

were seen only as a philosophical text. It has also a considerable historiographical, literary and linguistic value. Han Fei was not only a great thinker, but also a skillful writer, and thanks to the careful and readable translation of Lukáš Zádřapa, readers of Czech are provided with a work that is definitely worth studying.

Comenius University in Bratislava, Department of East Asian Studies

Třísková, Hana. *Segmentální struktura čínské slabiky* [The Segmental Structure of Chinese Syllables]. Praha: Karolinum, 2012—440 pp. ISBN 978-80-246-2181-4.

Ľuboš Gajdoš

Second-language acquisition (often abbreviated to SLA or L2 acquisition) is the process of learning any foreign language in addition to one's mother tongue. The correct pronunciation is undoubtedly one of the most important and challenging tasks in terms of spoken language competence. The monograph under review deals with issues which every student of Chinese language is faced during the process of SLA, namely acquiring correct pronunciation. The syllabary of Standard Chinese (*pǔtōnghuà* 普通話) is a part of it, in other words, the book under review aims at the phonological and phonetic description of isolated syllables in Chinese without suprasegmental phonemes—tones.

The first thing that captures the attention of a potential reader is the size of the publication. It is very large consisting of more than 400 pages A4 format and is based on the author's Ph. D. thesis (2010). At the beginning, it should be noted that my professional focus as a reviewer is different (applied linguistics), so throughout the review it will be more the view of a university teacher who almost on a daily basis encounters the problems of correct pronunciation by teaching Chinese as a second language and, nevertheless, who is one among the target group of readers. This fact corresponds to the intention of the author, who at the beginning states (2) that the work has two dimensions—theoretical and practical. The monograph's content is well organized across the chapters. The monograph is divided into five parts:

- 1) Introduction;
- 2) Syllable;

- 3) Initial consonants;
 - 4) Finals;
 - 5) Inventory of Mandarin segmental syllables;
- plus Conclusion, English Abstract, and the Appendix.

In the first chapter, Hana Třísková presents the reader with a brief (but concise) overview of genetic, typological characteristics of the Chinese language, its periodization, development of written language, the most important phonetic systems, primarily from Western authors. The chapter is well organized and offering mostly traditional views (e.g. genetic classification, 14). The author also provides the reader with bibliographic references to the relevant literature on the subject. She explains the reasons why using *Hanyu pinyin* romanization system (2). From the teacher's point of view, there is an interesting note on the variability or the flexibility of phonetic definition of standard language. In this section, Hana Třísková refers to another yet disappointingly solved problem—the delimitation of words in the *Hanyu pinyin* transcription and its orthography (1.3.4). I hope that the author—an expert with extensive experience in phonetics and phonology—will in the future provide a study for possible solutions of *Hanyu pinyin* orthography issues, for example the writing of so-called auxiliary words (*zhùcí* 助詞), and other problems.

Chapter two is concerned with the syllable as a whole (not only the Chinese one, but also in terms of language universals), summarizes current research and presents different approaches to the topic. Most attention in this chapter is devoted to diphthongs and approximants. The chapter may also serve as an introduction to the topic of phonetics or phonology (46–57). The proportion of monosyllabic words in Chinese (60) mentioned in this section is, in my opinion, a little bit controversial. This is not a critique of the author, but rather the observation in view of the methodology used in the frequency dictionaries in general, particularly to the portion of spoken and written varieties (registers) used in the statistics. On pages 62 to 71, there are two linear phonological approaches to the analysis of syllables in Chinese—Western (decomposition into phonemes) and Chinese (decomposition into initials–medials–centrals–terminals). Non-linear models are presented from the pages 73 onwards and are finally compared in chapter 2.5.4. Very valuable from the perspective of language teaching is the chapter 2.5.5, which shows the advantages of the initial–final approach (83–85). The complexity of this book can be illustrated by the phenomena of the phonetic/phonological system, which are normally not included in works of this kind. At the initial stage of phonological acquisition (L2), I am often asked by students whether the palatalization *n-* [nj] in the syllable *ni* is similar to that found in Slovak (»ň«). Due to the lack of appropriate answers from

the language teaching material, I responded questions about it on a merely empirical basis. Here (on pp. 100 and 101), the author fully answers these questions. Detailed explanations of the zero initials phenomenon and resyllabification is also a part of this chapter (2.9). The author offers here her plausible interpretation of these problems.

