

The English Consonants [f], [v]

In pronouncing the English [f] the lower lip is raised to the upper front teeth and a narrowing of the air-passage is formed between the lower lip and the teeth. The air passes through this narrowing producing audible friction.

X-ray photography shows that the position of the tongue in pronouncing the English [f] is nearly the same as in forming the English [p].

The front part of the tongue is somewhat lowered, the tongue is slightly retracted from the lower teeth. The soft palate is raised and the air escapes through the mouth cavity (fig. 3.13). The vocal chords are not made to vibrate.

The English [f] is a labio-dental fricative voiceless consonant phoneme.

The English [f] has nearly the same quality as the Ukrainian [Ф]. It differs from the latter by a more energetic articulation and by a somewhat more front position of the tongue (fig. 3.13).

To acquire the correct pronunciation of the English [f] one may start from the Ukrainian [Ф] making the lips more tense and the articulation more energetic.

The English [v] is formed like the English [f] except that the vocal chords are made to vibrate and the tongue occupies a somewhat lower position (fig. 3.14).

The English [v] is a labio-dental fricative voiced consonant phoneme.

The correct pronunciation of the English [v] may be acquired by starting from the Ukrainian labio-dental [В] as pronounced before the sounds [И], [Е].

If students pronounce the Ukrainian [В] before [И], [Е] as a bilabial consonant it is not advisable to start from it. In such cases one should start from the Ukrainian [Ф], provided that care is taken to make it voiced.

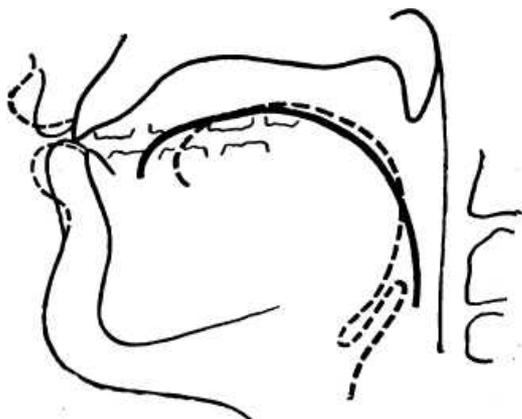


Fig. 3.13.

Tongue-position:

English [f] —————
 Ukrainian [Ф] - - - - -

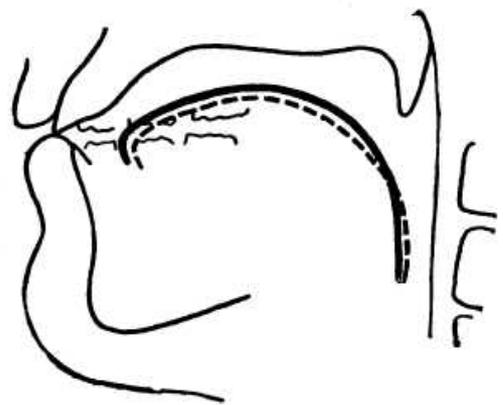


Fig. 3.14.

Tongue-position:

English [f] —————
 English [v] - - - - -

Fig. 3.15.

Lip-position of English [f]



As a rule the correct pronunciation of the English [f], [v] can be acquired without much difficulty but there is a tendency with some students:

1. not to make the English [f] energetic enough, especially at the end of words;
2. to palatalize the English [f], [v] before front vowels, especially before [i:], [I];
3. to devoice the English [v] at the end of words;
4. to pronounce the English labio-dental [v] as a bilabial consonant.

Such mistakes can be easily corrected by carefully adopting the position of the tongue and the lips characteristic of the English [f], [v].