# THE PHONETICS OF STANDARD BRITISH PRONUNCIATION:
## RP ENGLISH – A PSEUDO CONCEPT?
by
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An analysis of the literature and dictionaries regarding RP show that RP a) is improperly and ambiguously defined, b) uses inconsistent phonetic transcriptions, c) lacks standard vowel and articulatory charts, d) uses and substitutes generic phonemic transcription for actual phonetic transcription, e) is not based on a clear policy as to its appropriate areas of application or relationship to other dialects, f) is not established on the basis of enlightened majority rule, and serves to impose a tiny minority and arbitrary standard on a vast worldwide majority, thereby producing intolerance and linguistic oppression, or what is called 'linguistic imperialism'. Most people seem to feel inferior regarding their English pronunciation.

To correct such problems and put RP on a more scientific basis, the logic of definition is used to define RP; standard articulation and an extended vowel chart are proposed, 1989/1993 IPA phonetic symbols are used, and other corrections and analyses given. A proposal is made to replace RP with 'British Pronunciation' (BP), which would be based on an actual and adequate descriptive phonetics, called here, *Realphonetik*. Guidelines and requirements are proposed if it is to be used as a standard. It is proposed that RP, as well as a knowledge of dialects and American pronunciation, be taught in the schools, but that IPA phonetics be taught as well so that the various pronunciations may be properly compared and rendered. A comprehensive English language phonetics bibliography is included at the end of the analysis.

> *RP is not a particularly good term.* (Jones EPD 1958:4)
> *Some people deny that RP exists.* (Wells 1982. II: 301)
> *There is no such entity as RP. It is a rather absurd, almost comic term. Its use should be discontinued.* (Macaulay 1988:115, 122)

## Introduction

The alleged standard for the pronunciation of British English is referred to as 'received pronunciation' (RP). The following is an attempt to determine what is meant by this. Tracking down RP is not an easy task. What does it mean to say that there is a standard of English pronunciation? Does RP equal standard English? Is RP

better than the dialects? Are standards of English declining? What are the problems with RP? What is the purpose of having a standard? Is there one standard or more? If so, what is it, or what are they? These questions and others will be answered by the following analyses and definitions of RP.

The usual procedure is (with or without argument and analysis) to somehow arrive at a definition. It is as if this could be done – and could be done for RP. It cannot. That is not how the logic of definition works (cf. Robinson 1972). Rather, there are many kinds of definition. These will be presented producing a 'word–field' of the term, RP, allowing us to sort out the various definitions, clarify them and arrive at some useful answers to the above sorts of questions.

Abbreviations used here are the following:

AP = American Pronunciation.
BBCD = *BBC English Dictionary* 1992.
CCD = *Collins Cobuild English Language Dictionary* 1987.
EPD = Jones. *English Pronunciation Dictionary* (1917 to 1991. 1991, 14th ed. = EPD14)
IPA = The most recent is 1989 Kiel and a subsequent slightly revised 1993 version of the International Phonetic Alphabet. Dictionaries and texts other than IPA-S use earlier versions.
IPA-S = Transcriptions by Shibles IPA (1993 version).
LPD = Wells. *Longman Pronunciation Dictionary*. First edition. 1990.
OED = *Oxford English Dictionary* 1989.
RP = Received Pronunciation (or standard British).
SBE = Standard British English (esp. written grammars).

A few initial general definitions are: RP is only a pronunciation not a written standard English. *Accent* refers to the various pronunciations of a language, e.g. Ukranian English, AP, RP, BBC, French English, Geordie, etc. Standard English (e.g., BSE) refers to the vocabulary, grammar and written rules of the language. Dialects may involve differences in vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation, but they tend not to be written or recorded in dictionaries for everyday use. Dialects need not be regarded as merely being deviations from RP or standard English. We may have a Liverpudlian BSE accent or a Liverpudlian dialect. The former is written the same as

standard English, the latter is not. It is not an oxymoron to say, 'Standard English is a dialect.'

## I. *Absolute definitions*

These are not to be had. There are no true or absolute definitions of anything, and *a fortiori*, not of RP. To define is to take a model or metaphor. To think there are true definitions is to commit the metaphor–to–myth (or literalist) fallacy (Shibles 1971). Definitions are rather mere metaphorical perspectives, or seeings–as. Their value is determined by their contribution to clarity and usefulness. Thus, essential definitions are not to be looked for here.

Other reasons for the lack of absolute definition are that a) definitions differ, b) the phonetic symbols differ (cf. Shibles 'The Phonetics of English', forthcoming), and c) the language itself changes. For example, Wells (1990:xii) calls his pronunciation in LPD, 'Modernized RP' as opposed to 'Classical RP'. In LPD, both b) and c) have changed.

## II. *Abstract definition*

Abstract terms, unlike general terms, cannot be reduced to particulars. They commit the fallacy of abstractionism. It is the view that words somehow just have meaning in themselves. For example, it is stated, 'The representation of a "received" speech is always theoretical' (Hopewood 1927:68). Wells (1982, II:301) speaks of 'Near-RP' because of the vagueness of RP.

It is an abstractionist fallacy to say, 'I speak RP.' If RP is a generic class word, one cannot speak RP. RP means a number of things depending upon its attributes, contexts and qualifications. The following contexts may determine its meaning:

1. Written vs. spoken.
2. National language: Australian, French, Nigerian, Japanese, Singapore, etc. English. We can have an English for speakers of each foreign language. The English pronunciation is generally predictable from a knowledge of the sounds of the foreign language, e.g. Germanized English. For example, Söll (1987)

gives a pronunciation dictionary of English as spoken by speakers of the German Saarbrücken dialect.

3. Region: Cornish, East Anglia, Lancashire, Cumbria, Reading, Yorkshire, etc. English.

4. City: Birmingham, Cockney, Glaswegian, Liverpudlian, Mancunian, Wigan, etc. English.

5. Professional, social, or institutional groups: TV and radio announcer, stage, university, marketplace, factory, dock, pub, cricket, etc. English.

6. Style: Colloquial, formal, poetic, fast, slow, vulgar, etc.

7. Emotive and suprasegmental qualities: Affected, interesting, dramatic, monotonous, plummy, dull, emotional (angry, joyful, shy, reserved, nervous, etc.) English.

Also, a standard is abstract if it is 'unconsciously' and so variously, acquired and if it is not deliberately accepted as a standard. RP is not a deliberate, planned standard and for this reason also it is an abstract concept. The alleged RP speaker often cannot tell us what is and what is not RP. Even linguists, when asked by questionnaire showed 'surprising inconsistencies' (Gimson 1984:50).

III. *Descriptive definitions*

This can constitute the most scientific and valuable type of definition. It involves the reduction of RP to particular models or operational definitions, such as the following. Descriptions vary in accordance with the concreteness and soundness of the paradigms given.

1. DICTIONARIES.
RP may be regarded as the phonetics given in dictionaries such as EPD, LPD, or OED.

2. PARADIGMATIC GROUPS.
a. **RP as the Speech of Southern England** (EPD). This includes London and the Home Counties (EPD 1991:x). 'The present Dictionary is to record...the pronunciation used by a considerable number of typical Southern English people' (Jones 1967:xvii). Jones and his parents were Londoners, he was educated there and lived there

all of his life. It is now claimed that RP is a compromise mix of RP and the surrounding general RP dialects. This is called 'Estuary English' (Rosewarne 1994).

