Unit 02

φων

Refining goals

where you are, and what to do to get to where you need to be.

Print version of the
Practical English Phonetics /
Phonetics with Listening Practice (British & General)
presentation given on
octidi le 28 vendémiaire an CCXXXV
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02.1

1 Dedication

Dedication



Image: Sächsische Akademie der Wissenschaften; all rights reserved

Prof. Dr. phil. habil. Albrecht Gotthold Neubert
3.3.1930–1.6.2017

02.2

2 Warm-Up

Warm-Up

- What is this person from the West End of London saying?

  – *Dernchew filshie pled the Moonlet Snotter quett chommingly?*

- What is this Australian saying?

  – *With air chew, with air chew,*
  Iker nardly liver there chew,
  An I dream a badger kisser snite and die.

- Source: Afferbeck Lauder *Fraffly Strine Everything: Comprising: Let Stalk Strine, Nose Tone Unturned, Fraffly Well Spoken and Fraffly Suite.* Sydney: Ure Smith, 1969.

02.3

3 Reprise

3.1 Stratum

Reprising STRATUM: Phonology (phonemics), phonetics, physics

There are different LEVELS a.k.a. STRATA in language, as well as different MANIFESTATIONS (e.g. written and spoken). It often helps to analogize between the spoken and the written:

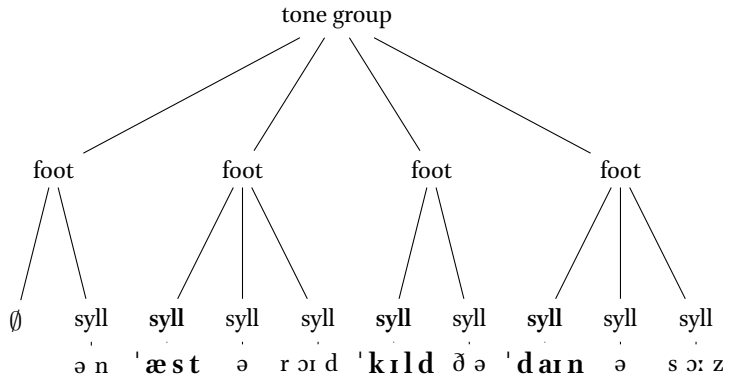
TIN STEP LETDOWN		lexicogrammar
⟨t⟩	/ t /	{graph | phon}emics
ᴄ 	[tʰ] [t] [t̚]	{graph | phon}etics
photons	sound waves	physical reality

Note the conventions: ⟨t⟩ / t / [t]
see Eckert & Barry, p. 289.

02.4

3.2 Rank

Reprising RANK: A phonological rank scale for English



(Context: ‘What happened 65 million years ago?’)

tone group ⟶ foot ⟶ syllable ⟶ phoneme

This is the most minimalistic description of English phonological units that actually works.

02.5

4 Two problems in transcribing sound(s)

4.1 Hearing *what’s* said vs. listening to *how* it’s said

Problem 1: Hearing *what’s* said vs. listening to *how* it’s said

- Primarily, we listen to someone to hear what he/she is saying.
- What did the person say? Click here to hear [klɪk hɪə tə hɪə]
  - “Ich bin in den Laden reingegangen...” ?
  - “Bin in den Laden reingegangen...” ?
  - “Bin in’n Laden reingegangen...” ?
  - “Bin in’n Lad’n reingegang’ng...” ?
- Orthography is not very good at capturing the details of the pronunciation:

  [bɪn ɪn̩ ˈlaːdn̩ raɪŋgəˈgaŋŋ̩]
- But how much detail should we try to capture in our transcription of the sound?

— Based on material by William Barry and Ingmar Steiner.

02.6

4.2 What should we include in the transcription?

Problem 2: What should we include in the transcription?

- ⟨Ich bin in den Laden reingegangen.⟩ — standard orthography
- /ʔɪç bɪn ʔɪn deːn ˈlaːdən ˈʁaɪŋgəˌgaŋən/ — an idealised phonemic transcription with word breaks
- [bɪn ɪn̩ ˈlaːdn̩ ˈʁaɪŋgəˈgaŋŋ̩] — a phonetic transcription with word breaks
- [ˈbɪnɪn̩ˈlaːdn̩ˈʁaɪŋgəˈgaŋŋ̩] — a phonetic transcription without word breaks
- [ˈbɪn.ɪn.n̩.ˈlaː.dn̩.ˈʁaɪŋ.gə.ˈgaŋ.ŋ̩] — a phonetic transcription with syllable breaks

- Is the idealised phonemic transcription with word breaks an attempt to reform the existing spelling system?
- Why don’t we indicate the syllable breaks in the phonemic transcription?
- But where, exactly, *are* the syllable breaks?

— Based on material by William Barry and Ingmar Steiner.

