

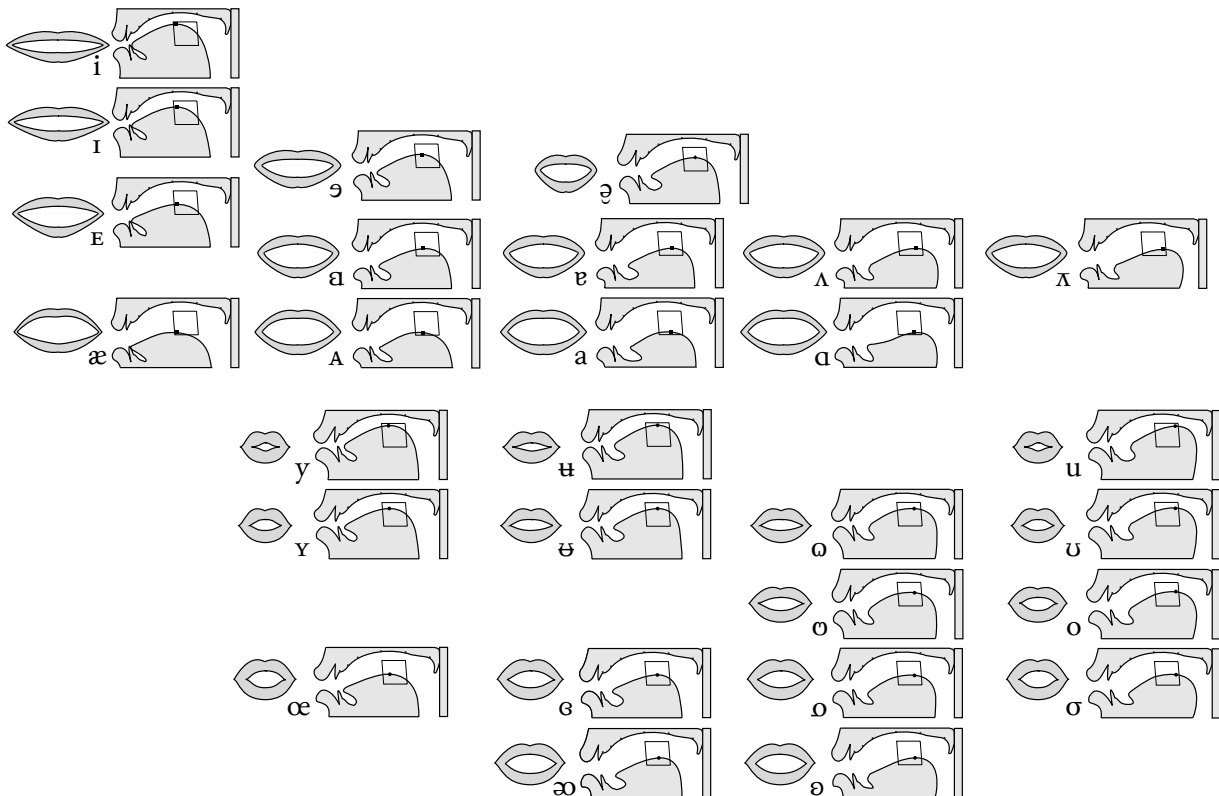
# Finnish Pronunciation

Luciano Canepari & Maurizio Pugliese (2019)

