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Preface

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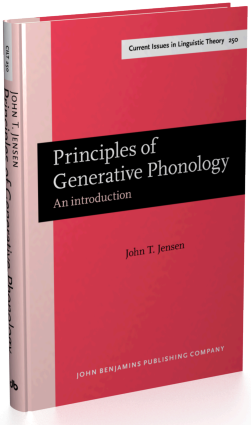

Pages ix–xii of
Principles of Generative Phonology: An introduction
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Preface

Principles of Generative Phonology is intended as a basic, thorough introduction to contemporary phonological theory and practice. While the theory is in a constant state of revision and refinement, it is not possible to appreciate recent developments or follow the argumentation involved without a firm foundation in the theory of distinctive features, formal notations for phonological rules, and the theory of rule ordering. In the first six chapters I have essentially followed the theory of *SPE* (Chomsky & Halle 1968) in discussing these concepts, with the exception that I use iterative rules rather than *SPE*'s simultaneous rule schemata for rules with multiple effects, as in vowel harmony.

The first chapter is a review of phonetics. An understanding of phonetics is essential for the study of phonology. The reader unacquainted with phonetics is advised to supplement this chapter with a textbook devoted to the subject, such as MacKay (1987). This chapter also introduces the phonetic symbols used throughout the book, in that I do not strictly follow IPA conventions, for reasons detailed there.

Chapter 2 discusses contrast and distribution, with emphasis on rules as the mechanism for describing distributions. The terms *basic, underlying segment,* and *phoneme* are used more or less interchangeably for the segment that appears in underlying representations at this stage, but problems with the concept of a phoneme as a group of phonetically similar sounds in complementary distribution (or free variation) are also discussed. In anticipation of the discussion of distinctive features, the notion of pattern congruity is also introduced here.

Chapter 3 introduces distinctive features, natural classes, and redundancy. I have adopted strictly binary features, since there does not appear to be any consensus on a replacement set of unary or multivalued features or some combination of these. For similar reasons I have excluded feature geometry, preferring standard unordered feature matrices as the clearest presentation of these concepts at this stage.

Chapter 4 builds on the concept of rules from chapter 2, showing how rules of the same type account for phonological alternations, and introduces additional rule writing conventions.

Chapter 5 demonstrates the use of ordering of rules to achieve maximum generalization, starting with examples of two or three rules and advancing to the nine rules of Yawelmani discussed in Kenstowicz & Kisseberth (1979).

Chapter 6 discusses abstractness and the motivation for abstract underlying representations, as well as the limitations on abstractness.

Chapter 7 discusses some post-*SPE* developments, including autosegmental phonology, metrical and prosodic phonology, underspecification theory, and lexical phonology.

For a number of reasons I have decided not to include Optimality Theory, despite its current popularity. One reason is that it does not really fall under the head of principles of generative phonology, being something of a departure from these principles in rejecting derivations with ordered rules. Second, Optimality Theory has achieved far more success in morphology than in phonology. It has made significant headway in describing infixation and reduplication without resort to unconstrained morphological processes, but encounters difficulties in the description of the opaque phonological interactions that occur constantly in languages and that are most convincingly treated in terms of ordered rules. In order to treat basic principles thoroughly I have thought it best to leave more advanced topics for others to tackle. Indeed there are a number of introductions to Optimality Theory that have recently become available, such as Archangeli & Langendoen (1997) and Kager (1999). Such works are best tackled after mastery has been achieved over the basic ideas underlying generative phonology.

It is my pleasant duty to thank the many colleagues and students who have read, used, and worked with this material in various capacities and provided suggestions for improvement. I am sure that I will regret not having taken their advice on certain matters, but in other cases their input has resulted in significant improvements. Kiyan Azarbar provided extensive comments on the entire manuscript, helped with the spectrograms in chapter 1, and also helped with the Farsi examples. Jon Wood also helped with the spectrograms, providing the graphic versions. Margaret Stong-Jensen read through several versions and offered suggestions at each stage. Leigh-Anne Webster, Natasha Le Blanc, Lisa DiDomenico, Michelle Charette, and Kerry Dockstader made numerous suggestions for improvement and helped with the exercises. Mim Pearse provided the drawings used to illustrate types of rule interaction in

chapter 5. Rebecca Silvert read through the entire manuscript in its last stages and helped tremendously with the preparation of the final version. Finally, I am grateful to Konrad Koerner, the editor of the series, and Ms Anke de Looper of Benjamins, for their invaluable assistance. Any remaining errors and inconsistencies have been left as an exercise for the attentive reader to discover.