

M D Munro Mackenzie

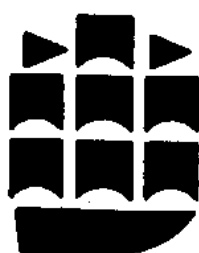
Modern English Pronunciation Practice

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M. D. Munro Mackenzie



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Introduction

Many teachers of pronunciation find that they have to waste time writing exercises on the blackboard, or dictating them. Even those whose students use a textbook come up against this difficulty. It is not the fault of the textbooks: the fact is that a textbook on pronunciation would be too voluminous if it included comprehensive exercises.

The aim of this book is to provide a wide range of exercises, so that the teacher whose students have the book can concentrate on pronunciation without devoting precious time to writing out lists and sentences on the blackboard. The saving in time allows more concentrated and extensive practice.

In these exercises, the various sounds ('phonemes') of English are identified, for quick reference, by means of the symbols of the International Phonetic Alphabet. However, the word-lists and reading matter have not been transcribed into phonetic symbols. Various teachers use various systems of transcription, and if the system used in a book is not that used by a particular teacher, the change from one system to another may be confusing to most of his students, especially in the early stages.

The exercises in this book are concerned with the 'pure' vowels, the diphthongs, and the consonants of English, in that order.

In the sections on the vowels and diphthongs, the 'First practice' consists (nearly always) of single-syllable words; in 'Later practice' are given words of more than one syllable, containing vowels or diphthongs other than that under study. Then come, when appropriate, 'Word-contrasts' such as 'sheep' and 'ship', or 'nut' and 'not'. Finally, there is some reading matter in which the particular vowel or diphthong occurs frequently. It should be noted that in the reading matter on the neutral vowel ('schwa') all the weak syllables contain only this vowel, or no vowel at all.

In the sections on the consonants, the first exercise deals with the consonant generally (more or less as 'principal member of the phoneme') and there is no exercise for later practice; there follow exercises on word-contrasts and other matters of interest, such as

the pronunciation of the sound in a particular phonetic environment; reading matter is then provided. There are also exercises on the weak forms and on word-junctures. Whenever appropriate, homophones have been included in the word-lists, and even repeated: this helps students to learn both the spellings and the pronunciation.

No exercises on intonation are given. This is partly because they would make the book too bulky, and mainly because there are in print certain excellent books on the intonation of English.

Using the Exercises

For the benefit of those who have not yet had much experience in the teaching of pronunciation, the following notes are given.

As a general principle, no word or sentence should be pronounced by the students until the teacher has pronounced it. The word-lists dealing with a particular sound (e.g. Exercises 1.1, 12.1) give the student practice in hearing a sound in various sound-contexts, and then in imitating the sound; these lists generally provide examples of the sound when it comes initially, inside a word, or at the end of a word. In some cases words have been arranged with reference to the spelling (e.g. Exercises 1.1, 3.1). The teacher may take the word-list word by word, or go through several words before asking students to repeat after him. Some words (e.g. 'acne', 'brad', 'pyx') are of minor importance and in order not to overload the students' vocabulary, the teacher may choose to skip them, or explain them quickly and point out their relative unimportance for vocabulary; such words are included only to give exercise in pronunciation or to complete lists of homophones. The word-lists should be read vertically.

The Later practice exercises (e.g. Exercises 1.2, 3.2) may be gone through when the first practice has given satisfactory results. Attention should always be paid to stress and intonation, the latter especially in the Reading matter exercises.

Students should be encouraged to indicate, by means of a tick placed before the stressed syllable, where the stress falls, and to transcribe words and passages into phonetic notation. Passages may be set for transcription as homework, after they have been worked through orally in class.

The word-contrast exercises (e.g. Exercises 2.5, 3.3) give students valuable ear-training when they are read by the teacher; they then serve as an exercise in pronouncing the sounds under study; they also help to teach the spelling of words.

The exercise on when to pronounce and when not to pronounce spelling *r* (Exercise 37.2) may well be taken at an early stage (careful study of the *r*-sound being left, if desired, until later; the point is that students should

soon learn that a great many of the *r*'s of spelling are not spoken).

Care must be given to accustoming students to hearing and using weak forms as these are all too often given insufficient attention.

Exercise 24.1 is particularly important. Exercise on the stressed forms of words with weak forms has on purpose been relegated to the appendix, and need be used only when the weak forms have been well drilled. Learners usually have little difficulty in speaking strong forms, and persist in upsetting the stress, rhythm and intonation of their sentences by using strong forms where weak forms are required.

Generous margins have been left in the book so that students may have space for putting down transcriptions or making notes.

Phonetic Symbols

(1) 'Pure' Vowels and Diphthongs

1.	i	as in	feed	}	Front Vowels
2.	ɪ		inch		
3.	ɛ		egg		
4.	æ		axe		
5.	ɜ		earth	}	Central Vowels
6.	ə		among		
7.	ʌ		such		
8.	u		food	}	Back Vowels
9.	ʊ		put		
10.	ɔ		lord		
11.	ɒ		ox		
12.	ɑ		ask	}	Diphthongs classified according to the first element
13.	ɪə		ear		
14.	eɪ		ale		
15.	ɛə		air		
16.	aɪ		ice		
17.	aʊ		owl		
18.	ʊə		truer		
19.	*əʊ, oʊ		home		
20.	ɔɪ		oil		

* More recent pronunciation.

(2) Consonants

21.	p	as in	pay	}	Plosive
22.	b		bob		
23.	t		tot		
24.	d		did		
25.	k		kick		
26.	g		go	}	Nasal
27.	m		my		
28.	n		none		
29.	ŋ		thing	}	Lateral
30.	l		low		
31.	f		foe	}	Fricative
32.	v		vie		
33.	θ		think		
34.	ð		that		
35.	s		soft		
36.	z		zoo		
37.	ʃ		shoe		
38.	ʒ		measure		
39.	r		ray		
40.	h		how		

41.	tʃ	church	} Affricative
42.	dʒ	judge	
43.	j	yes	} Semi-vowels
44.	w	way	

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1.1 - 1.3: i

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eat	free
each	tree
east	knee
ease	three
heap	bee, B, be
heat	glee
heave	chief
leave	grief
clean	thief
seat	eve
neat	people
zeal	heal, heel, he'll
breathe	meat, meet, mete
yeast	peal, peel
mean	knead, need
tea	leak, leek
eel	steal, steel
keep	weak, week
feed	flea, flee
weed	key, quay

1.2 Later practice, i

eager	Caesar
Peter	police
Eden	receive
alleviate	employee
secret	agreement
congeal	payee
secrete	conceal
meteor	relief
compete	reveal
even	

1.3 Reading matter, with i frequent.

In Aberdeen they're keen on meat that's lean.

They keep their streets clean and say what they say they mean.

The leaves of these trees are green at this season but if the wind is keen and the leaves freeze, they cease to be green and seem to lose their sheen. These trees need heat to keep them green.

Some teachers' teaching pleases some people but other people feel the same teaching isn't