One dialect is chosen as the standard. The standard may be chosen, then, as the speech of those having the most power and influence. Just who is a member of this elitist group remains a question. Wells (1990:xii) objects to the Southern English standard, arguing that RP is not regional at all – but this may be because it is now more generally accepted as the standard. If the Northumberland dialect were accepted as the standard, it would no longer be regional either. Hopewood (1927:68) says that RP 'represents...speech sounds of say one hundred educated speakers of Southern English, yet none of these individuals would correspond exactly with the "standard" so obtained.' Wells (1990:xii) agrees that only a minority of English people speak RP. Because of its small number and the vagueness of the paradigm, it leads to the conclusion that virtually no one speaks RP.

b. **RP as the Speech of the 'Educated Classes'** (EPD, Ramsaran 1990:178). This widespread belief does not constitute a genuine description, because neither 'educated' nor 'class' are precise terms. 'It is misleading to call RP the accent of educated people' (Abercrombie 1965:15). Gimson (EPD14:xi) says he doesn't know what 'educated' means here. The *Macquarie Dictionary* (1981) notes that it is hard to know what 'educated Australian' is. Those who are educated and those who are uneducated may or may not speak RP, assuming there were such a thing (cf. EPD14:xi). Abercrombie (1967:15) says that educated people who do not speak RP outnumber those who do. Wells explicitly excludes educated non-RP from his LPD dictionary. That one who is educated in some field or other entails that one speaks in a certain way, or even that one speaks at all, is a non-sequitur. Would a professor of athletics or Russian necessarily speak RP? Would all or even most 'educated' people speak in the same way?

Who is to be included in the group 'educated': The Polytechnic (now called universities) graduate, the engineer, the Oxford scholar, a business executive, a Dublin or Edinburgh University graduate? One may be educated in mathematics, but not in language pronunciation. In fact, few teachers of English or English as a Second Language, or foreign languages, even know the IPA symbols or use them in their teaching. The issue for them is not how pronunciation should be taught, but whether or not it should be taught at all. And if one does

not know the phonetics for RP, one does not know if it is RP, or if the pronunciation in question is correct or not. The number of people who know IPA phonetics is so small that we may say that, for all practical purposes, virtually no one knows IPA.

That one is a phonetics scholar does not mean that one speaks RP. Thus, it does not follow to say that because one is educated one speaks RP. This may be true only as a question-begging circularity: 'By RP is meant the pronunciation of the educated.' Thus, by definition, if one is educated, one speaks RP, even if it turns out to be Liverpudlian or Russian. On this view, if one is not (formally?) educated, one can never speak RP no matter how much education in pronunciation one has unless one first becomes 'educated'. But then one will not need the pronunciation training because, by definition, if one is educated one speaks RP.

Note that 'educated usage' is sometimes used as the standard as in BBC Pronunciation and Practice (1979:7). This is not the same as 'usage by the educated'. It is circular to say, 'The best usage is the educated (best) usage.'

'Class' in 'educated class' is also unscientific. If by 'educated class' is just meant 'Those who are educated', it adds nothing to the 'educated'. If it means more, it is imprecise. 'Upper, middle and lower class', are not clear categories. Andersson & Trudgill (1990:129) even give: Upper middle, lower middle, upper working, lower working. Presumably there are Upper upper, and lower upper (working or nonworking?) classes. With the variables 'working and non-working' for six classes, this would yield twelve possible 'classes'. Class can be determined by any criterion whatsoever, for example, the class of people who wear bowlers and carry umbrellas. One could say these people speak RP. Class may be determined by wealth, group membership, profession, power, behavior, etc. It is an open-context term requiring clear specification for intelligibility. But even if class is clearly defined, it does not mean that any class, just because it is a class, speaks RP – except the class of people who speak RP. Wells (1982: II:297) gives three types of RP: Conservative (older generation), General (BBC), and Advanced (the young and upper class). Such a hybrid of vaguely defined 'classes' does not make 'class' much more clear. Wells, himself, notes that the 'upper class' standard breaks down, especially because of the influence radio and TV which are accessible to all of the 'classes'. Gimson (1984:46) believes that RP is no longer defined by class or education.

Wells (1990:xii) defines RP as a 'social accent associated with the upper end of the social-class continuum'. This sounds partly like, 'RP is the language spoken by those having the power and persuasion to require that their dialect prevail over all others.' Jones (1991:x) says that RP is determined by upper class speech. This is also called 'upper crust' by Wells (Macaulay 1988:120). 'Upper', here, is a value term. Thus, 'Received Pronunciation is that spoken by the upper class', means 'Accepted "Accepted Pronunciation" is that spoken by the accepted class.' Why should not the standard be the language spoken by the 'lower classes' or the rustic country language, as was done in Norway? Because, by definition, 'lower' means 'not acceptable'.

If we were to choose a class or group as a standard, which group would it be and why? The favored class might be a 'world class' standard of English (international English), useful for all who learn English throughout the world. But which one? AP competes with RP as that standard. Jones even hints that RP might be used as the standard of English, even in America (Jones 1937:x). He says it is widely and easily understood throughout America, but that AP is often not understood in England (Jones 1967:xviii). This issue will be revived subsequently.

c. **RP as Public School Pronunciation (PSP).** One paradigm proposed for RP was British Public School Pronunciation (Jones 1991:x, cf. Macaulay 1988:117). In England, 'public school' actually means 'private school' (e.g., Eton and Harrow). There are private schools which are not public schools. And there are state schools which are called neither public nor private, but which in America would be called public schools. And 'private schools' are private schools. The boarding schools (English private) supposedly change students' pronunciation, and day schools which do not (Jones 1967:xvii). In any case, Macaulay (1988:122) points out that 'RP has never served as a general standard for schools throughout Britain'. Bailey (1985:xv) notes, 'There is no pronunciation taught in the public or private schools of any Anglo-Saxon country, let alone a standard that is required of all school children by the government, as in France and Germany.' One informant, a retired Lancashire schoolteacher, stated that she never taught students pronunciation, that she has never heard of RP, does not think there is a standard pronunciation, and does not know what dialect she herself uses, though it is not what she called 'the King's and Queen's English'. She regarded the spoken language as just a mix of numerous dialects. Another teacher, from

Liverpool, never spoke the local dialect, but said she never taught any pronunciation to her early grade students.

d. **The Single Speaker Standard.** Jones (1962:9), in one sense, defined languages as the consistent pronunciation of one person. He states (1937:xiii), 'All entries in this Dictionary are to be taken as expressions of opinion by the author.' The 13th edition of EPD (1967:xxii) restates this as 'All entries...are to be taken as facts as ascertained, or in some cases expressions of opinion, by the author.' Also, an individual well-known BBC commentator can to a large extent serve as a model for pronunciation. Although a seemingly narrow paradigm, it is similar to the present standard of basing RP on a small group of speakers. In behalf of the single person standard, it may be argued that: 1) From the viewpoint of each person, one's own speech is typically regarded as the correct one. 2) Dialects, standard or not, vary from region to region, town to town, person to person, so that we can only precisely give the phonetics of individuals (an idiolect), not of a dialect such as Cockney, RP, North Yorkshire, etc. 3) Phonemic rules are overgeneral and cannot adequately generate the particular pronunciation of individuals. Standwell (1991:139) states, 'Far from the phoneme being of any assistance to the language teacher, it is rather a red herring' (cf. Hammerly 1991:173ff). Roach (1987:34) claims that phonemics and phonology even impair phonetic accuracy. Wells (1991:300) states, 'An extreme abstractness such as found in Chomsky & Halle is obviously quite inappropriate for the needs of most potential users of a pronouncing dictionary.' Thus, the phonetic description of each individual word is required. Similarly, in dictionaries, the phonetics of each word must be given and a range of possible pronunciations added as is done in LPD and CCD. 'It is better to learn the pronunciation of each new word separately', rather than appeal to general rules (Wells 1990:xi). One knowing only phonemic principles, will not be able to accurately give the pronunciation of a single word (cf. Standwell 1991).

