

LOST IN LINGUISTICS.

A GUIDE TO THE CURRENT LANDSCAPE OF LINGUISTIC THEORY

PHONOLOGY

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The phonology section of the course will consist of three sections, split over the two two-hour sessions. The first section is an overview of the development of phonology and the current variety of theoretical positions found in the discipline, with a focus on segmental phonology. The second and third sections focus on two phenomena which have generated considerable discussion within and between phonological frameworks. These phenomena have been used to argue that particular phonological frameworks must be ‘right’ and others must be ‘wrong’. By considering these phenomena we will see what (certain) phonologists consider to be crucial pieces of data, and investigate the extent to which the range of phonological frameworks that currently exist make different predictions about how phonology should work, and what kinds of phonological phenomena should be common in the languages of the world. The suggested reading for the three sections is listed below; several books are listed there, but there is no expectation that anyone should read all of these books – judicious consultation of them would be helpful, however.

Section 1: Phonology – what is it and where did it come from?

The course will assume some understanding of what counts as a phonological issue and of the types of data considered in phonology. (I list some recommendable basic textbooks here if you need to brush up on this.) During the first section of the course, we will consider the development of phonology, from its early stages when it was inseparable from phonetics, to its split from phonetics in the twentieth century, to the development of the range of frameworks that exist today. Some of these frameworks (often called ‘formal phonology’) continue the split from phonetics and see the need for abstract and autonomous phonological structure, while others (sometimes called ‘usage-based phonology’) advocate a return to phonetics, and aim to provide reductionist explanations for phonological generalisations from other fields.

- Gussenhoven, C. & Jacobs, H. (1998/2005) *Understanding Phonology*. London: Arnold. (A good general introduction to phonology, covering basic generalisations and some phonological frameworks.)
- Carr, P. (1993) *Phonology*. London: Macmillan. (Now somewhat outdated as an introduction to phonology, but it takes a historical approach, and sets out the development of phonological theory well.)
- Anderson, S. (1985) *Phonology in the Twentieth Century*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. (An excellent text on the history of phonology, although it stops in the 1980s.)
- Scheer, T. (2011) ‘Aspects of the development of generative phonology’. In Botma, B., Kula, K. & Nasukawa, K. (eds.) *The Continuum Companion to Phonology*. London: Continuum, 397-446. (A recent, detailed discussion of the development of many strands of formal phonology.)

Bybee, J. (2001) *Phonology and Language Use*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (A well-known exposition of many aspects of usage-based phonology; the first few chapters, especially, might be worth consulting.)

Section 2: Opacity – derivational depth and process ordering.

Formally-minded phonological frameworks recognise that certain phonological phenomena can be opaque – that is, they are not fully apparent in the simple generalisations that can be made about the surface distribution of phonological entities. Phonetically-oriented approaches tend to deny that opacity exists, but this means that such frameworks cannot account for many generalisations which seem to be very regular. The existence of various types of opacity has been used in argumentation between formal frameworks, especially in the comparison of rule-based models and constraint-based approaches, such as Optimality Theory.

Vaux, B. (2008) ‘Why the phonological component must be serial and rule-based’ In Vaux, B. & Nevins, A. (eds.) *Rules, Constraints, and Phonological Phenomena*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 20-60. (A general attack on Optimality Theory, including arguments from opacity.)

Baković, E. (2007) ‘A revised typology of opaque generalisations’ *Phonology* 24, 217-259. (A stunning consideration of opacity in general, and the extent to which it can be used to argue in favour of different models of phonology.)

Section 3: Frequency effects – is phonology derived from stored words?

Usage-based approaches see quite some importance in the recognition of frequency effects – that phonological phenomena, such as reduction or regularisation do not affect all occurrences of the relevant phonological entities equally, with some affecting more frequent words first, and others less frequent words first. Such approaches argue that the existence of phonological frequency effects means that formal approaches must be fundamentally mistaken in assuming that phonology deals with underlying and surface structures, which are related to each other in a derivation, because we need to refer to the relative frequency of *words*. Formally-minded phonologists have argued back that frequency effects are not found where usage-based approaches predict that they should be, or that they are, in fact, non-phonological phenomena.

Bybee, J. (2002) ‘Word frequency and context of use in the lexical diffusion of phonetically conditioned sound change’ *Language Variation and Change* 14, 261-290. (One of Bybee’s discussions of frequency effects; there is also discussion in Bybee, 2001, listed above.)

Phillips, B. (2006) *Word Frequency and Lexical Diffusion*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. (A book length study - well worth consulting.)

Dinkin, A. (2008) ‘The Real Effect of Word Frequency on Phonetic Variation’ *Penn Working Papers in Linguistics* 14, 97–106. (An ‘attack’ on frequency effects, arguing that they have been over-interpreted.)

Clark, L. & Watson, K. (to appear) ‘Testing claims of a usage-based phonology with Liverpool English t-to-r.’ To appear in *English Language and Linguistics*. (A piece which shows that frequency effects can be more complicated than standard usage-based approaches predict - the paper’s final section *tries* to find a way out of this which is compatible with a usage-based approach)