

Criticisms apart, *English Pronunciation in Use* by Mark Hancock does constitute an interesting and valuable contribution to modern EFL pronunciation teaching materials and I highly recommend it to teachers and learners alike. Its innovative potential is particularly apparent in highlighting the prosodic aspects of pronunciation, in employing a range of stimulating and enjoyable activities, and in fostering autonomous learning of practical phonetics as an important aspect of foreign language competence.

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The history of pronunciation dictionaries in English is long and complex.¹ The seventeenth edition of Daniel Jones's *English Pronouncing Dictionary*, known to all as the *EPD*, is the latest of a very long line beginning with the numerous guides to pronunciation published in the 18th century. (It is one topic to be covered in the forthcoming *Oxford History of Lexicography*, edited by Anthony Cowie.) The most famous, influential and enduring of these was John Walker's (1791) *Critical Pronouncing Dictionary*, issued and reissued

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in various editions, some genuine, some pirated, throughout the 19th century. The first English pronunciation dictionary to appear in the 20th century was a quite competent but now completely forgotten work by the Swedish linguist J. A. Afzelius (1909). Some years later came Daniel Jones's first attempt, the *Phonetic Dictionary of the English Language*, co-authored with a German schoolmaster, Hermann Michaelis (Michaelis & Jones 1913). This had the huge disadvantage of 'working the wrong way' – the phonetic representations inconveniently preceded the orthographic. A landmark date is 1917, when Jones brought out the first edition of the *EPD* (Jones 1917), which soon, as stated in the introduction to the present edition (p. iv), 'became established as a classic work of reference'. Few reference works actually survive for ninety years, yet the *EPD* in its latest incarnation looks in sparkling good health for a nonagenarian. It now comes decked in digital dress, allowing purchasers the option of buying an excellent CD-ROM that contains a whole range of extra possibilities for the user.

For many years, the *EPD* had no real rival, apart from the *Concise Pronouncing Dictionary of British and American English* (Windsor Lewis 1972), which, as its title implies, was designed to be a much simpler and shorter piece of work. This situation held until 1990, when John Wells brought out, as a one-man *tour de force*, the *Longman Pronunciation Dictionary* (henceforth *LPD*). A recent addition to the range is the *Oxford Pronunciation Dictionary of Current English* (Upton, Kretzschmar & Konopka 2003); see Windsor Lewis (2004) for an assessment of this publication. The latest newcomer is the *Oxford BBC Guide to Pronunciation* (Olausson & Sangster 2006), but although this is a fascinating compilation of information and recommendations on pronunciation, it is not actually a pronunciation dictionary, and therefore we shall not consider it in this review.

The 1997 15th edition of the *EPD* brought in the present editorial team of Roach and Hartman (and, significantly in the background, Jane Setter), who undertook a complete makeover of the book in all its aspects, and introduced for the first time the representation of American pronunciation. (Note that in this review, we focus on British English, except where American English is explicitly specified.) In his introduction to the second (2000) edition of the *LPD*, Wells acknowledged (p. vii) that he was 'stimulated by the radical revisions' made in the fifteenth edition of *EPD* (*EPD*¹⁵), but it is clear that the stimulation is in fact a two-way process. In its 16th edition, the new *EPD* custodians (now with Setter getting full billing) copied Wells's scheme of information boxes (renaming them 'information panels') covering not only spelling-to-sound relationships but also explanations of technical terms and other matters of linguistic interest. Consequently, the *EPD* and *LPD* have moved yet closer together, even though this time round, for the 17th edition of the *EPD*, some extra features have been added in the form of a study section with exercises at the end of the book. Inevitably, in the course of this review, we shall be comparing these two great rivals.

