

Seminar 17312

Introduction to

Linguistics

Institute for English Philology
Winter Semester 2020/2021

Academic Instructor: Magdalena Borowik
Session 3: Phonetics

The Consonants of English (RP)

IPA Symbols

	bilabial	labio-dental	dental	alveolar	palato-alveolar	palatal	velar	glottal
plosive	p b			t d			k g	
fricative		f v	θ ð	s z	ʃ ʒ			h
affricate					tʃ dʒ			
nasal		m			n		ŋ	
approximant		w		(central) ɹ (lateral) l		j		

Source: Plag (2009: 15)

1. LENGTH of the vowel (QUANTITY):

- long (tense) vs. short (lax)

2. HEIGHT of the tongue (QUALITY):

- high (close, close-mid)
- mid (sometimes divided into mid-high and mid-low or close-mid, open-mid)
- low (open)

3. POSITION (part) of the tongue (QUALITY)

- front
- central
- back

4. ROUNDEDNESS:

- rounded
- unrounded

Rounded are [ɒ], [ɔ:], [u:] and [ʊ] in RP English

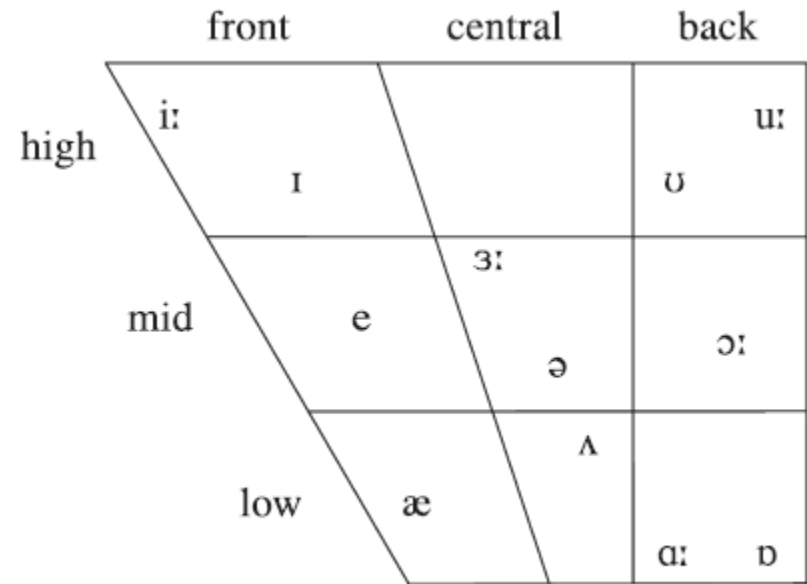
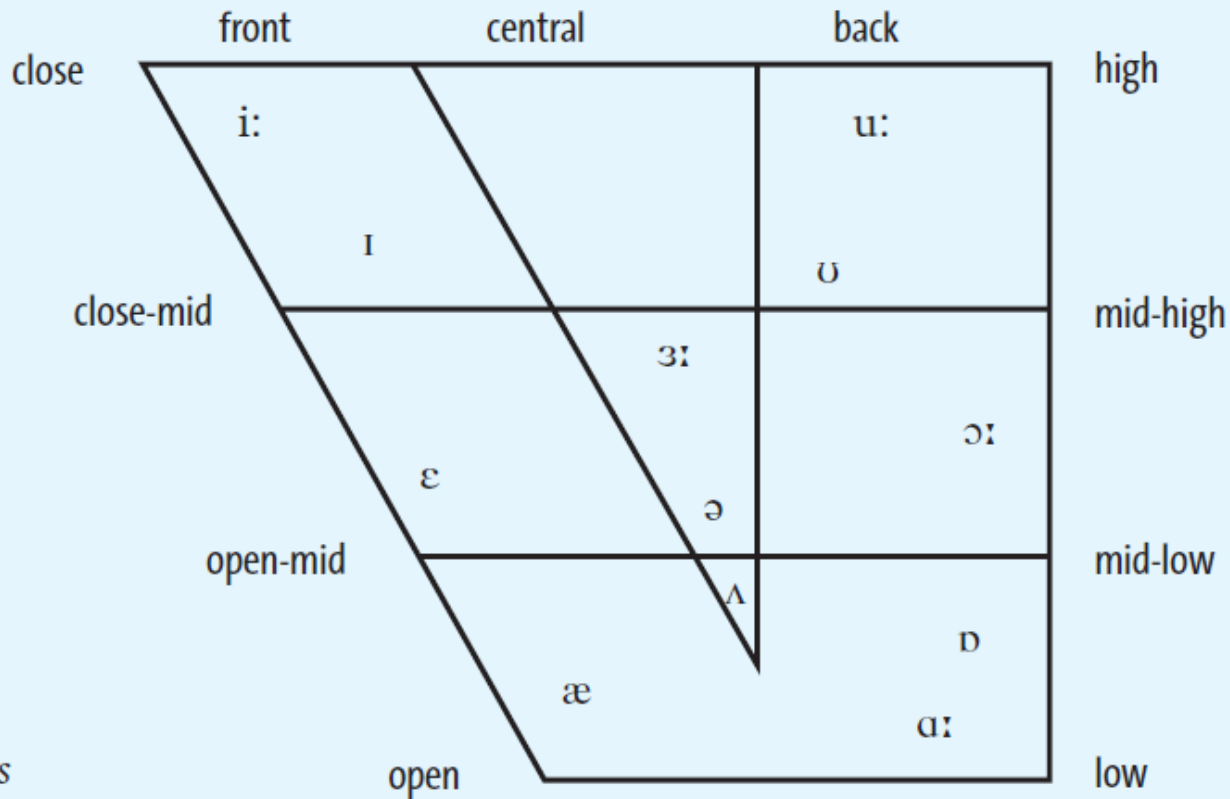


