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Hyperlink-Pronunciation

The hyperlink on pronunciation offers a brief introduction to essential terms within the study of the phonetics and phonology of English. Phonology deals with the structural features of the sound system such as which sounds (or phonemes) occur and how they can be combined (phonotactics). Phonetics is concerned with the actual articulation of sounds and words, which may be structurally identical in different varieties of English yet sound different. This hyperlink begins with a look at the IPA and at how comparison between accents of English may be undertaken.

Representation

IPA (International Phonetic Alphabet) comprises the set of symbols used to designate sounds unambiguously. If used broadly each phoneme in a language is assigned one symbol. Example: the <j> in *jet*, the <dg> in *lodge*, and the <g> in *privilege* are all /dʒ/. A narrow transcription is more strictly phonemic and distinguishes allophonic variants such as monophthongal [e:] and diphthongal [eɪ] for /eɪ/. See the following chart.

THE INTERNATIONAL PHONETIC ALPHABET (2005)

CONSONANTS (PULMONIC)

	LABIAL		CORONAL				DORSAL			RADICAL		LARYNGEAL
	Bilabial	Labio-dental	Dental	Alveolar	Palato-alveolar	Retroflex	Palatal	Velar	Uvular	Pharyngeal	Epi-glottal	Glottal
Nasal	m	ɱ	n			ɳ	ɲ	ŋ	ɴ			
Plosive	p b	ɸ β	t d			ʈ ɖ	c ɟ	k ɡ	q ɢ		ʔ	ʕ
Fricative	ɸ β	f v	θ ð	s z	ʃ ʒ	ʂ ʐ	ç ʝ	x ɣ	χ ʁ	ħ	ʕ	ħ ʕ
Approximant		ʋ	ɹ			ɻ	j	ɰ				h ɦ
Trill	ʙ		r						ʀ			ʀ
Tap, Flap		ⱱ	ɾ			ɽ						
Lateral fricative			ɬ ɮ			ɮ	ɬ	ɮ				
Lateral approximant			l			ɭ	ʎ	ʟ				
Lateral flap			ɭ			ɮ						

Where symbols appear in pairs, the one to the right represents a modally voiced consonant, except for murmured ɦ. Shaded areas denote articulations judged to be impossible. Light grey letters are unofficial extensions of the IPA.

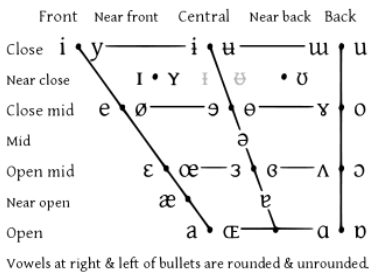
CONSONANTS (NON-PULMONIC)

Anterior click releases (require posterior stops)	Voiced implosives	Ejectives
ʘ Bilabial fricated	ɓ Bilabial	ʼ Examples:
ǀ Laminar alveolar fricated ("dental")	ɗ Dental or alveolar	ɸ' Bilabial
ǃ Apical (post)alveolar abrupt ("retroflex")	ɟ Palatal	t' Dental or alveolar
ǂ Laminar postalveolar abrupt ("palatal")	ɠ Velar	k' Velar
ǁ Lateral alveolar fricated ("lateral")	ʄ Uvular	s' Alveolar fricative

CONSONANTS (CO-ARTICULATED)

- ɱ Voiceless labialized velar approximant
- ʋ Voiced labialized velar approximant
- ɥ Voiced labialized palatal approximant
- ɕ Voiceless palatalized postalveolar (alveolo-palatal) fricative
- ʑ Voiced palatalized postalveolar (alveolo-palatal) fricative
- ɧ Simultaneous x and f (disputed)
- k̟p̟ ts Affricates and double articulations may be joined by a tie bar

