

التغيرات الصوتية في مجموعتي الكلمات FACE و GOAT في اللغة الإنجليزية الحديثة المتأخرة

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Phonological Changes to the FACE and GOAT Sets in Late Modern English

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المستخلص

تتناول هذه الدراسة التغيرات الصوتية في مجموعتي الكلمات FACE و GOAT في اللغة الإنجليزية الحديثة المتأخرة، مع التركيز بشكل خاص على ظاهرة تحويل الصوت المعتل المزدوج إلى صوت معتل واحد في هاتين المجموعتين. تستعرض الدراسة الأدبيات وتقيم تغيرات حروف العلة في هاتين المجموعتين خلال الفترة الممتدة من القرن الثامن عشر وحتى يومنا هذا. وتستند البيانات المستخدمة إلى قواميس النطق (شيريدان 1780، ووكر 1791، وإيليس 1889)، ومجموعات النصوص (تسجيلات مسح اللهجات الإنجليزية)، بالإضافة إلى الدراسات المعاصرة (وات وميلوري 1999)، ودوشيرتي وفولكس (1999)، وستودارت وأبتون وويدوسون (1999)، ونتورك (1999)، وماتيسن (1999)، وتروجيل (1999)، وتولفري (1999)، وويليامز وكيرسويل (1999)، وميس وكولينز (1999)، وسميث (1999)، وشيري (1999)،

وماكافيرتي (1999)، وهيكي (1999). وتناقش الدراسة تأثير التحول الكبير في حروف العلة ودمج الأصوات المتوسطة الطويلة على حروف العلة في هاتين المجموعتين. وتُعرض النتائج بترتيب زمني. وتُظهر النتائج أن ظاهرة تحويل الصوت المعتل المزدوج إلى صوت واحد لا تزال موجودة في بعض اللهجات الإنجليزية خلال الفترة قيد الدراسة، على الرغم من التأثير الكبير لظاهرة الازدواج المتوسطة الطويلة على حروف العلة في مجموعتي الكلمات FACE و GOAT.

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the phonological changes in the lexical sets FACE and GOAT in Late Modern English. It particularly focuses on the phenomenon of monophthonging in these lexical sets. The study reviews literature and assesses vowel changes in these sets in the period from the eighteenth century up to the present-day. It discusses the impact made by the Great Vowel Shift and Long Mid Mergers on the vowels of these lexical sets. The material for the study comes from pronunciation dictionaries (Sheridan 1780, Walker 1791, Ellis 1889), corpora (Survey of English Dialects recordings), as well as contemporary studies (Watt & Milroy (1999), Docherty & Foulkes (1999), Stoddart, Upton and Widdowson (1999), Network (1999), Mathisen (1999), Trudgill (1999), Tollfree (1999), Williams & Kerswill (1999), Mees & Collins (1999), Smith (1999), Chirrey (1999), McCafferty (1999), and Hickey (1999). The findings are discussed in a chronological order. The findings show that the phenomena of monophthonging is still retained in some English dialects in the period under study despite the important impact of the Long Mid Diphthonging on the vowels of these lexical sets.

Keywords: Phonological change, Late Modern English, FACE lexical set, GOAT lexical set, Monophthonging, Diphthonging, Great Vowel Shift, Long Mid Mergers.

1.Introduction

It is this study's intention to provide evidence for the phonological change that the lexical sets FACE and GOAT underwent as lexical categories since Late Modern English (LME). It will give special attention to examine the monophthonging of these lexical sets during the period under study. To do this, I will first review the literature on this topic (section 2), and then assess the extent of vowel change between the eighteenth century and present-day English using data from pronunciation dictionaries, corpora and some previous studies (section 3). Then I will present and discuss the findings (section 4), and then the conclusion





(section 5). In this essay I will argue that despite fact that Long Mid Diphthonging has had great impact in the vowels of FACE and GOAT, there still a considerable amount of monophthonging which is retained during the period under study.