In some respects the *EPD* is certainly more up to date. The 17th edition of the *EPD*, having appeared six years after the latest *LPD*, includes many more words and phrases of recent significance than does the rival publication, for example: *Al Qaeda*, *blog*, *chav*, *Condoleezza*, *dot.com*, *ebonics*, *ebola*, *Google*, *Putin*, *Taliban*. We searched with scant success for 'newsy' entries occurring in *LPD* but not in *EPD*: one example is *el Niño*. Curiously, a few modern items, such as *Al Jazeera*, *bling*, *spyware* and *wind farm*, are missing from both dictionaries. Pronouncing the initial consonants of words like *tulip* and *duke* with /tʃ, dʒ/ is indicated as non-RP in *LPD*, but in most cases is regarded as within the range of the standard variety in *EPD*. We feel the latter view reflects the current state of affairs more accurately. Furthermore, *LPD* is more openly conservative in basing its model on 'a modernized version of the type [of English] known as Received Pronunciation or RP' (p. xiii) and referring to it as such. *EPD* clearly wishes to be trendier, claiming to describe a kind of British English which is 'more broadly-based and accessible' than RP (p. v), emphasising that the time has come to 'abandon the archaic name Received Pronunciation', and calling the new form 'BBC English'. Yet, it must be said that, at least in its essentials, the *EPD* model seems to be very close to traditional RP. The *EPD* editors' choice of label may seem unfortunate, given the stated aim of the

BBC these days to employ more and more British regional accents for its domestic services, together with a melange of native and non-native varieties on the World Service – a policy which is in fact explained by the *EPD* editors themselves (pp. 591f.). It is ironic that as more and more of the lay population seem at last to be getting to know what is implied by ‘Received Pronunciation’, and the term crops up increasingly in journalism and other popular writing, fewer and fewer phoneticians seem to want to have anything to do with it. Deciding on a name for a more socially extended type of educated British English is admittedly difficult – the present reviewers have suggested ‘NRP’, standing for ‘non-regional pronunciation’ (Collins & Mees 2003a). Many British linguists are now opting for ‘Standard Southern British’ – a label where every element is open to criticism, but which nevertheless seems to be catching on.

The ingenious *EPD* transcriptions provide a tremendous amount of information in a concise form. Yet the effect at times is that of an embarrassment of riches; so much detail is given that many readers (native or non-native) might find it impossible to find their way through the maze. In particular, the dots which indicate syllable divisions can be distracting – notwithstanding the fact that these are an IPA recommendation. We feel that spaces as employed in *LPD* are a better solution. Or, alternatively, since syllable boundaries are so often debatable (the systems of *LPD* and *EPD* do not, of course, match) and are in any case of little concern to most readers, one might, in the interest of simplicity, just ignore this feature. This was Gimson’s policy in his revised 14th edition, cf. *EPD*¹⁴ /prə.nʌnsɪ.ɪfɪn/ with *EPD*¹⁷ /prə.nʌnt.s'ɪɪ.fən/. (Where deemed essential, a dot could be reserved for the most significant instances of syllabification, as was done formerly by a hyphen, e.g. *EPD*¹⁴ *satchel* /'sætʃəl/ vs. *nutshell* /'nʌt-ʃəl/.) Furthermore, the *EPD*¹⁷ syllable boundary dots can even at times be somewhat misleading; for instance, the homophones *buyer* and *byre*, despite their identical pronunciation, are represented as /'baɪ.ə/ and /'baɪə/, respectively. Some of the finer points in the *EPD*¹⁷ transcriptions might be considered superfluous, or at any rate a luxury; for instance, the italicised epenthetic /t/ (also shown in the *LPD*, but in superscript) in the transcription of PRONUNCIATION above, could be covered by a relatively simple phonological rule. For non-rhotic British English, potential r-liaison is indicated by a raised superscript *r*, e.g. *far* /fɑ:ˀ/. Such a convention runs the risk of being interpreted by beginning students as recommending rhoticism – or at least, treating it as a perfectly viable option. The old Jonesian way round the problem (found in editions of the *EPD* up to the 14th), where the possibility of r-liaison was shown with an asterisk, with its ramifications explained in the introduction, was arguably a much neater solution. *LPD* sensibly ignores the final *r* altogether in its RP representations, covering the point in a section on r-linking in the introduction.

