



SPEAK OUT!

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE IATEFL PRONUNCIATION SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP

September 2008 Issue 39

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Notes from the Co-ordinators

Dear PronSIG member,

Welcome to issue 39 of *Speak Out!*, and we hope you'll join us in extending a very warm welcome to our new editor, Robin Walker.

We'd like to tell you about two events we are holding during the coming year. Firstly, there will be a one-day event at Bilkent University, Ankara, Turkey, on 21st November 2008, with the title 'Perspectives on Teaching Pronunciation: where theory meets practice'.

The event takes as its theme the challenge of integrating pronunciation teaching into everyday classroom practice. Pronunciation teaching, covering sounds, stress and intonation, represents a demanding area for language teachers around the globe as they try not only to make sense of the particular sound system they are working with, but to integrate the teaching of pronunciation meaningfully into their practice. The aim of the conference is to show that pronunciation as an area of language teaching can be approached systematically and integrated into everyday practice in an efficient and effective manner, and can be perceived as rewarding to both learner and instructor.

Speakers will include John Wells and Gerald Kelly. The closing date for proposals is 15th September. Please visit the PronSIG website at www.rdg.ac.uk/eup/pronsig for further details.

Secondly, looking further ahead, the 2009 IATEFL conference will be in Cardiff, and as well as the usual day of pronunciation-related presentations there will be a PronSIG PCE (pre-conference event) on Tuesday 31st March. The theme of the PCE will be 'Integrating Pronunciation in CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) Education'. To register for the PCE or the conference, or to find out more about the conference, visit the IATEFL website: www.iatefl.org

We'd like to encourage more of you to make use of the discussion list, which is managed by Alex Selman and is accessible via the PronSIG website.

Please let the IATEFL office know if you change your email address. And please do get in touch about any PronSIG-related issue by email to PronSIG@iatefl.org. We'd really like to know how you think the SIG could be more effective, and what sorts of events and activities you would like to see. Of course, the effectiveness of the SIG depends on the active involvement of the membership, so we are always particularly pleased to hear from members who would be willing to take on a committee role or some other responsibility. At the moment, we're especially keen to hear from anyone who would be interested in taking on the role of building membership.

Finally, a big Thank You to Jane Setter for the hard work and dedication she brought to the role of joint co-ordinator over the last few years. We're very pleased that Jane is still in charge of our website.

Jonathan Marks jonathanmarks@wp.pl

Dolores Ramirez dolores.ramirez@uam.es

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From the Editor

A year ago now, in *Speak Out!* 37, Michael Vaughan-Rees led us all through a significant change. The newsletter had just adopted its new IATEFL format, and had taken on a look that I am sure we all agree lends a deservedly professional feel to the journal. At the same time, however, Michael announced a far more profound change – after over 20 years of selfless toil, he was stepping down from editing the publication he founded back in 1986, and which has offered so much to SIG members since then.

Without doubt, then, my first job as the new editor of *Speak Out* is to thank Michael on behalf of all the our members, past, present and future, for a magnificent job, the true value of which is impossible to calculate. However, one person who can give us a very good idea as to the magnitude of Michael's work is **Jonathan Marks**, the SIG's joint coordinator. Together they put together the first ever *Speak Out!*, and it is only fitting that it should be Jonathan who gives us fuller details as to how they did this, and more importantly, as to Michael's work as the journal's editor.

Change, in many ways, could be theme of this issue as a whole. There has been a last-minute change, for example, in the contents. Our initial intention was to bring you a second Americas issue. Sadly, this will have to wait; the Atlantic divide has proven too wide this time, despite modern communications technologies.

Happily, it has not been difficult to find good copy to occupy the space left vacant, the copy in question coming from the PronSIG track at Exeter. My sincere thanks here to the generosity and efficiency of the authors, who responded immediately to our pleas for help, not only by bringing forward their deadlines, but also by offering us a rich and varied set of articles with 'change' as the key word.

Change is central to **John Wells'** introduction to the third edition of the *Longman Pronunciation Dictionary*, but in the form shifting preferences. Fascinating in their own right, the latest preference polls allow us to compare pronunciation choices not just between young and old, but also between BrE speakers today and in 1998, when John conducted polls in preparation for the second edition.

Bunny Richardson calls for change in her article on negative attitudes to teachers' non-standard accents. What we need in ELT, she suggests, is a change in attitudes to non-native speaker teachers, who we need to judge on their ability as L2 users and as

language teachers, rather than on the fact that they are not L1 speakers of English.

