

The Phonetics of English Pronunciation

Session 04

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24.11.2008

¹using material by William Barry

Overview

- Problematic consonants (cont'd)

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- Practice run of typical test questions

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- Practice run of typical test questions
- Articulograms

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e.g. *twenty twins; quite queer; queen's question*
- And when you have practised and practised... the danger is:
you *over-correct*, “vich is wery vorrying!”

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- The /r/ only occurs *before* a vowel and *between* vowels in *British English*. In *American* it also occurs *after* vowels.

British:

American:

fought = *fort* /fɔ:t/; *fought* /fɔ:t/ ≠ *fort* /fɔt/

sought = *sort* /sɔ:t/; *sought* /sɔ:t/ ≠ *sort* /sɔt/

Also: *cart* /kɑ:t/; /kɑt/

dirt /dɜ:t/; /dɜt/ or /dɜ:t/

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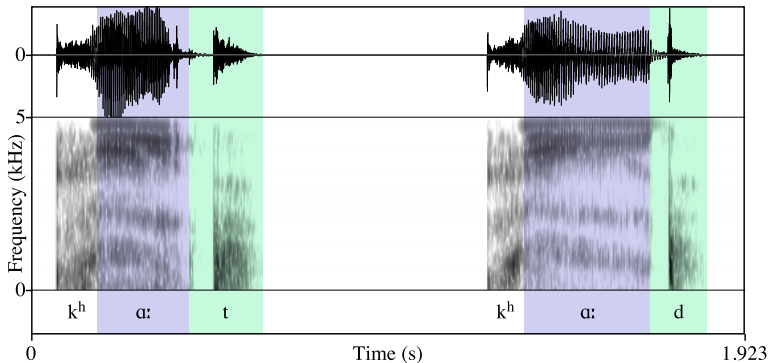
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 - c) after /p/ and /b/ (*price, bright, pray, break, prove*)

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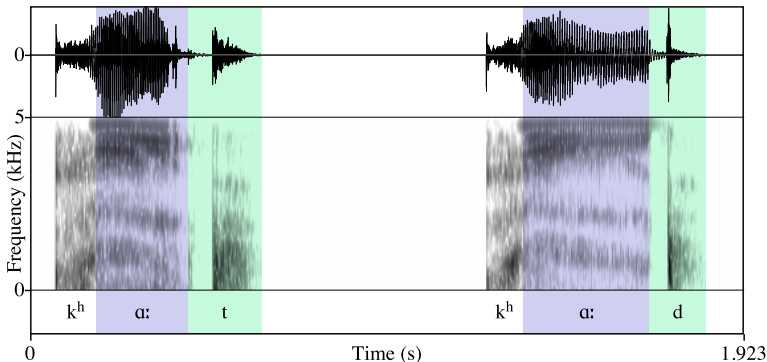
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/kɑ:t/: shorter vowel
longer, stronger /t/

/kɑ:d/: longer vowel
shorter, weaker /d/

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If the word is *monomorphemic*, the ⟨ng⟩ is pronounced [ŋg]
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- But the basic rule is broken with *comparatives* and *superlatives*!
long /lɒŋ/, *longer* /'lɒŋgə/, *longest* /'lɒŋgɪst/

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- I suggest [ɹ̥] or [t̥]: e.g.
[ˈraɪt̥ə] [ˈlɛt̥ə] [ˈtaɪt̥ə]
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- **The basic rule:** If the word has the *first syllable stressed* and the *second syllable unstressed*.
- But the rule also applies across word boundaries:
He got away [hi ˈgɑt̪̥ əˈweɪ]; *Put it down* [ˈpuɹ̥ ɪt ˈdaʊn].

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To represent it as a sound we can use what we like; The “official” IPA symbol for the apical tap is [ɾ] which might make you think of an “R” sound. Therefore my suggestion: [t̬]

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- **Note 2:** Between /n/ and schwa (/ə/), the ⟨t⟩ is not pronounced. . .

winter enter center

hunter counter gentle

Just like Saarland German: “komm’ runner!”

Historically speaking, they have been *elided*.

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| Voicing | Place | Manner |
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|---------|-------|--------|

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Exercise 2

What is the phonetic difference (i.e. what do you have to do to pronounce them correctly) between the following word pairs?

bend – bent

hard – heart

bug – buck

cold – colt

lived – lift

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It is *not* enough to say: “There is a /d/ in *bend* and a /t/ in *bent*”!

