

# Vauəlz

- INTRODUCTION
- ARTICULATORS
- VOWEL CLASSIFICATION – Monophthongs
  - Diphthongs
  - Triphthongs
- BBC AND GA VARIANCES

Lecture 2

1

## What makes a dialect?

- In terms of phonetics and phonology, the dialects of English are primarily distinguished by differences in
  - vowel quality
  - number of vowel sounds
- Our focus will be on BBC (or RP = Received Pronunciation) and GA (General American)

2

## Speaking of dialects...

- Check out the following links:
- <http://soundcomparisons.com/>
- <http://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL60484A55256C1D58>
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oSHHbfY6MVc>
- [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KH\\_kOjsXakM&feature=rrelated](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KH_kOjsXakM&feature=rrelated)

3

## Description of vowel sounds

- All vowels are voiced
- Vowels are described using four sets of criteria:
  - Close – Open/ High – Low
  - Front – Back
  - Unrounded – Rounded
  - Short (Lax) – Long (Tense)
- The first three have to do with the movements of the tongue, lips and jaw

4

## Articulation

- See Roach, pp 10-13
- In the production of vowel sounds, the active and passive articulators do not come very close together
- This means that the airstream is relatively unobstructed
- Vowels → Semivowels (Approximants) → Consonants

(NB. consonants are divided into sub-groups on the basis of how much obstruction there is to the airflow = degree of **sonority**)

5

## Articulation

- Vowels are classified in terms of three *articulatory* dimensions:
  - Tongue position
  - Tongue height
  - Lip rounding
- (NB. Vowel length is a *quantitative* dimension)



6

## Tongue position

- The front-back distinction
  - Involves whether the highest part of the body of the tongue is towards the front (alveolar/palatal region) or the back (velar region) of the mouth
  - Front vowels → central vowels → back vowels
  - Even finer distinctions are sometimes made

7

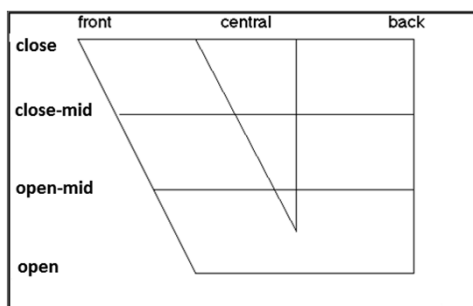
## Tongue height

- The open – close distinction
  - This involves the closeness of the highest part of the *body* of the tongue (not including tip and blade) to the roof of the mouth
  - Open vowels – open-mid – close-mid – closed vowels

NB. The term *central* is often used for tongue position, the term(s) *mid/medial* for tongue height!

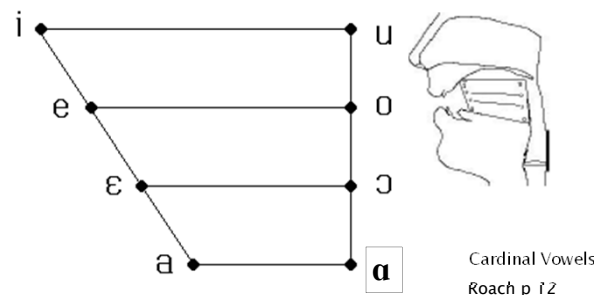
8

## The vowel quadrilateral/diagram



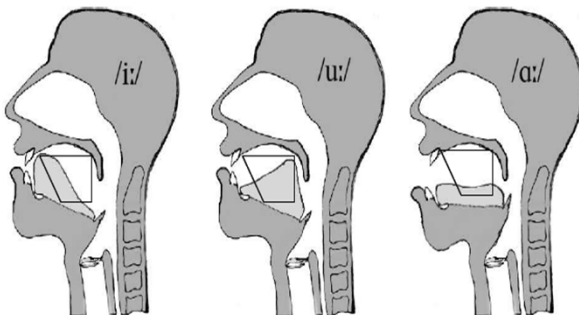
9

## The vowel quadrilateral/diagram



10

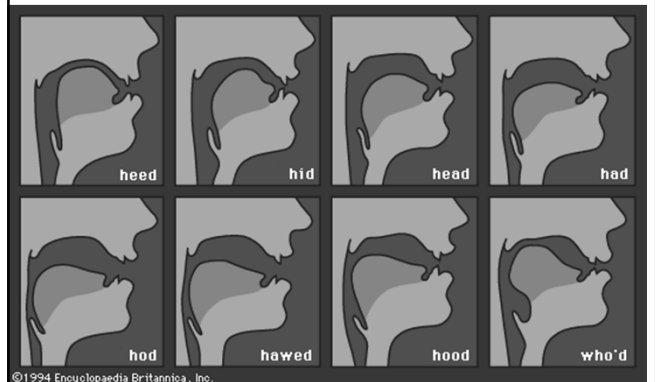
## The vowel quadrilateral/diagram



Adapted from Language and Mind, 2000

11

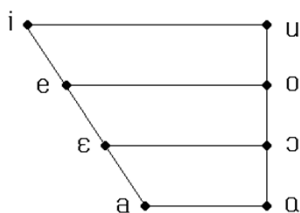
## Tongue position and height



©1994 Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc.

