

# 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

- palatalization

- the anticlockwise vowel shift

- GOOSE- and GOAT-fronting

- L- “vocalization”

- splits

- GOOSE and GOAT glide fronting

- changes in the vowel inventory

sample exam questions

# 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- ▶ RP is today considered outdated, old-fashioned, posh, funny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)

# TH-fronting

θ > f and ð > d or v

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- ▶ θ > f: *think* fiŋk, *path* pa:f, *month* mənʃ, *through* fru:u, *south* saʊf, *theory* fi:ri:j, *pathetic* pəfetik, *faithful* feiffəl;  
probability increases with frequency: *thirty three* θə:tij frij

# TH-fronting

$\theta > f$  and  $\delta > d$  or  $v$

- ▶  $\theta > f$ : *think*  $fɪŋk$ , *path*  $pɑ:f$ , *month*  $mənʃ$ , *through*  $fruw$ , *south*  $sawf$ , *theory*  $fɪ:rɪj$ , *pathetic*  $pəfetɪk$ , *faithful*  $fejffəl$ ;  
probability increases with frequency: *thirty three*  $\thetaɜ:tɪj frɪj$
- ▶  $\delta > v$  after a vowel or glide: *mother*  $mávnə$ , *bathe*  $bejv$ , *without*  $wíváwt$

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- ▶  $\delta > d$  elsewhere: *then*  $den$ , *the cat*  $də kát$ , *although*  $o:ldəw$



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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*

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

historical: before  $j$  + unstressed vowel

*nature* néjtʃə, *question* kwéstʃən; *procedure* prəsɪdʒə, *soldier* séwldʒə;  
*pressure* préʃə, *confession* kənféʃən; *seizure* síjzə, *fusion* fjúwʒən  
 (exceptionally before stressed vowel: *mature* mætʃú:, *sure* ʃú:)

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extension 1: before stressed vowel

*Tuesday* tʃúwzdeɪ, *dune* dʒúwn (=June), *assume* əʃúwm, *presume* prɪzúwm  
 (the fricatives  $s$   $z$  do not palatalize word initially: *suit* sjúwt/súwt, \*ʃúwt)

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extension 2: before any palatal consonant

*trap* tʃráp, *draw* dʒro:, *question* kwéstʃən, *disregard* díʃrɪgá:d, *Israel* íʒreɪl

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

historical: before j + unstressed vowel

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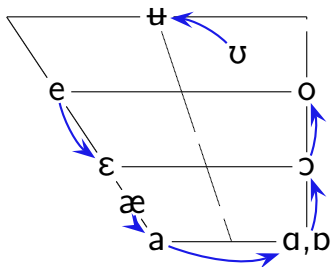
*trap* tʃráp, *draw* dʒro:, *question* kwéstʃən, *disregard* díʃrɪgá:d, *Israel* íʒreɪl

in multiple steps

*stupid* stjúwpɪd > stʃúwpɪd > ʃtʃúwpɪd, *strong* strón > stʃrón > ʃtʃrón

# the anticlockwise vowel shift

(this section uses narrow/precise vowel symbols)



RP = Gimson      CUBE = Lindsey

e                      ε

æ                      a

aɪ                     aɪ

ɒ                      ɔ

ɔɪ                     oɪ

ʊ                      ʊ

# GOOSE- and GOAT-fronting

GOOSE UW > ~~ʌ~~W

## GOOSE- and GOAT-fronting

GOOSE  $u\omega > \text{ɥ}\omega$

- ▶ *too*  $\text{t}\omega$ , *fuse*  $\text{fj}\omega\text{wz}$ , *Hewlett*  $\text{hj}\omega\text{wl}\text{ət}$ , *hooligan*  $\text{h}\omega\text{wli}\text{g}\text{ən}$



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- ▶ **but not** before word-final/preconsonantal [l]: *rule*  $\text{ru}\omega\text{l}$ , *school*  $\text{sku}\omega\text{l}$ ,  
*Gould*  $\text{gu}\omega\text{ld}$

## GOOSE- and GOAT-fronting

GOOSE **ʊ** > **ɪ**

- ▶ *too* **tɪw**, *fuse* **fjɪwz**, *Hewlett* **hjɪwlət**, *hooligan* **hɪwliɡən**
- ▶ **but not** before word-final/preconsonantal [l]: *rule* **ruwl**, *school* **skuwl**,  
*Gould* **ɡuwlɪd**

GOAT **oʊ** > **əʊ**

## GOOSE- and GOAT-fronting

GOOSE **u** > **ʌ**

- ▶ *too* **tʌw**, *fuse* **fjʌwz**, *Hewlett* **hjʌwlət**, *hooligan* **hʌwliɡən**
- ▶ **but not** before word-final/preconsonantal [l]: *rule* **ruwl**, *school* **skuwl**, *Gould* **ɡuwlɪd**

