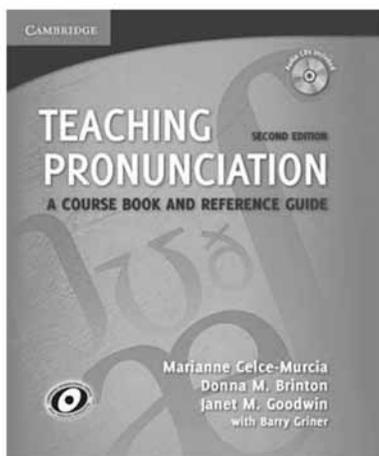


## Teaching pronunciation: A course book and reference guide, 2nd Edition,

by Marianne Celce-Murcia, Donna M. Brinton, and Janet M. Goodwin, with Barry Griner,  
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**T**he teaching of pronunciation is frequently cited as one of the language skills that receives the least attention in the classroom. This lack of attention is ironic if we consider the fact that pronunciation is one of the most salient features of language, and that which contributes perhaps most strongly to speakers' identities (Pennington, 1996). Nevertheless, pronunciation acquisition and instruction have gone relatively unnoticed in the paradigm shift from form-based to more communication-based teaching and towards learner-centered methodologies.

This ambivalence towards pronunciation teaching and learning may stem from a number of reasons, perhaps related to the lack of updated resources for teachers, or also the fact that many English

language teachers are non-native speakers of the language themselves and may feel insecure or uncomfortable assuming the role of a model of standard pronunciation (Brown, 1991). Further, the entire conception of language standards is in flux due to English's global status as a lingua franca (Celce-Murcia, 2010; Seidlhofer, 2008). No longer is it possible to consider one global standard for English such as Received Pronunciation or British English, or North American Standard. In fact, there are many global standards or New English Varieties today usually corresponding to geographical or geopolitical areas (Pennington, 1996).

Regardless of what standard variety we use as reference point in our classrooms, building awareness of the phonological system of English can help our learners cope with an element of language that is essential in providing meaning on the levels of lexis, syntax and utterance (Celce-Murcia, 2010). Still, a quick survey of some of the most common general EFL textbooks today reveals that there continues to be little innovation in pronunciation instruction. In fact, almost all pronunciation practice continues to take the form of "listen and repeat" exercises. There seems to be little concern for the role of pronunciation in the context of real-life listening or speaking tasks in English. There is also little explicit attention given to developing strategies for using, identifying or applying phonological patterns within a broader communicative framework. This is lamentable, given the importance of pronunciation, especially when linked to speaker meaning at the level of prosody (Gilbert, 2011).

Fortunately for teachers, an excellent, comprehensive textbook has been available for several years now, and has recently been released in its second edition. First published in 1996, the new 2010 edition of *Teaching Pronunciation: A course book and reference guide* provides a thorough treatment of phonology and pronunciation within the context of teaching English as an international language in today's classroom. The book is perfect for English teachers who are non-native speakers, as it provides a solid grounding in all relevant aspects of the phonological system. Each aspect is presented in the context of teaching English internationally, and includes important points to consider for speakers from many different languages. The material comes alive for teachers in a way that many typical phonetics reference books do not. Frequent "Notes to Teachers" interspersed throughout the text help remind readers that they live in the real world with real students, for whom different aspects of pronunciation may present a challenge.

One of the most attractive aspects of the text is the Communicative Framework for Teaching Pronunciation, which is presented in detail

and then applied in each chapter. This framework provides teachers with an extremely useful and accessible tool for planning short or long pronunciation lessons that move beyond “listen and repeat” to include discrimination and practice exercises, as well as ideas for communicative practice in order to implement the patterns in authentic situations. With some modifications, the framework is also suitable for young learners. Each chapter includes several examples and suggestions for implementing specific stages of the framework. With a little practice, most teachers should be able to easily adopt this invaluable framework to their own classrooms.

The second edition of the text has been updated to contemplate even more strongly the lingua franca status of English, and the emergence of new English varieties and standards around the world. The appendix has been expanded to include important elements such as digital resources and activity ideas like dramatic use of video clips and discussion cards. While the standard point of reference for the text is North American English, and the audio provided contains samples in this variety, the appendix does provide items on both pronunciation and spelling differences between North American and British English.

An exciting addition to the second edition also includes an entirely new section that demonstrates how the sound system of English intersects with other areas of language, specifically listening, morphology and spelling. This section is extremely important for language teachers because it may enable them to feel more comfortable reinforcing pronunciation within the context of vocabulary or listening activities.

Whether to teach pronunciation, and which variety to teach is an important issue for teachers and learners of any language. In the case of English, learners’ enjoy access to a wide range of speech varieties and accents today that were previously unavailable. In addition, learners’ own speech continues to contribute to a large degree to how they are perceived as language users. Now more than ever, it is relevant for teachers of English to understand the phonology of English and to raise students’ awareness of its importance. Resources developed specifically for English language teachers in a global context can aid these efforts and may enable teachers and students to approach pronunciation instruction from the perspective of current language use in authentic contexts.

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