2. FACE and GOAT sets: historical background

Wells (1982) defines the standard lexical set FACE as “comprising those words whose citation form RP and GenAm¹ has the stressed vowel /ei/” (ibid: 141). Traditionally, the *long a* is a name that has been assigned to the FACE vowel, and it descended from /a:/ found in Middle English in consequence of Great Vowel Shift and from /ei~æi/ as a result of FACE Merger (ibid: 141-42).

On the other side, the standard lexical set GOAT represents those words which share the stressed vowel /əu/ in RP and /o/ in GenAm. Traditionally the GOAT vowel is called the *long o* and it is derived from Middle English /ɔ:/ as a result of the Great Vowel Shift or from /ou/ as sequence of GOAT Merger (ibid: 146).

2.1 Great Vowel Shift

Great Vowel Shift (GVS) refers to the change in quality the English vowels underwent during the fifteenth century up to the start of the seventeenth century (ibid: 184). This change in English is seen as an example of a chain shift (Crystal, 2008: 72). This chain shift happened in such a way that half-close, half-open, and long vowels moved one step closer (higher). Consequently, the resultant change in FACE and GOAT was as in Table (1):

Table (1)
FACE and GOAT in the GVS (form Wells, 1982: 184 with some adaptation)

Middle English (c. 1100-1450)	Early English (c. 1450-1600)	Modern English	Examples
a: →→→→→→→→→→→→→→→→	→→→→→→→→→→→→→→→→	ɛ:	FACE
ɔ: →→→→→→→→→→→→→→→→	→→→→→→→→→→→→→→→→	o:	GOAT

2.2 FACE and GOAT Merger

Phonemic merger is carried out when two phonemes come together (Crystal, 2008: 301). Wells (1982: 192) argues that the Long Mid

¹ General American

Mergers process is reflected in the lexical sets FACE and GOAT, as will be discussed in the next two sections.

2.2.1 FACE Merger

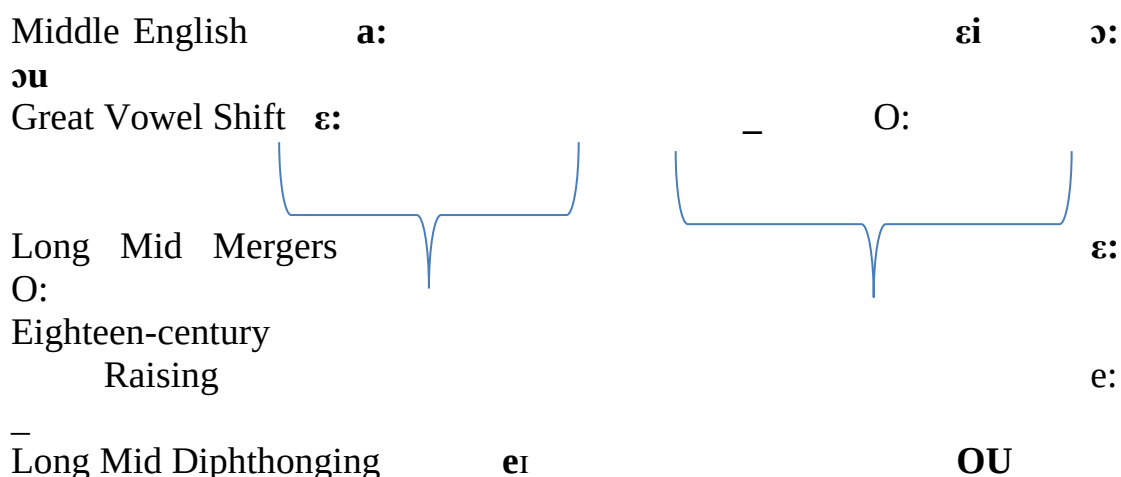
Essentially words in FACE set descended from three different groups of words. Group (a) had the monophthongal vowel /a:/, group (b) had the diphthong /ɛi/ or /ai/. Group (c) had the monophthong /ɛ:/ (ibid: 192-193). Around 1600 group (a) had a shift in the quality of /a:/ to /ɛ:/. By the fourteenth century the two possibilities in (b) i.e. /ɛi~æi/ had been levelled and around the seventeenth century this diphthong began to lose its quality for the monophthong /ɛ:/ . This development is referred to as FACE Merger. The merging vowel /ɛ:/ approached the quality of the monophthongal /e:/ by the eighteenth century. MacMahon states that “by the early eighteenth century, the [e:] pronunciation was the norm in StE” (MacMahon, 1999: 449). In polite English usage, the merging vowel /e:/ was diphthongised by the nineteenth century giving a comparable quality to the present-day RP /ei/ (ibid).