Figure 1.6. Vowel chart: the vowels of RP; IPA symbols

Plag (2009: 18)

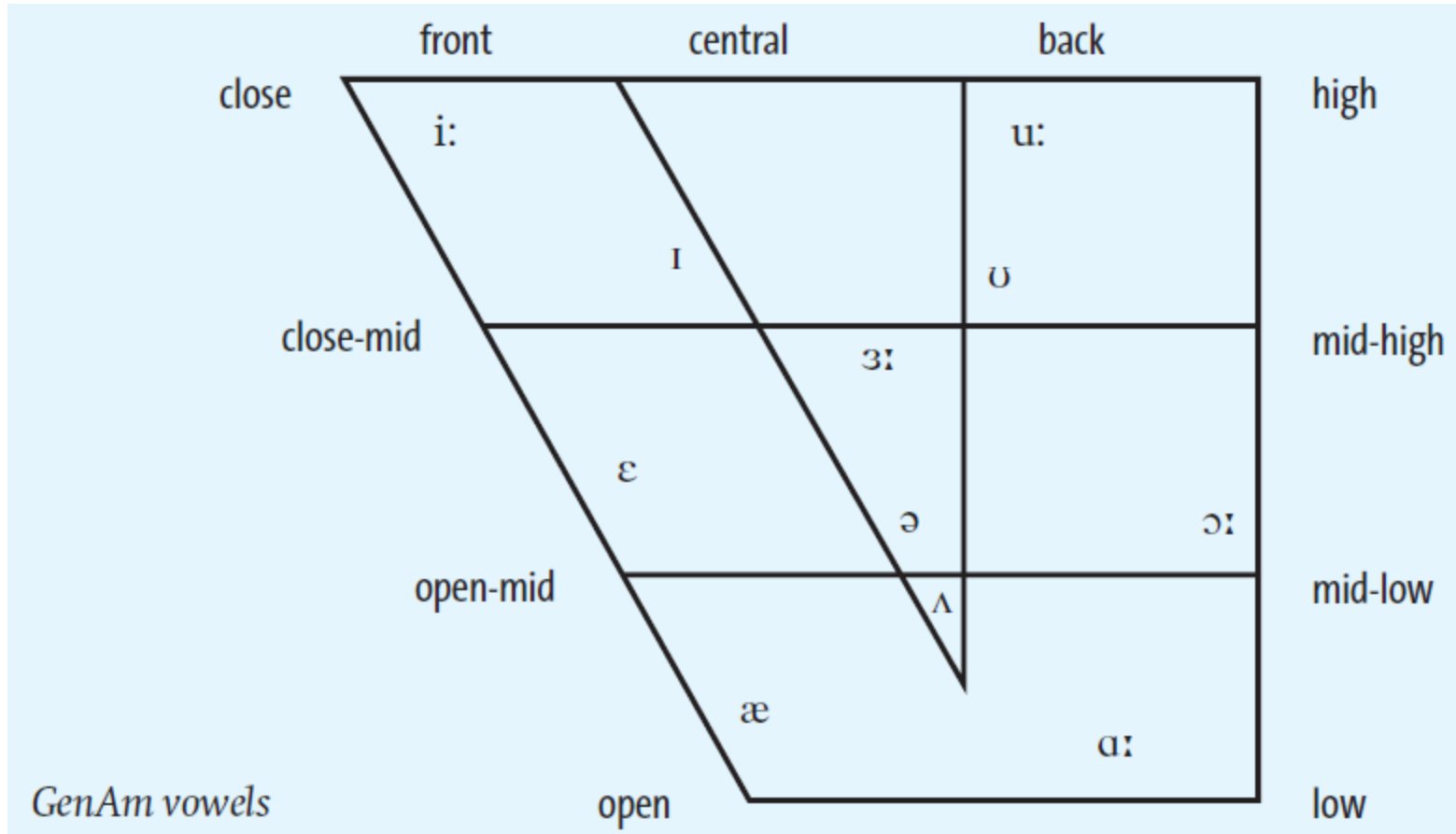
English vowels: RP



*RP and GenAm vowels
(adapted from Meyer
2005:96-97, cf. Biblio-
graphy of Chapter 1)*

RP vowels

English vowels: GenAm



Source: Bieswanger & Becker (2017: 56)

Vowel sounds: monophthongs

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=72M770xTvaU&index=6&list=PLOZUTLsJbEAjW-Z9Bou0fPvPs8zdF79pJ>

English short vowels (RP)

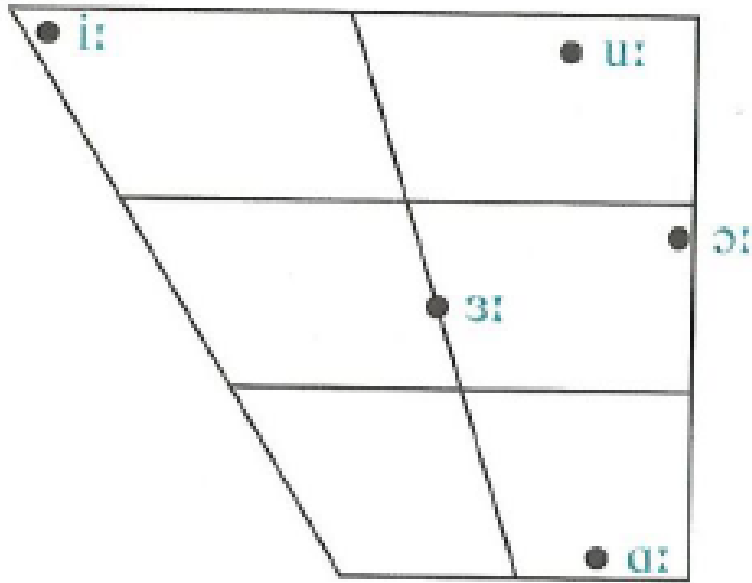
- **[ɪ]**: short, near-close, near-front, unrounded. Examples: bit /bɪt/, pin /pɪn/, fish /fɪʃ/
- **[e]**: short, close-mid, front, unrounded. Examples: bet /bet/, men /men/, yes /jes/
- **[æ]**: short, near-open, front, unrounded. Examples: bat /bæt/, man /mæn/, cat /kæt/, gas /gæs/
- **[ʌ]**: short, open, mid-back, unrounded. Examples: cut /cʌt/, come /kʌm/, rush /rʌʃ/
- **[ɒ]** *RP only*: short, open, back, rounded. Examples: pot /pɒt/, gone /gɒn/, cross /krɒs/ in GenAm: /pɑ:t/
- **[ʊ]**: short, near-close, near-back, rounded. Examples: put /pʊt/, pull /pʊl/, push /pʊʃ/
- **[ə]**: 'Schwa': short, mid-central, unrounded. It can be found in weak syllables. Examples: attend /ə'tend/

