

# Sound base of speech communication: phonetic and phonological description of speech

SKARNITZL, R., ŠTURM, P., & VOLÍN, J. (2016). *Zvuková báze řečové komunikace: fonetický a fonologický popis řeči*. Praha: Karolinum. ISBN 978-80-246-3272-8.

(book review)

**Reviewed by Lucie Šebková**

„Phonics is an interdisciplinary field that applies findings of other scientific branches in its research, and the results of phonetic research can be beneficial to these branches“, which is followed and presented in the publication. The text is to revise book overlapping to the field of speech therapy and surdopedia.

The publication brings a unique perspective on articulation, since it does not only acquaint the reader with the phonetic and phonological description of the language, but it also analyzes prosodic speech factors. You can hardly find a complete and detailed description of prosodic factors in the Czech literature, moreover, in terms of acoustics and psychoacoustics. From the perspective of contemporary speech therapy, which views its subject in the context of the pragmalinguistic trend which highlights the pragmatic level of communication, the chapters focusing on prosodic speech factors are very topical. The emphasis is put on the accent and speech rhythm, melody of speech, its physiological essence, perception and function. A melodic inventory of the Czech language is characterized as well.

The first chapter explains the basic sub-disciplines of phonetics and a relationship of phonetics and phonology in a historical context. According to the authors using of articulation phonetics and phonology can be found in speech therapy. The term speech therapy was probably coined before the literal translation of the English ‘speech therapy’.

Another chapter of the book is devoted to speech production in the anatomical and physiological description. Phonation system is simplified, one example may be the statement that “phonation system creates audible oscillations, ie sound” from the air coming from the lungs. I would recommend this part more itemize since the current theory on the origin of the voice is more complicated and is based on the histological structure of the vocal cords which consist of more than two parts. Here

we will also find terminological inaccuracies resulting from literal translation. For example: "The corners of the mouth are pulled up by the facial muscle, ie. the muscle of laughter." It is not a facial muscle, but the mimic one.

The aim of the third chapter is to show the relationship between objective acoustic and subjective psychoacoustic dimensions. The use of the knowledge of psychological disciplines in the perception of speech and voice is a challenging area which attracts an interest not only of professionals from various fields but also of the general public.

From the perspective of a speech therapist I also consider the fourth and fifth chapter of the book informational beneficial and enriching, not only the last chapters dealing with the prosodic speech factors. The fourth chapter summarizes the previous facts and features articulation, acoustic and perceptive description of the individual sounds not only of the Czech language. Characteristics of the initiation mechanisms in the production of speech sounds are interesting. The fifth chapter defines assimilation as well as co-articulation which is often an ignored concept, no matter how influential it is on the production of speech.

The publication titled Sound base of speech communication: phonetic and phonological description of the language is unique because of its current and comparative view on the issue. In my opinion it is intended for professionals of a broad spectrum of expertise. The book is written in the professional language; therefore it can be used and read as a study text.

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