A Manual of Basic English Sounds. By Emy M. Pascasio and Gloria Chan Yap. Manila: Ateneo University Press, 1970. Pp. x, 206.

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An addition to the growing list of the Language Research Series published by the Ateneo Language Center, *A Manual of Basic English Sounds* constitutes the first part of a pedagogical manual on English phonology. This first part deals with the segmental phonemes of English. It is to be expected that a subsequent manual on English phonology will deal with the suprasegmentals.

It is significant that the volume is dedicated to John W. McCarron, S.J., the founder of the Ateneo Language Center and a pioneer in the teaching of English as a second language in the Philippines during the 1950's and 1960's. The authors are former associates of Fr. McCarron and undoubtedly perceive themselves as continuing the work of the distinguished applied linguist.

The volume contains twenty-four lessons, eight lessons (including a review lesson) on the vowels of English and sixteen lessons (incuding a review lesson) on the consonants of English.

The manual, accompanied by tapes, uses American English as its target language, purports to be based on a contrastive analysis of English and Tagalog phonology (and is therefore problem-oriented, geared towards helping Filipinos with those sounds in English difficult to master), and is intended primarily for adult speakers seeking to improve their mastery of 'Oral English' through a concentrated phonology program. Undoubtedly, it is intended for and will lend itself to much use among adult speakers (mostly teachers taking graduate courses) who flock to different centers in the country for a summer's course in the mastery of English phonology.

The manual uses as its frame of reference for theoretical content Trager and Smith's (1957) analysis of English phonology; its learning techniques and procedures are ultimately traceable to Fries (1956) and Lado (1957).

Within this frame of reference, language acquisition is viewed as the acquisition of a habit, internalized in the human being through the setting up of neural paths which constitute habits and which manifest themselves through automatic mastery of a particular skill.

To acquire such a habit or to substitute one habit for an existing one, overlearning is necessary. Thus, for the mastery of the sound system of English, there must be two types of exercises: (1) discrimination exercises whereby the learner begins to distinguish contrasts and oppositions not present in his native language (2) production exercises whereby the learner begins to make these sound distinctions actively through various types of drills: word drills and sentence drills (alone or in the context of a larger piece of discourse). Towards these ends, transcription is used as a tool; hence, exercises in reading transcribed texts as well as in recording spoken texts in transcription are given. At the same time, since English spelling is inconsistent in terms of a one-to-one relation between sound and letter, exercises are given which are basically reading exercises of various spelling patterns that the learner will read aloud to internalize sound correspondences.

If one accepts the above view of language as habit and its concomitant learning theory, a theory based on the Stimulus-Response model, then the techniques and procedures

as well as drills used would be acceptable. And the manual, although not original within its own genre, would constitute a model of consistency, neatness, and carrying through of principles to their logical conclusions.

However, even within this given frame of reference, some suggestions might be given. One of the cardinal tenets of the S-R model is the value of immediate feedback. Judging from the text of the taped lessons I have had access to (courtesy of the principal author), there seems to be no provision for this immediate feedback to inform the learner whether his response was right or wrong. Undoubtedly, this could be provided orally by the instructor.

Moreover, although the lessons claim to be based on a contrastive analysis of Tagalog and English, except for some passing comments about Tagalog speakers mispronouncing /č/ as /ts/ and /ǰ/ as /dz/ and the tendency of Filipinos to pronounce American English /r/ as trilled *r*, there is no further mention made of the differences between English and Tagalog. However, anyone who has taught classes in Oral English will, I am sure, agree with the choice of contrasts to focus on in the lessons. These contrasts point to genuine Filipino difficulties with the sound system of English. It should be mentioned, however, there is nothing in this volume which makes it different from other manuals which teach the sound system of English to native speakers of languages other than Tagalog. This is not in any way intended to show the limitations of the manual but to question its presupposition: How much contrastive analysis is really needed to achieve one's goal?

There is a lesson (Lesson 14) on the aspirated allophones of the stops of English. It is not clear why this lesson, sequence-wise, should not follow the lesson (Lesson 9) on the stops of English. Instead, there are four lessons (on stops versus fricatives) in between.

