



Review of Monroy-Casas, Rafael & Arboleda-Guirao, Inmaculada. 2014. *Readings in English Phonetics and Phonology*. Valencia: Universitat de València. 409 pages. ISBN: 978–84–370–9455–7.

JOANNA PRZEDLACKA
University of Oxford

Aimed at more advanced students, the book intends to bridge the gap between basic content and the wide world of research. The book's goal is to facilitate moving on from the dogmatic views formed at undergraduate level. It does so by offering a series of specially commissioned readings on aspects of English phonetics and phonology, with each chapter combining theoretical input with praxis. This is executed by a survey of a given topic, highlighting current debates and followed by an empirical study, which serves to illustrate how research within a subfield can be carried out. The volume contains fourteen chapters organised into three parts: *Part I: English segmental phonetics and phonology*, consisting of four chapters; *Part II: Suprasegmental aspects of English*, comprising seven chapters; and finally *Part III: New developments in English*, with three chapters.

An interesting aspect of the volume's first part is its focus on consonants of a spoken variety. As previously pointed out by the editors of *Urban Voices* (Foulkes & Docherty, 1999), the focus in variationist literature had been chiefly on vowels, thus leading to the myth that vowels have more variability than other aspects of speech. Part I opens with Rodríguez-Romero's chapter discussing the phonological behaviour of yod in simple and complex syllable onsets; the author argues against its treatment as part of the consonant system despite the sound's phonetic properties. The chapter is written in the spirit of traditional descriptive phonemics and it is very pleasing to see Pike's *vocoid* and *contoid* distinction being introduced. The other chapters in this section also deal with consonants; for example, Arboleda-Guirao's is a descriptive study of syllabic consonants and schwa in the speech of the BBC newsreaders. The author discusses how a sample from a contemporary speech corpus fits in with four pedagogically-oriented descriptive rules governing the occurrence of schwa and syllabic consonants in Southern British English. Romero and Riera's chapter 4

revisits the phonetic and phonological voicing of plosives, emphasising the spatiotemporal aspect of the phenomenon and its relationship with stress, illustrated by copious examples from English. Worth noting is Barreiro-Bilbao's paper on fricatives, which uses the traditional articulatory description as an introduction to the complexity of acoustic cues and their relationship with inter-speaker variation. This is a welcome perspective, helpful in understanding the articulation-acoustics relationship and showing the current state of research on the topic.

Part II offers a comprehensive coverage of English suprasegmentals. The section begins with Duchet's classification of lexical stress rules and a brief historical overview, followed by Mompean's chapter on stress shift. Through an acoustic and auditory study of *-teen* numbers based on a 32-hour audio corpus from the BBC World service, Mompean aims to shed light on the variation in the use of stress shift in English. It is emphasised that stress shift is not categorical but variable in both normal and aphasic populations, and potential conditioning variables (speaking rate, stylistic variables and word frequency) are identified. This study simultaneously introduces readers to the wealth of phonetic realisations while warning them that wider patterns may be obscured by the paucity of production data about the occurrence or frequency of variation. Consequently, the existing rules should not be taken as set in stone.

Fuchs's chapter 7 is a clear introduction to rhythm types, taking the reader step by step through the topic. Its value lies in a neat demonstration on how to construct experimental methodology, taking as an example a sentence from the DyViS corpus and applying Pairwise Variability method to measure the durational differences between syllables in Southern British English speech. Helpfully, a discussion and interpretation of each calculation is provided as we read along. Part II finishes with Hanote's paper on connected speech, covering the standard material reviewed in introductory classes, such as assimilation, elision, linking (pleasingly including glottalisation as a way of resolving vowel hiatus, a recent pattern that many textbooks neglect to mention) and smoothing. However, it does so with a difference, going beyond the usual phonemic presentation of those phenomena and illustrating each one with a spectrogram of a BBC news excerpt, thus again, strengthening the link with acoustics.