Source: (Roach 2009: 14; English Language Club 2020)

English long vowels (RP)

- [i:]: long, close, front, unrounded. Examples: **beat** /bi:t/, **mean** /mi:n/, **peace** /pi:s/
- [ɜ:]: long, mid-central, unrounded. Examples: **bird** /bɜ:d/, **purse** /pɜ:s/.
- [ɑ:]: long, open, back, unrounded. Examples: **card** /kɑ:d/, **half** /hɑ:f/
- [ɔ:]: long, open-mid, back, rounded. Examples: **board** /bɔ:d/, **horse** /hɔ:s/
- [u:]: long, close, back, rounded. Examples: **food** /fu:d/, **soon** /su:n/

Source: (Roach 2009: 17; English Language Club 2020)



(ibid. p. 16)

Simplified descriptions: RP (Plag)

- **[ɪ]**: short, high, front, unrounded. Examples: bit /bɪt/, pin /pɪn/, fish /fɪʃ/
- **[e]**: short, mid, front, unrounded. Examples: bet /bet/, men /men/, yes /jes/
- **[æ]**: short, low, front, unrounded. Examples: bat /bæt/, man /mæn/, cat /kæt/, gas /gæs/
- **[ʌ]**: short, low, central, unrounded. Examples: cut /cʌt/, come /kʌm/, rush /rʌʃ/
- **[ɒ]** *RP only*: short, low, back, rounded. Examples: pot /pɒt/, gone /gɒn/, cross /krɒs/
- **[ʊ]**: short, high, back, rounded. Examples: put /pʊt/, pull /pʊl/, push /pʊʃ/
- **[ə]**: ‘Schwa’: short, mid, central, unrounded. It can be found in weak syllables. Examples: attend /ə'tend/