The *EPD*’s information panels are a welcome addition, even if the spelling-to-sound guides are often somewhat over-elaborate with too many complex rules and exceptions; a simpler rough-and-ready approach might be more effective. One very helpful guideline has been omitted, namely that orthographic medial ⟨ng⟩ typically indicates /ŋg/, but gives /ŋ/ when the word is derived from a verb, e.g. *finger* vs. *singer* (O’Connor 1980: 53). The explanations of technical terms are also sometimes unnecessarily involved for a general audience. For instance, is an analysis of syllable structure and explanation of terms like ‘onset’, ‘coda’ and ‘rhyme’ (p. 493) really essential for the average reader? And is there any point in introducing a discussion of airstream mechanisms into a section on ENGLISH plosives? On the other hand, there is too little on vowels. Vowel quadrilateral diagrams are presented in the introduction (pp. viii–ix) with minimal explanation – something which could be extremely puzzling for the non-specialist user (although admittedly reference is made to Roach 2000). The information panel on Cardinal Vowels provides somewhat more background, although nowhere in the book is the crucial point stated that the diagrams represent the presumed configuration of the tongue arch in vowel articulations. It is noteworthy, however, that *LPD* has, if anything, even less explanation to back up its vowel diagrams (pp. xvi–xvii). Incidentally, no mention is made in *EPD* of Wells’s (1982) convenient and widely used system of keywords for reference vowels.

Something one might expect from a pronunciation dictionary is instruction on how to say proper names. Although the *BBC Pronouncing Dictionary of British Names* (Pointon 1983) is an excellent source of such information, nevertheless, as its name implies, it covers Britain only and, regrettably, seems to be no longer in print. Conventional dictionaries have only very limited coverage of place names and personal names. So this is an area where a dictionary like the *EPD* can be of real service to native and non-native English speakers alike. In the case of non-English proper names there is an awkward decision to be made – either to show the usual English pronunciation (in fact often a MISpronunciation) or to attempt something closer to the actual form in the foreign language. The policy adopted in the *EPD* (see also p. vi of the Introduction) is essentially to opt for a totally English pronunciation as first choice at the expense of the feelings of the native speaker of the language concerned. In addition, a representation labelled ‘as if French’, ‘as if German’, etc. is sometimes provided to give some impression of what the native pronunciation would in fact be. This is not always the happiest of solutions. A few of the anglicised pronunciations seem quite outdated – when did one last hear *Charleroi* pronounced /'ʃɑ:l.ə.rɔɪ/? For the Spanish city *Murcia* [murθia], the recommendation is /'mɜ:ʃi.ə/ – a pronunciation which would strike Spaniards as bizarre, although admittedly the ‘as if Spanish’ form /'mʊθ.θi.ə/ is clearly better. (Interestingly, the pronunciation of *Murcia* has been discussed on John Wells’s phonetic blog, 30 January 2007.) *Guernica* [ger'nika] is shown as /'gɜ:n.ik.ə, 'gʊɜ:-/ without any ‘as if Spanish’ annotation. The French painter *Degas* is given as /də'gɑ:/ and /'deɪ.gɑ:/; the first choice is unusual in English but would be easy for a French person to interpret; whilst the second (undoubtedly the commonest English rendering of the name) is likely to be quite incomprehensible to a French speaker. Surely some mention should be made of these matters, and the native form [də'gɑ] ought to be shown also, as indeed it was in the *EPD* up to the 14th edition. Here, *LPD* performs much better, regularly providing a true native version, often with a useful brief discussion.

