

## The English Consonant [l]

In the pronunciation of the English [l] the tip of the tongue is raised to touch the alveoli. The sides of the tongue are lowered and the air escapes through the narrowings which are formed between the sides of the tongue and the hard palate. The soft palate is raised (fig. 3.36). The vocal chords are made to vibrate 141

The English [l] is a forelingual alveolar apical lateral sonant.

There exist several variants of the English [l]. At the end of words and before consonants there appears a “dark” variant of the English [l]. In pronouncing the English [l] in this position the tip of the tongue is raised to the alveoli and a spoon-shaped depression is formed along the central part of the tongue.

“Clear” variants of the English [l] occur before vowels, especially before front vowels. In pronouncing the English [l] before [j] in the word *lean* [li:n] the tip of the tongue is also raised to the alveoli but the contact covers a larger area. The front of the tongue is raised towards the hard palate (see fig. 3.36, 3.37).

Fig. 3.36.  
Tongue-position:  
English clear [l] —————  
English dark [l] - - - - -

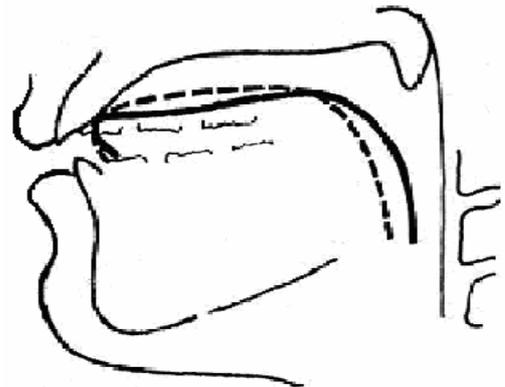
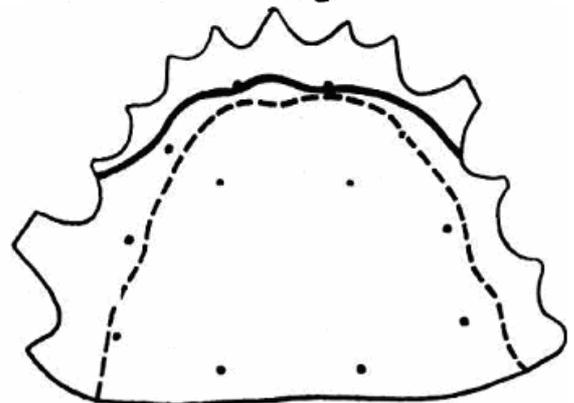


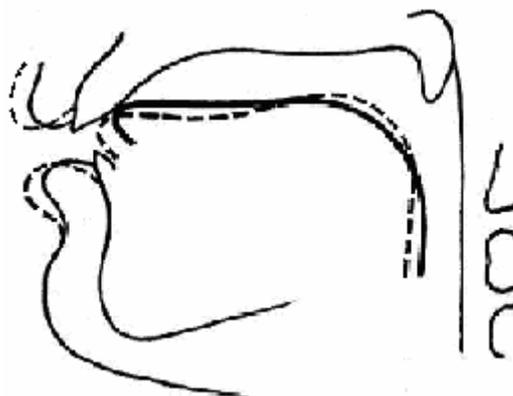
Fig. 3.37.  
Palatograms:  
English clear [l] —————  
English dark [l] - - - - -



In pronouncing the English “dark” [l] the position of the tongue resembles that of the Ukrainian [ʎ] in the word *була* (fig. 3.38). In all the other positions the Ukrainian non-palatalized [ʎ] is much harder than

the corresponding English [ɪ] (fig. 3.38).

Fig. 3.38.  
Tongue-position:  
English dark [ɪ] \_\_\_\_\_  
Ukrainian [ɪ] - - - - -

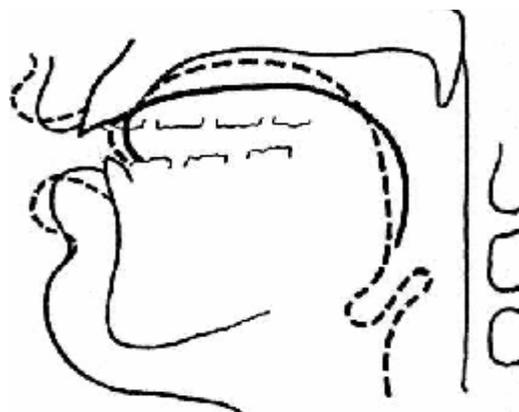


Many students whose native language is Ukrainian have a tendency to use too dark varieties of the English “dark” [ɪ].

The sound may be improved by starting from the Ukrainian [ɪ] in the word *була*.

The English “clear” [ɪ] resembles the Ukrainian palatalized [ɪ'] except that in pronouncing the Ukrainian [ɪ'] the front part of the tongue is nearer to the palate (fig. 3.39).

Fig. 3.39.  
Tongue-position:  
English clear [ɪ] \_\_\_\_\_  
Ukrainian [ɪ'] - - - - -



There is a tendency with some students to palatalize the English “clear” [ɪ].

The sound may be improved by starting from the Ukrainian palatalized [ɪ']. The tongue should be lowered a little. Special care should be taken to pronounce the English sound combinations [tɪ], [dɪ], [pɪ], [bɪ] properly, i.e. with “lateral plosion”.

This can be achieved by practising the pronunciation of these combinations without removing the tip of the tongue from alveoli after [t], [d], [p] and [b], respectively.