

English Pronunciation & Accents

(2024⁶, integrations)

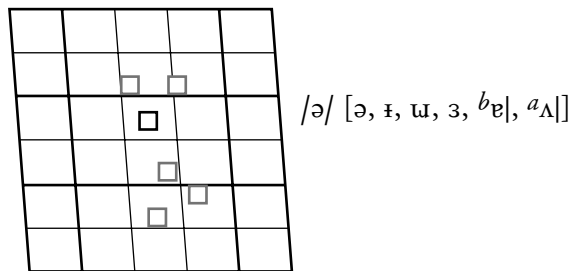
5.32. A more precise description of the phoneme /ə/, in both British and American neutral accents (including a native-like international one), has five taxophones (shown in fig 5.4).

In addition to the canonical [ə] vocoid, we have [^bə], [^aə], in word-final position, followed by a pause, as in *pizza* /'pi:tsə/ [ˈpʰi:tsə, ^aə]; of course, in British English also, and more frequently, for /-ə(ɪ)/ [-ɜ], not final, as in *father says* [ˈfɑ:ðɜ 'seɪz], *pizzas* /'pi:tsəz/ [ˈpʰi:tsɜz], *Pizza Hut* /'pi:tsəhʌt/ [ˈpʰi:tsɜhʌt, ^aəhʌt].

In contact with (and, certainly, if between, either in a word or in a phrase) velar(ized) consonants (/k, g, ŋ, w/ and [ŋ]), we have [ɪ]: *a cook* /ə'kʊk/ [ɪ'kʰʊk], *sing a song* /'sɪŋ ə'sɒŋ/ [ˈsɪŋ ɪ'sɒŋ], *devil* /'dɛvəl/ [ˈdɛv-ɪ, -ɪ], *believe* /b(ə)li:v; bi-/ [bɪ'lri:v, bɪ-] [bi'lri:v] [bɪ'lri:v, b'lri:v], but not [bɪ-].

In contact with (and, certainly, if between) apical consonants (/t, d; θ, ð; s, z; n; l/ and [ɹ]), we have [ɜ]: *to do* /tə'du:/ [tʰɜ'du:, -u].

fig 5.4. Different taxophones of /ə/.



10.12. Let us add that, mainly in quicker (British and American) speech, unstressed *-owing*, *-ower* /σɔwɪŋ, σɔwə/ become ^b[-əwɪŋ; -əɜ, -əvɪ] ^a[-ɔwɪŋ; -ɔɪ], as in *following* and *follower*: ^b[ˈfɔl-əwɪŋ, ˈfɔl-əɜ, -əvɪ], ^a[ˈfɔl-ɔwɪŋ, -ɔɪ]. Rarer items like *foraying* and *forayer*, for /ɜwɪŋ; ɜwə/, have ^b[-əwɪŋ; -əɜ, -əvɪ] ^a[-əɪ]; ^b[ˈfɔɪ-əwɪŋ; -əɜ, -əvɪ] ^a[ˈfɔɪ-əwɪŋ; -əɪ, ˈfɔɪ-əɪ] (less often stressed as: ^b[ˈfɔɪ-ɜwɪŋ, fɜ-; -ɜwɪɜ, -ɜwɪvɪ] ^a[ˈfɔɪ-ɜwɪŋ, fɜ-, fɜ-; -ɜwɪɜ]).

In very quick speech, these examples may be realized using approximant contoids: [j] (post-palatal), and [ɟ] (prevelar), and [w] (provelar rounded), instead of the vocoids [ɜ], [ə], and [ɔ], respectively: *following* and *follower* ^b[ˈfɔl-ɟwɪŋ, ˈfɔl-ɟɜ, -ɟvɪ], ^a[ˈfɔl-wɪŋ, -wɪ], *foraying* and *forayer* ^b[-ɟwɪŋ; ɟɜ, ɟvɪ] ^a[-ɟwɪŋ; ɟɪ]; ^b[ˈfɔɪ-ɟwɪŋ; ɟɜ, ɟvɪ] ^a[ˈfɔɪ-ɟwɪŋ; ɟɪ, ˈfɔɪ-ɟɪ].

