

Patricia Ashby
University of Westminster, UK

2020, Vol. 17 (2), 9-26(284)
revije.ff.uni-lj.si/elope
<https://doi.org/10.4312/elope.17.2.9-26>
UDC: 81'34:[811.111'342.2:37.091.33]

Does Pronunciation = Phonetics? 100 Years of Phonetics in Pronunciation Training

ABSTRACT

The short answer to the question in the title is: not exactly, no. This paper examines the confusion between *phonetics* on the one hand and *pronunciation* on the other. It looks at what phonetics actually is (its acoustic, articulatory and auditory components), and attempts to dispel the popular myth that studying or teaching '(English) phonetics' and studying or teaching '(English) pronunciation' are one and the same thing – in fact, the former is general phonetics, the latter applied phonetics. Reviewing 100 years of thoughts about English pronunciation teaching (from Daniel Jones to Geoff Lindsey) it examines the contribution phonetics is considered to make in this field, looking at the roles of both phonetic theory and ear-training in pronunciation acquisition from teachers' and learners' perspectives. It concludes by summarizing what phonetics today can offer the language learner.

Keywords: general phonetics, applied phonetics, pronunciation training, ear-training, perceptual approach, Daniel Jones, Gimson

Izgovorjava = fonetika? 100 let fonetike v šolanju izgovorjave

POVZETEK

Kratek odgovor na vprašanje iz naslova je: ne ravno, ne. Ta članek proučuje zmedo med fonetiko na eni strani in izgovorjavo na drugi. Ugotavlja, kaj pravzaprav je fonetika (njene akustične, artikulacijske in slušne komponente), in poskuša razbiti priljubljeni mit, da sta proučevanje ali poučevanje »(angleške) fonetike« in proučevanje ali poučevanje »(angleške) izgovorjave« ena in ista stvar – v prvem primeru gre za splošno fonetiko, v drugem pa za uporabno fonetiko. Članek obravnava 100 let razmišljanj o poučevanju angleške izgovorjave (od Daniela Jonesa do Geoffa Lindseyja) in proučuje prispevek fonetike na tem področju. Pri tem z vidika učiteljev in učencev ugotavlja, kakšno vlogo imata fonetična teorije in urjenja posluha pri usvajanju izgovorjave. Prispevek v zaključku povzema, kaj lahko fonetika danes ponudi učencu jezika.

Gljučne besede: splošna fonetika, uporabna fonetika, urjenje izgovorjave, urjenje posluha, percepcijski pristop, Daniel Jones, A. C. Gimson

1 Introduction

Dhi Fonètik Títcerz' Asóciécon (later the IPA) was founded in France in 1886. A product of the Reform Movement, members were not teachers *of* phonetics, but teachers who *used* phonetics in their teaching of foreign languages and the possible ambiguity here (Phonetic Teachers' Association) may well have sowed the first seed of confusion and contributed to the idea of equivalence that is often found today.

In 1898, Walter Ripman translated and adapted Wilhelm Viëtor's *Kleine Phonetik*. Both were founding members of the Association and Ripman's English publication was called *Elements of Phonetics: English, French and German*. In his Preface, Ripman wrote:

The growing demand for better instruction in modern languages and the consequent inquiries into the methods adopted in other countries have led many English teachers to consider how their pupils can best learn to pronounce French and German [...] and hardly a book of this kind has been issued in the last few years which does not supply a chapter on 'pronunciation.'

He went on to criticize publishers who refused to include such a chapter and was critical of all unscientific (i.e. non-phonetically informed) instruction in language textbooks (things like simplified spelling rather than IPA-style transcription), and also spoke about the phonetically "untrained observer" – a person who can't "hear" what they are saying or how they are pronouncing things, and has absolutely no awareness of speech (never even noticing themselves h-dropping or reducing vowels when using weak forms, for example) and "often refuses to accept the phonetician's accurate record of his speech as representing his pronunciation". So, as early as the late nineteenth century the application of phonetics to pronunciation training was already in vogue and Ripman bemoaned the fact that Henry Sweet's pioneering *Primer of Spoken English* (published 1890) was not more widely known (Ripman 1898, v–x).

He then made a final point of interest here, which relates to the teaching model – what sort of English should be taught? He wrote (Ripman 1907, vi):

Opinions are still much divided, but a definite course must be taken. In England the capital has so long exerted a preponderating influence in life and in letters [...] that we may confidently regard London (or Southern English) speech as the standard. Not, of course, 'cockney' speech, but the speech of educated men and women.

In summary, then, we can see that over a century ago we had the makings of everything that still concerns us today:

- the need for scientific/objective phonetic underpinning to *pronunciation training* (by which I mean both pronunciation teaching and learning);
- the inability of the untrained observer to **hear** (in the phonetic sense);
- the question of which accent of English should be taught to the non-native learner;
- and implicitly, how pronunciation should be taught.

So, is that what phonetics is? A pronunciation training algorithm? Literally: does pronunciation = phonetics? To hear people talk, you'd often think that when you say you study or teach pronunciation it *is* the same thing as saying you study or teach phonetics. But this isn't actually the case, and although the difference was completely clear to Ripman as he attempted to bring the *science* of phonetics into arts-based pronunciation training, it was to be some twenty years later before Daniel Jones openly acknowledged this in his own textbooks and it's worth a brief digression here to follow this up.

