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Underlying the apparent diversity shown by the thousands of mutually incomprehensible languages of the world, there is a remarkable, elegant and principled unity in the way that these languages exploit the phonetic resources of speech. It is these principles that Professor Laver sets out to describe in this major new textbook. Assuming no previous knowledge of the subject, it is designed for readers who wish to pursue the study of phonetics from an initial to an advanced stage, equipping them with the necessary foundations for independent research. The classificatory model proposed unifies the description of linguistic, paralinguistic and certain extralinguistic aspects of speech production. The book moves from a presentation of general concepts to a total of eleven chapters on phonetic classification, and it includes discussion of other issues such as the relationship between phonetics and phonology, the nature of accent, dialect and language, and the description of voice quality and tone of voice. Every descriptive category is illustrated by words in phonetic transcription from over 500 of the world's languages.

Principles of Phonetics will be required reading and an invaluable resource for all serious students and scholars of speech and language.

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JOHN LAVER

PROFESSOR OF PHONETICS
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For Sandy, Nick, Michael, Claire and Matthew

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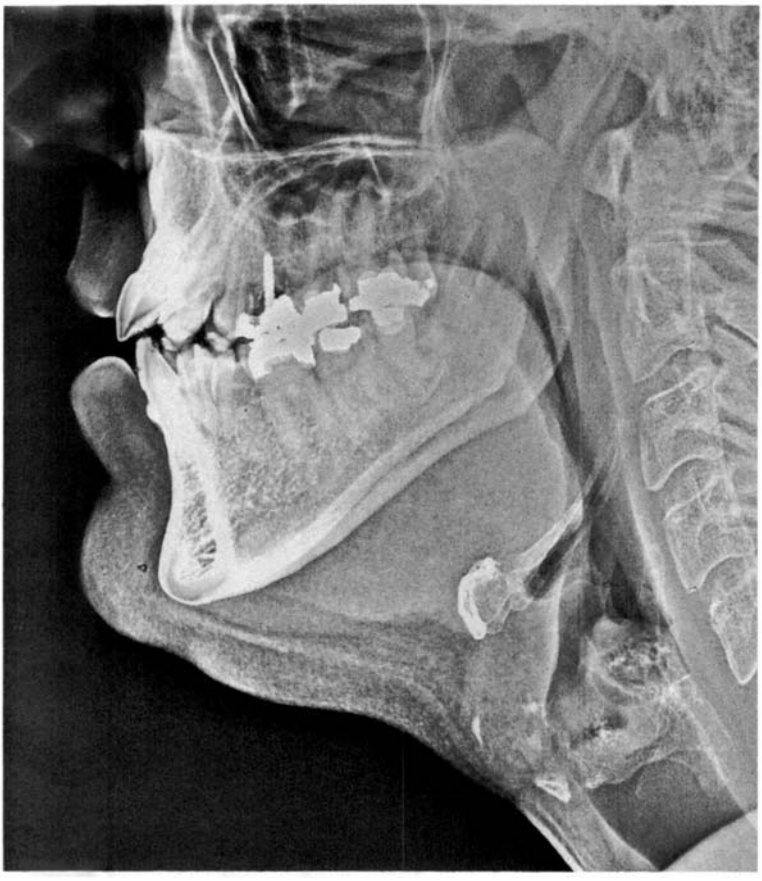

Xeroradiographic photograph of the vocal organs in the neutral configuration, during the pronunciation of a mid-central vocoid [ə]

