This book is a monograph-length description of major aspects of the phonological system of Tashlihyt Berber, and, to a lesser extent, that of Moroccan Arabic. The two authors have been working together on these languages for a number of years, and the second is a native speaker of both languages. Although Arabic is well known and widely studied, Berber is much less so, and even Moroccan Arabic is not well documented. However, Berber became something of a cause célèbre with the publication of the classic definition of Optimality Theory (Prince & Smolensky 1993). For those who follow phonological theory, the elegant description of the remarkable syllabification system in Berber was probably one of the most persuasive aspects of the new way of looking at the world occasioned by Optimality Theory (the other was probably the analysis of infixation in Tagalog – equally elegant, and, to most, persuasive).

In a nutshell, Tashlihyt Berber allows any consonant at all to function as the nucleus of a syllable under the appropriate circumstances. This leads to things that one would not normally expect, such as syllabic voiceless stops. A remarkable list of such words appears, for example, on p. 145, where we find words such as /t-!btn=t/ ‘she lined it’ (where ‘-’ indicates morpheme boundary, ‘!’ pharyngealization, and ‘=’ a clitic boundary), syllabified as follows: [t怜btn], and /t-ˇbd-t/ ‘you pulled’, syllabified [tˇbd怜t]. Of course, if voiceless stops can be nuclei, so can other obstruents, such as fricatives: /t-ˇsb怜b/ ‘she whipped’, [tˇsbˇb], /i-sbˇy/ ‘he painted’ [iˇsbˇy] (p. 144).

While the book does not contain a great deal of phonetic detail (there are no spectrograms, nor are there any narrow transcriptions of the kind that readers of this journal might look for), the data itself is sufficiently fascinating that readers interested in finding out more about this family of languages could use the data in here as a jumping-off point for further instrumental and fine phonetic study.

The authors make a number of theoretical phonological points that are of interest to both phonologists and those phoneticians who study the relation between phonetic reality and the perceptual realities underlying the physical description. There is a significant difference between the line of argumentation in this book and that found in traditional generative-phonological descriptions of languages, in that virtually no time is spent arguing for underlying representations through the use of alternations found in verb or noun paradigms (which could arguably be due to ‘leftover’ patterns inherited from a series of historical sound changes, such as the Great English Vowel Shift in English). Instead the authors...
argue that the native poetic/song tradition in Berber culture provides evidence for the often counterintuitive syllabification apparently required for an adequate description of the language. In several traditions of long, narrative, argumentative poetry/song there are strict constraints about syllable structure which can only be understood if the somewhat abstract surface representations the authors argue for are assumed to be psychologically quite real. This is especially convincing since Berber is, generally speaking, an unwritten language and has no written linguistic tradition. Apparently, talented Berber poets compose these competitive song/poems on the spot following standard meters based on specific sequences of heavy and light syllables. Some of the poets can write these down in Arabic orthography, after the fact, but transcriptions are not widely used. Much of the data on which the book is based come from several thousand lines of such verse published in various sources, and either sung by the second author (to check for meter) or taken from hundreds of lines of broad phonetic transcriptions used in studies of Berber meter.

The authors make two major points in their discussion of the phonology of Berber which should interest readers of this journal. First, they argue that the Tashlhiyt dialect has only three vowels (/i, a, u/). Any other vowels heard (and there are lots of schwa-like vowels audible in this dialect) are not only not underlying vowels, they are not even surface vowels. That is, they are not ‘allophonic’ in the traditional sense, but merely audible releases of consonants, much as they are in the ‘spaces’ between adjacent non-homorganic consonants in such French words such as *abdiquer* [abdike] (p. 137). Since they are essentially release characteristics, they do not affect syllable structure at all, allowing the authors to claim that stops can be syllable NUCLEI, even if followed by something vowel-like.

Second, they need to distinguish between ways in which sequences of THREE identical consonants are syllabified. Although in some languages exhibit three degrees of length (Estonian being the best known) there are words in Berber that contain sequences of three identical consonants that, in some cases, contrast in how they are parsed. On page 147, for example, we find a discussion of the following minimal pair: /i-yli d+ddir/ [id3ddi] ‘he started climbing’ vs. /t-bidd di-s/ [idd3di] ‘she stopped with him’, where the superscript schwas (which the authors transcribe with superscript number 2s) represent the audible releases mentioned above. Even more extreme cases include /t-smun-t=t d=t-tbir-t/ ‘you put it (m.) together with the dove’ and /ar=t tt=ttu-x/ ‘I forget him’, which illustrate a contrast between [t3t:3t] and [t3t:3t] (p. 147). The instances of ‘geminate’ [t3t] that are transcribed as [t3t] represent, phonologically, a single Root node associated with two timing slots, while instances of two [t] symbols represent two distinct Root nodes (and thus two separate segments in some more concrete sense) associated with two separate timing slots. It should be noted, however, that these triple (or more) segment sequences can, in fact, be pronounced simply as a long hold on release. Thus /ar tt-tu-x/ can be pronounced either as [art3ttux] or [arttttux] with a very long voiceless alveolar closure, although the former is ‘preferred’ (p. 149).

