

Unit 5

Vowels (2) – EXPERIMENTAL

Some differences between English and German vowels and diphthongs

Slides for the session of

Phonetics with Listening Practice (British)

held on

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English Phonetics: Unit 5:

/ˈɪŋ ɡlɪf ə ˈnet ɪks ˈjuːn ɪt ˈfɑːv/

Vowels (2) — EXPERIMENTAL

[ˈvaʊətz ˈtʰuː]

Some differences between English and German vowels and
diphthongs

[ˈsʌm ˈdɪf.jənsəz bə ˈtwiːn ˈɪŋɡlɪf ən ˈdʒɜːmən ˈvaʊətz ən ˈdɪfθɒŋz]

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The goals of today's session are:

- 1 To give an overview of the system of vowel and diphthong phonemes in English, contrasting it with the corresponding system in German (20 mins)

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Vowels (2) –
EXPERIMENTAL

Goals

Experiment

English vowels and
diphthongs (schematic)

Differences German/English

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- 2 To compare and contrast the typical phonetic realizations (phones, allophones) of the vowel and diphthong phonemes of English and German (25 mins)

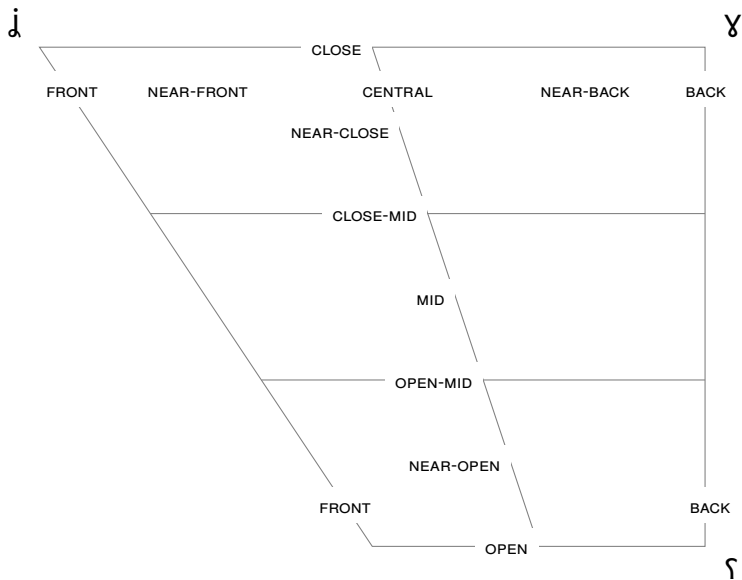
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- 3 To begin practising some of the English vowels and diphthongs that can be problematic to speakers of various other languages.
- 4 To begin comparing and contrasting the vowels and diphthongs of some of the main dialects of English (such as RP, General American, Australian English, New Zealand English).

Vowel Quadrilateral



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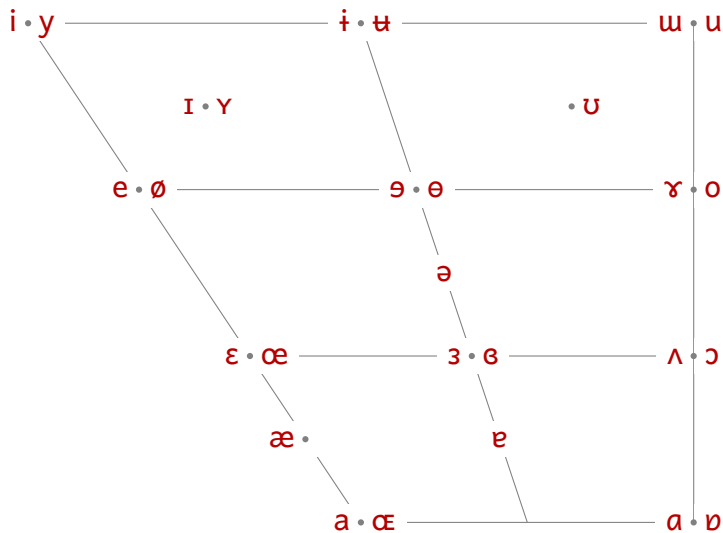
Goals

Experiment

English vowels and
diphthongs (schematic)

Differences German/English

Cardinal Vowels



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Vowels (2) –
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English vowels and
diphthongs (schematic)