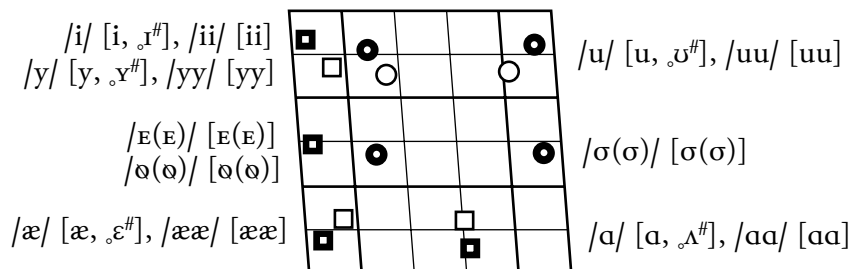
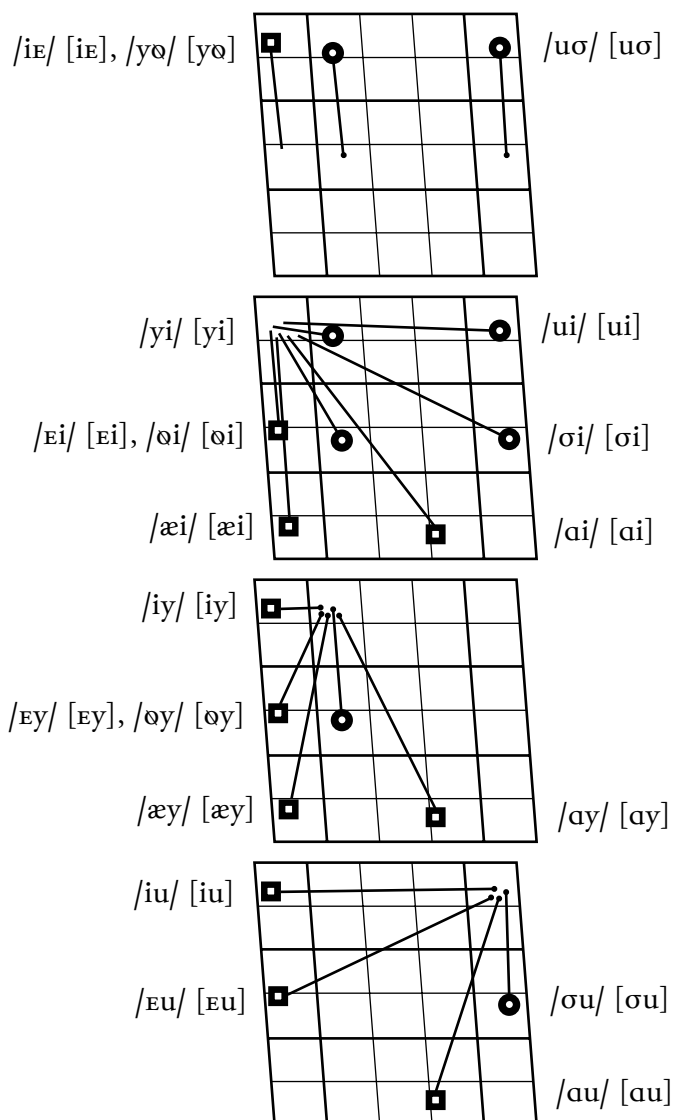
*Finnish* (Uralic) has 8 short and 8 long vowels (the latter are monotimbric diphthongs, [V·V, VV]): *katua* /'katua/ ['katuΔ], *kaatua* /'kaatua/ ['kɑ'ɑtuΔ]; *kiven* /'ki-ven/ ['kiVEN], *kiveen* /'kiveen/ ['kiVEEN]. It also has 19 phonemic diphthongs, even unstressed.

We show three sociophonic variants: *neutral*, *communicative*, and *mediatic*, in this order of prestige preference, but exchanged as far as actual usage and diffusion is concerned.

