

The English Vowel [x]

In pronouncing the English [x] the tongue moves forward, the tip of the tongue is near the lower teeth. A large resonance chamber is formed in the back part of the mouth cavity.

The front of the tongue is slightly raised towards the hard palate. The air passage is appreciably wider than in the case of the English [e]. The jaw is lowered. The lips are spread (fig. 2.20, 2.21).

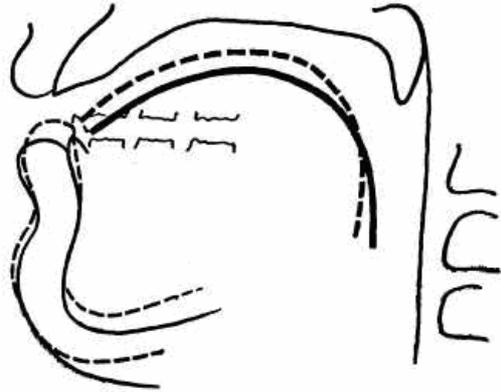


Fig. 2.19.

Tongue-position:

English [x] —————

English [e] - - - - -



Fig. 2.20.

Lip-position of English [x]



Fig. 2.21.

Lip-position of Ukrainian [E]
at the end of a word

In the production of the English [x] as in that of other front vowels a depression is formed along the central line of the tongue, but it is not so deep as in the production of the English [J], [I], [e].

The English [x] is rather lengthened under certain conditions. It is especially long before sonants and voiced consonants.

The English [x] is a non-labialized tense front open vowel phoneme of the wide variety.

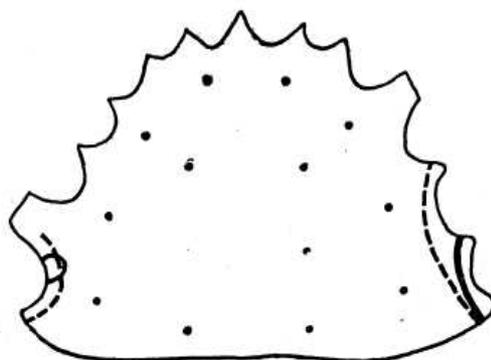
The English [x] is intermediate in quality between the Ukrainian [E] at the end of a word (e.g. *nace* [ПІАЦÉ]) and a variety of the Ukrainian [A] which occurs between soft consonants under stress (e. g. *лялька* [Л'АЛ'КА]).

The position of the organs of speech in pronouncing the English [x] differs from the position for the Ukrainian [E] at the end of a word.

In forming the English [x] the tip of the tongue comes near the front lower teeth, the tongue is more advanced, and its blade is raised towards the hard palate but not so high as in forming the Ukrainian [E].

The difference between the position of the tongue for the English [x] and the Ukrainian [E] at the end of a word is shown in palatograms (fig. 2.22).

Fig. 2.22.
Palatograms:
English [x] —————
Ukrainian [E] - - - - -



The English [x] differs from the Ukrainian [A]. The Ukrainian [A] is not so forward and more open. Therefore, the Ukrainian [A], even between soft consonants, gives no traces on the artificial palate.

To pronounce the English [x] correctly it is possible to start from the Ukrainian [E] as pronounced at the end of the word. But the distance between the jaws must be greater, the tongue moves forward, the tip of the tongue approaches the lower teeth.

One may also improve the sound by starting from the Ukrainian [A]. In this case the tongue should be raised a little higher and the tip of the tongue should be brought nearer to the lower teeth.

Ukrainian students are liable to replace the English [x] by the more close [E] of their mother tongue. In this case the tongue should be slightly lowered. The lips should be neutral without the slightest trace of protrusion.