A second major part of the book is an analysis of spoken Moroccan Arabic, a language that is also much less well-known than many of its sisters. Moroccan Arabic, almost certainly because of long and intimate association with Berber, has acquired a syllable structure strikingly similar to that of Tashlhiyt, and radically different from that found in, for example, Classical Arabic, the version of Arabic non-Semiticists are most likely to be familiar with. For example, there are vowel-less syllables in Moroccan Arabic, just as in Tashlhiyt. In fact there are sequences that ‘sound the same’ in the two languages. One example, discussed in some detail, is Moroccan /had l=hent/ ‘this perjury’ and Tashlhiyt /dlh-n=t/ ‘they smashed into him’, which are pronounced [.ha.dl.hnt] and [.dl.hnt], respectively; the Tashlhiyt-speaking author reports the identically transcribed second and third syllables sound the same to him (p. 305).

The book is extremely well produced (as one might expect, given its astronomical price), and has very few typos. There is a small number of grammatical infelicities, presumably due to the fact that the authors are not native speakers of English, but none that affect comprehension.
In this review I have concentrated on the phonetic details that the authors describe, rather than on phonological theory or the specific apparatus that they propose. This is in part because the authors make no bold claims about new flavors of Optimality Theory, or for rule ordering (they actually have old-fashioned rule notation to account for certain kinds of alternations). In fact, although they discuss constraints extensively, and present detailed charts of constraint ranking, both for Berber and Moroccan Arabic, they present no tableaux or detailed derivations. Rather they are interested in presenting a great deal of detailed information about specific aspects of the syllable structure of a language that is at one end of the continuum of which Hawai’ian represents the opposite extreme.

The other reason this book will be interesting to readers of this journal is that the language data beg for fine-grained phonetic analysis (in fact, the authors say exactly this, p. 333). For example, the sentence /dl-n=t ntl-n/ ‘they covered him and hid themselves’ must be pronounced ‘with a single uninterrupted closure in the midsagittal region’ (p. 141). Similarly, there are long stretches of speech with no vocal cord vibration at all, as illustrated by a sentence on the first page of text: /kks=t tˇsˇs-t=t/ ‘remove it and eat it’, pronounced [kːstːtː] (and, for those interested in the phonological questions, syllabified thus: [.k .kst .t .ˇs .ˇst .t .]).

Reference


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This is the second edition of a fairly traditional introduction to the linguistics of English, concentrating on the more formal aspects of language study such as grammar and phonetics with less attention paid to areas such as language acquisition, language variation or language change. It is divided into three sections, the first on morphology and word classes, the second on phonetics and phonology, and the third on sentence structure. There are not too many changes in this second edition of the book, though the section on words has been moved to the front, before that on sounds, and there are some valuable extra exercises to extend the understanding of students.

The coverage of the material is rather traditional in a number of ways, so for example there is little mention of modern theories of syntax, such as those of Chomsky, and thus the structure of noun phrases is discussed with no mention of the possibility of a DP analysis (Radford 1997: 152, Ouhalla 1999: 203). With respect to phonology, the analysis depends on two basic models, that of the phoneme, including substantial coverage of allophonic variation originating from complementary distribution, and an introduction to distinctive feature analysis, including simple rules for such processes as assimilation, deletion and insertion based on binary features. While this rather conservative coverage fails to consider more modern approaches, such as autosegmental phonology, feature geometry, or optimality theory, it does present basic phonological concepts in a very accessible manner, and the
extensive, well-constructed, carefully presented exercises, many of them interspersed into the main text, will enable introductory students to gain a solid understanding of the key issues in the grammar and phonology of English.

Even though most of the coverage is traditional, in a few places the analysis is perhaps a little surprising. For example, the concept of an allophone depends entirely on the occurrence of complementary distribution (p. 151), so the definition of allophones is that they ‘appear in mutually exclusive positions’ (p. 142). This seems to overlook the possibility of free variation as one source of allomorphic variation (Cruttenden 2001: 45), and it would seem better to define an allophone as any variant that does not result in a change in meaning (Crystal 2003: 19). The concept of free variation is introduced briefly, to deal with the occurrence of /i:/ or /ai/ at the start of *either* and /e/ or /i:/ at the start of *economics* (p. 147), but although such alternations affecting individual words may indeed be regarded as instances of free variation, it is usual to include within the scope of the concept the small variations in the realisation of a phoneme that occur on different occasions (Laver 1994: 69) and between different speakers, variations which are likely to extend throughout the lexicon and not be limited to isolated words.

In one further issue concerned with allophones, section 5.4, which is headed ‘Allophonic processes’, includes subsections on elision and insertion. While there is no explicit suggestion that Ø can be treated as an allophone of /d/ and /t/ on the basis of the pronunciation of *handsome* and *mostly* (p. 164), the fact that elision and insertion appear to be included within the scope of allophonic processes is likely to result in some confusion among students.

