

Analyser et transcrire les variétés d'anglais oral à l'agrégation externe d'anglais

Atelier : Enjeux en vue de la préparation à l'épreuve de phonologie

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Ideas for discussion

- digraphs and *neons*
- LOT and CLOTH in GA
- suffixes and endings
- Iambic Reversal in compound adjectives

Digraphs and *neons*

Digraphs and neons

first thing to teach and make learners realize:

it is not the pronunciation that's wrong, it's the way we spell

Digraphs and neons

What would be wrong with **/ɪ'nʌf/**?

Digraphs and neons

What would be wrong with /ɪ'nʌf/?

What's less trivial is that it corresponds to the spelling **<enough>**

Digraphs and neons

What would be wrong with **/bɪəd/** or **/wɪəd/**?

Digraphs and neons

What would be wrong with /bɪəd/ or /wɪəd/?

What's less trivial is the alternative spellings of the same vowel: *beard* versus *weird*

Digraphs and neons

nothing strange in the pronunciation of
/kwaɪət/ and **/kwaɪə/**

Digraphs and neons

nothing strange in the pronunciation of
/kwaɪət/ and /kwaɪə/

but a near-total mismatch in spelling:

quiet and *choir* (they only share <i>)

Digraphs and neons

there are **2 main reasons** for this discrepancy btw pronunciation and (standard) spelling:

-'English' pronunciation has **changed through time** and is changing

-English, like French by the way, has a very **long uninterrupted written tradition**

Digraphs and neons

'English' pronunciation has **changed through time** and is changing

the vowels in ***meat* [ɛ:]** and ***meet* [e:]** were audibly different when these words acquired their current spelling

=> at the time a different spelling made perfect sense

Digraphs and neons

'English', like French by the way, has a very **long uninterrupted written tradition**

=> conservatism

=> absorption of various writing traditions

Digraphs and neons

conservatism

to maintain the cultural access to earlier documents, it is not a bad idea to stick to the spelling of those documents

=> *meat* and *meet* are still spelt as if they had different pronunciations

Digraphs and neons

absorption of various writing traditions

Germanic tradition:

letter doubling to encode long sounds (mainly vowels) : **ee**, **oo**, **aa**

Digraphs and neons

absorption of various writing traditions

Latin tradition:

qu,

the spelling of Greek words

=> spelling of Greek words: **ph**antom versus **f**antasy, **rh**ythm, **ch**orus, **arch**itecture, **ch**oir

Digraphs and neons

absorption of various writing traditions

French (Romance) tradition:

the idea of using digraphs

(ou/ow, au/aw, **th**, **ch**, **gh** > then **sh**)

instead of using diacritics **ø**, **ö**, **ü**, **ä**

or ligatures like **æ**, **œ** (which were used in OE)

Digraphs and neons

These phenomena reinforce the wide-spread perception that English has a complicated writing system and hence pronunciation

Digraphs and neons

quietly, neon, Leo, riot

Digraphs and neons

quietly, neon, Leo, riot

*these words do not have a digraph because
the vowel letters do not function as a unit*

Digraphs and neons

riot

<io> is never a digraph in English

**/'raɪət/ is syllabified as /'raɪ.ət/ with
compression possible ['ræt]**

Digraphs and neons

neon, Leo

there is indeed *people* where <eo> does encode a vowel, /i:/

=> this example is, however, isolated (unique example)

=> eo does not function as a digraph

Digraphs and neons

neon, Leo

/'ni:ɒn/ /'li:əʊ/ are syllabified /'ni:.ɒn/ /'li:.əʊ/

ne|on and Le|o

perfectly regular

Digraphs and neons

quietly

<ie> is a regular digraph before consonants:

/i:/ chief, relieve/relief, thief, hygienic, field, fiend, priest

/ɪə/ as in pier, tier

Digraphs and neons

quietly

**/'kwaɪət/ is syllabified as /'kwaɪ.ət/ with
compression possible ['kwaət]**

similar explanation in: diet

(chaos too, with a different letter group)

LOT and CLOTH

LOT and CLOTH in GA

Wells 1982: LOT realized with /ɑ:/ in GA

stop, pot, sock, notch, Goth,

rob, odd, cog, dodge,

Tom, con, doll,

solve, romp, font, copse, box,

profit, possible, proverb, bother, rosin,

honest, ponder.....;

swan, quality, yacht, wasp, watch, squabble, waffle...;

knowledge, acknowledge.

LOT and CLOTH in GA

Wells 1982: LOT realized with /ɑ:/ in GA

Both LPD and EPD are unanimous:

All these words *invariably* have /ɑ:/ in GA

(with cog only in EPD and watch in both also recorded with /ɔ:/ as a secondary GA variant, though...)

LOT and CLOTH in GA

Wells 1982: CLOTH realized with /ɔ:/ in GA

Most of these words **are recorded with /ɑ:/ as a secondary (or even *only* or *main!*) variant in LPD 2008 and EPD 2011**

(colour coding in following slides is according to LPD 2008)

LOT and CLOTH in GA

Wells 1982: CLOTH realized with /ɔ:/ in GA

a) off, cough, trough, broth, froth, cross, across, loss, floss, toss,

fosse, doss,

soft, croft, lost, oft, cost, frost,

often, soften, lofty,

Australia, Austria, Austen, Austin,

gone;

LOT and CLOTH in GA

Wells 1982: CLOTH realized with /ɔ:/ in GA

a) off, cough, trough, broth, froth, cross, across, loss...

