

Session 2  
12:30 -  
13.20

2A Pron teaching  
in the UK

Mark Hancock

## 2A. Pronunciation Teaching in the UK

*Mark Hancock*

In this session, I will deal with the question of how pronunciation teaching can be flexible enough to accommodate different varieties of English. We will focus on individual sounds, and I will begin by presenting a new phonemic chart and explain how it is organized. We will then look at areas of the sound system which are particularly prone to variation across different UK accents. We will see that some variants are generally accepted, such as the Northern short 'a' in grass, while others tend to be stigmatized, such as a glottal stop before an l in bottle.

We will address the question of how relevant a phonemic chart can be in situations where the local people on the streets outside the school, and perhaps the teacher too, do not speak with a standard RP accent. Indeed, many teachers have been put off teaching pronunciation because of this mismatch. So I will put forward the idea that for teaching purposes, the sounds in the chart should be viewed as bendy, adapting to how we – and our students – actually speak. Finally, we will exchange opinions as to whether there should be any limits to this bendiness. I plan to take votes from the participants on whether some specific accents variants should be promoted, tolerated or avoided in the pronunciation class.

***Mark Hancock** started teaching English in 1984. He's worked in Sudan, Turkey, Brazil, Spain and now Chester. He has a degree in Teaching English from Aston University. He has published the pronunciation books *Pronunciation Games* (CUP 1995) and *English Pronunciation in Use Intermediate* (CUP 2012). He is co-founder of the ELT resource site [hancockmcdonald.com](http://hancockmcdonald.com).*



# 1. Introduction

1. Introduction
2. 4 types of accent difference
3. Vowel sounds
4. Consonant sounds

**Is it free furty  
already?**



**Tin tin tin!**



**Or rice!**



**There's a hall  
in is caught!**



**The grite  
Bri'ish buy-cough**





# From IDEA (International dialects of English)

<http://www.dialectsarchive.com/england-43>



**Terry Phelan**

You know, my m-, uh, my mother didn't really have a, a lot of money, and then to buy football boots and to buy football kit, so you know it was a, it was a big gamble; the gamble paid off because in athletics I run in bare feet for the school, so you know it didn-, it didn-, and we had our kit from the school, so it didn't cost my parents much money, uh, whereas the football was a little bit more expensive 'cause you had to have football boots and you had to have a football and you had to

have shin pads. So I said to my mother, "Would it be possible to have a pair of football boots?" So she said, "Well, you going on a school holiday, so you've got a choice. You got the school holiday, or you got the football boots." So I picked a 5-pound pair of football boots, so, you know, and I, and I treated them like they was gold. They never went out my sight; I cleaned them every night. And that was, uh, when I was probably 8 or 9, playing for the primary school, and then it just took off from there, really...

# Discussion...

- My Italian student always drops his *hs*. Should I insist that he pronounces them?
- Some of my students pronounce TH as /f/ or /v/. How much of a problem is this?