02.7

5 Sound vs spelling in English

Sound vs spelling in English

- The English spelling system is notoriously complicated.
- "Languages tend to get the orthography they deserve." M.A.K. Halliday
- The English spelling system is really two spelling systems in one, and both are out of date:
  - An orthography for vocabulary items of Germanic origin:
    - swine
    - slog
    - bridge
  - An orthography for vocabulary items of Romance or Graeco-Latin origin:
    - nation
    - nationalise
    - geography

02.8

5.1 Some useful links on the sound-spelling problems of English

Some useful links on the sound-spelling problems of English

- For a good, brief overview of how the problems evolved in the first place, see:
  - M.A.K. Halliday, *Spoken and Written Language*, pp 26-28
    `http://spence.saar.de/arcanum/phonetics/SWL/`
- For a detailed and systematic treatment of the relationship between sound and spelling in English, see:
  - Arnold u. Hansen *Englische Phonetik*, ch. 6
    `http://spence.saar.de/arcanum/phonetics/Arnold_u_Hansen_300dpi/englischephonetik_06.pdf`
- For a good summary, see:
  - the *Falttafeln* from Albrecht Neubert's *Englische Aussprache*: `http://spence.saar.de/phonetics/unit02_20262/B__Sound_and_Spelling/`

02.9

5.2 The Great Vowel Shift

The Great Vowel Shift

12/11/2023, 15:46 upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/2/23/Great_Vowel_Shift2b.svg

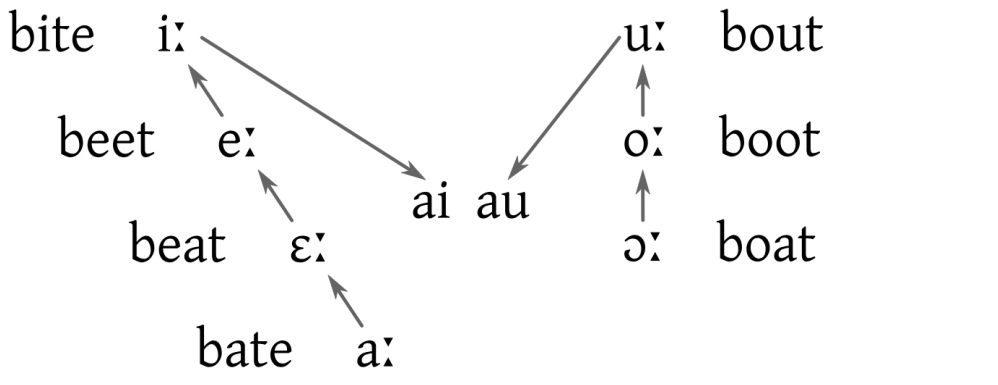


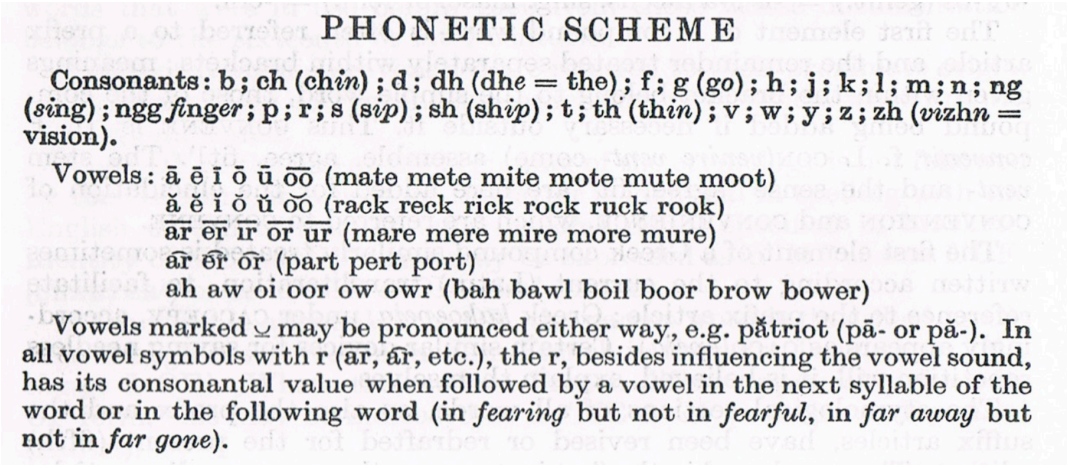
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The Great Vowel Shift

02.10

5.3 Oxford pronunciation key before HE-WHO-MUST-NOT-BE-NAMED

Oxford pronunciation key before He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named



PHONETIC SCHEME

Consonants: b; ch (ch*in*); d; dh (dh*e* = the); f; g (g*o*); h; j; k; l; m; n; ng (*sing*); ngg *finger*; p; r; s (s*ip*); sh (sh*ip*); t; th (th*in*); v; w; y; z; zh (*vizh*n = vision).