Challenging the seemingly erroneous assumption that children learn their mother tongue pronunciation through imitation, **Piers Messum** argues for a change in the way we teach adults. He draws on two of the findings of his PhD thesis to show us how we can help learners to master both the timing and the sounds of English pronunciation.

A change in attitude is at the heart of the contribution made by **Hande Mengü**, who reports on a study carried out with Turkish students at Bilkent University School of English Language. Hande reports on their initial feelings towards pronunciation, and on the feelings she encountered after they had experiencing a teaching package she designed.

Two articles stand out because of their alignment not with change, but with constancy. In the first of these **Bertha Chela-Flores** returns to a theme that has been a constant for many of us in our teaching – the way to help students to move from successful production in controlled practice to success in communicative speaking activities. In the second article, **Francis Hotimsky** calls for constancy in listening. Inspired by the work of John Field, she re-visits listening activities and explores the ways that careful, guided listening work can improve pronunciation.

Finally, **Michael Vaughan-Rees** reviews the CD-ROMs that accompany the three titles in the Cambridge University Press series, *English Pronunciation in Use*.

Robin Walker



Maximizing accuracy and fluency in pronunciation teaching

Bertha Chela-Flores

The literature on pronunciation teaching has recognized that communicative-based instruction should focus simultaneously on the learner's accuracy and oral fluency. However, an issue of concern that still remains among second language teachers is how to move from the controlled linear approach found in most pronunciation-based texts into the less structured communicative speaking practice required in the oral communication goals of their second language program.

Based on a non-linear approach, this paper suggests some pedagogical ways of integrating pronunciation into oral communication courses by: (i) focusing on immediate phonological needs of speaking-oriented tasks in course texts, (ii) forgoing the expectation that the aspects will be mastered after one exposure to them, and (iii) recycling the sounds and phonological processes from one lesson to another and from one level to the next.

A linear approach to pronunciation teaching

The traditional approach to pronunciation teaching is based on the premise that learners acquire one phonological sound or process at a time and that mastery of one aspect should be demonstrated before moving on to the next. Mastery of the phonological feature is frequently measured at a cognitive level and by the oral performance of mechanical drills made up of decontextualized words, phrases and sentences, referred to as "mindless mechanical drills" which "may have no effect on acquisition" (Porto, 2001:49). Even the less structured communicative practice in most teaching materials does not usually go beyond decontextualized information gap activities and dialogues that do not transmit messages in an actual communicative manner. In our classroom and teacher-training experience, most teachers follow

this linear approach to pronunciation teaching, mainly because most pronunciation-based texts do likewise.

In a case study, Schumann (1978) showed that intensive drilling of a feature resulted in improved performance in the artificial task provided but not in spontaneous speech. Likewise, it was found that after applying a linear framework in the teaching of syllable length in English rhythm patterns, learners from a Teacher Training Program exhibited accuracy in the production of the mechanical drills and decontextualized dialogues elaborated for the instruction, but failed to transfer their speech improvement to actual communicative language use (Chela Flores & Chela Flores, 2001). These studies seem to suggest that there is an abrupt transition from the controlled situation in which one exposes the learner to the new aspect of the L2 phonological language system to the open-ended tasks that one expects the learner to carry out in their spontaneous speech. This gap is especially difficult to fill in EFL settings, where there is little opportunity for native input in the target language.

In most pronunciation texts, based on a linear approach, forms and structures appear in isolation, frequently in a building-block fashion, starting from the smallest units and following the practices of behavioural psychology in the 1950s and early 1960s, in which the assumption was that habit formation was the basis of language learning "repetition and drill were the primary means whereby language was practiced by learners" (Celce-Murcia et al, 1996). This teaching approach presupposes that a feature from the L2 phonological system is learned and done with after one exposure to it. Relevant research has shown, however, that initial improvement in a learner's L2 performance, resulting from specific classroom exercises, is frequently followed by improvement disappearance not long after the focus of classroom work has moved on (Yule & McDonald, 1994). Lightbown (1985) has explained this phenomenon by stating that acquisition is not a linear process: what is taught first is not necessarily acquired first; learners may exhibit correct performance on a certain form and later produce deviant ones, in which case they may appear to have reverted to a previous form of interlanguage. What happens is that a new form is not simply added in a linear fashion but rather causes a "restructuring of the whole system" (p. 177).