As in so much of the pedagogical material arising from this school of thought, much use is made of minimal pairs. The problem arises with the allophones, however, which by definition do not contrast in identical environments. To carry on the rest of the pattern of each lesson, which begins with a discrimination exercise using minimal pairs, the authors have to resort to nonexisting formatives for contrast between aspirated and unaspirated stops, fronted and backed /l/, prevocalic and postvocalic /r/. How realistic is it to give exercises with nonexisting and unEnglish words, for example:

/p^heni/ 'penny' */p^{ϕ}eni/ '___?___'

It is possible to have a few minimal pairs contrasting /č/ with /ts/, /ǰ/ with /dz/. However, as with the allophonic variations, for the discrimination exercises between these pairs, the authors use on the one hand /čarč/ and */tsarts/, the latter a Filipino mispronunciation but not an acceptable American English vocable. Is it wise to build exercises around mistakes? Is this not contrary to the habit-strengthening principle of the S-R model? It is wise to call attention to contrasts which actually exist in the language, but is it advisable to build whole exercises on what is correct and what is wrong?

Moreover, in the drills which follow, there are many exercises built on the 'She sells sea shells on the seashore' model. Again, while interesting as tongue twisters and perhaps advisable at times to relieve the monotony of the lesson, would stilted sentences which call too much attention to their sound pattern really be advisable?

The attempt to pack as many formatives using a particular sound or sound contrast as possible within one sentence results in such sequences as

The king was not keen on being seen in the company of the queen.

which is interesting as a lingual gymnastic exercise but hardly the type of sentence which will be used and uttered again. If repetition is to be useful, sentences should be used which have higher probabilities of being repeated in the future. Moreover, there is a principle in Gestalt theory (see Carroll 1965) whereby one remembers something not so much by being bombarded with it again and again (one reaches the point of diminishing returns in such a case) but more by contrast, by letting something stand out from the rest. Based on this principle, would not one important formative duly emphasized and focused on do more for retention than a whole series?

Moreover, my experience with sentences of the above type is that rhythm and intonation suffer. Such sentences lend themselves easily to sing-song recitation, something we would very much want to avoid.

Then, too, there is the question of motivation. We normally remember events which are meaningful rather than nonsensical. The studies at the Harvard Center for Cognitive Studies give ample proof that structured sequences of words are much more easily memorized than a series of vocables. By extension, would this not be a case for meaningful drills and repetitions, rather than such implausible sentences as

The slain lay dying on the plain.

Leave the beets on the center-piece.

The mother hen allows her chicks to peck her cheek.

He made a fool of himself by jumping into a tubful of soap water.

Again, one would question not from the point of view of morals but merely of good taste the inclusion of a sentence such as

What's all this crap about the new crop?

In the drills, some very unusual words (for example: *floe, sloe, fey, hey, ley, coulee*) are used to exemplify certain sounds. Again, if functional load and frequency of occurrence are valid criteria in deciding whether or not to include an item in a pedagogical manual, the inclusion of such formatives is questionable.

Moreover, although the model is American English, there are many examples of Filipinisms; in fact, there is an evident difference between examples which have been borrowed from foreign sources and local examples which are for the most part quite stilted and although ungrammatical somehow sound nonnative. For example (italics mine):

He likes to tease the beast *in* the leash. (on)

He had drunk too much rum when he rammed his new car *against* a tree. (into)

She *stuck* a ten-inch stack of papers on my desk. (left)

The air *up* the hill *will heal me.* (on top of . . . . . is wholesome/healthy)

Your head will be hot without a hat *in* Hawaii's bright sun. (You'll get a sunstroke . . . . . under)

This *stuff* of data is too tough to systematize. (mountain)

She starts *to put the starch on* the shirts. (to starch)

The leading Russian parties are planning *on* a fusion (ϕ)

I always feel *sickly* when my stomach's full. (sick)

It was thrilling to see him take the bull by the *horn.* (horns)

Fishes' gills can be eaten if cooked well. (Fish)

(from Taping Exercises 185–206).

Returning to the lessons on allophonic variations: Except for a well-trained ear, it is difficult to distinguish between a fronted /l/ and a backed /l/, between a prevocalic /r/ and a postvocalic /r/ unless one takes positioning into account. It is a little easier to distinguish between aspirated and unaspired /p/. Since these are variants according to predictable circumstances, how much utility is there really in spending time overlearning these distinctions especially since failure to make them does not block communication?