Writing for humanities students, Jones at first downplayed the scientific nature of the discipline and the pronunciation~phonetics distinction remained fuzzy. (You could say this was the case in *The Pronunciation of English*, published in 1909, for example.) But by the time he published *An Outline of English Phonetics* (hereafter the *Outline*) in 1918, he defined phonetics as “the science which investigates the mode of formation of speech sounds and their distribution in connected speech” (Collins and Mees 1999, 56). He makes the distinction again in 1955 in the Preface to the ‘improved edition’ (in fact, the final edition) of his book of *Phonetic Readings in English*. After describing his own use of a “somewhat ‘narrow’ form of IPA transcription” (Jones 1955, x) in his key works (the *Outline* and *The Pronunciation of English*), he then wrote “Learners whose sole object is to acquire a good pronunciation of English, but who have no desire or opportunity to make a detailed study of phonetics [...] may use a simpler system [of transcription] with advantage...”¹ (Jones 1995, x). This view is curious, however, in that it seems to conflict completely with Jones’s avowed belief that the detailed study of phonetics underpins acquisition of good pronunciation. Is it possible that these later remarks about not needing to study theory at all were, effectively, fake news? Were they remarks intended to appeal to science-averse humanities students again and made simply to continue to sell his little book of *Phonetic Readings*? If not, the meaning and purpose of the remarks are not obvious. Whatever lay behind them, though, they serve to illustrate that (general) phonetics on the one hand and pronunciation on the other are two different things. Pronunciation (or **speech**) is in fact the very subject matter of phonetics, the data observed by the science. This then raises the question: how can phonetics help pronunciation?

2 Phonetics in Brief

Understanding the phonetics~pronunciation distinction a hundred years ago and more, teachers of modern foreign languages – especially English, French and German – were attracted to phonetics courses being offered in places like University College in London or the University of Marburg in German. These were courses which taught specifically about the phonetics underpinning descriptions of the pronunciation of those languages. Loosely, the courses were founded on the now proven belief that if you can **hear** a sound correctly, you

¹ There are two sorts of transcription: narrow or phonetic transcription, conventionally placed in square brackets, which shows exactly what a speaker said. Speaking the word *signs*, for example, the speaker might say [ʃḁ̈ɪnz] (using a fully devoiced final consonant) or [ʃḁ̈ɪnz̥] (with a devoiced offset), etc. The narrow transcription shows all the tiny differences. The broad or phonemic transcription, conventionally placed in slant brackets, picks out what is important for meaning: /saɪnz/ (as opposed to /maɪnz/, /laɪnz/, /saɪdz/, /saɪts/, etc. The broad version is the one used in pronouncing dictionaries where it is assumed the reader will know the phonetics (the range of possible variants) behind the simplifications.

have a good chance of eventually being able to **produce** that sound correctly. In the language training forum this translates into phonetics first, and then pronunciation – the *perceptual approach* to pronunciation training. The practice is what Kaufmann (2018) would today call *input-based learning*.

So, what is phonetics? Basically, it's the discipline that describes human speech sounds: how they are produced, how they are heard, and how they are pronounced by different speakers. Hearing and identifying sounds is greatly enhanced by phonetic ear-training. It is *general phonetics* that encompasses these different theoretical and practical activities – general phonetics, the theory of speech production and perception, covers the physical or acoustic reality of speech sounds (acoustic phonetics), how these sound effects are actually achieved by the speaker (articulatory phonetics), and how they are perceived by listeners (auditory phonetics).

Although by no means the whole story, the most familiar of these three areas and the sort of phonetics that tends to predominate is articulatory phonetics. It's also the least expensive of the areas to teach! You can sit an entire cohort of students in a lecture room, tell them one week about consonants, another week about vowels, and so on, going into greater or lesser depth, as time permits. With an hour or two per week over a ten or twelve-week semester, an introduction to general phonetics might consist of something like the schedule in Table 1 which skims the surface of the whole subject – introducing the subject matter, some terminology, and telling students briefly about all three aspects of phonetics. There are no details about the sounds of a specific language (although where possible, examples are always taken from the students' mother tongue), no processes of connected speech or suprasegmentals and no practical training – the listening and production skills mentioned earlier. However, listening and production skills are both things that the student of a modern foreign language needs to acquire, and traditionally these would have been part of basic training programmes such as the courses in London and Marburg, reflecting the importance once accorded to speaking a foreign language intelligibly. (Practical training would require more hours on the timetable.)

TABLE 1. Introduction to general phonetics – a sample syllabus.

WEEK	TOPIC
Week 1	General introduction to articulatory, acoustic and auditory phonetics plus the IPA Chart
Week 2	Consonants and voice, place, manner of articulation
Week 3	Vowel production and the vowel diagram
Week 4	The further role of the larynx in voicing, voice quality, tone, intonation...
Week 5	The further role of the velum in air-flow, nasality
Week 6	Primary and secondary articulations
Week 7	Air stream mechanisms
Week 8	Introduction to acoustics: spectrograms and waveforms
Week 9	The hearing mechanism and speech perception
Week 10	Listening to and transcribing speech

However, just as Jones found a hundred years ago, general phonetics is still often unpopular with arts and humanities students today. They consider it ‘too hard’ or ‘too scientific’. Unfortunately, it is precisely in response to such student complaints that the general phonetics foundation is now all too frequently further undermined. Increasingly, institutions are at the mercy of so-called student feedback which is used to measure ‘student satisfaction’ and feed public league tables. For a university to maintain a high ranking, student complaints have to be seen to be addressed, and it seems all too often that if students don’t like something and their complaints are vigorous enough, the easiest way out is just to stop doing it. So, we now have three reasons to dispense with undergraduate general phonetics – cost, time and popularity.

But without this general phonetics foundation, the detailed phonetics of a target language – the very thing that students of languages often do seem to think would be useful – becomes inaccessible. The advantage of approaching this specific application of phonetics with a general phonetic foundation cannot be overstated. And that’s what pronunciation training is, of course, a branch of *applied phonetics*... but you can’t apply something you haven’t got!

In 1909, while avoiding (as we have seen) the off-putting scientific truth, Jones wrote in the Preface to the first edition of *The Pronunciation of English*: “[...] a study of the pronunciation of the mother tongue is the indispensable foundation for the acquisition of the correct pronunciation of foreign languages” (Jones 1909, vii). Here, of course, the “pronunciation of the mother tongue” is a euphemism for a general phonetics course (which uses examples from the students’ mother tongue(s)). For example, without such training, the articulatory phonetic concept of Voice Onset Time in instances such as *long VOT* (which is a critical characteristic of English plosives), tends at best to be identified by one of its perceptual correlates, *aspiration* or *h* (which only captures half the story). What is worse, further down the training chain, you then start to hear childish talk about *puffs of air*! This is truly ridiculous. In the language classroom today, interactive displays enable both demonstration and monitoring of target values to facilitate learning. At the very least, the teacher needs to be *au fait* with the technology available, know how to use it, and understand what the images and visual feedback mean. You cannot describe the phonetics of any language without reference to the basics of speech production and these days, too, without a proper understanding of basic speech acoustics and imaging techniques. Spectrograms, speech waveforms and pitch contours can all contribute to the acquisition of good pronunciation.