One attractive aspect of this book is its regular use of literary texts, especially the work of such well-known poets as Gerard Manley Hopkins and W. H. Auden, to illustrate a number of phonological issues such as syllable structure (p. 193), rhyming schemes (p. 196), intonation (p. 204), and rhythm and meter (p. 209), and this certainly enlivens and enriches the text. But maybe as a result of this frequent reference to poetry when analysing the phonology of English, there is more belief in the isochrony of stress-timing in English than is generally assumed nowadays, and we might ask if there is really any empirical evidence for the approximately equal duration of the feet in an utterance such as:

| What’s the | difference between a | free and a | bound | morph? (p. 207)

However, in an introductory textbook, it perhaps does no harm to simplify things a little, even if a deeper understanding of phonetics would allow students to appreciate that such fixed patterns of isochrony are not quite so straightforward in the real world (Lehiste 1977, Couper-Kuhlen 1993).

Of course, more ambitious students might find it valuable to be told where things are not so simple, and pointers to further material on a topic such as rhythm would prove useful for such students. Unfortunately the guidance in this respect is rather limited. Although at the end of each section there is a very brief list of books for suggested further reading, there are no references within the text itself, so for example we are told that ‘some phonologists have considered’ the phoneme to be the underlying phonological entity while ‘other phonologists’ have instead proposed distinctive features to be the fundamental unit (pp. 168f.) without being informed who these phonologists are. Though it does seem to be common for many introductory books to avoid references within the text in this way, and this certainly ensures the text remains clear, direct, and uncluttered by what many might regard as extraneous material, it might be helpful if dedicated readers were offered a bit more substantial guidance on how to follow up some of the issues. Furthermore, one wonders whether the absence of references within the text is providing a good model for students who are in the process of learning how to write academic presentations.

In one further instance where the coverage simplifies matters to the extent that it is not quite watertight, the tonic syllable is defined as ‘the only syllable in the tone group where the pitch changes during its production’ (p. 201). However, this definition is at odds with some of the examples on the same page, where for instance the only syllable with pitch movement in the first tone group of ‘It was only yesterday | that I decided not to go’ is the final syllable
of *yesterday*, which exhibits a small but distinct rise in pitch. Surely the final syllable of *yesterday* cannot be the tonic syllable here? But perhaps a comprehensive definition of the tonic syllable would need to consider its role as the anchor point for the tune of the whole tone group (O’Connor & Arnold 1973: 14) and also maybe to analyse how the inventory of nuclear pitch patterns differs from those that occur on non-nuclear accented syllables (Nolan 1984: 7–10), and it must be admitted that this is rather more abstract than stating that the tonic syllable is the only syllable which exhibits pitch movement. Perhaps it is appropriate that an introductory textbook should keep things simple in this way, even if it results in some rather obvious flaws.

The book basically adopts a British model of pronunciation, though the symbols used are not quite the standard ones, with /ei, ai, ɔi, au/ used instead of /eɪ, aɪ, ɔɪ, ɔu/, and /ou/ instead of /ˈʌ/. While it may be possible to justify the use of these symbols, it seems a pity not to adopt the standard set found in the two pronouncing dictionaries (Wells 2000, Jones et al. 2003), as this is likely to result in unnecessary confusion among students. One other issue with symbols involves the adoption of [.] to indicate half-long vowels, so for example *beat* gets transcribed phonetically as [bi.ɪt] as a result of vowel shortening because of the final voiceless consonant (p. 167), and it is not clear why the standard IPA symbol [ ] (IPA 1999: 203) is not adopted for a half-long vowel, especially when this standard symbol is subsequently listed as the correct one for this purpose (p. 189). Furthermore, when syllables come to be considered, syllable boundaries are also shown (correctly) with [ ], so we have the same symbol sometimes indicating length as in [bi.ɪt] and sometimes showing a syllable boundary as in /fə.ˈne.ɪk/ (p. 190).

With regard to symbols, it is also rather unfortunate that there are quite a few errors, some of them introduced in the typesetting of this second edition, such as the regular appearance of [ə] instead of [ʊ] (pp. 141, 155, 174, 208), the suggestion that /n/ gets pronounced as [n] in *congress* (p. 162), and the claim that the past tense /d/ morpheme is pronounced as [əd] after [−cont −ant +cor] sounds (p. 182) instead of [−cont +ant +cor] sounds (as it was correctly shown in the first edition). In addition, it is a pity that some of the errors from the first edition have not been fixed, so /d/ rather than /z/ is given as the assimilated consonant in the pronunciation of /ju:zdə/ as [ju:stə] (p. 162), and the omission of the first /t/ in *postmaster* is still used to illustrate the elision of consonants in unstressed syllables (p. 207) even though this /t/ actually occurs in a stressed syllable. Finally, some of the additional exercises in this second edition have errors, such as the representation of *bathe* as /bɛ.θ/ (p. 185), which means the answer provided for the lengthening of Scottish vowels occurring before /vDzr/ or a morpheme boundary (p. 326) no longer works, and the transcription of *beautiful* as [bju:ˈtɪfəl] for Dialect D (p. 187) even though the answer key claims that this dialect (presumably Norfolk English) has deleted /j/ in all positions (p. 327).