Differences German/English

English short vowels: lexical sets



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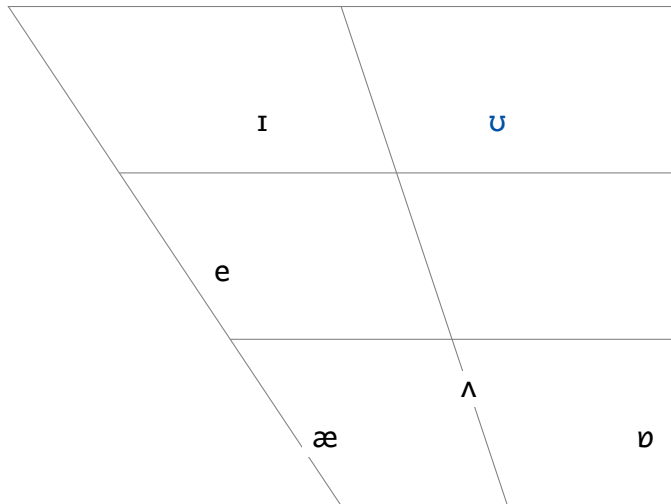
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English vowels and
diphthongs (schematic)

Differences German/English

English short vowels: phonemes



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Vowels (2) –
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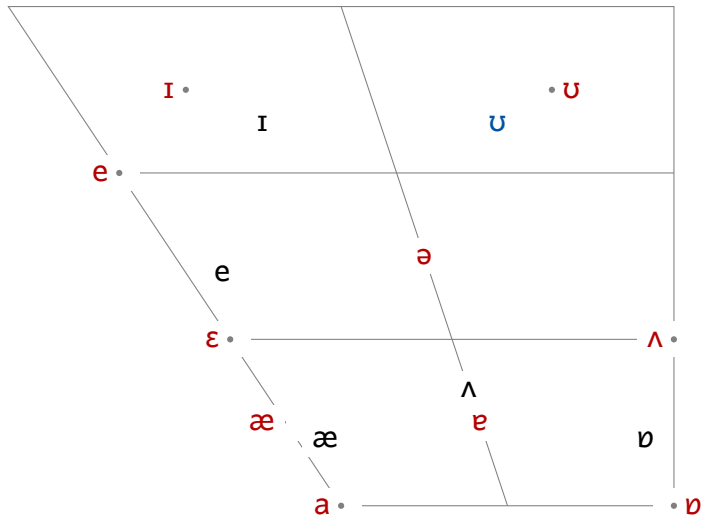
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Experiment

English vowels and
diphthongs (schematic)

Differences German/English

English short vowels: phonemes compared with cardinal vowels



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Vowels (2) –
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English vowels and
diphthongs (schematic)

Differences German/English

English short vowels: examples

pit	pet	pat	pot	putt	put
/pɪt/	/pet/	/pæt/	/pɒt/	/pʌt/	/put/
[pʰɪt]	[pʰɛt]	[pʰæ̃t]	[pʰɒt]	[pʰɛt]	[pʰʊt]

bit	bid	wick	wig	nip	nib	hiss	his
[bɪt]	[bɪˈd]	[wɪk]	[wɪˈg]	[nɪp]	[nɪˈb]	[hɪs]	[hɪˈz]

set	said	debt	dead	etch	edge	cess	says
[sɛt]	[sɛˈd]	[dɛt]	[dɛˈd]	[ɛt̃]	[ɛˈdʒ]	[sɛs]	[sɛˈz]

fat	fad	back	bag	batch	badge	slap	slab
[fæt]	[fæˈd]	[bæk]	[bæˈg]	[bæt̃]	[bæˈdʒ]	[slæp]	[slæˈb]

cop	cob	knot	nod	lock	log	hops	Hobbes
[kʰɒp]	[kʰɒˈb]	[nɒt]	[nɒˈd]	[lɒk]	[lɒˈg]	[hɒps]	[hɒˈbz]

cup	cub	duck	dug	fuss	fuzz	once	ones
[kʰɛp]	[kʰɛˈb]	[dek]	[dɛˈg]	[fes]	[feˈz]	[wɛns]	[weˈnz]

put	bush	soot	foot	wool	stood	hood	good
[pʰʊt]	[bʊʃ]	[sut]	[fut]	[wʊl]	[stʊd]	[hʊd]	[gʊd]

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English vowels and
diphthongs (schematic)

