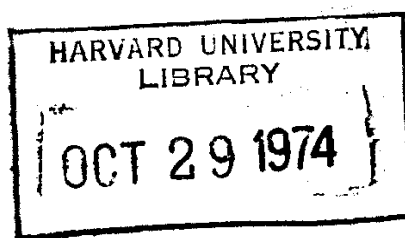


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by A. C. GIMSON and J. C. WELLS,
University College London WC1E 6BT



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The lexical item as a phonetic entity¹

R. K. SPRIGG

(School of Oriental and African Studies)

“... there is more near-ambiguity in language than it is always convenient to admit”; and in studying stress and juncture it would be especially valuable, in order to avoid too great a reliance either on introspection or on artificially contrived confrontations, to make a collection of ambiguities in action in the form of fully-documented instances of uncertainty of interpretation or of actual misunderstanding’ (Sharp, 1960: 112-13).

It is ambiguities of the sort that Sharp refers to in the passage quoted above that led me, recently, to look more closely at a number of pairs of English forms that I had hitherto taken to be homophones: they are symbolized as homophones in Jones’s *English Pronouncing Dictionary*.

Not a few of the ambiguities that provided me with my stimulus I owe to my wife’s pronunciation of English, which, though she speaks it with remarkable competence, is not her mother tongue. The mis-pronunciations of foreigners can be most instructive: valueless though foreigners are as informants for any language other than the mother tongue, they can still be highly useful to the phonetician, in languages that are foreign to them, as ‘reverse informants’, as it were, or ‘mis-informants’, for the light they shed on the finer points, the *minutiae*, of English pronunciation.

The frequent references that Daniel Jones makes, in *An Outline of English Phonetics*, to mistakes made by foreign learners of English are, no doubt, intended to help them to master the five types of difficulty that he lists on page 2; but I cannot help wondering how much of his awareness of such errors in pronunciation as the following are due to the mispronunciations of his students: ‘The French are inclined to shorten long vowels when final, pronouncing, for instance, *sea*, *too* with short vowels (like the French *si*, *tout*) instead of with long ones (**si:**, **tu:**). . . . The French also have a tendency to shorten the long vowels **i:** and **u:** when followed by **b**, **d**, **g**, **m**, **n**, and **l**, as in *tube* **tju:b**, *food* **fu:d**, *league* **li:g**, *tomb* **tu:m**, *fifteen* **’fif’ti:n**, *feel* **fi:l**’ (p. 243).

Or, indeed, it may be to his wife (Passy’s niece) that he too is indebted for the discovery of features such as these, or, at least, for their substantiation through instances of ambiguity and near-ambiguity.

¹ Based on a paper of the same title read at the Phonetics Colloquium, University College of North Wales, Bangor, April, 1973.

1. Monosyllabic examples

As an instance of my phonetic debt to my wife, through an 'actual misunderstanding' (to refer back to the passage quoted from Sharp at the beginning of this article), I will give an utterance that has to do with her career as a school-mistress; it went something like this: 'I cannot put up posters because of the [thæks]'. Both my son and I understood her to mean some form of purchase tax, and were non-plussed when it turned out that she meant not *tax* but *tacks*: the Surrey Education Authority had not supplied her with tacks to pin them up with. Another example, of 'uncertainty of interpretation' this time, arose when she referred to a strike in the docks, but made *docks* rhyme with *fox*.

In a piece of written work a student of mine had transcribed a word phonemically as /mist/, which I read as *mist*. When I noticed that he had glossed it as *missed*, my former pronunciation no longer sounded correct to me; and the third pair of the following set of six pairs of examples is the outcome:

- i. *tax* *fox* *mist* *copse* *Smuts* *Katz*
- ii. *tacks* *docks* *missed* *cops* *smuts* *cats*.