In addition, for /i, u/ of the unstressed diphthongs /iə, uə/, we can certainly find also the approximants [j, w], instead of the vocoids [i, ʊ], in words like *happier*, *idiot*, and *influence*: *b*[hæp-jɜ, -jə] *a*[-jɪ], [ʔd-jɪ; ʔɪflwɪns], instead of *b*[hæp-jɜ, -jə] *a*[-jɪ] [ʔɪflwɪns]. Let us also see: *valuer* with /juə/ *b*[væl-jwɜ, -jwə] *a*[-jwɪ], but also: *b*[væl-ɹɜ, -ɹə] *a*[-ɹɪ], if quicker.

fig 10.3. Approximants.

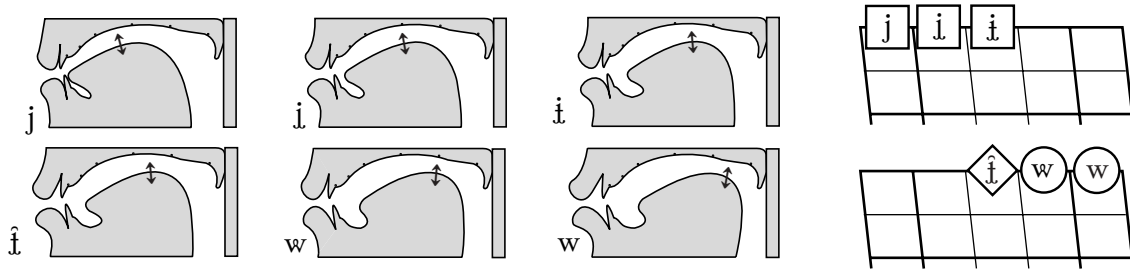
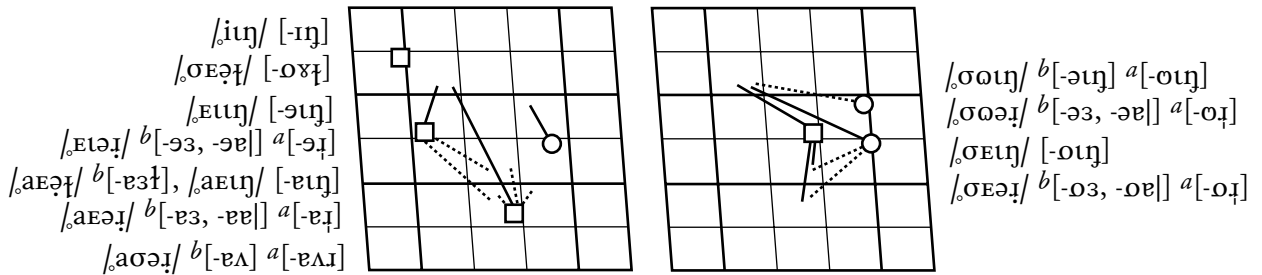


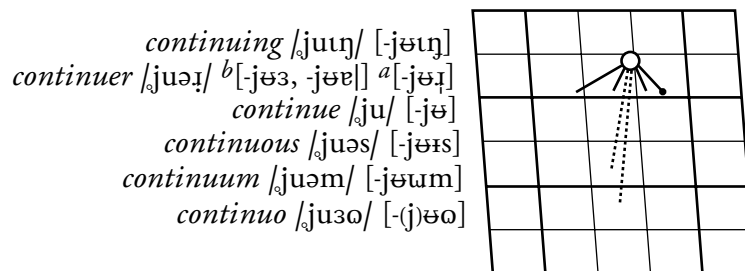
fig 10.4. Typical triphthong reduction in quick speech (including the diphthong /iə/).