# FOUR TYPES OF ACCENT DIFFERENCE

## 1. LEXICAL



## 2. STRUCTURAL



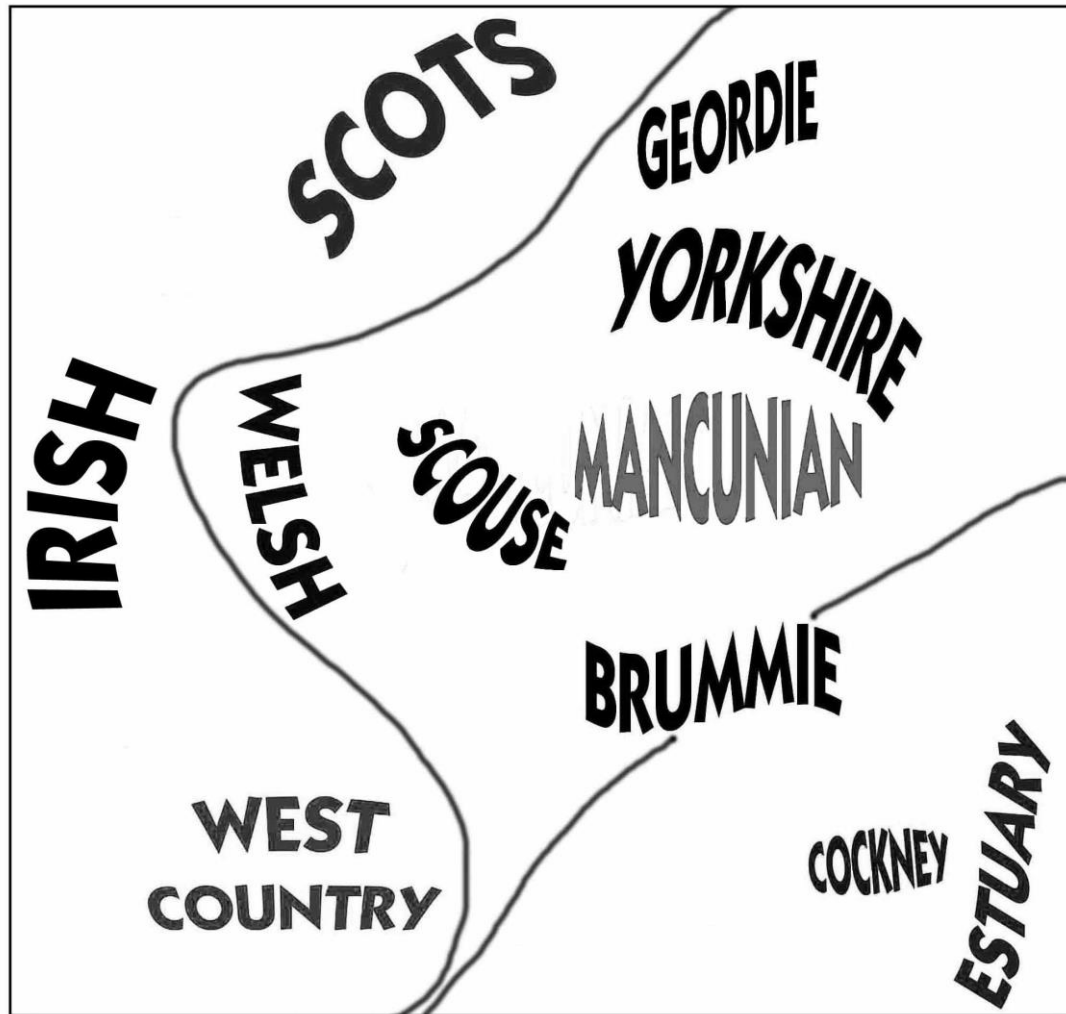
## 3. ALLOPHONIC



## 4. PHONEMIC



# BRITISH ACCENT MAP

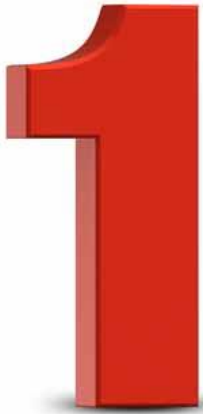






*schedule*

neither

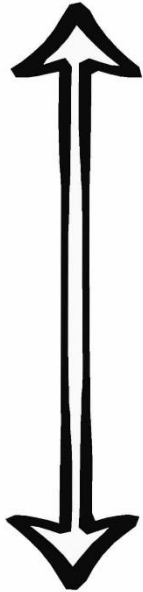


# Discussion...

- My students always pronounce an r where it is written. How much of a problem is this?
- How important is it to teach a vowel distinction between words like *gas* and *class*?

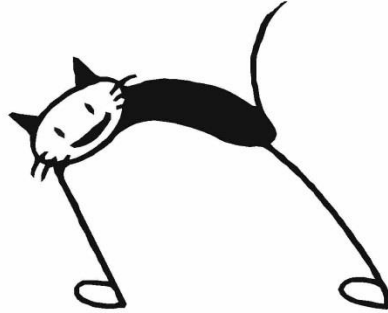
front ← → back

closed

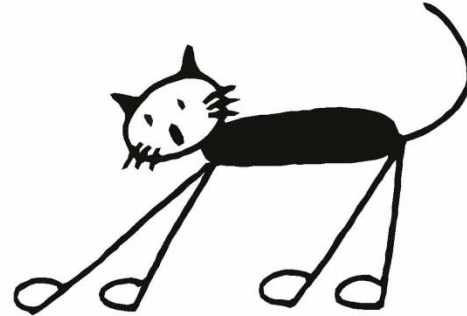
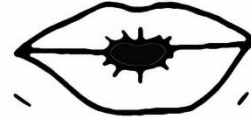


open

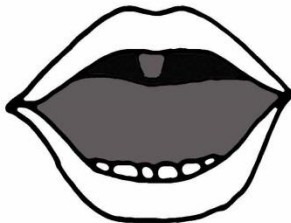
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1