One area where the *EPD* deserves to come in for particular criticism is in the treatment of Welsh proper names. Here, perhaps, the editors need to take even more pains to consider the views of a native population – if only because there are three million of them right on their doorstep (including one of the present reviewers). But no attempt seems to have been made even to approach a pronunciation of place names and personal names which would be acceptable – or in some instances even recognisable – to Welsh people (whether native Welsh speakers or not). If a velar fricative [x] is suggested for Scottish, German and Spanish, then why not regularly for Welsh? And surely most *EPD* users can manage to produce [v], even if Welsh orthography does show this consonant as ⟨f⟩? *EPD* representations such as /æb.ə'sik.ən/ for *Abersychan* /aber'səxan/, and /hlæn.feə'fek.ən/ for *Llanfairfechan* /lanvair'vexan/ sound ludicrous to Welsh ears – the renderings on the CD invoking peals of laughter. Surely /æb.ə'sɪx.ən/ and /hlæn.vaiə'vex.ən/ would be little harder to say and far closer to local pronunciation? The name of the greatest Welsh poet, *Dafydd ap Gwilym*, is misspelt as ‘Daffydd’, in addition to having an inappropriate recommended pronunciation. The full version of *Llanfairpwllgwyngyllgogerychwyrndrobwllllantysiliogogoch* (in origin a made-up joke name) as said on the CD issued with the 16th edition was hilarious – quite enough to stop most Welsh people dead in their tracks. Thankfully, that has been removed from the present recording. One could continue in this vein. Nevertheless, the curious thing is that, apart from two consonants (the voiceless lateral fricative [ɬ] and possibly the voiceless velar/uvular fricative [x]), making a reasonable attempt at Welsh names is really not such a big deal for English speakers. Given that phonetic transcription can remove the problems caused by the spelling conventions of Welsh, whereby orthographic ⟨y⟩ and ⟨w⟩ typically represent vowels, it's not impossible to come up with a fair approximation. Here, there is no question that *LPD* scores with a competent and diplomatic treatment of Welsh proper names, helped undoubtedly by the fact that its editor is one of the very few English people ever to have made himself fluent in that language. Wells always shows an accurate Welsh representation in addition to any anglicised version far removed from the original.

A great advance on previous editions was made in *EPD*¹⁶, which for the first time made available the optional purchase of a CD-ROM. This gave a spoken rendering of every word (but not variants) in British English. In addition, it provided a facility for non-native learners to record and compare their efforts with the model presented on the CD. Now, for the seventeenth edition, the CD has been further improved by the addition of American pronunciations for every word. The CD works efficiently, is easy for the non-expert to use and in the case of every person we have seen encounter it for the first time their eyes light up. It is unquestionably the great advantage that this dictionary has over the *LPD*, which (as yet) has nothing similar on offer (although a CD-ROM illustrating pronunciation is available for the *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*). There is a good mix of pleasant male and female voices, the quality of the recordings is excellent and the CD-ROM is easy to navigate. All the words we searched for turned up quickly without any problem. Nevertheless, there are some deficiencies. Where there is more than one transcription of a word, it may not be clear which of the variants has been recorded (it's not always the first) and it would be helpful if the choice were indicated in some way. The American speakers do not consistently have voiced [t] as shown in the transcriptions – *betting*, *computer*, *water* (to cite just a few examples) are clearly pronounced with aspirated [t^h]. *Newquay* is transcribed as /'nju:ki/, but the recordings of both the British and the American varieties appear to have secondary stress on the final syllable with a long vowel. *Menzies* is shown as /'menziz/ in the British form, but pronounced with /i:/ in the second syllable; the usual Scottish form /'mɪnɪs/, as used by the leader of the British Liberal Democrats, 'Ming' Campbell, is not given on the CD. The British realisation of *oeuvre* comes out as /ɜ:v/ rather than the mysterious form /'ɜ:v.rə/ indicated (how could a non-rhotic speaker pronounce the schwa-less variant?). *Köchel* is shown as /'kɜ:k.ə1/ followed by 'as if German /-xə1/'. Here the British speaker gives the first entry and the American the second, with it not being clear whether this reflects the most frequent usage in the two standard varieties or whether it is simply coincidental. If ⟨wh⟩ is 'usually pronounced as ... /hw/ in US English' (p. 558), then this dubious assertion is certainly not borne out by the CD recording; very few of the items containing ⟨wh⟩ are actually said with /hw/ by the American speakers. Finally, the following statement, proclaimed on the publisher's Internet catalogue, may make a few *JIPA* readers' blood run cold:

The CD-ROM features the whole paper dictionary plus: NEW! Spoken North American pronunciations as well as British pronunciations for every word – NO NEED TO UNDERSTAND PHONETICS to get the information you need!

(Cambridge University Press English Language Teaching catalogue,
(http://www.cambridge.org/elt/elt_projectpage.asp?id=2500823),
accessed 22 August 2006; our emphasis)

Perhaps we ought to clear our desks and start looking for more secure employment straightaway!