On the other hand, if the speech of an individual (real or ideal), or small group of individuals, is to be the standard we would need to have clear arguments and reasons why that standard is chosen. Andersson & Trudgill (1990:188) state that RP is a 'historical accident'. Is it useful, pragmatic, heuristic, etc.? Does it accurately describe actual pronunciation or is it to serve as an ideal which speakers should try to achieve? The reasons for the choice of a standard are typically not forthcoming. *Nynorsk,* or *Landesmål,* is a

distinctively Norwegian language and was created by one person, Ivar Aasen, from a synthesis of country dialects largely to get away from the Danish based *Bokmål,* or 'book language'. The motivation appears to be cultural and nationalistic. It may be questioned how much nationalism and culturism are the basis of RP as opposed to, for example, Australian, Scottish, Anglo-English, and AP.

If there were a standard, it should be accurately recorded phonetically and serve as a reference. This is seldom efficiently done. There is no official standard of British, American, or Australian pronunciation. The dictionaries that do give pronunciation, vary from one another. Until the above reasons and standards are provided, we are left only with the task of recording the phonetic (as opposed to phonemic) pronunciation of each individual. EPD (1967:viii) even excludes actual allophones and phonetics, and replaces them with a more broad general phonemics. Jones (1967:xvii) stated about RP: 'The pronunciation is in the main that which I use myself.' A dialect has general similarities, but we cannot record an individual speaker and say that that is the dialect, nor can we transcribe a dialect as such. Dialects are abstractions from individuals. Accuracy demands that we give the background and place of the individual speaker transcribed, making only minimal claims as to what broad dialect it may be classified as.

e. **RP as BBC Pronunciation** (British Broadcasting Corporation). Wells (1990:xii) stated that RP = BBC pronunciation. Insomuch as the BBC has the ability to reach the majority of people, it has unofficially served as the standard of pronunciation. It is claimed that BBC has never set a standard although this point is controversial (Macaulay 1988:120-121). BBC Handbook (1970:110) states, 'The policy of English by Radio and TV is to teach the everyday usage and the pronunciation of educated English people.' They spoke also of 'the importance of maintaining universal forms of English'. It does produce its own pronunciation guides: *BBC Pronouncing Dictionary of British Names* (1971, 1983), *BBC Pronunciation Policy and Practice* (1972), *BBC English Dictionary* (1992) (BBCD). There is also a journal used in connection with its English courses, called *BBC English.* Graham Pointon (1988), Director of the BBC Pronunciation Unit and in 1994 Pronunciation Advisor, states that BBC did set a standard of correct pronunciation which reflected a) current usage of educated speakers, (p. 9), or b) the 'preferred usage of the British public' (p. 12). But there is a great difference between a)

and b). The phonetician, Arthur Lloyd-James, of the BBC Advisory Committee of Spoken English, supposedly did seek to have BBC set a standard speech for all speakers. In sum, the BBC rule seems to be: There is no universal standard RP, and we have set it.

In addition, in recent times. a number of dialects may be heard on BBC. This is, in effect, to give some recognition to each dialect as the local standard, to acknowledge the various dialects. This is especially important because it shows the diversity of the language people actually speak – which is not RP. Each of the five members of the family of one informant has a different accent, though the three children grew up in the same household in the same town. Thus, we find the Welsh poet, Dylan Thomas, who himself gave BBC broadcasts, questioning whether or not one should speak BBC or 'pub'. Ellis (1869:vol.1:23) even states that RP is 'the educated pronunciation of the...pub'.

BBC guidelines as laid out in *BBC Pronunciation Policy and Practice* (1979) state the following:

1. *There is no single correct mode of pronunciation which is inherently superior to all others.* (p. 7)
2. BBC does try to raise the general standards of pronunciation. (p. 10)
3. *Newsreaders and announcers are not required to be conversant with the International Phonetic Alphabet.* (p. 10)
4. *As long as the only means of indicating pronunciations to announcers is limited to the sounds of English, there is nothing revolutionary that can be introduced by way of improvement.* (p. 9)

In short, BBC uses 'folk phonetics' in place of the IPA and the result is that the pronunciation, especially of foreign languages, is basically inaccessible to the announcer. They are not able to look up phonetic pronunciations in reference sources such as BBCD, LPD, OED, or any foreign language source giving the IPA pronunciation, such as *Duden Aussprachewörterbuch* (1990) for German. The Pronunciation Unit itself does use IPA in their master index and in, for example, BBCD. The problem ought to be not whether announcers should be educated in IPA, they should, but how to improve the IPA accuracy and symbolism used by the Pronunciation Unit. It is in these senses as well as in regard to policy that the BBC has a phonetic crisis.

There would remain serious problems if RP were equated with BBC pronunciation.

f. **Statistical Description.** Can or should the standard of English pronunciation be determined by the speech of the largest number, a majority, a select group of people, or an ideal language virtually no one speaks? Should the standard be determined by the ballot? The statistical profile is rendered in the literature, for example, as follows:

1. RP is spoken by a small minority (e.g., 3-5%) of the English speaking world (cf. Jones 1967:xviii, Macaulay 1988:118, Nihalani, et al. 1979:205; Trudgill & Hannah 1982:2).
2. There are probably more speakers of RP in South Africa than in England (Hopewood 1927:68).
3. Only a tiny portion of Scots speak RP (Macafee 1983:31).
4. Most teachers of English as a second language do not speak RP (Macaulay 1988:122).
5. There are more non-native than native speakers of English: 300 million native, 375 million non-native (Brown 1991:7).
6. 97% of the British population do not speak RP (Macaulay 1988:123).
7. 'The majority of learners will have in varying degrees a "foreign accent"' (Macaulay 1988:117).

To require the majority to speak the language of a tiny minority, guarantees that nearly everyone will speak English with a foreign accent.