Differences German/English

English short vowels: more examples

kit	dress	strap	lot	strut	foot
/kɪt/	/dres/	/stræp/	/lɒt/	/strʌt/	/fʊt/
[k ^h ɪt]	[dʁɛs]	[stɹæp]	[lɒt]	[stɹʌt]	[fʊt]

it fits him | big business stinks | Tim hit his shins |
/ɪt fɪts hɪm/ /bɪɡ ˈbɪznɪs stɪŋks/ /*tɪm hɪt hɪz ʃɪnz/

let's get set | lead's heavy | chem sex isn't the same as cam sex |
/lets get set/ /ledz ˈhevi/ /kem seks ɪz.nɪt ðə seɪm əz kæm seks/

the black cat tried to catch a rat | the back hatstand is for caps |
/ðə blæk kæt traɪd tu kætʃ ə ræt/ /ðə blæk ˈhætstænd ɪz fə kæps/

I want to wander in the tropics | Don Johnson is on top |
/aɪ wʌnt tu ˈwɒndər ɪn ðə ˈtrɒpɪks/ /*dɒn *ˈdʒɒnsən ɪz ɒn tɒp/

cut up the tough stuff | it's lovely honey and butter |
/kʌt ʌp ðə tʌf stʌf/ /ɪts ˈlʌvli ˈhʌni ən ˈbʌtə/

look, full of books | Cook took a look | Cook took Brook's rook |
/lʊk | fʊl əv bʊks/ /*kʊk tʊk ə lʊk/ /*kʊk tʊk *brʊks rʊk/

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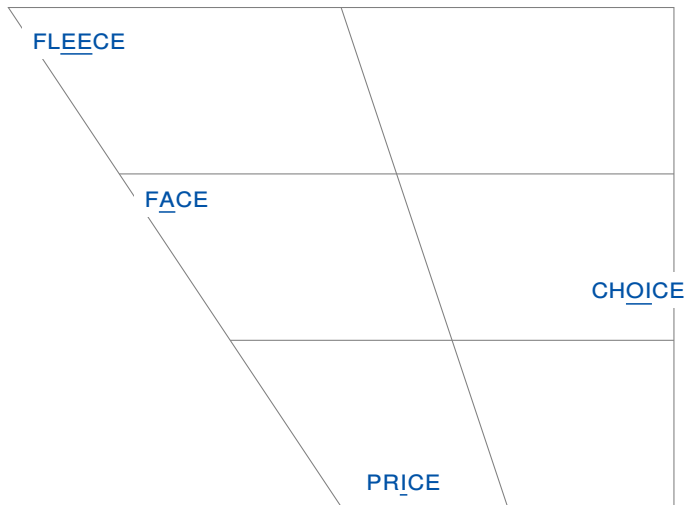
Goals

Experiment

English vowels and
diphthongs (schematic)

Differences German/English

English long vowels and diphthongs (1): lexical sets



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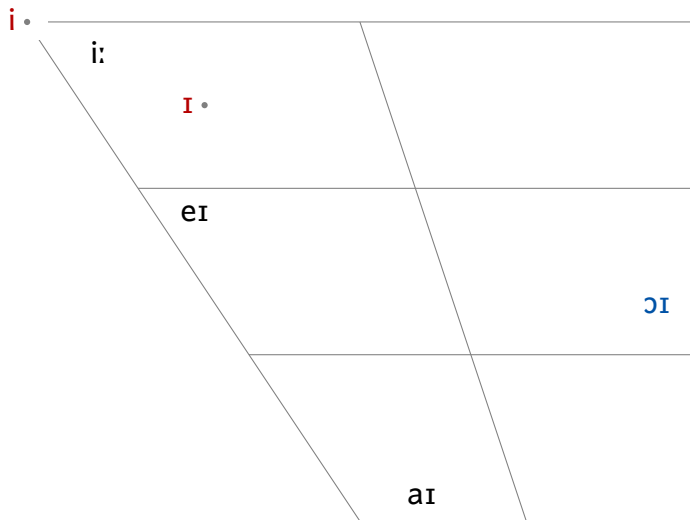
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English long vowels and diphthongs (1): phonemes



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English vowels and
diphthongs (schematic)

Differences German/English

English long vowels and diphthongs (1): examples

fleece	face	price	choice
/fli:s/	/feɪs/	/praɪs/	/tʃɔɪs/
[fl̩iːs]	[f̩eɪs]	[p̩ɹ̩aɪs]	[tʃ̩ɔɪs]

fleece	fleas	heat	heed	belief	believe	cease	seize
[fli:s]	[fli:z]	[hi:t]	[hi:d]	[bɪ.li:f]	[bɪ.li:v]	[si:s]	[si:z]

face	phase	pace	pay	wait	wade	fate	fade
[feɪs]	[feɪz]	[pʰeɪs]	[pʰeɪ]	[weɪt]	[weɪd]	[feɪt]	[feɪd]

price	prize	ice	eyes	wright	ride	dice	die
[p̩ɹ̩aɪs]	[p̩ɹ̩aɪz]	[aɪs]	[aɪz]	[waɪt]	[waɪd]	[daɪs]	[daɪ]

choice	Choy's	Joyce	joys	quoit	coy	Boyce	boys
[tʃɔɪs]	[tʃɔɪz]	[dʒɔɪs]	[dʒɔɪz]	[kɔɪt]	[kɔɪ]	[bɔɪs]	[bɔɪz]