You don’t acquire such knowledge by osmosis. Nonetheless, many teachers of foreign or ‘additional’ languages seem to consider they are trained and qualified to teach pronunciation. And they often (mistakenly) call this particular exercise ‘phonetics’.

3 A Century of Scholarship

3.1 An Overview

Although by no means the only contributors to the field over the last century, the names of scholars like Daniel Jones and A.C. Gimson undoubtedly dominate and their key publications are listed in Table 2, moving from Jones, via Gimson to Alan Cruttenden and beyond.

However, while this paper focuses primarily on these field leaders, it does not entirely ignore the many other excellent – sometimes brilliant – contributors who worked alongside them.

TABLE 2. A century of selected phonetics and pronunciation training texts.

Year of publication	Author/Editor	Edition/Title (Edition used here)
		KEY: Bold print indicates practice books
1909	Jones	<i>The Pronunciation of English</i> (Definitive: 1958)
1912		<i>Phonetic Readings in English</i>
1918		<i>An Outline of English Phonetics</i> (9th ed., 1960 reprinted)
1962	Gimson	<i>Introduction to the Pronunciation of English</i> (1st ed.)
1970		<i>Introduction to the Pronunciation of English</i> (2nd ed.)
1975		<i>A Practical Course of English Pronunciation</i>
1980		<i>Introduction to the Pronunciation of English</i> (3rd ed.)
1989	Ramsaran	<i>Introduction to the Pronunciation of English</i> (4th ed.)
1994	Cruttenden	<i>Gimson's Pronunciation of English</i> (5th ed.)
2001		<i>Gimson's Pronunciation of English</i> (6th ed.)
2008		<i>Gimson's Pronunciation of English</i> (7th ed.)
2014		<i>Gimson's Pronunciation of English</i> (8th ed.)
2019	Lindsey	<i>English After RP</i>

3.2 Jones

As we've seen, just over a century ago, in 1918, Daniel Jones first published the *Outline*. The ninth and final edition, published in 1964, is not only testament to the value placed on this work (still selling robustly half a century later), but also tells the reader briefly how the publication had developed over the years:

- First published in 1918, with a second edition in 1922, the *Outline* was completely re-written as a third edition in 1932;
- Jones considered the fourth to seventh editions (1934 to 1949) to be substantially just reprints of the third, although the seventh edition (1949) recognised the new global, post-war importance of American English, adding an appendix on 'American Pronunciation';
- The eighth edition, in 1956, was a watershed moment – in response to “the fact that the pronunciation of English [had] undergone changes” the book was completely re-written incorporating numerous “improvements” an including “new phonetic facts or advances in our knowledge of phonetic theory”. In this edition, too, a full appendix on ‘Types of Phonetic Transcription’ replaced the original page of rules for converting “broad” transcriptions of English to “narrow” ones and the ‘American Pronunciation’ appendix (introduced in the seventh edition) was expanded and thoroughly overhauled (see Jones 1956, v–vi);
- The final, ninth edition, according to Jones, was simply a reprint of the eighth but “incorporating a few necessary corrections” (Jones 1960, vi).

The *Outline* provided a detailed theoretical account of the pronunciation of Southern British English at the time, written primarily from the “point of view of the foreign learner of English”. It included accounts of “the chief mispronunciations heard from foreign people” along with “methods” aimed at “enabling students to pronounce correctly”. The publishers avowed that not only foreign learners of English, but also “English students of speech” would “find much to interest them in this book, since much information is given in it regarding the fundamentals of general phonetic theory” including *inter alia* “principles of ear-training” – and here the publishers themselves are finally bigging up the *scientific*, general phonetic orientation of the work, presumably believing that this would not, after all, undermine sales! (See cover blurb for all quotations in this paragraph.)

However, as we saw, in 1909, even before the publication of the *Outline*, Jones had published another account of English pronunciation, *The Pronunciation of English*. Jones had been engaged by CUP as the editor of a projected series of pronunciation manuals. His English volume was the first. (The series would later also include his *Pronunciation of Russian*.) But the volume is surprisingly lightweight (see below) given that Jones had promised a detailed analysis with this book, even planning a subtitle (never used): “A manual of phonetics for English students.” Again, the cover blurb is historically instructive. For the 1956 definitive edition, this tells us that the book “was written originally as a detailed description of the phonetics of English, presented from the point of view of the native English-speaking student.” It goes on “[...] it soon established itself as a standard textbook in universities where English is a foreign language, because it provides in a lucid and authoritative manner the basic information needed by foreign students of the language”. In other words, in spite (or maybe *because*) of its scientifically-based approach, it found a large overseas market. The book contains:

- A descriptive account of English pronunciation (including stress, rhythm and intonation)
- Production-training – Section XV Practical exercises
- Recommendations for ear-training (Section XVI)
- Sound-by-sound comments on a number of native accents of English
- Illustrative texts in phonetic transcription of RP and several regional varieties (including annotated examples of Scottish English and American English)

However, the core phonetic content was actually quite slight, taking just 69 pages, and Collins and Mees speculate that the publishers may have forced Jones to compress this first part of the book (Collins and Mees 1999, 67), possibly because what this earlier volume, *The Pronunciation of English*, does **not** do, is cater for the foreign learner of English, neither summarising typical errors, nor offering remedial practice materials. The transcribed passages in different accents at the end of this volume are scientific data, not pronunciation training materials. It seems highly likely, therefore, that prompted by discovery of the overseas market that had opened up for this text, rather than change its nature completely in subsequent editions, Jones instead started afresh and went on to write the *Outline* overtly addressed to foreign learners. Not to put too fine a point on it, it was suddenly obvious that the **application** of general phonetics to language training was where the money lay and not in the science of phonetics itself.

