BBN–ANG–141 Foundations of phonology
12. The shape of things to come

Péter Szigetvári

Dept of English Linguistics, Eötvös Loránd University

outline

language change

current changes in BrE

- TH-fronting
- glottalling
- palatalization
- the anticlockwise vowel shift
- smoothing
- GOOSE- and GOAT-fronting
- L-"vocalization"
- splits
- GOOSE and GOAT glide fronting
- changes in the vowel inventory

sample exam questions

exam info

language change

- linguistic systems constantly change
- linguistic systems do not change uniformly
  - some speakers adopt a new form, others do not
  - some words under the scope of the change are altered, others are not
- to predict the directions of change we must examine how younger speakers speak

Standard British English

- the standard of the mid 20th century: RP (Received Pronunciation, also known earlier as Public School English)
- RP is today considered outdated, old-fashioned, posh, funny
- Estuary English $\approx$ Cockneyfied RP (Cockney $\approx$ London English)
- proposals for the name of today's standard
  - General British (GB)
  - Current British English (CUBE)
  - Standard British English (SBE)
  - Standard Southern British English (SSBE)

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  probability increases with frequency: *thirty three* θəːtij frij

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mergers

hearth=half, Ruth=roof, thallic=phallic, thawed=ford, thin=fin, third=furred, thorn=faun, thought=fort/fought, three=free, throws=froze; clothe=clove, lather=larva, nether=never, oaths=oaves, then=den, thence=dense, there=dare, they=day, etc

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lil

little litəl > litl̩ > liʔl̩ > lil

palatalization: tj > tʃ, dj > dʒ, sj > ʃ, zj > ʒ

historical: before j + unstressed vowel

nature néjtʃə, *question* kwéstʃən; *procedure* prəsíjdʒə, *soldier* sə́wldʒə; *pressure* préʃə, *confession* kənféʃən; *seizure* síjʒə, *fusion* fjúwʒən
(exceptionally before stressed vowel: *mature* mətʃúː, *sure* ʃúː)

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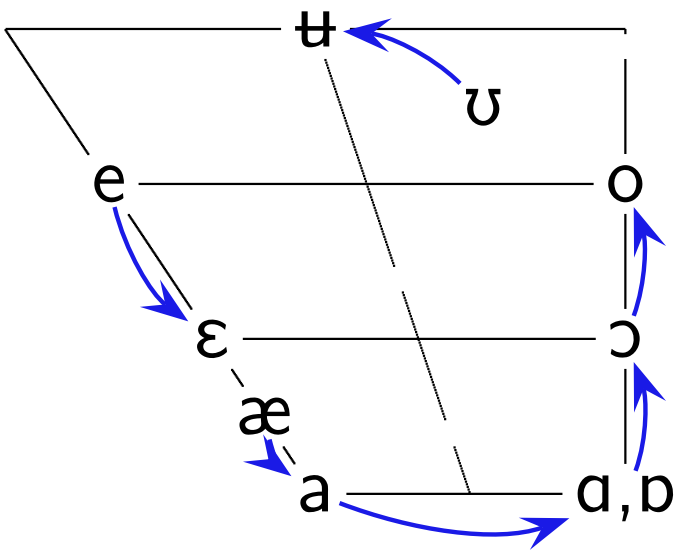
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in multiple steps

stupid stjúwpid > stʃúwpid > ʃtʃúwpid, *strong* stróŋ > stʃróŋ > ʃtʃróŋ

the anticlockwise vowel shift

(this section uses narrow/precise vowel symbols)



RP = Gimson	CUBE = Lindsey
e	ɛ
æ	a
aɪ	ɑj
ɒ	ɔ
ɔː	oː
ʊ	ʉ

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- əwə > əː, eg *mower* máwə > máː, *go away* gə́w əwéj > gə́ːwéj

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- GOOSE: uw before nonprevocalic l (*fool*) and ʉw elsewhere (*hula, who*)
- GOAT: ow before nonprevocalic l (*cold*) and əw elsewhere (*Cola, go*)

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several outcomes

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l > w unless followed by a vowel (ie word-finally and preconsonantally)

- *mill* mil > miw, *felt* felt > fewt, *help* help > hewp, *world* wəːld > wəwd
- vs *Millie* milij, *fellow* feləw, *hello* heləw, *early* əːlij
- j/w/ː delete: *tale* tejl > tew, *owl* awl > aw, *world* wəːld > wəwd
- after stressed ə: *null* nə́l > nə́w
- after unstressed ə: *mental* méntəl > méntu, *little* lítəl > lítu, *April* éjprəl > éjpru (resulting in another word-final unstressed short vowel!)

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- *feel* fijəl > fiju or fijl > fiw (= *fill*)

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- other mergers: *Cal* kal > kaw (= *cow*), *gull* gəl > gəw (= *go*)

GOAT- & GOOSE-fronting and L-vocalization lead to splits

	go	goal	code	cold
earlier	gow	gowl	kowd	kowld
fronting	gəw	↓	kəwd	↓
vocalization	↓	gow	↓	kowd
now	gəw	gow	kəwd	kowd

	too	tool	rude	ruled
earlier	tuw	tuwl	ruwd	ruwld
fronting	tʉw	↓	rʉwd	↓
vocalization	↓	tuw	↓	ruwd
now	tʉw	tuw	rʉwd	ruwd

GOAT and GOOSE each develop into two contrasting vowels, ow and əw, uw and ʉw are not allophone pairs any more, two new phonemes appear

GOOSE and GOAT glide fronting

GOOSE ʉw > ʉj

goose gʉws > gʉjs, *two* tʉw > tʉj

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GOAT əw > əj

goat gəwt > gəjt, *moment* məwmənt > məjmənt

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blocked by a following l (the vowel does not front either)

fool fuwl, *goal* gowl

changes in the vowel inventory

i kit	ij fleece		iː near
e dress	ej face		eː square
a trap	aj price	aw mouth	aː palm
o lot	oj choice		oː thought
u foot		uw goose	(uː cure)
ə strut		əw goat	əː nurse

changes in the vowel inventory

L-vocalization

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sample exam questions

which pair my be homophonous in British English?

1. think—sink
2. that—fat
3. then—Zen
4. nether—never

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AND NOW FOR
SOMETHING
COMPLETELY
DIFFERENT

about the test

form

- cca. 50 multiple choice items, wrong answers are ignored, cca. 1 hour
- the test sheet is A5 size, in 8.3pt font

special needs

if this format does not fit your eyesight, or if you have any other request, please contact the examiner at szigetvari@elte.hu as soon as possible

before the exam

what you must bring with you

an ID (student card, driving licence, passport), several pens/pencils

what you may bring with you

snacks, drinks, mascot

what you had better not bring with you

headphones, tablets, smart phones: these will be required to be turned off and put far away from you

after the exam

checking your solutions

- you may take the test sheet with you
- you may mark your answers on the test sheet
- you can compare your answers and the correct answers on the website of the course a couple of hours after the examination
- to access your test result, all you need is your Neptun code
- if you do not want others to see your result, you may give a password on the answer sheet
- you may complain if you find any errors in the correction
- in itself the fact that you need one more point to get a better mark is not sufficient grounds for a complaint

problems

I fell ill...

1. get off the exam list unless it is the last session before the retake
2. notify me at your earliest convenience

I failed...

1. if this is the first time in this term, register for any of the remaining sessions
2. if this is the second time in this term, come next term

I wanted a better mark...

you can come again, but your second attempt will count even if it's worse

síj juw əʔ vij igzám