It's the bee's knees! Peachy keen! Squeaky clean! Lean and mean!

The rain in Spain stays mainly in the plain. (K)no(w) pain, (k)no(w) gain.

Try it – you'll like it! “I like Ike!” (“I like Pike!”) Mike's on Skype.

Noisy toys point to boys. (This one's been reported to the gender police.)

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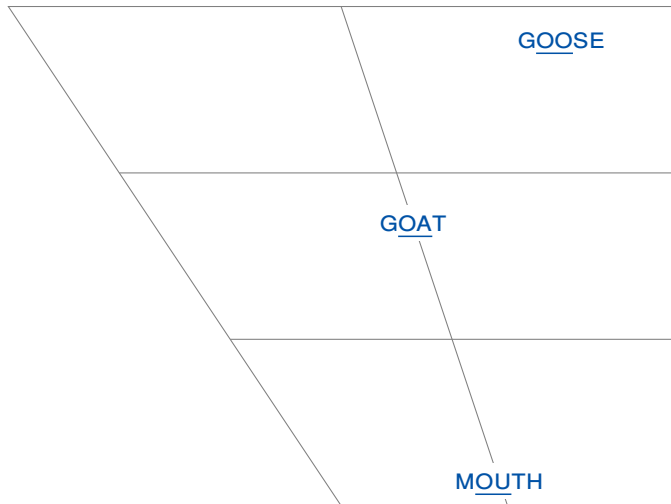
Goals

Experiment

English vowels and
diphthongs (schematic)

Differences German/English

English long vowels and diphthongs (2): lexical sets



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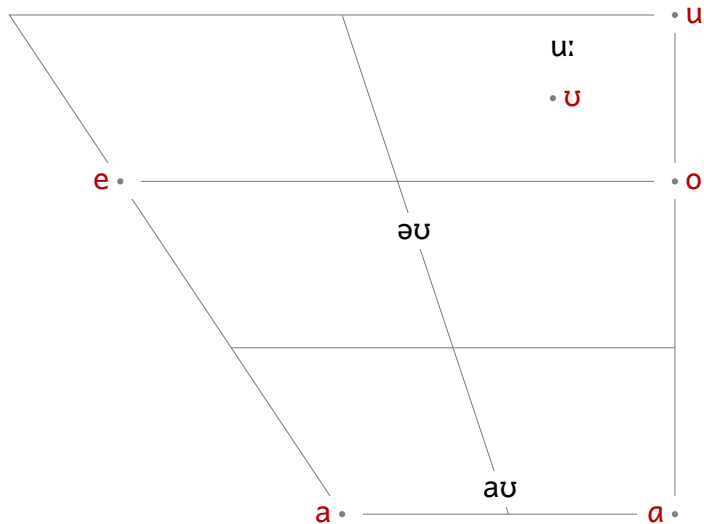
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English vowels and
diphthongs (schematic)

Differences German/English

English long vowels and diphthongs (2): phonemes



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Vowels (2) –
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English vowels and
diphthongs (schematic)

Differences German/English

English long vowels and diphthongs (2): examples

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English vowels and
diphthongs (schematic)

Differences German/English

goose goat mouth

/gu:s/ /gəʊt/ /maʊθ/

[gʊːs] [gəʊ̯t] [maʊ̯θ] [mɛ̯ʊ̯θ] [maʊ̯θ]

moot mood use (n.) use (v.) proof prove

[mʊːt] [mʊːd] [jʊːs] [jʊːz] [pɹʊːf] [pɹʊːv]

goat goad dose doze close (n.) close (v.)