It is hoped that these (and many more) irritating errors can be fixed soon, so that this book can take its well-deserved place as one of the foremost introductory textbooks on the structure of English for those who prefer a solid, traditional approach that focuses in a highly approachable manner on the core areas of grammar and phonetics. Even if some of the definitions are not completely watertight, and even though the analysis of a few things such as rhythm does not quite comply with recent acoustic research, perhaps it is picky to dwell on minor shortcomings when so much of the material is presented so well and in such an attractive fashion. Many students will appreciate the detailed but clear discussion of this introductory material on the structure of English and will also find the extensive, carefully graded exercises exceptionally helpful, and this certainly makes it an excellent introductory text.

References

This volume (henceforth ODP) is certainly a weighty contribution to English pronunciation lexicography. It immediately invites comparison with the only two previous works of closely similar aims and dimensions, viz. the Longman Pronunciation Dictionary (LPD) and the Cambridge University Press English Pronouncing Dictionary (EPD). LPD has 869 pages in two columns and EPD has 606 pages in three columns. ODP has 1208 pages of text in four columns per page. In hardback, ODP has the same footprint and weight as LPD but it is 1.5 cm thicker and consequently a little less convenient to handle, but it scores heavily over the other two in offering rather more self-explanatory and certainly less condensed transcriptions.

Its preliminary matter begins with a single page (p. vi) headed ‘Dictionary team’, which lists five additional editorial staff and eighteen ‘Foreign language consultants’. These last cover Afrikaans, Brazilian Portuguese, Lusitanian Portuguese, Czech, Danish, Dutch-and-Flemish, French, German, Hungarian, Irish Gaelic, Italian, Norwegian, Polish, Russian, Spanish, Swedish, Turkish and Welsh.

The single-page, rather effusively expressed ‘Preface’ (p. vii) proclaims that the authors offer ‘models . . . in what we believe to be a new manner for the new millennium’ having ‘developed’ them ‘not as incremental improvements upon some prior practice but as the product of our long research experience as students of language variation’. They see themselves as having been ‘called upon to decide what pronunciations are held in common as national habits or norms by British and American speakers’. They refer to their belief that their ‘wide experience with variation’ gives them ‘standing to create pronunciation models which avoid slavish imitation of the dictates of self-appointed arbiters of taste or style in language in favour of patterns which reflect the actual speech of real people’. Some lines later they talk of having ‘ascertained particular models’.

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They acknowledge indebtedness to certain pronunciation lexicographers of past generations (UK’s Jones and Gimson and USA’s Kenyon and Artin) but make no mention of any debts to their contemporaries. They don’t even include either LPD or EPD in their bibliography at p. xvii. In a work offering pedagogical models for learners of English, their reference to debts to the editors of the Leeds University Survey of English Dialects, which dealt essentially with demotic usages, strikes one as a little odd. By contrast, its authors in their accounts of their credentials make no claims to any EFL expertise though ‘intended for use both by fluent English speakers and by learners of the language’ (p. viii) clearly indicates expectation of an EFL audience. Indicative of this perhaps is their meagre treatment of certain verb forms, prepositions and pronouns such as have, to and her, which are much more fully treated by LPD and EPD. ODP is, one notes, from the English Language Reference section and not the ELT Dictionaries division of Oxford University Press.

After this single-page preface, the following pages, viii–xix, are headed ‘Introduction’. In the first section of this introduction, ‘Use of the dictionary’, we meet the abbreviations by which the American and British entries are identified, viz. BR and AM. (In the subsequent dictionary text these appear always in small capitals.) No account is given of any other varieties of English than those of England (though see the remarks below about ‘RP’) and the USA, except for the brief comment at p. xiv that the ‘model presented here will offer a fair description of Canadian English as well’. They say of their BR and AM transcriptions that the ‘choice has been for that model which, if reproduced by users of this dictionary in accordance with the principles of the International Phonetic Association, will enable them to be understood by native speakers of English without being categorized as belonging to any narrow class, age or regional grouping’. This seems somewhat at variance with the remark that their text has been designed to be used ‘without careful study of a set of complicated conventions’. The only illustrations given of this last feature are their use of BR and AM ‘rather than symbols’ and their intention of showing at every entry ‘complete . . . rather than abbreviated transcriptions . . . for each alternative pronunciation’ (p. viii).

