

# Unit 2

## Theoretical introduction (2)

Phonetics, phonology, and writing

Slides for the session of

*Phonetics with Listening Practice (British)*

held on

19 / 20 brumaire de l'année CCXXX de la République

09 / 10 November 2021



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Why do we need the International Phonetic Alphabet?

Hearing *what's* said vs. listening to *how* it's said

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Consonants and vowels: phonetics and phonology

Phonetics vs. phonology: different strata

Confronting phonetics with phonology

-etic vs. -emic: a difference of perspective

Homework

Robert Spence  
LangSciTech  
Saarland University

## Phonetics with Listening Practice (British): Unit 2:

[fə.'net.ɪks wɪð 'lɪs.ən.ɪŋ 'pɹækt.ɪs 'bɪt.ɪf 'ju:n.ɪt 'tʰu:]

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based on material by William Barry and Ingmar Steiner

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### 19 / 20 brumaire de l'année CCXXX de la République

[diz.nœf / vɛ bʁy.mɛ:ʁ də la.ne dø.sã.tʁãt də la ʁe.py.blik]

### 9 / 10 November

[ 'naɪnθ ʊ əv ʊ / 'tʰenθ ʊ əv ʊ nə(ʊ). 'ven.bə 'twɔnt.i 'twɔnt.i 'wɒn]

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From the “spelling poem” (cf. Eckert and Barry p. 253)

I take it you already know  
Of tough and bough and cough and dough?  
Others may stumble but not you  
On hiccough, thorough, lough, and through.  
Well done! And now you wish perhaps,  
To learn of less familiar traps?  
Beware of heard, a dreadful word  
That looks like beard but sounds like bird,  
And dead –it's said like bed, not bead –  
For goodness' sake don't call it deed!  
Watch out for meat and great and threat  
(They rhyme with suite and straight and debt).

## Why do we need the International Phonetic Alphabet?

A moth is not a moth in mother  
Nor both in bother, broth in brother,  
And here is not a match for there  
Nor dear and fear for bear and pear,  
And then there's dose and rose and lose –  
Just look them up –and loose and choose,  
And cork and work and card and ward,  
And font and front and word and sword,  
And do and go and thwart and cart –  
Come, come, I've hardly made a start!  
A dreadful language? Man alive!  
I'd mastered it when I was five!

... and you can find even longer versions of this poem if you google for the first line :-)

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- Primarily, we listen to someone to hear what he/she is saying.

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## Hearing *what's* said vs. listening to *how* it's said

- Primarily, we listen to someone to hear what he/she is saying.
- What did the person say? [Click here to hear \[kɪɪk hɪə tə hɪə\]](#)

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- What did the person say? [Click here to hear \[klɪk hɪə tə hɪə\]](#)
  - “Ich bin in den Laden reingegangen...”?

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  - “Bin in den Laden reingegangen...”?
  - “Bin in'n Laden reingegangen...”?

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- What did the person say? [Click here to hear \[klɪk hɪə tə hɪə\]](#)
  - “Ich bin in den Laden reingegangen...”?
  - “Bin in den Laden reingegangen...”?
  - “Bin in'n Laden reingegangen...”?
  - “Bin in'n Lad'n reingegang'ng...”?
- Orthography is not very good at capturing the details of the pronunciation:

[bɪn ɪn̩ ˈlaːd̩n̩ raɪŋgəgəŋ]

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- Primarily, we listen to someone to hear what he/she is saying.
- What did the person say? [Click here to hear \[klɪk hɪə tə hɪə\]](#)
  - “Ich bin in den Laden reingegangen...”?
  - “Bin in den Laden reingegangen...”?
  - “Bin in'n Laden reingegangen...”?
  - “Bin in'n Lad'n reingegang'ng...”?
- Orthography is not very good at capturing the details of the pronunciation:  
  
[bɪn ɪn̩ 'la:dən raɪŋgəgəŋ]
- But how much detail should we try to capture in our transcription of the sound?