Also noteworthy here, however, is the fact that both books blend all three aspects of phonetics. The articulatory phonetics accounts (coupled with general phonetic production/mouth-training advice or, in the *Outline* pronunciation training) dominate, but alongside the traditional, impressionistic vocal tract diagrams, the books also contain other illustrations of a more instrumental nature (photographs of lip gestures and static palatograms of tongue gestures). It was as necessary a hundred years ago for students to be familiar with interpreting the visual evidence as it is today. And finally, there is ear-training which nods to speech perception. And as if to underline the importance he placed on ear-training, Jones scribbled in his personal copy of *The Pronunciation of English* that “untrained persons cant hear differences wh do exist, & think they hear diffs wh. dont exist” (*sic*) (Collins and Mees 1990, 69).

Many other textbooks of the time shied away from incorporating phonetic theory. Indeed, Jones’s own 1912 publication *Phonetic Readings in English* was one such book – a practice book only, containing just transcribed reading texts. This suggests that Jones also took for granted that the exercise of reading from transcription was an everyday requirement and an essential skill. But how students are supposed to learn the art of reading transcription without any theoretical back-up is unclear. It was almost as if transcription itself had the power to give readers the skill to pronounce the language, as if the transcription carried the solution to the pronunciation learning process. And Jones himself must at least have considered this conundrum because in the preface to the 1955 final edition of this book, he refers students who do not wish to spend time studying theory to other, even more simplified readers (including MacCarthy’s 1956 *English Conversation Reader in Phonetic Transcription with Intonation Marks*, Scott’s 1949 *English Conversations in Simplified Phonetic Transcription*, and Tibbitt’s 1946 *Phonetic Reader for Foreign Learners of English*). Each book uses the author’s own simplified transcription but none include theory or explanatory material. The accessibility of the transcription is taken entirely for granted.

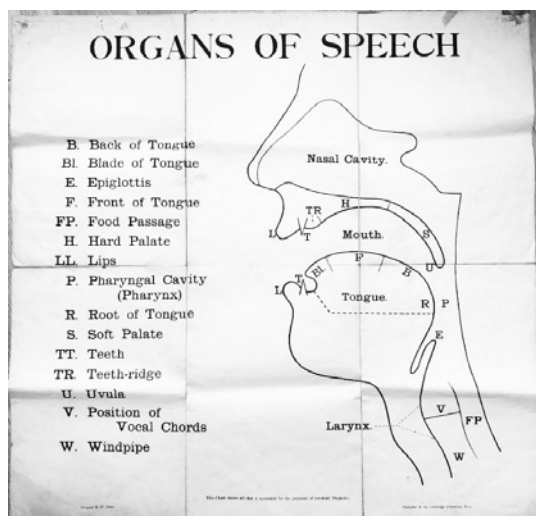


FIGURE 1. The Organs of Speech, Daniel Jones.

Jones was also a master of teaching aids in the form of wall charts and suchlike. Figure 1, a wall chart recently found in boxes of documentation and paperwork relating to the *Certificate* examination of the International Phonetic Association, is evidence of this. The image shows a much used, but undated wall chart, printed on linen backed paper, published by Cambridge University Press and written (or designed) by Daniel Jones. The chart is a large, well-labelled vocal tract drawing beneath which is written “This Chart shows all that is necessary for the purpose of practical Phonetics.” And by ‘practical phonetics’ here, of course, it is now clear that Jones is talking about phonetics applied to pronunciation training.

In 1917, Jones also published the 1st edition of his renowned *Everyman’s English Pronouncing Dictionary* (EPD, now known as the *Cambridge English Pronouncing Dictionary*), which went through twelve more editions by the time of his death in 1967. This belief in the central value of transcription and the ability to read from it is still enshrined in the Certificate examination of the International Phonetic Association today. The examination, of course, also dates from the beginning of the last century and might well be considered out of date in today’s world. Nowadays, we rarely read phonetically transcribed prose narratives with our students (even if some students are still encouraged to make transcriptions themselves).

To sum up, what this mixture of Jones’s key publications suggests, is that while he himself fully engaged in the scientific description of speech, he also understood perfectly the value of certain aspects of this to the language student. What he did not always do, was properly separate these two interests: scientific description on the one hand, and the skills-focused application of this on the other.

However, he was also active in promoting phonetics as a subject of study. The University College London calendar for 1920 lists Jones as offering a course in general phonetics for those who wish to become teachers of phonetics. It’s my guess that this means basic general phonetic theory (including ear-training and mouth-training) for those going on to become language teachers – in other words, the exact general (and English) phonetic theory and practical skills that would be needed to succeed in the IPA Certificate examination just mentioned and considered at that time a language teaching qualification (see, for example, Ashby, Ashby, and Moore 2019).

So, these seminal but now historical texts may be themselves the very source of the confusion between phonetics and pronunciation that exists today. But the distinction, as we have just seen, was definitely clear in the minds of the authors. Jones and Gimson were first and foremost phoneticians, Jones in particular researching in general phonetics and engaging with the phonetic description of a number of exotic foreign languages. But the money lay in the foreign language training market and especially in pronunciation training for foreign students of English. Both Jones and Gimson knew this. Their formal phonetic descriptions of English were taken up and used not only by students of phonetics and linguistics but also, perhaps even more widely, by language teachers... formal, general phonetics became inextricably bound up with pronunciation teaching. Instead of teasing apart the scientific research and description, and interleaving a relevant but simplified account with practice materials for the language training market, first Jones and then Gimson endeavoured to be all things to all people. The rest, as they say, is history.

3.3 Important Others

Jones and Gimson, of course, were not alone in this field at this time. There were others, and especially there were others who managed to write and publish theoretically simplified but very popular and instructive applied phonetics textbooks which **did** include the necessary theory. One such was Julian Pring's *Colloquial English Pronunciation*, written in 1959 specifically with self-access students in mind (this work received high praise from Jones who contributed the Foreword, writing "Mr Pring, who is a skilled phonetician, is well qualified to write such a book, as he has been teaching English on phonetic lines for nearly twenty years. I can strongly recommend his present work.") and another, O'Connor's *Better English Pronunciation* (published originally in 1967, with a 2nd edition in 1980). Pring's book is outstanding, and reviewing O'Connor in *The Times Educational Supplement*, Jack Windsor Lewis wrote that it "can quite safely be said to be the most effective [book] ever written to help the ordinary learner to improve his pronunciation."

