Everyday Sentences in Spoken English

PALMER & BLANDFORD

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With Phonetic Transcription & Intonation Marks
(For the use of Foreign Students)

BY

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Preface to First and Second Editions.

WHEN the foreign student of English first comes to England he realizes, as perhaps he has never realized before, the difference between possessing a theoretical knowledge of the language and possessing the capacity for using the language in everyday speech. Hitherto he may have looked upon his work either as an interesting linguistic study or as a tedious but necessary preliminary to the passing of some dreaded examination. He is perhaps able to decipher an English text with tolerable accuracy; he is more or less able to translate into classical English the conventional sentences which form the "exercises" contained in his "English Course"; the range of his vocabulary and the extent of his knowledge of classical grammar are such as have enabled him to gain sufficient marks to pass some examination. He may even have paid some attention to the "conversational" side, and have satisfied his teacher as to his capacities for giving oral answers to the set questions contained in his text-book.

But on his arrival in England he finds that his relation towards the language has necessarily changed. English is no longer either an abhorred school-subject nor a fascinating literary hobby; it has now become the medium of communication between himself and the people by whom he is surrounded. His personal comfort depends on his being able to understand and to speak the English of daily converse. Unless he can express his wants, his wants will not be attended to. If he is not able to communicate readily and intelligibly with the policeman, the shopkeeper, the landlady, and his English acquaintances, he will find himself involved in misunderstandings and at cross purposes with the people who constitute his environment.

He will find that his pronunciation differs so much from that of native speakers that there may be mutual unintelligibility. The English sentences that he constructs so ingeniously and laboriously may result in stares of wonderment; the English sentences that he hears result in bewilderment; and often he concludes that the English do not know how to use their own language.

If he is well advised, and if he is fortunate enough to get into touch with the right teachers, his phonetic defects may soon be remedied, and he will learn how to recognize and how to make the sounds and the tones of which the spoken language is composed. He will soon learn that his own native phonetic system is of no more use in England than his own native monetary system; in both cases he must use the currency of the country.

Sooner or later another fact will also become impressed on his mind; namely, that he must use the same sort of English sentences as those which are used in England. Before this truth has been fully revealed to him he may have imagined strange things. He will, of course, have recognized that English speech is not merely a word-for-word equivalent of his own speech. If French, he will realize that "I should will well to follow one course from English" is not the way to say "Je voudrais bien suivre un cours d'anglais." He will already be aware that French proverbs cannot be rendered into English by applying the ordinary rules of translation. He will already have been put on his guard against those mysterious things called "idioms," and will have been told that they mean "expressions which can neither be explained nor translated." It is, after all, only the comic Frenchman of the English novel or play who says "How you carry you?" or "There is not of what."

But while fully recognizing the existence of "idioms" he

will still assume that the vast bulk of English sentences (including those used in everyday speech) are more or less literal equivalents of his own. For the last twenty years I have been correcting the compositions of foreign students of English, and noting (sometimes with amusement, sometimes with amazement) the results of this assumption.[1] The student forms sentences in his own language and translates them into English and, provided there are no serious mistakes in grammar or vocabulary, sees no reason why the resultant sentences should not be perfect.

I frequently use the following test in my classes. I say: "Imagine yourself in a given situation; imagine, for instance, that having made an appointment with somebody, you arrive ten minutes late. Now write down a few of the things which you might say in such circumstances." In the great majority of cases the students write sentences which no English-speaking person would ever use.[2] And yet, in many cases, there are no actual violations of English grammar. I then say: "You have *invented* these sentences. You have either translated them or have evolved them out of your inner consciousness. You have strung a lot of words together in the hope that the sentence will be intelligible. But you have not asked yourselves whether these are sentences which you have actually heard fall from the lips of native speakers."

Sooner or later the foreign student begins to realize that genuine English sentences cannot be evolved out of his inner consciousness, and that the process of translation from his mother-tongue rarely produces anything but "broken"

[1] For some characteristic and authentic specimens of foreigners' English see "Write English. Essays in English of Ultima Thule." (Heffer, 1s.).

