

From the authors

The story of foreign language teaching in British schools (which I'm not going to write about here, you'll be pleased to know) has had its ups and downs – more downs than ups, probably – but what I want to write here concerns one of the ups.

I went to primary school in a suburb of Leeds in the 1960s, and the school I attended happened to be one of those that took part in a national experiment to introduce French at primary level.

My recollections of this are somewhat vague, as I hope you'll understand: it was, after all, half a century ago. I don't even know whether I did two years of French at primary school, or just one. It certainly wasn't more than two.

Nor do I remember very much about what we did in our French lessons, or how many we had per week. I do remember that we used pictures a lot, and that the lessons were primarily (entirely? did we do any writing at all?) oral.

Why am I telling you this? Well, the thing is ...

Our French lessons were taught by our regular class teacher. I don't know how much French she knew. Was she perhaps just one jump ahead of us? Some of the teachers involved in the scheme were, apparently, just one step ahead of the pupils.

But I seem to recall very clearly that she had a good French accent. Of course, this is impossible to verify, and I suppose that at the age of nine or so I didn't really have much idea of what a French accent was supposed to sound like, anyway.

I can still hear a distant but distinct echo of her voice speaking the unfamiliar language. It still sounds good, even now.

And it was simply the sound of it that appealed to me first. Not the prospect of venturing across the Channel and using the language – that came later.

It was the sound of that familiar teacher's voice making those unfamiliar sounds, and the discovery that I could hear myself somehow managing to at least approximate to the same sounds myself.

So now, half a century later, I think that primary school classroom was probably the beginning of my enduring interest in pronunciation – the latest manifestation of which takes the shape of these pages.



Part of my university course was a weekly lecture on Russian phonetics. I found the whole business totally unfathomable. Like many academic subjects, it was couched in what was, for me at least, impenetrable jargon. I had no idea what a 'voiceless fricative' was, for example, and no amount of reading and re-reading seemed to shed any light on the matter. Perhaps most importantly of all, I simply failed to see the relevance of this strand to the process of learning the language and studying its literature and history.

A mystery.

Some years later, having drifted into English teaching while a postgraduate student in Czechoslovakia, I decided to get a formal teaching qualification and, to this end, took a PGCE course specialising in TEFL. Again, there was a phonetics element on this course and again, at first at least, I found it complicated and uninspiring.

I recall having to describe in minute detail in an assignment what happened to the speech organs during the pronunciation of the word 'anglepoise' (a kind of table lamp) and wondering why anyone should imagine that was useful. To my amazement, I managed to pass this assignment. Looking back, I suppose this may have been the first turning point. The words *fricative*, *plosive*, *affricate* and so on were beginning to make sense, and even my younger, sceptical self could see some relevance in the field of general phonetics.

The seeds were sown.

After a five-year stint in the Balkans, I got a job teaching EFL at a language school on the south coast of England. Each classroom was equipped with a phonemic chart that, to my relatively untrained eye, seemed to have an intriguing design. The more I looked at it, the more it made sense. I could also see immediately that it had a clear practical purpose – the symbols were identical to those used in learners' dictionaries.

Students in the classes I observed (and subsequently taught) were not asked to analyse the activity of the speech organs in the production of the word *anglepoise*; but they could identify and use the symbols accurately as part and parcel of every lesson, focusing on those sounds that were particularly problematic for speakers of their own mother tongue and self-correcting in a particularly impressive way.

Gradually the fog lifted.

The mystery was solved – and I was hooked.



Contents

From the authors	Page 3
------------------	--------

Part A Page 7

From mouthful of air to stream of sound	Page 12
Sounds, symbols, spelling and stress	Page 31

Part B Page 37

1 Introducing ...

... pronunciation	Page 39
... the phonemic chart	Page 40
... the phonemic symbols	Page 41
... syllables	Page 42
... word stress	Page 43
... consonant clusters	Page 44



... tonic prominence	Page 46
... intonation patterns	Page 47

2 Sounds

Create your own chart	Page 49
Recognising the symbols	Page 50
Sounds bingo	Page 50
Vowel chanting	Page 51
Miming sounds	Page 51
/h/ through whispering	Page 52
Split sentences	Page 53
Endings and beginnings	Page 54
Sounds game	Page 55
Sounds hangman	Page 56
A bagful of sounds	Page 56
Phonemic scrabble	Page 57
Sounds–vocabulary game	Page 58
Odd one out	Page 58
Making a difference	Page 59
Sorting sounds	Page 60
Sounds discrimination	Page 60

Test the teacher	Page 61
A little alliteration	Page 62
Rhyme time	Page 63
Sound symbolism	Page 64
Bilingual minimal pairs	Page 65
Comparing sounds	Page 66



Listening for numbers	Page 67
-----------------------	---------

3 Sounds and spelling

A, B, C, D, Easy	Page 68
A, B, C	Page 69
A phonemic word race	Page 70
Vowels and diphthongs	Page 70
Phonemic DIY	Page 71
Sounds maze	Page 72
Deciphering a transcription	Page 73
Homophones dictation	Page 74
Homophones matching	Page 74
Odd homophone out	Page 75
Initial 'a'	Page 76
How many syllables?	Page 77
Tough enough	Page 78
Read or read?	Page 79
Sounds search	Page 80
Rhyming sounds	Page 80
Rhymes in phrases	Page 81



Pronouncing abbreviations	Page 82
Starring schwa	Page 84

4 Word stress

A simple sorting activity	Page 85
Stress patterns race	Page 86
Stress pattern prompts	Page 86
Odd stress out	Page 87
Not quite identical twins	Page 88

Contents

Stress patterns into words	Page 89	Tonic prominence production	Page 123
Word families	Page 90	Reciting	Page 123
Who does what?	Page 91	Poetry to prose and back	Page 125
Everything but ...	Page 92	Correct the teacher	Page 126
A white blackbird?	Page 93	Intonational Simon says	Page 128
Disappearing text	Page 94	Contrastive stress	Page 127
Revising vocabulary in a text	Page 95		



CD Tracks 54–57

Streets ahead	Page 96
See you this afternoon ...	Page 97
Compound adjectives	Page 98

5 Connected speech

Weak forms and grammar	Page 100
Breadnbutter	Page 101
Comic effect	Page 102
Fine doubt	Page 103



CD Tracks 58–72

Teach a teacher	Page 104
Nothing a tall	Page 105
Schwa in many guises	Page 107
Strong or weak?	Page 108
Auxiliary spotting	Page 109
To contract – or not?	Page 110
What was that word?	Page 111
Disconnecting speech	Page 112
Goob morning	Page 114
Assimilation and elision	Page 115
How many words?	Page 116
Short cuts	Page 117

6 Stress, rhythm and intonation

Body language	Page 119
Dos and don'ts	Page 119
Shadowing	Page 120
Stress and unstress	Page 121
Tonic prominence recognition	Page 122



CD Tracks 73–93

Mystery text	Page 130
Pause for thought	Page 131
Lift off!	Page 133
Chanting lists	Page 135
Long tails	Page 136
I did tell you	Page 137
Who's got the tickets?	Page 139
Agreeing	Page 141
I bet you did!	Page 142
If only ...	Page 143
Not exactly ...	Page 144
Tag along	Page 145
The best answer you can	Page 147
The thing is ...	Page 148
Well ...	Page 149
Actually	Page 150
Being right and being wrong	Page 152
Guessing a drawing	Page 153

Part C

Page 155

More ... about pronunciation	Page 156
More ... about learners	Page 162
More ... about teaching	Page 164

From the editors	Page 175
From the publisher	Page 176