Besides, *convoying*, *convoyer*, for /*σ*εɪ/; *σ*εə/, have *b*[kʰɔŋvɔɪ; kʰɔŋvɔɜ, -ɔə] *a*[kʰamvɔɪ; kʰamvɔɪ] (less often: *b*[kʰɔŋvɔɪ; -vɔɜ, -vɔə] *a*[kʰamvɔɪ; -vɔɪ]). *Satisfying* and *satisfyer*, for /*ə*εɪ/; *ə*εə/, have *b*[sæt-ɪsfɪɪ; -fɜ, -fə] *a*[sæɪ-ɪsfɪɪ; -fɪ] (but also: *b*[sæt-ɪsfɪ(ɪ)ɪ; -fɜ(ɪ), -fɜ(ɪ)ə] *a*[sæɪ-ɪsfɪ(ɪ)ɪ; -fɜ(ɪ)]). For *accompanying* and *hurrying* with /iə/, we often find [-ɪ].

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





14.7. Here is a concise summary of *expiration* (rather than ‘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): [ʰ#Ch]. 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* /ˈpi:pə/ [ˈphi:pʰ], *anticipate* /æntɪˈsɪpəteɪt/ [æntɪˈhɪsɪpʰeɪt], *potential* /pəˈtɛnʃəəl/ [pʰɪˈtɛnʃwɪt], (*an*) *impact* /ˈɪmpækt/ [ˈɪmpækʰt], (*to*) *separate* /ˈsepəreɪt/ [ˈsep-əreɪt].

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

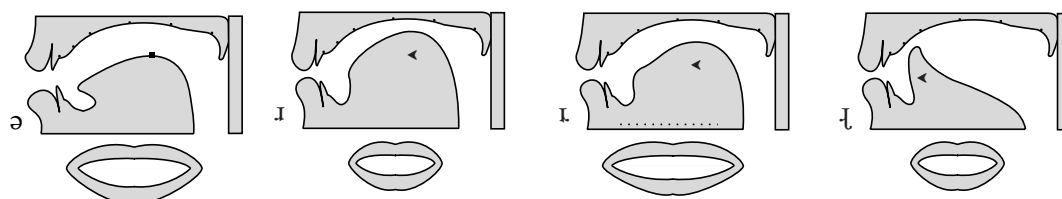


26.15. A brief remark concerning cases like *weary*, *vary*, *tourist* /ˈwɛəri, ˈveəri, ˈtuəri.ɪst/ ^b[ˈwɛɪ-ɪ, ˈveɪ-ɪ, ˈtuɪ-ɪst] ^a[ˈwɛɪ-ɪ, ˈveɪ-ɪ, ˈtuɪ-ɪst], in order to expand on what we already know about /əɪ/. fig 26.3 shows the orograms (and labiograms) of [ə] and [ɪ, ɪ, ɪ].

In British English (and the other accents structurally similar to it, like Australian and New Zealander), we have [Və-ɪV], while in American English (and those similar to it, like Canadian and generally the Celtic ones), we have [Vɪ-V, ˈVɪ-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 [Vɪ-V, ˈVɪ-V] must have derived from [Və-ɪV], by strong assimilation and simplification.

fig 26.3. Orogams and labiograms of [ə] (a static vocoid), [ɪ, ɪ, ɪ] (dynamic contoids).





Especially in addition to § 24.4-6 and § 24.11, let us see, in more detail, something else for the combination of /t, d; θ, ð; s, z/.

Independently from the consonant chart of fig 13.2 and from fig 24.1-2, fig 24.3 first shows the three articulations for English /t, d/ that we need in this section: the last phone is the normal one (alveolar): [t, d], while the other two are: [t, d; t, d] (pre-dental, and dental, respectively). Here we do not present the postalveolar phones, which are used in British English before /ɪ/: [t(h)ɪ, dɪ].

