



ORGANS OF SPEECH (ARTICULATORS)

جامعة ساوة

كلية التربية

قسم اللغة الانكليزية

المرحلة 2

رقم المحاضرة 3

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English long vowels:



(Long vowels, diphthongs and triphthongs)

A-Long vowels These are the vowels which tend to be longer than the short vowels in similar contexts.

✱ The length of all English vowel sounds varies very much according to their context such as the type of sound that follows them and the presence or absence of stress.

✱ the symbols of these vowels consist of one vowel symbol

plus a length mark made of two dots (:). Thus we have **i:**, **ɜ:**, **ɑ:**, **ɔ:**, **u:**.

The five long vowels are different from the six shorts vowels not only in length but also in quality. Differences in quality (resulting from differences in tongue shape and position, and lip position) and also in length.

✳ We can omit the length mark, because it is not essential but it helps learners to remember the length difference.

i: ('beat', 'mean', 'peace')

This vowel is closer and more front than is the short vowel of **'bid', 'pin', 'fish'**. Although the tongue shape is not much different from cardinal vowel {i} the lips are only slightly spread and this results in a rather different vowel quality.

ɜ: ('bird', 'fern', 'purse')

This is a mid-central vowel which is used in most English accents as a hesitation sound (written 'er'). The lip position is neutral.

ɑ: ('card', 'half', 'pass')

This is an open vowel. The lip position is neutral.

ɔ: ('board', 'torn', 'horse')

The tongue height for this vowel is between cardinal vowel no. 6 [ɔ] and no. 7 [o], and closer to the latter. This vowel is almost fully back and has quite strong lip-rounding.

u: ('food', 'soon', 'loose')

The u: is much less back and less close than cardinal vowel **u**, while the lips are only moderately rounded.

B. Diphthongs

These are sounds which consist of a movement or glide from one vowel to another.

A Pure vowel :A vowel which remains constant and does not glide.

♣ The most important thing about all the diphthongs is that the first part is much longer and stronger than the second part.

For example, most of the diphthong **aɪ** (as in the words ‘**eye**’, ‘**I**’) consists of the a vowel, and only in about the last quarter of the diphthong does the glide to ɪ become noticeable. As the glide to ɪ happens, the loudness of the sound decreases. As a result, the ɪ part is shorter and quieter.

♣ **The total number of diphthongs is eight (though ʊə is increasingly rare).**

They are divided into three groups as in this diagram:

The centering diphthongs glide towards the ə (schwa) vowel.

/eə/

ɪə (‘beard’, weird’, ‘fierce’)

The starting point is a little closer than ɪ in 'bit', 'bin'.

eə ('aired', 'cairn', 'scarce')

This diphthong begins with a vowel sound that is more open than the e of 'get', 'men'.

ʊə ('moored', 'tour', 'lure')

This diphthong has a starting point similar to ʊ in 'put', 'pull'. Many speakers pronounce ɔ: instead.

All the closing diphthongs end with a glide towards a closer vowel. Because the second part of the diphthong is weak, they often do not reach a position that could be called close. The important thing is that a glide from a relatively more open towards a relatively closer vowel is produced.

eɪ ('paid', 'pain', 'face')

The starting point is the same as the **e** of 'get', 'men',

aɪ ('tide', 'time', 'nice')

This diphthong begins with an open vowel which is between front and back; it is quite similar to the **ʌ** of the words 'cut', 'bun',

ɔɪ ('void', 'loin', 'voice')

The first part of this diphthong is slightly more open than **ɔ:** in 'ought', 'born'.

Two diphthongs glide towards ʊ, so that as the tongue moves closer to the roof of the mouth there is at the same time a rounding movement of the lips. This movement is not a large one, again because the second part of the diphthong is weak.

əʊ ('load', 'home', 'most')

The vowel position for the beginning of this is the same as for the "schwa" vowel ə, as found in 'about'. The lips may be slightly rounded in anticipation of the glide towards ʊ.

aʊ ('loud', 'gown', 'house')

This diphthong begins with a vowel similar to aɪ. Since this is an open vowel, a glide to ʊ would necessitate a large movement, and the tongue often does not reach the ʊ position. There is only slight lip-rounding.

C. Triphthongs

A triphthong is a glide from one vowel to another and then to a third, all produced rapidly and without interruption.

For example, a careful pronunciation of the word 'hour' begins with a vowel quality similar to α :, goes on to a glide towards the back close rounded area (for which we use the symbol υ), then ends with a mid-central vowel (schwa, $\ə$).

So, the symbol is $\alpha\upsilon\ə$

The triphthongs can be looked on as being composed of the five closing diphthongs with ə added on the end. Thus we get:

eɪ + ə = eɪə 'layer', 'player'

aɪ + ə = aɪə 'liar', 'fire'

ɔɪ + ə = ɔɪə 'loyal', 'royal'

əʊ + ə = əʊə 'lower', 'mower'

aʊ + ə = aʊə 'power', 'hour'

*Triphthongs are complex, rather difficult to pronounce, and very difficult to recognize vowel type because:

1. In present-day English the extent of the vowel movement is very small. Thus, the middle of the three vowel qualities of the triphthong (i.e. the ɪ or ʊ part) can hardly be heard and the resulting sound is difficult to distinguish from some of the diphthongs and long vowels.

2. The problem of whether a triphthong contains one or two syllables. Words such as 'fire' faɪə or 'hour' aʊə are probably felt to consist of only one syllable, whereas 'player' pleɪə two syllables.

The production of Speech Sounds

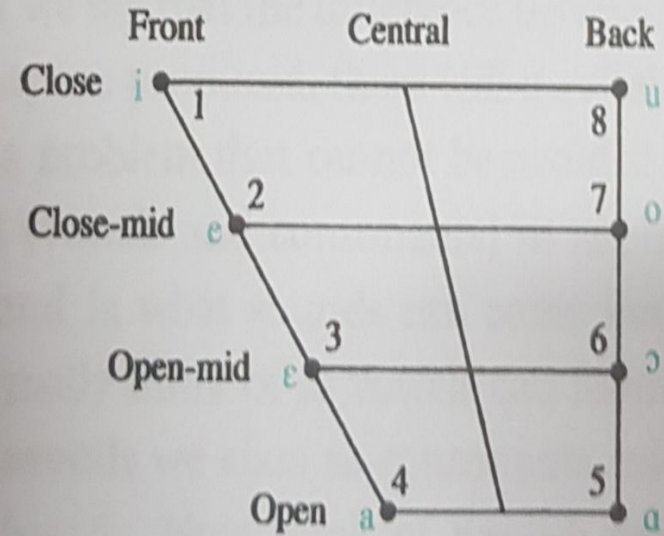


Fig. 4 Primary cardinal vowels



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