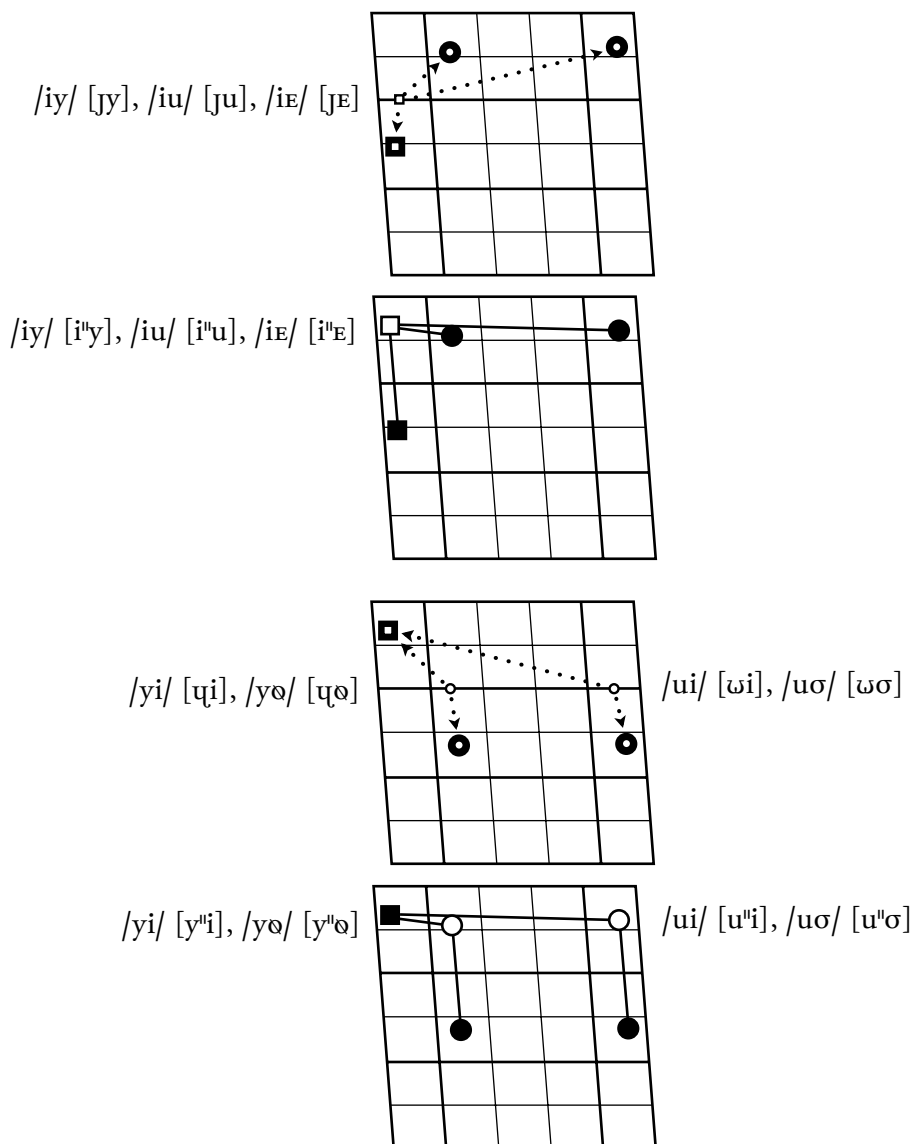
fig 1. All the Finnish vocoids presented in this paper.



/iE, yØ, uσ/ have different realization between normal [i'E, 'yØ, 'uσ], and [jE, yØ, uσ] mostly occurring in unstressed syllables at the beginning of longer words, and even [i''E, y''Ø, u''σ], for emphasis (including the sociophonic variants shown for the additional accents).

fig 2. *Neutral* Finnish: short & long vowels.fig 3. *Neutral* Finnish: main diphthongs.

The *consonants* and the fundamental *intonation* patterns are given in fig 10-11. Finnish has relatively few consonants, with three xenophonemes, /b, f, g/, forming diphonic pairs. In final position, also /ʔ/ occurs: *vie* /'vie/ [ˈviE] ‘(she/he) drives’ and /'vieʔ/ [ˈviEʔ] ‘drive!’, even for the frequent ending -*Vn* /*Vn*/ [Ṽʔ], while there is systematic assimilation for /*nC*/.

fig 4. *Neutral* Finnish: different realizations of /iy, iu, iE/, /yi, yO/, /ui, uo/.

Contrary to the frequently occurring diphthongs in lexemes, instead, in compounds, the sequences with  $/V^{\#}V/$  are realized as  $[V\tilde{r}V]$ .

$/h/$  may have some free taxophones: a laryngeal constrictive,  $[\hbar]$ , especially before a consonant, or palatal or velar approximants,  $[\hbar, \hbar]$ , as current taxophones, in contact with front or back vowels, respectively. Also  $[V\hbar V]$  is rather frequent.  $/s/$  varies between apico-alveolar,  $[s]$ , and lamino-alveolar,  $[s̺]$ ;  $/k/$   $[k, k̺]$ ;  $/t, d/$  vary much more:  $[t, t̺, t̺]$   $[d, d̺, d̺]$ , freely, including  $[ɹ]$  (occasionally also  $[r]$ ) for  $/d/$ .

$/l/$  may be always  $[\l̥]$ , or  $[l, \l̥, \l̥]$  in contact with front, middle or back vowels, respectively, but with oscillations.  $/r/$   $[\r̥]$  varies freely between  $[\r̥, r, r]$ . Before front vowels, the velars are prevelarized. In addition,  $/v/$  may be rather weak:  $[v, v, v]$ .

