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Phonetics and phonology closer as never before? From Generative to Laboratory Phonology

The main objective of this study is to systematically examine the intricate relationship between phonetics and phonology within prominent linguistic theories and frameworks, spanning from the inception of Generative Phonology (SPE) to the contemporary paradigm of Laboratory Phonology. This analysis showed that the role of phonetics has been varied significantly across theories, ranging from its function in providing empirical support (e.g. for feature formulation) to assuming a central role in elucidating phonological phenomena.

Predominantly, theories lacking an experimental focus gravitated towards computational orientations, a trend notably initiated by Generative Phonology (GP) and continued to a different extent in its offspring theories (with still some exceptions). The pursuit of universals, such as phonological features, and the development of computational algorithms on the one hand, and the resignation on detailed experimental evidence on the other, was in accordance with the foundational assumptions of these theories. Notably, it seems that the imperative for more rigorous experimental inquiry, which began to take root with Natural Phonology, found its expression in Prosodic Phonology and is currently successfully carried on in Laboratory Phonology.