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## Phonetic vs. phonological (e.g. phonemic) transcription

Remember that there are different LEVELS a.k.a. STRATA in language, as well as different MANIFESTATIONS (e.g. written and spoken).

TIN STEP LETDOWN		lexicogrammatical
<t>	/t/	{graph   phon}emic
τ      ɾ	[t <sup>h</sup> ] [t] [tʰ]	{graph   phon}etic
photons	sound waves	physical reality

Note the conventions: <t> /t/ [t] see E&B p. 289

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- ⟨Ich bin in den Laden reingegangen.⟩

— standard orthography

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## What should we include in the transcription?

- ⟨Ich bin in den Laden reingegangen.⟩
- /ʔɪç bɪn ɪn de:n 'la:dən 'ʁamɡə,ɡaŋən/

— standard orthography

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— a phonemic transcription
- [bɪn ɪn ɪ 'la:dɪ 'ʁaɪŋgə'gəŋ]  
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- ['bɪnɪnɪ'la:dŋ'kaɪŋə'ɡaŋ]  
— a phonetic transcription without word breaks
- ['bɪn.ɪn.ɪ.'la:.dŋ.'kaɪŋ.ə.'ɡaŋ]  
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## Variation

- Phonetic variation – the way your pronunciation differs from those of other people – is an indication of “where you belong”, “who you are”, “what your identity is”.

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  - Variation according to generation – older vs. younger.
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  - Variation according to geographical origin – the ‘Received Pronunciation’ of British English (SE Britain) vs. General American (Midwest United States) vs. General Australian, and so on.

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## Variation

- Phonetic variation – the way your pronunciation differs from those of other people – is an indication of “where you belong”, “who you are”, “what your identity is”.
- There are many dimensions of variation:
  - Variation according to generation – older vs. younger.
  - Variation according to gender – man vs. woman – some of this is biological (innate), whereas some of it is learned.
  - Variation according to social class – class is measurable as: high workplace autonomy vs. low workplace autonomy.
  - Variation according to geographical origin – the ‘Received Pronunciation’ of British English (SE Britain) vs. General American (Midwest United States) vs. General Australian, and so on.
- As an EU spy in the post-Brexit Republic of England, whose identity will you take up?

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- As an EU spy in the post-Brexit Republic of England, whose identity will you take up?
- Where does this man come from, do you think?

[http:](http://www.spence.saar.de/courses/phoneticswithlistening/mc.mp3)

[//www.spence.saar.de/courses/phoneticswithlistening/mc.mp3](http://www.spence.saar.de/courses/phoneticswithlistening/mc.mp3)

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- Phonetically: vowels involve merely a “shaping” of the airflow from the lungs

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- Phonetically: vowels involve merely a “shaping” of the airflow from the lungs
- Phonetically: consonants involve more of a restriction or obstruction of the airflow

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- Phonetically: vowels involve merely a “shaping” of the airflow from the lungs
- Phonetically: consonants involve more of a restriction or obstruction of the airflow
- Phonologically: a vowel typically functions as the Nucleus of a syllable

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- Phonetically: consonants involve more of a restriction or obstruction of the airflow
- Phonologically: a vowel typically functions as the Nucleus of a syllable
- Phonologically: a consonant typically functions as the Onset (Initial) or Coda (Final) element in the structure of a syllable

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- Phonologically: a vowel typically functions as the Nucleus of a syllable
- Phonologically: a consonant typically functions as the Onset (Initial) or Coda (Final) element in the structure of a syllable
- And don't confuse vowel/consonant “letters” (⟨ ⟩) with vowel/consonant “sounds” (/ / and [ ]); the above is about “sounds”.