In order to apply the best methodology and the most adequate materials, we should distinguish clearly two different goals in pronunciation instruction: on the one hand, pronunciation could be given as a separate practical phonetics course designed for learners in advanced levels and in Teacher Training Programs. In such cases, we could follow the linear approach found in most pronunciation texts: basically, one phonological feature at a time, finding multiple occurrences to highlight and practice it. However, in these contexts, the main goal should be *to perfect accuracy* and to obtain more specific detail about the sound system and phonological processes *previously acquired in general*



A SUGGESTED PACKAGE FOR TEACHING PRONUNCIATION

Dr. Hande Isil Mengü

This article reports on a study carried out over nine weeks with 45 Turkish students learning English at Bilkent University School of English Language in Ankara, Turkey, regarding their feelings about pronunciation and the package they were 'exposed to' that helped them change their perceptions and improve their pronunciation.

Introduction

Throughout history there has been a strong need to express words clearly and time has shown that even the simplest mistake in pronunciation has led to the loss of life as well as great confusion. Therefore, if we are to be effective in this world, we must speak clearly and precisely. It is a known fact that as students' and teachers' awareness of the importance of intelligible speech increases, pronunciation automatically finds room for itself in the classroom context and becomes an integral part of all classes. Therefore, especially in a non-English speaking environment (i.e. EFL setting), raising awareness of the importance of pronunciation plays a vital role in persuading students to believe in the miracles of pronunciation. To this end, the following are the questions upon which the study and the package were constructed:

- What is the best way to raise students' awareness of the importance of pronunciation to help them improve their pronunciation?
- How can students be shown/persuaded that it is possible to articulate sounds correctly with a bit of practice?
- How can students see that certain sounds, for example, /w/, exist in Turkish (e.g. kavun, kavuk, tavuk etc.)?

In addition, the existence of the positive impact of pronunciation on "listening and reading comprehension", "spelling" and "grammar" has been revealed through various studies in the area. That is why students' awareness regarding the importance of pronunciation should be raised from day one. In any given context, as is known, the best way of raising awareness is achieved through unearthing where individuals' beliefs centre on, which in this study was firstly realised through the initial administration of

the beliefs questionnaire. Secondly, with the help of individual interviews, the underlying cognitive and affective reasons behind the students "not so positive attitude" towards pronunciation was further explored. Thirdly, students were given the chance to self-assess their own articulation of the most common problematic sounds for Turkish learners to see where they were at and to give them a goal to work towards. Next, they had nine weeks of input and practice (i.e. the package) aimed to improve their pronunciation. Finally, the change in the students' beliefs and the improvement in their pronunciation observed through their in- and outside class work was validated through the final administration of the beliefs questionnaire. This was followed by a final round of interviews and a final phase of self-assessment for the students to see the improvement in their pronunciation.

Background to the Study

The students who took part in the study were students studying English at Bilkent University School of English Language to pursue their academic studies in the departments, and whose ages ranged from 17 to 22 (25 female and 20 male students). Most of them were false beginners who had limited exposure to English through classes taken at secondary school. It was certain that they had not done any work in the area of pronunciation previously and therefore it was a perfect opportunity to help them see the importance of pronunciation, knowing that it would have a lot of impact on their overall language skills. They were going to receive 20 hours of input and practice in the areas of grammar, vocabulary, lexis and discourse, and language skills (reading, listening, writing, speaking) over nine weeks at elementary level and were going to spend 5 hours every week working on pronunciation.

Data Collection

As mentioned previously, the data collection stage consisted of the following phases:

Phase 1- Awareness Raising

- Initial administration of the beliefs questionnaire
- Initial round of semi-structured interviews
- Pre-test: self-assessment 1 (through software)

Phase 2 - Observation of the Changes (with regards to perceptions and performance)

- Final administration of the beliefs questionnaire
- Final round of semi-structured interviews
- Post test: self-assessment 2 (through software)

The first phase in the data collection stage started with the administration of the initial beliefs questionnaire (see appendix 1).



The Constant Listener

Frances Hotimsky

In June 2004 at the Pronunciation and Learner Independence SIGs joint event at Reading University, John Field gave a presentation on *Pronunciation Acquisition and the Individual Learner*. He explained that there is a close interrelationship between listening and speaking: we need to understand how listeners succeed in recognising phonemes and words reduced in connected speech and find ways for teachers to help learners improve their speaking skills through listening activities. This encouraged me to look for ways in which listening activities could be re-formatted.

The Exemplar Theory

The first point at issue is how the listener manages to de-code reduced phonemes and words in connected speech. Weakening, accommodation (assimilation, elision, re-syllabification) liaising (intrusive /r/ in particular!), breaking, pre-fortis clipping, smoothing, glottaling – all, one way or another, contribute to the ‘distortion’ of speech. One adequate explanation, Field said, is given by the *exemplar theory*. In essence: 1) the mind stores multiple *examples* from which it can extrapolate generalisations; 2) thus the level of exposure the listener has had determines the number of traces of voices the listener has acquired. Thus, the more traces there are, the easier it will be for the listener to process utterances.