VOWELS



SUPRASEGMENTALS

- ˈ Primary stress
 - ˌ Secondary stress [ˈfəʊnəˈtʃən]
 - ː Long
 - ˑ Short
 - Syllable break
 - INTONATION
 - ˌ Minor (foot) break
 - ˎ Major (intonation) break
 - ↗ Global rise
 - ↘ Global fall
- Extra stress
- Level tones
- Contour-tone examples:
- ˥ Top
 - ˦ High
 - ˧ Mid
 - ˨ Low
 - ˩ Bottom
 - ˨˩˦ Tone terracing
 - ˥˩ Upstep
 - ˩˥ Downstep
 - ˥˩˥˩ Rising
 - ˥˩˥˩ Falling
 - ˥˩˥˩ High rising
 - ˥˩˥˩ Low rising
 - ˥˩˥˩ High falling
 - ˥˩˥˩ Low falling
 - ˥˩˥˩ Peaking
 - ˥˩˥˩ Dipping

DIACRITICS

Diacritics may be placed above a symbol with a descender, as ɲ̰. Other IPA symbols may appear as diacritics to represent phonetic detail: ʔ̰ (fricative release), ɸ̰ (breathy voice), ʔ̰ (glottal onset), ʔ̰ (epenthetic schwa), ʔ̰ (diphthongization).

SYLLABICITY & RELEASES		PHONATION		PRIMARY ARTICULATION		SECONDARY ARTICULATION		
ɲ̰	Syllabic	ɲ̰	Voiceless or Slack voice	ɬ̰	Dental	ɬ̰˥	ɬ̰˩	ɬ̰˥˩
ɬ̰	Non-syllabic	ɬ̰	Modal voice or Stiff voice	ɬ̰	Apical	ɬ̰˥	ɬ̰˩	ɬ̰˥˩
ɬ̰ ^h	(Pre)aspirated	ɬ̰	Breathy voice	ɬ̰	Laminar	ɬ̰˥	ɬ̰˩	ɬ̰˥˩
ɲ̰ ⁿ	Nasal release	ɲ̰	Creaky voice	ɲ̰	Advanced	ɲ̰˥	ɲ̰˩	ɲ̰˥˩
ɲ̰ ^l	Lateral release	ɲ̰	Strident	ɲ̰	Retracted	ɲ̰˥	ɲ̰˩	ɲ̰˥˩
ɲ̰ [̰]	No audible release	ɲ̰	Linguolabial	ɲ̰	Centralized	ɲ̰˥	ɲ̰˩	ɲ̰˥˩
ɲ̰ [̠]	Lowered (β̠ is a bilabial approximant)	ɲ̰		ɲ̰	Raised (ɲ̰ is a voiced alveolar non-sibilant fricative, ɲ̰ a fricative trill)			

Schwa, which is the name of the phonetic symbol /ə/, is the default unstressed vowel of English.

Example: the <a> in *alone* is /ə/. Because English usually has only one distinctly stressed syllable in each lexical word and therefore only one vowel which is fully realized, all of the remaining vowel tend to be pronounced relatively indistinctly and are often reduced to schwa. This means that schwa is the most frequently used vowel of English. Some varieties such as those of AusE and AmE have a stronger tendency toward schwa while other accents, esp. those of BrE also draw strongly on unstressed /ɪ/. Example: RP distinguishes between /bɒksɪz/ and /bɒksəz/ while AusE would tend to realize both as the latter, thus leveling the distinction between *boxes* and *boxers*.

Comparison

Comparing pronunciation demands systematic approaches to pronunciation. These will take different aspects into consideration.(1) via contrasts in the **vowel system** or inventory of **phonemes** of the

different accents of English. Example: OE had the velar fricative /x/ while ModE does not. (2) differences in the articulation or **phonetic realization** of the sounds. Example: Northern and Scottish varieties of ModE may have monophthongal /e:/ and /o:/ where RP and many varieties of GenAm have /e/ and /əʊ/ or /ou/. (3) **phonotactic** rules describe the possible combination of phoneme. Example: the permissible initial consonant clusters /hl-/, /hr-/, /hw-/, and /hn-/ of OE and including contextual variants (allophones) like initial voiceless fricatives (/f, θ, s/ but medial voiced ones (/v, ð, z/), and (4) the **lexical sets** of words which indicate which words undergo or have undergone particular processes of change. Example: the BATH words, which have [ɑ:] in Southern England, but [a] in the North or [æ] in America.

The following links provide an auditory impression of a variety of accents. They all use the same text, which is given here and which contains the key words from Wells' lexical sets.