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- Phonologically: a consonant typically functions as the Onset (Initial) or Coda (Final) element in the structure of a syllable
- And don't confuse vowel/consonant “letters” (⟨ ⟩) with vowel/consonant “sounds” (/ / and [ ]); the above is about “sounds”.
- The “vowel letters” in the English spelling system are ⟨a⟩, ⟨e⟩, ⟨i⟩, ⟨o⟩, ⟨u⟩, and (sometimes:) ⟨y⟩

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- Page 40 of the course notes: official full IPA chart

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- Page 40 of the course notes: official full IPA chart
- Page 39 of the course notes: list of English phonemes

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- Page 40 of the course notes: official full IPA chart
- Page 39 of the course notes: list of English phonemes
- What differences do you notice between the two pages?

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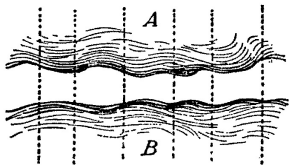
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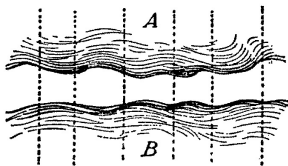
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## -etic vs -emic: a difference of perspective

- An -etic description is made from the perspective of an “outsider”:



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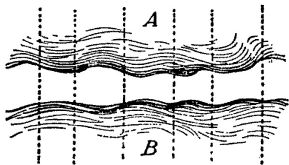
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- An -etic description is made from the perspective of an “outsider”:
- — “what gestures / shapes / sounds can I in fact observe?”



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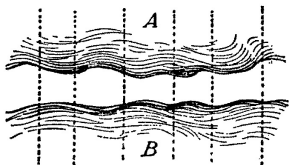
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## -etic vs -emic: a difference of perspective

- An -etic description is made from the perspective of an “outsider”:
- — “what gestures / shapes / sounds can I in fact observe?”
- ← THERE ARE NOT YET ANY DOTTED LINES!!!



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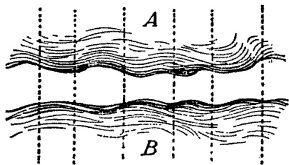
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- BUT NOW THERE **ARE** DOTTED LINES!!! →

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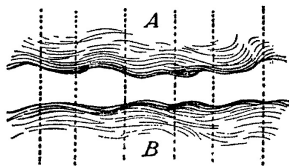
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- BUT NOW THERE **ARE** DOTTED LINES!!! →
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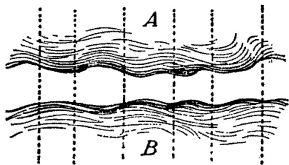
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- — “what gestures / shapes / sounds can I in fact observe?”
- ← THERE ARE NOT YET ANY DOTTED LINES!!!



- BUT NOW THERE **ARE** DOTTED LINES!!! →
- An -emic description is made from the perspective of an “insider”
- — which *differences* between gestures / shapes / sounds are likely to **stand for a difference in MEANING** within one particular language?

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- You can find the relevant pages here:  
[http://www.spence.saar.de/courses/phoneticswithlistening/unit02\\_20211/C\\_\\_Additional\\_Handout](http://www.spence.saar.de/courses/phoneticswithlistening/unit02_20211/C__Additional_Handout)
- Consult the diagram on page 49 of the course notes, which shows the **places of articulation** in the human vocal tract.

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- Each of these places of articulation has a technical name (usually borrowed from Latin) and an associated adjective. This applies both to the 'active' articulator (typically: a part of the tongue) and the 'passive' articulator (typically: a part of the roof of the mouth). Follow the link to the original Wikipedia file from which the diagram is taken and **learn the adjectives**. (In addition to the English terms, you can also find the German and Spanish terms there.)

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- Familiarize yourselves with the **IPA symbols** used for phonemic transcriptions of English words (page 39 of the course notes). But beware! When learning the ‘meaning’ of IPA symbols you should always start with the full IPA table on page 40! (In transcribing English, we are often a bit sloppy in the way we use symbols like /r/ /ʌ/ /i:/ /e/ /u:/ /ʊ/ /ɔ:/ and a few others.)

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