This intention is not quite fully realised because parentheses are constantly used around notionally optional sounds (often more than once in the same word and on the odd occasion even separately around two symbols in succession). Happily, this needs no elucidation though the italicising of every intrusive /r/ does. Use is made of the customary vertical bar to signal the point to which a word is to be cut back to add an inflectional ending (though one fails to appear at house) and of a reverse oblique stroke to indicate alternative forms of the same ending. The example of this given at p. ix is of spell whose past tense may end as /-ld/ or /-lt/. Unfortunately, at the spell verb entry in the text no such variation is in fact recorded. One other way in which ODP falls slightly short of the aim to avoid abbreviated transcriptions is the use, not explained though easily comprehensible, of a plus sign to avoid repetition of a transcription already given in a previous line e.g. as at c’est la vie (twice), ceteris paribus (on six of the eight lines devoted to the entry) and at Plaid Cymru, where the ‘+’ is obviously used to avoid giving again the same transcription for Plaid. At that entry, Cymru is intended to appear in a different form, with [u] instead of [a], though it in fact doesn’t do so. The variant intended can be found at the separate entry for Cymru.

The second section of the introduction, headed ‘The text explained’, says that ‘[t]he ordering of variant pronunciations does not imply that one form is more desirable or “correct” than another’ (p. ix) but doesn’t say whether or not first-given forms are to be taken to be the more frequent ones. It says that optional elements enclosed in parentheses have equal acceptability but again without explicit comment on their relative frequency. ‘A most basic entry’, it is pointed out, ‘consists of a headword in bold type and identical transcriptions for BR and AM’ (p. viii). There would have hardly been any loss of clarity in such cases if a single line had begun with, for example, ‘BR/AM’.

So far things are actually very much what we find in LPD and EPD but next we come to two newly-invented symbols which are said to conform to an alleged ‘IPA convention of barring to signify centralization of high vowels and retraction of front vowels’ (p. x). The IPA
alphabet does indeed contain the barred symbols [i, u] and [o] but no such convention has ever in fact been formulated by the IPA. Nevertheless, symbols denoting approximately equal frequency of occurrence of /ɔ/ or /ɑ/ and of /œ/ or /œː/ seem perfectly reasonable innovations in this lexicographical context and their barred small capital [i] certainly looks less ungainly than the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English and Webster’s Third New International Dictionary notations which for /iː̃/ variation use schwa surmounted respectively with an /i/ and a dot. They might well have ventured also to employ barred lower-case [i] to convey the freely varying possibilities of /iː/ and /i/ in the plurals of the words like city, abbey, safari, coffee etc. and in items like alleyway, Furies, ladylike, Scillies, undies etc., which are unsatisfactorily shown with only /i/ for BR and only /iː/ for AM. Because the size of type used in ODP is rather small, the barred letters may possibly cause problems of legibility for some readers. They may have done so for their proofreaders: at least the heading (though not the text) of section 7 at p. x fails to show these novel ‘composite symbols’ with their bars.

For the unstressed endings of e.g. business, challenge, climate, palace, -itis words, the superlative suffix -est and the middle syllables of words like villages the barred small capital /i/ (legibility apart) serves well enough because both versions are common in General British (see below). However, with many items, e.g. most -ness-ending words and all -less-ending ones, where /ɔ/ is markedly predominant in BR, the reader is being denied the information that that is so. Moreover their use of barred /i/ for the final syllable of plurals like villages and past forms like chatted is likely to give the wrong impression that there is often no difference between them and villagers and chattered whereas schwa ending the first pair is only a very untypical borderline General British usage. The claim that environmental factors (preceding high front vowel or so ending diphthong) ‘frequently govern the choice of vowel-sound’ is no doubt defensible for American usage but ‘for BR -less’ (p. xviii) it is quite unsustainable.

