcelona, segunda edición.

This volume is a revised edition of Brian Mott's 2000, *English Phonetics and Phonology for Spanish Speakers* and its predecessor, *A Course in Phonetics and Phonology for Learners of English*, published in 1991. This revised edition, as the author explains in the Preface, aims to keep up with progress in the field and incorporates the modifications in transcription in the latest edition of the Longman Pronouncing Dictionary. Although this course book presents a traditional articulatory approach, a welcome addition is the inclusion of some illustrative acoustic data, including waveforms, spectrograms and F0 tracings.

This textbook is the result of Dr. Mott's extensive experience in teaching English phonetics and phonology to Spanish and Catalan students, and it effectively addresses the specific problems that Spanish speakers have when they speak English. It is not, however, just a practical textbook in English phonetics and phonology, it is a comprehensive description of the English segments, phonotactics, rhythm and intonation, English phonology and sound change. The volume will be of interest to students of English and linguistics alike because (i) it covers in greater detail than the average introductory book on English phonetics and phonology areas such as intonation, the syllable and sound change, and (ii) presents alternative theoretical views on certain aspects of English phonetics, e.g., rhythm or the syllable.

The book exudes the author's teaching experience and erudition. Dr. Mott has a great awareness of the main problems of English pronunciation for Spanish-speaking students and addresses them in a detailed and comprehensive way. Examples of his wide linguistic knowledge may be found throughout the book, as for example, when he uses Latin examples (p. 148) to illustrate how connected speech processes may result in sound change or on describing the dependency of French liaison on syntactic constituency (p. 155). Also he makes reference to the phonetic features and patterning of a number of different languages to illustrate his points.

The book is organized into 15 chapters. Chapter 1 sets phonetics and phonology in context. Chapters 2 and 3 present the organs of speech and the classification of the

vowels and consonants of English. As noted, the book follows a traditional articulatory description using the standard parameters to classify the English consonants (manner, place and voicing) and vowels (degree of opening, backness and lip-rounding). On occasions, the book draws heavily on other sources as manifest in the description of the use of the glottal stop in English (section 2.3), based closely on Ladefoged (1975).

Chapter 4 is dedicated to phonetic transcription. It presents a systematic and well-informed description of the symbols used for transcribing the speech sounds with interesting information on the origin of the symbols (e.g., the caret, ash, eth) which may stimulate the interest of the diligent student.

Chapter 5, «The English Phonological system», includes a detailed description of the English vowels and consonants —placing vowels on the traditional vowel chart and providing midsagittal sections of the articulation of consonants—, their most common spellings, as well as informative comments on dialectal and historical variation.

Chapter 6 describes connected speech processes —with a useful description of the assimilation of the morphemes *-es* and *-ed* in English— and the use of weak forms of function words, which leads to a description of English rhythm (chapter 7). Mott espouses the popular categorical distinction between stress-timed and syllable-timed languages, although it has not received empirical support from duration measurements.

Stress is described in chapters 8 and 9. While chapter 8 deals with stress, vowel and consonant changes due to the addition of a derivational suffix (e.g., *nation-nationality*), chapter 9 reviews the most common stress patterns in English (and Spanish) words of different syllables, the stressing of compounds and derived words as well as sentence stress. Chapter 9 also includes the placement of the nuclear (or tonic) stress, which may be considered more within the realm of intonation. Chapter 10 covers the functions of intonation, the choice of pitch direction (also known as ‘tone’ in Halliday’s terms) to convey specific meanings, and the division of speech into tone groups.

Chapter 11 is devoted to *length*; this is surprising as phonological length does not play a distinctive role in English. After reviewing some languages that use vowel and/or consonant length distinctively, Mott reviews the vowel length distinctions in Old English, how long and short vowels are represented in English spelling, and then focuses on *pre-fortis clipping*. Chapter 12 presents a comprehensive compa-

rison of the segments of English, Spanish and Catalan as well as the positions where segments may occur in these languages (phonotactics). Chapter 13 presents some basic phonological notions, the principles of phonological analysis and the traditional distinctive features. The last two chapters deal with the syllable and sound change, respectively.

The book has many positive features but it is not exempt from certain inaccuracies which, while they are easy to correct, may nevertheless confuse the reader. For example, on p. 51 creaky voice is described as [*being*] produced when we are speaking under our breath, or to avoid disturbing people in the vicinity of our conversation, or in order to keep a conversation private, which would be more descriptive of ‘whisper’. The book also claims that in creaky voice *the defective periodicity that we perceive arises from weak breath force: we are expelling less than the average amount of air from the lungs*. Indeed in creaky voice the vocal folds do not open completely and therefore, the volume of air flowing out is usually less as compared to modal voice, but the *irregular* periodicity in creaky voice stems from heavier or strained vocal folds. Another minor inaccuracy is the assertion that *In Spanish there is no assimilation of in+m (inmediato)* (p. 150). While it is not shown in the spelling, assimilation is certainly the norm in fluent speech, as noted by Navarro Tomás (1980²⁰: 179).