Wells (1990:xi) took a poll of 275 allegedly native RP speakers to determine the pronunciation of one hundred words of uncertain pronunciation. The sample is small, and it is not clear how he knew that they were native RP speakers. It would not do to merely ask them. Speakers of dialect often report not having any dialect at all. The 275 people did not pronounce all of these words alike and certainly would not pronounce numerous other words alike either. Almost half were teachers or students of linguistics, 103 were northerners, 133 southerners, and 21 did not describe themselves as English. When 'no preference' for a pronunciation was given, this response was eliminated, but it is not clear why. It could mean that the various pronunciations are equally acceptable, and this is relevant information. The following are some examples of the poll given in LPD:

| again | ə.'gen (80%), ə.'geɪn (20%), (Both: many) |
| assume | ə.'sjuːm (84%), ə.'suːm (11%), ə.'ʃuːm (5%) |
| ate | et (55%), eɪt (45%) |
| auction | 'ɔːk.ʃən (87%), 'ɒk.- (13%) |
| been | biːn (92%), bɪn (8%) |
| broom | bruːm (92%), brʊm (8%) |
| cigarette | ˌsɪg.ə.'ret (85%), 'sɪg.ə.ret (15%) |
| crescent | 'krez.ənt (55%), 'kres- (45%) |
| data | 'deɪt.ə (92%), 'dɑːtə (6%), 'dæt.ə (2%) |
| demonstrable | [de'monstrable (63%), 'demonstrable (37%)] |
| dispute | [dis'pute (62%), 'dispute (38%)] |
| distribute | [dis'tribute (74%), 'distribute (26%)] |
| either | 'aɪð.ər (88%), 'iːð.ər (13%) |
| exasperate | ɪg.'zæsp.ə.reɪt (54%), -'zɑːsp- (46%) |
| year | jɪə (80%), jɜː (20%) |

In the earlier EPD (1967:vii), Gimson had sent out a questionnaire of 300 words to 100 colleagues in linguistics. The BBC English Dictionary (1992:xiii) (BBCD) is based on a database of over 150 million words used in BBC broadcasts, including ten million words from National Public Radio in Washington, D. C. The selection is, however, somewhat question begging because BBC sets a style then surveys the style, it sets. It is nevertheless an extremely valuable resource. It may be noted, however, that the pronunciation in the BBCD and the CCD are nearly identical, except that the latter gives a more thorough and extensive range of pronunciations. Both are among the best IPA sources of British phonetics.

## IV. *RP and majority rule*

*RP is an anacronism in present-day democratic society.* (Abercrombie 1965:14)

Should the standard of English be established by the democratic ballot, by majority rule (MR)? The democratic vote is based on MR, which is basically a 'Majority Rule Fallacy' (cf. Shibles 1993c). Thus, there would be serious difficulties involved in basing a standard of English on MR. Several of these are the following:

1. MR presupposes an informed populace. Extremely few in any society are familiar with phonetics, or language problems. Nor are even literate voters generally educated in critical thinking in any society.

2. The popular vote is typically based on personal interests, religious bias, racial bias, gender bias, nationalism, etc., rather than on sound argument, consequences and what is best for the local or world community. Humanistic parties (e.g. the Humanists, the international Greens Party: *Die Grünen*) typically have, however, shown more informed concerns, but they have few members. The vote is more a survey of wants than a judgment arrived at by intelligent inquiry. For example, people and their representatives vote for war without any knowledge of the 'just war' or other relevant arguments. The same would tend to apply regarding issues of language standards.

3. MR guarantees neither fairness nor reasonableness. If most people in the world want to speak Chinese, it does not mean that all should be required to do so. (cf. §9 below.)

4. MR can be a way for the majority to eliminate dialects other than the standard, and oppress speakers of dialects. Those not speaking RP often report 'feeling inferior'.

5. The MR may be based on a mere majority (e.g. 51%) of those who vote, thereby infringing on the views and desires of a large minority. The majority often consists of the majority of the minority of those voting, thus three people could win an election involving millions.

6. The MR standard must specify the purpose for the standard. Is it to be used in education, home, dictionaries, media, overseas education, etc.? For example, to what extent can dialect be allowed in school, the playground, or on BBC? Irish is the first official language according to Article 8 of the Constitution of Ireland, yet is spoken by a tiny minority. Presumably, this is for the purpose of promoting and preserving their linguistic heritage.

7. By voting for the majority one may, in effect, have to give up one's language. Members of Parliament use many pronunciations and so if they voted to require RP, they would be voting for a pronunciation many of them do not use.

8. Votes are quantitative not qualitative. Reasons and arguments need not be had or given.

9. The majority need show no concern for or sensitivity to the minority, or those wishing to speak other dialects. Any decision by the majority could rather preserve, as much as possible, the needs and desires of the minority as well, but MR does not require that. Phillipson (1992) argues extensively and convincingly that English is being imposed on the rest of the world not by careful humanistic, integrated and deliberate planning, but by accident – by various independent agencies such as BBC, the British Council, etc. The institutions are shown to involve: a) the economy (business leaders): 'Where they speak British, they buy British', b) university teachers of English as a Second Language, c) nationalism, d) religion, e) political influence and power such as the spread of democracy, f) enculturation into Western belief systems, g) controling thought, etc. England may no longer 'rule the waves' but the English language does. For such reasons, Phillipson calls the present policy of unplanned teaching English throughout the world, *linguicism and linguistic imperialism*. It is pointed out, for example, that this is how Gandhi thought of English in India – as mental slavery (ibid. p. 35).

An alternative to the prevailing approach is to follow John Dewey's proposal: to have deliberate, informed, adequate, integrated planning which involves the world community, and the cultures involved in a reciprocal way. It would not be narrow based or, for example, Anglocentric. Phillipson notes that there is at present the determination to spread English throughout the world, but there is an 'absence of any policy or plan' (ibid. p. 302). It may be noted that France is also shown to be 'imperialistic' regarding French, but there is nevertheless some recognition given to *francophonie*, which is the pluralistic recognition of other languages and dialects (ibid. p. 249). In English, there are the similar concepts of *pluricentrism* and *Englishes*.

10. The 'rule' in 'majority rule' can be vague or punitive. How will the standard be enforced? It may be a mere suggestion with no enforcement, or a required standard such that deviations result in low school grades, inability to gain employment, intolerance, or even punishment. In Europe, severe prison sentences have been imposed for not speaking the language of the occupying forces even though it was a foreign language.

Thus, there are a number of restrictions to be placed on MR before it can approach being a fair or intelligent method to use. In addition, the MR decision should not be based on informal logical

fallacies such as appeal to tradition and authority, for example, to keep RP because it is based on custom, tradition and familiarity. The consequences of the use of this standard should be clearly stated and the standard should be for the benefit of all, including the local as well as the world language community. IPA phonetics could be used as the standard phonetic symbolism, because it is the only thoroughly researched and also scientifically acceptable international standard of phonetics and phonetic research. That is, a standard language requires a standard phonetics.

In any case, if one is to do a statistical study of pronunciation, for whatever reason, it should conform to acceptable standards of analysis, for example, a sufficiently large number of informants should be recorded, the range of acceptable pronunciation indicated, the basis of selection carefully determined, etc. Wells (LPD), for example, did a written postal survey, rather than record the pronunciation of the subjects. The use of the transcription of one author, or a poll of several hundred opinions regarding one hundred words, would not satisfy adequate experimental design. This is not, however, to say that phoneticists cannot have perfectly accurate transcriptions without any statistical analysis whatever. They can, and EPD, LPD, BBCD and OED do.