Exercise 3

What problem for German learners of English is there in the following expressions and how is incorrect pronunciation avoided?

down there *all that* *good thinking* *fight the good fight*

Why is the same strategy not possible in the following expression?

wise thought

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Answer: The /n/ in *down*, the /l/ in *all*, the /d/ in *good*, the /t/ in *fight* are all articulated as dental consonants preceding the interdental fricatives: [n̪ ð] [l̪ ð] [d̪ θ] [t̪ ð]

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Answer: The /z/ in *wise* must be pronounced as an *alveolar* fricative. It would become a different sound if it was pronounced as a *dental* fricative. It is therefore necessary to pronounce the /z/ as a *laminal* (tongue-blade) rather than an *apical* (tongue-tip) /z/, so that the tongue tip is free to move up onto the teeth for the /θ/.

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What are the phonetic difference between the following sounds?

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Answer: The first two are articulated in the same position (as an [u], with rounded lips). The /w/ immediately glides from the [u] position towards the following vowel and is thus heard as a “consonantal” onset. /v/ is a *labio-dental* fricative (upper teeth close to bottom lip) and is *not* produced with *rounded lips*.

Exercise 5

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Answer: In American English the /r/ is also pronounced *post-vocally*.

Exercise 6

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Answer: Following the dental fricative /θ/ (e.g., *throw*, *thrifty*, *through*, etc.)

Exercise 7

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Answer: No. American English /l/ tends to be pronounced more darkly pre-vocally than British English /l/.

Exercise 8

Why and how does the letter sequence ⟨ng⟩ sometimes cause pronunciation problems?

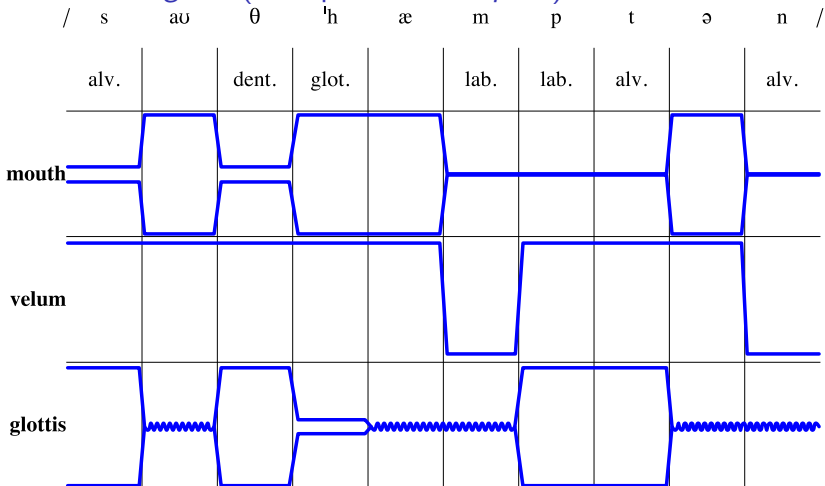
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Answer: Under certain morphological conditions, it is pronounced as /ŋg/ (even before schwa (/ə/), which is *not* possible in German).

Now – to help you think about sounds

The *articulogram* (example: *Southampton*)



Here's one for you to do at home

- Draw an articuloqram for the expression

absent-minded

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 - the *velum* controls the aperture to the nasal cavity. It is lowered for nasal sounds and raised for oral sounds.
 - *glottis* (the opening between the vocal folds); when the vocal folds are adducted, they can vibrate; if they are opened, they result in voiceless sounds. (Note if they are adducted a bit and kept fairly stiff, they allow friction to arise at the glottis. This is necessary for /h/ – a glottal fricative.)

Danger points

Take a text. . .

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- ⟨ng⟩ related

Danger points (cont'd)

Try at home with the sequel:

One of the secretaries had whispered rather loudly to her friend that there were plans being hatched to close the local primary school and bus the children to the neighbouring village. The doors and windows would then be bricked up to discourage vandals, pending a decision on the future use of the building.

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- We completed our tour of “problematic” consonants in English:
 - “new sound” problems
 - “distribution” problems
 - In both cases we need to look at them in terms of how they fit into the *sounds around them*.
 - Sounds are not produced in isolation; the smallest unit of pronunciation is the *syllable* and most of our utterances are syllables fitted together for *words* and *phrases*.
- We did a short practice run of typical test questions.
- We introduced the *articulogram* as a means of *schematically visualising speech production*.

Homework

- a) Analyse consonantal problems in text
- b) Draw articulogram

You do *not* have to hand anything in this week!