My own feeling is that I distinguish the examples on line (i) from their near-homophones on line (ii), and corresponding examples, in my own pronunciation, though probably not with complete consistency, and that I detect departures from this distinction of mine in the speech of others even where collocation is powerful enough not only to dispose of any ambiguity, but, one might have thought, to have prevented me even from perceiving deviations from my own usage.² My colleague Mrs Whitley shares my distinction for the first two pairs of examples in the preceding paragraph, though her means of doing so is, she told me, different from mine: she makes the distinction through a simultaneous double closure, velar and glottal ([ʔk]), for the examples *tacks* and *docks* (line ii), but a single (and velar) closure ([k]) for *tax* and *fox*. My impression is that I make a longer and firmer closure for the plural forms, the first two and the last three on line (ii), and a longer and more deliberate stricture for the fricative ([s]) in the verb form on line (ii), than for the corresponding noun form above each of them on line (i), as though the various dorsal and laminal movements of the tongue, or the movement of the lips, in the noun singular forms on line (i) were more of a gesture, a flap-like gesture, compared with the deliberate contact, or the deliberate approach, appropriate to the plosives in the noun plural forms, and the fricative in the verb form, on line (ii). I hope, ultimately, to provide instrumental evidence for this distinction.

² For COLLOCATION see Firth 1951, pp. 123 ff.

and have already made a few sound spectrograms and electro-aerometer readings as a preliminary to a more detailed study in the not-too-distant future.

A comparison of the forms in line (i) with corresponding forms in line (ii), then, suggested to me that there was a phonetic (and phonological) case for treating the syllable finals of line (i) differently from those of line (ii), and, in particular, justifying the symbol *x* in *fox* and *tax* as a monograph for a syllable-final cluster no less justified than the Greek use of ξ (*xi*) for a syllable-initial cluster in, for example, ξένος (*xénos*) 'stranger', and more justifiable, in fact, than the Greek use of ξ finally in, for example, νύξ/νυκτός (*nyx/nyktós*) 'night/of-night', where a sequence of κ (*k*) and σ (*s*) would be more appropriate for this sequence of stem-final κ (*k*) and flexion σ (*s*) (cf. also English *tack-s*). Similarly, I welcome the final *tz* of *Katz*, in line (i), but as a digraph, not a monograph in this case, for an alveolar cluster.

I take my phonetic distinction between the examples in lines (i) and (ii) to correspond to a lexical distinction, whereby the line-(i) examples are each examples of a single lexical item, whereas those of line (ii) are two-lexical-item examples. Alternatively, one might call the line-(i) examples monomorphic and the line-(ii) examples bimorphemic; but, as Palmer (1965) has pointed out, the term MORPHEME has moved far from its original sense of 'smallest grammatically relevant, but phonologically segmentable element' (p. 10). For the sense of smallest separable lexical element that I need here I have, therefore, thought it prudent to turn my back on MORPHEME in favour of LEXICAL ITEM.

For my monosyllabic examples in this section (section I), then, I claim a twofold phonetic distinction that can be related, term for term, to a lexical distinction, of one-lexical-item forms versus two-lexical-item forms, and, further, to grammatical differences between such categories as singular and plural in nouns and between noun and verb.³

II. Polysyllabic examples

A. Pairs of examples not related etymologically (short-vowel)

Passing, now, to my polysyllabic examples I would make the same

³ J. M. Y. Simpson, of the University of Glasgow, informs me in correspondence that in his Scots English he distinguishes *greed* from (*a*)*greed*, and *brood* from *brewed*, through vowel length, a shorter vowel in the first example in each pair, and a longer vowel in the second.

This phonetic distinction also corresponds (i) to a lexical distinction, the first example in each pair being one-lexical-item, and the second being two-lexical-item, and (ii) to a grammatical distinction, the first example in each pair being a noun form, and the second being a verb form.

claim for the two pairs of examples below; the second of these, a highly contemporary example, was suggested to me by one of my students, who have played an active part in my search for examples:

i. *finish* *rugger*

ii. *Finnish* *mugger* *bug-er*.

My impression, again, is one of a flap-like gesture for the medial consonants in the examples on line (i); and I should be willing to accept a fricative ([ɣ]) as an alternative to the velar plosive [(g)] in *rugger*, but not in *mugger*. As a child I used to use a nasalized labial fricative in *mummy* ([ˈmʌβ̃u]); I might, therefore, be willing to accept a nasalized fricative, or a nasalized flap, in *finish*. The line-(ii) example *bug-er* I owe to my daughter and to her grandfather, who sent her from the United States a kit for collecting 'bugs', which is American English, I understand, for beetles, butterflies, and moths; but I have more recently heard the word used on B.B.C. news programmes to refer to people who installed listening devices, in the Watergate affair. I should not, I think, find a velar fricative an acceptable alternative to a velar plosive in this word; and it is unfortunate for me that there is in English no contrasting line-(i) example, with a fricative alternative, like *rugger*, to point the contrast.

