

English Pronunciation & Accents

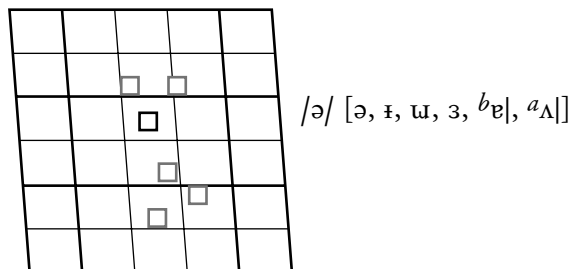
(2023³, integrations)

5.32. A more precise description of the phoneme /ə/, in both British and American neutral accents (including a native-like international one), has five taxophones (shown in fig 5.4). In addition to the ‘normal’ [ə] vocoid, we have [^bə], [^aə] (in word-final position, followed by a pause), as in *pizza* /'pi:tsə/ [ˈpʰi:tsə, ^a-ə] (of course, in British English also, and more frequently, for /-əɪ/, as in *father*), *pizzas* /'pi:tsəz/ [ˈpʰi:tsəz], *Pizza Hut* /'pi:tsə,hʌt/ [^a-hʌt/ [ˈpʰi:tsə,hʌt, ^a-hʌt].

In contact with (and, certainly, if between, either in a word or in a phrase) velar consonants (/k, g, ŋ/), we have [ɜ]: *a cook* /ə'kʊk/ [ɜ'kʰʊk].

In contact with (and, certainly, if between) apical consonants (/t, d, s, z, n, l/ and [ɹ]), we have [ɛ]: *to do* /tə'du:/ [tʰɛ'dʰu:, -ɜu].

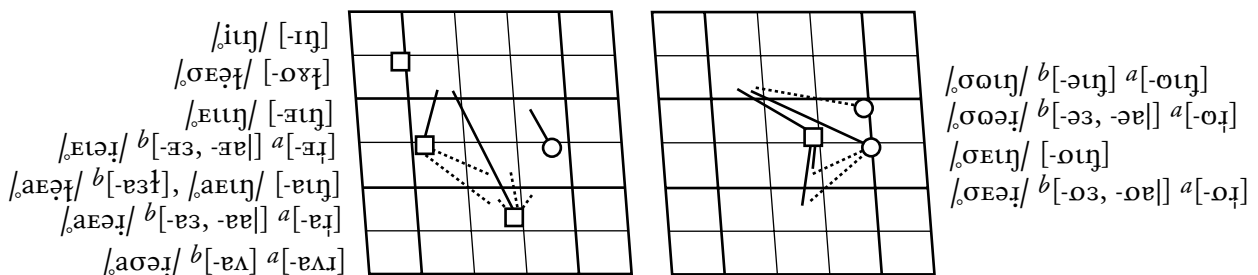
fig 5.4. Different taxophones of /ə/.



10.12. Let us add that, mainly in quicker (British and American) speech, unstressed *-owing*, *-ower* /σəʊɪŋ, σəʊəɪ/ become [^b-əʊɪŋ; -əɜ, -əɛ] [^a-əʊɪŋ; -əɪ], as in *following* and *follower*: [^bfɒl-əʊɪŋ, fɒl-əɜ, -əɛ] (^a[fɒl-əʊɪŋ, -əɪ]).

Rarer items like *foraying* and *forayer*, for /εʊɪŋ; εʊəɪ/, have [^b-ɛʊɪŋ; -ɛɜ, -ɛɛ] [^a-ɛɪ]; [^bfɒɪ-ɪŋ; -ɛɜ, -ɛɛ] [^a[fɒɪ-ɪŋ; -ɛɪ, fɒɪəɪ] (less often stressed as: [^bfɒɪ-ɪŋ, fɒɪ; -ɪɛɜ, -ɪɛɛ] [^a[fɒɪ-ɪŋ, fɒɪ; -ɛɜ, -ɛɛ]).

fig 10.3. Typical triphthong reduction in quick speech (including the diphthong /-iʊ/).

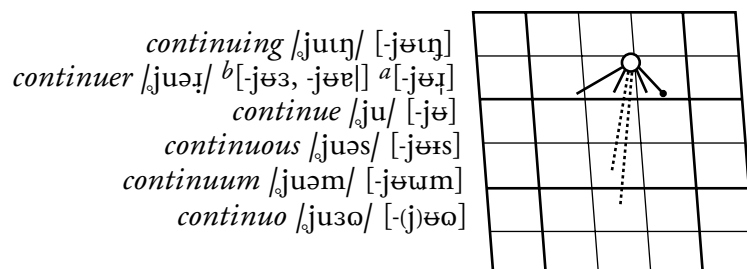


Besides, *convoying*, *convoyer*, for /_əσEΛŋ; σEƏΔ/ , have *b*[^hkhɔŋvɔŋ; ^hkhɔŋvɔɜ, -ɔe] *a*[^hkhɑŋvɔŋ; ^hkhɑŋvɔɪ] (less often: *b*[^hkhɔŋvɔŋ; -vɔɜɜ, -vɔɜe] *a*[^hkhɑŋvɔŋ; -vɔɜɪ]).

