

Hong Kong English: Pronunciation Features at a Glance



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OUTLINE OF TALK

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- (1) Background
- (2) The Sound System of English
- (3) Segmental Features of Hong Kong English
 - (A) Loss of voicing contrast
 - (B) Final plosives and fricatives
 - (C) The two 'TH' sounds
 - (D) Final /l/-vocalisation
 - (E) The /n/-/l/ merger
 - (F) Consonant clusters simplification
 - (G) Some merged vowels
 - (H) Vowel length distinction not realized
 - (I) Diphthongs shortening
 - (J) 'you' pronounced as [tʃu]
 - (K) /s/ → /ʃ/ before a rounded vowel
- (4) Suprasegmental Features of Hong Kong English
 - (L) Word Stress
 - (M) Reduced Vowel
- (5) Conclusion

BACKGROUND (1)

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- Today's talk is based on a survey of published research articles on HKE and some of my own research in this area.
- The term “features” is used to indicate a more neutral stance.
- Some of these features may NOT necessarily be errors because some native speakers of English also manifest such features.
- From the point of view of “variations”, they will be compared with the “standard” varieties.

THE SOUND SYSTEM OF ENGLISH (1)

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- An Overview
 - Segmental
 - ✦ Consonants (24)
 - ✦ Vowels (20 in British English)
 - Suprasegmental
 - ✦ Word stress
 - ✦ Reduced Vowels

24 Consonants in English

(adapted from Deterding & Poedjosoedarmo 1998)

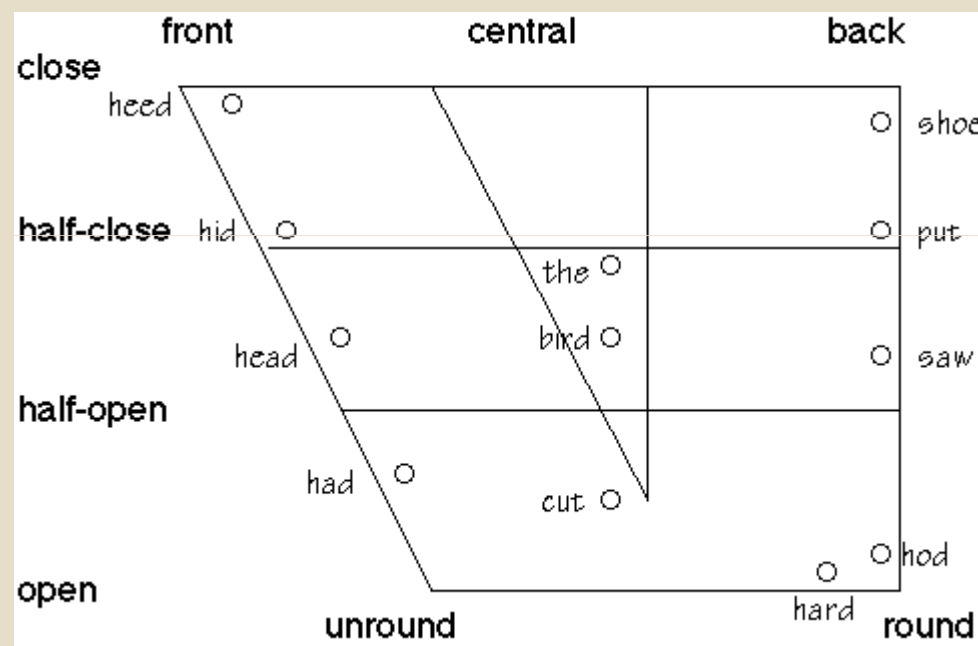
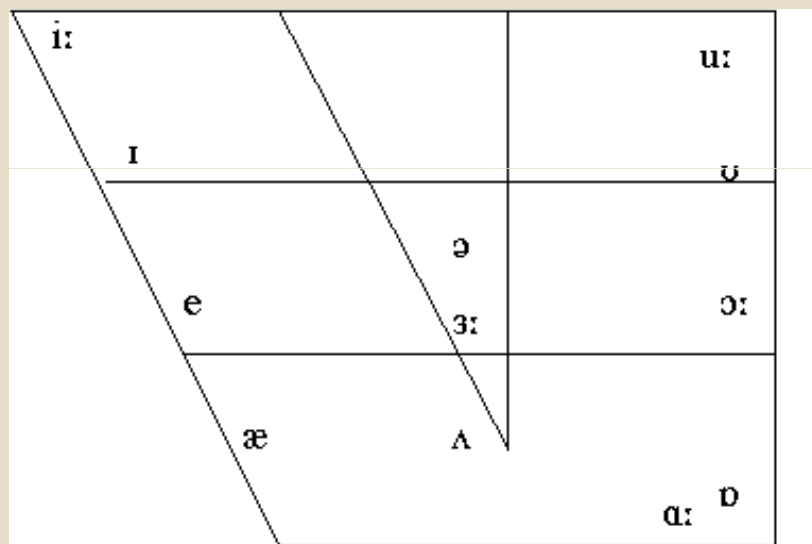
5

