

# The Phonetics of English Pronunciation

## Session 07

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<sup>1</sup>using material by William Barry

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- **Read: Section VI.3, pp. 213-222**

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- **Read: Section III.3, pp. 25-29**
- Listen carefully to the example and imitate!  
🔊 *The cat got in through the catflap*

## The vowel /æ/ (cont'd)

/æ/ [ʔ]

Conservative RP [eə]

NE US [ɛ̃ə]

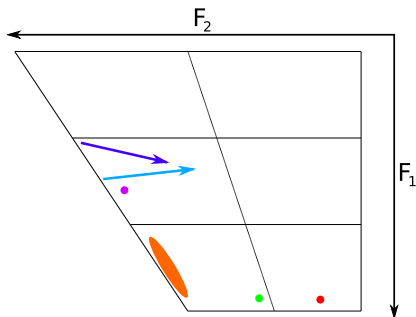
NZ & SA [ɛ̃]

(This is what Germans often pronounce)

SBE & MW US [æ]

NBE [a]

Glasgow & Belfast [ɑː]



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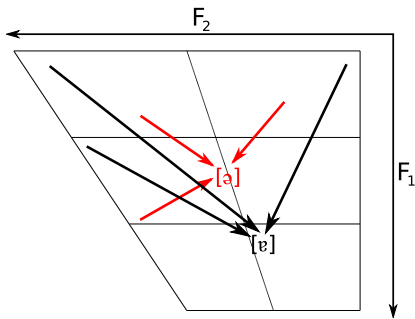
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- Both German and British English have ⟨r⟩ diphthongs:  
E.g. *vier* – *fear*      American English has  
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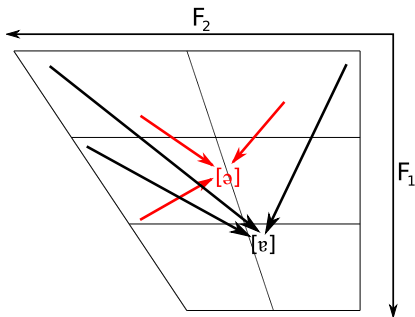
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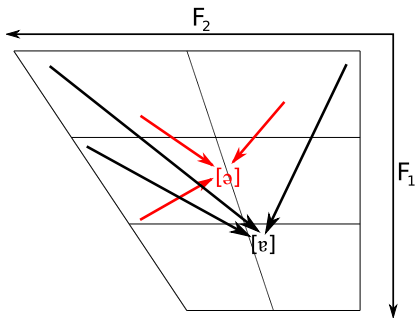
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b) The offset quality:

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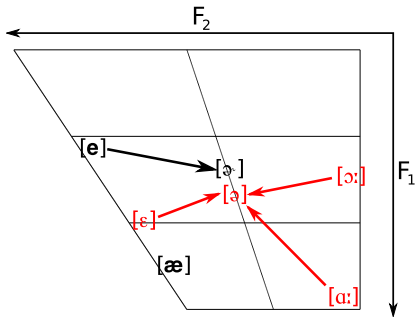
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American English has the [ɹ]-coloured schwa in a clear diphthong: [eɹ] / [eɹ]

But the [ɹ]-colouring in US English has obscured the /ɛr/ vs. /eɹr/ vs. /æɹ/ vs. /æɹ/ oppositions in some areas.

So: *merry* = *Mary* = *marry*



## Practice Expressions

	<b>British</b>	<b>US</b>
“You can’t drink <i>beer here!</i> ”	[bɪr hɪə]	[bɪr hɪr]

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Common (British) variants:

- /ʊə/ → [ɔ:] ... so *sure* ~ *shore*; *poor* ~ *paw*
- /ɛə/ → [ɛ:] is an even more modern development  
... so *care*, *pair*, *lair* ~ [k<sup>h</sup>ɛ: p<sup>h</sup>ɛ: lɛ:]

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Read: Section V.3.6, pp. 168-175

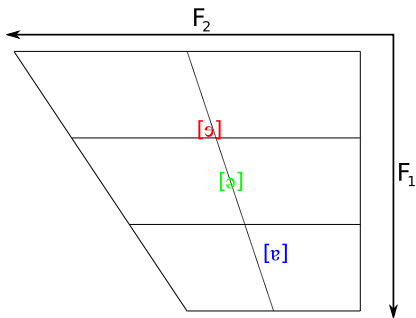
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Listen for the differences:

	German	English
bitte	bitter	bitter
Locke	locker	locker
Klippe	Klipper	clipper
Linde	linder	Linda

Remember: in American, [ə] does not occur in ⟨er⟩ words! It is [ɛr].

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/fɪ'lɒsəfə/                      /fɪlə'sɒfɪkəl/

*constable* vs. *constabulary*

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/'kɒnstəbəl/                      /kən'stæbjələri/
- This *weakening of unstressed vowels* also occurs in running speech, where grammatical words (*function words*) are mostly unstressed.

