

ALMEIDA, Manuel (1999). *Tiempo y ritmo en el español canario: un estudio acústico*. Frankfurt - Madrid: Vervuert - Iberoamericana. 93p. ISBN 3-89354-778-9 (Frankfurt) & 84-95107-29-5 (Madrid) (e-mail: almeida@arrakis.es).

Notice by Antonio Pamies (*Universidad de Granada*)

Although the title could perhaps make us think of a dialectological work, this book is a very well documented essay on the prosodic features of timing and rhythm in speech and language, containing a critical and lucid discussion of the state of the art on theories as well as a discussion about isochrony and alternance, contrasted with an important experimental work of the author's, a specialist in Phonetics and Sociolinguistics at the University of La Laguna (Tenerife). The author has undertaken a wide analysis of the problem, isolating each factor that can have an influence on duration patterns in Spanish with speakers from the Canary Islands, studying the behaviour of each of these factors in every kind of vowel (front vs. back, high vs. low, in open syllables vs. closed syllables, before voiced vs. voiceless consonants, before labial vs. dental, palatal or velar consonant, before plosive vs. fricative or approximant consonant, according to presence/ absence of stress, according to its position in word and sentence).. He also tries to measure the influence of each factor on vowel duration (with detailed statistic treatment of the obtained acoustic data: averages, typical deviations, linear regression tests, Anova and so on for each analysed factor) that are then also applied to the main problem: the proportions between syllables, feet, stress clash, or any possible relevant feature of speech rhythm. The results reflect general properties of Spanish, though they were extracted only from the performances of Canarian speakers. The author considers his results to be contrary to any kind of isochrony, and rather favourable to alternance theories. Such conclusions are actually based on a very serious and careful work. It must be said, nevertheless, that the alternance hypotheses cannot be verified by duration measures nor by other experimental approaches as clearly and directly as isochronic ones, because the correlation between a given acoustic value and the concept of "weak" and "strong" is much more difficult to establish. Thus, the relation between alternance and duration values is only indirect, since it depends on the concept of stress hierarchy and relative saliency, whose relation with time is more complex and also more controversial.