The third section of the introduction, at p. x, entitled ‘Technical discussion: transcription sets’, remarks that these are ‘broadly phonetic’ and ‘do not hide potential variation. For instance, both [rum~rum] and [rum] are possible pronunciations for room … A limited symbol set results in broad transcriptions, and may suggest de facto phonemicizations to some readers, but our intention is always to indicate actual sounds to be produced’ (p. xi). It’s difficult to make sense of such remarks: the transcriptions offered for room etc. are simply what one finds in LPD, EPD and elsewhere. Anyway, the talk immediately turns to phonemes: ‘[n]o single set of vowel and consonant phonemes can represent all varieties; the following sets are appropriate to the BR and AM models used’ (p. xi). Then beneath this appear two groups of vowel symbols set out in diagrammatic spacing with the vertical titles Front, Central and Back, and horizontal ones High, Mid and Low. The first of these, ‘Vowels (BR)’, has 12 single letters, four of which are accompanied by length-marks but epsilon (ε), which is used in the text at the dress and square vowels accompanied by a length-mark in the latter case, is missing. The ordinary roman letter ‘e’ supplies the earlier element of the first of the five diphthongs given below the diagrammatic grouping but not diagrammatised themselves. At least two further BR diphthongs occur in the dictionary text, of which, puzzlingly, no mention is made here, viz. /iə, ʊə/. For a detailed discussion of their not completely happy choice of vowel symbols for their BR entries (these have already appeared in certain other OUP reference books) the reader is referred to Windsor Lewis (2003). As to the choices of symbols for the AM vowels, one would have thought that ordinarily the fewer unhelpful contrasts made between BR and AM items the better. After all, the purpose of putting both these lists into one book rather than two separate volumes obviously has to be to facilitate comparison of the two varieties. Accordingly, to have harmonised the representation of /iː/ /uː/ /aː/ and /ɔː/ (as in LPD and EPD), not to mention various diphthongs, would have met this desideratum and provided useful economies of space. For example, a great deal of space would be saved if /iː, uː/ etc. were adopted to represent both AM and BR instead of, for example, /e/ being shown as ‘BR fiː’ and ‘AM fi’ on separate successive lines. Incidentally, there is surprisingly in ODP no convenient listing together with explanatory keywords of the full set of phonetic
symbols used. The use of a different AM symbol /ə/ corresponding to the BR /ɪ/ is especially unfortunate partly because it requires markings for AM in non-tonic syllables that constantly suggest AM/BR stress differences which are either non-existent or totally trivial, at least as far as the EFL user is concerned. *LPD* and *EPD* both sensibly use /ɪ/ for both GB and American entries. One doesn’t question the feasibility of AM being notated with differential explicitly stressed and unstressed schwa in a different context from a dictionary. In *ODP*, it adds to an impression gained elsewhere that the authors responsible for BR and AM entries each took their decisions with little or no account of what the other was doing.

Symbols for five diphthongs are given below the ‘Vowels (AM)’ quasi-diagram and, as with the BR diphthongs, not diagrammatised. No reference is made to a sixth AM diphthong, /oə/, which occurs in the text but is confined to monosyllables (and the final stressed syllables of polysyllabic words) where /r/ follows it, e.g. *fork* /fɔr(r)/, with its schwa element always bracketed. Further AM diphthongs to be found in the text but not mentioned here are /eə/ and /æə/, as at *yeah*, all of which appear in the text with bracketed schwa.

In the list of consonant symbols for BR and AM the first fricative item shows a gross deficiency in proofreading by having [æ] where a bilabial-consonant symbol is required. *ODP* does include a bilabial-fricative phi symbol, [ɸ], at the entry *pshaw*. A lateral-fricative symbol [ɻ] is, as in *LPD*, unfortunately employed at the *ODP* first BR versions of e.g. *Llanelly*, *Llangollen*, *Pwllheli*. Such transcriptions indicate sounds which are in fact only available to a speaker with native-equivalent ability to pronounce Welsh. *EPD*’s /hl/ is a much more realistic representation of the native English-speaker’s performance in such items. The p. x entry ‘l(= [ʎ])’ is quite mystifying.

The fourth and longest section of the introduction, pp. xi–xviii, headed ‘Pronunciation models’, is divided into two major parts: BR (pp. xi–xiii) and AM (pp. xiii–xvi) but ends with two short subsections which deal with AM and BR side by side (pp. xvif.) on matters of stress marking and vowel reduction.

In the first major part of this fourth main section of the introduction, the discussion of BR, which is equated with ‘Received Pronunciation’, refers to its mainstream variety as carrying ‘connotations of education and sophistication but no especially narrow regional overtones and certainly no serious negative judgements’ (p. xi). It is remarked that ‘it might loosely be labelled broadcast RP if yet another label were to be thought desirable’ (p. xi). *ODP*’s own BR is just such a new label which no other dictionary has used hitherto. They add: ‘to correct a situation where the British model is the possession of a small minority restricted in terms of age, class and region, a younger unmarked RP is that which provides the model in this dictionary . . . that accent which will be most widely acceptable as well as most intelligible to native BR speakers’ (p. xi).

It is quite possible, of course, to invent an artificial language (as with Esperanto) but the idea of concocting an accent is difficult to accept. Talking of ‘individuals who can legitimately lay claim to an RP accent’ (p. xi), and of ‘RP’ as a ‘possession’ also sounds less than felicitous.