For the first half of the twentieth century, Jones, and later his successor Gimson, dominated the market for phonetic textbooks. They remain icons in the field to this day. But I think it has to be said that neither really mastered the applied model required by the pronunciation training community in spite of the fact that this community was their principal audience and they both overtly claimed to be writing specifically for it. This simplified and focused theoretical account of the speech of the target language which dovetails with a practical application of the facts was left to these other scholars to achieve.

3.4 Gimson

The natural successor to Daniel Jones in the phonetic textbook market was his former student and younger colleague at UCL, A.C. Gimson who in 1962 published the first edition of *An Introduction to the Pronunciation of English* (hereafter *An Introduction*). This volume, Gimson said, was "intended to serve as a general introduction to the subject" which "sets out to place the phonetics of British English in a larger framework than has been customary" explaining that "emphasis is given to the function of the spoken medium as a form of communication." Gimson also notes that the book contains "information concerning the acoustic nature of English sounds" (Gimson 1962, v).

Accordingly, the book opens with a chapter on communication and – a further departure from Jones's books – chapter 3 concentrates on acoustic phonetics. Interestingly however, although he asserts the book's content derives directly from his experience of "teaching the spoken language to both English students and to foreign learners" (Gimson 1962, v) (exactly like Jones before him), all the ear-training, mouth-training and transcription-based materials found in Jones's volumes have gone. Instead, in Parts II and III of *An Introduction*, only "general advice to the foreign learner is given" – each sound in Part II has a section headed "Advice to foreign learners" and in Part III, a sub-section containing advice is included at the end of each of the three final chapters. The practical training has gone completely and ear-training receives no mention. From the start, *An Introduction* is more in the style of a reference text than a straightforward textbook.

The second edition followed in 1970 with very little changed beyond an update on the status and nature of RP, especially among younger speakers, and the addition of a section considering the “intelligibility of spoken English in the world”.

Mid-way between this and the publication of the third edition, in 1972, Gimson appeared to address his exclusion of the Jonesian-style practical materials by publishing *A Practical Course of English Pronunciation. A perceptual approach*. But it was not until 1980, with the publication of the third edition of *An Introduction*, that a chapter appeared called ‘Teaching the Pronunciation of English’, overtly acknowledging the link between phonetics and pronunciation training. Here, Gimson advises that “any teacher or learner must consider how much of the time given to the acquisition of another language should be devoted to pronunciation and what level of performance is necessary to efficient communication”. (Gimson 1972, 299) In this chapter, too, we meet the embryos of debates still raging today, nearly half a century later, and which were foreshadowed even earlier by Ripman:

- **Which accent should be taken as a model?** Ripman, at the end of the nineteenth century, as we saw, was an advocate of ‘educated London’ speech. In 1950, in the preface to the fourth edition of *The Pronunciation of English*, Jones declared that he “found [...] it can no longer be said that any standard exists” and he did not “think it desirable to attempt to establish one” (Jones 1958, vi). Although while still acknowledging the increasing global importance of the General American accent, he continued unhesitatingly to choose RP for teaching to foreign learners of English. At the time, of course, RP was (and probably still is) the most widely documented accent, as well as the one spoken by Jones and the majority of his colleagues. As the world changed, Gimson later pointed out that the choice of accent is actually very important. The language has so many established and widely spoken mother-tongue world variants as well as the long-established *lingua franca* variants in Africa and in the Indian sub-continent. He even mentions the notion of a contrived or artificial, International English accent which he had discussed a couple of years earlier in a volume honouring A S Hornby (Gimson 1978, 45–53). Today, as we shall see, Cruttenden has moved away from RP altogether, taking an entirely descriptive approach with what is now called General British (GB);
- **What level of achievement should be expected?** Acknowledging that only in exceptional cases will a foreign learner of a language acquire a pure native-like accent, the new chapter on communication implies the target is simply to be clear enough to be understood – although it does not overtly claim this. However, this does also raise the first hint of current debates around intelligibility and comprehensibility (for example, Thomson and Derwing 2014). In his chapter on teaching pronunciation, Gimson said specifically that “It is rare for a foreign learner [...] to approach the native’s receptive and productive competence. Indeed it can be argued that only exceptionally is it necessary to have such an aim.” (Gimson 1980, 14)
- **Should you order the introduction of topics in a pronunciation training class?** Neither Jones, nor later Gimson or Cruttenden tackled this probably unanswerable

question. It is nonetheless a valid question in that unlike grammar teaching, which can be strategically phased, **all** aspects of pronunciation are present from the very first words in the very first class; what then, should the teacher do?

- **What general principle should inform the pronunciation teaching model?** Jones more or less came in on the outgoing tide of the Reform Movement (pioneered among others by Wilhelm Viëtor) and published during the rise and establishment of the Direct Method (pioneered by Charles Berlitz). Both favoured plenty of oral practice. Gimson was of a younger generation again, publishing in the heyday of the Audiolingual Method of language training, again involving a strong focus on pronunciation. The big question, then, was which method – if any were suitable at all – should inform the teaching of pronunciation as distinct from the teaching of a language itself. Needless to say, beyond the shared and firm belief that ear-training must precede mouth-training, there was no definitive answer to this question.

3.5 Ramsaran

A few years after the 3rd edition, in 1985, Gimson died. And in 1988, the publisher (Edward Arnold) handed responsibility for revising the book to Gimson's collaborator, colleague, and one-time student, Susan Ramsaran who prepared (with "invaluable assistance" from Alan Cruttenden, acknowledged not by Ramsaran but by the publisher) the fourth edition of the book, published in 1989. Other than updating throughout on research and terminology, additional information on the ever-changing characteristics of RP and the stylistics of RP speech based on her own research is the only personal contribution included in the fourth edition which otherwise remains a very close parallel of the third.

