

## Preface

 <https://doi.org/10.1075/cilt.43.04pre>

Pages xix–xxi of

### **The Theory of Neutralization and the Archiphoneme in Functional Phonology**

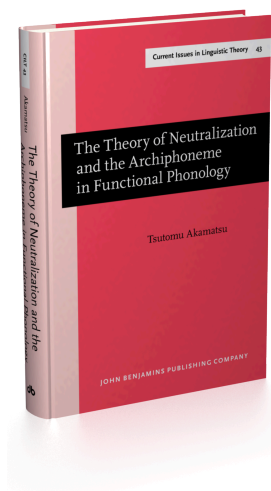
**Tsutomu Akamatsu**

[*Current Issues in Linguistic Theory*, 43] 1988. xxi, 533 pp.

© John Benjamins Publishing Company

This electronic file may not be altered in any way. For any reuse of this material written permission should be obtained from the publishers or through the Copyright Clearance Center (for USA: [www.copyright.com](http://www.copyright.com)).

For further information, please contact [rights@benjamins.nl](mailto:rights@benjamins.nl) or consult our website at [benjamins.com/rights](http://benjamins.com/rights)



## PREFACE

This book represents an attempt to propose a maximally functionalist theory of neutralization and the archiphoneme. I shall review and submit to critical discussion various notions such as 'phonological opposition', 'relevant feature', 'archiphoneme representative', 'mark', 'marked phoneme' and 'unmarked phoneme' as well as, of course, 'neutralization' and 'archiphoneme' themselves, that are involved in the theory of neutralization and the archiphoneme as traditionally expounded by functionalists, i.e. Pragueans (Trubetzkoy et al.) and neo-Pragueans (Martinet et al.).<sup>1</sup> The objective of my critical discussions of these notions consists in sharpening their defining characteristics so that they may be optimally congruous with the principles of functional phonology. The theoretical framework within which this book has been written is what is known as 'functional and structural linguistics', and those scholars whose works are discussed are deliberately limited to functionalists in principle as distinct from those whom I shall refer to as non-functionalists. It is hoped that there will emerge, at the end of this book, a picture of a maximally functionalist theory of neutralization and the archiphoneme.

It would be useful to the reader to know, already at this early stage of the book, my attitudes to the above-mentioned notions and some of the other notions which are traditionally employed in the theory of neutralization and the archiphoneme. My attitudes to these notions are immediately clarified in what follows. As for the notions themselves, I shall discuss them in detail as I go along in this book.

I vigorously maintain the notions of 'neutralization' and 'archiphoneme', which I consider as being undissociable from each other. I also maintain that neutralization should not be confused with defective distribution or with syncretism not only in our understanding of it but also in our presentation of it.

Relevant features, a sum of which constitutes a phoneme or an archiphoneme, should not be confused with distinctive features à la Jakob-

son or à la generative phonology.

I consider important the distinction between a phonic opposition<sup>2</sup> and a phonological opposition. It is my view that neutralization may be undergone by a phonological opposition, but not by a phonic opposition. The above-mentioned distinction will further be considered in connection with a well-known Trubetzkoyan distinction between a privative opposition, a gradual opposition and an equipollent opposition, with which, however, I myself do not operate, and which I could only accept as pertaining to a phonic opposition but not as pertaining to a phonological opposition. I shall also discuss another well-known Trubetzkoyan distinction, that between a bilateral opposition and a multilateral opposition, which I shall reject in favour of the distinction between what I propose to call an exclusive opposition and a non-exclusive opposition. A neutralizable opposition is bound to be an exclusive opposition, though an exclusive opposition is not necessarily neutralizable. I thoroughly approve of the distinction between a neutralizable opposition and a non-neutralizable (i.e. constant) opposition.

The archiphoneme is fully recognized as *the* distinctive unit that occurs in the position of neutralization. The archiphoneme is, in my considered opinion, associated exclusively not only with a neutralizable (and hence) exclusive opposition but also with the position of neutralization; it is not associated with the position of relevance where a neutralizable opposition is operative. What many other functionalists consider also as the archiphoneme in connection with a non-neutralizable exclusive opposition is not recognized by me as the archiphoneme but as what I propose to call the exclusive common base, which is not a phonological but a logical entity. (I also talk about the non-exclusive common base in connection with a non-exclusive opposition.)

The notion of 'archiphoneme representative', which is discussed in detail as to its phonic or phonological status and its justification or otherwise in the theory of neutralization and the archiphoneme, is firmly rejected as both unnecessary and pernicious since its admittance will result in the *de facto* non-recognition of the archiphoneme.

The notion of 'mark', which is, in most functionalists' analyses, frequently equated to that of 'relevant feature', is rejected in a maximally functionalist theory of neutralization and the archiphoneme. So are the notions of 'marked phoneme' and 'unmarked phoneme'. My negative attitude to the notions of 'mark', 'marked phoneme' and 'unmarked phoneme' is closely linked to my positive attitude to what I call the 'func-

tional principle of the relevant feature' whereby I mean that no relevant feature is conceivable without its being opposed to another or other relevant features in a given phonological system.

The above indication of my stances to some of the notions traditionally employed in the theory of neutralization and the archiphoneme, whilst not meant to be exhaustive, will already give the reader some idea of such a maximally functionalist theory of neutralization and the archiphoneme as I propose and practise and will also prepare him for my detailed discussion to follow in this book.