For this reason, the key to improved pronunciation lies in amassing a large number of traces of the target language system in order to establish appropriate L2 phonological values. What is required is intensive and extensive exposure through the teacher’s use of L2, through listening activities and through activities which require the learner to make contact with the target language in the outside world. Exposure to the language and constant listening, then, are a very effective way to help learners with their speaking skills.

Pedagogic implications of the Exemplar Theory

The statement by which we cannot produce unless we receive is axiomatic. We cannot write if we are not familiar with the writing system; we cannot speak unless we are familiar with spoken language. Hence the more familiar we are with spoken language the more proficient we will be when speaking it. There is nothing against

learners being adventurous and trying to communicate against all odds, even when they do not master the lexis and the structures they need, even when accuracy is a word they are likely to pronounce as /a'kju: rasi/. But a distinction ought to be made between ‘free conversation’ slots and ‘speaking practice’ activities. During ‘conversation time’, learners are invited to speak uninhibitedly, tell jokes, anecdotes or stories for fun, or voice their feelings and opinions in English. By contrast, during ‘speaking skills time’ learners perfect their ability to speak clearly, to reproduce recordings as accurately as possible and then stretch that very same degree of clarity and accuracy to personalized activities. This ability stems from observing and noticing, from ‘intelligent’ analysis and parsing, from de-constructing and re-constructing meaningful chunks of language, as Scott Thornbury wrote in *Unlocking the Text*.

The idea came to me, then, that one ought to investigate ways in which listening activities could be re-formatted. Traditional listening activities are either listening for pronunciation or comprehension. The former typically focus on aural/oral repetition of de-contextualized words to foster the correct pronunciation of sounds and words in isolation. The latter typically focus on the aural repetition of stretches of speech to foster students’ ability to understand meaning. Lists of words, minimal pairs and minimal sets are classic activities carried out to teach/check accuracy. Gap-fills, sentence completion, multiple choice are used check comprehension. I felt it was time to re-think these activities and focus not only on the pronunciation of words in isolation or on the comprehension of passages, but also on a better understanding of the ways grammar and pronunciation interact.

Listening activities revisited

In this new approach, we start by placing listening activities under these headings:

- Listening for reception: listening for exposure
 listening for information
- Listening for production: listening for grammar
 listening for pronunciation

The table below illustrates their general layout. There are four features which appear across the activities: the recording chosen ought to be fairly short – three or four sentences at the most in order to make constant listening more effective; the use of a chart of IPA symbols and a worksheet to make pronunciation and contents more memorable; the gist stages follow the same procedure – the teacher introduces the topic at the beginning of the lesson by showing realia, writing a word or drawing a picture on the board, or simply through elicitation; after the first listening slot, learners answer some questions to make sure they have understood the general meaning of the passage.

At the end of listening for information, listening for grammar and listening for pronunciation, minimal pairs and minimal sets will assist learners when discrimination between sounds is not so obvious.



What if children don't learn to pronounce by imitation? How should we teach older learners?

Piers Messum

We believe that children learn to pronounce by listening to adults and then basing their production on what they have heard. So when we teach older learners, most of the exercises we propose ask them to 'listen and repeat' in one form or another. We think that this approach should be effective because it is consistent with what seems to be the natural way of learning. But taken as a whole, the results we get are not as good as we would hope. Perhaps we are wrong in some ways about what is natural ...

I recently completed a PhD thesis that examines the role of imitation in learning to pronounce (Messum, 2007a). It challenges the orthodox assumption that children do this 'by imitation' and proposes alternative mechanisms to account for the replication of some aspects of pronunciation. This is a report of my presentation at the 2008 IATEFL conference, where I described two of these mechanisms, and some of the practical implications for pronunciation teaching if they are indeed those involved.

I do not have the space to present all the evidence in favour of my proposals or to explain why the orthodox assumption is probably wrong. For a more careful and complete argument please see the short articles I have written (Messum, 2008; 2007b; 2007c) or the thesis itself. All of these are available on my website, as are the slides from my presentation at Exeter.

Part 1: learning the timing patterns of English

In the first part of my thesis I considered the modifications in the timing of spoken English that are typically discussed in phonetics textbooks, including the 'rhythm' of the language, the differing lengths of tense and lax vowels in certain contexts, and voice onset time (aspiration). These phenomena are all believed to be

time-related not only in perception but also in production, meaning that the speaker is planning his articulation to achieve timing goals rather than to achieve some other objective which might lead to changes in timing but only as an unintended by-product.

