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***THE PHONOLOGY OF WELSH* by S.J. HANNAHS.  
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The book consists of seven chapters supplemented with a foreword and two indexes. It faces the challenges of Modern Welsh phonology through the optic of Optimality Theory.

Chapter one is a general introduction where goals of the book are put forward. On the very first page of the main text, the author proposes that phonology be understood as a “relatively unitary abstract system underlying the various dialects of a language”. Importantly, he emphasises the need to keep the synchronic and diachronic phonologies apart. The vantage point is that active phonological processes are productive and learnable to a large extent in the process of natural first language acquisition.

The second chapter offers a summary of the Welsh sound inventory and the transcriptional conventions. Interestingly, Hannahs recognises [tʃ] and [dʒ] as affricates, which may be considered slightly too precipitate. Firstly, they are relatively rare in the system and secondly, Griffen (1974, 1997) observes that they behave like single consonants.

Central to the analysis of the prosodic structure of Welsh, which is presented in chapter three, is the idea that a Welsh word is minimally bimoraic. This assumption helps explain why long vowels are found in open monosyllables (e.g. [ti:] *tŷ* ‘house’, [da:] *da* ‘good’, [fa:] *ffa* ‘beans’) and those closed with most single consonants (e.g. [si:ð] *sudd* ‘juice’, [di:n] *dyn* ‘man’, [ja:χ] *iach* ‘healthy’).

The shortness of vowels before consonant clusters and some single consonants, is accounted by those codas being moraic, for a long vowel and a moraic coda would yield a trimoraic monosyllable. The chapter further deals with consonant

clustering, gemination and stress placement, which revolve around the bimoraic minimal word and the trochaic foot structure.

Chapters four and five provide theoretical accounts of processes taking place in Welsh. Although analyses are presented from a phonological point of view, the author observes that vowel mutation, vowel affection and h-deletion are not entirely regular and should be approached cautiously. The process of antepenultimate deletion, which is discussed in chapter five, requires further insight. The author claims that the antepenultimate syllable in a trisyllabic word is linked directly to the prosodic word, which is why it can be deleted without an intervention in the foot structure (e.g. [əsgol] > [sgoljon] *ysgol* > *ysgolion* ‘school > pl.’ or [kupan] > [paned] *cwpan* > *cwpanaid* ‘cup > cupful’). However, the analysis works only if the initial syllable is deleted as a whole. Fynes-Clinton (1913) lists alternations whereby the antepenultimate vowel is done away with leaving the preceding consonant intact (e.g. [super] > [spera] *swper* > *swperau* ‘supper > pl.’ or [kalon] > [klondid] *calon* > *calondid* ‘hearth > cheering’). Such alternations are ignored in the book and they call for a refinement of the analysis of antepenultimate deletion.

In his endeavour to describe the regularities marshalling the sound changes known as the initial consonant mutations in chapter six, Hannahs draws a clear line between the phonology of Modern Welsh and that of its ancestor languages.

Chapter seven deals with two important processes, namely positional consonant devoicing called provection, and sound changes caused by concatenation. Although the chapter is dubbed “remaining issues...”, the phenomena discussed there are of no lesser importance.

To conclude, not only is *The Phonology of Welsh* a position worthwhile for researchers interested in Celtic languages but also for linguists from a variety of theoretical backgrounds. The data are clearly presented and categorised, while the analyses are introduced and justified with scholarly care and are accessible to a reader with even minimal understanding of the adopted theory. Compared to the only book-length publication on Welsh phonology, namely the collection of papers edited by Ball and Jones (1984), it is the first coherent and monolithic volume on the subject. However, the book fails to reflect the dialectal variety of the language, which is collectively analysed under the artificial umbrella of a standard called modern colloquial Welsh. The analysis would definitely have benefited from including phonological differences at least between north and south, and from juxtaposing phonological processes with precise sound inventories of the varieties in which they occur.

## References

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