

García Lecumberri, M. Luisa & John A. Maidment. *English Transcription Course*. London: Arnold, 2000.

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This book, as the title and introduction make clear, is intended for students of English as a foreign language who wish to improve their phonetic transcription skills. Since the authors had set themselves this practical objective only the most essential aspects of theory are discussed. The book begins with some basic principles (lessons 1 and 2) and then deals with stress, rhythm and weak forms (lesson 3), linking 'r' (lesson 4), syllabic consonants (lesson 5), elision (lesson 6), assimilation (lesson 7) and glottalization (lesson 8). Lesson 9 cannot be strictly regarded as such since no new material is introduced. Instead the lesson is made up of six complementary texts "for further practice". These might more simply have been grouped together under a single rubric since the same instructions are given in each case viz., "transcribe the following passage, including all we have seen in previous lessons (weak forms, sandhi 'r', syllabicity, elision, assimilation and glottaling)". The lessons include examples with commentaries on the transcription issues presented, exercises and various texts for transcription, the answers to which can be found in the Appendix.

A book of this type intended to teach and practise phonetic transcription is certainly not a novelty. There is already a wide range of publications concerned with English phonetics, among which the most noteworthy are Jones, Daniel. *Phonetic Readings in English*. Carl Winter. Universitätsverlag. Heidelberg. Germany, 1955, 1962; Tibbitts, E. Leonard. *Practice Material for the English Sounds*. Heffer, Cambridge, 1963; Scott, N. C. *English Conversations* in simplified phonetic transcription with intonation marking. Heffer, Cambridge, 1942, 1965, 1969; Arnold, G.F. & Tooley, O. M. *Say it with Rhythm* 1, 2, 3. Phonetic Readers. Longman, 1971; O'Connor, J. D. *Phonetic Drill Reader*. Cambridge English language Learning, CUP, 1973, 1976; Lewis, J. Windsor. *People Speaking*. Phonetic Readings in Current English, Cornelsen & OUP, 1977. Somewhat curiously none of these are cited by García Lecumberri and Maidment.

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of *English Transcription Course* is the special attention given to those aspects of phonology most likely to prove problematic for non-native speaking students of English i.e., stress, rhythm and sounds in the speech chain. Another feature that is bound to please students in particular is the fact that the transcriptions are accompanied by commentaries. It is not my view, however, that linking 'r' and glottalization (the authors choose to use the less familiar terms "sandhi 'r'" and "glottaling") merit entire chapters especially at the expense of other topics such as intonation, which is not even mentioned.

It also seems a pity that narrative texts are used exclusively and that these are, being narratives, excessively long. The authors give no indication of the criteria used for text selection but it would appear that they were chosen at random since on page 72 they state that: "Almost any passage of English prose could serve as an exercise: a piece of a modern

novel, a passage from a newspaper or magazine, even this paragraph". Finally, it should be said that in the answer key, the "edited autographic versions" add little or nothing.

Cruttenden, Alan. *Gimson's Pronunciation of English*. 6th ed. London: Arnold, 2001, xix+339 pp.

Reviewed by Antonio Lillo
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If one could use the phrase 'classic text' at this point in the history of phonetics literature, A.C. Gimson's *An Introduction to English Pronunciation* would aptly fit the description. Since its publication in 1962 it has established itself as one of the most accessible and comprehensive accounts of RP, and this sixth edition, revised by Professor Alan Cruttenden of the University of Manchester, testifies to its on-going popularity among professional phoneticians and advanced students of English alike.

As in the previous edition, Cruttenden retains the original organization and approach of Gimson's work, the core of the book being constituted by a commendably full treatment of the vowels and consonants of RP, with a wealth of examples, articulatory descriptions, variants, chief sources and advice to foreign learners. In this updated edition, however, those parts of the book which had already been extensively revised in the fifth edition (1994) have been improved in several ways, especially the sections on the syllable and on phonotactics. These have been considerably enriched by the inclusion of relevant subsections on syllable constituency (pp. 50-51) and on the syllabification of word-medial sequences (pp. 244-245).

Other major additions include a new section on pronouncing dictionaries (pp. 317-318) and the illustration of the acoustics of vowels and consonants, with useful information on the formant frequencies for pure vowels in connected speech (p. 99) and spectrograms for vowels (pp. 100-101), obstruents (p. 157) and sonorants (p. 194). Another novel aspect of this edition is the treatment of current changes within RP (pp. 81-83), which Cruttenden breaks down into four categories, namely 'changes almost complete' (e.g. [eə] > [ɛ:]), 'changes well-established' (e.g. [u:] > [ʊ:]), 'recent innovations' (e.g. the increasingly frequent use of high rise terminals) and 'innovations on the verge of RP' (e.g. [ɰ] > [ʊ]). The coverage of the phonetic features of Estuary English (or 'London Regional RP' to use Cruttenden's term) is also most welcome, since this accent was only touched on in passing in the previous edition.

Even though a book of this type is not expected to dwell excessively upon stylistic variation, I believe both the relationship between Cockney, Estuary English and RP and the description of some of the new trends in RP would have been made somewhat clearer by appealing to the notion of style (cf. McArthur's [1998:117] description of Estuary English as an 'accent-cum-style'). The existence of a range of styles within each accent (RP or otherwise) is clearly stated in the section on stylistic variation (pp. 293-295) and further implied in Cruttenden's statement that "there are no categorical boundaries between the