English Phonetics and Phonology
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Sound Recordings

These sound files accompany exercises, the treatment of intonation, and the description of some of the varieties of English given here. They are marked in the margins with a headphones symbol (as shown), and are available at: www.wiley.com/go/carrphonetics

Track 1.1: Exercise 4
Track 1.2: Exercise 5
Track 1.3: Exercise 6

Track 2.1: Exercise 1
Track 2.2: Exercise 2
Track 2.3: Exercise 3

Track 3.1: Exercise 3

Track 4.1: Exercise 3

Track 5.1: Exercise 4

Track 6.1: Marry Merry Mary (vowel neutralization in GA)
Track 6.2: Exercise 3

Track 7.1: Exercise 4

Track 8.1: Exercise 1
Track 8.2: Exercise 2
Track 8.3: Exercise 3
Track 8.4: Exercise 4
Track 8.5: Exercise 5
Track 8.6: Exercise 6
Sound Recordings

Track 9.1: Exercise 2
Track 9.2: Exercise 3
Track 9.3: Exercise 4

Track 10.1: Example (1) (falling tone)
Track 10.2: Example (2) (rising tone)
Track 10.3: Example (3) (rise-fall)
Track 10.4: Example (4) (fall-rise)
Track 10.5: Example (5) (last lexical item)
Track 10.6: Example (6) (last lexical item)
Track 10.7: Example (7) (last lexical item)
Track 10.8: Example (8) (contrastive intonation)
Track 10.9: Example (9) (last lexical item)
Track 10.10: Example (10) (contrastive intonation)
Track 10.11: Example (11) (contrastive intonation)
Track 10.12: Example (13) (given information)
Track 10.13: Example (14) (given information)
Track 10.14: Example (15) (synonyms and given information)
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Track 10.17: Example (18) (final temporal adverbials)
Track 10.18: Example (19) (final temporal adverbials and contrastive intonation)
Track 10.19: Example (20) (fronted temporal adverbials)
Track 10.20: Example (21) (event sentences)
Track 10.21: Example (22) (no one, nothing, nowhere, nobody)
Track 10.22: Example (23) (someone, something, somewhere, somebody)
Track 10.23: Example (24) (pro-forms)
Track 10.24: Examples (25), (26), (27) (clefting and focus)
Track 10.25: Example (28) (deixis)
Track 10.26: Example (29) (deixis)
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Track 10.28: Examples (31), (32) (non-restrictive and restrictive relative clauses)
Track 10.29: Example (33) (noun phrases in apposition)
Track 10.30: Example (34) (other parentheicals)
Track 10.31: Example (35) (co-ordinated constituents)
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Track 10.35: Example (39) (list intonation)
Track 10.36: Examples (40), (41) (subordinate clauses)
Track 10.37: Example (42) (sentence adverbials)
Track 10.38: Example (43) (sentence adverbials)
Track 10.39: Example (44) (pseudo-clefts)
Track 10.40: Example (45) (the is … is that construction)
Prefaces to the First Edition

Preface for Teachers

Each year in the Department of English at Newcastle University, I am given eleven 50-minute lecture slots in which to introduce English phonetics and phonology to around a hundred students in the first semester of their first year on a variety of different undergraduate degree programmes, including English language and literature, linguistics, English language, modern languages, music, history and many others. Also included in the student body are European exchange undergraduates and students taking applied linguistics postgraduate degrees in media technology and in linguistics for teachers of English as a second language.

Given the range of degree types, this is a daunting task, made even more difficult by the fact that a substantial minority of the students do not have English as their first language. In a typical year, the student cohort will include speakers of Arabic, French, Spanish, German, Greek, Japanese, Korean, Mandarin or Cantonese Chinese, and Thai. Many of the non-native speakers will have been taught RP; others will have been taught General American. Amongst the native speakers of English, very few of the students will be speakers of RP, so that the non-native speakers are more likely to speak RP than the native speakers.

The vast majority of the student body will take their study of English phonetics and phonology no further, and the one factor which the majority of this diverse band of students shares is that they have no previous knowledge of phonetics or phonology; the course must therefore be *ab initio*.

One faces a dilemma in teaching such a course: on the one hand, one wants to cater to the small minority who will go on to study phonology at a more advanced level. On the other hand, one wants to introduce the subject without overwhelming the students with a mass of bewildering descriptive detail and an avalanche of seemingly arcane theoretical constructs. It is a moot point whether this dilemma can be resolved. However, this textbook was written as an attempt at a solution.
It is arguable that textbooks are harder to write than monographs, and that the
more elementary the textbook, the harder it is to write: one can barely write a line
without being aware of one’s often questionable assumptions, and one has always
to resist the temptation to question them in the body of the text. One continually
has the sense of one’s peers looking over one’s shoulder and guffawing at the absurd
oversimplifications which one is knowingly committing to print. But it has to be
done: students have to learn to walk before they can learn to run; they also have
to learn to crawl before they can learn to walk.

