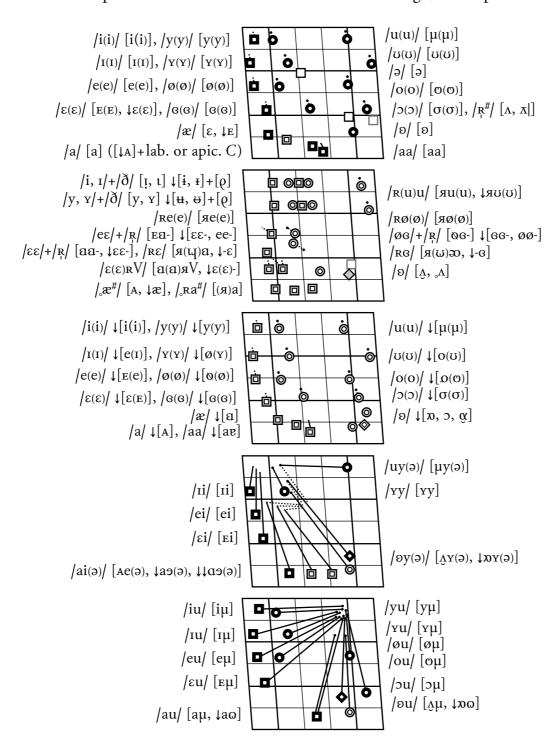
## **Danish Pronunciation**

## Luciano Canepari – © 2020<sup>2</sup>

1. Neutral Danish (Germ., IE) has changed considerably with respect to the traditional pronunciation of three or four decades ago, both phonetically and



phonemically (even though grammars and textbooks usually still present traditional pronunciation).

In fact, we now even find an opposition between  $|\alpha| \neq |a|$ , as in kan /khæ/ ['khæ] (present tense) 'can' vs kar /kha/ ['kha] 'container', Anners /'ænʌs/ [ˈʔænʌs] (genitive plural form of) 'Anna' vs Anders /'anʌs/ [ˈʔanʌs] (surname).

In words of foreign origin ending in -a#, we have /æ#/ [A], but /a#/ [a] for -ra: villa /'vilæ/ ['vila], Noah /'nuuæ/ ['nuuA], zebra ['sɪɪpaa], Nora ['nuua, 'nuua].

Moreover, we now have: *lad* /ˈlæð/ [ˈlæo̞] (before coronal *C*) vs *lab*, *laf*, *lak* /ˈlap, ˈlaf, ˈlak/ [ˈlap, ˈlaf, ˈlak], which once had the same phoneme (/ˈCaC/), even though phonetic differences similar to those of today were to be found (ie: [ˈlæo̞], [ˈlap, ˈlaf, ˈlak]), while there were no minimal pairs, since *kar* was still /ˈkhar/ [ˈkhar, ˈkhax] (the last symbol is completely voiceless), and *kan* /ˈkha(n²)/ [ˈkhæ(n)].

Besides, it is better to posit the phonemes /8(8)/, even if they are only found in contact with /R/. In fact, particularly out of sociolinguistic reasons, we cannot let /R8(8)/ [88(8)] coincide with the diaphonemic sequences /R8(8)/ [88(8)], which are possible in the same words, but with connotations referring to traditional pronunciation (which is shown by the taxophones given in the second vocogram), with a closing and fronting narrow diphthong; the same happens for the indicated taxophone of /R8(8)/ [88(8)/ [88(8)/].

We also show a number of variants, mostly contextual: taxophones. Some are indicated by means of descending arrows, \$\psi\$, as less recommendable, or mediatic, shown especially in the third vocogram. Some are only slightly moved in their own cells, others change more. Thus, listening to different speakers, it may seem that some neutralizations can occur.

2. Let us also notice /eɛ, øø/, which occur in contact with /R, R/: they are diaphonemes, being possibly realized as [ee, aa; øø, αθ] alongside with [εα, αθ]: lære /ˈleɛr/ [ˈleax, ˈleex, ˈlaax], smøre /ˈsmøθr/ [ˈsmøθx, ˈsmøθx, ˈsmθθx], rærene /ˈree² - R-nə/ [ˈseaʌnə, ˈseeʌnə, ˈsaaʌnə, -ʌn], røre /ˈreex² - R-nə/ [ˈseaʌnə, ˈseeʌnə, ˈsaaʌnə, -ʌn], røre /ˈreex² - R-nə/ [ˈseaʌnə, ˈsaaʌnə, -ʌn], røre /ˈreex² - R-nə/ [ˈsaəx].