*Loanwords* also have  $/b, g, f/$   $[b, b̺, p]$ ,  $[g, g̺, k, g, g̺, k̺]$ ,  $[f, f, \Phi]$ , in addition to:  $/ts, dz, tʃ, dʒ; ʃ, ʒ; z/$   $[ts, dz, tʃ, dʒ; ʃ, ʒ; z, z̺]$ .

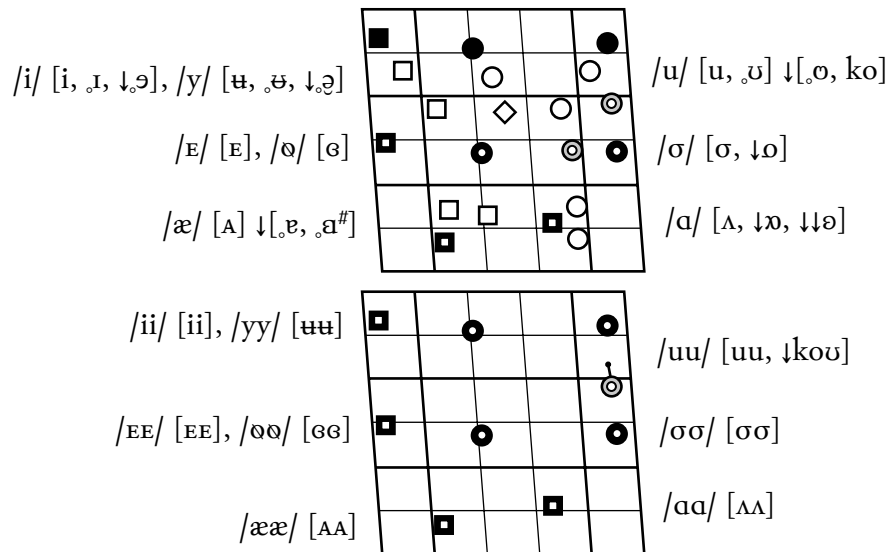
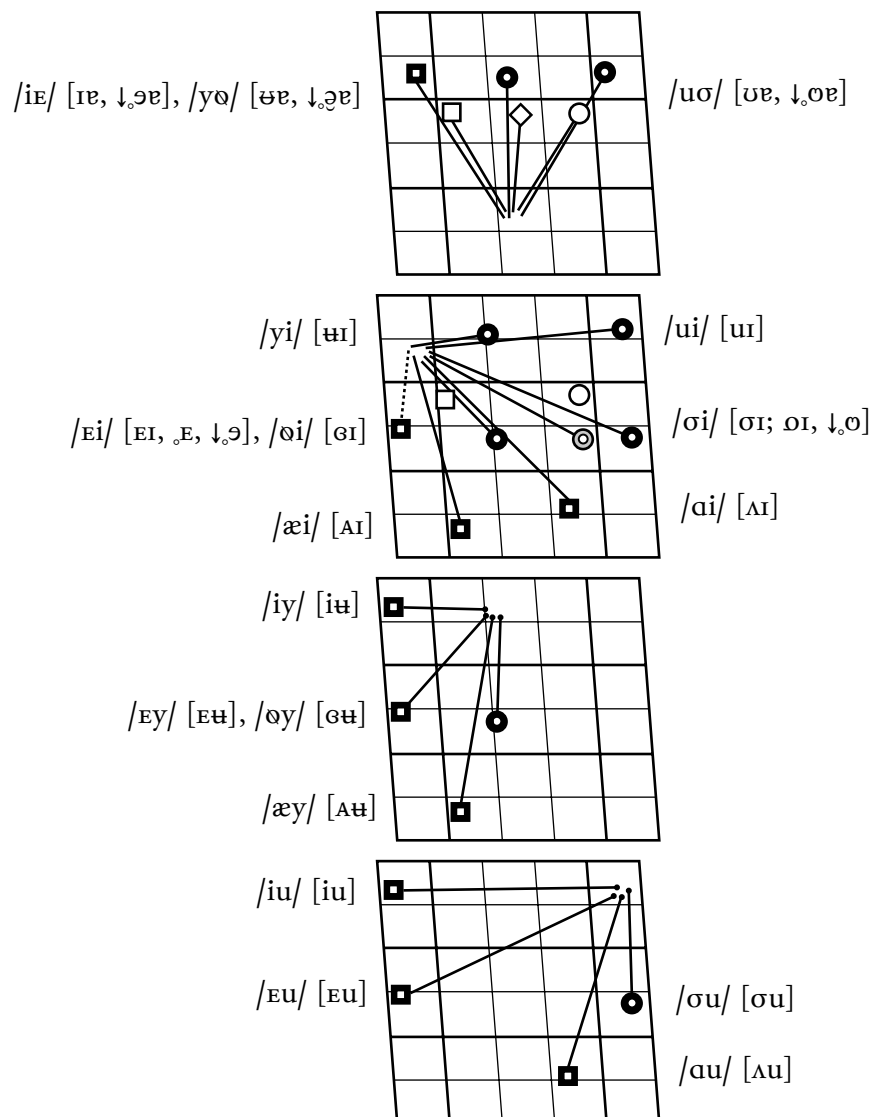
fig 5. *Communicative Finnish: short & long vowels.*fig 6. *Communicative Finnish: main diphthongs.*