In chapter 3, Trísková explains the phonetics of individual phonemes in Chinese (consonants, vocals). She also adds important notes to the articulation of aspirated affricates *c-*, *ch-*, *q-* with the elements *-i* and *-u* in words like /chi/, /qu/ (143), incorrect articulation (as voiced) of initials *b-*, *d-*, *g-*, *z-*, *zhi*. I highly appreciate that the author dedicated a separate subchapter (3.10.4 or 3.16) to the controversial initial consonant *r-* in which she presents the results of two Chinese linguists, namely Shi Feng and Liao Rongrong.¹ According to their research, the articulation of the consonant considerable varies between the poles of a voiced retroflex fricative [ʒ] and retroflex approximant [ɻ] which is true not only for different speakers but also for one and the same speaker.

Chapter 4 is the most extensive of the entire book and is divided into two parts—the finals (*yùnmǔ* 韻母) from the perspective of Chinese phonetics (211 to 275) and from phonology (278–345). In the phonetic part, the author presents in-depth confrontation of two main concepts of the analysis of finals, namely San Duanmu² vs. Dragunov & Dragunova³ (chapters 4.3 and 4.4, respectively). In general, it might be said that all chapters are accompanied by illustrations of the articulators making it thus more comprehensible to students.

In the following chapter (Inventory of Mandarin Segmental Syllables), the author describes the combinations of initials and finals in *putonghua*, explains blanks in the table of syllabary (355). At the end of this chapter, Trísková clarifies why there are different numbers of syllables in Chinese by various researches.

Usually, reviewers of scholarly publications do not pay too much attention to a book's appendix. For this monograph, however, it would be a shame, because it provides a valuable source of information, with explanations, namely on the syllabary with *Hanyu pinyin* romanization, the IPA phonetic transcription, supplemented with Chinese characters (368–383), a Czech-Chinese glossary of terms (384–407), illustration of the speech organs (409), a bibliography, etc.

- 1 Shi Feng 石峰 and Liao Rongrong 廖榮容, *Yuyin conggao* 語音叢稿 [Collected Papers on Phonology] (Beijing: Beijing yuyan xueyuan chubanshe, 1994).
- 2 San Duanmu, *The Phonology of Standard Chinese*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).
- 3 Aleksandr Aleksandrovich Dragunov and Ekaterina Nikolaevna Dragunova, »Struktura sloga v kitajskom nacional'nom jazyke« [The Structure of the Syllable in Standard Chinese], *Sovetskoe vostokovedenie* 1/1955, 57–74.

What are the positive aspects of the book that make it valuable? As already mentioned above, the book can be divided into two parts—theoretical and practical. I consider the practical part, which is usually the second half of each chapter, to be a very useful passage in which the author, based on her own prior research, proposes various solutions for the proper pronunciation with regards to the specifics of Czech language. An achievement of this work certainly is the analysis of the research results not only published in English and Chinese, but—what is often missing—also of research published in Russian.

Which are the shortcomings? It is not surprising that in such a voluminous monograph flaws can be found, e. g. in the Czech »Pozámka« instead of »Poznámka« (22), or in the *pinyin* romanization »guójī« instead of »guóji« (35), or in the wrong characters 北方方言 instead of 南方方言 (391). However, there is only a small number of such errors considering, in view of the size of the book.

Despite some blemishes occurring, the book provides a complex overview of the research on Chinese syllables. To write a book that has to reach a wide range of readers is never an easy task, and if the main goal of Hana Tříšková was »to provide a guide to university teachers and students«, I must state that she has succeeded. Although the information here may be found in other works too, yet, to my knowledge, in such a detailed form that makes accessible a great number of sources, this monograph is quite unique. It is evident that the author here utilizes several years of research on Chinese phonetics and phonology, and it would take years to collect a similar amount of relevant material. Finally, I may warmly recommend this monograph to all Chinese language teachers, as well as to students who wish to understand better the sound level of Chinese language.

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