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

12 English Monophthongs (Simple Vowels)

6

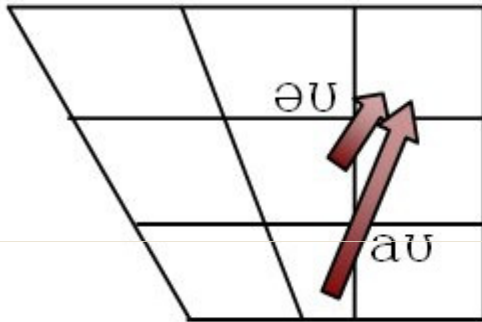
(from LLAS at University of Southampton
http://www.llas.ac.uk/materialsbank/mbo81/page_10.htm)



8 English Diphthongs (Complex Vowels)

7

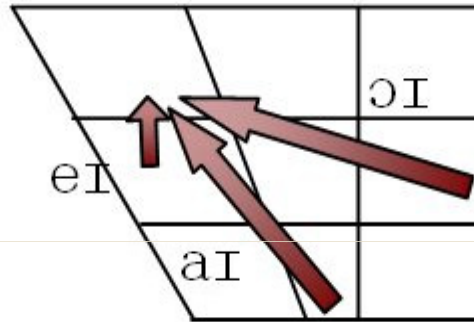
Closing to the back



aʊ house

əʊ no

Closing to the front

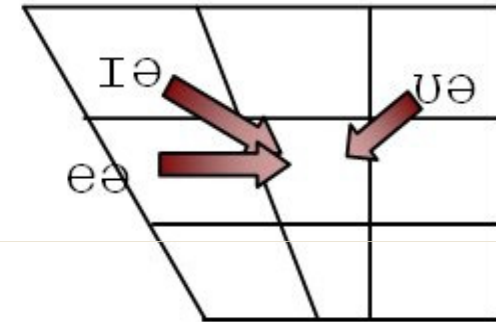


eɪ eight

aɪ five

ɔɪ boy

Centering



ɪə here

eə hair

ʊə sure

from <https://sites.google.com/site/frufusphonoweb/eng---chapters/vowels/english-vowel-system>

SEGMENTAL FEATURES OF HKE (1)

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- (A) Loss of voicing contrast
 - maintained in initial plosives and affricates: /p b/, /t d/, /k g/ & /tʃ dʒ/
 - lost in final plosives and affricates:
 - ✦ final plosives, fricatives, and affricates tend to be voiceless:
 - (1) *regard* [t], *mind* [t], *need* [t], *use* /z/ → [s], *clothe* /ð/ → [θ], *engage* /dʒ/ → [tʃ], *arrange* /dʒ/ → [tʃ], *strange* /dʒ/ → [tʃ]...
 - lost in all fricatives:
 - ✦ /f θ s ʃ h/ (☒ /v ð z ʒ/ ☒)
 - (2) *while we arrive* [ə'raɪf] *we can see a very beautiful environment* [ɛn'fɛʊmɛnʔ] [{09-HE:00:05}](#)
 - (3) *my dad usually* ['juʃəli] *drive his car and pick us up* [{01-HE:00:17}](#)