3.6 Cruttenden

Ramsaran then retiring from the academic field to pursue a new career in the church, Alan Cruttenden's involvement continued in all subsequent editions of *An Introduction*. In fact, we have reached a point where the book is usually no longer referred to as 'Gimson' but as 'Cruttenden's Gimson' or even recently (since the eighth edition dropped the 'revised by' that previously preceded Cruttenden's name on the cover) just as 'Cruttenden!' (But I don't think Cruttenden sees the work as exclusively his, regarding himself rather as the custodian of an important contribution to the field of phonetics which, had Gimson lived, he himself would have continued to update and develop, keeping the volume always at the cutting edge.)

So, what did Cruttenden bring to the table with regard to this seminal text which he described in 1994 as having "retained its pre-eminence as the standard reference book on the pronunciation of English over a period of thirty-two years"? Well, he began by changing the name of the book to *Gimson's Pronunciation of English* – a change which both acknowledged that he was not himself the primary author so much as the custodian of this *magnum opus*, and at the same time overtly recognized that the book is rather more than introductory in nature – a status which over the years he has been at pains to promote. Having changed the title of the book, Cruttenden continued by undertaking a "major revision" in which he re-

wrote “large parts of the book and altered details on almost every page, to include new facts and approaches” (Cruttenden 1994, v). The overall phonemic, sound-by-sound, framework of the descriptive chapters was retained (as much for reasons of accessibility to readers as anything else), but a new chapter was added on standard and regional accents. Cruttenden also acknowledged the wider market of the book which in addition to being used by students of linguistics and foreign learners of English was by this time also very widely used by speech and language therapy students; to this end, information on language acquisition by native learners was also included for the first time at appropriate points. Spelling frequency details were added following the spelling-to-sound examples at the outset of each phoneme. The edition further included new formant information for the RP vowels, newly drawn vowel diagrams, and changes in transcription. And, for the first time, dynamic palatograms appeared alongside the consonantal vocal tract drawings (the mid-sagittal sections of which Cruttenden was also critical, hoping to improve these impressionistic sketches in a subsequent edition). But at this point too, although they remained essentially impressionistic, he updated them to the extent of having all the hitherto freehand drawings drawn on computer for the first time, ensuring uniformity. Cruttenden also updated the final chapter on teaching pronunciation, which (following the inclusion of the new accents chapter) now became Chapter 13.

The subsequent sixth and seventh editions continued to extend inclusion of technology-based insights. In the sixth edition, the most noticeable difference was the addition of spectrographic data, by now easily available, and accessible to students via their laptops, tablets and smartphones. Textual developments here included: re-writing of the more linguistic/phonological sections on the syllable, phonotactics and word accent; updating the sections on RP and on Estuary English; revision of advice offered to teachers (and note, **teachers**, not student learners of English) including the addition of a section dealing with pronouncing dictionaries.

The seventh edition was perhaps the most visually different (and maybe the most attractive) and was accompanied for the first time by a companion website. Here, in addition to the palatographic and spectrographic images (introduced respectively in the fifth and sixth editions), in the seventh, Cruttenden did what he talked about in his Foreword to the fifth edition when discussing the freehand vocal tract drawings for consonants – he was finally able to include “more objectively compiled diagrams”, each checked against “frames taken from dynamic MRI scans of the mouth during the speaking of various English phrases” (Cruttenden 2008, xiii). Thus, the vocal tract diagrams were no longer speculative or impressionistic but now derived directly from factual evidence. In the seventh edition, too, Cruttenden added text-boxes with information about spellings and sound sources.

Throughout the editions, errors have been corrected, transcriptions corrected (or updated), references checked and facts updated. The seventh edition was no different in this respect. Here too, Cruttenden also brought the final chapter more firmly into the twenty-first century. Chapter 13 had a new title: “Teaching and Learning English as an Additional Language”. The chapter responded to the radical change of status of English in the world in the 57 years since the first publication of the book and to the very rapid change witnessed over the last 10 years. Quoting Cruttenden himself, we read that he “attempted to reflect present-day usage of English

as a world language in presenting two alternative targets to RP (and to other native-speaker targets) for those learning English as an additional (and often official) language and for those using English as a *lingua franca*.” Cruttenden recognizes the possibly controversial nature of his recommendations “both as models and in their details”. He also here widens the definition of RP as a reference accent, to be more in keeping with reality vested in the thousands of speakers of modern, modified, Regional and other varieties of this accent. He explicitly acknowledges the now old-fashioned and therefore inappropriate (even amusing) nature of “Refined RP” which is no longer fit for purpose in the language learning forum – the speech of yesteryear.

The current edition is the eighth – the fourth for which Cruttenden has had sole responsibility. Perhaps the most valuable development here is the enhancement of the companion website and the now routine cross-references to this in certain chapters of the book itself. Also in this edition, Cruttenden has finally completed his rewrite of the entire text where the last parts, Chapter 6 and the first part of Chapter 7, have now also been re-cast to bring the language into a more simple, contemporary and readable style. Other than these stylistic differences, however, Cruttenden has included a couple of quite major changes in the eighth edition. First, the now old-fashioned and somewhat elitist term RP has been replaced by the more inclusive and flexible term General British. Second, Cruttenden has made three major changes to the transcription of vowels, primarily (he explains) in response to actual changes in pronunciation: /æ/ is now represented as /a/, the diphthong /eə/ which has long been subject to smoothing is now /ɛ:/ (which parallels changes in other texts), and the weak vowels *schwɪ* and *schwɯ* are introduced, replacing long /i:/ and /u:/ in final and prevocalic positions (even in stress positions where, for me, new diphthongs are created: *seeing* /'siŋ/, *doing* /'dʊŋ/ for example, essentially saying these are now monosyllabic words).

Finally here, Cruttenden states explicitly that since he first came to work on the book, his aim has been to establish it firmly as a reference book rather than a simple textbook. I think many people would feel, like me, that it has always been more weighty than the name ‘textbook’ suggests. But the eighth edition, even with its continued consideration of the needs of the foreign learner, is undoubtedly a volume of serious reference status. It is quite unique.