## Primary cardinal vowels

- A set of **reference** vowels evenly spaced between the two most extreme tongue body positions: high front /i/ and low back /ɑ/. The other vowels are placed on the vowel quadrilateral (vowel diagram) using these cardinal vowels as landmarks.



13

## Listen to them

- <http://www.phonetics.ucla.edu/course/chapter9/cardinal/cardinal.html>
- <http://www.phonetics.ucla.edu/course/chapter1/vowels.html>

14

## See it in action!

- <http://hctv.humnet.ucla.edu/departments/linguistics/VowelsandConsonants/vowels/chapter11/chapter11.html>

15

## Lip rounding

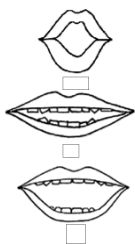
- Roach, p 13
- When we produce the vowel /ɔɪ/ as in *boy*, our lips are rounded, as compared to when we produce the vowel /ɪ/ in *lit* where the lips are spread
- In English, most front vowels are unrounded or neutral, and most back vowels are rounded
- Other languages (eg, Swedish) have rounded front vowels (eg, *bi* vs *by*). There are also languages (eg, Scottish Gaelic) which have unrounded back vowels (eg, *bùth* 'shop' vs *baothair* 'idiot')

(<http://phonetics.ucla.edu/vowels/chapter14/gaelic.html>)

16

## Lip rounding: Lip shapes

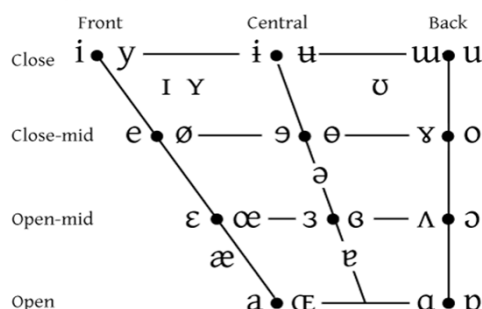
- Rounded: core /ɔ:/
- Spread: beat /i:/
- Neutral: pot /ɒ/



17

## Cardinal Vowels: Roach, pp 12-13

### VOWELS



Where symbols appear in pairs, the one to the right represents a rounded vowel

18

## Cardinal vowels: description

<http://hctv.humnet.ucla.edu/departments/linguistics/VowelsandConsonants/vowels/contents.html>

- 1. close front unrounded /i/
- 2. close-mid front unrounded /e/
- 3. open-mid front unrounded /ɛ/
- 4. open front unrounded /a/
- 5. open back unrounded /ɒ/
- 6. open-mid back rounded /ɔ/
- 7. close-mid back rounded /o/
- 8. close back rounded /u/

19

## Vowel quantity

- English vowels can be short or long (Roach, pp 13-14)
- Long vowels are divided further into
  - Monophthongs (Roach, pp 16-17)
  - Diphthongs (Roach, pp 17-18)
  - (triphthongs; Roach, pp 18-19)
- Diphthong and triphthongs are produced by *gliding* the tongue from one vowel position to another

20

## Diphthongs and triphthongs

- Diphthongs are divided into
    - Closing diphthongs: movement towards /ɪ/ or /ʊ/
    - Centering diphthongs: movement towards /ə/
  - The final sound in all English triphthongs is /ə/
  - Closing diphthongs and triphthongs are usually only found in *non-Rhotic* varieties of English
- (NB. Some sources list triphthongs which do *not* end in /ə/ – it is debatable whether, in such cases, we are dealing with one or two syllables)

21

## Schwa???

- Roach, pp 65-66
- The schwa /ə/ is found in unstressed syllables
- The tongue is in its "resting position" in the mid, central region (=neither front nor back)
- Lips are unrounded (in English)
- The schwa causes lots of problems for many Swedes...
- Therefore, go to:
 

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AbYVN077--M&feature=related>

22

## Non-rhotic???

- English is divided into Non-Rhotic and Rhotic varieties
- Standard BBC English is Non-Rhotic, standard GA is Rhotic
- In Non-Rhotic varieties, the written letter *r* is pronounced *before*, but not *after*, a vowel sound:
  - Right, free, ring, rate, ...
  - Here, poor, bear, beer, ...