SEGMENTAL FEATURES OF HKE (2)

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- (B) Final Plosives and Fricatives
 - ✦ final plosives tend to be glottalized
 - (4) *so that the first word [wʔ]* *mat6* is similar [{05-HE:09:02}](#)
 - (5) *some places with my father at weekend [wiʔɛn]* [{10-HE:00:05}](#)
 - (6) *while we arrive we can see a very beautiful environment [ɛn'fɛʊmɛnʔ]* [{09-HE:00:05}](#)
 - ✦ final plosives sometimes are deleted
 - (7) *size* /z/ → ∅
 - (8) *kind of* [kain∅ɔf]

SEGMENTAL FEATURES OF HKE (3)

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- (C) The two 'TH' sounds
 - /θ/ → [f]; /ð/ → [d]
 - ✦ (9) so *there's* [dɛəz] actually a *path* [paf] between *those* [dɒs] two {01-MT:01:53}
 - ✦ (10) pass *through* [fru] it and then go *north* [nɔf] {09-MT:01:16}
 - ✦ (11) /ð/ → [d]: *they, them, there, weather, though...*
 - ✦ (12) /θ/ → [f]: *think, three, theme, thirteen, something, youth, both, cloth, bath, thin...*

SEGMENTAL FEATURES OF HKE (4)

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- (D) Final /l/-vocalisation
 - ✦ (13) *I think until [ʌntio] I got to... primary school* {05-HE:06:23}
 - ✦ (14) final /l/ → [w]: *feel, dull, call, cool, useful, fruitful, eventful,...*

SEGMENTAL FEATURES OF HKE (5)

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- (E) The /n/-/l/ merger
 - ✦ (15) *or even snake* [sleʔk] [{09-HE:04:41}](#)
 - ✦ (16) *yes we are not alone* [nɔʔ ənoʊn] [{09-HE:06:30}](#)
 - ✦ (17) /n/ → [l]: *night, no, naked, number, need, not, net, now, nose, nine, name,...*
 - ✦ (18) /l/ → [n]: *line, lame, longing, lead, loose, loud, lower, lot, lake, leafing, long, low, leaf, let, leaving, light, leave, lumber...*

SEGMENTAL FEATURES OF HKE (6)

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- (F) Consonant clusters simplification
 - initial CCs—one C deleted or modified
 - ✦ (19) *I think until I got to... primary* [p_aimri] school
{05-HE:06:23}
 - ✦ (20) *and we play some er... small scale rides there*
{10-HE:00:44}
 - ✦ (21) *problem* [prɒb_em], *free* [f_i], *spleen* [sp_in], *spring* [sp_in]
 - ✦ (22) *English* [ɪŋg^wɪʃ], *flow* [f^wo], *Fred* [f^wed], *freeze* [flis],
 - final CCs—one or more C deleted or modified
 - ✦ (23) *and we play some er... small scale rides* [rais] there
{10-HE:00:44}
 - ✦ (24) *er then you go east* [is] ... {09-MT:00:26}
 - ✦ (25) *act* [æ_t] [æʔt], *boats* [boʊ_s], *leads* [li_s] [lits],
handful [hæn_fow] [hæntfow], *mindful* [mai_fow]
[maitfow]

SEGMENTAL FEATURES OF HKE (7)

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- (G) Some merged vowels
 - tends to be very similar to that of British English (HKE: p.28) with the following distinctive features:
 - ✦ /ɛ/ for both /e/ and /æ/
 - (26) *hand* [hɛnd], *enactment* [ɛ'nɛtmɛnt], *had* [hɛd], *bat* [bɛt]

SEGMENTAL FEATURES OF HKE (8)

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- (H) Vowel length distinction not realized
 - long/short (tense/lax) distinction neutralized
 - ✦ (27) *I went there to visit* ['vɪsɪt] *her... because at that time it* [ɪʔ] *was after graduation so I've got* [gɔʔ] *about three* [θri] *months' holiday* ['hɔlədeɪ] {08-HE:00:22}
 - ✦ (28) *and then can you see a rope bridge* [brɪtʃ] {05-MT:04:46}
 - ✦ (29) *need* [nɪd], *heed & hid* [hɪd], *heat & hit* [hɪt], *caught & cot* [kɔt],...