### V. *Stipulative definition*

Unlike descriptive or statistical description, these definitions merely stipulate that such and such will be the standard of RP. It takes the same form as mathematical expressions such as, 'Let $x = y$', for example, RP = LPD, RP = EPD, RP = BBC, RP = OED, RP = London English (excluding Cockney), etc. If it is stipulated that SBE is the standard, then, by definition, it could not be a dialect, and a dialect could not be the standard. If by SBE is meant a description of one form of English, then it can be a dialect. It is often said that SBE can be spoken with or without an accent (cf. Abercrombie 1965:10). That depends. RP = an accent = a pronunciation, therefore it cannot be spoken without an accent. If SBE does not imply pronunciation, it is not as such spoken at all and so is without accent. If, however, accent means not only pronunciation, but 'pronunciation which differs from the standard' and RP is the standard, then RP cannot be an accent  and has no accent by definition. Because 'accent' is used

equivocally, we may in the above respects say that RP both is and is not an accent. That is, RP is the accent that has no accent.

## VI. *Evaluate definitions*

*The existence of a standard pronunciation such as RP is a bad rather than a good thing.* (Abercrombie 1965:14)

Unlike descriptive and other definitions, evaluative definitions involve value terms such as 'RP is the recommended, obligatory, useful, or aesthetic standard'. Unlike descriptive definitions, evaluative definitions may involve enforcement or penalties for nonconformity. It is here that one speaks of 'correct', or 'proper', speech as well as of emotional or vulgar pronunciation (cf. Macaulay 1988:117). The very word 'received' in 'received pronunciation' means 'acceptable' with a suggestion of being passed down by tradition and custom. But dialects can be 'received' in the sense of meaning 'learned', especially in youth.

Value terms may be thought to be terms like good, bad, right, wrong, ought, and ought not, or their synonyms. These are open-context-terms. They are meaningless in themselves and gain meaning only if something specific and naturalistic is substituted for them (Shibles 1992). Dewey's naturalism in ethics may serve as a guide here. Ethics, value terms, and valuing involve: bringing about our own deliberate, adequate, informed wants and goals on the basis of inquiry and a reasonably full knowledge of the specific consequences. Lack of deliberate policy and unplanned reception or promotion of RP or SBE would not qualify as being ethical.

SBE does not mean 'good English'. We can swear and be vulgar in SBE. The words are in the dictionary. We can speak perfectly good SBE and sound daft. 'Advanced RP' is usually regarded as undesirable. We can speak formal Scouse or Geordie.

## 1. Recommended definitions

A descriptive definition is neutral as to recommendation. It is a mere report, except, of course, for the fact that value may be involved in the selection and purpose aspect of the descriptive process. Jones

(1967:xviii) states, 'RP means merely "widely understood pronunciation", and that I do not hold it up as a standard which everyone is recommended to adopt.' Various degrees of recommendation are stated or implied by various authors. Wells (1990:viii) says that the main pronunciations of LPD are 'recommended as models for learners of English' and ESL, English as a Second Language. It is a bit odd to recommend one accent over another, but one can rather say that if one wishes to speak the Norfolk dialect, then these are the generally found pronunciations; and if one wishes to speak Cockney, these; and for RP follow EPD, LPD, or OED – if one can, because the latter sources conflict somewhat. (For the differences between the various IPA transcriptions of RP as well as those of English dialects and extensive comparative phonetic charts, see Shibles 'The Comparative Phonetics of English', forthcoming.)

Nihalani, et al. (1979:204ff) 'recommend' an India English pronunciation which is an artificial standard to be based on a compromise between the English of India and RP. Gimson (1984:48) stipulates that RP is what is spoken by middle–aged British people.

## 2. Obligatory standard

*I do not believe in...imposing one particular form of pronunciation.* (Jones 1967:xviii)

Both in and out of school, certain pronunciations are regarded as 'correct' or 'incorrect'. This criterion is stronger than mere recommendation. Professor Quirk (1990) of University College London, has recently supported a report by the Department of Education and Science in London which states that it is the duty of British schools 'to enable children to acquire Standard English, which is their right'. (p. 4) He states that he 'would feel cheated by...a tolerant pluralism'. (p. 10), and that English is the best choice not only for England, but also as an international language.

In addition to an imperious RP, one may also have correct and incorrect dialect, incorrect Liverpudlian, its obligatory [tˢ] and Cockney's imperative glottal stop. It is one thing to say that a standard is required, another to say that if one wishes to speak a certain dialect certain pronunciations are required in order to do so.

However, because of wide variation in any dialect, including RP, the standard would have to include a range as is done in LPD and CCD (but seldom, if ever, elsewhere). EPD (1967) even excludes variations entered in previous editions. Usually, however, only a single standard is presented. Macaulay (1988:122) even states, 'There is no such thing as RP except as a prescriptive model for the upwardly mobile.'

Crystal (1987:2) wrote of the 'prescriptivist' controversy according to which 'one variety of language has an inherently higher value than others, and that this ought to be imposed on the whole of the speech community'. (Another view is that the prescription is justified based on custom and tradition.) Alternative to this is: 'describe, not prescribe', and Crystal says that the opposition between these two views 'has often become extreme' (ibid. 2, 3). Jones (1967:xvii) states, 'No attempt is made to decide how people <u>ought</u> to pronounce.' Along with the obligatory standard comes rejection, social stigma, intolerance, and various forms of punishment. One of my well-educated informants for RP stated, 'I have always felt inferior when others around me speak RP and I am not.' Abercrombie (1965:15) presented the same point and asserts that all accents should be regarded as socially equal, otherwise intolerance of an 'accent bar' will exist. One of the main points of the book by Andersson & Trudgill (1990:167-180) is to show that dialects should be appreciated, not condemned, and that no one should be made to feel bad because of speaking a dialect. 'Rather dialects may be appreciated and celebrated.'

## 3. Aesthetic standard

Wyld (Macaulay 1988:117) regarded RP as the most refined and graceful form of language. To impose RP is, then, like imposing a certain style of art, the pronunciation of each dialect being like a different symphony. RP becomes a form of art, a 'received sound picture'. And this is true enough. The error is in thinking that the aesthetic is objective, that RP is objectively beautiful in itself. It is not.

'Aesthetic' is a value judgment meaning a 'good' or 'beautiful', object or activity. Without the evaluation there is no aesthetic object. Individuals decide for themselves what they choose to regard as good or beautiful, thereby inducing the aesthetic emotion. The formalist view that beauty/aesthetic can be seen as being in the object must, on this view, fail (cf. Shibles 1994e). But there is an up side. Although

RP cannot possibly and by definition be beautiful in itself, it cannot be ugly either. And this is instructive, because it means that no dialect, no matter how coarse seeming or how many r's are dropped, can itself be ugly, or as is often termed 'vulgar'. The rough Mancunian, curious Northumbrian with its uvular /r/, the Cockney with its glottal stop, the snobbish and affected forms of RP, are only as ugly or beautiful as one sees them. A lot depends upon what one grows up with. The country dialect, the farmers-at-market dialect, may be thought of as vulgar, or on the other hand, as rustic and quaint. RP may be seen as heartless and cold. RP BBC newscasters have been often thought to be dull, humorless, stereotypic, never cheerful, and aloof. Consider the following reports:

*I do not regard RP as intrinsically 'better' or more 'beautiful' than any other form of pronunciation.* Jones (1967:xviii)
Giles, et al. (1990:194) found that, in fact, seven year old children 'found RP to be rather amusing, and not at all statusful'.
Welsh adults found RP to be arrogant, snobbish and conservative (ibid. p. 95).
*Its aesthetic merits are...dubious.* Abercrombie (1965:13)
*We...happen to dislike the old-fashioned and very posh RP.* (Andersson & Trudgill 1990:7)

Typically, whatever is unlike one's own pronunciation is going to sound to some degree strange or weird even though it may be regarded as having more prestige. We often speak our own dialect as well as the standard, just as the Swiss-German learn a dialect at home and then later in school are required to learn the standard German, *Schriftsprache*. The standard for Swiss-German is actually a foreign language to the Swiss. They typically report that the *Schriftsprache* sounds 'wooden'. Similarly, Giles et al. (1990:209) found RP to be perceived as being more prestigious, but less warm and caring than the local dialects. The same is true of Bavarian as opposed to standard German. Do people cherish RP, or think of it as 'folksy'?

