

Lecture eight

Diphthongs

In all of the **RP** and **GA** vowel sounds we have considered thus far, the articulators remain more or less in the same position throughout the articulation of the vowel. This means that the vowel quality remains more or less constant. That kind of vowel is a monophthong. However, there are vowel sounds in which this is not the case

This kind of vowel sound, called a diphthong, entails some kind of change of position of the articulators during its production, and thus a change in the vowel quality produced. A diphthong is a vowel whose quality changes within a syllable

A diphthong is not simply a sequence of two vowels. For instance, in both the RP and the GA pronunciations of the word **seeing** [si:lɪŋ], the vowel [i:] is followed by the vowel [ɪ], but the resulting sequence is not a diphthong, because the [i:] and the [ɪ] are not in the same syllable: seeing has two syllables, **the first of which ends in [i:] and the second of which begins with [ɪ].**

The following are called diphthongs.

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- 1-/aɪ/. Examples: **sigh, rye, bide, kite, site, bite, price .**
- 2-/eɪ/. Examples: **say, ray, bayed, face .**
- 3-/ɔɪ/. Examples: **boy, soy, roy, buoyed, choice .**
- 4-/aʊ/. Examples **how, now, loud, cow, mouth .**
- 5-əʊ. Examples **Go, load, home, most, coat .**

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Lecture nine

.RP and GA short Vowels

1- There is considerable variation in the vowel sounds uttered by speakers of different accents of English. We will begin with two particular accents; the first is Received Pronunciation (**RP**) and General American (**GA**).

RP is the accent often referred to as the prestige accent in British society and associated with the speech of the graduates of the English public schools. It is thus defined largely in terms of the social class of its speakers.

The term **GA** is an idealized over a group of accents whose speakers inhabit a vast proportion of the United States. It excludes eastern accents such as the New York City accent, and southern accents (such as spoken in Texas). For speakers of **RP** and **GA**, the vowels in **peep** and **pip** differ in several respects, one of which is vowel length. In **peep** it is a long vowel and in **pip** it is a short vowel.

The vowel in **pip** is transcribed as [ɪ]. so the word is transcribed as [pɪp]. [ɪ] is high front unrounded vowel, it is less high and less front than the vowel in **peep**.

The words **pit**, **pet**, **pat**, **pot**, **putt** and **put** can be used to illustrate the short vowels, since these words differ in pronunciation only with respect to the vowel. **EXAMPLES:** **ɪ** as in **pit** [pɪt], **ɪ** as in **fill**, **mid**, **e** as in **pet** [pet], **led**, **sell** [sel], **æ** as in **pat** [pæt], **ʌ** as in **putt** [pʌt] or **love**, **ʊ** as in **put** [pʊt], **full**, **ɒ** as in **pot** [pɒt], **doll**, **song**,

- ★ **ɪ** as in **pit** [pɪt], **fill**, **mid**,
- ★ **e** as in **pet** [pet], **led**, **sell** [sel],
- ★ **æ** as in **pat** [pæt],
- ★ **ʌ** as in **putt** [pʌt] or **love**,
- ★ **ʊ** as in **put** [pʊt], **full**,
- ★ **ɒ** as in **pot** [pɒt], **doll**, **song**,

An example of vowels to the Examination

▲ The vowel in the word (pat) is pronounced as:

- a) **e**. **b) æ.** C) **ʊ.** D) **e.**

ə (which is called schwa) as in about [əbaʊt], or again. this vowel (the schwa), is typically shorter than the short vowels we have just described, and it differs from those in that it may never occur in a **stressed syllable** (in about, it occurs in the unstressed first syllable; in elephant, it occurs in the **unstressed second syllable**; in Belinda, it occurs in the **unstressed initial and final syllables**).

In discussing vowels, we will also adopt the lexical sets adopted by wells. These are the key words selected by wells **to bring out the similarities and differences between RP and GA**. We will therefore, at times, refer to the vowel in words such as pit as **KIT vowel**

The vowel in words such as pet we will call the **DRESS vowel**; words such as pat have the **TRAP vowel**; words such as pot have the **LOT vowel**; words such as put have the **FOOT vowel**, and words such as putt have the **STRUT vowel**.

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