-all are recorded with **a secondary variant in /ɑ:/ in LPD**

(except **fosse**, **doss** where /ɑ:/ is the **only** recorded variant in both EPD and LPD)

-all are recorded with an older **variant in RP in /ɔ:!** (except *across*, *floss*, *loft(y)* while *gone* has non-RP §gɔ:n/§gɑ:n)

-EPD: practically **all have /ɑ:/ only:** *cough*, *trough* and the group *Aust-* have /ɔ:/ too, and the latter have a variant in /ɔ:/ in RP as well)

LOT and CLOTH in GA

Wells 1982: CLOTH realized with /ɔ:/ in GA

b) moss, boss, **gloss**, **joss**, Ross,
long, strong, wrong, gong, song, thong, **tongs**, throng,
accost, coffee, coffer, coffin, offer, **office**, **officer**, **glossy**,
foster, Boston, **Gloucester**, sausage;
wash;

LOT and CLOTH in GA

Wells 1982: CLOTH realized with /ɔ:/

b) moss, boss, gloss, joss...

-*all* are recorded with a variant in /ɑ:/ in LPD

-*none* are recorded with an older variant in RP in /ɔ:/ (except *Gloucester*, which is in LPD but not in EPD)

-*foster*, *joss*: /ɑ:/ is the *only* recorded variant in both EPD and LPD

-EPD *consistently has* /ɑ:/ for all these words, with /ɔ:/ as secondary in the *-ong* words, *coffee*, *coffer*, *Boston*, *wash*, *sausage* and as main variant in *coffin*)

LOT and CLOTH in GA

Wells 1982: CLOTH realized with /ɔ:/ in GA

c) origin, Oregon, oratory, orator, orange, authority,
borrow, categorical, correlate, coroner, coral,
florid, Florida, florist, florin, historic(al),
horrid, horrible, majority, horrify, horror,
metaphoric(al), morrow,
Morris, moral, Norwich, porridge, rhetorical, sorrel, moribund, ...;
sorrow, tomorrow, sorry,
Laurence/Lawrence, laurel, laureate,
quarrel, quarry, warrant, warren, warrior, Warwick.

LOT and CLOTH in GA

Wells 1982: CLOTH realized with /ɔ:/ in GA

c) origin, Oregon, oratory, orator, orange, authority,

-*all* are recorded with a secondary variant in /ɑ:/ in LPD (except *authoruity*)

-EPD does not record /ɑ:/ for any of these (except: *sorry*, those in -*orrow*, which only have /ɑ:/ (*morrow*: /ɔ:/ too); those in -*au/aw*, *Florida*, the group /wɒ/ in RP, which have secondary /ɑ:/ in GA

-*none* are recorded with an older variant in RP in /ɔ:/ (except *florist*, which is in both LPD and EPD, *moribund* has secondary /ɔ:/ only in EPD, and *laureate* which has /ɔ:/ first in RP and only /ɑ:/ in GA in LPD but has /ɔ:/ first in EPD)

LOT and CLOTH in GA

The LOT and CLOTH sets

-show **considerable variation** between /ɑ:/ and /ɔ:/ in GA

-are recorded with different main variants and amount of variation in the **dictionaries**

> The general tendency is **towards /ɑ:/** in all these words but much less so in words where the vowel is before /r/

Suffixes and endings

Suffixes and endings

Grotesque – picturesque

=> in *picturesque* one can assume it is a suffix because its morphological (and semantic) relation to *picture* is clear and felt by native speakers

Suffixes and endings

Grotesque – picturesque

=> this is not the case in *grotesque* because there is no morphologically related word today (its relation to *grotto* is etymological, no semantic link anymore)

Suffixes and endings

Grotesque – picturesque

for practical teaching purposes:

=> whenever a word ends in *-esque*, it is expected to be final stressed, whether this element is semantically active or not

Compound adjectives

Compound adjectives

Main message:

-you can't always simply rely on your past experience of listening to English when it comes to discussing fine points of stress placement

-this is particularly true for cases of Iambic Reversal

Compound nouns

flattened [cigarette butts]

Compound nouns

flattened cigarette butts

lexical stress	1	0	2	0	1	1
compound stress	n/a	3	0	1	2	
phrasal stress	2	0	0	0	1	3

Compound adjectives

[white-haired] man

Compound adjectives

white-haired man

lexical stress

1 1 1

Compound adjectives

white-haired man

lexical stress	1	1	1
compound stress	[2	1]	n/a

Compound adjectives

white-haired man

lexical stress	1	1	1
compound stress	[2	1]	n/a
phrasal stress	[2	3]	1

Compound adjectives

white-haired man

lexical stress	1	1	1
compound stress	[2	1]	n/a
phrasal stress	[2	3]	1

[half-masked] smile

[white-coated] consultant

[black-suited] crowds

Compound adjectives

user friendly in COCA (Contemp. Corpus AmE)

This adjective is expected to show lambic Reversal before a noun

user 'friendly

'user friendly appli'cations

Compound adjectives

user friendly in COCA (Contemp. Corpus AmE)

150 tokens

19 tokens from speech (13%)

=> 17 are used predicatively

Compound adjectives

user friendly in COCA (Contemp. Corpus AmE)

=> 2 are before a noun:

'And out of those five, which do you think is the most *user friendly site*?'

user friendly | smart things

Compound adjectives

high-'fibre/'fiber in COCA

200 tokens

=> 198 followed by nouns like *diet, foods, fruits, breakfast, cereal(s), options*

Compound adjectives

high-'fibre/'fiber in COCA

200 tokens

=> 2 tokens that were used predicatively:

**for a dessert that's sweet, high-fiber and
virtually fat-free**

...that the food you choose are high-fiber

Compound adjectives

high-'fibre/'fiber in COCA

200 tokens

=> only 10 tokens came from speech (5%)

=> NONE had high-fiber predicatively