Vowels: ā ē ī ō ū o͞o (mate mete mite mote mute moot)
ă ĕ ĭ ŏ ŭ o͝o (rack reck rick rock ruck rook)
a͡r e͡r i͡r o͡r u͡r (mare mere mire more mure)
a͡r e͡r o͡r (part pert port)
ah aw oi oor ow owr (bah bawl boil boor brow bower)

Vowels marked ⏑ may be pronounced either way, e.g. pătriot (pā- or pă-). In all vowel symbols with r (a͡r, a͡r, etc.), the r, besides influencing the vowel sound, has its consonantal value when followed by a vowel in the next syllable of the word or in the following word (in *fearing* but not in *fearful*, in *far away* but not in *far gone*).

Image: photocopy COD 5th edition; all rights reserved O.U.P.

How Oxford used to indicate pronunciation before He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named came

http://www.spence.saar.de/courses/phoneticswithlistening/unit01_20262/B__Sound_and_Spelling/COD_5_xii-xiii.pdf

02.11

6 Typical problems in reading aloud *Dialectal differences*

Problems in *Dialectal differences* (0)

- How do you spell the present tense of the verb whose simple past tense is spelt ⟨*cured*⟩?
- An Australian Prime Minister, who had just been dismissed by the Governor-General, Sir John Kerr (note: there is no stress on ⟨*Sir*⟩, because English), predicted that his successor would be remembered as ⟨*Kerr's cur*⟩. (The meaning is approximately 'Kerrs Köter'.) Do the two words ⟨*Kerr*⟩ and ⟨*cur*⟩ rhyme?
- How would the Concise Oxford Dictionary, in pre-He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named days, have indicated the correct pronunciation of the ⟨*ur*⟩ bit of the words:
  - ⟨*cured*⟩
  - ⟨*occur*⟩
- How would you spell
  - the present participle of ⟨*occur*⟩?
  - the past participle of ⟨*occur*⟩?

02.12

Problems in *Dialectal differences* (1)

- ⟨*Dialectical*⟩? Oops! Your Hegel is showing. Read it again.
- Is it *DI-a-LECT-al* or just *di-a-LECT-al*? Does it matter?
- How many syllables are there in ⟨*differences*⟩ when you speak the word aloud?
- Can you have ante-antepenultimate stress in English?
  - ultimate — last (syllable is stressed)
  - penultimate — almost-last …
  - antepenultimate — before almost-last …
  - ante-antepenultimate — before before almost-last …
  - If you elided a syllable in ⟨*differences*⟩, which would it be?
  - What exactly is the vowel sound in the last syllable of ⟨*differences*⟩?

  - What about ⟨*interesting*⟩?
  - Some linguistic dinosaurs can pronounce English words with ante-ante-antepenultimate stress:
    ⟨*disciplinary*⟩
    ⟨*laboratory*⟩

02.13

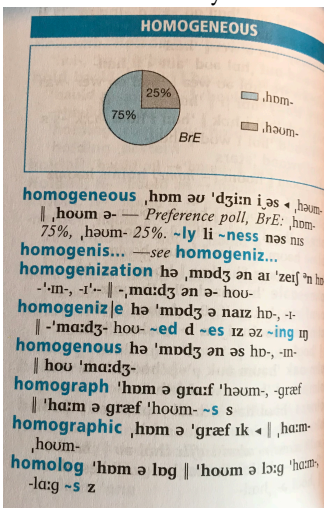
Problems in *Dialectal differences* (2)

- How many ways can you pronounce the vowel sound in ⟨*the*⟩?
- How will people react if you get the consonant sound in ⟨*the*⟩ wrong?
- What about the ⟨*th*⟩ in ⟨*whether*⟩ or ⟨*breathe*⟩?
- English has / v ð z ʒ /, but does German have any voiced fricative phonemes?

02.14

Problems in *Dialectal differences* (3)

- Which word were you trying to pronounce? ⟨*homogenous*⟩? ⟨*homogeneous*⟩?
- This is what Wells says:



Longman Pronunciation Dictionary, 3rd edition

- American pronunciations are after the ‖

02.15

Problems in *Dialectal differences* (4)

- ⟨*all over*⟩: the first syllable of ⟨*over*⟩ has a diphthong, not a long pure vowel
- vowel length and diphthongisation: typical First World Problems :-)
- the normal rhythm is slightly disturbed at this point in the text
- the two words are 'run together' ('LINKING'):
  not [ɔːl ʔəʊ̯və] but [ɔːl‿əʊ̯və] and not [ɔː ləʊ̯və] although
  ⟨*not at all well*⟩ is
  [nɒt‿ə tɔːl wel]
  (how can you tell?)

