Alan Cruttenden (ed.), *Gimson's Pronunciation of English*, 8th edition.
London and New York: Routledge, 2014, pp. xxvi + 381.

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INTRODUCTION

In April 2014, some six years after the publication of the previous edition, a new instalment came out of what must be, deservedly, the most well-known work of its kind. The first edition of this textbook, which was meant to serve as a general introduction to the subject of English phonetics, was written in 1962 by A. C. Gimson, Professor of Phonetics at University College London (the original title was *Introduction to the Pronunciation of English*). The following three editions were also written by the original author (the second was published in 1970, the third in 1980, and the fourth in 1989, four years after Gimson's death in 1985). The first edition under the custodianship of Alan Cruttenden, currently the Emeritus Professor of Phonetics, University of Manchester and Fellow of the Phonetics Laboratory, University of Oxford, the fifth edition in total, came out in 1994, and another two revised and updated editions appeared in 2001 (6th) and 2008 (7th). According to Cruttenden, he gradually changed this work "from being primarily a textbook to being a reference book" (2014: xvi). Indeed, if we compare it to e.g. *Practical Phonetics and Phonology* by Collins and Mees (the third edition of which also came out fairly recently), we can see that it boasts a noticeably longer list of references as well as a greater total length, but that it completely lacks activities and exercises aimed at students.

BOOK STRUCTURE

The general structure of the book remains largely the same as before. Nonetheless we will briefly outline it here, before proceeding to talk about the main changes introduced in this edition.

The four major sections of the book comprise a total of thirteen chapters. Part I, some fifty pages long, introduces the main relevant concepts from linguistics and acoustic and articulatory phonetics (e.g. phonetics vs. phonemics, voicing, fundamental frequency, distinctive features, allophones, sonority, cardinal vowels, vowel formants etc.), and lists the main organs of speech. It also introduces the IPA chart and discusses various manners and places of articulation, as well as frequently referring to the MRI video clips available on the accompanying website. The chapter titles are 1. Introduction, 2. Production of speech: physiological aspect, 3. The sounds of speech: the acoustic and

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auditory aspects, 4. The description and classification of speech sounds and 5. Sounds in language.

Part II is by far the largest section (it makes up over half the total length of the book). It begins (Chapters 6 and 7) by providing a brief view of the main sound changes that took place in English over the past fifteen centuries (we are given an outline of Old English, Middle English and Early Modern English sound systems). It proceeds to talk about the standard British pronunciation, its formation, and various names and labels that have been attached to it, as well as its main subtypes. We are then briefly introduced to some other major varieties of English (General American, Standard Scottish English, General Northern English, Estuary English, Multicultural London English and the Englishes of Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and the Caribbean) and reminded of the ways varieties can differ from one another in terms of pronunciation (systemic, distributional, lexical and realisational differences).

The meat of this section (Chapters 8 and 9) is the detailed description of each individual phoneme of the General British variety of English, and every one of them is given the following treatment: the main historical origins of the sound and the main spellings associated with it; examples of words illustrating the main allophonic variants; an articulatory description; the position on the vowel chart alongside the main regional variants when it comes to vowels, and palatograms and mouth cross sections when it comes to consonants; a description of some of the difficulties encountered by foreign learners; references to MRI videos (available on the website) of native speakers producing words with the given sound.

Part III deals mostly with connected speech. Its first chapter (Ch. 10, Words) is devoted to word accent, primary and secondary stress, and stress in compounds, but it also covers some key phonotactic issues. The next chapter (Ch. 11, Connected speech) deals with the rhythm and stress of sentences, weak forms, as well as the basics of English intonation. Finally, Chapter 12 (Words in connected speech), discusses how the citation forms of words change in connected speech (i.e. processes like elision, assimilation etc.).

It is worth noting that each of the chapters in Parts II and III ends with a short subsection titled "Advice to foreign learners". This is in keeping with the status of the book as a notable EFL reference book, which is further underscored by its last section, Part IV, Language Teaching and Learning.

Though shortest of the four, this section provides an insightful discussion of the main issues pertaining to the teaching of English pronunciation. It tries to answer questions such as "What type of pronunciation is to be taken as a model?", "How does the model of pronunciation used as a target differ from that described in the earlier chapters of this book?" and "What teaching methods should be used in the teaching of the various sounds?". Again, stressing the proportion of EFL users, as well as the current lingua franca status of English, the book introduces two additional models, Amalgam English (based on an amalgam of native speaker Englishes, together with some local features arising from a local L1) and International English, for speakers who need a minimum standard for occasional communication. This chapter also revisits the most frequent regional features of British English. Finally, the book ends with a Selective Glossary, a fresh addition to this edition.

CHANGES TO THIS EDITION

By far the two most important changes introduced by this edition are a) the abandoning of the term "RP" (Received Pronunciation) and adoption in its stead of "GB" (General British), and b) the replacement of /æ/ and /eə/ with /a/ and /ɛː/ for vowels in lexical sets TRAP and SQUARE, respectively.