beat

boot

bat

pot

2

read

rude

hat

hot

3

cheap

tube

jam

job

4

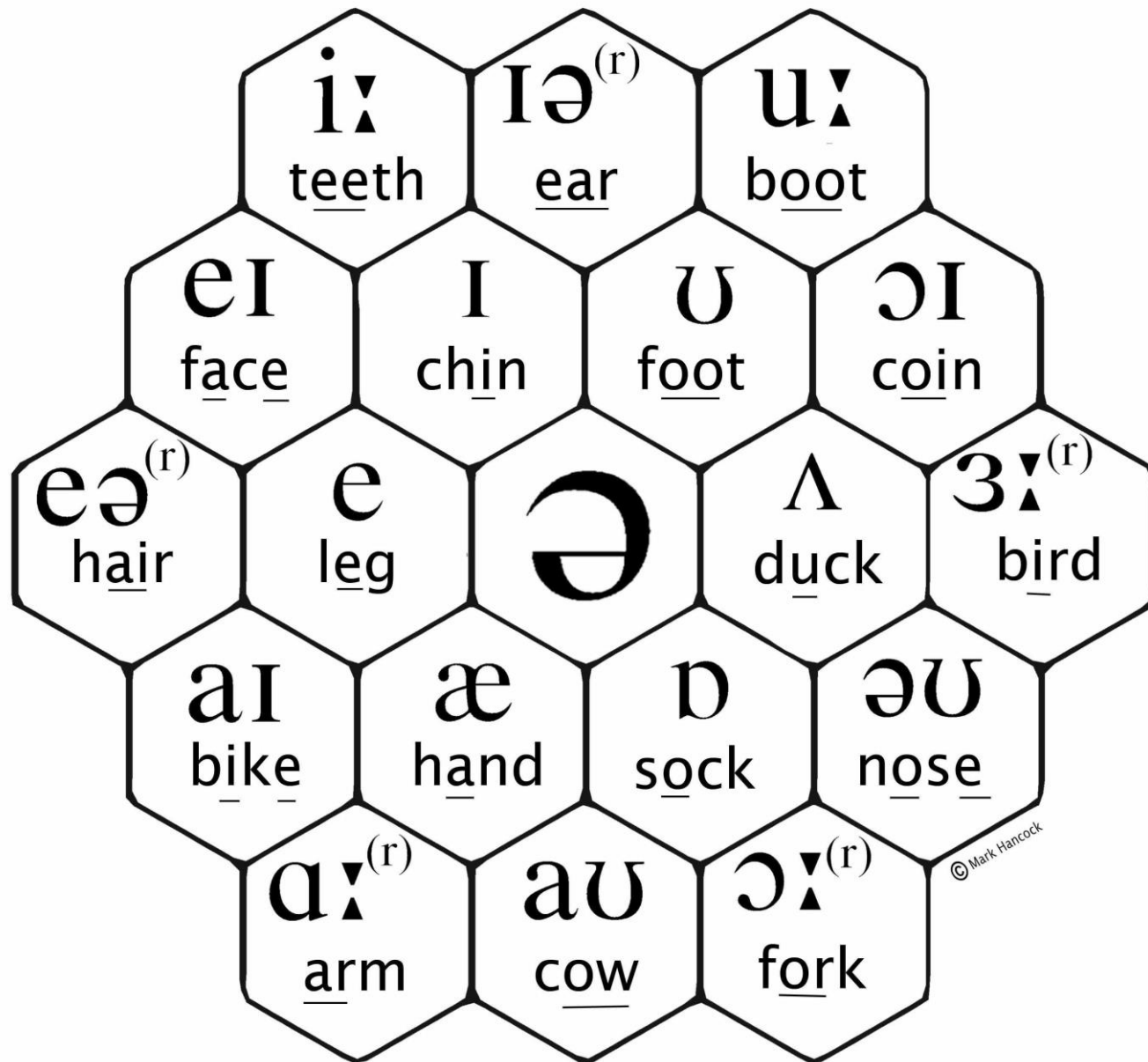
least

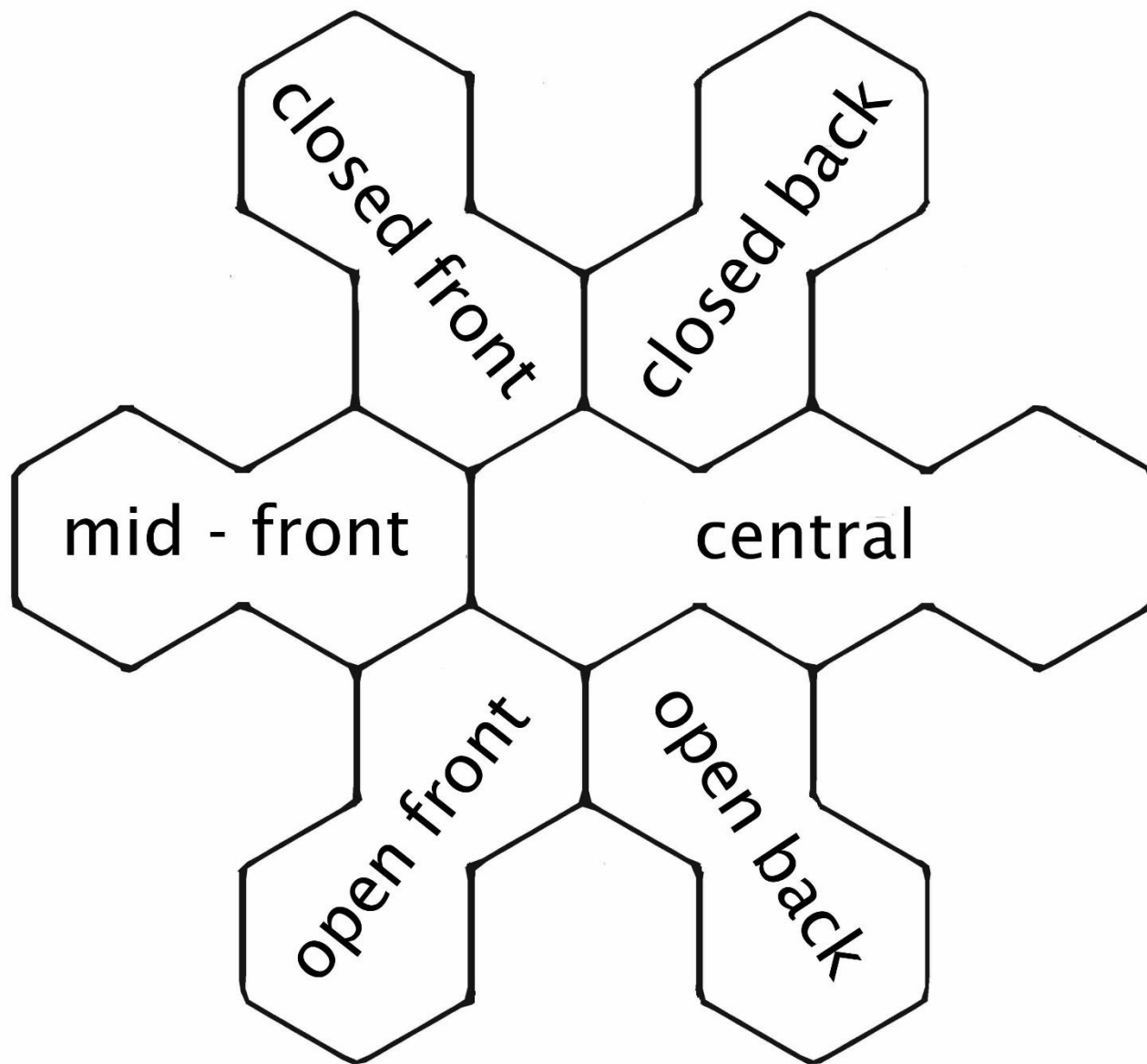
loose

land

lost

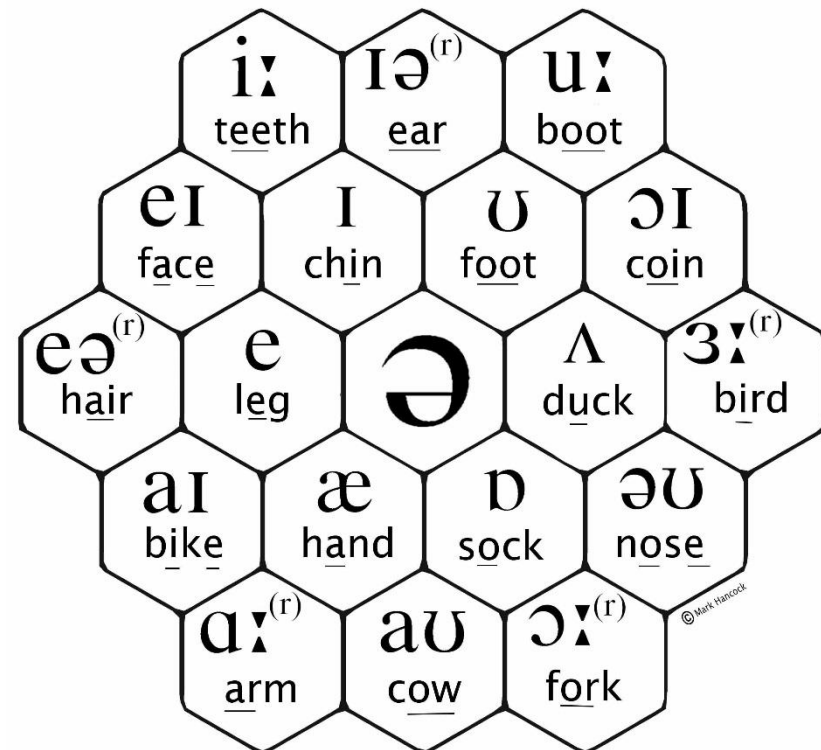






# Discussion...

- Are there any vowel sounds which you personally pronounce in a non-RP way? How much of a problem is this?



# VULNERABLE CONSONANTS

p pen	b bin	m man	f fish	v vest
t toe	d door	n note	θ think	ð there
k key	g girl	ŋ ring	s sun	z zip