23

## BBC vowel sounds

- Monophthongs:
  - Short: /ɪ, e, æ, ʌ, ɒ, ʊ, ə/ (see chart, Roach, p 13)
  - Long: /i:, ɜ:, aɪ, ɔ:, u:/ (see chart, Roach, p 16)
- Diphthongs:
  - Closing towards /ɪ/: /eɪ, aɪ, ɔɪ/
  - Closing towards /ʊ/: /aʊ, əʊ/
  - Centring: /ɪə, ʊə, eə/ (charts, Roach, p 18)
- Triphthongs: /aɪə, aʊə, eɪə, əʊə, ɔɪə/

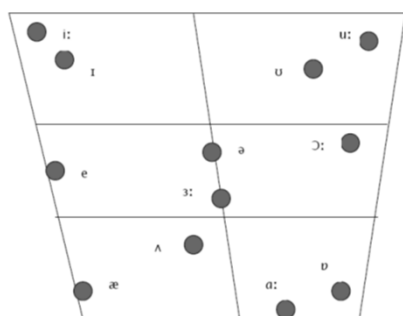
24

## BBC monophthongs

SEE ALSO:

LONGMAN'S  
pp xvi-xvii

Roach, p 13, p16



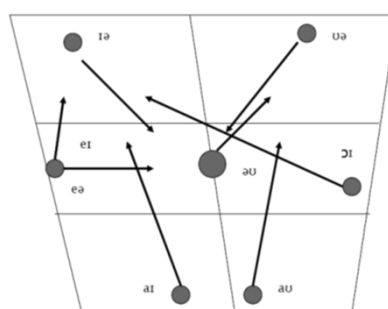
25

## BBC diphthongs

SEE ALSO:

LONGMAN'S  
pp xvi-xvii

Roach, p 18



26

## Listen to them:

- Monophthongs
  - <http://fonetiks.org/engsou2.html>
- Diphthongs
  - <http://fonetiks.org/engsou3.html>
- Triphthongs
  - <http://fonetiks.org/engsou4.html>
- All of them
  - <http://phonetics.ucla.edu/vowels/chapter3/bbcenglish.html>

27

## Listen to them:

- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XlSeYt6PN6s&feature=related>
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f4Q1QN-SFCM&feature=related>

28

## GA vowel sounds

- Monophthongs:
  - Short: /ɪ, e, æ, ʌ, ɒ, ʊ, ə/
  - Long: /i:/, ɜ:/, a:/, ɔ:/, u:/
- Diphthongs:
  - Closing towards /ɪ/: /eɪ, aɪ, ɔɪ/
  - Closing towards /ʊ/: /aʊ, oʊ/
  - Centering: /ɪə, eə, ʊə/

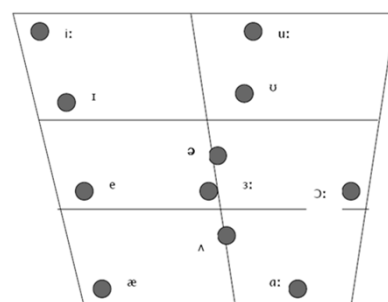
29

## GA monophthongs

SEE ALSO:

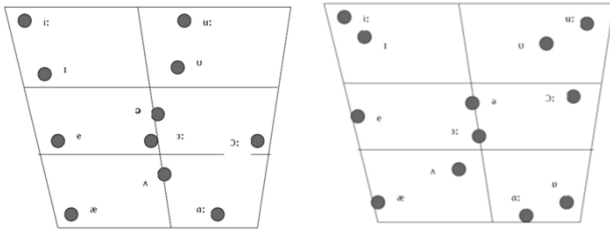
LONGMAN'S  
p. xxiii-xxiv

Longman's uses the symbols /ə/ and /ɜ:/ for "rhotacized" central vowels. You do NOT have to use them. Just transcribe as /ər/ and /ɜ:r/



30

## GA and BBC monophthongs compared



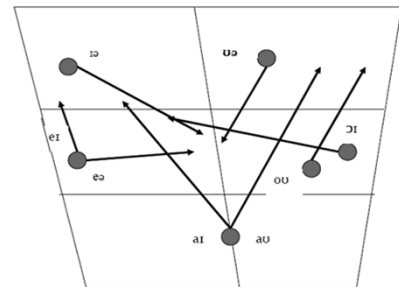
SEE ALSO: LONGMAN'S pp xvi-xvii  
Roach, p 13, p16

