



Introducing Vowels

1.

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8/4/2021

Légende



Entrée du glossaire



Abréviation



Référence Bibliographique



Référence générale

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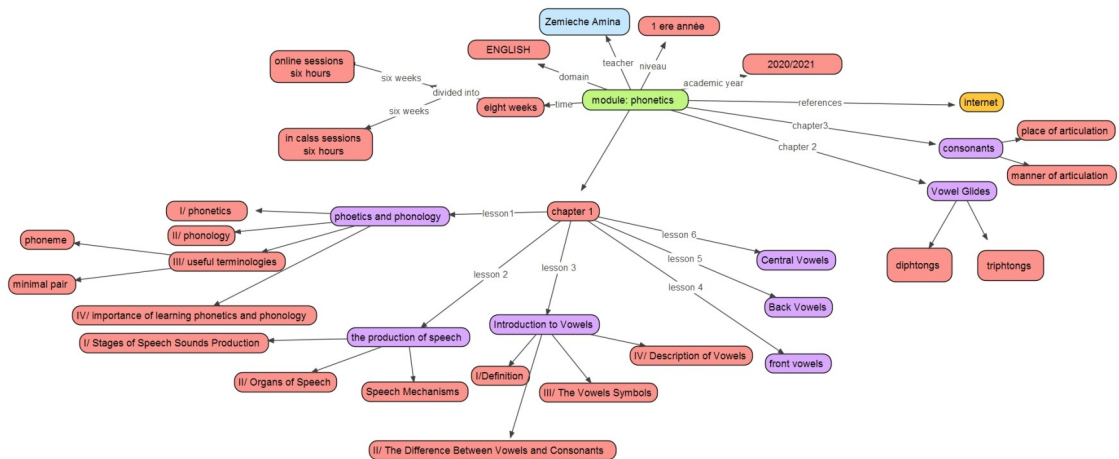
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Objectifs



By the end of this chapter, learners will demonstrate the ability to distinguish between vowels and consonants, to recognise and memorise vowels symbols, to describe how vowels are articulated, and to classify each vowel sound in its appropriate category.

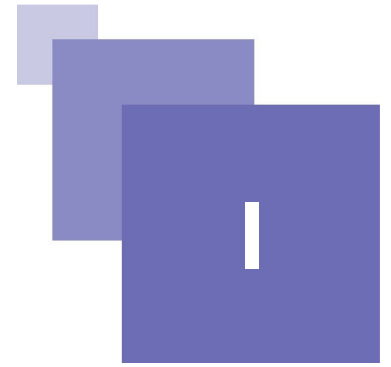
Introduction



pré-requis

Learners should know the different organs of the humans speech apparatus. Additionally, they should distinguish between the different parts of the tongue.

Exercice : pre-test



[Solution n°1 p 27]

1- What is the phonetic notation system used to represent all of the phonemes in human speech?

IPA

APA

API

Exercice

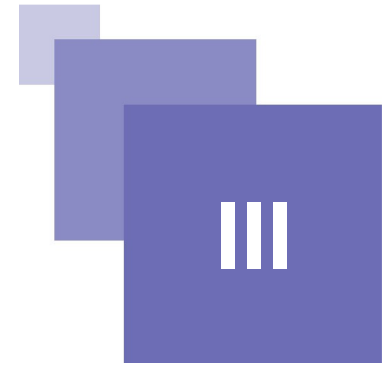


[Solution n°2 p 27]

Which refers to vowel production?

- Fricatives and affricates
- Monophthongs and diphthongs
- Plosives and fricatives

Vowels versus Consonants



Speech Organs Movement

13

Flow of Air

13

Vowels refer to the human sounds that are produced without any obstruction to the flow of air when it passes from the larynx to the lips. That is, there is no closure between the organs of speech when air passes through them. The vowel is the sound which has a central, major, syllabic function (the vowel is usually in the middle of words). In the English language for instance, only a vowel or a diphthong can be the nucleus in a syllable. Nevertheless, the consonant is said to be of minor importance in the syllable. The major differences between vowels and consonants are concerned with the movement of speech organs and the flow of air.

A. Speech Organs Movement

In vowel production, the organs of speech are nearly stationary; however, in consonant production, speech organs are constantly in motion.

B. Flow of Air

In vowel production, the air escapes freely; nonetheless, in consonant production, the air is either completely or partially obstructed.

The Vowels Symbols

IV

- / i: / leave, read, achieve, believe.
- / ɪ / bin, honey, heavy.
- / e / tell, letter, hell.
- / ɜ: / shirk, curly, herb, burn, early, learn, fur
- / ə / above, possess, shower, labour, data, ahead, father.
- / æ / ham, shallow, sand.
- / ʌ / among, cut, shut.
- / a: / chart, part, farm, car, palm, past, fast.
- / ʊ / put, full, cook, good, look, should, wolf.
- / u: / moon, move, group, juice, June, flute, clue, fruit, include.
- / ɒ / pot, was, what, because.
- / ɔ: / more, door, talk, saw, bought, four, board, fall.

Vowels' Description



V

Soft palate position.	17
Shape of the lips	17
The part of the tongue which is mainly raised	18
The degree of raising of the tongue	18

During a vowel description, one must take the following points into consideration:

A. Soft palate position.

B. Shape of the lips

The lips can, generally, have three shapes. They can be

1. Rounded

such as in the vowel / u: / in words like: 'pool', 'shoes', 'move.' The corners of the lips are brought together towards each other, with the lips pushed forward.