A change of perspective is required in art appreciation allowing us to appreciate in as many ways as possible. Similarly, we can come to value and esteem each dialect and not regard them as intrinsically inferior, any more than one language is inferior to another. We only have our own preferences. We may prefer German over Spanish, or RP over AP. Cockney is poor RP, but RP is poor Cockney. Rather,

Cockney can be seen as a beautiful and interesting orchestration of sounds. There is great and innovative verbal music to be heard at Petticoat Lane and the markets throughout England, some of which I have myself, taped, transcribed and enjoyed.

## 4. The pragmatic standard

*English spelling is actually something of a mess.* (Andersson & Trudgill 1990:176)

There is in America and England no official standard of pronunciation. By 'pragmatic' is meant here that RP and SBE are more practical and useful as a standard, than other dialects would be. Jones (1967:xviii) states, 'I have recorded RP because it happens to be the only type of English pronunciation about which I am in a position to obtain full and accurate information.' Presumably, if he had lived in Birmingham, he would, as a practical matter, have recorded that accent. He was in a position to record Cockney, except that he himself did not regularly speak it. Thus, the personal standard still prevails. Al-Sawaf (1979:288) argues that the model should be RP because most of the books on English pronunciation and teaching materials use RP. Certainly the main pronunciation texts of English are RP, such as EPD, LPD, OED. It is also claimed that a standard is useful because it allows uniformity (Pointon 1988:9). Practically speaking, it is convenient to use RP.

On the other hand, suppose most of the transcriptions and texts were in AP. Should AP then be used as world standard? This would be an incentive for a nation to make sure that their dictionaries and language books use IPA. America has not done that, whereas England has, so that RP may to this extent be favored by nations wishing to teach English. AP, on the other hand, has the advantage that its accents are less diverse than those in the U. K. What is especially practical and to the point is that more of the basic dictionaries giving full phonetic IPA transcriptions for English are British and more yet, foreign language dictionaries, such as *Cassell German-English, English-German Dictionary* (1978). It is the fact that IPA transcription is used, not merely that RP is used, that makes a standard especially practical.

It is especially important to note that if one goes by IPA pronunciation one need not be at the mercy of the particular accent of the teacher, be the teacher a speaker of Welsh, Irish, Cockney, etc. It also means that one may choose one's accent because it can be rendered in IPA symbolism. But if we cannot realistically expect the bulk of people who speak English to abandon their pronunciation for RP, then it may not be practical to try (cf. Abercrombie 1965:12). They can, however, be taught a written SBE. Nihalani, et al. (1979:205) oppose the teaching of RP in India, and suggest that it is not possible to do so for their millions of children and adults learning English.

If most countries set RP, with given specific IPA paradigms as the standard, it is a strong argument for its continuance. But there still remains a problem as to whether AP or RP should be used. Both are world-class languages. RP drives on the left making for linguistic collisions with AP which drives on the right. A descriptive resolution to this problem is at hand with LPD. This gives both RP and AP showing where they agree and disagree. This shows why the British have no 'humor', but they do have a sense of 'humour'. LPD even lists cases where the difference in AP and RP pronunciation is unexpected, symbolized by (!), such as the following.

| | RP–LPD | AP–LPD | AP IPA-S |
|---|---|---|---|
| asthma | ˈæs.mə | ˈæz- | ˈæz.ma |
| blouse | blaʊz | blaʊs | blauz |
| borrow | ˈbɒr.əʊ | ˈbɔːr.oʊ | ˈbɒɹ.ɹo/oᵘ |
| borough | ˈbʌr.ə | ˈbɝ-ːoʊ | ˈbɹː.ɹo/oᵘ |
| cliché | kliːʃ.eɪ | kliː.ˈʃeɪ | kli.ˈʃeː/eːi |

Lastly, regarding the pragmatic approach, we may note the statement by Andersson & Trudgill (1990:189):

> *Those human beings who can use their language to do and say whatever they want to do and say with it, regardless of what self-appointed pundits may think about* <u>how</u> *they do and say it, are the ones who speak and write language that is truly good.*

Their approach is not practical, however, for those who wish to learn the pronunciation and grammar of a language or dialect.

## VII. *Description based on phonetic transcription*

The standard of pronunciation is only as accurate as its symbolism. A standard not represented by IPA symbolism is of questionable value. This is true of other languages from Spanish phonetics, German phonetics, and Chinese romanizations – which are in fact not phonetic, to the idiosyncratic phonetics given in *Webster's Third New International Dictionary* (1986) which is used as the standard dictionary in the United States.

In spite of this, Dickerson (1987), speaking of it as a 'trend', argues that orthography instead of the IPA may be used as the source of pronunciation. This amounts to what may be called 'folk phonetics'. It is clear that we cannot pronounce a word merely by looking at its spelling. Regarding orthography, Andersson & Trudgill (1990:176) state, 'English spelling is actually something of a mess'. In addition, if we are given rules for pronunciation from orthography, it presupposes a phonetics, it does not present one. If all students know is the orthography of any known language, they will not know how to pronounce it. For example, even if the Pinyin or Wade-Giles (or fifty plus other) romanizations of Chinese are given, we will still not be able to accurately pronounce a single Chinese syllable. IPA phonetics is needed for that. Pointon (1988:11-12) reports that the BBC Pronunciation Unit has two of the Chinese romanizations, but he does not report that they have the IPA or any phonetics of Chinese. (For a complete IPA transcription of Mandarin Chinese syllables see Shibles 1994d.)

The phonetic symbolism used is best if international and well-established for phonetic research. To the extent that it was only in 1989 that OED began using IPA symbolism, it may be suggested that prior to that there was no widely distributed phonetic standard for RP. There are few sources for IPA transcriptions of English dialects and practically no full English dialect dictionaries using IPA. As an IPA standard, RP did not basically exist before 1989, except for Daniel Jones' EPD. His text, however, does not have the weight or accessibility of OED which serves as a main standard of the English language.

There are basically the following IPA phonetic sources of RP: a) EPD, LPD, OED. b) Other sources, which are less accessible, are contained in the bibliography. c) Foreign language dictionaries giving the IPA for RP. The problem arises that the phonetics given by

various sources differs. Thus, the phonetic standard is corrupted and equivocal. The following examples illustrate: *city* is rendered by various dictionaries as: [siti, sɪti, sɪtɪ]. They have the consonants right. The problem is with the vowels. [ə] is given for [ʌ], [ɔ] for [ɒ], [i] for [ɪ] depending upon which text is consulted.