B. Homographic and near-homographic pairs

I have divided section II into sub-sections (A) and (B) because my examples in sub-section (B) are a special case of the distinction, or, rather, the associated distinctions, phonetic and lexical, that I have made so far: many of these latter examples have to do with identical or near-identical orthographic forms; e.g.

1. short-vowel: i. *Miller*, *skinny*, *Singer*;

ii. *miller*, *skin-y* *singer*;

2. long-vowel: i. *Rover*, (*iron*) *filings*, *polar* (*bear*),

ii. *rover*, *filin* (*system*), *polar* (*intonation*).

i. *Tyler*, *sailor*, *thirsty*, *Walker*, *Harper*,

ii. *tiler*, *sailer*, *thirst-y*, *walker*, *harper*.

i. ('*Daily*) *Worker*', *Weaver*, *Baker*, *tailor*,

ii. *worker*, *weaver*, *baker*.

i. *Reader*, (*university*) *reader*, *Rider* (*Haggard*),

ii. *reader*, *rider*.

It was the Rover car, I believe, that first drew my attention to some of the phonetic distinctions of line (i) versus line (ii) in this sub-section: at one time the Rover used to carry a fine metal radiator cap in the shape of a helmeted Norse sea-rover, the memory of which recalled to me Sir Ralph the Rover of Southey's poem *The Inchcape Rock*; it was while reciting a few lines of this poem that it struck me that there was a difference in pronunciation here, between the name of the make of car and the name of the character in the poem, not to mention the name of the public house, 'The Rover's Return', that figures in the television series 'Coronation Street'. From this pair of homographs or near-homographs, *Rover* versus *Rover* and *rover*, I went on to examine other such pairs; a selection from among them appears in the list of examples above, of both types, (1) short-vowel, e.g. *Miller*, *miller*, and (2) long-vowel, e.g. *Weaver*, *weaver* (for this vowel distinction see also below).

My impression of those distinctions is, again, of a difference in medial-consonant length and, possibly, firmness of stricture, between the proper name on line (i) and the contrasting form on line (ii). The examples containing a medial lateral, the first pair from section (1) and the second, third, fourth, and fifth from section (2), further suggested to me the contrast between palatalized lateral ([l̥]), in line (i), and semi-velarized lateral, or palatalized velarized lateral ([l̠]), in line (ii), with associated vowel differences, that I was already familiar with from Sharp's examples *Dooland* versus *coolant* and *wiley* versus *smiley* (Sharp, 1960, pp. 132-3).

The second pair of examples in section (1), *skinny* versus *skin-y*. I owe to another instance of ambiguity: my hostess at a dinner party recently described the wine as 'skin-y', explaining that one could detect the flavour of the grape skins. The *thirsty*-versus-*thirst-y* distinction arises from my own usage: I detected myself, the other day, describing one of my colleagues at the School of Oriental and African Studies as being a 'thirst-y bloke', as characterized, that is, by a perpetual thirst.

In suggesting that the name *Walker*, for example, or *Singer*, has joined a single-lexical-item class of personal names, I am not attempting to deny that they must have originally been derivatives of the lexical items *walk* and *sing*; but that is now a matter for etymology, for historical lexis, rather than for synchronic study, if, that is, my phonetic distinctions are valid.⁴ Correspondingly, *Worker*, as in 'The Daily Worker', has, as I see it (or, rather, as I hear it), given up any synchronic link with the lexical item *work*; and the same may well be true of the lexical item *work* in the phrase *working class*, as opposed, for example, to *working party* and *working lunch*.

⁴ My colleague C. E. Bazell has pointed out to me that while *Walker* is indeed derived from *walk*, it is *walk* in the sense of 'full': 'cleanse and thicken (cloth)'.
Journal of Linguistics, 1970, 6, 132-3.