Comma Gets a Cure

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Well, here's a story for you: Sarah Perry was a veterinary nurse who had been working daily at an old zoo in a deserted district of the territory, so she was very happy to start a new job at a superb private practice in North Square near the Duke Street Tower. That area was much nearer for her and more to her liking. Even so, on her first morning, she felt stressed. She ate a bowl of porridge, checked herself in the mirror and washed her face in a hurry. Then she put on a plain yellow dress and a fleece jacket, picked up her kit and headed for work.

When she got there, there was a woman with a goose waiting for her. The woman gave Sarah an official letter from the vet. The letter implied that the animal could be suffering from a rare form of foot and mouth disease, which was surprising, because normally you would only expect to see it in a dog or a goat. Sarah was sentimental, so this made her feel sorry for the beautiful bird.

Before long, that itchy goose began to strut around the office like a lunatic, which made an unsanitary mess. The goose's owner, Mary Harrison, kept calling, "Comma, Comma," which Sarah thought was an odd choice for a name. Comma was strong and huge, so it would take some force to trap her, but Sarah had a different idea. First she tried gently stroking the goose's lower back with her palm, then singing a tune to her. Finally, she administered ether. Her efforts were not futile. In no time, the goose began to tire, so Sarah was able to hold onto Comma and give her a relaxing bath.

Once Sarah had managed to bathe the goose, she wiped her off with a cloth and laid her on her right side. Then Sarah confirmed the vet's diagnosis. Almost immediately, she remembered an effective treatment that required her to measure out a lot of medicine. Sarah warned that this course of treatment might be expensive-either five or six times the cost of penicillin. I can't imagine paying so much, but Mrs. Harrison-a millionaire lawyer-thought it was a fair price for a cure.

RP	GenAm	Shakespearean	Cameroon
Yorkshire	Southern	Irish English	Ghana
Australian			

It is planned to add further samples of accents.

Lexical sets are words which share the same vowel. Because of historical shifts some sets have merged with another lexical set in the one or the other accent, as have the vowels of FORCE and NORTH. In other accents the one or the other lexical set has emerged as a split off a previously unified lexical set with a different original vowel. The STRUT vowel split off and became /ʌ/ in RP and GenAm, but remained /ʊ/ in Yorkshire. Furthermore, the way in which any given vowel is pronounced will sound different from accent to accent without actually being a phonologically different vowel. In RP the phonetic quality of the STRUT vowel is [a] while in GenAm it is [ɔ]. For this reason it is very convenient to refer to vowels by their lexical set since this helps us to avoid the otherwise inevitable confusion

which would ensue. The sets, originally proposed by Wells (cf. Wells 1982) are listed by key word in the following:

KIT	NURSE	MOUTH
DRESS	FLEECE	NEAR
TRAP	FACE	SQUARE
LOT	PALM	START
STRUT	GOAT	NORTH
FOOT	GOOSE	FORCE
BATH	PRICE	CURE
CLOTH	CHOICE	

Wells, J.C. (1982) *Accents of English*. Cambridge: CUP.

Accent refers to the pronunciation a speaker or group of speakers has. An accent is independent of grammar and vocabulary. Most importantly: people may speak **Standard English (StE)** with virtually any accent. Example: StE may be delivered in a prestige accent such as **RP** or **GenAm**, but also a local or regional accent or, of course, a foreign (non-native) accent.

Reference accents are the standard accents generally used in dictionaries and other reference works to indicate pronunciation. See **GenAm** and **RP**.