2.2.2 GOAT Merger

The GOAT set was derived from two groups of words. In Middle English, group (a) had the monophthong /ɔ:/ while group (b) had the diphthong /ɔu/. Around 1600 the vowel /ɔ:/ in group (a) was raised to /o:/ while the vowel in group (b) was losing its diphthongal quality to /o:/. This development is referred to as GOAT Merger. By the nineteenth century, the merging vowel /o:/ was diphthongised in polite English usage giving a similar quality to /oU/ which is heard in traditional RP. The FACE and GOAT Mergers could be together referred to as Long Mid Mergers (ibid). Figure (1) shows Long Mid Merger:

Figure (1)

Long Mid Merges (from Wells, 1982:193 with some modifications)





2.3 Evidence for Diphthongisation in the Nineteenth Century

Diphthongisation is a phonological process by which a single vowel is changed into a sequence of two vowel segments which together occupy the nucleus of a single syllable (Campbell, 2004: 42). Though Clarke (2004) states that the pronunciation of FACE and GOAT sets with non-upgliding /e:/ and /o:/ was the English norm until part of the nineteenth century, Wells (1982) argues that by 1800 there was a change in FACE from /e:/ to /ei/ and in GOAT from /o:/ to /oU/ in the precursor of RP. This change is referred to as ‘Long Mid Diphthonging’ and it is described as “the addition of a closing offglide to the long mid vowels” (ibid: 210).

2.4 Evidence for Diphthongisation of FACE and GOAT in the Nineteenth Century

Beal (2004: 137) claims that Batchelor (1809) was the first to present reliable evidence for diphthongal pronunciation of the FACE set. Beal adds that evidence of diphthongisation was supported by other sources: “Later nineteenth- century sources such as Smart (1836) and Sweet (1877) in Britain, and Rush (1827) and Whitney (1875) in America, are increasingly confident about identifying this sound as a diphthongal” (ibid).

The development in the GOAT words was alongside that in FACE set (ibid: 138). Beal indicates that the turn of nineteenth century witnessed almost the first evidence for diphthongisation for GOAT set by the Scottish orthoepist William Smith in 1795. Commentators were more confident about this change with the progress of the nineteenth century (ibid).

2.5 FACE and GOAT in the early Twentieth Century

Beal states that the diphthongal pronunciation in general was the tendency since the nineteenth century in the educated speech of the south of England, general RP as well as General American. But the early twentieth century witnessed the use of ‘smoothing’ of diphthongs by some RP speakers (ibid: 137). Smoothing is the possibility of monophthongal realization when a diphthong occurs in a prevocalic environment. Accordingly, there is a possibility to pronounce ‘chaos’ with a monophthongal vowel /e:/ or with the common FACE diphthongal realization (Wells, 1982: 238). Beal (2004: 144) argues that there is no evidence for smoothing of GOAT in the early twentieth century.

On the other hand, by the end the nineteenth century there was a new trend in pronouncing GOAT vowel. The first element of the diphthong is centralised from /o/ to /ə/ which was considered as an unusual

improvement at that time. Though some phoneticians like Sweet and Jones did not approve such improvement and insisted on the /oU/ quality of the sound but with the progress of the twentieth century the centralised quality turned to be the norm in RP and this was confirmed when the notation /əu/ was presented in 1962 by Gimson (ibid: 138). Wells comments on this development by saying: “We may suppose that in the early twentieth century smart RP speakers initiated the switch from [oU] to [əU] in GOAT words” (Wells, 1982: 105).