Writing and using textbooks is an empirical matter: it is very often immediately
apparent when an exercise, chapter or book is simply not working, for a given body
of students. Almost all of the textbooks which I have used on the first-year
Newcastle course described here have proved to be unsuitable for this type of
student cohort in one way or another; mostly, they have contained far too much
detail. I have therefore set out to write a very short, very simple coursebook which
deliberately ignores a great many descriptive/theoretical complexities.

My aim has not been to introduce students to phonological theory; rather,
I have sought to introduce some of the bare essentials of English phonetics and
phonology in a manner that is as theory-neutral as possible. This is fundamentally
problematic, of course, since there is no such thing as theory-neutral description.
I have therefore decided to adopt various theoretical/descriptive views, such as the
tongue-arch/cardinal vowel approach to articulatory description, the phonemic
approach to segmental phonology, the trochaic approach to English foot structure,
and so on, on the purely pragmatic basis of what I have found to be easiest to con-
vey to the students.

I have ignored acoustic phonetics for the very simple reason that our depart-
ment lacks a phonetics lab, and I have not included distinctive features, since the
mere sight of arrays of features marked with ‘+’ and ‘−’ symbols seems to render
large numbers of my first-year students dizzy (particularly those majoring in
English literature). I have also excluded feature geometry, the mora, under-
specification and a great many other theoretical/descriptive notions, in an attempt
to pare the subject down to a bare minimum of these.

The first four chapters are deliberately very short indeed, and contain only the
most elementary introduction to articulatory phonetics. My aim there is to offer
the student a gentle introduction to the course. I have spread the introduction of
the phonemic principle over two chapters, since, in my experience, students find
their first encounter with these ideas something of a quantum leap. The chapters
on word stress, rhythm, connected speech phenomena and accent variation con-
tain a very stripped-down, minimal account of those subjects; I hope that there is
enough there to act as a foundation for those students who wish to study these
matters in more depth. In the chapter on syllable structure, I have been a little more
ambitious in introducing analytical complexity, on the assumption that syllable struc-
ture is something that beginning students seem to be able to get the hang of more
easily than, say, rhythm or intonation.
I believe that one of the most important duties of a university teacher is to induce in the student a sense of critical awareness, a grasp of argumentation and the role of evidence. On the other hand, one has to be very wary of introducing students at the most elementary stage to the idea of competing analyses: they find it difficult enough to get the hang of one sort of analysis, without being asked to assess the merits and demerits of competing analyses (even at the post-elementary stage, most undergraduates are very resistant to the idea of critically comparing different analyses). I have tried to overcome this dilemma by introducing competing analyses and assumptions at one or two points, while consciously ignoring them elsewhere.

The exercises are meant to be discussed at weekly seminar/tutorial meetings; my experience is that, if phonetics/phonology students are not made to do exercises, they easily come to believe that they have grasped the subject when in fact they have not. It is my hope that students who have completed this course would find it possible to tackle more advanced textbook treatments of these topics, such as those given by Giegerich (1992) and Spencer (1996). Whether that hope is fulfilled is, of course, very much an empirical matter.

Preface for Students

This is an elementary introduction to English phonetics and phonology, designed for those who have no previous knowledge whatsoever of the subject. It begins with a very elementary introduction to articulatory phonetics, and then proceeds to introduce the student to a very simplified account of some of the main aspects of the phonological structure of present-day English.

It is arguable that there are two main questions one might ask in studying the English language: what is it about English that makes it a language (as opposed to, say, a non-human communication system), and what is it about English that makes it English (as opposed to, say, French or Korean)? This book attempts to provide the beginnings of an answer to both of those questions, with respect to one aspect of English: its phonology.

Thus, although the subject matter of this book is English, there is reference to the phonology of other languages at several points, often in contrastive exercises which are designed to bring out one or more differences between English and another language. These contrastive exercises are included because native speakers of English, who often have little or no detailed knowledge of other languages, tend to assume that the phonology of English is the way it is as a matter of natural fact, a matter of necessity. For many such speakers, it will seem somehow natural, for instance, that the presence of the sound [f] as opposed to [v] functions to signal a difference in meaning (as in fan vs van). To the English speaker, [f] and [v] will therefore seem easily distinguishable, and that too will appear to be a natural fact. But the fact that these sounds have that function in English is a conventional, not a necessary or natural fact: English need not have been that way, and may not always