I have included *tailor* in the set of examples at line (i) in spite of not having a contrasting example, because it rhymes with *sailor* but not with *sailer*. *Tinker, tailor, soldier, sailor* make a good set of type-(i) examples.

III. Long-vowel examples : (i) single, (ii) consonant-final, (iii) vowel-final

The distinction already drawn, in section (IIB), between 'short-vowel' examples, those which contain a short vowel in the first syllable, and 'long-vowel' examples, those which contain a long vowel, pure or diphthong, in that syllable, is highly important. This is because it appears to me that while only two types of junction between syllables are open to the short-vowel examples, there may well be three such types open to the long-vowel examples. These three types of junction are illustrated at lines (i), (ii), and (iii) below, to which I have provisionally assigned matching lexical classifications 'single', 'consonant-final', and 'vowel-final' respectively :

- i. single : *(iron) filings, burly, D'Ogly.*
- ii. consonant-final : *filing (system), pearly, oily, 'beastings'.⁵*
- iii. vowel-final : *Filey, Burley, coyly, 'bee-stings'.⁵*

My wife's habit of pronouncing *boiler* as [bɔɪ.lə] had much to do with drawing my attention to the difference between the examples on line (iii) and those on lines (i) and (ii). My pronunciation, [bɔɪ.lə], with a shortish vowel in the first syllable, a somewhat velarized (or semi-dark) lateral, and a more retracted ending to the diphthong, puts it into the line-(ii) class, with *filing, pearly, and oily*; her pronunciation, [bɔɪ.lə], with a longish vowel in the first syllable and a palatalized (or clear) lateral, suggests to me some association with the lexical item *boy* (or *buoy*), and, in terms of my usage, would have to be assigned to the same class (line iii) as *Filey, Burley, and coyly*. My examples on line (i), on the other hand, while they share the palatalized types of lateral with those of line (iii), differ from them in having a shortish vowel in the first syllable, shorter than those of line (iii).

I used to be in some doubt over how to pronounce the name of one of my colleagues at the University of London, Miss Tooley. Until I learnt from her that her pronunciation was what I should classify as of the line-(iii) type ([^htuːlɪ]), I had wondered whether to pronounce it like those of line (ii); and the nickname of the American girl in Graham Greene's *Travels with my Aunt* must surely be of the line-(ii) type ('^htuːlɪ), because the girl's surname was O'Toole.

⁵ This well-known pair of examples is taken from sixteen such pairs in Jones 1931 illustrating 'diffransiz in legθ' (pp. 62-3).

Of the examples that I quoted earlier from Sharp's article *Dooland* I should put into the line-(iii) class (with *Tooley* and *Filey*), *coolant* and *smil(e)y* into the line-(ii) (with *filing* and *pearly*, and the nickname *Tooley*), and *wiley* and *Riley* into the line-(i) (with *burley* and *D'Oyly*).

Since I have, to date, little in the way of instrumental support for my three categories, I welcome Lehiste's detailed study of these types of example in 'standard Midwestern' American English, 'Some allophones of /l/ in American English' (1964). She comes to the conclusion that: 'A study of the different medial allophones of /l/ indicated that some of them could be assigned, with some justification, to either an initial or a final category, whereas others appeared to belong to neither, but represented an intermediate value' (p. 47). For her speakers *freely* goes into her 'initial' category, probably corresponding to my type-(iii), 'vowel-final'; some of the members of her 'final' category, *oily*, for example, and *pearly*, correspond to my type-(ii), but others of them, I should guess, correspond to my type-(i), e.g. *wiley*. Her third, and intermediate, category comprises mainly 'short-vowel' examples (cf. IIB above) like *billow*, *fellow*, *valley*, and *gulley*, which do not concern me in this section, but some 'long-vowel' examples too, *halo*, *holy*, *silo*, and *coolie*, which I should put into my type (i), all except *Cowley*, which would, I think, go into my type (iii).