RP (Received Pronunciation) is the prestigious standard accent of England, spoken in a near-RP form by as many as 25% of the population. RP in its strictest sense (3% of the population of England) carries strong associations of class and is rejected by many for this reason. The accent is non-rhotic and realizes the **FOOT-STRUT split**. The following excerpt from Henry Wyld illustrates the class basis of RP (referred to by Wyld as “Received Standard” or “R.S.”) as well as any statement:

Everyone knows that there is a type of English which is neither provincial nor vulgar, a type which most people would willingly speak if they could, and desire to speak if they do not. It is unnecessary to particularize R.S. farther than I have done in the preceding sentence, beyond saying that it is the type spoken by members of the great Public Schools, and by those classes in society which normally frequent these. I suggest that this is the best kind of English, not only because it is spoken by those often very properly called “the best people”, but because it has two great advantages that make it intrinsically superior to every other type of English speech – the extent to which it is current throughout the country, and the marked distinctiveness and clarity in its sounds. (Wyld 1934, 1991: 211)

Aside from the fundamental class-bias in this statement even the two reasons Wyld gave for the so-called superiority of RP would be hard to defend. Its currency is hard to defend in a country where you seldom run into an RP speaker in any kind of casual encounter. As for the second point, clarity is very obviously in the ear of the hearer and hard if perhaps not impossible to define more precisely.

Wyld, Henry (1934, 1991) “The Best English: A Claim for the Superiority of Received Standard English.” In: Tony Crowley (ed.) *Proper English? Readings in Language, History and Cultural Identity*. London: Routledge, 207-218.

General American (GenAm) is a relatively diffuse cluster of accents of North American English which are generally viewed as constituting the standard accent. It is rhotic and is characterized by the lack of specifically **Southern, New England, Appalachian**, or **ethnic** features. Some form of GenAm is spoken by perhaps 70% of the population of the US.

Estuary English is a koinéized form of English that seems to be developing in London and its vicinity (the Thames Estuary and the lower Thames valley, i.e. Essex and northern Kent). It contains some of

the less stigmatized, non-RP features of *London English*. Example: **L-vocalization**, *Paul* = *paw* /pɔ:/.

Phonology of English as an International Language (EIL). The suggestion has been made to teach EIL or the lingua franca core (LFC) without bothering with unimportant points from the perspective of maintaining intelligibility. Since many non-native and even quite a few native speakers do not produce /θ/ and /ð/ and yet are readily understood, there is no need to teach these phonemes. Learners can make do with /t, d/, with /s, z/, or with /f, v/. Other features of pronunciation easily dispensed of: the distinction between /i:/ and /ɪ/ as in *peach* and *pitch*. Weak forms can be ignored, always saying /sɪ: pɪtʃ/ and never weak /ðə pɪ:tʃ/. Rhythm may be syllable-timed rather than stressed timed. The idea behind such suggestions is well meant, but it ignores the fact that most non-native speakers prefer to pursue a standard ENL pronunciation (cf. Jenkins 2009: 147f)

Jenkins, J. (2000) *The Phonology of English as an International Language*. Oxford: OUP.

Jenkins, J. (2009) *World Englishes. A Resource Book for Students*. 2nd ed. London: Routledge.

Phonetics

Allophone: a variant of a phoneme. Although the pronunciation may sound strange, the exchange of allophones does not cause a word to take on a different meaning. Example: The girl's name *Ann* may be pronounced with or with a nasalized vowel as [æ̃n] or [æ̃ñ] without changing reference.

Aspiration: a feature of pronunciation in which an voiceless stop (/p, t, k/) is followed by a slight puff of air. Aspiration is marked in narrow, i.e. detailed phonetic transcription with a following raised <h>, e.g. [p^h].

Backing: a feature of vowel pronunciation. Specifically, there is backing if the highest point of the tongue when producing a **vowel** lies farther to the back of the mouth in comparison to some other pronunciation of the "same" vowel. Example: In SAfE the START-vowel is farther back at [ɒ:] in comparison to RP/GenAm [ɑ:].

Fronting: a feature of vowel pronunciation. Specifically, there is fronting if the highest point of the tongue when producing a **vowel** lies at the front of the mouth in comparison to some other pronunciation of the "same" vowel. Example: In the **Southern Shift** the FOOT-vowel is farther front at [ʊ] in comparison to conservative **RP/ GenAm** [u].

Consonant clusters: the occurrence of two or more consonants together without intervening vowels. In ME numerous such clusters were simplified. Example: initial /kn-/ to /n-/ or final /-mb/to (-m/ even though the spelling continues to reflex the earlier pronunciation of the clusters (*kenow*, *lamb*)

Diphthong, diphthongization: combinations of two vowels which function as a unit. Example: the vowel of *time* is /aɪ/, a diphthong consisting of /a/ + /ɪ/. In the process of diphthongization new diphthongs emerge. Example: If dark [ɛ] is vocalic [u], as in *milk* [mɪʊk] it contains a new diphthong.