[2] Examples. Excuse me that I arrive too late. I regret that I have made you wait. Will you please forgive my latecoming. I think that you expect me since ten minutes.

English (*i.e.* any dialect of English which is used exclusively by foreigners). He discovers, in short, that nine-tenths of English speech is "idiomatic." He concludes, and rightly, that he must adopt an entirely different plan; that he must observe exactly what English people do actually say; that he must make mental or written notes and then, on the first suitable occasion, use these identical expressions himself. From this moment onwards his speech begins to improve.

Some students experience a certain amount of difficulty in observing and retaining. They have not formed the observation habit. They may live in an English environment and hear English spoken around them at every moment, but until they have disciplined themselves to observe and to note exactly what they hear, they persist in inventing sentences by some strange synthetic process—and continue to talk "broken English."

For various reasons it is not always advisable for the student at the outset to make his own collection or selection of models. In the first place he may have limited opportunities for observation. In the second place he cannot always be expected to select, from the thousands of expressions he may hear, the most useful or most characteristic models. He is unable to distinguish the English of normal conversation from slangy, trivial, vulgar, pedantic, or bookish English. He will gain little help from his English friends, for many of them feel it their duty to teach him "better" English than that represented by their own normal and educated speech,[1] while others delight in coaching him in those

[1] This is the sort of advice which my foreign students report to me "Don't say *don't*; say *do not*: *don't* is a vulgar expression." "Never use a preposition to finish a sentence with." "You should say *whom* not *who* when it isn't subject; I don't know who you learn your English from."

racy and familiar expressions which sound so offensive when used by those whose command of the language is not perfect.

Again, given the most appropriate models, the foreign student is rarely able to transcribe faithfully in phonetic characters what he *does* hear, and without an exact phonetic (and even tonetic) transcription, the student will rarely be able to reproduce with any success what he has observed.

But authentic models the student *must* have; they form part of his elementary equipment. This book is intended to supply him with a characteristic selection of those sentences which are likely to be of the greatest use to him in the first stages of his study of Spoken English. He may safely use as many of these sentences as he is able to memorize, for, to the best of my knowledge and belief they are representative of the ordinary everyday speech of educated persons in England. I make no claim that this is the classical English of the grammar-books, that it is the "best" English, or even "correct" English. I merely state that it is the sort of English which I actually hear used in ordinary conversation by those whose speech is generally considered beyond criticism.

The pronunciation is in general conformity with that given in Professor Jones' *English Pronouncing Dictionary*.

The phonetic transcription is that of the International Phonetic Association.[1]

The "tonetic" symbols are those I have explained and used in my *English Intonation* and *A Grammar of Spoken English*. I am aware that each sentence may be intoned in a number of different ways according to the exact shade of meaning that the speaker wishes to convey, but I have selected in each case that intonation which I think to be the most appropriate and characteristic.

1922 and 1923. H. E. P.

[1] See Preface to Third Edition.

Preface to Third Edition.

THE chief modification in this edition is the complete revision of the phonetic notation on the principles of transcription most recently adopted by the International Phonetic Association. The notation now employed conforms generally with that used in the official publications of the Association and with all modern "readers" and text-books. It is the same as that used by the present authors in their *Dictionary of English Pronunciation with American Variants*, published in October, 1926.

The use of [ɪ] and [ɪ] to represent respectively the precise and obscure value of certain vowels has been continued here as it was in the Dictionary. As the usage in this matter is still uncertain, the use of [ɪ] calls, perhaps, for some justification. The authors use it for two main reasons. First, on theoretical grounds, because they believe that they are, in so doing, strictly adhering to the fundamental principle of using separate symbols for separate "phonemes." Just as in *catastrophe* [kətæstrəfɪ] and *catastrophic* [kætəstrɒfɪk] the phonemes [æ] and [ɒ] are clearly replaced by the phoneme [ə] on removal of stress, so it is contended that the unstressed [ɪ] in *dissolve* [dɪzɒlv] and *positive* [pɒzɪtɪv] belongs to a different phoneme from the [ɪ] in *dissolute* [dɪsəlut] and *position* [pəzɪʃn]. Secondly, on practical grounds, the use of [ɪ] has been found to be of considerable help to those foreigners whose chief difficulty lies in acquiring the right stress or rhythm of English, since [ɪ], like [ə], is invariably unstressed.