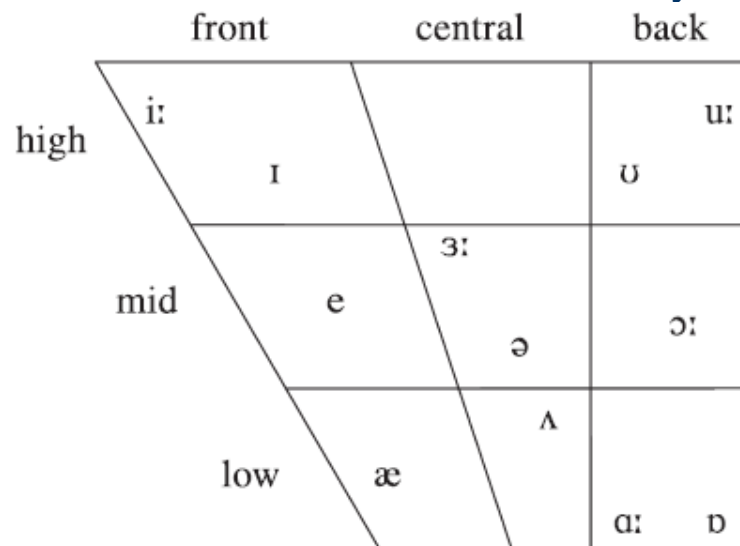


Figure 1.6. Vowel chart: the vowels of RP; IPA symbols

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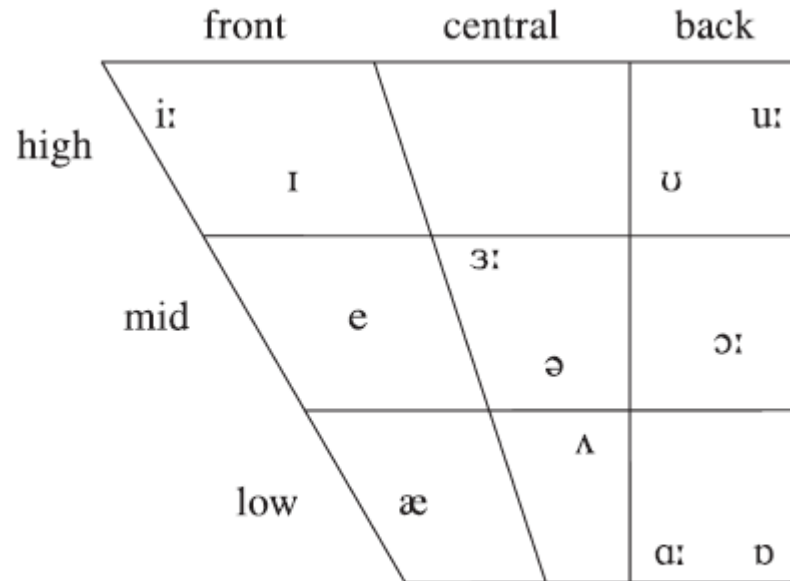


Figure 1.6. Vowel chart: the vowels of RP; IPA symbols

Closing Diphthongs rising to [ɪ]

[eɪ]	<i>say, plate</i>	[aɪ]	<i>fly, pie, rye</i>	[ɔɪ]	<i>boy, toy</i>
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Closing Diphthongs rising to [ʊ]

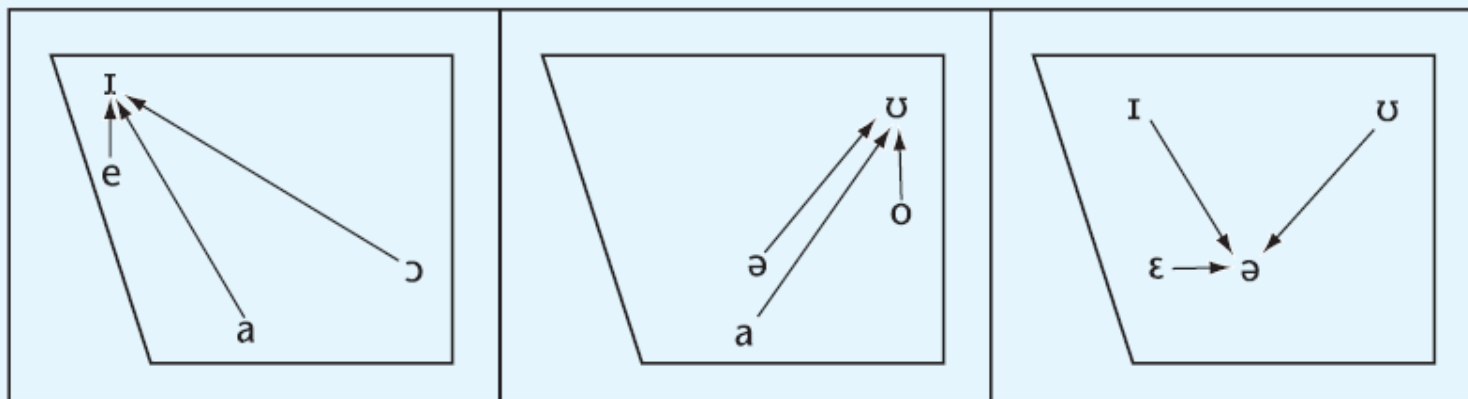
[aʊ]	<i>how, loud</i>	[əʊ]	<i>bone, load</i> (RP only!)	[oʊ]	<i>bone, load</i> (GenAm only!)
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Centring Diphthongs ending in [ə] (RP only!)