[gəʊ̯t] [gəʊ̯d] [dəʊ̯s] [dəʊ̯z] [kləʊ̯s] [kləʊ̯z]

mouth (n.) mouth (v.) house (n.) house (v.) bout bowed

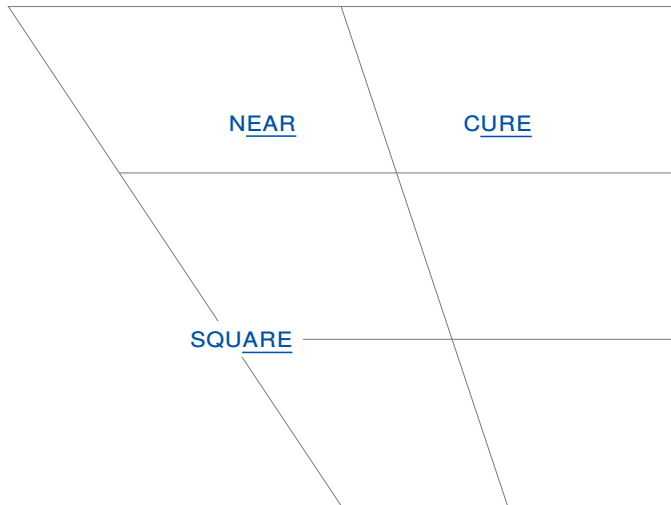
[maʊ̯θ] [maʊ̯ð] [haʊ̯s] [həʊ̯z] [baʊ̯t] [bəʊ̯d]

Whose shoe's loose? Sue knew. Hugh's tune is due in June.

I suppose so. It's Flo's go. Oh no, don't go home alone.

How now, brown cow? Out out, town mouse! Clouds and showers.

English long vowels and diphthongs (3): lexical sets



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Vowels (2) –
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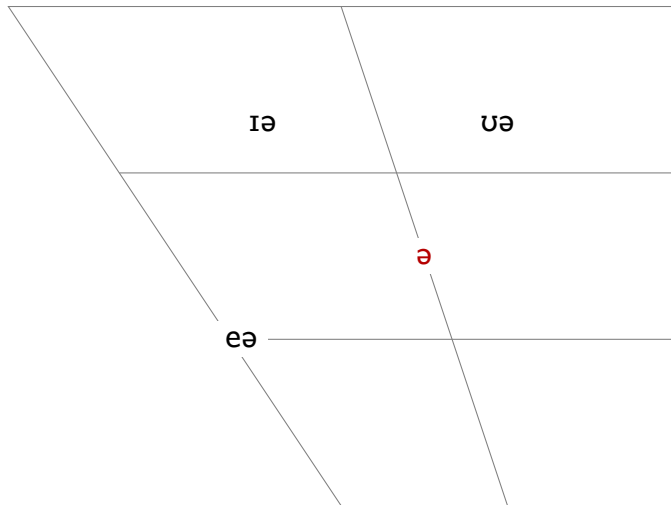
Goals

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English vowels and
diphthongs (schematic)

Differences German/English

English long vowels and diphthongs (3): phonemes



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Vowels (2) –
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English vowels and
diphthongs (schematic)

Differences German/English

English long vowels and diphthongs (3): examples

near square cure
/nɪə/ /skweə/ /kjʊə/
[nɪ̯ə] [skwɛ̯ə] [kjʊ̯ə] [kjɔ:]

pierce peers fierce fear weird beard
[p^hɪə̯s] [p^hɪ̯ə̯z] [fɪəs] [fɪ̯ə] [wɪ̯əd] [bɪ̯əd]

scarce scares there their they're mayor prayer
[skɛ̯əs] [skɛ̯ə̯z] [ðɛ̯ə] [ðɛ̯ə] [ðɛ̯ə] [mɛ̯ə] [pɹ̥ɛ̯ə]

your you're sure pure poor Europe
[jʊ̯ə] [jʊ̯ə] [ʃʊ̯ə] [pjʊ̯ə] [p^hʊ̯ə] ['jʊ̯ə̯.əp]

Here and there, we're aware of Peter Pears paring a pair of pears.

Here they're all ours; there they're all theirs.

This is your big “But you're Jean Ure, aren't you?” moment!

Are you sure (/ʃɔ:/ <Shaw>)? No, I'm Shakespeare!