Lax: a vowel pronounced without any great muscle tension. Examples: /ɪ, e, ʊ/. See also **tense**.

Tense refers to the higher muscular energy which is used when long vowels are pronounced. Examples: the long vowels such as /i:/ or /u:/. See also **lax**. See also (grammatical **tense**)

Voicing: obstruents in English are paired according to whether the vocal cords vibrate (**voiced**) or not (**voiceless**) when they are articulated. Examples of such pairs: /b – p/, /v – f/, /z – s/,

Stress is the relative prominence of a syllable as compared to its context. Stress is achieved by pronouncing the syllable to be stressed more loudly or more slowly or with a falling pitch, sometimes even by pronouncing it more softly.

Word stress: the syllable in lexical words which is more strongly accented in English. It is relatively fixed and tends to fall on the first syllable. However, borrowed words, esp. ones from Latin may have variable stress, and there may be some differences between varieties of English. Examples: Latinate: *profēs̄sor*, but *profēs̄sorial*; varieties: AmE *advērtisēment*, but BrE *advērtisēmēt*.

Phonology (see also Phonotactics)

Phonemicization: the process in which an *allophone* becomes a distinct sound (*phoneme*). Two words with a sound which once existed as two variations are now distinct. Example: With the loss of final /g/ after /ŋ/ in words like *sing* the phoneme /ŋ/ became distinct from the /n/ of *sin*.

Phonemes are the smallest unit of sounds which may potentially distinguish two words (see *minimal pair*). The phonemes of ModE vary from accent to accent. RP, for example, has 20 vowels and diphthongs while GenAm has only 16 (no centering diphthongs /ɪə, eə, uə/)

A minimal pair consists of two words with different meanings which are distinguished in pronunciation by a change of one *phoneme*. This is a test for establishing the existence of distinct phonemes.

Example: *sharpe* : *carpe* (Text 5.6b) distinguishes /ʃ/ from /k/.

Consonants

Affricate: a *stop* with *fricative* release at the same place of articulation. Examples: /tʃ, dʒ/

Fricative: *obstruent* with a continuous flow of air through a narrowing which causes friction within the mouth at the lips /f, v/, the teeth /θ, ð/, the alveolar ridge /s, z/, or just behind the alveolar ridge /ʃ, ʒ/

Obstruent: a cover term for both stops/plosives and fricatives. Examples: /p, t, k/ (stops) and /f, θ, s, ʃ/ (fricatives) are all obstruents.

Plosive. See stop.

Nasal: a consonant in which the air is released through the nose and the passage through the mouth is blocked at the lips /m/, the alveolar ridge /n/, or the velum or soft palate /ŋ/.

Stop, aka plosive. a consonant produced by stopping and then releasing the air flow at the lips /p, b/, the alveolar ridge /t, d/, or the velum or soft palate /k, g/.

Vowels

Vowel systems: *GenE* in its many varieties shares systems of vowels which are close enough to allow a high degree of mutual intelligibility. The vowel systems of some *traditional dialects* may diverge too strongly for easy comprehension by outsiders. Examples (GenE). See also *RP, GenAm, Northern Cities Shift, Southern Shift*.

Phonotactics (see also **sound change** and **8.2.5**)

Consonant clusters are groupings of two or more consonants without any intervening vowel. Example: /str-, pl-, -kt, -mpt/ as in *street, please, act, or jumped*.

Rhoticity, semi-rhoticity, and non-rhoticity: refers to whether /r/ is pronounced only before a vowel (non-rhoticity), only in morpheme-final position (semi-rhoticity), or also freely before consonants and a pause (rhoticity). Examples: *farm* non-rhotic and semi-rhotic /fɑ:m/ vs. rhotic /fɑ:rm/; *star* (morpheme-final <r>) non-rhotic /stɑ:/ vs. semi-rhotic and rhotic /stɑ:r/.

Non-rhotic: see *rhoticity*.