[ɪə]	<i>here, beer</i>	[ɛə]	<i>hair, swear</i>	[ʊə]	<i>tour</i>
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RP and GenAm diphthongs

(Bieswanger & Becker 2017: 58)



Closing Diphthongs

Centring Diphthongs (RP only!)

Fig. 3.17

English diphthongs

(ibid. p. 57)

Diphthong sounds (RP)

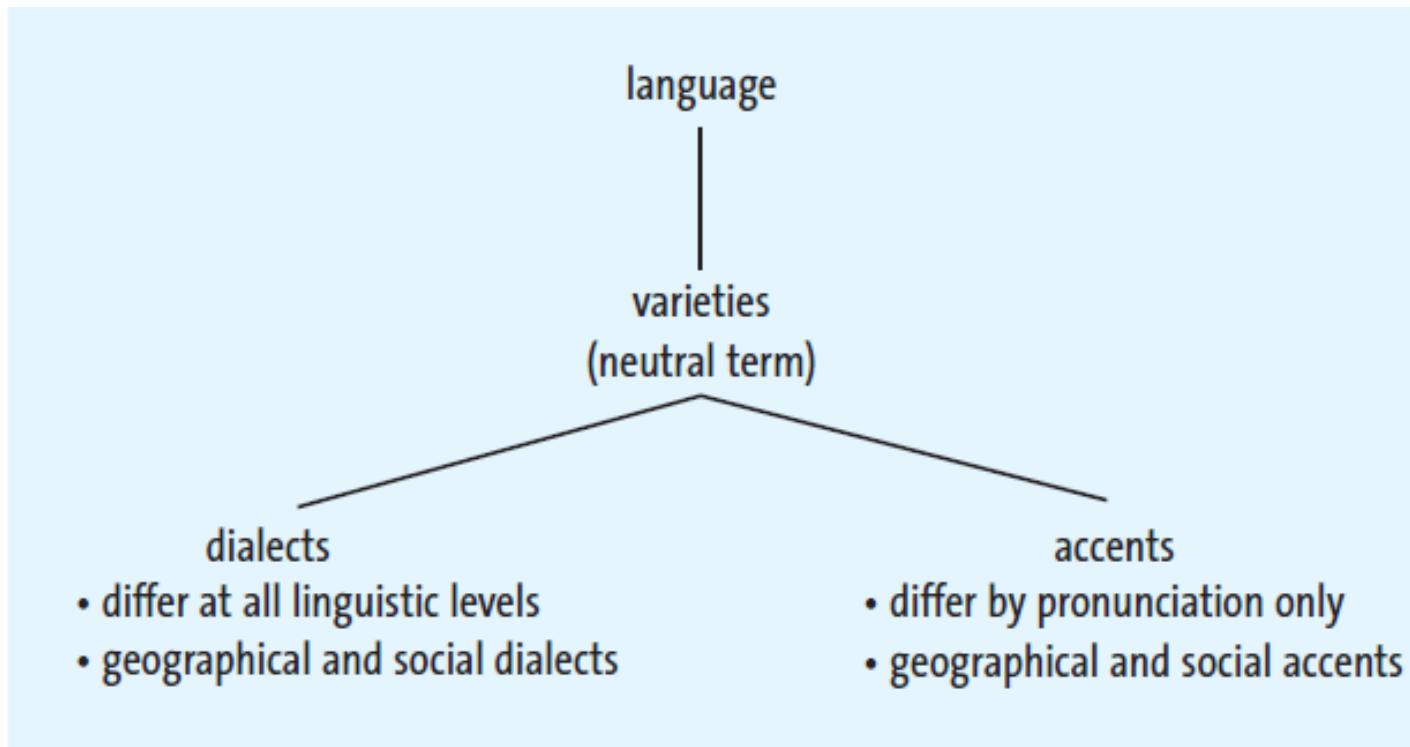
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d1HZPx8DuDw&list=PLOZUTLsJbEAjW-Z9Bou0fPvPs8zdF79pJ&index=7>

Useful link

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLOZUTLsJbEAjW-Z9Bou0fPvPs8zdF79pJ>

I recommend that you watch all the videos covering vowel sounds, diphthongs and consonants.