The other side of the coin from this is that these phenomena are supposed to be learnt by imitation, i.e. by children noticing the timing changes in the speech of others, working out some set of underlying, time-based 'rules' that capture each one, and then using these rules to guide their own production. The way that we conventionally teach these phenomena to second language learners assumes that they will be able to undertake a similar modelling process.

Let us consider the 'rhythm' of English, which is a challenge for many learners. Others (e.g. Dauer, 1983) have described how a variety of non-temporal aspects of the language contribute to the effect of so-called stress-timing, and they therefore question its reality. But to the best of my knowledge no-one sympathetic to this theoretical viewpoint has explained why foot level shortening (FLS) occurs. This is a key issue, since FLS probably contributes more than any other factor to the impression of stress-timing.

FLS is the phenomenon of a speaker progressively shortening the syllables in a foot as more syllables are added to it. (Compare | *one* | *two* | *three* | with | *one and* | *two and* | *three* | and | *one and then* | *two and then* | *three* |.) One of its effects is to make the intervals between stressed syllables more isochronous than they would otherwise be, so in the absence of any other motive FLS has seemed to be evidence in favour of some kind of 'rhythmic' consideration being part of the speech planning process for English speakers.

To explain why FLS occurs, it helps to start with consideration of pre-fortis clipping (PFC), the shortening of the vowels in *cat* and *niece*, for example, compared to their lengths in *cad* and *knees*. PFC is apparently unrelated to either FLS or the rhythm of English, and is almost a universal feature of speech in languages where it can occur.

In trying to explain PFC, what has been overlooked up to now is the fact that a young child's respiratory physiology is very different from that of an adult. At the end of an inhalation an adult generates roughly the subglottal pressure he needs for speech solely as a result of the new configuration of his chest wall. He has stretched his body tissue and its elastic recoil compresses the air in his lungs. But a child's very compliant ('floppy') chest wall means that little subglottal pressure is generated as a result of inhalation. The contrast between the adult's pulmonary-chest wall unit and the child's can be imagined as that between an inflated balloon and an inflated paper bag.

Negative Attitudes to English Teachers' 'Non-Standard' Accents and Solutions

Bunny Richardson, Dublin Institute of Technology, Ireland

It is accepted that this debate is sensitive and even controversial. However, it must be stated that the NS¹ ideal is a myth which continues to be propagated in the 21st century, mainly in Expanding Circle² countries, by and large, for the sole benefit of NSs and NS countries – which is evidenced in L2 English-speaking countries by the high number of private English language schools and inadequately trained NS English language teachers hired.

NS English Ideology

'...there's still a deeply-entrenched bias towards native-speaker English accents among both native and non-native English speakers, and it's largely the result of prevailing ubiquitous standard native English ideology' (Jenkins, 2007: 10).

The NS English ideology is due to two main historical factors: UK colonisation in the 19th century and the position of the US as the world's chief superpower in the 20th century, which it maintains to this day. Widdowson (2003: 36) asserts that the maintenance of the NS fallacy³ is 'to retain exclusive rights to a profitable formula and prevent other people from exploiting it to their commercial

¹ NS = native speaker

² From Kachru's Three Concentric Model – Expanding Circle countries are where English is learned as a foreign language (EFL) and is little used within the countries themselves but learnt mainly for communication and trade with other countries, is 'norm dependent' and includes countries such as China, Japan, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Indonesia and Russia (Kachru, 1985)

³ The native speaker fallacy is based on the Chomskyan notion that the native speaker is the most proficient user of the language with ultimate authority regarding correct grammar and language use and thus the ideal model for language instruction (Chomsky, 1986)

advantage'. By doing so the British maintain their status in the world as proprietors of 'proper' English which ensures plenty of business for British English language schools and institutions and British-produced ELT materials and literature. The NS ideology is unacceptable mainly due to the fact that to be a NS of English is an incident of birth and does not guarantee that one is the best user of the language. Modiano (1999) notes that a speaker's proficiency in a language is not determined by birth but by an ability to use the language appropriately. Imagine an advert for a pilot where the main criterion is *not* 'must be sufficiently trained to fly a plane'? In the same vein, why should the main criteria for hiring an English language teacher not be 'must be must be a competent teacher who is sufficiently knowledgeable about the English language system and how it operates'? Twenty-five years ago, Ferguson (1983: vii) called for the terms 'native speaker' and 'mother tongue' to be omitted from linguistics, referring to the terms as 'professional myths about language'. However, since Ferguson's time of writing, the NS ideal has been maintained in ELT. Alptekin (2002: 60) sums up what should happen to the NS ideology in ELT: '[I]t is perhaps time to rid the ELT field of its educational vision and practices based on a utopian notion of communicative competence involving idealised native speaker norms in both language and culture'.

