

Accents

Some examples of systemic, distributional and realizational differences in the accents of England and Wales

Systemic differences: differences in the number and identity of the phonemes in the system

RP/SESP

ʌ	ə/ʊ	<i>cup, done, flood, etc</i>
ʊə	ɔ:	<i>poor, sure, during, Europe, gourmet, etc</i>
eɪ	e:	<i>made, waste</i>
	eɪ	<i>maid, waist</i>
θ/ð	f/v	<i>youth, bother</i>
h	-	<i>have, hold, hat, hand</i>

Distributional differences (phonological): differences in the places where a phoneme can occur

RP/SESP

ɪ	i	<i>event, befriend, deceive, report</i> (initial unstressed syllables)
ɪ	ə	<i>animal, beautiful, quality</i> (medial unstressed syllables)
ɪə	i:	<i>weary, serious, period</i> (stressed syllable before /r/)
-	r	<i>car, farther, horse</i> (syllable-final position)
ŋ	n	<i>hunting, evening, nothing</i> (final unstressed syllable)
ŋ	ŋg	<i>sing, tongue</i> (stressed syllable)
w	hw	<i>white, whales, which</i> (<i>wh-</i> in spelling, except before <o>)
j	-	<i>news, beautiful, assume</i> (after a consonant in stressed syll)

Distributional differences (lexical): differences in the 'choice' of a phoneme in a given word or set of words

RP/SESP

ɪ	ɛ	<i>example, exam</i> (initial unstressed <i>ex-</i>)
ɑ:	æ/a	<i>path, last, laugh, dance, plant, branch, etc</i>
ɔ:	ɒ	<i>salt, fault, false, waltz, etc</i>
əʊ	ɒ	<i>bolt, toll, solve, revolver, etc</i>
ʌ	ɒ	<i>one, once</i>
u:	ʊ	<i>tooth, room</i>
ð	θ	<i>with</i>

Realizational differences: differences in the actual phonetic quality (ie 'realization') of a given phoneme

RP/SESP

t	[ʔ]	intervocalic (in addition to preconsonantal and final)
l		either always clear, or always dark; vocalized syllable-final

1. KIT	ɪ	i	kin, kill, village, business, wicked, mirror, critic
2. DRESS	ɛ	e	dread, ten, tell, very, bury, says, said, ate
3. TRAP	æ	a, ʌ, ɛ	tram, shall, marry, balcony, plaits
4. LOT	ɒ	ɔ, ɔ:, ʌ	gone, doll, sorry, swan, because, Austria
5. STRUT	ʌ	ə, ʊ, ʌ	strum, sulk, pulse, bulge, bulb, blood, love
6. FOOT	ʊ	u, ʊ, ə	good, wool, butcher, courier
7. BATH	ɑ:	a, a:, ɛ	laugh, pass, plant, branch, ghastly, can't
8. CLOTH	ɒ	ɔ, ɔ:	off, cross, dog, solve, salt, false, quality
9. NURSE	ɜ:	v + r, ø	first, verse, earth, work, journey, turn, girl, furry
10. FLEECE	i:	ii, əi	tea, feel, lean, pizza
11. FACE	eɪ	ei, e:, æɪ	day, tail, tale, waist, waste, paint
12. PALM	ɑ:	a:	alms, half, spa
13. THOUGHT	ɔ:	ɒ:	law, lawn
14. GOAT			
	əʊ	o:, ou, ʌʊ	no, know, groan, grown; ɒʊ cold, stole, boulder
15. GOOSE	u:	ʊu, əu, ɜ:	blue, cool, tune; ɪʊ blew, news; ʊ tooth
16. PRICE	aɪ	ai, æɛ, ɑɪ	pry, pint, pile
17. CHOICE	ɔɪ	ɔi, ɑɪ, oɪ	toy, point, oil
18. MOUTH	aʊ	au, ɛʊ, a:	now, mount, owl
19. NEAR	ɪə	iə, i:, i + r	cheer, weary, idea, real; jɜ: ear, year, hear, here
20. SQUARE	ɛə	ɛ:, eə, ɛ + r	air, wear, prayer
21. START	ɑ:	a:, a/ɑ + r	star, starry, snarl, arms
22. NORTH	ɔ:	ɔ: + r	nor, norm ɔʊ small, talk
23. FORCE	ɔ:	ɔə, o: + r	four, door, more
24. CURE	ʊə	ɔ:, uʌ, u + r	sure, poor, jury, Europe
25. HAPPY	i	i:, ɪ, əi	coffee, spaghetti, Mummy
LETTER	ə	ər	driver
COMMA	ə		sofa, pizza

Wells, J C (1982) *Accents of English 1* Cambridge: CUP

Other weak vowel environments

ANIMAL	ɪ	ə	beautiful, quality
EDUCATE	ʊ	ə	stimulus, communism
SPIRIT	ɪ	ə	pocket, budget, spinach, wicked, kitchen
ADDED	ɪ	ə	waited, offices, villages, taxis
HISTORY	-	ə, ɔ:, ɛ	category, primary, cemetery, century
FAMILY	-	ɪ	
EASILY	ɪ	-	
POLICE	ə	-	collect, correct, suppose, veranda, syringe

Lexical distribution differences between British and American Pronunciations

	UK	US
missile	'mɪsaɪl	'mɪsl̩
futile	'fju:təɪl	'fju:tl̩
fertile	'fɜ:təɪl	'fɜ:r̩tl̩
projectile	prə'dʒɛktəɪl	prə'dʒɛktl̩
servile	'sɜ:vəɪl	'sɜ:r̩vəl
nubile	'nju:bəɪl	'nu:bəl
<i>but</i>		
exile	'ɛksaɪl	'ɛksaɪl
either	'aɪðə	'i:ðər
neither	'naɪðə	'ni:ðər
figure	'fɪgə	'fɪgjər
suggest	sə'dʒɛst	səg'dʒɛst
clerk	'klɜ:k	'klɜ:rk
lieutenant	leɪ'tenənt	lu:'tenənt
patriot	'pætriət	'peɪtriət
tomato	tə'mɑ:təʊ	tə'meɪtəʊ
vase	'vɑ:z	'veɪs

With word stress

enquiry	ɪŋ'kwɪəri	('ɛŋkwəri)
address	ə'dres	('ædrɛs)
aristocrat	'æɪstəkræt	ə'ɪstəkræt
harass	'hærəs	hə'ræs
magazine	mægə'zi:n	'mægəzi:n

Phonological distribution differences between British and American Word Stress

primary	'praɪmri	'praɪmeɪri
cemetery	'semətri	'semətəri
category	'kætəgri	'kætəgɔ:ri
laboratory	lə'bɒrətri	'læbərətɔ:ri
<i>but</i>		
century	'sɛntʃəri	'sɛntʃəri
cremate	krə'meɪt	'kri:meɪt
frustrate	frə'streɪt	'frʌstreɪt
vacate	və'keɪt	'veɪkeɪt

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