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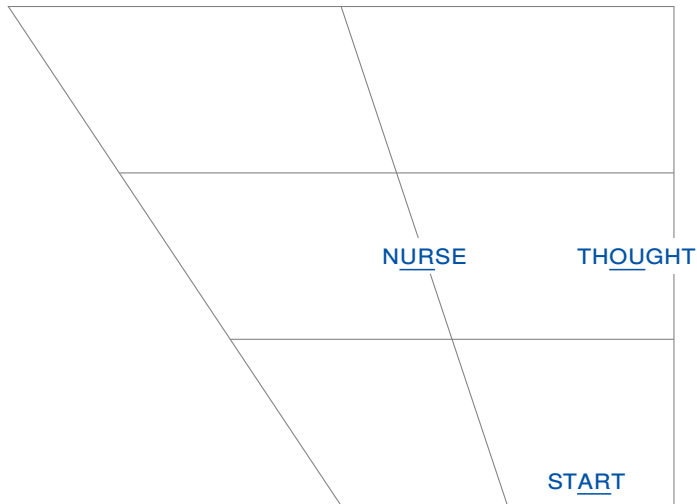
Goals

Experiment

English vowels and
diphthongs (schematic)

Differences German/English

English long vowels and diphthongs (4): lexical sets



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Vowels (2) –
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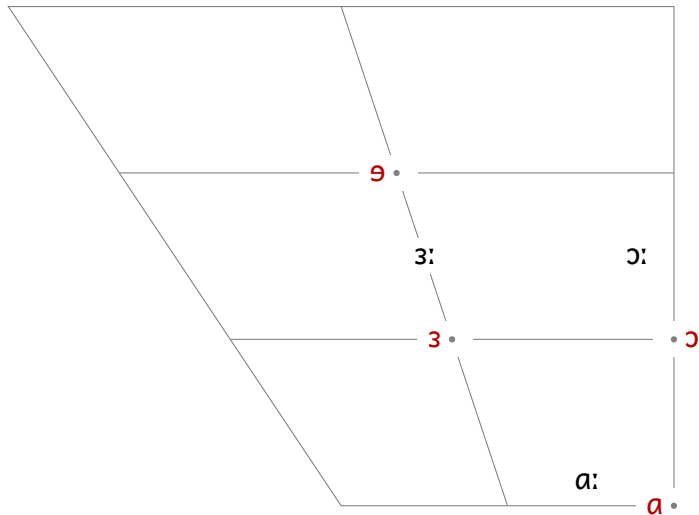
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Experiment

English vowels and
diphthongs (schematic)

Differences German/English

English long vowels and diphthongs (4): phonemes



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Vowels (2) –
EXPERIMENTAL

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English vowels and
diphthongs (schematic)

Differences German/English

English long vowels and diphthongs (4): examples

start	nurse	thought
/sta:t/	/nɜ:s/	/θɔ:t/
[stɑ:t]	[nɜ:s]	[θɔ:t]

part	staff	starve	cars	bar	bra
[p ^h a:t]	[stɑ:f]	[stɑ:v]	[ka:z]	[ba:]	[bɹɑ:]

search	surge	merch	merge	fir	prefer	fur
[sɜ:tʃ]	[sɜ:dʒ]	[mɜ:tʃ]	[mɜ:dʒ]	[fɜ:]	[pɹi.'fɜ:]	[fɜ:]

law	war	court	cord	course	cores	sauce	saws
[lɔ:]	[wɔ:]	[kɔ:t]	[kɔ:d]	[kɔ:s]	[kɔ:z]	[sɔ:s]	[sɔ:z]

Ma parks Pa's car | last dance, last chance | a large farmyard
Percy turned, when he heard the girl's words | birds searched the earth for
worms
you're four boards short | Lord Gordon caught naught | coarse gorse tore
your horse

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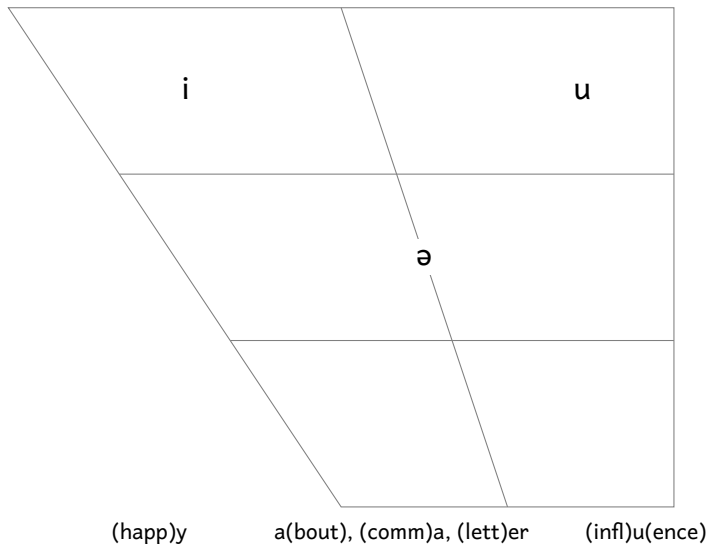
Goals

Experiment

English vowels and
diphthongs (schematic)

Differences German/English

English weak vowels: phonemes



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Vowels (2) –
EXPERIMENTAL

Goals

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English vowels and
diphthongs (schematic)

Differences German/English

Slides from previous iterations of this course



Vowels (2) –
EXPERIMENTAL

Goals

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English vowels and
diphthongs (schematic)

Differences German/English

The remaining slides are from previous iterations of this course.

