

The Phonetics of English Pronunciation

Session 06

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Homework Review

Exercise 1

fast [fæst]

f voiceless labiodental fricative

æ near-open front unrounded vowel

s voiceless alveolar fricative

t voiceless alveolar plosive

Homework Review

Exercise 2

breathe [bɹi:ð]

- Consonants
 - ɹ new consonant
 - ð new, final voiced consonant
- Vowels
 - i: more open than in German

Homework Review

Exercise 3

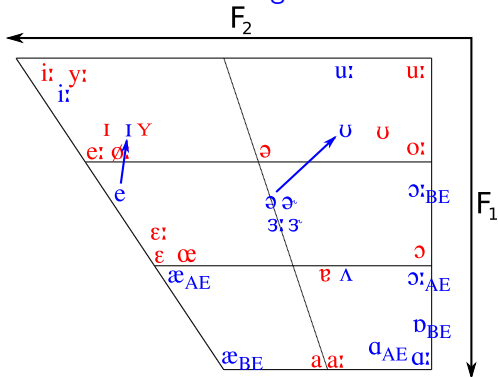
German	English	
<i>viel</i>	<i>feel</i>	“dark” ⟨l⟩
<i>Schuh</i>	<i>shoe</i>	diphthongised vowel
<i>Fisch</i>	<i>fish</i>	
<i>Miete</i>	<i>meter</i>	non-rhotic only
<i>Lack</i>	<i>luck</i>	vowel more back and close; possibly “dark” ⟨l⟩
<i>Batterie</i>	<i>battery</i>	[a] vs. [æ]; approximant ⟨r⟩; note also different stress pattern

Before we look at the vowel questions: a summary of the vowels so far

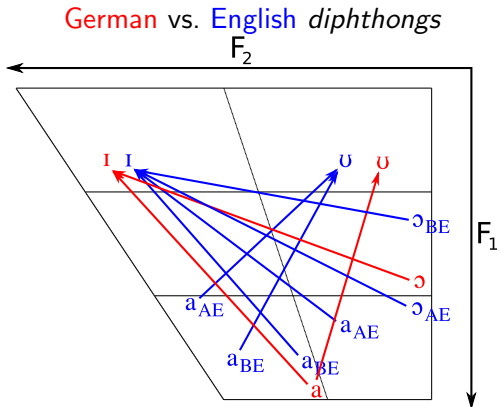
- Vowels are very *prominent* signals of the sort of accent you speak
- The *symbols* used to represent vowels are only a rough indication of the vowel quality to produce.
- *Nearly all* English vowels (American or British) are *phonetically different* from German vowels.
- You need to *understand* what the differences are, hear them, and *automate their production!*
- Read *again* Chap. V, pp. 105-111 and then work your way through the vowel sections

Vowel quality and symbols (repeated)

German vs. English vowels









Vowel quality and symbols (cont'd)



So let's listen for the small differences: /u:/

Listen to the following /u:/ words and say whether what is spoken is German or English:

German	English	
Schuh	shoe	
hut	hoot	
Wudu	voodoo	
Hindu	Hindu	
Ruth	root	
muh	moo	

Now listen to /i:/ words

Listen to the following /i:/ words and say whether what is spoken is German or English:

German	English	
Biest	beast	
Beat	beat	
flieh	flea	
Ski	she	
nie	knee	
bieten	beaten	
Vieh	fee	
lieh	lee	

/ʊ/ words vary a lot!

Listen to the /ʊ/ words in the following sentences:

He didn't like *books* with *footnotes*. 🔊


I like the *book*; I think it's very *good*. 🔊

Be careful with /ɑ:/ words

Listen to the /ɑ:/ words (*far* and *park*) spoken by a German:

Is it *far* to Hyde *Park*? 

Compare them to the /ɑ:/ words (*far* and *car*) spoken by an English woman:

Well, it's not *far* by *car*. 







- But it's not just the *timbre* of the /ɑ:/ that is a problem: Don't forget *glass*, *grass*, *dance*, *France*, *plant*, *grant* are pronounced /ɑ:/ in SBE and /æ/ in US:

/glɑ:s/, /grɑ:s/, /dɑ:ns/, /frɑ:ns/, /plɑ:nt/, /grɑ:nt/
/glæs/, /græs/, /dæns/, /fræns/, /plænt/, /grænt/

- And remember:

US *part*, *park*, *start*, etc. vs. *palm*, *father*, *calm*
/ɑ:/ /ɑ:/






Now, of course, the /ɔ:/ words

- British English (but not American English) /ɔ:/ is *more closed* than German /ɔ/
- Compare the following phrase spoken by a German and an English speaker:
 - The *orders* were *ignored*.  
 - She gave a *short talk*.  
 - She *bought* a *horse*.  
- N.B. American English /ɔɪ/ as in *short, horse, orders, ignored* also has a *closer* vowel quality than German /ɔ/.
- But American /ɔ:/ (without following /r/) as in *bought, taught* is more open, i.e. *longer but similar quality* to German /ɔ/.
- So /ɔɪ/ and /ɔ:/ have a different quality in US-English: e.g. *bought – port; chalk – cork; paw – pour*

And now the /ʌ/ words

- The temptation is to pronounce English *luck* like German *Lack*.

Can you say whether the following words spoken by a German or an English speaker?

German	English	
dann	done	
Matten	mutton	
hat	hut	
patt	putt	
Lack	luck	

- American English /ʌ/ is less open and rather *more centralised* than SBE /ʌ/ (very close to /ɜ:/)

American /ɑ/ and British /ɒ/

- Both these variants of the vowel in *lock*, *pot*, etc. fall into an “empty space” in the German system.
- The closest German vowel (as in *Topf*, *Locke*, etc.) is less open and more rounded than either English variant.
- Listen to the pairs of German and British English words:
 Gott 🗣️ *got* 🗣️
 Block 🗣️ *block* 🗣️
 Plotter 🗣️ *plotter* 🗣️
- The American English /ɑ/ is *more open* and *less rounded* even than SBE /ɒ/; it is quite “spread” . . .
in fact, a shortened German /a:/ is an acceptable American /ɑ/: AE *tot* (kid; “a tiny tot”) ~ German *Tat*

The stressed central vowel /ɜ:/

- Here the interference is from German /œ/, a *rounded* vowel; i.e. German *Törn* for British English *turn*.
- Can you say whether the following words are the German loanwords or the (British) English words?

German	English	
Server	server	🔊
Churchill	Churchill	🔊
Guernsey	Guernsey	🔊
Wordsworth	Wordsworth	🔊
Gershwin	Gershwin	🔊
Surfer	surfer	🔊
Terminal	terminal	🔊

- In American English /ɜ:/ does not occur because there is always an /ɹ/ following. It is therefore *symbolised* with [ɜ̃] or [ɜɹ]. The quality is dominated by [ɹ]. *It is like a syllabic R.*

Summing up...

- We have surveyed the *English* vowels which are *close* to vowels in the *German* system.
- Sometimes the *symbols* used are the same, but you have been shown that there are *phonetic differences*. . . You must build an “auditory picture” of the differences.
- Equally important is the *feel in your mouth* that you associate with the sound. This *should feel strange* to start with because it is a *new position*.
- Still to come: The notorious /æ/ and the diphthongs. . .
- **For homework:** Work your way through the vowel section (Chapter V)

[,meɪi 'kɪsməs]