

Review of *Practical phonetics and phonology*

posted December 4th, 2010

Practical phonetics and phonology: A resource book for students. 2nd edn. By Beverley Collins and Inger M. Mees. (Routledge English language introduction series 3.) London: Routledge, 2008. Pp. xix, 305. ISBN 9780415425148. \$34.99.

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This book is the second edition of the textbook originally published in 2003. Like the first edition, it is organized into four sections—Section A: ‘Introduction’ (1–68), Section B: ‘Development’ (69–148), Section C: ‘Exploration’ (149–222), and Section D: ‘Extension’ (223–72). Each section includes numerous exercises, discussion questions, cross-references, and references to websites and additional readings. The book is accompanied by an audio CD that provides authentic speech samples from a range of English varieties.

Section A, composed of six subsections, introduces the reader to basic concepts and terminology. Focusing on articulatory phonetics, the topics include accentual variation in English worldwide, phonemes and allophones, the syllable, the organs of speech, and English consonants and vowels.

The seven subsections of Section B expand on the concepts introduced in Section A. In particular, it extends the reader’s knowledge of the phoneme and syllable, provides details on the allophonic variation of English consonants and vowels, introduces speech rhythm, stress, and intonation, and explores English spelling.

Section C, consisting of six subsections, explores a selection of accentual varieties of English as spoken in North America, the British Isles, and elsewhere in the world. It discusses pronunciation changes over time and devotes a subsection to the pronunciation of English as a foreign language.

Section D provides a selection of (reprinted) classic readings from leading scholars: David Abercrombie on the British received pronunciation (RP); Daniel Jones on attitudes toward regional and social accents; David Crystal on pronunciation complaints and ‘sloppy’ speech; Dennis Fry on hearing loss and its consequences regarding the development of speech; Peter Ladefoged on the problems of producing synthetic speech; Maurice Varney on phonetics and phonology in criminal investigations; Barbara Bradford on ‘upspeak’ in British English; David Crystal on aspects of the acquisition of first language intonation; J.C. Wells on reforming English spelling and why it is impossible to satisfy all speakers; and Peter Trudgill on changes in RP, its sociolinguistic situation, potential death, and competitor(s).

The book includes a glossary, suggestions for further readings, references, the 2005 version of the International Phonetic Alphabet, and a combined name and subject index.

This second edition has a number of new features, among them a subsection on spelling-to-sound relationships and pronunciation guidelines for non-native speakers (105–15), new written and audio materials representing Estuary English and New York English, and the chapters by J.C. Wells and Peter Trudgill in Section D. The book is also accompanied by a website that contains resources such as additional exercises and answer keys as well as useful web links.

Many of the activities and exercises might be difficult for non-native students. Overall, however, I consider the book an invaluable resource for teaching English phonetics and phonology in both native and non-native contexts.