Why Focus on Pronunciation?

'The objections to foreign models usually single out the element of pronunciation' (Prator in Brown, 1991: 13).

The question of which pronunciation model(s) should be used for ELT is currently much debated by ELT theorists and scholars. Standard English (SE) is commonly thought of as the language forms used by L1 English users, even though it is an idealisation rather than an empirically identifiable entity (Milroy 1999: 18). There are a number of problems associated with applying SE to ELT, namely, the difficulty in defining exactly what SE is and whether this includes pronunciation. Also, SE seems to be inextricably linked with native speakerness, which causes problems for L2 English users as they can be then viewed as inferior to L1 users, which is unfair, unacceptable and untrue in many instances. Pronunciation is largely not focussed on in ELT. It is often sidelined in favour of other language skills and activities (Caldwell, 2002). Additionally, the Common European Framework of Reference refers very little to pronunciation in its language level bands and, when it does, is quite vague.

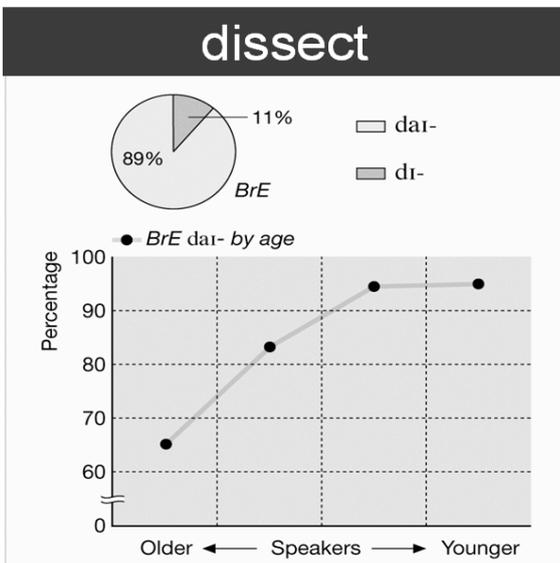
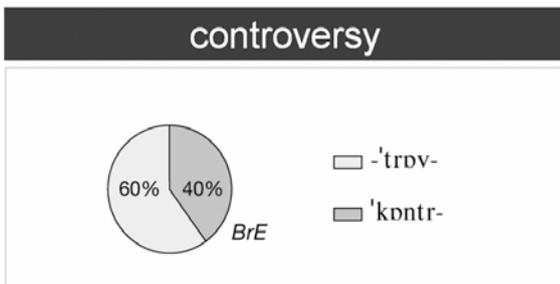
Pronunciation, as noted by Prator (in Brown, 1991: 13), is the main aspect of language which tends to be negatively viewed when it reflects an L2 or *foreign* enunciation. It is surprising that the source of most disapproval is not due to other aspects of language such as incorrect use of grammatical structures or lexical items, which can easily lead to misunderstandings and communication difficulties. The results of two separate L2 English

Pronunciation preference polls in LPD3

John Wells

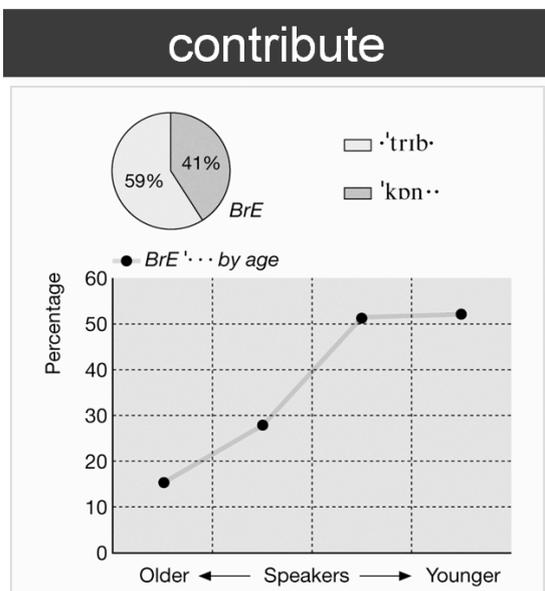
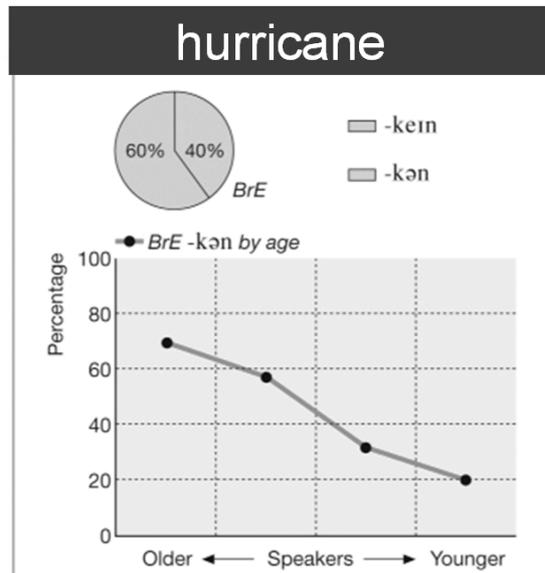
The new, third, edition of the Longman Pronunciation Dictionary (Wells, 2008) includes not only a CD-ROM with spoken versions of every headword (in BrE and AmE), the entire text of the dictionary on-screen, a Self-Study Lab (interactive exercises with feedback) and a Teacher's Resource Centre with worksheets and suggestions for classroom activities, but also the findings of new pronunciation preference polls.