The decision by Daniel Jones in 1926 to label as ‘Received Pronunciation’ the type of accent he described was extremely unfortunate, ironically so for someone who, in Jones (1937), should go out of his way to insist that ‘no person should ever disparage the speech of another’ (p. 2), because the term’s inevitable implication is that those who do not employ that accent exhibit one in some way not accepted. Many of his pupils and their followers appear to have been either oblivious to the term’s invidiousness or – from ingrained habit – unable to bring themselves to replace it. However, the most significant defining feature of the accent today is not its social value but its geographical neutrality: it certainly tends to get thinner on the ground the farther one travels from its place of origin, London, but it can be met with anywhere in the whole of England and Wales, and even to a slight extent in Scotland, exhibited by persons who have spent the major part of their formative years where one finds them. A discussion of such matters appeared in Windsor Lewis (1985).
My preferred replacement for the now increasingly rejected term RP is General British (abbreviation GB) the term I introduced in Windsor Lewis (1972). This is not an ideal label but, in the absence of a widely agreed alternative, it is a convenient one. GB has an identity which can, as in LPD and EPD etc., be fairly clearly specified, admittedly acknowledging some inevitable fuzziness at the edges. ODP’s seeking to ‘correct a situation’ (p. xi) seems remarkably arbitrary. Despite the deplored earlier of ‘self-appointed arbiters’ (p. vii), ODP’s insertion of undifferentiated regional items (i.e. the inclusion of ‘one specifically “northern” BR feature’ (p. xii), the variation between /ə/ and /ɛ/ in bath, dance, without on-the-spot indication of origin and no other northernisms) into the present work seems to place it in exactly that category. LPD in 1990 introduced the very worthwhile feature of including pronunciations ‘widespread in England among educated speakers, but which are nevertheless judged to fall outside RP’ (LPD, p. xiii). These items, in most cases associated with northern England, are identified by the arbitrary symbol ½ († in the first edition). It is not clear why /ə/–/ɛ/ is included while more distinctive differences are ignored. For example, there is no recognition of the fact that almost all relatively sophisticated northern speakers employ different vowel qualities in e.g. foot and cut while yet not using in such words anything from the range of values generally heard from GB speakers in cut. But in fact the inclusion of strong vowels as variant pronunciations of the first syllables of words like example, examine, exclude, expect etc. is more or less equally ‘northern’; and, seeing that strong-vowel variants are given for those, why have they not been admitted at e.g. admire, admit, advance, conclude, complain, compute, objection, observe, obtain, substantial, success etc.? Examples of other items widely employed by educated northerners which ODP fails to admit into BR include because and raspberry with /s/, decision with /ʃ/, gooseberry with /w/, eighty and eighteen with /-tt/-, magazine with initial and yesterday with final tonic stress, mischief with latter vowel /i/, the adjective perfect with /-ekt/, one, none and nothing with /o/, us and various dis- words, like dismiss, with /z/, and with with /θ/. These usages are widespread in educated varieties of speech of various northern and a few other limited areas of England and Wales.

When items are given with /ə/ and /ɛ/ in EPD or LPD, one knows that the vowels are being recorded as GB variants and that whichever is shown second is considered the less usual GB form. In ODP, the reader is denied this information because a second version will often be a regionalism only. This applies to various items such as graph, autograph, cenotaph, photograph, telegraph, chaff, giraffe; lath, lather; Madras, hasp, bastard, flabbergast, masque; Sandra, plantation, circumstance and stanch. Unlike castle and grass, the entries Castleford, Castleton, Grasmere and Grassington are all given in ODP with /ə/ first. Some ODP items completely omit common variant GB forms with /ə/ e.g. aftermath, Cassandra, circumstantial, elastic, masculine, mastiff, plantain, plastic, stanchion. Sanders is given without initial capital or the /ə/, listed as its only GB form in LPD and EPD. Similarly, the ODP reader is not made aware that their BR transcriptions of words ending like horrible and terrible indicating alternative pronunciations with /i/ are in unselfconscious or unpedantic speech solely northernisms.

The second major part of the fourth main section of the introduction (pp. xiii–xvi) deals with the AM ‘pronunciation model’. It begins by saying that AM contains ‘no identifiable variety widely spoken by well-educated, cultivated residents... Regional varieties of pronunciation show few signs of giving way before the mobility of the population and the omnipresence of national broadcast media.’ Yet later it remarks that ‘the model adopted here follows the trend among younger educated speakers of exclusion of regional features’ (p. xiv). It proceeds to refer to certain major regional variants ‘not included in the transcriptions, both because of regional marking and because this volume seeks to present pronunciations typical of the model adopted in slow to moderate speech’ (p. xiv).

Acceptances and exclusions contain few surprises. The trio of marry, Mary and merry all have the same vowel because alternatives are judged ‘recessive and regionally marked’ (p. xv). Similarly with horse and hoarse and with halve and have. On the other hand calm and palm receive optional /l/ and e.g. mental is accorded optional /v/. There is also reference to
possible diphthongisations of vowels being ‘shown by an optional mid-central vowel . . . except for’ words like four (p. xv): yet at the AM entry for that word a bracketed schwa does appear.

No use is made of length marks or specifically retroflex symbols. EPD uses /œ/ for the US ‘r-coloured schwa’, where LPD shows /ɔ/. For American ‘long schwa’, LPD has /m3dɔr/ for murder and EPD /m3:rdɔ/. I don’t think ODP users lose much by being spared this complexity. ‘Intervocalic /t/, as in ladder, is often realized as a flap [r] or voiced t [t] but is transcribed here as [d]’ (p. xvi) so that latter and ladder have identical transcriptions. (At p. vi the symbol for the flap is much taller than the IPA authorised form.) So the claim to keep the transcriptions free from complications is considerably borne out as compared with the LPD and EPD American entries.