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I.e. a reduction in the phonetic distinctiveness
- We don't say:

*Can I borrow the car for the rest of the day?*  
[kæn] [aɪ] [bɔɪəʊ] [ði:] [kɑ:] [fɔ:] [ði:] [rest] [ɒv] [ði:] [deɪ]

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  - auxiliary verbs:** *is, are, was, were, has, have, had*
  - modal verbs:** *will, would, shall, should, can, could*

# Prepositions

- **to**

*it fell **to** **the** floor* [ɪt 'fel tə ðə 'flɔ:]

*come **to** tea* ['kʌm tə 'ti:]

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- **from**

*a present **from** heaven* [ə 'prezənt frəm 'heɪvən]  
***from** me to you* [frəm 'mi: tə 'ju:]  
*it came **from** nowhere* [ɪt 'keɪm frəm 'nəʊwɛə]

## Clause linkers

- **because**

*because* I say so      [bɪkəz aɪ 'seɪ səʊ]

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- **that**

I knew *that* I could do it      [aɪ 'nju: ðæt aɪ kəd 'du: ɪt]

don't say *that* I can't      ['dəʊnt seɪ ðæt aɪ 'kɑ:nt]

## Clause linkers

- **because**

*because* I say so [bɪkəz aɪ 'seɪ səʊ]

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- **but**

it's naughty *but* nice [ɪts 'nɔ:ti bət 'naɪs]

small *but* expensive ['smɔ:ɪ bət ɪks'pensɪv]



# Comparatives

- **as ... as**

*as soon as possible* [əz 'su:n əz 'pɒsɪbəl]

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- **not so ... as**

*not so good as I'd like* ['nɒt sə 'gʊd əz aɪd 'laɪk]

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- **not so ...**

*(how are you?)*

*not so bad, thanks* ['nɒt sə 'bæd 'θæŋks]

# Pronouns

- **he, him, his, her** often lose the /h/  
*is **he** happy?* [ɪz i 'hæpi]  
*I found **him*** [aɪ 'faʊnd ɪm]  
*it's **his** first attempt* [ɪts ɪz 'fɜːst ə'tempt]  
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*we never knew* [wi 'nevə 'njuː]
- **you** and **your** can be the same in British English  
*you did your best* [jə 'dɪd jə 'best]

## Pronouns (cont'd)

- **them** and **us** become [ðəm] and [əs]  
*I saw **them** come* [aɪ 'sɔ: ðəm 'kʌm]  
*she told **us** the truth* [ʃi 'təʊld əs ðə 'tru:θ]

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- **they**, **their**, and **our** can be shortened and “de-diphthongised”  
*did **they** know?* ['dɪd ðe 'nəʊ]  
*what's **their** name?* ['wɒts ðeɪ 'neɪm]  
*it's **our** first holiday* [ɪts ə 'fɜ:st 'hɒlɪdeɪ]



## Auxiliary and modal verbs

- the verb **to be** is often reduced even in orthography... and should *always* be reduced in speech, *unless stressed*

*what **is** the time?*            ['wɒts ðə 'taɪm]

*those **are** mine*                ['ðəʊz ə 'maɪn]

*that **was** stupid*                ['ðæt wəz 'stju:pɪd]

*they **were** very unhappy*    [ðei wə 'veri ʌn'hæpi]

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  - that **was** stupid* ['ðæt wəz 'stju:pɪd]
  - they **were** very unhappy* [ðei wə 'veri ʌn'hæpi]
- if **have** isn't used as a *full verb* or *stressed* as an auxiliary, it is also reduced
  - what **has** happened?* ['wɒts 'hæpɪnd]
  - what **have** you done?* ['wɒt əv jə 'dɒn]
  - their dream **had** come true* [ðe 'draɪ:m əd klʌm 'tru:]

## Auxiliary and modal verbs (cont'd)

- the modal verbs **will, would, can, could, shall, should** are also reduced... unless they're stressed

<i>what <b>will</b> you do?</i>	[ˈwɒtɪ jə ˈduː]
<i>what <b>would</b> you do?</i>	[ˈwɒt wəd jə ˈduː]
<i>how <b>can</b> you do that?</i>	[ˈhaʊ kən jə ˈduː ˈðæt]
<i>how <b>could</b> we help?</i>	[ˈhaʊ kəd wi ˈhelp]
<i>we <b>shall</b> do what we can</i>	[wi ʃəl ˈdu wɒt wi ˈkæn]

## Auxiliary and modal verbs (cont'd)

- **combinations** of auxiliary and modal verbs are reduced too (unless they're stressed)

*she **could have** done  
anything she wanted*

[ʃi **kəd əv** dʌŋ 'eniθɪŋ ʃi 'wɒntɪd]

*they **have been**  
all over the world*

[ðeɪ **v bɪn** 'ɔ:t əʊvə ðə 'wɜ:ld]

*he **will have** left by now*

[hi **əl əv** 'left baɪ 'naʊ]

## Now for an exercise!

Transcribe the following text – marking the syllables you would stress when reading, and also marking the contextual variants we have learned about

*When the girls reached home, there was nobody there. All the windows were dark, and there was not a single sign of life.*

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