English Words

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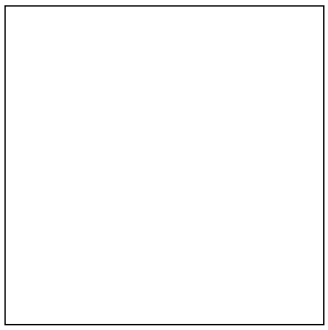

English Words

A Linguistic Introduction

Heidi Harley

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This book is dedicated to my father, *Peter Harley*, who takes words seriously.

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Preface

This textbook is intended as a thorough introduction to the study of English words from a linguistic perspective. It introduces students to the technical study of words in several areas: phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, language acquisition and historical linguistics, in that order. Some introductory material is covered in each section, to give students the theoretical tools they will need to proceed, and then those tools are employed to analyze the English vocabulary.

This book will be of interest to students who have a general interest in words – people whom Richard Lederer smilingly calls "verbivores." They enjoy reading tidbits of word facts in language mavens' columns, word games and etymologies, but have never taken a linguistics or structure of language course.

The text is designed to give students a command of the basic theory in each area, skill in analyzing and understanding English words, and the grounding needed for more advanced study in linguistics or lexicology. Ultimately, however, the aim is to provide students who will never take another linguistics-related course with a grasp of some of the basic methods and questions of the field, viewed through the window of words.

Acknowledgments

This book would not have been possible without the help of a great many people. It wouldn't exist had Andrew Carnie not suggested that I submit a proposal for it, building on my lecture notes for the cross-listed Linguistics/English 322 course, "The Structure and

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Meaning of Words." My students and colleagues at the University of Arizona provided invaluable feedback and expertise in many moments of uncertainty. I would especially like to thank Michael Hammond, Adam Ussishkin, Diane Ohala and Andrew Carnie for reading and commenting on portions of the manuscript. Several teaching assistants I have had over the years also provided feedback, including Bob Kennedy, Jason Haugen, Sarah Longstaff, Gwanhi Yun and Xu Xu. Thanks especially to Xu Xu for preparing the IPA summary tables. The three anonymous reviewers of the manuscript for Blackwell provided exhaustive comments that improved it considerably and also saved me from many mistakes; I am very grateful to them. The linguistics editors at Blackwell, first Tami Kaplan and then Sarah Coleman and Ada Brunstein, have exhibited a combination of patience, persistence and tact that both reassured and motivated a fairly skittish author. I also have very much appreciated Sarah's guidance and hard work throughout the publication process.

Last but far from least, both my parents, Carolyn and Peter Harley, read through the entire first draft manuscript and provided detailed comments that have helped me no end. My husband, Art Torrance, read through the manuscript not once, but twice, thinking through each analysis and transcription, paying sharp attention to every comma and apostrophe, and saving future students from a great deal of unnecessary confusion. He also has supported me throughout the process with encouragement, snacks and late-night cups of hot chocolate. I cannot express my gratitude to him and them enough.

Needless to say, the many flaws that doubtless remain are entirely my responsibility!

Heidi Harley
April, 2005

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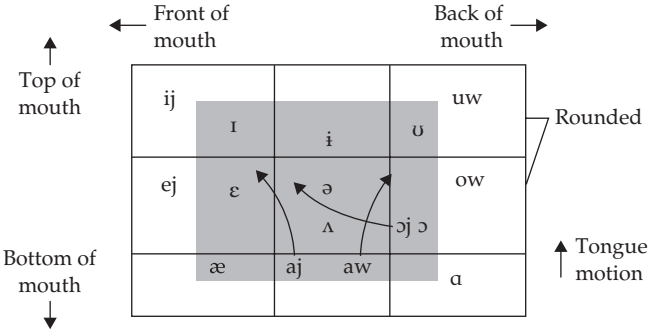
IPA Summary Tables

Consonants of English voiceless voiced

place / manner	labial		labio-dental		inter-dental		alveolar		palatal		velar		glottal	
stops	p	b					t	d			k	g	ʔ	
fricative			f	v	θ	ð	s	z	ʃ	ʒ			h	
affricates									t͡ʃ	d͡ʒ				
nasal		m						n				ŋ		
liquids (lateral)								l						
(non-lateral)								ɹ						
glides		w								j				

Vowels of English tense lax



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