

J. C. Wells, *Longman Pronunciation Dictionary*, Longman, Harlow 1990, XXVIII 802 pp.

Although J. C. Wells now occupies the chair of phonetics in the University of London, just as D. Jones and A. C. Gimson did in the past, he did not continue the traditional practice of revising Jones' pronouncing dictionary (the latest edition was prepared by S. M. Ramsaran, also from the University of London), but has instead produced a new dictionary.

The *Longman Pronunciation Dictionary* has about 19,000 more entries than the *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*, of which about 60 percent are proper names, about 30 percent general names, e. g. *aardvark*, *aardwolf*, and the rest derived words. There are also entries in the *LDCE* which have not been included in Wells' dictionary, such as *able seaman*, *classified ad*, *Down's syndrome*, *hammer and sickle*, *penny pincher*, i. e. some multiverbal naming units and collocations.

Although there are about eleven thousand proper names in *LPD*, this is less than half the names in the *BBC Pronouncing Dictionary of British Names*. The reason is that *LPD* gives the pronunciation of names from all over the world, including their pronunciation in the native tongue.

The author of *LPD* uses the same system of transcription as the 14th edition of Jones' dictionary, although with some new features. *LPD* makes a finer distinction in the system of stress by introducing tertiary stress. It also sets the boundaries between syllables in pronunciation. The criteria differ from the traditional ones in that (i) a consonant is joined to the preceding vowel even if the vowel is long /'ka:p-it/, if it is a diphthong /'leid-i/, or even if it is not stressed /'dom-in-ənt/, and (ii) a stressed vowel may attract two consonants /'kænd-i/. *LPD* pays more attention than Jones' dictionary to optional sounds which a foreign learner is either recommended to ignore, e. g. /p/ in /gim^psən/, or to include, although native speakers may omit them, e. g. /i/ in /faɪə/.

There is more that can be said in praise of the new pronunciation dictionary: (i) it gives British and American pronunciation, including alternative pronunciations, (ii) the selection of the main British pronunciation in some entries was decided by an opinion poll, e. g. 80 percent of the 275 native speakers preferred /ə'gen/, 63 percent preferred the long vowel in /bedru:m/, (iii) the entries include notes on pronunciation, e. g. on aspiration, breaking, stress shift, syllabic consonants, (iv) there are separate entries for affixes and parts of compounds, such as *-ant*, *-free*, (v) the relationship between graphemes and phonemes is summarized under the letters in question, (vi) many entries include the distribution of stress in the most current collocations: the entry for *harvest* also shows the stress in *h. festival*, *h. home*, *h. mile* etc.

We may conclude by saying that the *Longman Pronunciation Dictionary* by J. C. Wells is a well devised reference book, better than its predecessors and useful to everybody who wants to improve his or her knowledge of English.

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