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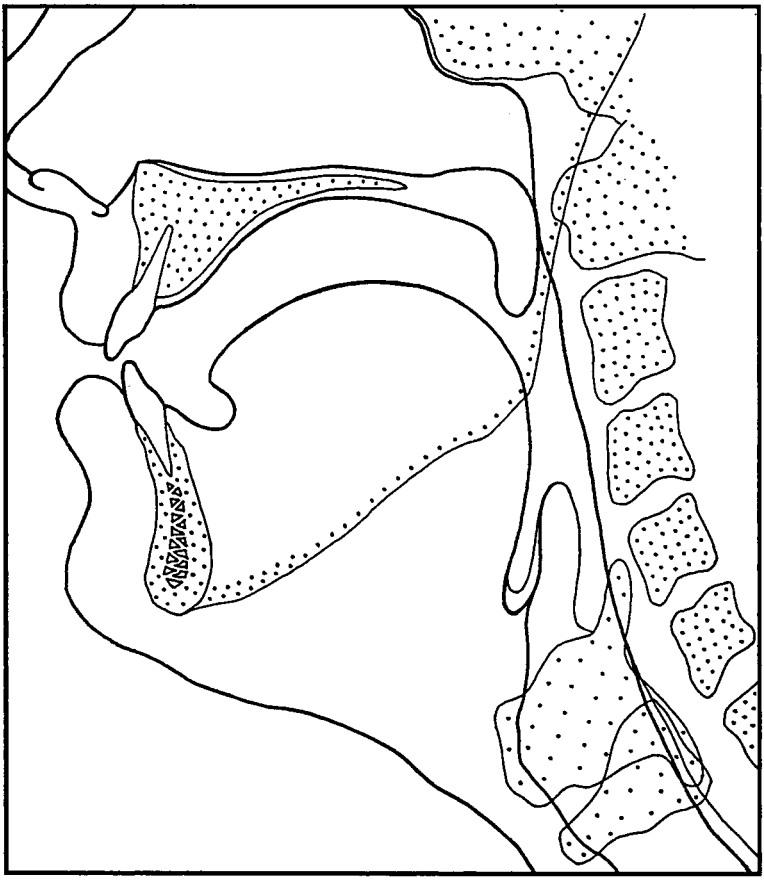

The neutral configuration of the vocal tract, drawn from the xeroradiographic photograph on the opposite page

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PREFACE

In a preface, one can perhaps be allowed to make some personal remarks. In my own training in the Department of Phonetics of the University of Edinburgh, I had the great privilege of being taught by some of the leading phoneticians of the century. Foremost amongst these were David Abercrombie and Peter Ladefoged. Ian Catford was also in Edinburgh at that time, at the School of Applied Linguistics. The hallmarks of their teaching were a scrupulous attention to objective phonetic detail, the development of excellent practical skills of phonetic performance and perception, and a rigorous concern for the architecture of phonetic theory. The abiding motivation of their work was always the linguistic relevance of speech.

These attitudes were and are strongly held, but they are not novel. They have been a characteristic of professional phoneticians in what one might call the British school since the days of Henry Sweet in the nineteenth century (Henderson 1971). One may not completely agree with the full implications of Sweet's claim when he wrote in his Preface to *A Handbook of Phonetics* (1877), that 'The importance of phonetics as the indispensable foundation of all study of language – whether that study be purely theoretical, or practical as well – is now generally admitted.' There are some aspects of linguistics (defined as the study of language) where the connection with speech as such is very tenuous; phonetics is undoubtedly indispensable, however, to the study of any aspect of spoken language. Daniel Jones emphasized the utility of phonetics for this and other purposes when he wrote that 'Phonetics is a means to an end' (Jones 1937). But I believe that the approach to phonetics implicit in the teaching of Abercrombie, Ladefoged and Catford goes a long way further than this, and I would wish to insist on the merit of phonetics, not only as providing tools for a variety of applications, but also as an end in itself – as a subject worthy of study in its own right and as an equal of other university-level disciplines.

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Frances MacCurtain of the Middlesex Hospital in London made the xeroradiographic photograph of my production of the neutral configuration of the vocal organs shown as the frontispiece, from which Janet Mackenzie Beck created the drawing reproduced on the page facing it. She also drew the schematized version reproduced as figure 5.12, which has been used as the basis for many of the articulatory diagrams throughout the book. Tom Harris took the fiberoptic telelaryngoscopic pictures reproduced in figure 7.4.

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