The *LPD* has more for the native English speaker and the phonetician (for instance, poll panels on variant pronunciations, indications by means of symbols of non-RP realisations, discussion of possible alternatives, accurate representations of foreign words including proper names). Readers may well appreciate being warned that certain frequently encountered British pronunciations, such as /'eəri:ɪtɪd/, /mɪs'tʃi:vɪəs/, /prə'naʊnsɪɪfən/ for *aerated*, *mischievous*, *pronunciation* (to quote just three examples) are still considered incorrect by most educated speakers, and are consequently stigmatised. Recent research (Van den Doel 2006) has indicated that native-speaker reactions to non-natives who produce perfectly intelligible but nevertheless stigmatised forms are far harsher than previously assumed. Again, where there are striking, and perhaps unexpected, differences between British and American speech, as in, for example, *Adolf* /'æd.ɒlf ~ 'eɪ.dɑ:lf/, *baton* /'bæt.ɒn ~ bə'tɑ:n/, *docile* /'dɒs.saɪl ~ 'dɑ:sə1/, *herb* /hɜ:b ~ ɜ:v/, it is useful (both for natives and non-natives) to have these picked out in some way. The *LPD* marks stigmatised forms by a 'danger triangle' and surprising non-correspondence of British and American pronunciations by an asterisk – but both these matters are ignored by the *EPD*.

The present incarnation of the *EPD* is aimed primarily at non-native speakers and sets out to cater for them more directly than in the past. But perhaps the weakest area of the present edition turns out to be the set of ‘study sections’ (pp. 573–599), which have been added at the end of the book for this edition; particularly weak are those sections which are clearly targeted at the non-native. The brief section ‘Teaching pronunciation’ (pp. 594f.), seemingly much influenced by the fashionable notion of English as a ‘lingua franca’, attempts the impossible in dealing with this vast topic in one and a half pages. It does so by means of a list of vague and inadequate teaching hints (e.g. ‘all English consonants should be pronounced clearly’ and ‘vowel duration, together with differences in vowel quality which are problematic, should be addressed’). Such banal advice seems quite unworthy of a reputable work of reference like the *EPD*. The interesting item on the pronunciation policy of the BBC (pp. 591–593) which we have referred to briefly above would have been better incorporated into the introduction, as is also true of the helpful section ‘Principal differences between British and American English’ (pp. 574–576). Incidentally, although rhoticism and T-voicing are treated adequately, why has yod-dropping been omitted here? The useful information in ‘Weak forms in context’ would have been more economically placed in the information panel headed ‘Weak forms’. One might ask, in passing, why no mention is made anywhere of contracted forms, since these are surely a significant area for learners at all stages. Furthermore, in this final section of the book, there are some outdated examples and a few errors. Whilst the stereotype of West Country ‘Zummerset’ indeed has voicing of fortis fricatives, thus giving rise to forms like /'vɑ:ɹ.ɪ.mə/ for *farmer* (p. 587), this is hardly a ‘common pronunciation feature’; it is not only archaic but its present-day use is largely for comic effect, as was noted almost a quarter of a century ago (Wells 1982: 343). It is incorrect to say that ‘much of Wales’ is rhotic (p. 432); in fact this is true only of a very few peripheral areas such as south Pembrokeshire and east Monmouthshire. The phonetician Arthur Lloyd James certainly did not remain as an advisor to the BBC after the second World War (p. 591) – he committed suicide in Broadmoor prison in 1943 (Collins & Mees 1999: 353f.).

It is a truism to say that most people obey the law most of the time; similarly, most lexicographers do their linguistic duty nobly most of the time. Consequently, a review of a work of this type tends (perhaps unreasonably) to concentrate on the points of difference between one dictionary and another, and to skip over the good points they have in common. Let’s state quite clearly that this new edition of the *EPD* provides the user with a vast amount of accurate information on the pronunciation of an amazingly large corpus of words in the two major varieties of the world’s most widely understood language. That it does so with, relatively speaking, so few errors and questionable statements is a tribute to the editorial team and the publisher. It goes almost without saying that for the serious student of English phonetics the need to own either the *EPD* or the *LPD* (preferably both) is a *sine qua non*. But since we’ve actually said it, should that be /sɪmi kwɑ: 'nəʊn/, /sɪ:neɪ kwɑ: 'nəʊn/ or /sɑmi kwɛɪ 'nɒn/? Well, let’s look it up in the *EPD*!

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