The book also features some controversial aspects that may be more a matter of persuasion. For instance, the use of a subscript wedge, [t̸], instead of the IPA symbol [ɾ], for the tap (p.94). This is surprising as the symbol [ɾ] is used in the next section (4.3). Or the fact that *weakening* processes are missing from chapter 6 on connected speech. As to the arrangement of the content, the reader would appreciate the presentation of all the major allophonic variants of phonemes in the same chapter; as it is now, pre-fortis clipping is presented in chapter 11, aspiration in stops in chapter 12, and dark- and clear-l in chapter 5.

As stated in the preface, the revised edition attempts to keep up with progress in the field. On occasion, however, the descriptions are not fully up to date. For example, the chapter on rhythm presents Abercrombie’s view of rhythm as a combination of chest-pulses and stress-pulses (p. 166) —which provided a physiological basis for the distinction between stress-timed and syllable-timed languages— but this has long been proved incorrect (e.g., Ladefoged, 1967). Furthermore, empirical support from duration measurements for isochrony between stressed syllables in English (section 7.2) has not been found (see, for example, Laver, 1994). The failure to find measurable isochrony has obliged researchers to describe isochrony as a tendency and has fostered the search for

rhythm measures (such as proportion of vocalic segments, variability in V/C interval duration, etc.) to quantify cross-linguistic differences in rhythm. Another example is the chapter on «The phoneme and its distinctive features», which presents a structuralist and early generativist description of phonological features. In more recent accounts, however, these abstract phonological features have a language-specific phonetic realization, that is, the implementation of the identical phonological feature, e.g. [voice], may differ from language to language (e.g. Keating, 1985). This view is certainly more appropriate for foreign learners than formal accounts as it allows us to describe the different realization of the feature [voice] in English and in Spanish/Catalan stops. Thus, while in English the voicing contrast is realized as a contrast between *voiceless aspirated* vs *unaspirated* stops word-initially, e.g. [p^han] vs [ban], in Spanish/Catalan stops the same phonological contrast is realized as a contrast between *voiceless unaspirated*, [pan], vs *voiced stops*, [ban].

Nevertheless, these minor problems do not seriously detract from the merits of the volume: clear, informed and practical descriptions of English and Spanish segments, useful diagrams, valuable suggestions for improving English pronunciation, focus on stress and intonation, reference to relevant historical and dialectal variation, and suggestions on which pronunciations may be used in certain contexts or registers.

A very useful feature of the book is the section «Further readings» at the end of each chapter for the interested student or teacher who wishes to expand specific aspects raised in the chapter, as well as the wealth of exercises to practice the points presented in the chapter, and the key to the exercises in the appendix. These features, along with the accompanying CD, make this volume an excellent course book as well as a stand-alone book which can be used by students to improve their English pronunciation.

Partly due to its detailed information and its erudition, this book has inspired and trained generations of phoneticians who studied with Brian Mott, and it will certainly continue to do so.

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ANTONIO HIDALGO y MERCEDES QUILIS (2012): *La voz del lenguaje: fonética y fonología del español*, Valencia, Tirant Humanidades.

Transcurridos diez años desde la publicación de la obra *Fonética y Fonología españolas* (1ª ed. 2002; 2ª ed. corregida y aumentada 2004), Antonio Hidalgo Navarro y Mercedes Quilis Merín lanzan al mercado editorial un nuevo libro, *La voz del lenguaje: fonética y fonología del español*, publicado en Valencia por la editorial Tirant Humanidades (2012); obra que, si bien mantiene lo esencial de la anterior, supone una ampliación, una actualización y una mejor planificación y redistribución de su contenido, con nuevos epígrafes, subepígrafes y apartados que dosifican la información y permiten un desarrollo más pormenorizado y exhaustivo de la materia, acompañados de figuras que ilustran y facilitan la asimilación de la información que contienen, lo que la convierte en una obra de referencia seria y rigurosa desde el punto de vista científico. Dos han sido las razones que han impulsado su elaboración: una, incorporar los avances acaecidos en la última década en esta disciplina; dos, dar respuesta a las necesidades académicas surgidas como consecuencia de los cambios producidos en los planes de estudio universitarios. La obra consta de doce capítulos, que abordan aspectos generales y específicos relativos al plano fónico de la lengua, y de un apéndice orientado a la transcripción fonética.