fig 7. *Communicative* Finnish: different realizations of /iy, iu, iε/, /yi, yø/, /ui, uo/.

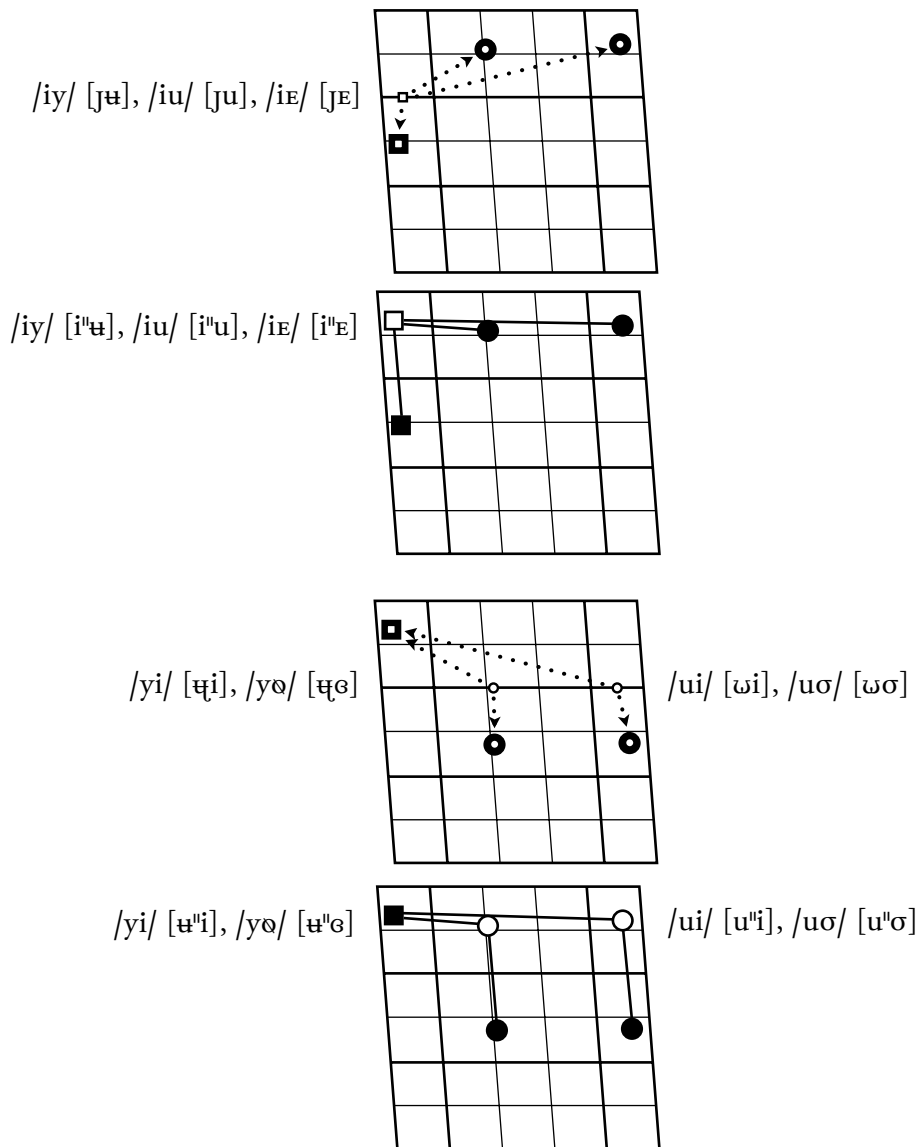
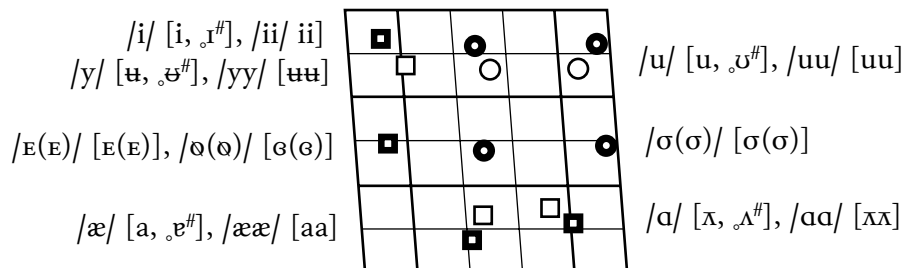