As well as the three polls reported in the previous edition, in the new edition you will find the results of (i) an American English poll conducted on-line by Prof. Bert Vaux, and (ii) a British English poll conducted on-line by the author and publisher. In the BrE poll I invited people to vote, for example, on whether they prefer to say **controversy** with the stress on the first syllable /'kɒntrəvɜːsi/ or on the second /kən'trɒvəsi/. Sixty percent voted for the latter.



I asked which vowel they prefer in the first syllable of **dissect**; somewhat to my surprise, as many as 89% voted for /daɪ-/. But there was a difference here between the older respondents and the younger. Although all age groups preferred this form, the majority in favour ranged from 65% among the oldest (aged over 65) to 95% among the youngest (aged 25 or younger).

We get a sharp difference between different age groups if we look at the answers to the question 'What is the vowel in the last syllable of **hurricane**?'. Two thirds of the oldest group voted for /-kən/, but four-fifths of the youngest went for /-keɪn/. There was an even bigger difference with the stressing of **contribute**. Only fifteen percent of the oldest group would choose to stress the *con-*, with 85% stressing the *-trib-*. But with the younger age groups opinion was about equally divided between the two stress patterns. I wonder if the same would apply to *distribute*.





'English Pronunciation in Use' CD-ROMs. C.U.P 2007

Reviewed by *Michael Vaughan-Rees*

This review of the CD-ROM elements of EPIU complements earlier reviews of Mark Hancock's original intermediate title (SO! 31, 38-39) and the advanced and elementary versions, by Martin Hewings and Jonathan Marks respectively (SO! 37, 24-25). The books and their accompanying CDs are good enough in their own right, so the CD-ROMs can be seen as an optional extra. But, offering as they do a wealth of goodies, it is a purchase well worth considering.

The User's Guide for all three levels is identical, which places the extra burden on the elementary user which I noted in SO! 37. It is difficult to see how much simplification would have been possible, however. (And the good news is that, once you have the material up and running, the on-screen help is clear, simple and well sign-posted.)

The CD-ROMs offer the following options: doing exercises; testing yourself; using the whiteboard toolbar (included for teachers); playing games to help you learn; seeing your progress; using the glossary; and using the phoneme chart.

The **exercises** are the main source of pleasure and instruction. At all three levels they refer to the sections and units of the title, offering additional practise and, often, providing extra insights. Most of the exercises allow you to listen to recordings, after which you can record your own version and compare it to the original. (Annoyingly, clicking on the icon which gives you your score, brings up a window which obscures maybe half of the exercise, not allowing you always to see where you went wrong).

The help sequence for the **testing** element says that 'you can create your own tests', which got me rather excited; but it just means that you can choose a given unit (or units) and call up an appropriate test. Only one test appears, but I worked out that you can create more than one from the small bank of material available by going back to 'create new test' and choosing the same unit. You can also decide to create tests covering more than one unit, but they are not designed to merge in any way.

The ingenuity and panache which characterises the exercises ran out, sadly, when it came to the **games**. There are just three, on word stress, sentence stress and 'falling phonemes' in which you have to guide phonemic symbols into their appropriate place in the word. At advanced level you have similar word stress and phoneme games, the only difference being the items tend to be longer, and secondary stress is included. People used to computer games will, I'm afraid, be easily bored. I'm not, but got annoyed when the phonemes started falling too fast for me to insert them in the proper places. It was almost a relief when (on two of the discs) an error occurred which prevented me from proceeding to a higher level.

