

ROUTLEDGE ENGLISH LANGUAGE INTRODUCTIONS



Practical English Phonetics and Phonology

A RESOURCE BOOK FOR STUDENTS



Beverley Collins, Inger M. Mees and Paul Carley
Fourth edition



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AND PAUL CARLEY**

 **Routledge**
Taylor & Francis Group
LONDON AND NEW YORK

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

The *Routledge English Language Introductions* offer key information and a set of resources that you can use to suit your own style of study. The books are divided into four sections:

- A Introduction** – sets out the key concepts for the area of study.
- B Development** – adds to your knowledge and builds on the key ideas already introduced.
- C Exploration** – provides examples of language data and guides you through your own investigation of the field.
- D Extension** – offers you the chance to compare your expertise with key readings in the area. These are taken from the work of important writers, and are provided with guidance and questions for your further thought.

Most books in the *Routledge English Language Introductions* series are designed to be read either straight through (like a traditional textbook), or across the numbered units to allow you to follow a thread in depth quickly. For *Practical English Phonetics and Phonology* we have retained the four-section structure. However, the nature of phonetics requires a cumulative build-up of knowledge; so you first need to read all the units in Sections A and B fully and in sequence before going on to the accent samples in Section C, and the extension readings in Section D.

The glossary/index at the end, together with the suggestions for further reading, will help to keep you orientated. The textbook has a supporting website with extra commentary, suggestions, additional material and support for teachers and students.

PRACTICAL ENGLISH PHONETICS AND PHONOLOGY

One word in the title above is all-important: note that this book concentrates on *practical* rather than theoretical aspects of English phonetics and phonology. It has been our aim to present the subject in the kind of down-to-earth way that readers will find easy to follow, enabling them to absorb the most significant basic principles and terminology. Exercise activities are provided at regular intervals to reinforce and extend what has been learnt.

We emphasise throughout how phonetics and phonology can supply insights to help you understand those aspects of speech and pronunciation that most people seem to find interesting. These include such matters as the ways in which regional accents differ from each other, how over the centuries English pronunciation has changed (and is still changing) and how phonetic knowledge can help you to pronounce foreign languages more effectively. Incidentally, we must state at the outset that this is

not a book on elocution or speech training. We believe that the way you speak your *native* language is your own concern, and it isn't any of our business to tell native English speakers that certain types of accent are better or worse than others. (For non-natives, we do provide some hints and guidance on making your English pronunciation more convincing.)

The practical emphasis also explains why we include such a large number of audio recordings on the companion website. Not only does this provide you with spoken examples as you read along, but it also enables you to listen to nearly fifty minutes of samples of English drawn from all over the world. A final practical resource is the website with extra information, questions, and keys to exercise activities. By accessing this material, you can go on to expand your knowledge by investigating areas of speech science beyond what we can deal with in an introductory textbook.

Section A introduces some basic concepts and leads you on to absorb the ideas and terminology needed for the all-round study of human speech (i.e. general phonetics). It introduces the phoneme and teaches you how to use phonemic transcription to write down the sounds of English with greater accuracy than ordinary spelling would ever allow. In addition, it provides an up-to-date description of the consonants and vowels of modern British English.

Building on this foundation, Section B develops your expertise through a closer study of many of the interesting features of connected speech such as assimilation, elision, stress and intonation. You'll also find out how English has developed over the centuries, and how its pronunciation is changing even now in our own time. This section is rounded off with guidelines showing you how practical phonetics can be used both as an aid for English speakers learning foreign languages, and also as an effective way of teaching English pronunciation to non-natives.

Section C explores English in a selection of its many varieties. The audio recordings include English spoken by twenty-five genuine speakers of different English accents worldwide – ranging from Dublin to Delhi, and from Scotland to Singapore. For each accent there is a full transcript plus a brief description of the salient phonetic features. Section D extends your knowledge further by means of a selection of writings about phonetics by well-known experts in the field. These take in a wide range – including attitudes to regional accents, teaching and learning the pronunciation of a foreign language, the need for a reformed alphabet which takes account of different pronunciations in different accents and the syllabification of English words. Our hope is that through reading these authors you'll be inspired to go on to discover much more about that most complex and fascinating of human activities – speech.

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