

## Re: some more Irish vowels

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- *From:* "Peter T. Daniels" <[grammatim@xxxxxxxxxxxx](mailto:grammatim@xxxxxxxxxxxx)>
  - *Date:* 17 Dec 2006 07:35:37 -0800
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Ruud Harmsen wrote:

16 Dec 2006 10:44:05 -0800: "Peter T. Daniels"  
<[grammatim@xxxxxxxxxxxx](mailto:grammatim@xxxxxxxxxxxx)>: in sci.lang:

Ruud Harmsen wrote:

16 Dec 2006 07:29:31 -0800: "Peter T. Daniels"  
<[grammatim@xxxxxxxxxxxx](mailto:grammatim@xxxxxxxxxxxx)>: in sci.lang:

No, Ruud.  
merry is [E]

Then why must Dutch  
speakers be taught not to use  
their /E/, which is  
[E] or slightly higher,  
because for English <set> it  
is too low?

I have no idea why a Dutch writer, forty  
years ago, gave the following  
instructions.

I have: to keep student from making unnecessary mistakes.

What are they? Are necessary mistakes permitted?

Mistakes that constitute a Dutch accent when speaking English.  
Do you know the song "Little Green Bag" by teh "George Baker  
Selection"? That kind of English. It's so bad even I have trouble  
understanding it. Nevertheless, it was a number hit in the States,

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back it 1968 or something.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George\\_Baker\\_%28Dutch\\_singer\\_and\\_songwriter%29](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_Baker_%28Dutch_singer_and_songwriter%29)

No, I have never heard of that person or group or song. (What do you mean, "even I"?)

Perhaps your Mr. Trenite was misinformed,

Possibly. As an aside, he did have excellent knowledge of how spelling relates to pronunciation, having written the poem "The Chaos":

<http://members.fortunecity.com/rapidrytr/Spell/chaos.html>

or perhaps the state of affairs he was describing FORTY YEARS AGO was not what it is today.

Quite likely. But the difference between a reasonably passable British accent and the same 70 years ago (mine was probably a later edition of an older book) is much smaller than between a bad Dutch accent and proper English. So most of what he writes is still quite valid today.

He died in 1946, by the way:

[http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gerard\\_Nolst\\_Trenit%C3%A9](http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gerard_Nolst_Trenit%C3%A9)

(no English available). It mentions:

"Drop your foreign accent. Vocal gymnastics. Haarlem, Tjeenk Willink, 1909."

So that's how old the original version is. Nice illustration of how slowly languages change.

I am completely familiar with that poem; it is quoted in WWS in my little piece on "English" that I had to write because the contributor on Germanic orthography didn't bother to cover it.

I noticed the coincidence of names, but since you lied to me by claiming that the book was written in Dutch in 1967, I had no reason to suppose it was the same person.

It may be perfectly sound contrastive analysis; it may be based on misconceptions about English (or about Dutch, for that matter); it may be aimed at teaching an understandable rather than a perfect accent; who knows?

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I know, because I read the book.

You know from reading the book that everything he asserts is accurate???

I know whether he aimed at teaching an understandable rather than a perfect accent, which is what you asked. He aimed at an accent much better than necessary just for being understood.

You know from reading the book that everything he asserts is accurate???

I don't understand what that could have to do with it.

It's what you said when I ended my wonderings about the book with a rhetorical "who knows?"

<discussion of JD's software>

Do you not know what "distinctive feature" means? Only one (acoustic or articulatory) feature is distinctive of any particular segment; any others that happen to accompany it are redundant.

Yes, you mentioned that before. I don't find a wise decision, but it's how it is.

Do I also need to refer you to Jakobson and Halle 1956 and to Jakobson, Fant, and Halle 1951?

No, you did earlier.

But you haven't consulted them.

Height distinction of Mary vs. merry, and Mary vs. marry?

Totally puzzled now.

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Once more: Mary is intermediate in height between merry and marry.

You could have said that 200 posts ago.

I never said anything different.

Wouldn't it be so much easier if instead of this mile long thread, you'd simply tell us what, in your view and accent, are Mary, marry and merry, in terms of vowel articulation? Relative to cardinal vowels?

I have no idea what the Cardinal Vowels are supposed to be.

Huh? Totally puzzled yet again.

If Dale Terbeek (3rd generation) ever demonstrated Cardinal Vowels for the class (he likely did), I don't remember it; and we certainly weren't trained in the Cardinal Vowel system.

I have given you the articulation. I can also give you the phonemicization: /eh/ /e/ /e/ in the order you listed them in.

Ah, so Mary has the make vowel? Then why didn't say so? Why did you even deny it when somebody else said so?

How utterly stupid can you possibly be? make is /ey/. Mary is /eh/.

No of course not. It's just that I have never ever heard of anything like that before. But I'm always willing to learn.

And I wonder why you didn't say this earlier, instead of referring to an undescrivable "Mary vowel".

Because I did not know that people do not know what American English

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sounds like.

I do know what American English sounds like, I can even understand it, I too suspected that Mary would be (or start) intermediately between marry and merry, yet I had never heard of Mary having additional lip spreading. Nor can I recognize the effect of additional lip spreading. Does this combination of skills amaze you? If so, that amazes me.

Of course you hadn't heard of it. It's never distinctive in English, so no one mentions it. Perhaps there has never been a detailed phonetic description of New York City vowels (the Linguistic Atlas project deliberately did not sample big cities, because the sociolinguistics -- though they didn't label it that -- were too complicated for their purposes) (though if you go through the 100-odd pamphlets published by the American Dialect Society, I wouldn't be surprised if you found one).

So what does "cardinal" mean?

To me it means what Daniel Jones explains it to mean, in the paragraphs I quoted fragments of. Articulatory phonetics, that is.

No. To Jones, it meant the extreme positions of the articulatory organs.

How's that different from what I said? By no you mean yes?

Apparently you weren't aware of what Daniel Jones explains it to mean (cf. the Clark & Yallop quote from Cherubina), so your excerpts of his comments are irrelevant.

This one is interesting, BTW.

<http://www.phonetics.ucla.edu/course/chapter1/wells/wells.html>

"Click on a sound to hear a recording of John Wells, Susan Ramsaran and Peter Ladefoged (not always in that order)"

Look at the huge differences for high central rounded, for example.

Differences between the three speakers? I don't know who Ramsaran is, but the other two had it directly from Jones.

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Yet they sound very different in some vowels. Just listen (Wav format this time, so should work even on your computer.)

I'll take Brian's word for it that the two elderly phoneticians (I was shocked to learn recently that Wells is almost exactly the same age as Ladefoged) who learned Cardinal Vowels from Daniel Jones pronounced them differently some/nearly 50 years on.

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