Varieties



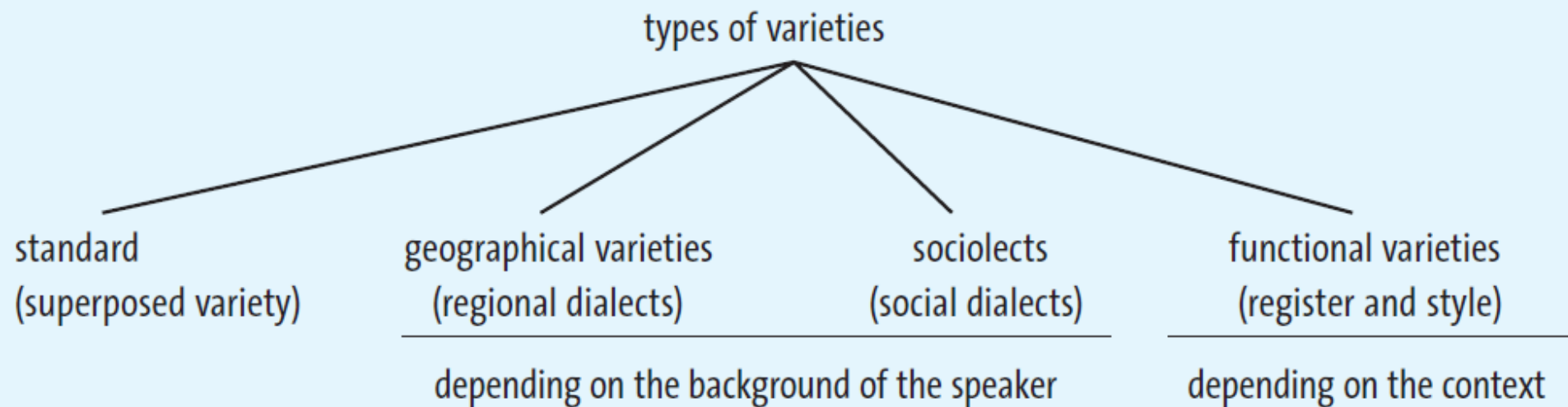
Types of varieties

Varieties may be distinguished along:

A **regional** dimension — **REGIONAL DIALECTS (horizontal variations)**

A **social** dimension — **SOCIAL DIALECTS**

A **functional** dimension — **FUNCTIONAL DIALECTS**



Major types of language varieties

(Bieswanger & Becker 2017: 174)

Standard language

STANDARD ENGLISH is the commonly accepted variety of English employed in writing, broadcasting, administration and normally taught in schools and to non-native learners (Bieswanger & Becker 2017: 176).

The term **STANDARD ENGLISH** refers to grammar and vocabulary, but not to pronunciation. Standard English can be spoken with any accent (ibid., p. 177).

However, the standard is often associated with a particular **ACCENT**:

- ✓ **RP English (Received Pronunciation)**
- ✓ **General American English**

National varieties of English: BrE, AmE, CanE, AusE, NZE (Bieswanger & Becker 2017: 179)

- **Received Pronunciation (R.P.):** „The national pronunciation standard of British English which is historically developed in the Southeast of England” (Mair 2015: 252)
- **RP** stands for **Received Pronunciation**, ”where ’received’ originally meant ’accepted’ in the sense of being the accent accepted in ’best’ social circles” (Gramley & Pätzold 2002: 230).
- RP originated in the south-east of England, but it is likely to be found and understood throughout the country (Trudgill & Hannah 2002: 9-10).
- RP is the accent which is used most often in radio and television broadcasts in England.
- RP is used natively by 3-5% of the population of England;
- Today RP is not a regional dialect, but a social accent, associated particularly with the upper-middle and upper classes (ibid.)
- Chosen types of RP:
 - mainstream RP vs upper-crust RP (upper-class)
 - adoptive RP (for those ones who did not speak it as children, acquired for professional reasons, friends) (Wells 1982: 278-286)

General American

“[...] Idealisation over a group of accents in the United States excluding Eastern and Southern accents, or in both”
(Bieswanger & Becker 2017: 52).