3. Data and methods

Limitations of space and the time-consuming nature of the analysis made it impossible to collect or analyse more data. The material for this study comes from three sources: first, pronouncing dictionaries of the eighteenth- century (Sheridan 1780, and Walker 1791), nineteenth-century (Ellis 1889), and the twentieth century (Wright 1905). These pronunciation dictionaries were selected due to the fact that their authors reflect the native speaker’s intuition about the vowel system of that era. The second source is the Survey of English Dialects (SED) recordings. These included 11 speakers who born between 1863 and 1888. Trudgill (2006) justifies the use of the SED to collect data about mid-nineteenth-century English by saying:

This supposition is supported by evidence from the SED (Survey of English Dialects). The SED does not, of course, provide us with information about mid-nineteenth-century English. But it is based on data obtained in the 1950s and 1960s from elderly speakers who were, in some cases, born as early as 1870 (Trudgill, 44:2006).

Trudgill believes that these recordings could be a reflection of mid-nineteenth century English. Or at least they could be considered a link between the nineteenth century and the twentieth century English. The third part of the data comes from some previous studies specially Foulkes and Docherty (1999) which contained a description for FACE and GOAT sets in fourteen dialects (including Scottish dialects) and it was selected specially to give a clear picture to these sets in present-day English. The data will be analysed so as to figure out the course of the phonological change whether towards monophthonging or diphthonging.in the period under study.

4. Findings and discussion

This section will examine the most important findings and discusses the results for each period. The data will be examined in a chronological order.



4.1 FACE and GOAT in the Eighteenth Century

Vowels of FACE and GOAT are discussed in two pronouncing dictionaries in late eighteenth century, the first is Sheridan (1780) and the second is Walker (1791).

4.1.1 Sheridan (1780)

Sheridan (1780) in his dictionary *A general dictionary of the English language*, recognizes that the vowel in the word FACE is a monophthong with the sound a^2 (ibid: 24). This vowel is one of the “long or doubtful vowels” (ibid: 6). Sheridan indicates that the vowel in the word GOAT is a monophthong with the sound o^2 which is a long vowel that is formed by a “small pushing out of the lips in a figure resembling the circular character which represent the sound” (ibid).

4.1.2 Walker (1791)

Walker (1791) in his dictionary *A Critical Pronouncing Dictionary* treats the vowels of the FACE and GOAT sets as monophthongal. He describes the vowel in FACE as “The long slender English a ” (Walker, 1791: 72), and it is given the sound a^1 . Walker attributes the length of the vowel to silent e that follows it. Walker explains the articulatory processes involved in producing this vowel:

The slender a , or that heard in *lane*, is formed in the mouth still higher than the last; and in pronouncing it, the lips, as if to give it a slender sound, dilate their aperture horizontally; while the tongue, to assist this narrow emission of breath, widens itself to the cheeks, raises itself nearer the palate, and by this means, a less hollow sound than either of the former produced (ibid: 5).

Walker gives the vowel in GOAT the sound o^1 and it is described as the *long open o*. He adds that “It requires the mouth to be formed, in some degree, like the letter, in order to pronounce it (ibid: 21).

4.1.3 Macmahon’s (1999) Remark

Macmahon (1999) gives an important indication for diphthonging of FACE and GOAT in the eighteenth century by saying that “The first mention of a diphthongal realisation (‘Mid Long Diphthonging’) had been noted as early as 1711, in the Gildon-Brighdand *Grammar of the English Tongue*” (ibid :450).

Though Macmahon remark is very important evidence for the early diphthonging of FACE and GOAT, data showed that monophthongal view was dominant at that period.