Other new features of this edition are (1) the addition of many new sentences and phrases in everyday use; (2) the

more liberal use of the stress mark [ˈ] to give further help in sentences where the rhythm may be difficult for foreign students; (3) fuller indication of intonation by means of the "dot" notation where such additonal help is likely to be needed[1]; (4) three new tables of sentence extensions; (5) the addition of an Orthographic Version for the use either of beginners who wish for an interpretation of the phonetic text or for advanced students who are ready to dispense with the help afforded by phonetic transcription. Both classes, however, are warned not to use the orthographic version too freely, and to check their use of it constantly by reference to the phonetic transcription.

1927. F. G. B.

[1] This is given in 48 sentences on pp. xxiv–xxviii, to which reference is made in the exercises by numbers in square brackets after any sentences likely to present difficulty.

Preface to the Fourth Edition.

The Transcription Used.

After careful consideration the authors can find no valid reason for departing materially from the style of transcription they have used in recent years. The International Phonetic Association has, since the issue of our third edition, decided that the stress-mark in a phonetic transcription should be a short vertical line instead of an oblique "accent," which is needed for other purposes. This change is cordially welcomed, and has been adopted in the present edition.

The use of the stress-mark in a sentence already transcribed with tonetic notation has aroused comment from some critics. It has been retained on the ground that it has been found valuable by many foreign readers as an aid to acquiring the rhythm characteristic of colloquial English. It will be found mainly in "superior heads" of tone groups to indicate the syllables on which the pitch falls to a lower note, and occasionally in long "tails" after the falling or the falling-rising nucleus. In the former case it merely marks the rhythm of a difficult phrase and in the latter the low note from which the intonation begins its final rise of pitch.

Continued use of [ɪ] and [ɪ] to represent different phonemes has confirmed the authors' view of the logical desirability of the distinction. The difference is found to be not merely one of the presence or absence of stress. It is true that [ɪ] is invariably unstressed, but its chief characteristic is that it can represent any unstressed vowel sound lying between the extreme limits of [ɪ], [ɛ] and (almost) [ə]; any vowel sound

between those limits can be used without ambiguity and without attracting attention as a "foreign" pronunciation in almost every syllable in which the present volume contains the symbol [ɪ]. For this reason it is felt to be the correct symbol for the second element of the falling diphthongs [eɪ, aɪ] and [ɔɪ], which may reach the actual position of [ɪ] when the diphthongs are long and fully stressed, but which falls far short of it in short and unstressed positions. On the other hand, for the *first* element of a falling diphthong precision is necessary, and [ɪ] is therefore retained as the first component of the bigraph [ɪə].

Little is known of the true nature of a syllable, but the careful differentiation of [i], [ɪ] and [ɪ] tends to increase such knowledge. Those who regard *inferior* as containing four syllables will prefer to transcribe it [ɪnˈfɪərɪə], while those who feel that it has only three may prefer [ɪnˈfɪərɪə] or [ɪnˈfɪərjə]; similarly, *theatre* and *museum* may be transcribed as [mjʊˈziəm] and [ˈθiətə] or [θɪˈɛtə] by those who do not regard them as the dissyllables [mjʊˈzɪəm] and [ˈθɪətə].