RP and GenAm: differences

- RP is non-rhotic and GenAm is rhotic;

RP: non-rhotic; in non-rhotic accents, /r/ is not pronounced before consonant or pause:

- GenAm is rhotic. In rhotic accents, /r/ is realised together with a vowel.

card /kɑ:d/ (RP) /kɑ:rd/ (GenAm)

work /wɜ:k/ (RP) /wɜ:rk/ (GenAm)

clear /klɪə/ (RP) /klɪr/ (GenAm)

(Collins & Maes 2003: 119-120)

In RP, /r/ following a vowel is silent and in GenAm, it is pronounced (Mair 2015: 147)

RP and GenAm: differences

- ✓ The short back vowel /ɒ/ is absent in GenAm;
 - In words such as hot /hɒt/ (RP), stop /stɒp/ (RP), lock /lɒk/ (RP), John, horror /'hɒrə/ is realised as /ɑ:/ or /ɔ:/ depending on the phonetic context;
- ✓ /ɑ:/ in RP is realised as /æ/ in GenAm in words such as *dance, demand, rather, staff*: the contrast is restricted to about 80 words;
- ✓ Variation between /ju:/ (RP) and /u:/ (GenAm): new /nju: vs. /nu:/ duty /'dju:ti (RP) vs. /du:ti/ (GenAM)

(Mair 2015: 147)

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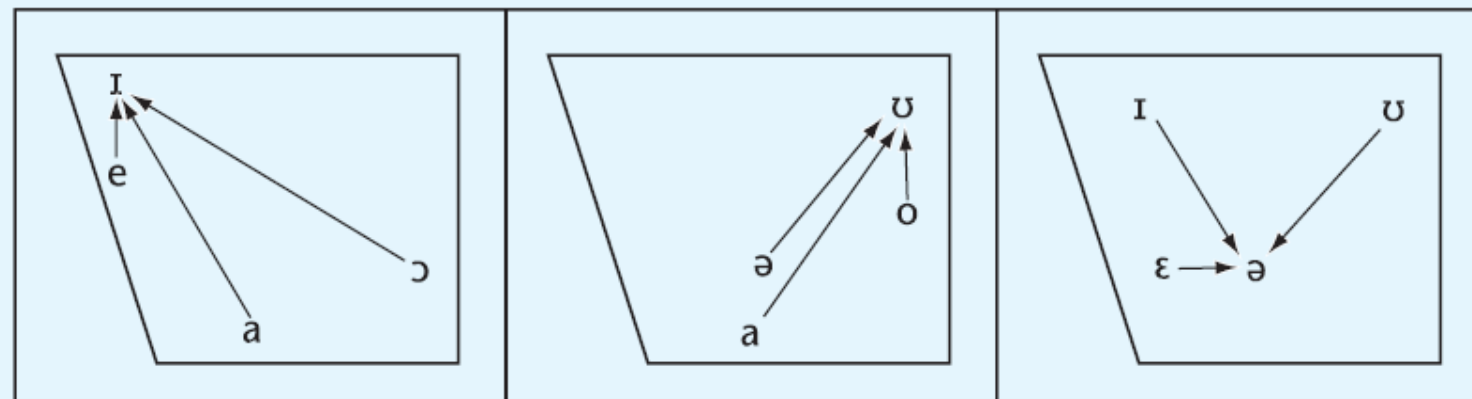
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1. Bieswanger, Markus & Annette Becker. 2017. *Introduction to English linguistics*. 3rd edition. Tübingen: Francke.
2. English Language Club. 2020: Vowel Sounds: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=72M770xTvaU>, 12 November 2020.
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