Chapters 8, 9 and 10 focus on intonation, starting with Granato's comprehensive overview of previous studies of English intonation as an introduction to the topic. The author goes through a number of approaches to the study of intonation, pointing out how common terms are defined and employed in various schools. A positive of the chapter is the fact that the author highlights different foci of interest of each school. Her chapter is followed by Estebas Vilaplana's dissection of a few simple sentences within the two different traditions of intonational analysis, the British School and the American School, especially the ToBI system and the Autosegmental-Metrical approach. This excellent chapter does not miss a trick; the presentation is accessible to a non-specialist reader, yet far from simplistic. It takes the reader through parameters of intonation, pointing out various possibilities in the system,

their phonetic correlates and corresponding diacritics along the way. No danger of getting lost here, as the author succinctly summarises the commonality of a number of very different frameworks within the American tradition. She finishes off by offering several examples of sentences, analysed within both the British and the American Schools for easy comparison. Tench's paper, complementing Estebas Vilaplana's, is equally brilliant. Starting from the introduction of Halliday's systemic functional model, the author elegantly demonstrates how intonation is integrated with not only phonology but grammar. He proceeds to unveil the full richness of the English intonational system, exemplified by a hundred ways of intoning one sentence. The presentation shows how pretonic choices may convey a wide range of attitudes, tonicity is responsible for focus management and tonality controls the flow of information. In other words, it shows step by step how the seemingly simple framework is capable of conveying a huge number of subtleties of meaning, vaster than previously noted.

Part III, whose goal is to show change within both the English language and ways of representing it in phonetic notation, starts promisingly, with Larsen and Mees charting the use of American pronunciations in Cliff Richard's songs spanning five decades. This of course revisits Trudgill's classic study on the acts of identity in British pop music (1983: 141–160) and links the use of phonetic variants to a complex interplay of social and linguistic factors as well as those specific to the music genre. While I feel that the chapter contains too many Trudgill quotes and a somewhat unnecessary discussion of Estuary English, it has the potential to be of benefit to student audiences. It is an attractive idea to introduce the concept of variation by designing an experiment, while at the same time drawing attention to changes within RP. My experience as an academic teacher has been that these two aspects are too frequently lacking in introductory curricula, which tend to err on the canonical side.

Disappointingly, the two remaining chapters in this section do not quite deliver the goods. Mott's consists of little more than a collection of examples, dressed with a splash of prescriptivism. Levey's contribution regarding observations of current changes in British English does not say anything that cannot be found in more recent editions of Gimson/Cruttenden's standard textbook (2014). Add to the mix a lack of explicitly stated distinction between the linguistic and general meaning of 'standard', a confusion between Standard English and RP or indeed the linguistic scope of the terms 'model' and 'standard', coupled with a single-faceted view that in the past English native speakers used to aspire to speak like the ruling monarch. Finally, the chapter is let down by impressionistic language to describe individuals and their use of phonetic variants, such as 'slightly less pronounced way', 'posh' or 'crisp tap r'. Admittedly, these would not be out of place in a newspaper article, aimed at lay native English audiences, who can readily link those labels to their experience of their own language, but is unsuitable for both L2 students and an academic textbook and runs the risk of trivialising the importance of mastering precise terminology. Equally, the 'frightfully' joke falls flat.

Explaining the volume's inception, Monroy-Casas remarks that university level teaching of English phonetics and phonology to Spanish speakers "has more often than not characterized itself by a bare, uncritical presentation of facts, as they are usually portrayed in classic publications" (2014: 1). Abstracting away from the subject or the audience, this is indeed not an uncommon feeling among many academics attempting to train future researchers. Partly, this is the nature of the beast. Laying the foundations in any field consists of developing skills relevant to that area, the ability and willingness to observe and analyse and hopefully inspire, but doing that does require the presentation of numerous basic facts. Consequently, as Monroy-Casas goes on to say "students end up having a quasi-dogmatic opinion of the phonology of English, hardly being aware of other views and approaches" (2014:1). Again, it is partly inevitable that this should be the case. In order to deconstruct and analyse a reality, a framework needs to be built first—which at the introductory level involves making a lot of simplifications.

Overall, the volume forms a much needed middle ground between introductory textbooks and research papers and is suitable for a variety of students, not only Spanish speaking readers. The book focuses on RP, the variety that is the staple of introductory phonetics courses in Europe. However, far from presenting a dogmatic view, it uses the (over)familiar material to build on and extend the undergraduate knowledge base and to show neophytes the nuts and bolts of carrying out research. It does so by demonstrating experiment design and methodology as well as the multitude of views on a topic. It also suggests areas of research to be done, thus encouraging its potential readers to become part of the academic community. I feel particularly impressed by the intonation 'trilogy' in *Part II*. In light of the scarcity of comprehensive intonation textbooks, it is the most significant forte of the volume and I only wish it had been written when I was an undergraduate.

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