Forster (1981:ix) notes that the phonetics and interpretations of English place names are inconsistent and that many sounds given used ambiguous, non-IPA symbols. Many of his own symbols do not correspond to IPA-1989/1993. The result is that the reader cannot know the pronunciation of a word by merely looking at the phonetics, thereby invalidating the phonetic description given. In addition, all transcriptions except IPA-S use the schwa. It has been shown that the schwa is a pseudo-symbol and should rather be reduced to its proper vowel sound (Shibles 1994c). For LPD, *-ll* > [ᵊl, əl], (AP) *-er* > [ᵊr], *Chicago* > (LPD-AP) ʃɪ/ə.ˈkɑːgou ˈkɒːg-. IPA-S gives ʃɪ/ʌ.ˈkɑ.go. LPD (xvii) and EPD14 (xv) both note that the schwa is given the largest area of variation on the vowel chart. This supports the view that it does not refer to a specific sound. Thus, it is unacceptable for EPD (1967:viii) to delete [o] from RP and replace it with the schwa.

The same is the case with [r]. There are many kinds of /r/ sounds and it is not acceptable merely to use a generic /r/, especially if it is rendered as if it were not phonemic /r/, but phonetic [r]. Thus, the reader would not know which /r/, which allophone, is intended. LPD, for example, uses [r] for both RP and AP, but in AP it is actually [ɹ].

The inconsistency of the use of the phonetic symbols [ɪ] and [i] has resulted in a controversy (Lewis 1990). Several types of confusion are as follows:

1. [i] is used to mean [ɪ]. The result is symbolic confusion, so that the reader cannot tell which is the correct sound. Wright (1968) uses [i] for [ɪ]. Crystal (1987:153) contrasts Jones (1956) [ə, ɔ, i] > Gimson [ʌ, ɒ, ɪ], respectively (cf. Knowles 1987:231). Jones (1963) gives *lip* as [lip], where /i/ = [ɪ]. The change from EPD14 to LPD is ɪ > i , ʊ > uː, for example, *happy* in EPD14 [ˈhæp.ɪ] > LPD [hæp.i]. [ɪ] is placed, by various authors, in conflicting places on the IPA vowel chart. Jones' (1967) uː, i, and e are equivalent to IPA ʊ, ɪ, and ɛ, respectively. Examples of the above kinds of inconsistencies in RP are:

|  | OED | Cassell 1978 |
|---|---|---|
| cake | keɪk | keik |
| coffee | kɒfɪ | kofi |
| milk | mɪlk | milk |

## 2. Theoretical Controversy.

a. [ɪ] is said to be heard as a short [i].

b. [ɪ] is not a short [i], but rather there is said to be a qualitative difference between them (Gimson, EPD 1967:viii). Knowles (1987:231) maintains that because of this qualitative difference, short [i] should not be used in place of [ɪ].

## 3. Historic Change.

It is held that [ɪ] was correctly used for RP in *city*, but the language itself has changed in some cases such that what was formerly [ɪ] has become closer to [i]. Wells (1990:5) says the [ɪ] in city is now [iː] (cf. Wells 1990b:8).

## 4. Transcription Error.

[ɪ] is mistakenly translated as [i], and [i] as [ɪ].

## 5. [i] is neither [i] nor [ɪ], but between them or undefined:

a. [ɪ] = [ɛ̈] (Wells 1982, II: 279ff.)

b. Ramsaran (1990a:178) says that the sound is between [ɪ] and [i]. Thus, although she does not say so, we may represent it by the use of the diacritic for simultaneous sounds to capture the quality of each, namely, [i͡ɪ].

c. Undefined. '[ɪ] has not got...a defined quality in the way the Cardinal vowels have, but is to be understood as defined by the user.' (Lewis 1990:160)

In addition to the above controversy, Wells (1990:5) notes that the old [u] is now transcribed as [ʊ], and *lot* [lɔt] is now [lɒt], although he states that he himself does not use the latter pronunciation. Hornby (1989), on the contrary, gave [ɒ] in an earlier edition, and later gave [ɔ]. Knowles (1987:231) comparison of five phonetic systems shows: u = u, ʊ; au = au, ɑʊ; eə = ɛə, eə. Gimson (EPD 1991:viii) uses [eə] where [ɛə] is meant. *Poor* is rendered as (EPD14) pɔː, (EPA13) pʊə, (LPD) pɔː, pʊə. Thus, the symbols cannot be trusted or taken at face value.

## VIII. *Emotive pronunciation and suprasegmentals*

We may take any grammatically correct SBE sentence and pronounce it in various ways so as to render an unlimited number of different emotions and messages. We can say, 'Hello' in such a way as to render 'I would love to spend some time with you', or express irritation (cf. Shibles, 1989, 1989a, 1992). For any word, then, there is an infinite range of possible correct pronunciations. This requires an adequate IPA phonetics that is able to specify this range. It also means that RP becomes more allusive. A word cannot have only one correct RP pronunciation. It would have to have a range of correct RP pronunciations. Such a range is not included in any dictionary because emotions and suprasegmentals are not to be found in dictionaries. The debate about whether or not BBC announcers are too aloof, authoritative or animated for RP has no standard for resolution. The answer may rather be that positive emotions are always appropriate, negative ones never – and 'neutral' are also negative. Negative emotions have been regarded as informal logical fallacies (Shibles 1992). Hatred and revenge are never justifiable. The area of emotions (and avoidance of violence) is where a workable standard may well be considered for school education and the media. The Rational-Emotive or Cognitive Theory of Emotion may be used to gain an understanding of the emotive aspect of language (Shibles 1992).

## IX. *RP and comparative phonetics*

One of the interesting things about place names is that they retain the dialectical or older pronunciation as opposed to what would be the RP pronunciation. For example, LPD (77) gives for *Blackburn*, 'blæk.bɜːn, or locally 'blæg-. Forster (1981:27) gives blegbərn, blægbəːn, and blækbəːn. Place names, then, often require the local, dialectical pronunciation rather than RP. The BBC, however, does not use the local pronunciation of places, but changes it into more usual English, thus setting a new standard at the expense of the actual pronunciation. For the names of people, however, the correct pronunciation is attempted (*BBC Handbook* 1956:66).

It may be additionally observed how foreign languages are comparatively transcribed and anglicized. The phonetics given in LPD, however, do not always agree with those given in foreign language dictionaries. LPD correctly uses ʌ for Duden's (1990) centralized schwa-like vowel ɐ, and ʁ for Duden [r]. The above is exemplified by the following:

| LPD German | IPA (Anglicized) LPD-RP version | German IPA-LPD | German Duden 1990 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Bauer | 'baʊ̯.ə | 'baʊ.ʌ | 'baʊɐ |
| Benz | benz | bents | bɛnts |
| Bierkeller | 'bɪə.kel.ə | 'biːʌ.kɛl.ʌ | biːɐ̯kɛlɐ |
| Brecht | brext | bʁɛçt | bʁɛçt |

| LPD French | IPA (Anglicized) LPD-RP version | French IPA-LPD | French Warnant 1968 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Abidjan | ˌæb.i.'dʒɑːæn | a.bid.ʒɑ̃ | a.bid.ʒɑ̃ |
| Ajaccio | æ.'ʒæks.i.əʊ | a.ʒak.sjo | a.ʒak.sjo |
| Aimée | 'eɪm.eɪ | ɛ.me | ɛ(-)m(ə) |
| Ardèche | ɑː.'deʃ | aʁ.dɛʃ | aʁ.dɛ(-)ʃ(ə) |
| Ardennes | ɑː.'den(z) | aʁ.dɛn | aʁ.dɛ(-)n(ə) |
| Armand | 'ɑːm.ənd | aʁ.mɑ̃ | aʁ.mɑ̃ |
| au courant | əʊ.'kʊr.ɒ̃ | o.ku.ʁɑ̃ | o.ku.ʁɑ̃ |
| au fond | əʊ.'fɒ̃ | o.fɔ̃ | o.fɔ̃ |
| battue | bæ.'tuː, -'tjuː | ba.ty | ba.ty |
| Bayeux | baɪ.'ɜː, beɪ-, -'jɜː | ba.jø | ba.jø |
| Binet | 'biːn.eɪ | bi.nɛ | bi.nɛ |
| boeuf | bɜːf | bœf | bœf |
| vin | væ̃, væn | væ̃ | vɛ̃ |