Lehiste's American-English speakers, then, though they seem to differ from me, to some extent, in the distribution of their examples among the three categories, do at least agree with me in the number of categories that they distinguish; but I am by no means sure that all English-English speakers agree with me in this: practically every morning, listening, while shaving, to the weather forecast and local-news bulletin, I hear examples of my types (i) and (ii) pronounced with too long a first-syllable vowel for me to accept them for either of those two categories of mine (and often with a marked rising-falling pitch); e.g.

type-i: *Martin*, *cargo*, *anti-cyclone* ([¹ma:tɪn, 'kha:gəʊ, -'sai:kləʊn])

type-ii: *striker*, *driver* ([¹stɹi:kə, 'dɹi:və]).

These phonetic forms suggest to me type-(iii) words, the non-existent **mar-tin*, **car-go*, **sigh-clone*, **stry-ker*, and **dry-ver*; is it a question of difference in distribution, I wonder, or have these speakers fewer junction categories than my three? ⁶

* A comment on this part of my paper from my colleagues at the Colloquium was that it is important to take into account stylistic features in the reading of B.B.C. news bulletins and sports reports. The latter are perhaps better described as intoned rather than read.

Further afield, Hockett (1958) refers to speakers of American English as alter-

Nor is it only my type-(i) and type-(ii) examples that are liable to confusion with my type-(iii) or open to disagreement: my type-(iii) example *sea-port* Daniel Jones (1931) not only puts into a different category from *teapot* and *tea-spoon*, which are equally type-(iii) for me, but even adds a footnote: ' *ti:pət* and *ti:spu:n* əpərəntli nət θə:t əv əz kəmpaundz; ai dəunt θɪŋk ðei əv evə prənaunst *ti:-pət*, *ti:-spu:n* ' (p. 62, note 1).⁷

There are some examples that I myself find it difficult to classify, because I am not sure of my own usage; they include Sharp's well-known '*Roman bowman*'. I am not in doubt about *bowman*: the longish vowel in the first syllable, and features of the medial consonant, put it into my junction type (iii), and thereby relate it, at the lexical level of analysis, to the two-lexical-item category in which the first lexical item is vowel-final. The shortish vowel in *Roman* ([*rəomən*], or [*rəomrən*]) excludes it from my type-(iii) junction; but I am not sure whether I regularly use the shortish gesture-like medial nasal appropriate to type-(i) or the longish firmish medial nasal appropriate to type (ii). Possibly I fluctuate in usage. Possibly I even make a distinction between a type-(i) form [*rəomən*] and a type-(ii) form [*rəomrən*], the type-(i) form being relatable, at the lexical level of analysis, to the single-lexical-item (or monomorphemic) type of form, like Sharp's other example *Simon*, and the type-(ii) form to the two-lexical-item (or bimorphemic) type in which the first lexical item is consonant-final (*Rom-*). If this latter account of my usage is correct, one might say of St Paul that he was a Roman ([*rəomən*]) citizen without being a Roman ([*rəomrən*]) citizen, a citizen of the Roman Empire without being a citizen of the city of Rome.

IV. Syllable-division versus lexical analysis

It is no accident that Sharp's examples (1960) *Roman*, *bowman*, etc. are disyllabic: he preferred to approach problems of junction (or juncture) through 'the pronunciation of polymorphemic words of various kinds' (p. 127), '*Dooland*', '*coolant*', '*Simon*', '*pie-man*', etc. and was led by this approach to the conclusion that 'this is a simple matter of syllable-division, We must be careful, therefore, it seems to me, to distinguish syllable-division as a prosody

nating between a pronunciation that seems to correspond to my type-(i) and a pronunciation apparently corresponding to my type-(iii) for certain single-lexical-item forms: 'Many people pronounce the single words *Plato* and *Cato* to rhyme with N.A.T.O.: /pléj+tòw/, /kéj+tòw/, as though they were two-word phrases *play toe*, *Kay toe*. . . . In the Middle West everyone says /wintər/ *winter*, /hél-tər/ *shelter*. Some people in parts of New York City vary between those pronunciations and /win+tə/, /sél+tə/' (p. 59). (For *winter* and *shelter* cf. my types (i) and (ii).)

⁷ I suspect that my pronunciations '*ti:-pət* and '*ti:-spu:n* are due to the potential contrast with *coffee-pot*, *mustard-pot*, etc., and with *egg-spoon*, *dessert-spoon*, etc.