The term General British was first used by Jack Windsor Lewis in his 1972 book *A Concise Pronouncing Dictionary of British and American English*. Cruttenden explains his abandoning "Received Pronunciation" thusly:

> [D]espite many attempts to say that RP has evolved and includes considerable variation within it, non-phoneticians and even some British linguists and phoneticians, persist in identifying RP as a type of posh, outdated, falsely prestigious accent spoken, for example, by various members of the Royal Family[.] Because of this narrow use by many of the name RP, and the frequent hostility to it, the name of the accent described in this book has been changed to General British (GB). But it has to be made clear that, compared with previous editions of this book, *it is not a different accent that is being described, but an evolved and evolving version of the same accent under a different name* [emphasis mine]. (2014: 80)

Regarding the transcriptional changes, Cruttenden says about /æ/ > /a/ "the symbol /æ/ has always been an oddity even in the IPA alphabet: nowhere else is there a separate symbol for a value intermediate between two Cardinal Vowels[.] Moreover the value of this vowel in current GB is much closer to Cardinal [a] than it was fifty years ago" (Cruttenden 2014: xvii). The other major change, involving the vowel in the lexical set SQUARE, was due to the fact that "the centring diphthongs in GB (and in other parts of the world) are being progressively monophthongised; the process is most advanced with the diphthong formerly transcribed /eə/, so this is recognised here by the new transcription /ɛː/" (Cruttenden 2014: xvii).

It should be noted that the most recent editions of the two major pronunciation dictionaries, LPD 3 (2008) and EPD 18 (2011) still stick to the old symbols (i.e. /æ/ and /eə/); on the other hand, Clive Upton in *Concise Oxford Dictionary* (1995) and *Oxford Dictionary of Pronunciation for Current English* (2001) used /a/ and /ɛː/ (alongside some other changes that were less welcomed by other phoneticians, e.g. /ʌɪ/ instead of /aɪ/ for PRICE), and Collins and Mees, in their *Practical Phonetics and Phonology*, have opted for the /ɛː/ symbol since 2003. Now that this influential work has made the switch as well, we shouldn't be surprised if subsequent editions of LPD and EPD follow suit, especially when it comes to /ɛː/ instead of /eə/.

Regarding the so-called happy and thank you vowels, Cruttenden only now adopts the practice, common in the current editions of the standard pronunciation dictionaries, of transcribing these allophones with /i/ and /u/, i.e. including them in phonemic transcriptions. He adds that, even though /i/ is closer in quality to /iː/ than to /ɪ/, seeing as some words end in /iː/ (*pedigree*, *jubilee*, *filigree* etc.), "the final short /i/ cannot be regarded as an allophone of /iː/ conditioned by accent and position" (Cruttenden 2014: 114). That is to say, he treats happy as an allophone of /ɪ/. This is not a universally held

opinion, and indeed Lindsey (2012) argues, to our mind convincingly, for abandoning of /i/ and /u/ in phonemic transcription altogether, and using the same symbol as for /iː/ and /uː/ when transcribing contemporary speech.

Other changes in this edition include the fact that, as the author puts it, Chapters 6 and first part of Chapter 7 have been completely rewritten. In addition to this, the companion website (the book does not come with a disc), available at www.routledge.com/cw/cruttenden and originally introduced with the seventh edition, has now been updated and is completely free of access. It contains the following[2]:

- Recordings of the pronunciation of Old English, Middle English, and Early Modern English (in Chapter 6) and of all the intonation examples in Chapter 11.6
- Recordings of Daniel Jones pronouncing the Cardinal Vowels, and of the original author, Alfred Charles Gimson ("Gim") introducing a lecture.
- Videos made by Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI), showing the articulation of 15 phrases containing all the consonants and vowels of English.
- Pronunciation practice material originally produced by Gimson and a colleague, and updated by Cruttenden. This consists of separate words illustrating consonants and vowels, and dialogues, with accompanying scripts in both normal orthography and in phonemic transcription.
- A list of internet sites and blogs relevant to the pronunciation of English, including the website where there is an excellent compilation made by Cruttenden himself of recordings of General British and related accents, along with comments, transcripts and transcriptions (available at http://www.phon.ox.ac.uk/general-british).

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The only[3] complaint we have pertains to the brief description of the General American variety (Cruttenden 2014: 88), where we find that one of the realisational differences between GB and GA is "the realisation of the diphthongs /eɪ/ and /əʊ/ as monophthongs [eː] and [oː], hence *late* [leːt] and *load* [loːd]". This is at best misleadingly oversimple and at worst flatly incorrect. Monophthongal realisations of FACE and GOAT in contemporary North America are associated with broad regional accents of certain parts of the Midwest (e.g. Minnesota) and Canada. In GA a monophthongal allophone of GOAT is only usual in front of a homosyllabic /l/ (e.g. *told* [to̝ːld]); otherwise, a diphthong, albeit often somewhat more narrow than the one in GB/RP, is the norm (Wells 1982: 487, Labov et al. 2006: 11–13 *et passim*). Indeed, both LPD and EPD, as well as pronunciation textbooks that have GA as their target, such as Dauer's *Accurate English*, appropriately use /oʊ/ and /eɪ/ for the phonemic transcription of GA.

2 It is worth noting that the previous version of the website, to which the seventh edition refers, is still online and available at the same address.

3 This is discounting the single typo we spotted: on pg. 162 a list of sonorants reads "/m, n, l, n, ŋ/".

To conclude, *Gimson's Pronunciation of English* continues to be an invaluable tool for teachers and students of English alike. Those who haven't should definitely incorporate it into their collection of essential works of reference on English pronunciation. Owners of the previous edition, on the other hand, can be comforted by the knowledge that the most significant addition, the new website, is freely available to everyone, so there is no urgent need for a new investment.

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