English vowels and diphthongs (schematic)

- The following slides constitute a tabular list of all English vowels and diphthongs (dialect: Southern British).

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Vowels (2) –
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English vowels and
diphthongs (schematic)

Differences German/English

English vowels and diphthongs (schematic)

- The following slides constitute a tabular list of all English vowels and diphthongs (dialect: Southern British).
- The representation is highly schematic, based on a stylized vowel “square”. But even the standard “vowel quadrilateral” is already quite stylized anyway.

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Vowels (2) –
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English vowels and
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Differences German/English

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- We’ll keep the IPA character picker a mouseclick away:
- <http://westonruter.github.io/ipa-chart/keyboard/>

Some terms and definitions (1): ‘stressed’

- A syllable can be either ‘stressed’ or ‘unstressed’, depending on where it occurs within the foot.

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Vowels (2) –
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English vowels and
diphthongs (schematic)

Differences German/English

Some terms and definitions (1): 'stressed'

- A syllable can be either 'stressed' or 'unstressed', depending on where it occurs within the foot.
- Assuming there is no 'silent beat', the *first* syllable in the foot (the Ictus) is 'stressed', all other syllables within that foot (the Remiss) are 'unstressed'.

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- Example:
/ **Arth**-ur and / **May** have / **left** for / **It**-a-ly
— the beginning of each new foot is shown by a slash; the stressed syllables are printed in boldface type; all other syllables are unstressed.

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English vowels and
diphthongs (schematic)

Differences German/English

Some terms and definitions (2): 'checked' vs. 'unchecked' vowels/Nuclei, 'open' vs. 'closed' syllables

- A syllable consists of an Onset followed by a Rhyme; the Rhyme consists of a Nucleus followed by a Coda.

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English vowels and
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- Example:
/ **Arth**-ur and / **May** have / **left** for / **It**-a-ly
– the Nucleus is ‘checked’ in **left** and **It**, ‘unchecked’ in **Arth** and **May** (note that the Onset is empty in **It** and **Arth**);
–the syllable is ‘open’ in **May**, ‘closed’ in **Arth**, **left** and **It**.

Some terms and definitions (2): ‘checked’ vs. ‘unchecked’ vowels/Nuclei, ‘open’ vs. ‘closed’ syllables

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/ **Arth**-ur and / **May** have / **left** for / **It**-a-ly
– the Nucleus is ‘checked’ in **left** and **It**, ‘unchecked’ in **Arth** and **May** (note that the Onset is empty in **It** and **Arth**);
–the syllable is ‘open’ in **May**, ‘closed’ in **Arth**, **left** and **It**.
- These factors play a major role in determining what vowels or diphthongs can occur in a syllable...

Some terms and definitions (3): ‘reduced’

- If a syllable is ‘unstressed’ in English, it can (and typically does) contain a ‘reduced’ vowel — perhaps shortened in quantity, or simplified in quality, or both.

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Vowels (2) –
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English vowels and
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Differences German/English

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- e.g.
[fəʊ'netɪks fɔ:'ɪevə] →
[fə'netɪks fə'ɪevə]

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Short vowels in stressed or unstressed closed syllables

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English			German		
ɪ	ʊ	cf.	ɪ	ʏ	ʊ
e	ʌ		ɛ	œ	ɔ
æ	ɒ			a	

- All six English sounds are distinctively different, i.e. they are phonemes
- /sɪks/, /seks/, /sæks/, /sɒks/, /sʌks/, /sʊks/ are the six different words ⟨six⟩, ⟨sex⟩, ⟨sax⟩, ⟨socks⟩, ⟨sucks⟩, ⟨sooks⟩.
- We'll draw the exact locations of the phonetic realizations of these phonemes on the proper 'vowel quadrilateral' on the whiteboard; and see your handouts from Eckert and Barry (Unit 4) and the Longman Pronunciation Dictionary (Unit 5).
- The phoneme / ʌ / varies considerably in its phonetic realization from dialect to dialect. (Why?)
- Which vowel letters can be used to write the phoneme / ʌ / in English?

