

3.2.4 ENGLISH BACKLINGUAL CONSONANT PHONEMES IN COMPARISON WITH UKRAINIAN BACKLINGUAL CONSONANTS

The English Consonants [k], [g]

In pronouncing the English [k], [g] the back of the tongue is raised to the soft palate and a complete obstruction is formed there (fig. 3.45). Immediately after that the tension in the place of obstruction is released and the air breaks through the obstruction. The tip of the tongue is retracted from the front lower teeth.

The soft palate is raised. In pronouncing the English [g] the vocal chords are made to vibrate.

The English [k] is a backlingual plosive voiceless consonant phoneme.

The English [g] is formed like the English [k] except that the vocal chords are made to vibrate, the muscles of the tongue are less tense.

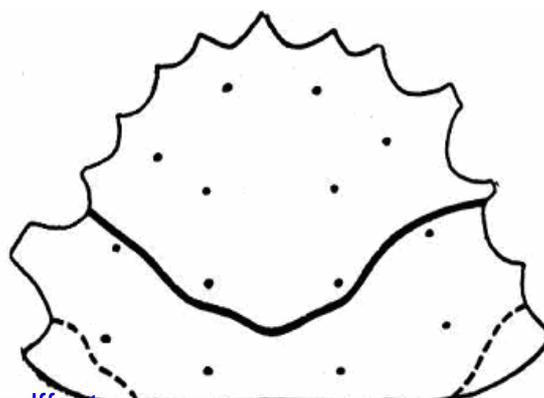
Fig. 3.45.
Tongue-position of English [k]



The English [g] is a backlingual plosive voiced consonant phoneme.

There are several variants of [k], [g] in English depending on the quality of the following vowel. The place of the obstacle is more advanced when the English [k], [g] are followed by front vowels and more retracted when they are followed by back vowels (fig. 3.46).

Fig. 3.46.
Palatograms:
English [k]
(before back vowels)
English [k]



(before front vowels) — — — — —

The articulation of the English [k], [g] very much resembles the articulation of the Ukrainian [K], [G] in all positions in a word, except before the sound [I], as the Ukrainian [K], [G] become palatalized when followed by [I]. And yet the English [k] differs from the Ukrainian [K] to a certain extent. The English [k] is pronounced with aspiration especially before stressed vowels, while the Ukrainian [K] is never aspirated. The place of the obstruction is rather more forward in pronouncing the Ukrainian [K], which is more stable and depends less upon the quality of the following vowel. However this difference is not of great importance, and the correct English [k], [g] may be acquired by starting from the Ukrainian [K], [G], provided that care is taken to make the English [k], [g] more energetic and to pronounce the English [k] with aspiration before stressed vowels.

Many students whose native language is Ukrainian have a tendency:

1. to mispronounce the English [k] before stressed vowels making it unaspirated;
2. to use a voiceless sound resembling the Ukrainian [X] instead of the English final [g];
3. to replace the English [g] by the Ukrainian [Г].

Those who mispronounce the sound [g] should study carefully the difference between the English [g], and the Ukrainian [Г] and practise pronouncing words ending in [g].

Special care should be taken to pronounce the English sound combinations [kl], [gl] without removing the obstruction for [k], [g] before pronouncing [l].