3.7 *Inter Alia*

I mentioned older publications such as Pring and O’Connor. But in the eleven years since the last edition of *Cruttenden’s Gimson*, there have also been many other publications embracing general phonetic theory and the phonetics of English.

Perhaps one of the most widely known and current of these is Collins and Mees’s *Practical Phonetics and Phonology* – more recently published in the new 4th edition as Collins, Mees and Carley, *Practical English Phonetics and Phonology*. Interestingly, this book parallels the Jones-Gimson tradition of being loosely accompanied by a practical text – published in 2018 (four years after the death of Beverly Collins), Carley, Mees and Collins, *English Phonetics and Pronunciation Practice* is another widely available practical course.

Other well-known publications relevant to the present topic include Roach’s *English Phonetics and Phonology. A practical course*, Kenworthy’s *Teaching English Pronunciation*, etc.

3.8 Lindsey

Compared with these more traditionally styled and perhaps rather conservative offerings, Lindsey's 2019 publication *English after RP* is not in any way a traditional text book. Rather, it's a commentary for the phonetically informed reader – for language teachers, speech and language therapists, accent coaches, etc. *English After RP* identifies “notable ways in which contemporary standard British speech differs from the British [...] accent of the last century, Received Pronunciation (RP)” (Lindsey 2019, vii). The amalgam of such developments and changes create what Lindsey refers to as SSB (Standard Southern British) which is much the same as Cruttenden's GB (General British) or Collins, Mees and Carley's NRP (Non-Regional Pronunciation). Unfortunately, the lack of agreement on terminology obscures the parallels.

Having summarized useful and interesting generalities, the book starts by considering the increasingly common phenomenon of strengthening – a notable characteristic of so many of today's BBC commentators from the chief political correspondent Vicky Young to media editor Amal Rajan (routinely using strong *a* /eɪ/) or journalist Gavin Ramjaun (with a predilection for strong *the* /ði:/). I witnessed a demonstration of this change just recently: the then 93 year-old Queen Elizabeth II concluded her D-day speech with a classic Jonesian, early 20th century RP GOOSE (/u:/) weakened to FOOT /ʊ/ in *thank you* ['θæŋk jʊ] which was in marked contrast to my grandchildren's 21st century longer (or 're-strengthened') and diphthongized, GOOSE-fronted /u:/, ['θæŋk jʊw]. Strengthening was a feature I struggled to come to terms with when still teaching. Ten to fifteen years ago, strengthening became increasingly evident in transcriptions written by my students, but I encouraged them to target instead a 'standard weak form' realization of words like *a*, *the*, *of*... Now, I realize this was probably a mistake. With hindsight, this was evidently the embryo of today's more clearly established process or pattern... a sound change that I tried to over-ride!

Lindsey's chapter on “The Anti-clockwise Vowel Shift” is clear and concise and supports the argument put forward by many (including Cruttenden) for replacing traditional /æ/ with the symbol /a/. Lindsey also records the contrary, forward movement of the starting point of the MOUTH diphthong (which in turn supports the transcription update in the seventh edition of *Cruttenden's Gimson* where Gimson's original /aʊ/ was replaced by the present-day /aʊ/).

Lindsey effectively makes a list of all the notable changes to be heard in contemporary (educated) modern English speech and ticks them off, chapter by chapter, topic by topic, providing all and only the crucial information for the reader. Each chapter can be read as an annex or appendix to the corresponding section in *Cruttenden's Gimson* or Collins et al., sometimes covering new ground and sometimes trendily reinforcing the points made in these more traditional texts (selective equivalences are illustrated in Table 3). And one of the big plusses here, is that Lindsey refers to the English vowel sounds clearly and unambiguously throughout by means of Wells's lexical sets (see Wells 1980) – capitalized keywords, each referring exclusively to all tokens of the vowel value it contains – FLEECE identifying all tokens of the long /i:/ vowel in *tree*, *seize*, *treat*, etc. Would that all authors did this (and that all learners learnt them, as well).

TABLE 3. Selected consonantal changes described by Lindsey compared with treatment in the 8th edition of *Cruttenden's Gimson*.²

Selected consonantal changes identified by Lindsey	Are these treated in 8th edition of <i>Cruttenden's Gimson</i> ?	Is <i>Cruttenden's</i> treatment up-to-date?
1. Aspiration common in all positions	Strongest initially in stressed syllables, etc.	No
2. Affrication of /t/	This is frequent	More or less
3. Final /p t k/ as ejectives common	Ejectives acknowledged as possibility	No
4. Yod-coalescence becoming norm	An optional process only	No
5. Palatoalveolar spread in clusters	(Not discussed)	No
6. Plosive epenthesis	Treated in different parts of the book	More or less
7. Loss of syllabic consonants	(Not discussed)	No
8. Glottalling ² (-Vt → -Vʔ)	Treated under variants of /t/ and also as [ʔ]	Yes
9. /t/-voicing	Similar account to Lindsey	Yes
10. TH-fronting	Similar account to Lindsey	Yes
11. Linking-r	More old-fashioned treatment	More or less

4 Conclusion

This brief survey has skimmed the last 100 years, bringing us to where we stand today. But can such retrospection provide any pointers for the future? In this case, I think it can.

As far as the way forward is concerned, the first thing that needs reinforcing both for teachers and learners, is that when we speak a foreign language, unless we are engaging in state espionage and need to be indistinguishable from all around us, we do not need to sound like native speakers. Indeed, native speakers don't even expect us to sound like them – they may actually like to know that we are different. Accordingly, we shouldn't be disappointed in ourselves when we find we don't or can't sound like a native speaker. Given what we know about first language acquisition, it is unreasonable even to expect to sound like one. I hear people every day who speak brilliantly fluent and easily understood English, but they have a non-native accent. Fluency is not a matter of being able to pronounce like the natives and there is nothing wrong with an accent unless it is so remote from the target that it impairs intelligibility. When playing tennis, we might model ourselves on Serena Williams but we don't ever expect to win grand slams and play as well as she does. Our aim when learning a language is simply to communicate with other speakers of that language – native and non-native alike – to keep the ball going to and fro over the net. The fundamental requirement is to understand and to be understood. We are not required to become indistinguishable from native-speakers.