31

## GA diphthongs

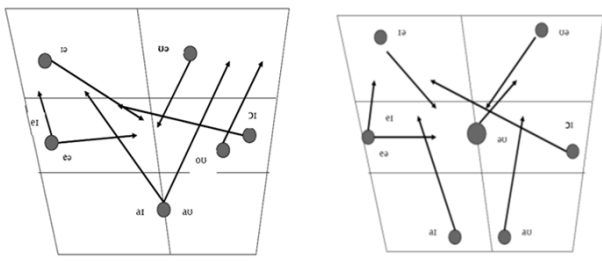
SEE ALSO:

LONGMAN'S  
pp xvi-xvii



32

## GA and BBC diphthongs compared



SEE ALSO: LONGMAN'S pp xvi-xvii  
Roach, p 18

33

## Listen to them:

- Monophthongs
  - <http://fonetiks.org/engsou2am.html>
- Diphthongs – but see comments above!
  - <http://www.fonetiks.org/engsou3am.html>
- Triphthongs – ditto...
  - <http://fonetiks.org/engsou4am.html>
- All of them
  - <http://phonetics.ucla.edu/vowels/chapter3/amengvowels.html>

34

## Listen to them:

- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ESXa12DNCCs>
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AwU7UU-HnYE>

35

## Different varieties of English

- We find variation between
  - Vocabulary
  - Spelling
  - Grammar
  - Pronunciation
    - Phonetic realisation
    - Phonotactic distribution
    - Phonemic systems
    - Lexical distribution

36

## BBC vs GA

- Phonotactic distribution
  - Eg, rhoticity:
    - BBC /kɑ: pa:k/
    - GA /kɑ:r pa:rk/
- Phonemic systems
  - Eg, *rock*
    - BBC /rɒk/
    - GA /rɑ:k/ (GA does not have /ɒ/)
- Lexical distribution:
  - Eg, *tomato*
    - BBC /təməʊtəu/
    - GA /təmeɪtəu/

37

## BBC and GA vowel systems

Table 9.1 Some correspondences between RP and GA vowels

RP /ɔ:/ before r	GA /ɔ:/	horse, sword, born, before, more, door, floor, oar, board, court, four, war, etc
generally	GA /ɑ:/	saw, lawn, jaw, bought, ought, daughter, cause, all, tall, salt, water, etc
RP /ɒ/ especially before /θ, f, s, θ/		long, song, coffee, soft, cloth, loss, etc
generally	GA /ɑ:/	dock, holiday, bomb, swan, want, watch, quality, knowledge, bother, etc
RP /ɑ:/ before r		car, march, part, heart, far, farm, large, hard, etc
occasionally		father, balm, calm, palm, almond, etc
RP /ʌ/ especially before -nce, -nch, -nd, -nt, and before /f, s, θ/	GA /ɪ/	chance, dance, branch, demand, command, slander, grant, aunt, half, staff, laugh, draft, class, glass, pass, last, bath, banana, example, sample, etc
RP /ɪ/ regularly		van, marry, hand, grand, lamp, ass, lass, mass, passage, aspect, plastic, etc

38

## Listen to the varieties

- [http://alt-usage-english.org/audio\\_archive.shtml](http://alt-usage-english.org/audio_archive.shtml)
- <http://www.fonetiks.org/>
- Try also:
  - <http://www.howjsay.com/>
  - <http://web.ku.edu/~idea/>
  - [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kn3\\_bYcAnWI&feature=related](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kn3_bYcAnWI&feature=related)

39

## For next time

- Workshop 1:
  - Re-read Roach Ch 2-3 and do the written and recorded exercises in the book
  - Visit the suggested websites and do the web exercises on the book website
  - Write down questions and comments, if you have any
  - Have a look at the exercises in the Workshop 1 set (at the back of the compendium) but *don't do them beforehand!*
- Lecture 3:
  - Read Roach Ch 4 and 6-7 as instructed in the compendium

40

## Bibliography

- Carr, P. (1999). English Phonetics and Phonology. Blackwell Publishing Ltd: UK
- Catford, J.C. (2001) A Practical Introduction to Phonetics. Oxford University Press: NY
- Johnsson, S & Rönnerdal, G. (1993). English Pronunciation. Studentlitteratur: Sweden
- Kelly, G. (2000) How to Teach Pronunciation. Pearson Education Limited: England
- Ladefoged, P. (2001). Vowels and Consonants. An Introduction to the Sounds of Languages. Blackwell Publishing: UK
- Pennington, M.C. (1996) Phonology in English Language Teaching. Addison Wesley Longman Limited: UK
- Roach, P. (2000). English Phonetics and Phonology. Cambridge University Press: UK
- Rogers, H. (2000) The Sounds of Language. An Introduction to Phonetics. Pearson Education Limited: 2000
- Yavas, M. (2006). Applied English Phonology. Blackwell Publishing: UK

41