Among the follow-up exercises, there is a premium placed on excertps from poetry rather than prose. Again, in the light of maximum utility and functional load, is there not better emphasis placed on natural prose discourse rather than metered lines? Likewise, metered lines lend themselves more to the sing-song repetition which we are trying to prevent our learners from reinforcing.

One item that puzzles me is the absence of dialogues, which under any methodology have been found to be quite effective as learning instruments especially for motivation and for adding variety to class sessions.

Moreover, beginning even with the first lesson, there is an exercise in the reading of transcription. Unless there is a special lesson (not in the book) given in the course of the school term on transcription, this seems to be an unrealistic demand made on the students.

The transcription is phonemic rather than phonetic. Since there are some lessons on allophonic variations, it seems that at least for these lessons, transcription should be broad phonetic. Instead, even in these lessons on allophones, transcriptions are phonemic. This seems a bit inconsistent.

The diagrams on phonetic articulation are quite helpful. It is not clear however why when discussing voiceless-voiced contrasts, the authors do not commit themselves fully to the contrast but merely state that 'the vocal cords vibrate *relatively more*' (emphasis mine) when the voiced term of a contrast is described. I am not sure why the authors are guarded about this. There is clear evidence from spectrograms that voicing does not occur in voiceless sounds. Naturally, where there is a voiceless sound between two voice sounds, chances are that the voicing 'spills' into the intermediate voiceless sound, but to worry about this in a pedagogical manual would be to split hairs. Especially in the case of initial voiceless

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On pages 97–98, the diagrams for [t^h] and [t'] have been mistakenly interchanged with the diagrams for [k^h] and [k'].

In discussing the fricatives, there is a remark on 'leaving a small opening for the stream of air to pass through resulting in a "hissing sound or fricative' (131) which is quite exact. Later on (146), however, in discussing /s/ once more, there is the remark: 'in the production of /s/, the tip of the tongue touches the alveolar ridge . . . whereas in the

production of /š/, the blade of the tongue touches the alveopalatal region'. This is questionable since the tongue approaches but does *not* touch—that is why /s/ is a fricative rather than a stop'. The same type of description is used in describing the production of /z/ and /ž/ (153): 'the tip of the tongue touches the alveolar ridge . . . whereas in the production of /ž/, the blade of the tongue touches the alveopalatal region of the mouth'.

In describing English (160), both types, prevocalic and postvocalic, it should be made clear that the tongue approximates the palate but does not quite touch it—whether flapped or retroflexed. On the other hand, Tagalog *r* is made with the tongue touching the palate; it is this [-continuant] feature which relates Tagalog [r] so closely to Tagalog [d].

Although the diagram on page 168 shows clearly the difference in tongue shape between /l/ fronted and backed, no mention is made of this very important articulatory distinction in the description.

The descriptions of affricates are accurate enough as to point of articulation. However, an affricate is by definition a combination of stop+fricative, hence, involves a motion which a static sagittal diagram must show by a two-step process. Instead, superimposed diagrams (solid line for stops, broken line for fricatives) are used. Moreover, the articulatory descriptions of /č/ and /j/ on page 107 merely describe the point of articulation, not the process of affrication.

In describing /θ/ (82), the word *dental* is used; it would be more proper to describe it as *interdental.* The word *interdental* is used in describing its voiced counterpart, /ð/ on page 89.

One would question too the choice of an apostrophe (usually a phonetic marker for palatalization) for unaspirated stops:

$$[\,k^{h}\,] \qquad\qquad [\,k'\,]$$

Should not the unaspirated stop be left unmarked or at least marked by a zero rather than the usual palatalization superscript?

$$[\,k\,] \qquad \text{or} \qquad [\,k^{\phi}\,]$$

There are no formal lessons on the nasals, although surprisingly, there is an exercise in the review lesson on consonants (Lesson 24, p. 182) on the three nasals in Tagalog.

In some of the exercises, usually the second exercise in each lesson, the learner is asked to listen to a pair of words. If the pair has the same target sound, the learner is supposed to check RIGHT, but WRONG in other instances. Why not respond by checking YES or NO instead of the value-connotative 'right' or 'wrong', since as a matter of fact, except in the lessons on the allophones where deliberately wrong citations are given, all citations are really right? This obtains all through the second exercise in each lesson except for the lessons on the allophones.