Reduced short vowel(s) in unstressed open or closed syllables

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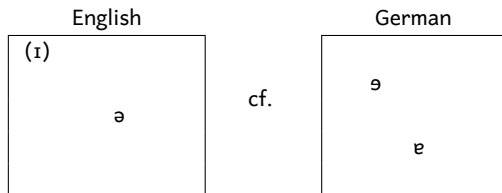
Vowels (2) –
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English vowels and
diphthongs (schematic)

Differences German/English



- Australians and Americans tend to use only the “schwa”:
⟨The wicked witch⟩ (‘die böse Hexe’) [ðə 'wɪkəd 'wɪtʃ]
- Speakers of Southern British English would say:
[ðə 'wɪkɪd 'wɪtʃ]
- Note that the German “schwa” is different from the English one.
- Compare English ⟨bitter⟩ ['bɪtə], German ⟨bitte⟩ ['bɪtə], German ⟨bitter⟩ ['bɪtə].

Unchecked vowel(s) in unstressed open syllables (1)

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Vowels (2) –
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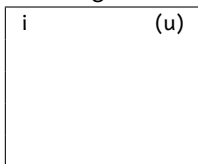
Goals

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English vowels and
diphthongs (schematic)

Differences German/English

English



Consider the word ⟨city⟩.

- Some dictionaries give the pronunciation as /'sɪtɪ/
 - This breaks the rule that /ɪ/ (like all other short vowels) can only occur in closed syllables.
 - But it does in fact correspond to the pronunciation used by many upperclass speakers of Southern British English.
- Some highschool English textbooks give the pronunciation as /'sɪti:/
 - This tends to encourage an awkward rhythm in German English-learners.
 - But it does in fact correspond to the pronunciation used in some parts of Britain.

Unchecked vowel in unstressed open syllables (2)

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Differences German/English

- The modern trend seems to be; to give the pronunciation as /^lsɪti/
 - This final vowel is unchecked, and potentially tense, but nevertheless short
 - Eckert & Barry give an elegant solution by saying that the English phoneme /i:/ has two allophones, [i:] as in ⟨beat⟩ and [i] as in ⟨happy⟩

English			German		
i:	u:		i:	y:	u:
		cf.	e:	ø:	o:
	ɜ:		ɛ:		
	ɔ:				
	a:			a:	

- There are no front rounded vowels in English.
- The long close vowels in English tend to be slightly diphthongized (closing diphthongs):
- The other long vowels in English tend to alternate with centering diphthongs.

Closing (=‘verengende’) diphthongs

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English vowels and
diphthongs (schematic)

Differences German/English

English	English	German
eɪ		
	əʊ	
		ɔɪ
	[æʊ]	
aɪ	aʊ	
[aɪ]		
		[aɪ]
		aɪ
		aʊ
		[aʊ]

- IPA symbols are placed roughly at the starting position of the diphthong, i.e. the position from which the gliding movement begins.
- /əʊ/ was originally /ou/
- its original partner /εʊ/ has turned into /ju:/
- with the partner absent, there's no 'pressure' on /ou/, so it can 'take up all the space' — becoming /əʊ/ (or even /εʊ/ !)
- Fun fact: ⟨mew⟩, which for Shakespeare was the noise made by a cat (/mεʊ/), is now the noise made by a kitten (/mju:/)
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_Vowel_Shift

Centering diphthongs

ɪə	ʊə
eə	(ɛə)

- In most varieties of English there is no difference between /ʊə/, /ɔə/ and /ɜ:/.
- Some books write /ɛə/, others /eə/.

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Triphthongs?

eɪə	əʊə	ɔɪə
aɪə	aʊə	

- These tend to lose the middle element: /eɪə/ becomes [e(:)ə], etc.
- /aɪə/ and /aʊə/ go one step further, turning into the monophthongs [a:] and [ɑ:]: ⟨tire⟩ /taɪə/ [t^ha:], ⟨tower⟩ /taʊə/ [t^hɑ:]
- Not everyone recognizes the existence of triphthongs; a triphthong may simply be a diphthong followed (in the next syllable) by a schwa.
- But note the difference between disyllabic ⟨prayer⟩ ('Betender') /'preɪ.ə/ and monosyllabic ⟨prayer⟩ ('Gebet') /preə/

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Differences German/English

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- You might also like to look at the diagrams from the Longman Pronunciation Dictionary:
http://www.spence.saar.de/courses/phoneticswithlistening/unit05_20211/LPD/