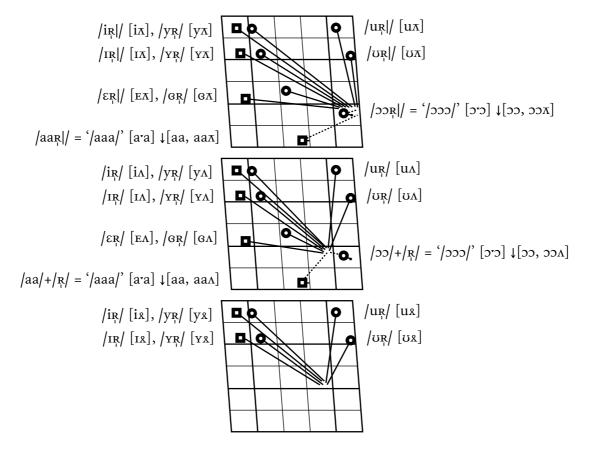
Again in the second vocogram, we also find the peculiar realizations of /Rε, RΘ/ [Яща, Яωω], with an inserted approximant, as in: række /ˈRɛkə/ [ˈЯψαkə], drømme /ˈtrsmə/ [ˈtrswəmə, -ωṃ]. They can alsooccur without [ψ, ω].

Even other taxophones appear, under the influence of /R/ and /R/  $[\Lambda, X^{\#}]$ , as well, but we focus especially on /A are, /A ('/A are, /A) ('/A are, /A) (/A are, /A) (/A are /A) as in /A are /A are increasingly less frequent (and belong more to traditional pronunciation); some speakers drop [X], keeping [A are influence of /A and /A are /A are /A are /A are influence of /A and /A are /A are

These three vocograms complete the series with /V/ followed by /R/: /iR, IR, ER; yR, YR, GR; UR, UR/ [i-, I-, E-; y-, Y-, G-; U-, U-], which maintain the second element unassimilated, ie /R/ [A], or [ $\pi^{\#}$ ], in final and prepausal position. Especially in sentence internal position, not followed by pauses, some speakers can use higher realizations as shown in the third vocogram. Sequences of /VV/ + /R/ are also possible: ord /\forall UU^2R/. Stressed initial vowels are often preceded by [?].

3. As shown in the second vocogram of the first serie of five elements, /i, 1, y,  $y/+ |\delta|$  have retracted taxophones [i, i, y, y]  $\downarrow$  [i, i, u,  $\theta$ ] + [ $\varrho$ ], which are indicat-

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ed: stød /'stvð/ ['stʊð/ ['stʊð/]. Danish shows various sequences of vowel phonemes (either short or long, [V, VV]), phonetically real closing diphthongs, with /i/ [i], or especially /u/ [ $\mu$ ], as a second element (deriving from previous / $\chi$ , v/, to which they are still synchronically linked). Notice, however, that /ai/ is mostly [Ae, \$\pi a=, \$\pi \text{deg}].

There are even some real triphthongs, which are generally hardly ever realistically indicated with '/VjV, VwV/', which would lead one to think there are two syllables '/V#jV, V#wV/'.

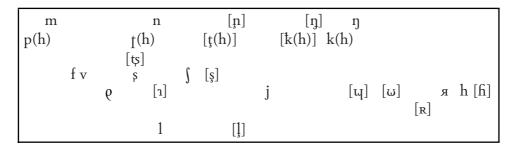
Sequences of |VV| + |i|, |u| are also possible: |eg|, |ag|/|ag|/|ag|, |ag|/|ag|, but they are often shortened to |V| + |ag|, |ag|

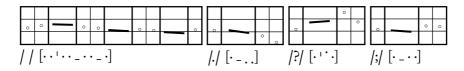
The abstract (tautosyllabic) sequences  $\|\exists n, \exists l, \exists R\|$  undergo assimilation, which is already included in our phonemic transcriptions |n, l, R| (the latter,  $[A, X]^{\#}$ ), from previous traditional [A, R]): halen |A| halen |

This assimilation can further extend to other voiced phonemes: *tiet* /'thiiəð/ ['thiiǫ], *hyldet* /'hyləð/ ['hylǫ]. Let us notice that currently (as already emerged from some examples given above) /ə<sup>#</sup>/ even assimilates to a preceding voiced phone, giving: *hale* /'hɛɛl/, *måne* /'moonə/ ['moon], *uge* /'uuə/ ['ʔμμ], *pige* /'phiiə/ ['phii, 'phii], *pine* /'phiinə/ ['phiin], *gade* /'kɛɛðə/ [ˈkɛɛðə/ [ˈkɛɛðə/ [which are possibly further reduced in case of complete assimilation. Let us also notice: *uforståelige* /ufʀˈstoo²əliə/ [ˌμfʌ-ˈstooolii].

4. As for the *consonants*, we recall that  $/C^h/$  indicates /Ch, C/, which oppose word-initially; in the extant cases (even in /sC/) they occur without 'aspiration', and –between vowels– they are voiceless lenis,  $[\dot{p}, \dot{f}, \dot{k}]$  (in careful pronunciation, but  $[\dot{p}, \dot{q}, \dot{q}]$  in connected speech).

Besides, we notice that in the capital and its outskirts, /th/ is often realized as





[\tsh]: ten /'thii?n/ ['thiin; \tsh-]; on the other hand, especially between vowels, /t/ is frequently realized as [1] ('dasked d'): otte /'ootə/ ['Pootə, -də, -nə].