There are several typographical mistakes as well as grammatical mistakes in some of the citations that a more careful proofreading could have avoided. However, by and large, compared to most books published in the Philippines, the proofreading job was done relatively well. Some glaring errors should be pointed out, however, whether typographical or not:

Pronunciation

	Error	*Correction*
Page 5:	/wanz/ ones	/wənz/
Page 24:	stanch /æ/	[ɔ/ or [a]
Page 31:	/deyŋyal/ Daniel	/dænyal/
Page 31:	/wɔn/ won	/wən/
Page 45:	buoy /ow/	buoy /uw/ or / ɔ /
Page 63:	/tɔ/ to	/tuw/ or /tə/
Page 72:	/preti/ pretty	/priti/
	/wen/ when	/hwən/ ∿ /hwen/
Page 111:	/ɔlweyz/ always	/ɔlwəz/
Page 150:	/ ðayr/ their	/ ðer/
	/didnat/ didn't	/didnt/
Page 157:	/raðar/ rather	/ræðar/
Page 164:	/reyr/ rare	/rer/

Grammar and Spelling

Page 6:	Carrol	Carroll
Page 38:	He stood by the bush and *push* the bull to the brook.	pushed
Page 94:	The dead departs in mournful *thread*.	tread
Page 113:	Whenever Caesar *wages* a war, he always *emerged* victorious.	waged-emerged or wages-emerges
Page 188:	She proved to be *prude* when she refused to hold hands with Rudy.	a prude
Page 198:	John *jumped* the hedge . . .	jumped over
	The cats catch rats that *jumped into* the table	jump onto
Page 205:		
17.	He saved us from that closes have with death	?

In format, there seems to be a lack of consistency at times in the citations from Clarey and Dixson's *Pronunciation Exercises in English*. Sometimes the page is given; more often than not, it is not. Sometimes a comma is placed after the authors, sometimes a period.

At the beginning of this review, the statement was made that granted the assumptions of the manual, the exercises make sense. At this juncture, however, it is proper to question the assumptions on which the book is based.

If language acquisition is more than a matter of acquiring a new set of habits, if language is competence, rule-governed creativity, best accounted for in terms of ordered rules and mentalistic constructs, then one must question the usefulness of the whole enterprise.

At this stage, there is no supervenient reason for preferring either view. Clearly, there is more to language than habit, and on this point, the transformationalists are correct. At the same time, it is not clear that the Skinnerians are completely wrong. Experience and common sense show us that there is an element of habit formation in language. There is muscle control and there have been people who have learned language through the auro-oral method, although it is questionable if the percentage of success using the new methodology and its hardware is really that much greater compared to previous methods.

What I would question, though, is the long-term usefulness of remedial classes in pronunciation for adults. My own limited experience in this area has been discouraging. Apparently, there are factors other than linguistic which explain language acquisition, chief among which are motivation and attitude, as Lambert and his colleagues (1968) have shown.

Why is it that there seems to be so little transfer of training from the language laboratory using drills exemplified by this manual and later use? Undoubtedly, many people who sign up for speech courses either at the Manila Speech Clinic or the Ateneo Summer School are positively motivated–at least if they are there willingly and have not been forced to be there by their principals. Among such learners, attitudes and motivations are positive. Perhaps one has the essential wherewithal to try remedial classes with them.

Perhaps, however, there are likewise subtle sociolinguistic pressures operative which prevent the transfer of training or cause the easy extinction of newly-formed habits. My own experience is that the better students get better and the really bad ones are just as badly off as they were after six weeks or so of intensive summer speech training.

Again, there might be biological factors to contend with, as Lenneberg (1967a, b) contends. Most of the graduate students who enroll in Oral English classes are past the critical stage of language acquisition. After puberty, except for some very gifted mimics, the chances of a perfect accent are practically nil. This may explain the apparent futility of efforts made in Oral English classes. The good ones get better because they have already mastered the sound system and merely need a little polishing up of rough edges (mispronunciations and misconceptions), but the rest are beyond improvement.

To summarize: Within its genre and within its own assumptions–Pascasio and Yap's *A Manual of Basic English Sounds* is a competently written and useful pedagogical tool and a welcome addition to the growing body of pedagogical literature of a linguistic nature appearing in the Philippines. Outside of its assumptions, however, and within a different frame of reference or linguistic theory, the enterprise is questionable. Since no one has certain answers at this stage of the learning game, who dares to play the censor?

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