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GRETA COLSON in *Voice Production and Speech* (Museum Press, 12s. 6d.), has tried to produce (in eighty pages) "a simple and accurate exposition for students, which places the theory of voice production and speech on a thoroughly practical basis." She divides the book into four parts, corresponding to "Breath, Note, Tone and Word", prefixing each by a handy summary of contents. There are a number of excellent diagrams, useful parallel passages of practical exercises alongside theoretical discussion, a short bibliography, a clear and elementary progression.

But it's not enough. And at the end of the book the author's aim is nowhere near realised. The main fault is suggested in the partitioning: the book stops at the *word*. Seven pages, no exercises, and but a few "general principles" are a ridiculous amount to give to connected speech, in a book which claims to have the practical end of voice production at heart. We speak, recite, compose in connected units, not words. And the difference can't be summed up in a few principles.

The omissions are grievous for the serious student. The section on Intonation is inadequate, and paralinguistic (the study of tones of voice) receives only a mention. But the point is that these features are *the* most important in the communication of meaning via speech, because they are the most readily perceivable. They can even contradict words and get away with it: "It wasn't *what* he said, but how he said it." To imply, then, that "only a very brief résumé" (p. 71) is within the compass of the book surely distorts the reality of speech. The constant qualifications necessary to talk about such a brief survey ("it could be, it might be said, possibly, perhaps, nearly always", p. 74) should cause a great deal of dramaturgic frustration. Intonation can't be popularised too much: it works by detailed contrast and needs to be described likewise. Especially in an "accurate exposition for students."

The second criticism stems from the statement: "Phonetic symbols are not used in this book" (p. 11); which means that one can never be really sure of what's being talked about, especially in vowel and diphthong discussion. Indeed, "accuracy should be the aim of vowel positioning" (42); but accuracy is relative to a standard. What standard? The nearest hint is that speech should be natural (54). But what *is* this "natural" pronunciation? No answer. And people of different social standing, regional area, etc., must feel free to interpret many of the examples as they please, e.g., the "figure-of-eight" tone exercises (40). Articulatory statements with no perspective are useless; e.g., "HUI" (vowels) are often regarded as back of tongue vowels but in fact they are made with the centre of the tongue today" (52).

Other points at issue can only be listed for space reasons: why is no mention made of modern studies in rhythm and versification (e.g. Abercrombie's)? Why is study of vowels and consonants (49) done with reference to the *word*, which is a *non-phonological* unit? Why distort the normal linguistic meaning of *phoneme*, which is claimed to be "another term for speech sounds as used in this book" (64)? The author ignores the basic use of the phoneme as a *functional* unit. Thus she makes some phonemically incomprehensible statements, e.g. "Individual differences between speech sounds depend largely upon the speech organs involved in making them" (49); and she loses the power of the function criterion

in classification, e.g. in the semi-vowels (64), and on vowel quantity (54), where the length of a vowel is said to depend on "its position in the word."

How many other phoneticians would use *Volume* (26) referring to sound rather than space? Why omit the useful term "allophone" (positional variant)? Why not include the lips as a fourth resonator (30)? How can vocal cords be synonymous with vocal folds (47)? Could there not be clearer definition of "antagonism" of muscles (18), "noise" (44), more definition of "tone" (30), and "stress" (70). And finally, two cases of linguistic unreality: "pauses . . . are oral punctuation" (69)—to be read (with correct priorities) "punctuation should be written pause"; and, "in connected speech sounds are rarely given their full value" (64)—when *do* they get this then? In isolation? I wonder what the author means by "full".

But—critical volte-face or not—I still think the book is good value at 12s 6d.

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