In addition, /n,  $t^h$ , s,  $1/ + /j/ \rightarrow [nj, t(h)j, s(j), t]$  (also with plain [n, t, s, t] + [j]), but usually  $||sj|| \rightarrow ||f||$ . Besides, in quick speech /h/ can become  $[f_n]$  between vowels.

5. As already seen, Danish has a typical consonantal sound:  $|\eth|$  [ $\varrho$ ], 'blødt d' /'plyt 'tɪɪ²/ ['plyt 'tɪɪ²/, a voiced lateralized dental approximant (which foreigners often mistake for /1/).

Stød is a typically Danish phenomenon by which stressed (or half-stressed) vowels either short (followed by voiced consonants) or long can present distinctively the creaky phonation type (in place of ancient tones): hun /hun/ [hun] 'she', hund /hun²/ [hun] 'dog'; also, mor /muur/ [muux] 'mother', mord /muu²r/ [muux] 'murder'; tænder /thenr/ [henr] 'lighter', tænder /thenr/ [henr/ 'thenr/ 'thenr/

Some speakers pronounce /V<sup>2</sup>, C<sup>2</sup>/ as sequences of [V2, C2]. However, nowadays, this pronunciation is not considered to be neutral any longer, except when speaking slowly or emphatically; otherwise, it is regional.

Let us finish with some interesting transcriptions: *København* /khypnhau²n/ [ˌkhypmhayn], *Kierkegaard* /ˈkhirkəkəɔ²/ [ˈkhinkəˌkəɔ, -kəˌk-, -kˌk-], *Lars von Trier* /ˈlaas fənˈthrii²r/ [ˈlaas fənˈthriix].

6. Spelling. Vowels:  $a \mid \varepsilon\varepsilon$ ,  $\varepsilon$ ,  $a \mid (but only \mid a, aa \mid before or after <math>r$ ),  $e \mid II$ , e;  $I \mid (after <math>r$ , normally  $\mid \varepsilon$ , ee, ei  $\mid (before <math>r \mid \varepsilon$ ,  $II \mid (before <math>r \mid \varepsilon)$ ,  $II \mid (before <math>$ 

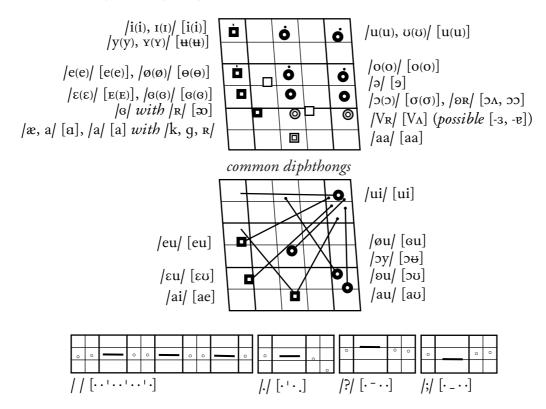
Consonants: b/p/ (finally, even  $|v^{\#}, u^{\#}/\rangle$ , c/sV, k/, ch/V,  $d/^{\#}t$ ,  $\delta^{\#}$ ,  $\delta_{9}$ ,  $\delta_{i}/$  (silent in ld, nd,  $rd^{\#}$ , ds, dt),  $-dd-|\delta|$ ,  $g/^{\#}k$ ,  $V_{0}$ ,  $V_{i}^{\#}$ ,  $V_{0}$ ,  $V_{i}^{\#}$ ,  $V_{0}$ ,  $V_{i}^{\#}$ ,  $V_{0}$ 

7. The fundamental *intonation* patterns are shown in the tonogram at the end of the last figure.

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8. Here is a concise presentation of the Faroese and Greenlandic accents of Danish. We show the most typical peculiarities of the vowels (and main diphthongs), including some observations about the consonants, also providing the fundamental tonograms for intonation. Oscillations are quite possible especially for some vowels and consonants.

Thus, in the *Faroese* accent, the 'aspirated' voiceless stops are usually [Ch] (semi-approximant), with oscillations between [Ch] and [C]; while the 'voiced' stops are [C] (lenis voiceless). In addition, /tj/ may become [tth]. Danish r is a uvular tap, [R], before vowels, but a vocoid, as shown in the first vocogram (vith variants). Creaky voice (stød) may be very very unstable, and sometimes used for the vocalized r.



In the *Greenlandic* accent of Danish, word-initial vowels (especially in stressed syllables) may be [?V] (with a weak glottal stop). Rather systematically, the 'aspirated' voiceless stops are [Ch] (semiapproximant), and the 'voiced' stops are [C] (lenis voiceless). Before /i(i), I(I), j/, we often find that /t, d//s, l, n/ are prepalatal, [t] (rtespectively with [h] or lenis) and [t, t, t, t]. Danish t is a uvular constrictive, or approximant, or tap, [t, t, t, t, before vowels, but a vocoid, as shown in the first vocogram (vith the variants given). Creaky voice (t) may be very unstable.

