

**Arvo Eek, Eesti keele foneetika I, [Tallinn], TTÜ Kirjastus, 2008. 192 pp.**

When part I of "Eesti keele foneetika" (Estonian Phonetics) by Arvo Eek appeared in 2008, more than half a century had passed since the last textbook on Estonian phonetics, (written by Paul Ariste) was published in Estonia for Estonian speaking readers. Arvo Eek's book therefore meets a clear need and has been eagerly anticipated by both teachers and researchers in the field. It was well worth waiting for. Although — as the author points out — a large part of Estonian phonetics still remains to be studied, the result presented by Arvo Eek are impressive.

The book is of primary interest to researchers, teachers and students, but may even be rewarding for readers who are not experts in the field. Even though Arvo Eek's reasoning may sometimes be difficult for non-phoneticians, he usually gives concrete examples and/or figures that help to clarify his points.

As the author mentions in the preface, the data presented in the book are based mainly on the research he himself carried out in the last 40 years, but partly also on the results of colleagues in and outside Estonia during the past half century. Arvo Eek stresses the fact that Estonian phonetics rests on linguistic ground, and that the description of the Estonian sound system has phonological units as their points of departure. The present book is the first of three and contains an introduction and a study of vowels. In the second book, consonants will be described. A third volume will be dedicated to prosody.

The introduction acquaints the reader with the fundamentals of speech considered as both a system and a process, such as, for example, the relation between thought and speech or between meaning and form. The linguistic subsystems morphology and phonology are described and discussed.

A special section is dedicated to the relation between phonetics and phonology. Their mutual significance is discussed: the author's conclusion is that they are

inseparable. Arvo Eek also discusses some of the shortcomings of phonological standard systems. This may encourage readers to think about the problems and maybe even try to find their own solutions.

The main part of the book contains a study of vowels, their articulation, acoustics and perception. Vowel systems and different techniques used for the description of vowel sounds are thoroughly described and discussed. The main interest is directed toward the vowels and diphthongs of standard Estonian. In addition to that, a large part of the text is dedicated to a careful description and many examples of the vowels of different Estonian dialects. Moreover, descriptions of sound change and matters concerning quantity are included. Different views on matters like, for example, the number of phonemes in Estonian or the nature of diphthongs are discussed.

Also the theory and practice coarticulation — insofar as it concerns vowels — is discussed and exemplified with figures and spectrograms.

Arvo Eek's book can be warmly recommended, both as a textbook for university courses in phonetics and as a reference book for researchers. The fact in the book can — as far as I can judge — be depended upon. The list of references at the end of the book is impressive (20 pages!). This is, at least in part, due to the author's habit of not only expressing his own opinions on different subjects, but reporting also the viewpoints of other researchers, discussing them and thus giving his readers the possibility of deciding for themselves.

The professional terms appearing for the first time in the text are presented in bold style. This is a great help for the reader. However, the terms are usually given only in Estonian, with the exception of the anatomical terms for speech organs where the corresponding Latin names are added. With very few exceptions, no English terms are given. This

is a serious shortcoming, because today the largest part of scientific papers are written in English, and it is absolutely necessary for a researcher who wants to publish his or her work in an international paper to know the exact English term which corresponds to the given Estonian one. It is also indispensable for a student of phonetics to be able to understand international scientific papers in their field. For a new edition, I would

therefore strongly recommend the addition of an Estonian-English vocabulary including all the terms presented in bold style throughout the book.

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