(or, if you will, a phoneme) in its own right, and another junctural or other prosody having as its exponent not merely syllable-division but a feature of prolongation IN ADDITION (p. 133). My starting point was different from Sharp's, not his polymorphemic and polysyllabic examples but the monosyllabic forms of my section (I), some of which are monomorphemic, to use Sharp's term, those of line (i), while others, those of line (ii), are polymorphemic; but all examples in that section, on lines (i) and (ii) alike, are monosyllabic. Consequently, in my sections (I) (III) I have related differences in phonetic feature not to syllable-division—indeed my examples in section (I) have no syllable-division—but to lexical-item (or morpheme) composition. For the type of example in which the vowel of the first syllable is long, a long pure vowel or a diphthong, I have distinguished, in section (III), the single-lexical-item examples of line (i) from the two-lexical-item examples of lines (ii) and (iii), this latter category being further divided into (line-ii) consonant-final and (line-iii) vowel-final.

For disyllabic examples, on the other hand, in which the vowel of the first syllable is short (sections IIA and IIB1), the analysis is simpler, because the distinguishing phonetic features can be related to only two lexical types: the single-lexical-item type, exemplified by *finish* and *rugger*, in line (i), by *skinny*, and, if valid, by *Singer*, and the two-lexical-item type, exemplified, in line (ii), by *Finnish*, *skin-y*, and *singer*, the first lexical item being consonant-final. By this means one might, perhaps, bypass a problem of syllable-division to which Sharp refers in his article: " " Beetroot " and " bedroom " raise the same problem, but whereas a division /bi:trʊt/, though morphemically regrettable, would not be likely to shock the PHONOLOGICAL conscience of most scholars, a division /be.dru(:)m/ is in danger of being rejected on the ground that a stressed syllable ending in a short vowel is impossible ' (p. 134). Does one need to ask oneself. I wonder, where the syllables end in *beetroot* and *bedroom* any more than in *finish* or *rugger*? Is it not enough to classify *beetroot* and *bedroom* as two-lexical-item forms for those of us who pronounce them ['bitrʊt] and ['bedrɒm], together with, perhaps, the Sprigg pronunciation of *teapot* and *tea-spoon* but as single-lexical-item forms for those who pronounce them ['bitrʊt] and ['bedrɒm], together with, perhaps, *cupboard* and the Jones pronunciation of *teapot* and *tea-spoon*.

V. Pseudo-elision

There remain certain equally unobtrusive sentence-initial lexical items, whose presence on line (ii) of the following pairs of examples I have been able to symbolize by a sentence-initial apostrophe, thereby giving them the orthographic recognition that I feel to be their due:

- i. *That's the miller. You're coming too? Don't throw it away!*
 ii. *'That the miller? 'You coming too? 'Don't think so.*
 i. *Going to London's fine, but . . .*
 ii. *'Going to London?*

I have long been aware of Daniel Jones's example 'ḳkju' (1918, p. 245), and of his analysis of it as disyllabic, with the stress on the first syllable; but I believe it was an example in Palmer (1965) that first really directed my attention to a feature of sentence-initial length, both consonantal and vocalic, in sentences like those in line (ii), coupled with full voicing for sentence-initial voiced plosives and fricatives. Palmer's example, '*I/He taking coffee' (p. 12), is given to illustrate the distinction between finite and non-finite forms through the impossibility of having a non-finite form, e.g. *taking*, as the only verbal form in an independent clause; but, after reading his example aloud to myself several times, I began to suspect that '*He taking coffee*', at least, would be an acceptable utterance provided that this independent clause was interrogative and provided that the sentence-initial voiceless vowel was long ([h:], or [j:]), i.e., in my revised orthography, '*He taking coffee?* Under the same two conditions '*You taking coffee?* and '*Taking coffee?* would also be acceptable, as interrogative sentences, with the sentence-initial sound pronounced long.

In vowel-initial sentences like my second example on line (ii), '*You coming too?* ([i'ju: khamuŋ 'tu:]), initial length ([i'j-]) is in contrast with the initial shortness ([i'j-]) of the contrasting line-(i) example *You're coming too?* ([jɔə khamuŋ 'tu:]). Unless my pronunciation in '*That the miller?* ([θ:æt] . . .) versus *That's the miller* ([θæts] . . .), '*Don't think so* ([d:əont] . . .), and so on, is hopelessly idiosyncratic, there is phonetic evidence for the presence here of such lexical items as *is*, *are*, and *I*, which are commonly treated as victims of elision. I have visual evidence of their presence, unelided, in spectrograms and electro-aerometer readings from my own utterances, though too few, as yet, for me to be able to claim instrumental support.