But let us pass, now, to the slit consonants /θ, ð/, which may be realized as in the three articulations shown: [θ, θ; θ, ð; θ, ð]: (lowered-tip coronal) pre-dental, (apical) pro-dental, (apical) dental, respectively.

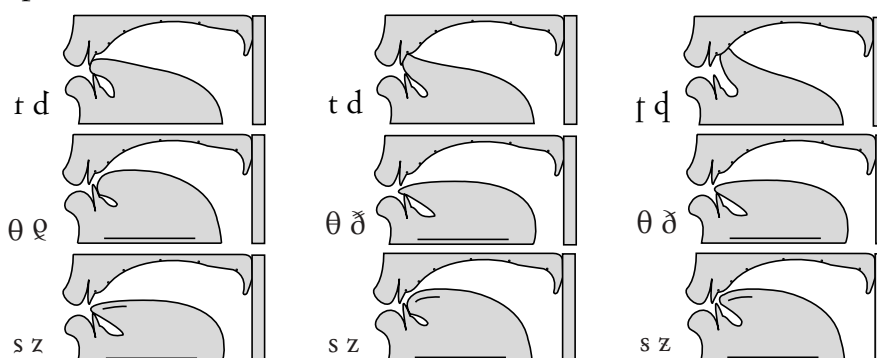
The other three orograms show three articulations for /s, z/: [s, z; s, z; s, z]: (apical) pre-dental, (lowered-tip coronal) dental, (raised-tip) dental (or dentalveolar), respectively.

In words like *eighth* and *width* /'eɪtθ, 'wɪdθ/, we have: ['eɪtθ, 'eɪtθ; 'wɪdθ, 'wɪdθ], while, in *hats* and *kids* /'hæts, 'kɪdθ/, we have: ['hæts, 'hæts; 'kɪdθ, 'kɪdθ]. In *breaths* /'breɪθs/ and *breathes* /'breɪðz/, we find: ^b['breɪθs, 'breɪðz] ^a['breɪθs, 'breɪðz].

In quick speech, for *is there any?* /'ɪzðəɪ 'eni/ we can hear ^b['ɪzzɪɪ 'en-i, -zz-] ^a['ɪzzɪɪ 'en-i, -zz-] and for *what's the time?* /'wɒtɪs ðə'taɪm/, ^b['wɒts zɪ'haɪm, 'wɒts, 'wɒt sɪ-, sɪ-] ^a['wɒt-, 'wɒt-].

In very broad regional accents, /θ, ð/ can become [f, v; t, d], but cases like *all the way* /'ɔ:l ðə'weɪ/ or *in the morning* /ɪnðə'mɔ:ɪnɪŋ/, even colloquially, may have: ^b['ɔ:l fɪ'weɪ, 'ɔ:l dɪ-] ^a['ɔ:l fɪ'weɪ, 'ɔ:l dɪ-] and [ɪnɪf-, ɪnɪd-].

fig 24.3. Taxophones needed in this section.





Typical (American) country music accent

We are presenting a common general vocalic set of the most typical realizations in country (o hillbilly) music.

In singing these vowels and diphthongs, they are typically realized as shown in the two vocograms below, differently from neutral accents, and usually with no taxophones, not even when followed by [t]. Indeed, they are said (sung) with full voice, as an exhibition performance typical of their artistic nature.

They are generally used as accepted model sounds for this kind of music by many singers, not to sound (too) different from all others.

In addition, vowels or diphthongs followed by a /N/, in the same syllable, are quite ‘twangy’ (strongly nasalized), as it also happens with *thing*, typically realized as /'θɛɪŋ/ [θɛĩŋ], instead of current /'θɪŋ/ [θɪŋ].

We do not add further examples, leaving to our readers the pleasure of finding some by themselves. Let us just add that words like *anybody* and *everybody*, instead of /'æni,bɒdi/ have /'æni,bɒdi/.

The tonograms show the typical intonation patterns, which are clearly perceptible, also derived from some spoken parts.