² Lindsey does not use this term glottalling, coined I believe by Wells, meaning replacement of the /t/ by a glottal stop.

And this takes us back to phonetics, to ear-training and to mouth-training. To understand spoken language, we need to be able to identify what we are hearing. To be understood ourselves, we need to be able to pronounce well enough. . . understanding the spoken language is as much a challenge as speaking it intelligibly. Both reception and production skills need to feature in pronunciation training.

For more advanced learners of English, books like Lindsey's little volume are invaluable. A phonetically aware teacher can listen to input from the television, radio, cinema and so forth, and listen out for the features Lindsey describes. These, then, are the very features that can be used to guide students as they, in turn, listen to input. The shifting sands of spoken language are a challenge to all of us, but language changes all the time and we can't artificially freeze it. What was a fact at the time we learnt it at school may no longer be a fact on the street today.

The language learner and teacher today need to stay informed, be aware and be realistic. This is most easily achieved by being phonetically aware.

So, returning to Figure 1 above, this chart encapsulates 'phonetic awareness' and serves as a summary of phonetics applied to pronunciation training. The vocal tract drawing summarises the scope of articulatory phonetics. For participants in the pronunciation training process, it is the bottom line. If you can conceptualize your vocal tract, your tongue, jaw and lips and their spatial relations one to another, and if you know the terminology, you have the wherewithal to "talk phonetics". You have the basic, minimum phonetic theory to enable you to start describing the pronunciation of any spoken language in the world. *That* is phonetics – the body of information we apply to facilitate pronunciation training.

References

- Ashby Michael G., Patricia Ashby, and David Moore. 2019. "Australia's First Phonetics Laboratory, 1913: Its Founder and Its Context." In *Proceedings of the Congress of Phonetic Sciences*, edited by Sasha Calhoun, Paola Escudero, Marija Tabain and Paul Warren, 1898–1902. Melbourne: University of Melbourne. https://assta.org/proceedings/ICPhS2019/papers/ICPhS_1947.pdf
- Carley, Paul, Inger Mees and Beverly Collins. 2018. *English Phonetics and Pronunciation Practice*. London: Routledge.
- Collins, Beverly, and Inger Mees. 1998. *The Real Professor Higgins. The Life and Work of Daniel Jones*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter GmbH & Co.
- . 2003. *Practical Phonetics and Phonology*. London: Routledge.
- Collins, Beverly, Inger Mees, and Paul Carley. 2019. *Practical English Phonetics and Phonology*, 4th ed. London: Routledge.
- Cruttenden, Alan. 1994. *Gimson's Pronunciation of English*, 5th ed. London: Edward Arnold.
- . 2001. *Gimson's Pronunciation of English*, 6th ed. London: Edward Arnold.
- . 2008. *Gimson's Pronunciation of English*, 7th ed. London: Edward Arnold.
- . 2014. *Gimson's Pronunciation of English*, 8th ed. London: Edward Arnold.
- Gimson, A.C. 1962. *An Introduction to the Pronunciation of English*. London: Edward Arnold.
- . 1970. *An Introduction to the Pronunciation of English*, 2nd ed. London: Edward Arnold.
- . 1975. *A Practical Course in the Pronunciation of English. A Perceptual Approach*. London: Edward Arnold.
- . 1978. "Towards an International Pronunciation of English." In *In Honour of A.S. Hornby*, edited P. Stevens, 45–53. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- . 1980. *An Introduction to the Pronunciation of English*. 3rd ed. London: Edward Arnold.

- . 1989. *An Introduction to the Pronunciation of English*, 4th ed. Revised by Susan Ramsaran. London: Edward Arnold.
- Jones, Daniel J. 1909. *The Pronunciation of English*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- . 1912. *Phonetic Readings in English*. Heidelberg: Carl Winter, Heidelberg Universitätsverlag.
- . 1917. *The English Pronouncing Dictionary*. London: J. M. Dent & Co.
- . 1918. *An Outline of English Phonetics*. Cambridge: W. Heffer & Sons.
- . 1955. *Phonetic Readings in English*. Improved ed. Heidelberg: Carl Winter, Heidelberg Universitätsverlag.
- . 1958. *The Pronunciation of English*, 4th ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- . 1972. *The Pronunciation of English*. Definitive ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- . 1960. *An Outline of English Phonetics*, 9th ed. Cambridge: W. Heffer & Sons.
- Kaufmann, Steve. 2018. "Can We Learn to Speak a Foreign Language Like a Native Speaker?" *The Linguist*. <https://blog.thelinguist.com/speak-like-a-native-speaker>.
- Kenworthy, Joanne. 1987. *Teaching English Pronunciation*. London: Longman.
- MacCarthy, Peter Arthur Desmond. 1956. *English Phonetic Reader in Phonetic Transcription with Intonation Marks*. London: Longman, Green & Co.
- O'Connor, J. D. 1967. *Better English Pronunciation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- . 1980. *Better English Pronunciation*, 2nd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Pring, Julian T. 1959. *Colloquial English Pronunciation*. London: Longman.
- Ripman, Walter. 1907. *Elements of Phonetics. English, French & German*. London: J. M. Dent & Co.
- Roach, Peter. 1983. *English Phonetics and Phonology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- . 2009. *English Phonetics and Phonology*, 4th ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Scott, Norman Carson. 1949. *English Conversations in Simplified Phonetic Transcription*. Cambridge: W. Heffer & Sons.
- Thomson, Ron I., and Tracey M. Derwing. 2014. "The Effectiveness of L2 Pronunciation Instruction: A Narrative Review." *Applied Linguistics* 36 (3): 326–44. <https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/amu076>.
- Tibbitts, E. Leonard. 1946. *A Phonetic Reader for Foreign Learners of English*. Cambridge: W. Heffer & Sons.
- Wells, J. C. 1982. *Accents of English*. Vols 1–3. London: Cambridge University Press.