4.2 FACE and GOAT in the Nineteenth Century

Following Trudgill's (2006) model, the examined data here comes from SED recording, also from Ellis (1889) and Wright (1905). Examining data in Wright (1905) is based on the belief that dialectal description in it represents an extension to the late nineteenth-century English.

4.2.1 SED Recordings

The findings in Table (3) below represents the results obtained from analysing the recordings for eleven dialects:

Table (3)
SED Recordings

County	FACE	GOAT	Date of Recording	D.O.B
Oxfordshire	ei	u:	1953	1866
Middlesex	ai	Λu	1952	1888
Worcestershire	ə	Λu	1951	1869
Yorkshire	e:	o:	1951	1864
Lancashire	e:	o:	1952	1863
Warwickshire	e	ou	1951	1872
Lincolnshire	eə	oə~uə	1952	1872
Northumberland	e:	o:	1953	1876
Durham	e: ~ e:ə	oə	1953	1876
Kent	{I ¹	ou	1952	1881
Essex	ei	u:	1962	1882

Where:

x ~ y x occurs as frequently as y (Robinson, 2008)

The data shows remarkable evidence for monophthonging among the dialects. Counties such as Yorkshire, Lancashire and Northumberland showed monophthongal FACE and GOAT. Oxfordshire and Essex showed monophthongal GOAT whereas the monophthonging of FACE was in Worcestershire and Warwickshire.

¹ /{/ is a sound somewhere between /a/ and /e/ for TRAP



4.2.2 Ellis (1889) and Wright (1905)

The same dialects were selected for analyses depending on data quoted from Ellis (1889) and Wright (1905) and the findings are shown in Table (4)

Table (4)
Data from Ellis (1889) and Wright (1905)

County	FACE	GOAT
Oxfordshire	iə	u:
Middlesex	ei~æi	ou~əu
Worcestershire	eə	u:
Yorkshire	eə ~ iə	o:
Lancashire	e: ~eə	oi~uə
Warwickshire	eə	o:
Lincolnshire	eə	uə
Northumberland	je	o:
Durham	je	iə
Kent	ai	au
Essex	ei	ʊu

The data in Table (4) seems to be different from what is in Table (3). The first observation is that no county demonstrated monophthonging for FACE and GOAT together. The other observation is that there is only one case of monophthonging of FACE that is in Lancashire whereas five monophthonging cases of GOAT in Oxfordshire, Worcestershire, Yorkshire, Warwickshire, and Northumberland.

The question now is what is the interpretation for the difference of patterns between Table (3) and Table (4)? The possible interpretation could be that though SED recordings were of people born between 1863 and 1888, their patterns of FACE and GOAT are likely representing patterns of time of recording rather than representing the patterns they were using in late nineteenth century. That is to say that these recordings reflect the norm of the middle of the twentieth century. Accordingly, patterns of table (4) could give the more reliable picture about the vowels of FACE and GOAT by the late nineteenth century.

4.3 FACE and GOAT in Present Day English

Three reasons are behind selecting the material in this section: first, the data belongs to previous studies that were conducted in 1999; therefore, it is relatively recent. The second is that SED recordings end at 1974

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whereas recordings of Millennium Memory Bank and BBC Voices lack the linguistic description of the item in many cases. The third reason is that data in these studies covers Scottish and Irish dialects which may give a clearer picture to the status of FACE and GOAT in the late twentieth century in the British Isles. The data in Table (5) shows this variation and it is quoted from: Watt & Milroy (1999), Docherty & Foulkes (1999), Stoddart, Upton and Widdowson (1999), Network (1999), Mathisen (1999), Trudgill (1999), Tollfree (1999), Williams and Kerswill (1999), Mees and Collins (1999), Smith (1999), Chirrey (1999), McCafferty (1999), and Hickey (1999):

Table (5)
Variation of FACE and GOAT among the accents of the British Isles in 1999