SEGMENTAL FEATURES OF HKE (9)

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- (I) Diphthongs shortening
 - if a diphthong is followed by a consonant, 3 things may happen:
 - (i) both the D and C are kept
 - ✦ (30) *so there's actually a path between those [dɔʊs] two* {01-MT:01:53}
 - (ii) the D is kept but the C is deleted:
 - ✦ (31) *so we are at the starting point and do you see a diamond mine [maɪ]* {09-MT:00:00}
 - (iii) the diphthong may become a monophthong:
 - ✦ (32) *so we are at the starting point [pɔnt] and do you see a diamond mine* {09-MT:00:00}
 - ✦ (33) *or even snake [sleʔk]* {09-HE:04:41}

SEGMENTAL FEATURES OF HKE (10)

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- (J) ‘you’ pronounced as [tʃu]
 - ✦ (34) *so um they... you [tʃu] wouldn’t believe their life* {05-HE:07:08}
 - ✦ (35) *cause I felt very embarrassed of you [tʃu] know not um knowing something that they said* {05-HE:09:41}
- (K) /s/ → /ʃ/ before a rounded vowel
 - ✦ (36) *yeah quite like a zoo [ʃu]* {10-HE:02:56}

SUPRASEGMENTAL FEATURES OF HKE (1)

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- (L) Word Stress
 - Below are some examples where HKE speakers put the primary stress differently:

EXAMPLE	SHOULD STRESS	HKE STRESS
<i>representative</i>	<i>repreSENtative</i>	<i>represenTative</i>
<i>consultative</i>	<i>conSULtative</i>	<i>consulTative</i>
<i>tentative</i>	<i>TENtative</i>	<i>tenTative</i>
<i>mandatory</i>	<i>MANdatory</i>	<i>manDatory</i>
<i>obligatory</i>	<i>oBLIgatory</i>	<i>obliGatory</i>
<i>pedagogy</i>	<i>PEdagogy</i>	<i>pedaGOgy</i>
<i>courageous</i>	<i>couRAgeous</i>	<i>COURageous</i>
<i>horizon</i>	<i>hoRIzon</i>	<i>HOrizon</i>

SUPRASEGMENTAL FEATURES OF HKE (2)

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- (M) Reduced Vowels
 - The unstressed syllables in an English word are usually pronounced as a reduced vowel /ə/.
 - One of the HKE features is to have this reduced vowel produced as a full vowel.
 - The realization of these full vowels are very often related to the spelling of the English words.

SUPRASEGMENTAL FEATURES OF HKE (3)

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- Examples of non-reduced vowels in HKE
 - /ə/ → [ʌ]: *accepts* [ʌ]ccepts, *accounts* [ʌ]ccounts, *appoint* [ʌ]ppoint, *applied* [ʌ]ppplied, *arrest* [ʌ]rrest,...
 - /ə/ → [a] / [ɛ] : *accept* [a]ccept, *alumni* [a]lumni, *association* [a]ssociation, *attraction* [a]ttraction, *cannot* c[ɛ]nnot, *magician* m[ɛ]gician, *patrol* p[ɛ]trol, *statistics* st[ɛ]tistics, *traditional* tr[ɛ]ditional, *absorbs* [ɛ]bsorbs, *advance* [ɛ]dvance, ...
 - /ə/ → [ɔ] / [ɒ] : *communication* c[ɒ]mmunication, *comparing* c[ɒ]mpare, *considerate* c[ɒ]nsiderate, *horizons* h[ɒ]rizons,...

Website on HKE Pronunciation Features

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- **Website “Pronunciation Features of Hong Kong English”**
- <http://funstuff.engl.polyu.edu.hk/hkepron/>

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THANK YOU!!

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