VI. Conclusion

What I have tried to do with the various types of example in sections (I)-(V) of this article is to distinguish sets of features at the phonetic level, and to relate a phonological analysis of them through types of junction, to analysis at the lexical level, giving priority to the phonetic over the orthographic.* '*A thoroughly sound reading transcription, so far from being a mere teaching device, is*

* See page 30.

the outward and visible sign of that total grasp of the phonic data on which all valid phonological and grammatical description ... must ultimately depend'; connoisseurs of juncture (or juncture) will recognize that last sentence as being Sharp's (1960: 135).

* Cf. also Hockett (1958); in the course of delimiting the microsegment he writes: 'It is easy to fall into the error of assuming that our mark "+" is just like the space between words that we use in English traditional orthography. . . . Our phoneme /+/, on the other hand, is defined purely in terms of pronunciation. If it turns out that many occurrences of /+ / fall where in writing we would leave a space, and that relatively few fall where traditional orthography does not prescribe a space, then this is a matter of interest—mainly in the light it sheds on our orthographic habits, since it tells us nothing new about /+ /' (p. 58).

Jones (1931), on the other hand, starts from the orthography, and tries to justify its use of space between words: '. . . ai wud ɣou fə:ðə, ənd sei ðət ə "wə:d" i: ə fonetik entiti—ðət ðə blæŋk speisiz bitwi:n ritn wə:dz du: həv fonetik signifikaŋs (p. 60).

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Another note on RP notation

GORDON WALSH

(Materials Development Unit, ELT Division, Longman Group)

Windsor Lewis's recent article (1972*b*) admirably summarizes the case for a Gimson-type transcription as a reference tool for EFL students. As he states, his own 'CPD' (Windsor Lewis, 1972*a*) transcription clearly—and sensibly—derives from the system established by Gimson (1962, 1970) in 'the standard up-to-date description of Received Pronunciation'. On general principles, there is little that could usefully be added to Windsor Lewis's (1972*b*) comments on three other transcription types that are increasingly coming to be regarded as inappropriate for EFL purposes:

- (i) that used by Abercrombie (1964), which, as Windsor Lewis (1972*b*: 60–63) shows, has disadvantages in its choice of detail symbols (though in underlying philosophy this system is perhaps closer to 'CPD' than is the latter's acknowledged parent);
- (ii) the long-established 'EPD' (Jones, 1917) system, with its inconsistent treatment of the monophthong phonemes;
- (iii) the 'simplified' (Jones, 1956: 346 *ff.*) types of transcription first used in books by Scott (1942) and MacCarthy (1944, 1945) and taken up by Kingdon (West, 1965) and others, which although useful for the L1 speaker are grossly misleading for the EFL student in implying a solely quantitative distinction between such pairs as the vowels of *seat* and *sit*.

This article will largely take for granted Windsor Lewis's comments on those types, and will concentrate on some aspects of the system discussed by Windsor Lewis (1972*b*) and applied in his *CPD* and the new third edition (1974) of the *Advanced Learner's Dictionary*.

However, before considering 'CPD', one may perhaps pause at the new opposition of transcription types suggested by Windsor Lewis: 'comparative' and 'lexical' notations. When the terms are introduced (Windsor Lewis, 1972*b*: 59), the writer speaks first of 'two main purposes of such notations' (i.e. in EFL use); but in the next paragraph he is already talking about the other main 'type' of EFL transcription. Purpose and type, of course, are not the same thing; and it is perfectly possible to use a 'simplified' type of transcription for the purpose of teaching 'the theory of the English segments', as for example in MacCarthy (1944) or Byrne and Walsh (1973). In any case, 'lexical' might prove a misleading term: it could be taken to imply that such notations are suitable only for use in dictionaries, and conversely that 'comparative' notations are not suitable for this purpose—which is clearly not so. The difference