Accent	FACE	GOAT
Newcastle	e:~ε:~ ɪə > eɪ	o: > Uə ~ θ (Watt & Milroy, 1999: 27)
Derby	εɪ	əu~ ou (Docherty & Foulkes, 1999: 48)
Sheffield	e: > e: ^l	ɔ: > ou > əu (Stoddart, Upton and Widdowson, 1999: 73)
West Wirral	eɪ ~ ěɪ ~ εɪ	əu ~ ʌu ~ εu ~ ou (Network, 1999: 94)
Sandwell	æi > εɪ	æu ~ ɔu (Mathisen, 1999: 108)
Norwich	æi > ɛ	Uu > U (Trudgill, 1999: 125)
Milton Keynes Reading Hull	εɪ ~ æi ~ ʋɪ ~ ɛɪ εɪ ~ æɪ ~ ɛɪ ε:	əʏ ~ ɐʏ ~ ɔɪ ~ ʋɪ



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		əʏ ~ əɪ ~ əʏ ~ əʊ ɔ̃: ~ ə: > ɒ ~ əʊ Williams and Kerswill, 1999: 143)
South East London SELRS SELE	eɪ ~ ɛɪ ~ ẽɪ aɪ ~ ʌɪ ~ ʌi	ʌU ^(W) ~ ʏU ~ ʏə ~ əʊ ʌU ~ ʌʏ ~ ɐʏ ~ a: (Tollfree, 1999: 165)
Cardiff	ei	ʏu (Mees and Collins, 1999: 187)
Glasgow	e	ɒ (Smith, 1999: 206)
Edinburgh	e	ɒ (Chirrey, 1999: 225)
(London) Derry	e ~ ɪ ~ iə	ɒ (McCafferty, 1999: 247)
Dublin Local DE Mainstream Fashionable	e: e:	ʌO OU əʊ (Hickey, 1999: 270)

Where:

x ~ y x occurs as frequently as y

x > y x occurs more frequently than y (Robinson, 2008)

The data in Table (5) shows that there is a wide variation in the pronunciation of FACE and GOAT among the accents of the British Isles. It also indicates that some accents of present-day English still retain monophthongal FACE and GOAT. This tendency is found for example in accents such Newcastle where /e: ~ ɛ:/ could be used for FACE and /o:/ for GOAT. Monophthonging of FACE also could be found in Sheffield, Hull, Glasgow, Edinburgh, (London) Derry and Dublin. Monophthonging of GOAT could be found in Sheffield, Hull, Glasgow, Edinburgh and (London) Derry.

The results provide indication that monophthonging of FACE and GOAT is still active in present-day English especially in the northern accents.

Data analysis made in 4 sheds light on the fact that monophthonging of FACE and GOAT is continuous since the eighteenth century but at different ratios. It was widespread in the late eighteenth century (as in Sheridan 1780 and Walker 1791), then it was lowered by the late nineteenth century (as in Ellis 1889 and Wright 1905). After the divergence with the data in Wright and Ellis, SED recordings are likely to reflect the middle of the twentieth century English in which a considerable amount of monophthonging is shown. Finally, the most recent evidence for monophthonging was in late twentieth century as was presented in this section where northern accents still retain this feature.

5. Conclusion

This study is intended to trace the phonological change in FACE and GOAT in the Late Modern English. It especially gives consideration to monophthonging process that is still carried out despite the important impact of the Long Mid Diphthonging on the vowels of these lexical sets. It was impossible to collect or analyse more data due to limitations of space and time. The data in this essay is collected from pronouncing dictionaries, SED recordings and previous studies conducted in 1999. Data analysis showed that monophthonging was dominant in the late eighteenth century whereas diphthonging was almost the norm by the end of the nineteenth

century. SED recordings showed that monophthonging was wildly practised between 1950-1960 of the last century. Data in Foulkes and Docherty (1999) gives the most significant evidence that monophthonging is still retained in present-day English especially in the northern dialects. For further studies it will be worthwhile to collect more data about monophthonging in the southern hemisphere dialects.

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