02.16

Problems in *Dialectal differences* (5)

- How do you pronounce ⟨*marked*⟩? What does that say about your regional or social origins?
  - If [mɑːkt], you're speaking RP ("Received Pronunciation" – "the King's English"; "Oxford English"; "BBC English")
  - If [maːkt], you might just be Australian
  - If [mɑɹkt], you might just be the reason why this course had to be renamed "General" instead of "British'.

- Although ⟨*pronounce*⟩ is /prəˈnaʊns/, ⟨*pronunciation*⟩ is not /prəˌnaʊnsiˈeɪʃn/ but /prəˌnʌnsiˈeɪʃn/.
- If you want to dispute this, you'll first have to persuade the Roman Catholic Church to change the name of one its feast days to ⟨*The Announciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary*⟩. (Good luck with that one!)

02.17

Problems in *Dialectal differences* (6)

- ⟨*note*⟩
  - if you pronounce this with a long pure vowel, I will think you are from the North of England or from Scotland.
  - if you pronounce it with a diphthong, where is the starting point of the glide towards /ʊ/?
    * if central – /əʊ/ – I'll think you're from the South of England
    * if back rounded – /oʊ/ – I'll think you're from the U.S. or from Australia
    * if front unrounded – /eʊ/ – I'll think you're sending up someone from the West End of London
  - If you don't shorten the diphthong slightly, I'll hear ⟨*node*⟩ instead of ⟨*note*⟩.

02.18

Problems in *Dialectal differences* (7)

- Pronounce the following:
  - ⟨*small island*⟩
  - ⟨*where only*⟩
  - ⟨*are often*⟩
  - ⟨*but there are*⟩
  - ⟨*Near East*⟩
  - ⟨*can't figure out*⟩ (you're British)
  - ⟨*can't figure out*⟩ (you're American)

02.19

Problems in *Dialectal differences* (8)

- Pronounce the following:
  - ⟨*Britain*⟩
    * in the Received Pronunciation of British English
    * as a working class person from London
    * as an American (or Australian)
  - ⟨*Kansas*⟩
  - ⟨*Yorkshireman*⟩
  - ⟨*Yorkshiremen*⟩
  - ⟨*Londoners*⟩
  - ⟨*Cockney*⟩

02.20

Problems in *Dialectal differences*(9)

- Pronounce the word ⟨*fact*⟩. What does it say about you if you pronounce it as:
  - /fɛkt/?
  - /fækt/?
  - /fakt/?
- Pronounce the words ⟨*logical historical*⟩ as
  - a British person
  - an American

02.21

Problems in *Dialectal differences* (10)

- Should the word ⟨*hailed*⟩ receive the same amount of stress as ⟨*American*⟩ or ⟨*Kansas*⟩?
- You don't do functional grammar (which is a sin of omission on the part of your other teachers), but if you did do it, you might ask whether, to use linguistic baby-talk, ⟨*hail*⟩ in ⟨*an American who hailed from Kansas*⟩ behaves more like a verb of 'doing' or more like a verb of 'being'.
- Compare the rhythm of:

		('kandidierte')		
/ **Herb**ert	/ **Smith**	/ **stood** for	/ **Parl**iament	
/ **Herb**ert's	/ **wife** stood for ('symbolisierte')	/ **wom**en's	/ **rights**	02.22

Problems in *Dialectal differences* (11)

- Pronounce the following.
  - ⟨*World War*⟩
  - ⟨*boarding house*⟩
- Are they compounds in English? (Where is the main stress?)
- On the question of stress in compounds, check the following pages from M.A.K. Halliday *A Course in Spoken English: Intonation. Oxford: O.U.P., 1970*: http://spence.saar.de/phonetics/unit02_20262/C__Slides_and_Printout/Halliday1970_44-45.pdf http://spence.saar.de/phonetics/unit02_20262/C__Slides_and_Printout/Halliday1970_46-47.pdf

02.23

7 Envoi

Envoi: Pronunciation prejudices

- People will judge you by your pronunciation.
- Purely physically, just by listening to your voice, they will categorise you as male or female, young or old ('indexical' features)
- If you sound foreign, they will judge you by the nationality they ascribe to you.
  - Prejudices about nationality work both ways.
    - *Americans are brash and inconsiderate.* (negative)
    - *Americans are friendly and helpful.* (positive)
  - i.e. such prejudices are always logically inconsistent.
- If you don't sound foreign, people will judge you by the region and social class they ascribe to you(r pronunciation):
  - There are advantages in sounding 'upper class'.
  - George Bernard Shaw parodied this in his play *Pygmalion*, which was turned into a musical called *My Fair Lady*, which was then filmed, starring the immortal Audrey Hepburn as a young Cockney woman who is taught by a professor of phonetics to speak like a high-society lady. Here she learns to say *the rain in Spain* instead of the Cockney/Australian ("Strine") *the rine in Spine*. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xmADMB2utAo

02.24