But [ɪ] is not exclusively confined to stressed syllables, though certainly it is in stressed syllables that it is most frequently found. There are two chief classes of unstressed syllable in which it is felt that [ɪ] is not an "obscure" vowel: the first of these is such English compounds as *outfit* and *blacksmith*, in which the unstressed [ɪ] must have that characteristic vowel quality and no other [ˈautfɪt, ˈblæksmɪθ], and the second is words usually of Latin or Greek origin which are still felt to be semi-learned or technical terms. "Latin" is itself an example, [ˈlætɪn] has, in the received pronunciation, a precise [ɪ] in its unstressed syllable, though many provincial speakers use an obscure vowel or none at all, [ˈlætʊn, ˈlætən] or [ˈlætn]. Other interesting examples occur in words ending with the suffixes *-ism*, *-ist*. When the root of the

word is Greek and the word itself is popularised the precise vowel [ɪ] is used as in ['bæptɪzm, 'eɪθust, pə'lɪgəmɪst] even in the unstressed termination; though in modern words coined with this termination such as *florist, reservist* and *tobacconist*, there is much greater latitude as to the permissible vowel sound: ['flɒrɪst] and ['fɒrɪst] (forest) may be a perfect rhyme, [tə'bækənɪst] can have almost any vowel sound in the last syllable, and even ['ɔ·gənɪst], in spite of his archaic origin, has any vowel between [ɪ] and nearly [ə] on the ground that he does not *organize*, and is not specially distinguished for his *organism* ['ɔ·gənɪzm], but merely plays the organ!

One further comment on our transcription may perhaps be appropriate. No transcription is immediately acceptable to any student who is already very familiar with another method. If any reader finds the use of one or more new symbols irritating to him at first, he is asked to believe that they are not introduced merely for that purpose, but to persist in using them till they become familiar. The purpose of phonetics is to teach pronunciation, and the objections put forward to the introduction of a representation of two sounds by two different symbols almost always come from those particular foreigners who most need them because their natural tendency is to identify the sounds. Thus it is usually French and Swedish readers who dislike the use of both [i] and [ɪ] in English transcriptions because they habitually pronounce [ɪ] as a shortened form of [i·], instead of with an entirely different tongue position, and most foreigners dislike our use of [ɒ] in words like *hot, comic* [hɒt, 'kɒmɪk], because they unconsciously fight against the conviction that they are inclined to mispronounce it as a short variety of [ɔ·]. The symbol is meant to remind them at every occurrence of it, not to say [hɔt, kɔmɪk] if they desire to use an acceptable pronunciation of English.

It is perfectly true, however, that the correct use of an appropriate symbol will not by itself work the miracle of perfecting the pronunciation of a person who cannot or will not learn the sound it represents. Accurate transcription is of value only to the accurate user of it. Others have not earned the right to object to it.

1930. F. G. B.

Preface to Fifth Edition.

SINCE the issue of the Fourth Edition the Linguaphone Company has published five double-sided records of sentences taken from the text and introduction, spoken by myself. The use of these records in conjunction with the transcription is undoubtedly the quickest and most certain way of learning the exact significance of the system of intonation marks.

In this edition any slight discrepancies between the recorded pronunciation or intonation and those of the text have been adjusted.

One sentence has been omitted. It was perfectly good and possible English but should not have been included in the category to which it was assigned. The fact that it escaped the notice of both authors and all the critics until the Fourth Edition (now happily exhausted) should be a warning to students of the necessity for extreme accuracy. The offending sentence was "I ¯beg your ˎpardon" [Ex. VII, 27], which can only be interrogative and implying the sequel "Of ˎcourse I don't." This truculent utterance was included under Polite Expressions, for which error I can only say to our readers, "I ¯beg your ˎpardon."

1935. F. G. B.

Phonetic Symbols.

The phonetic transcription used is that of the International Phonetic Association.

Key words are not required for: p, b, t, d, k, m, n, l, r, f, v, s, z, h, w. The remaining phones are:

Consonants.

g	*g*ive	gɪv.	ʒ	measure	ˈmɛʒə*.
ŋ	lo*ng*	lɒŋ.	j	*y*es	jes.
θ	*th*in	θɪn.	ʧ	*ch*in	ʧɪn.
ð	*th*en	ðɛn.	ʤ	*j*am	ʤæm.
ʃ	*sh*ip	ʃɪp.			

