PHONOLOGY

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Phonology

Philip Carr

Macmillan Education

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St. Martin's Press, Inc., 175 Fifth Avenue,
New York, N.Y. 10010

First published in the United States of America in 1993

ISBN 978-0-333-51908-0 ISBN 978-1-349-22849-2 (eBook)
DOI 10.1007/978-1-349-22849-2

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Carr, Philip, 1953–

Phonology / Philip Carr.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and indexes.

ISBN 978-0-312-10102-2 (cloth)—ISBN 978-0-312-10357-6 (paper)

1. Grammar, Comparative and general—Phonology. I. Title.

P217.C35 1993

414—dc20

93—1627

CIP

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EN3 7TB, England.

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For Rab, Tam and Sheila

Preface

To the Student

This book is a beginners' introduction to phonology, and concentrates mostly on what is known as generative phonology. It assumes that the reader has taken a course in elementary articulatory phonetics, but it assumes no knowledge whatsoever of phonology. A revision chapter on phonetic terminology and a chart of the symbols which constitute the International Phonetic Alphabet are included for reference, or for those who need to brush up on the subject. It is hoped that the present textbook will allow students to move on to more advanced textbooks, such as Kenstowicz and Kisseberth (1979), and also to the source literature on the subject. The reader should also consult Hyman (1975) for further details and issues in standard generative phonology, Lass (1984a) for a broader view of phonology (beyond generative work), and Anderson (1985) for a historical perspective on twentieth century phonology. Syntheses and surveys of current theoretical work, such as Goldsmith (1990) and Durand (1990), as well as the literature itself, should also be approachable after reading Chapters 8–11.

The book begins with exercises within and at the end of chapters, many of which should prove easy for students who take naturally to linguistic analysis, and tractable for those who do not. After the first few chapters, there are fewer, and these are at the end of chapters. (Some sample answers are given at the end of the book.) For most students, it would be rather pointless to attempt reading the early chapters without simultaneously doing the exercises; the exercises in the later chapters are intended to help students to think about the theories discussed by focussing their attention on particular analyses. It is important for students to retain all their exercise work, since earlier exercises may be referred back to, or reworked, at a later stage.

The following abbreviations are used in exercises and examples: 'pl.' (plural), 'sg.' (singular), 1PS, 2PS, 3PS (1st, 2nd and 3rd person singular); nom. (nominative), acc. (accusative), gen. (genitive), masc. (masculine), fem. (feminine).

To the Teacher

This book is an attempt at a solution to a problem. The problem is this: how to introduce generative phonology, without trivialising the subject, within the confines of a ten-week course, to students who major in subjects other

than linguistics, and thus may not take their study of the subject any further. The problem is less acute when those other subjects require similar sorts of thinking, but when the majority of students have, for several years, spent the bulk of their time following courses requiring quite different sorts of thinking, difficulties arise. In England (much less so in the US and in the continental system, which also survives in Scotland), these difficulties are in large part a consequence of the fact that many such students have been educated in the English 'narrow specialism' tradition, which has tended to bolster the 'two cultures' arts/science divide. These students often tend to view themselves as 'arts types' rather than 'science types'; for many of them, the mere sight of diagrams in a book can prove anathema. The subject therefore needs to be introduced in as gentle a way as possible, with much exemplification, and exercises which do not throw the student in at the deep end. Thereafter, more complex problems can be investigated, and the student can then find a way into the subject. The problem is a challenging one, and in attempting to resolve it, one can go some way towards undermining the rather limiting 'two cultures' division, which fails so clearly to accommodate the discipline of linguistics. While there are excellent textbook introductions to standard generative phonology, such as Kenstowicz and Kisseberth (1979), and impressive surveys of current theory, such as Goldsmith (1990), they are simply too detailed to be used on such a course, given the time available and the sorts of student in attendance.

The book aims to introduce standard generative phonology in a relatively simple way in Chapters 1–6, and then, in Chapters 7–11, to introduce the student to more recent work in phonological theory. Since the text thus falls into two parts, it is possible to teach just the first six or seven chapters if time is short; the last chapters may then be used as an introduction to a more advanced course, for which a textbook on current work, and the literature itself, may be used. No attempt is made to present alternative, non-generative, approaches to phonology: new students have enough trouble trying to get the hang of one framework without having to cope with several; other approaches can be tackled once the generative approach is familiar. This is not to say that a non-critical attitude to generative work is fostered; analyses are often shown to be revisable, competing generative theories are discussed, and the interplay of data and theory is stressed.

It is best if students have seminars/tutorials in which to discuss the exercises in each chapter before proceeding to the next, but the exercises should be tractable even if this is not possible; some sample answers are given at the end of the book.

Acknowledgements

I am grateful to Mike Davenport, Gerry Docherty and Ken Lodge for reading and commenting on several draft chapters. The following people kindly helped with the languages indicated: Inès Brulard (French), Mike Pincombe (Hungarian), Charles Prescott (Russian), Menekşe Suphi (Turkish) and Sylvana Warth (Russian and Polish). My thanks to all of them. I am grateful to Noël Burton-Roberts for persuading me to stop complaining about not having the right textbook for the course, and to have a go at writing it myself. He was also of great assistance as Series Editor: I am indebted to him for his detailed comments and discussion on many chapters. I thank two sets of second-year students at Newcastle for acting as guinea-pigs; in particular, I am grateful to John Bell and Charles Prescott for their intelligent responses. Many thanks to Rowena Bryson, who committed a large chunk of text to disk with characteristic grace and good humour.

One forever owes a debt to one's teachers. I thank those who taught me phonetics and phonology in the Linguistics Department at Edinburgh University: Ron Asher, Gill Brown, Karen Currie, Jody Higgs, Sandy Hutcheson, Alan Kemp, Roger Lass, John Laver and Betsy Uldall. John Anderson and Heinz Giegerich of the English Language Department at Edinburgh taught me Dependency and Metrical Phonology, respectively: I hope they will forgive me for any misrepresentation of those subjects which may appear in this book. I also hope that Ron Asher and Gill Brown will forgive me for any liberties which I may (inadvertently) have taken with their works, on Tamil and Lumasaaba, respectively. My greatest debt is to Roger Lass, who I was fortunate to have as a teacher and supervisor just prior to his departure from Edinburgh. I thank him for presenting phonology in such a fresh and stimulating way, and for continuing to do so.

At several stages during the writing of this textbook, Inès Brulard has put up with my incursions upon her personal computer, desk space and library card, for which she deserves praise, gratitude and a bottle of Château Monbousquet 1982.