GOAT **o** > **ə**

- ▶ *go* **ɡəw**, *goat* **ɡəwt**, *Cola* **kəwlə**, *holy* **həwli**

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the result: two allophones for these two vowels

## GOOSE- and GOAT-fronting

GOOSE **u**w > **ʊ**w

- ▶ *too* **tʊ**w, *fuse* **fjʊ**wz, *Hewlett* **hju**wlət, *hooligan* **hʊ**wlɪgən
- ▶ **but not** before word-final/preconsonantal [l]: *rule* **ru**wl, *school* **sku**wl, *Gould* **gu**wld

GOAT **o**w > **ə**w

- ▶ *go* **gə**w, *goat* **gə**wt, *Cola* **kə**wlə, *holy* **hə**wlɪj
- ▶ **but not** before word-final/preconsonantal [l]: *goal* **gə**wl, *pole* **pə**wl, *gold* **gə**wld

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- ▶ GOOSE: **u**w before nonprevocalic l (*fool*) and **ʊ**w elsewhere (*hula*, *who*)

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the result: two allophones for these two vowels

- ▶ GOOSE: **u**w before nonprevocalic l (*fool*) and **ʊ**w elsewhere (*hula*, *who*)
- ▶ GOAT: **o**w before nonprevocalic l (*cold*) and **ə**w elsewhere (*Cola*, *go*)

# L- “vocalization”

l > w unless followed by a vowel



## L-“vocalization”

l > w unless followed by a vowel

- ▶ *mill* mil > miw, *felt* felt > fewt, *help* help > hewp, *world* wɜ:lɪd > wəwd

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

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- ▶ *feel* fijəl > fiju or fijl > fiw (= *fill*)
- ▶ *tale* tejl > teju or tejl > tew (= *tell*)



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several outcomes

- ▶ *feel* fijəl > fiju or fijl > fiw (= fill)
- ▶ *tale* tejl > teju or tejl > tew (= tell)
- ▶ other mergers: *Cal* kal > kaw (= cow), *gull* gəl > gəw (= go)

## GOAT- &amp; GOOSE-fronting and L-vocalization lead to splits

|              | go          | goal         | code         | cold          |
|--------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|
| earlier      | g <u>ow</u> | g <u>owl</u> | k <u>owd</u> | k <u>owld</u> |
| fronting     | gəw         | ↓            | kəwd         | ↓             |
| vocalization | ↓           | gow          | ↓            | kowd          |
| now          | gə <u>w</u> | g <u>ow</u>  | kə <u>wd</u> | k <u>owd</u>  |

|              | too         | tool         | rude         | ruled         |
|--------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|
| earlier      | t <u>uw</u> | t <u>uwl</u> | r <u>uwd</u> | r <u>uwld</u> |
| fronting     | tɨw         | ↓            | rɨwd         | ↓             |
| vocalization | ↓           | tuw          | ↓            | ruwd          |
| now          | tɨ <u>w</u> | t <u>uw</u>  | rɨ <u>wd</u> | r <u>uwld</u> |

GOAT and GOOSE each develop into two contrasting vowels, ow and əw, uw and tɨw are not allophone pairs any more

# GOOSE and GOAT glide fronting

GOOSE  $\text{ɥw}$  >  $\text{ɥj}$

*goose*  $\text{gɥjs}$ , *two*  $\text{tɥj}$

# GOOSE and GOAT glide fronting

GOOSE  $\text{u}\text{w}$  >  $\text{u}\text{j}$

*goose*  $\text{g}\text{u}\text{j}\text{s}$ , *two*  $\text{t}\text{u}\text{j}$

GOAT  $\text{ə}\text{w}$  >  $\text{ə}\text{j}$

*goat*  $\text{g}\text{ə}\text{j}\text{t}$ , *moment*  $\text{m}\text{ə}\text{j}\text{m}\text{ə}\text{nt}$

## GOOSE and GOAT glide fronting

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GOAT  $\text{əw}$  >  $\text{əj}$

*goat*  $\text{gəjt}$ , *moment*  $\text{məjmənt}$

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

*fool*  $\text{fuwl}$ , *goal*  $\text{gowl}$

## 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  | ɜː nurse   |

# changes in the vowel inventory

## L-vocalization

|         |           |          |            |
|---------|-----------|----------|------------|
| i kit   | ij fleece | iw bill  | iː near    |
| e dress | ej face   | ew bell  | eː square  |
| a trap  | aj price  | aw mouth | aː palm    |
| o lot   | oj choice | ow ball  | oː thought |
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## changes in the vowel inventory

## glide fronting

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| ə strut | əj goat   | əw dull  | əː nurse   |

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## sample exam questions

which pair may be homophonous in British English?

1. think—sink
2. that—fat
3. then—Zen
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in which pair of words may the vowel be pronounced differently?

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2. coat—coal
3. fall—call
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