The former of the two final subsections, ‘BR and AM stress marking’, contains the vague assertion that AM ‘has a heavier stressing pattern than BR’ (p. xvi), which is illustrated by the suggestion that the second syllable of baseball has secondary stress in AM but tertiary stress in BR. Whatever may precisely be meant by this comment, i.e. what learner can possibly benefit from the display of a secondary-stress mark in the AM version? The other example given is dictionary, in which the subordinate stress marking is equally superfluous because the different phonemic structures of the BR and AM versions of the word make matters perfectly clear.

The fifth main section of the introduction is a twelve-item ‘Bibliography’, at p. xviii, which incidentally doesn’t include Webster’s Third New International Dictionary though that work is referred to at p. xvii.

The sixth and final main section of the introduction consists of a page or so headed ‘Foreign pronunciations’. ODP actually offers only limited information on original-language pronunciations of its loanword entries. EPD jettisoned in 1997 the rather few foreign forms it had once contained. LPD has remarkably full, though not exhaustive, coverage of foreign language versions. Their value to ODP and LPD users is, of course, dependent on the individual’s knowledge of the IPA alphabet. This section is introduced by saying ‘When given in native form, a limited number of foreign headwords also have native pronunciations based on current national standards, but only where these differ significantly from the anglicized pronunciations.’ (p. xviii) It is added that words ‘falling within specific subject fields, e.g. culinary and musical terminology, have not been given native pronunciations’ (p. xviii). Neither in fact have any items not linguistically European. No explanations are offered for these decisions. Quite what is meant by ‘significantly’ also receives no elucidation. For example, Dresden, Ibiza, Le Corbusier, Murillo, Utrillo and Velasquez receive foreign native versions but not Botticelli, Cervantes, Goya, Modigliani, Michelangelo, Quixote or Watteau. One might have imagined that having [x] for the ‘x’ Mexico and for the ‘ch’ in Machynlleth would be considered a significant difference but neither is given a foreign-language version. Bacardi, Bolivar, Cadiz, Dali, Helsinki, Maastricht, Otranto, Trafalgar and Uppsala, which have differently placed tonic stress from their native forms, aren’t either. Copenhagen, Trondheim and smorgasbord get no Scandinavian version; Paris, Besançon and Nez Percé no French; Dusseldorf, Pachelbel and Weltschmerz no German. By contrast Myfanwy and Pontypridd are given Welsh transcriptions differing only by the use of [a] in an unstressed syllable, which for Welsh itself might at least as well have been shown as /a/, as indeed it is in LPD. Mistakes or misprints occur at numbers of foreign items including Bergman, Brno, Clwyd, Hofmannsthal, Lofoten, Malmø and öre.

In the diagrammatic setting out of foreign-language vowel symbols (p. x), a front vowel at Open-Mid or between that and Open (their three levels are termed High, Mid and Low) is omitted though there are plenty of examples of items employing [e] in the foreign-language transcriptions. The item ‘/æ/’, as in Dutch Waal, is not the symbol found in the text of the dictionary at that entry. At Beira the vowel exemplified is again not used but [a] appears instead of the suggested back vowel. At Douro, the wrong vowel is underlined. At each of the simple-vowel types listed one or more languages containing it are specified; each language is
illustrated by one or two words except that at Italian and Spanish, for some unstated reason, ‘mid vowel’ and ‘close back vowel’ are used (p. xviii).

The representation of the voiced velar fricative consonant is, by the common solecism, not IPA’s proper gamma but its ‘ram’s horns’ vowel symbol. All these items except the diacritics are presented between slants, not square brackets. The apostrophe symbol for the Danish glottal catch is given the definition appropriate to the similar-looking ‘corner’ diacritic [’] for absence of audible release! If they meant to include a symbol corresponding to that definition, its appropriate location would perhaps have been with English sounds at p. x: yet one doesn’t appear at *Yep* or *Nope*. A dental click symbol is included and given first position at the entry *tut* but appears not at all at *tut tut*.

Despite its imperfections, we must certainly welcome this ambitious new work. It can only be an advantage to have a set of impressions independent from the ones available in the two previously available works of this nature and scope. It must be salutary for students to be able to compare the contents of the three works and see that there is far from complete unity of opinion between them in a variety of ways. Furthermore the presentational style of *ODP* offers us a stimulus to reconsider how this kind of information should be displayed in the future. It seems probable that in time *ODP*’s more user-friendly way of setting out variants will prevail, not least because computer screens are likely to become the preferred mode of access to their content. In electronically presented texts the matter of type size can cease to be a problem. The great benefit of showing so many separate-line variant transcriptions uncluttered with the numerous italics and superscript miniature symbols to be found in other works which are tiresome for all and impenetrable for many will then be fully realised.

References

*EPD*: see Jones (2003).


*LPD*: see Wells (2000).

Webster’s Third New International Dictionary (1966). London, G. Bell & Sons Ltd. [Editor P. B. Gove; Associate Editor for pronunciation E. Artin.]