Differences between RP and AP given in LPD and the AP transcription given is here contrasted with and corrected by IPA-S. Note that LPD uses [e] for [ɛ]. No [o] is given in LPD for RP. It was deleted in EPD (1967:vii) also. IPA-S does find [o] in RP (Not shown).

| LPD-RP | LPD-AP | Key Word | IPA-S (AP) Corrections |
|---|---|---|---|
| --- | -ɾ- | city | 'sɪ.ti |
| ɒ | --- | lot | |
| əʊ | --- | no, goat | substitute for ə |
| --- | oʊ | no, goat | goːtˀ, goᵘtˀ |
| ɒʊ | --- | (var.) cold | |
| --- | ɪə | near | nɪːɹ (no ə) |
| --- | eə | fair | fɛɹ (no ə) |
| --- | ɑː | lot | lɒt/tˀ |
| --- | ɒː | law | lɔː |
| ɔː | --- | law | |
| --- | oː | (var.) four | foɹ |
| ʊə | --- | cure | |
| ɜː | --- | nurse | |
| --- | ɝː | nurse | nɹːs |
| i | i | happy | 'hæpˀ.pi |
| ʊ | --- | educate | |
| --- | ᵊr | father | 'fɑː.ðɹ (no ə) |

The syllabification in LPD often does not agree with actual pronunciation. For example, LPD gives *happy* as 'hæp.i, but it could be 'hæ.pi. MacCarthy (1945) gives ['hapi] without syllabification, and which is also phonetically incorrect. IPA-S gives 'hæp.pi. But, Wells (1990:xix) admits 'the question of syllabification in English is controversial'.

In summary, if RP is to be a standard, IPA phonetic symbolism must be used and the diverse accounts should be made as consistent as possible. This also allows us to note how RP has changed over the years, from, for example, EPD of 1917 to EPD of 1991, LPD of 1990, or BBCD of 1992. The IPA symbols themselves change to some extent. The recent large change is the 1989 Kiel IPA, which has been slightly revised in 1993 (cf. IPA-Kiel 1989). OED was published too late to use the 1989 IPA. Wells in LPD uses what he calls EPD-14 (Jones EPD, 14th edition), which is based on an older IPA transcription. This means that at present virtually no dictionary has the up-to date 1989 or 1993 IPA symbolism.

## X. *A proposed model: RP as realphonetik*

In view of the foregoing analysis, the following is a proposed model for the establishment of standard British pronunciation.

1. The policy for teaching BSE and pronunciation may be deliberate based on organized planning considering the needs of local, national and world-wide consequences. The problem of 'linguistic imperialism' may thereby be addressed and avoided. In sum, the grounds for the choice may be pragmatic and be based on adequate and deliberate reasoning, planning and argument, and these grounds made explicit. Any use of surveys, ballots, or majority rule should be qualified as indicated earlier.

2. The activities the standard applies to may be clearly specified, for example, BBC newsbroadcasts, education, standard dictionaries, foreign language teaching, stage, etc. Specify where alternative dialects may be used, for example, in court, in legal documents, etc.

3. Transcriptions may be best given in IPA. Wherever possible, narrow, rather than broad/phonemic transcription may be given.

4. Produce standard dictionaries which a) give the ideal pronunciation (if desired). b) Give the actual range of usually found pronunciations, that is, a *Realphonetik*. This will show RP as well as AP and variations shown of each. This is also useful to record for future generations because past and present phonetic sources are typically unscientific. It is also useful for foreigners learning English to hear how English is spoken in both England and America. Specialized dictionaries can show separately how other kinds of English (Englishes) are spoken, for example, Australia (Macquarie 1981), Jamaica (Casidy & LePage 1967, Wells 1973), Scottish (Graham 1978; *Scottish National Dictionary* 1931-1975), *Dictionary of Canadian English* (1967), the English dialects, etc. (See bibliography for additional sources.)

At present the closest to presenting an adequate phonetic standard in the above sense are CCD and LPD. (See additional sources in bibliography such as BBCD, Cassell 1978, EPD, Hornby 1989, Kökeritz 1932, Lewis 1972, MacCarthy 1945, OED.)

5. Generic schwa and generic /r/ could be omitted and instead replaced by their actual phonetic values.

6. Corrections to the dictionaries may be kept up to date regarding a) changes in the IPA symbols, b) pronunciation corrections arrived at by phonetic research, c) changes in the language

pronunciation itself. The text introduction may specify the reasons why and show how these corrections are made, for example, 'This edition has been revised to conform to 1993 IPA symbolism. The phonetic rendering of the following words has been changed to reflect greater accuracy based on recent phonetic research.' Different transcriptions given in different dictionaries may be compared (comparative phonetics) to ascertain which is correct. (This has been done in Shibles 'The Comparative Phonetics of English', forthcoming.)

7. Ongoing surveys may be taken and updated to specify actual pronunciation in accordance with the latest statistical survey methods. This seems not to have yet been done except in the case of BBCD.

8. Vowel and articulatory charts may be employed for more accuracy and standardization so that descriptions will refer to the same sound or place of articulation. (See Shibles 'A Standard IPA Vowel Chart', 1993, 1994; Shibles 'An Extended IPA Vowel Chart', 1994.)

9. The name 'Received Pronunciation' is evaluative and could be replaced by more objective terms such as 'British Pronunciation' (BP), just as American pronunciation is AP. Jones (1967:xviii) said, 'It is often called "Received Pronunciation" for want of a better term.'

10. The descriptive approach allows both standard and various dialects to be taught in the schools. Some writers encourage teachers to be familiar with and teach the different dialects as well as the standard in the schools (Andersson & Trudgill 1990:179). Dialect tapes can also be used for this purpose. Because existing standards of RP are diverse and conflicting, it would be pragmatically useful to have a standard, not one which is legislated for all to follow, but one which can serve as an ideal, one which gives the ranges of the usual pronunciations and is rendered by precise IPA transcription.

The standard thereby achieved by the above would be intended to be fair, pragmatic, and descriptive. It is not, as such, prescriptive or obligatory. What is done with the standard and how it is regarded is up to the user, and the above guidelines may be found useful. Secondly, those teaching, speaking and learning a language could benefit by knowing the IPA. Writing English is to English grammars as pronouncing English is to IPA phonetics. The analogy exposes the

fact that IPA phonetic texts and IPA education virtually do not exist in the schools.

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