

BETTER ENGLISH PRONUNCIATION

J.D.O. CONNER

LECTURE NO.1

PAGES: 5-12

LECT. KARRAR HAIDER

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The Aim of This Book

- ❖ To be familiar with the necessary differences between the basic sounds which are found in all kinds of English.
- ❖ By familiarizing oneself with the differences of each sound, one can easily distinguish between each sound and pronounce it appropriately.

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Which English?

- ❖ There are many different kinds (pronunciations) of English.
- ❖ If we live in a country where a distinct variety of English is spoken (for communication purposes), we should learn this variety.
- ❖ If we live in a country where English is not spoken, we should learn a form of *native English pronunciation*.
- ❖ The decision of choosing which type of English pronunciation to learn depends on which one you *hear* most often. Accents of English have more similarities than differences.

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Which English?

- ❖ The accent used in this book is the *Received Pronunciation (RP)*; it is an accent used by educated native speakers in south-east England.
- ❖ However, the aim of this book is not making you speak with this particular accent of English than in helping you to make the necessary differences between the *basic sounds* which are found in all kinds of English.
- ❖ The word *accent* describes differences in pronunciation, while *dialect* describes differences in vocabulary and grammar.

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Letters and Sounds

- ❖ Letters are written, sounds are spoken. It is very useful to have written letters to remind us of corresponding sounds, but this is all they do; they cannot make us pronounce sounds which we do not already know; they simply remind us.
- ❖ We have twenty-four consonants and twenty vowels to consider and we give to each of these forty-four units a letter (or sometimes two letters, if this is convenient). In that way we can show without any doubt what the student should be trying to say.

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Letters and Sounds

Letters of the International Phonetic Alphabet

<i>pier</i> /p/	<i>fear</i> /f/	<i>rear</i> /r/	<i>cheer</i> /tʃ/
<i>beer</i> /b/	<i>veer</i> /v/	<i>mere</i> /m/	<i>jeer</i> /dʒ/
<i>tier</i> /t/	<i>sheer</i> /ʃ/	<i>near</i> /n/	
<i>deer</i> /d/	<i>hear</i> /h/	<i>weir</i> /w/	
<i>gear</i> /g/	<i>leer</i> /l/	<i>year</i> /j/	
<i>base</i> /s/	<i>wrath</i> /θ/		
<i>baize</i> /z/	<i>wrong</i> /ŋ/		
<i>bathe</i> /ð/			
<i>beige</i> /ʒ/			
<i>bake</i> /k/			
<i>feel</i> /i:/	<i>fail</i> /eɪ/	<i>cat</i> /æ/	<i>tier</i> /ɪə/
<i>fill</i> /ɪ/	<i>foal</i> /əʊ/	<i>cot</i> /ɒ/	<i>tear</i> /eə/
<i>fell</i> /e/	<i>file</i> /aɪ/	<i>cut</i> /ʌ/	<i>tour</i> /ʊə/
<i>fall</i> /ɔ:/	<i>foul</i> /aʊ/	<i>curt</i> /ɜ:/	
<i>full</i> /ʊ/	<i>foil</i> /ɔɪ/	<i>cart</i> /ɑ:/	<i>banana</i> /ə/
<i>fool</i> /u:/			

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pier
beer
tier
deer
gear
fear

veer
sheer
hear
leer
rear
mere

near
weir
year
cheer
jeer

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Letters and Sounds

- ❖ This way of writing or transcribing makes it possible to show that some words which are ordinarily spelt in the same way sound different; for example, *lead*, which is pronounced li:d in a phrase like *lead the way*, but led in *lead pipe*
- ❖ It also makes clear that some words which are spelt differently sound the same, for example, *rain*, *rein*, *reign*, which are all pronounced rein.

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Sounds and Sound Groups

- ❖ A sound is made by definite movements of the organs of speech, and if those movements are exactly repeated the result will always be the same sound.
- ❖ If you say *tea* and *two* ti:, tu: you will notice that the lips are in a rather flat shape for ti: but are made rounder for tu:, and this is true for both the consonant /t/ and for the two vowels. So the organs of speech are not making exactly the same movements for the /t/ of *tea* and the /t/ of *two*, and therefore the resulting sounds are *not* exactly the same.
- ❖ These groups of sounds, each represented by one letter of the phonetic alphabet, are called *phonemes*, and the method of representing each phoneme by one symbol is called *phonemic transcription*. Phonemic transcription may be enclosed in diagonal lines/ /.

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Sounds and Sound Groups

- ❖ It is necessary to *distinguish* carefully between phonemes and sounds: the 44 phonemes of English are the *basic* contrasts which make it possible for us to keep each word or longer utterance separate from every other, but each phoneme may be represented by *different sounds* in *different positions*.
- ❖ So the different /t/ sounds in *tea* and *two* both represent the /t/ phoneme, and the three /h/ sounds in *he*, *hat*, *who* all represent the single /h/ phoneme.
- ❖ In theory a single *phoneme* is represented by a different *sound* in every different position in which it occurs, but most of these differences will be made automatically by the learner without instruction. It is only in cases where this is unlikely to happen that it will be necessary to worry about particular sounds within a phoneme.

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Words and Utterances

- ❖ The sounds and words are connected together with others to make up longer utterances, and these longer utterances have special difficulties of their own.
- ❖ First, they must be pronounced smoothly, without hesitations and without stumbling over the combinations of sounds.
- ❖ Secondly, in a longer English utterance some of the words are treated as being more important to the meaning than others, and it is necessary to know which these words are and how they are treated in speech. For example, the word *can* which is pronounced kæn if it is said by itself, is often pronounced kən in phrases like *You can have it*.

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Words and Utterances

- ❖ Thirdly, the rhythm of English must be mastered. That is, the different lengths which the syllables of English are given and the reasons why these different lengths occur. For example, in the following sentences, *chair* has the same length as *chairman*.

The c h a i r collapsed.

The chairman collapsed

- ❖ Fourthly, the tune of the voice, the melody of speech is different in different languages and it is necessary to learn something of the English way of using tune. For example, when we say *thank you*, the voice may go from a higher note to a lower one, or it may go from a lower note to a higher one and these two different tunes show two different attitudes.

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Thank you for your listening!

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