Satisfying and *satisfyer*, for /_əΔEΛŋ; ΔEƏΔ/ , have *b*[^hsæf-ɪsfɛŋ; -fɛɜ, -fɛe] *a*[^hsæɪ-ɪsfɛŋ; -fɛɪ] (but also: *b*[^hsæf-ɪsfɛ(ɪ)ŋ; -fɛ(ɪ)ɜ, -fɛ(ɪ)e] *a*[^hsæɪ-ɪsfɛ(ɪ)ŋ; -fɛ(ɪ)ɪ]). For *accompanying* and *hurrying* with /_ɪŋ/ , we often find [-ɪŋ].

Still in quicker speech, other simplifications occurring in unstressed syllables are certainly possible. As a practical demonstration, fig 10.4 shows what can certainly be heard using the lexical root *continu-* in the inflection of some words.

fig 10.4. Common realizations for different endings after /kən'tɪn-/.



14.7. Here is a concise summary of ‘aspiration’ for /p, t, k; tʃ/. We have to distinguish the (voiceless laryngeal) approximant [h] and the semi-approximant [ɦ]; the latter is weaker, less energetic, than the former. We will show how they are used.

In *stressed* syllables, we find [^hCh] (except for [^hsC]). In *half-stressed* syllables, we have [Ch] (and, of course, [sC]). Usually, we find [h] also in *unstressed* syllables, in word-initial position, *after silence* (as isolated words are, too): [ʰCh]. Instead, we have a zero phone, in *unstressed* syllables, *after a heterosyllabic phone*, either a vowel or a consonant: [V[#]C, CC].

Here are some illustrative examples (in international pronunciation, for simplicity), and shown only for /p/: *people* /^hpɪipɛt/ [^hpɪiipɛt], *anticipate* /æŋtɪsəpɛɪt/ [æŋtɪs-ə-^hpɛɪt], *potential* /pəʰtɛŋʃɛt/ [pɛtɛŋʃɛt], (*an*) *impact* /^hɪmpæk/ [^hɪmpæk], (*to*) *separate* /^hsɛpəɪt/ [^hsɛp-əɪt].

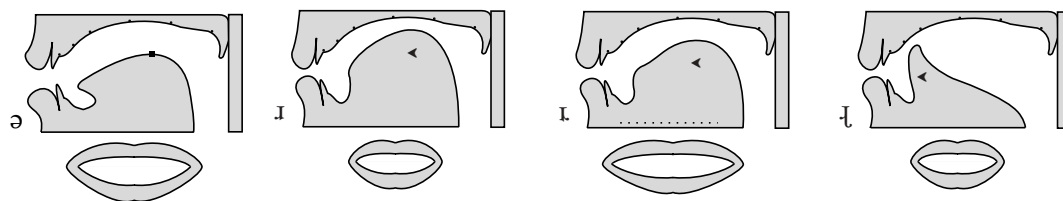
Notice that /p, t, k/ may be followed by /j, w, ɪ, l/. In addition, [h] might not necessarily be shown explicitly.

26.15. A brief remark concerning cases like *weary*, *vary*, *tourist* /^hwɛɪɪ, ^hvɛɪɪ, ^htʊɪst/ *b*[^hwɛɪ-ɪ, ^hvɛɪ-ɪ, ^htʊɪst] *a*[^hwɪɪ-i, ^hvɛɪ-i, ^htʊɪst], in order to expand on what we already know about /əɪ/. fig 26.3 shows the orograms (and labiograms) of [ə] and [ɪ, ɪ, ɪ].

In British English (and the other accents structurally similar to it, like Australian and New Zealander), we have [^hVə-ɪV], while in American English (and those similar to it, like Canadian and generally the Celtic ones), we have [^hVɪ-V, ^hVɪ-V].

It is easy to see that, articulatorily [ɪ] is rather different from [ɪ, ɪ] (although too many –even native– ‘experts’ still describe them as produced the other way round!). However, the important thing is that it is rather clear that [^hVɪ-V, ^hVɪ-V] must have derived from [^hVə-ɪV], by strong assimilation and simplification.

fig 26.3. Orograms and labiograms of [ə, ɪ, ɪ, ɪ].



55.17. The *intonation* patterns of *mediatic* American English differ only slightly from the *neutral* American ones, mostly on the tonic syllables of the interrogative and supensive tunes, where [-] is more appropriate than [', ^], respectively (although a slight similar movement is still present), as shown in fig 55.8 (cf fig 41.2), which also shows a somewhat broader version of the mediatic American patterns.

fig 55.8. American English intonation patterns.