l leaf	r rat	h hat	ʃ shoe	ʒ television
w watch	j year	ʔ button	tʃ chair	dʒ jam



# I KNOW A LITTLE BIT

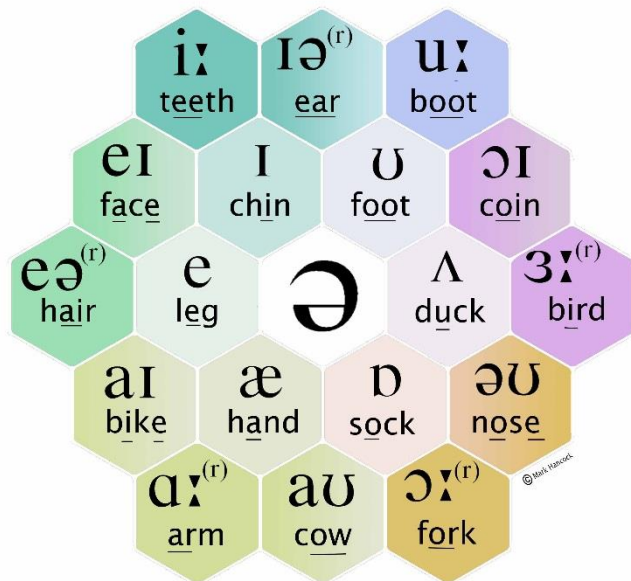
I know a little bit about kittens  
I got bitten by a kitten last year  
A certain little kitten in Britain  
I've not forgotten that it bit me on the ear



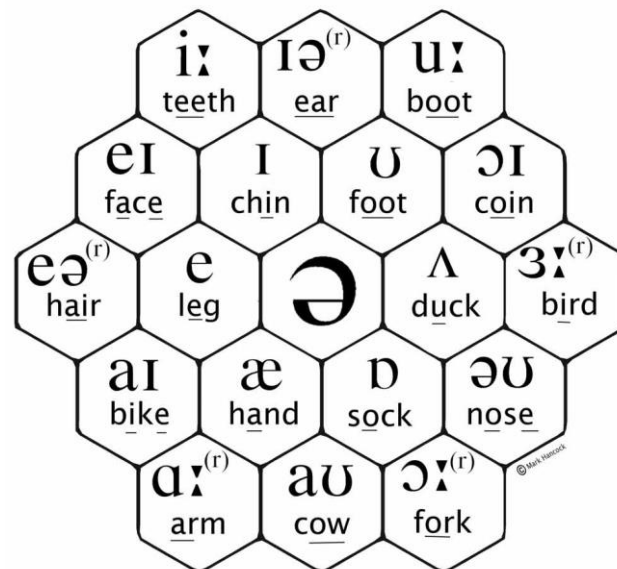


# Discussion...

- My student is picking up some stigmatized pronunciation features. In what circumstances might this be a problem?



p pen	b bin	m man	f fish	v vest
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k key	g girl	ŋ ring	s sun	z zip
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w watch	j year	ʔ button	tʃ chair	dʒ jam



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l leaf	r rat	h hat	ʃ shoe	ʒ television
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Download slides for this talk, and various versions of the sound chart here >>>>>



**Hancock McDonald**  
hancockmcdonald.com