2. Spread

as in the vowel / i: / in words like: 'beans', 'achieve', 'receive'. The corners of the lips are moved away from each other, as for a smile.

3. Neutral

such as with the vowel /a: / in words like 'part', 'heart', and 'father'. The lips are not noticeably rounded or spread.

C. The part of the tongue which is mainly raised

Is it the front, centre, or back one?

D. The degree of raising of the tongue



Categories of Vowels

VI

Front vowels	19
Central vowels	19
Back vowels	19

Vowels can be classified according to different principles. One of the principles of vowels categorisation is the vowels' length. Accordingly, there are long vowels where the articulation of the vowel takes more time and short vowels where the articulation takes less time. In English, the long vowels are /ɑ:/ /i:/ /ɔ:/ /u:/ /ɜ:/ (The colon ":" which is not always used refers to the length of the sound) whereas the short vowels are /ɪ/ /e/ /æ/ /ɔ/ /ʊ/ /ʌ/ /ə/.

Vowels can also be categorised according to the part of the tongue involved in the articulation.

Indeed, this method of categorization is the most common one for vowels. Accordingly, there are three sets of vowels

A. Front vowels

or sounds in which the main raising is made by the front of the tongue toward the hard palate.

B. Central vowels

or sounds in which the main raising is made by the centre of the tongue toward the hard palate.

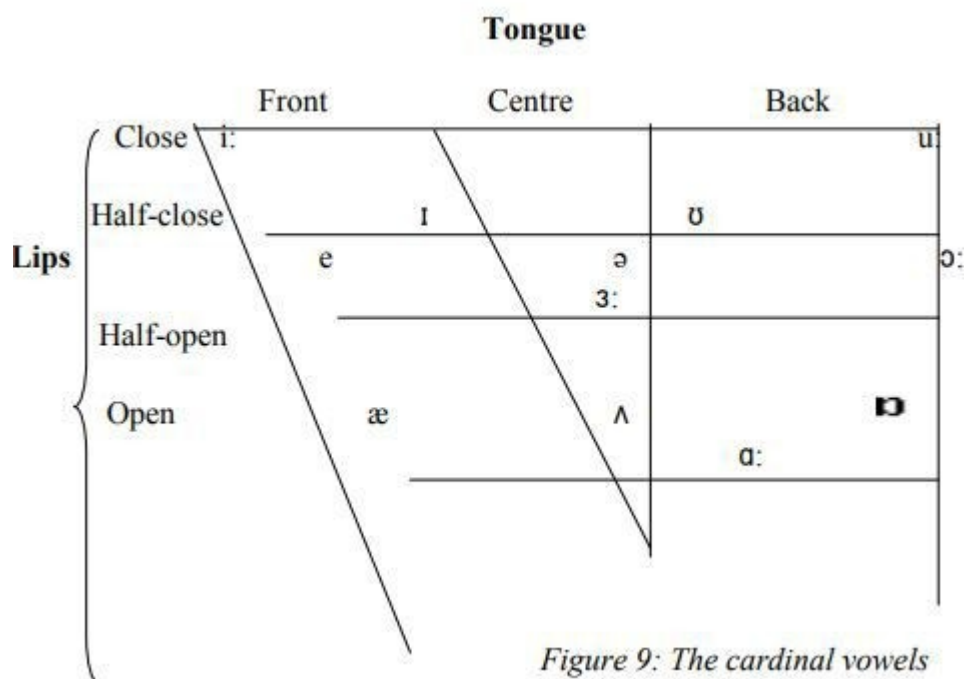
C. Back vowels

or sounds in which the main raising is made by the back of the tongue toward the soft palate.

Cardinal vowel scale: Daniel

VII

The late 19th c and early 20th century phonetician Daniel Jones, introduced a diagram called the vowel Quadrilateral used as a reference for describing vowels. In this chart, phoneticians represent the parts of the tongue that are involved when articulating vowels as well as the degrees of its raising. In addition, the position and shape of the lips are also represented in this chart. They put on it the vowels corresponding to each position.



Cardinal vowel scale: Daniel Jones' Diagram

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*

This chart or scheme represents the Cardinal Vowels System. It shows the range of vowels that the human vocal apparatus can produce.



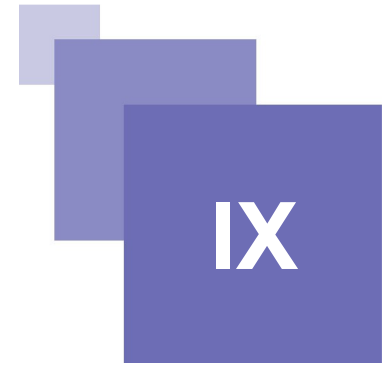
Exercice

VIII

[Solution n°3 p 27]

How many long vowels are there in English ? Mention them.

Exercice



[Solution n°4 p 27]

in what terms does vowel production differ from consonant production ?

Solution des exercices



> Solution n°1 (exercice p. 9)

IPA

APA

API

> Solution n°2 (exercice p. 11)

Fricatives and affricates

Monophthongs and diphthongs

Plosives and fricatives

> Solution n°3 (exercice p. 23)

There are five long vowels in English which are : /ɑ:/ /i:/ /ɔ:/ /u:/ /ɜ:/

> Solution n°4 (exercice p. 25)

The eproduction of vowels differs from that of consonants in terms of the movement of the speech organs and in the flow of air.

Bibliographie



[1] Ladefoged, P. (2001). A Course in Phonetics. USA: Heinle & Heinle.