Vowels.

i	s*ee*	siˈ.	u	t*oo*	tuˈ.
ɪ	s*i*t	sɪt.	ʊ	p*u*t	pʊt.
ɛ	g*e*t	gɛt.	ʌ	b*u*t	bʌt.
æ	c*a*t	kæt.	ɜ	b*ir*d	bɜˈd.
ɑ	f*a*ther	ˈfɑˈðə*.	ə*	ov*er*,	ˈɒuvə*,
ɒ	h*o*t	hɒt.		c*a*thedr*a*l	kəˈθiˈdrəl.
ɔ	s*aw*	sɔˈ.	ɪ	*i*niqu*i*ty	ɪnˈɪkwɪtɪ.

Diphthongs.

eɪ	d*a*y	deɪ.	ɪə*	here	hɪə.
aɪ	fl*y*	flaɪ.	ɛə*	there	ðɛə.
ɔɪ	b*oy*	bɔɪ.	ɔə*	four	fɔə.
aʊ	h*ow*	haʊ.	ʊə*	tour	tʊə.
oʊ	*go*	goʊ.			

[ˑ] The length mark. [ˈ] The stress mark.

A symbol printed in italic type indicates that the sound may either be pronounced or omitted.

An asterisk [*] after ə means that a rolled or fricative r is pronounced if the next word in the phrase begins with a vowel sound. Examples, mɛzər əv leŋθ, fɑˑðər əv laɪz, oʊvər ən oʊvər əgeɪn, hɪər ən ðɛə, ðɛər ən ðən, fɔər ɔ faɪv, ə tʊər ɪn ɪtəlɪ.

Tonetic Symbols.

The nucleus is the stressed syllable of the most prominent word in the tone-group, and may be of the following kinds:

\, ˎ the falling nucleus.
ˆ the falling nucleus with intensification.
/ the high-rising nucleus.
ˇ the falling-rising nucleus.
ˏ the low-rising nucleus.

Syllables that precede the nucleus are called "heads," and are marked thus:

¯ the superior head.
˗ the scandent head.
_ the inferior head. [This sign is often omitted. If head syllables are unmarked they may be assumed to be on a low pitch.]

Syllables following the nucleus (called the "tail") are not marked.[1]

In the examples on the following pages (xxvi—xxx), the intonation of the whole phrase is shown by dots indicating the relative pitches of each syllable of the "head," "nucleus" and "tail." Small dots correspond to unstressed syllables and thick dots mark important stresses. When the pitch rises or falls on a single syllable it is shown either by one of the nucleus signs or by an oblique line instead of a dot.

Reference to these types of intonation is made in the text of the book by means of the appropriate number in square brackets after any sentence likely to present difficulty.

[1] For further explanation of the symbols and their use consult *English Intonation*, by H. E. Palmer (Heffer).

Some Typical Intonations.

READERS who have had little experience in using texts marked to show intonation (sometimes called tonetic transcriptions) are advised to study the following pages, or at least to refer to them frequently.

The examples given are representative but not, of course, exhaustive. The most frequently recurring types of sentence, from the point of view of Intonation, have been selected and marked with the conventional "tonetic" indications; against each is an indication by means of dots of the rise or fall of the voice for each syllable of the sentence. Fuller explanation of this notation, and carefully graded exercises for practice will be found in "Systematic Exercises in English Colloquial Intonation,"[1] as well as some consideration of the different shades of meaning imported into sentences by different types of Intonation.

The present work, which provides for the emergencies of daily conversation, cannot be arranged in any way less haphazard than the conversational forms with which it deals. It obviously, therefore, cannot *teach* English Intonation, and the examples that follow should be taken only for what they are worth. They are not a primrose path to perfection, but merely a mitigation of some of the hardships of the rough road.

Some frequently recurring types of English conversational intonation are given below. Each sentence is marked with the same form of "tonetic" notation as the sentences that are contained in Parts I to V of this book, but as an additional

[1] By H. E. Palmer (Heffer), 1922.