The **glossary** allows the user to check the meaning of words and phrases such as 'auxiliary verb', 'minimal pair' and 'phonemic symbol', these examples from the elementary and intermediate levels, which are – perhaps surprisingly – identical. So the elementary user reads that a consonant sound 'is a sound we make by obstructing the flow of air from the mouth', which, to me, sounds less easy to understand than the advanced 'a sound produced by blocking the air flow from the mouth with the teeth, tongue or lips', which at least explains what is happening.

The user would have been better sent to the **phoneme chart** which, in addition to showing symbols and example words with accompanying recordings (by female and male speakers), allows you to bring up a cutaway view of the head, with the tongue in schwa position. Clicking on the appropriate male or female silhouette animates the diagram, so that you can hear the sound while watching any movement: of tongue, lower lip and teeth, even a little tremor to represent vibration of the vocal folds, for vowels and voiced consonants. Absolute genius.

I picked up a number of mistakes, and alternative answers a few times; but these don't outweigh the value of the CD-ROMs. And the more I have been working through them, the more I have been thinking how useful they would be in a teaching institution, where the instructor could project them onto a whiteboard, using the toolbar option provided. And the advanced version, in particular, would provide an extremely useful tool for teacher training in what is still, sadly, a much neglected area.

MVR founded the PronSig in 1986 and is the author of 'Test Your Pronunciation' and 'Rhymes and Rhythm', as well as a number of books which have nothing to do with teaching or language. He is anxiously awaiting the results of his GCSE exams in Turkish.

Email: michaelvr@metronet.co.uk

Michael Vaughan-Rees and *Speak Out!*

Jonathan Marks

The first issue of what was to become *Speak Out!* is dated December 1986, and is simply called 'Phonology Group newsletter number one'. It was produced by Michael and myself on an Amstrad computer (if you don't remember them, you might possibly find one in your local museum of technology) and consists of 13 sides of A4 stapled together. Newsletter number 2 was produced in the same way but is slightly more substantial, with 17 pages.

Then, one murky day early in 1988, Michael and I took the train to Birmingham to meet up with Adam Brown, who was working at Aston University and had access to such technological marvels as a Macintosh computer with a laser printer. Adam compiled and produced issue 3 (24 pages) complete with a graphic logo which he designed for the top of the front page – including, for the first time, the title *Speak Out!* This radical new treatment defined the look of the newsletter right up to issue 36 in December 2006, though with issue 13 'phonology' was replaced by 'pronunciation', and with issue 24 the front page was modified in line with the IATEFL SIG unistyle then introduced. Issue 3 was also notable for the inclusion of a cassette ("available for SIG members only") with material illustrating some of the contributions.

From issue 7 in December 1990 up to 2007, Michael became the sole editor of most issues, although there have also always been occasional guest editors.

In our editorial for the first newsletter, we wrote "We will be pleased to receive letters, articles, teaching tips, book reviews or whatever anyone wishes to send us." Book reviews have always been an important component of *Speak Out!* There have been teaching tips, but very few letters. There have been other types of content: – interviews, ready-to-use teaching material, cassettes and more recently CDs. And over the years, under Michael's editorship, *Speak Out!* has profiled itself increasingly as a vehicle for articles reporting innovative thinking and experimentation in the field of pronunciation teaching. As such, it has become highly regarded and widely respected. None of this would have been possible without Michael's devotion to seeking out and making contact with people around the world who have interesting things to say, and hassling them to produce copy on time.

Number 8, 'Rhymes and rhythm', was the first single-topic issue, and eventually developed into Michael's book with the same title, published in 1995. Since then, *Speak Out!* has generally appeared twice a year, one issue being a general 'mixed bag' and the other being devoted to a single topic, including the technology of pronunciation teaching, 'Changes in pronunciation', testing

pronunciation, alternative approaches, pronunciation in teacher training, a special 'Americas' issue, pronunciation and computers, pronunciation and learner independence, intonation and the heftiest of these issues weighs in at 100 pages!

All in all, the *Speak Out!* archives are a real treasure trove and a tribute to Michael's editorship. We have for some time been trying to find a way of making a selection of articles from past issues more widely available, and I hope this project will come to fruition sooner or later.

The advertisement features a white background with a dark grey header. The header contains the word "CAMBRIDGE" in white on a dark grey background, followed by "English Language Teaching" in a smaller font. The main title "The ultimate pronunciation package" is centered in a large, bold, black font. Below the title, three CD-ROM cases are displayed, each with the text "English Pronunciation in Use" and "with CD-ROM". At the bottom, the website "www.cambridge.org/elt/inusa" is listed, along with the "in Use" logo and the text "Your first choice". The Cambridge University Press logo and name are also present at the bottom.