fig 8. *Mediatic* Finnish: short & long vowels.



There is a distinctive opposition between simple consonants, C /C/ [C], and geminated consonants, CC /CC/ [CC:] (also for /j, v/): *palo* /'palɔ/ ['paɫɔ], *pallo* /'pallɔ/ ['paɫkɔ], *mato* /'matɔ/ ['matɔ], *matto* /'mattɔ/ ['mattɔ], peculiarly so, even after long vowels.

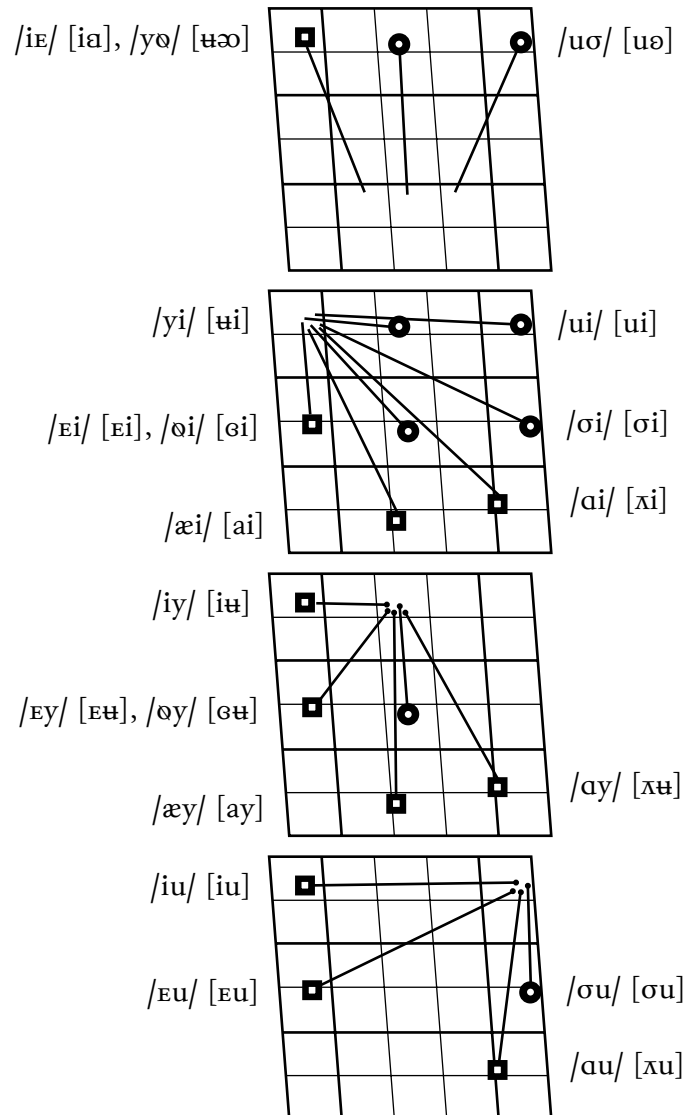
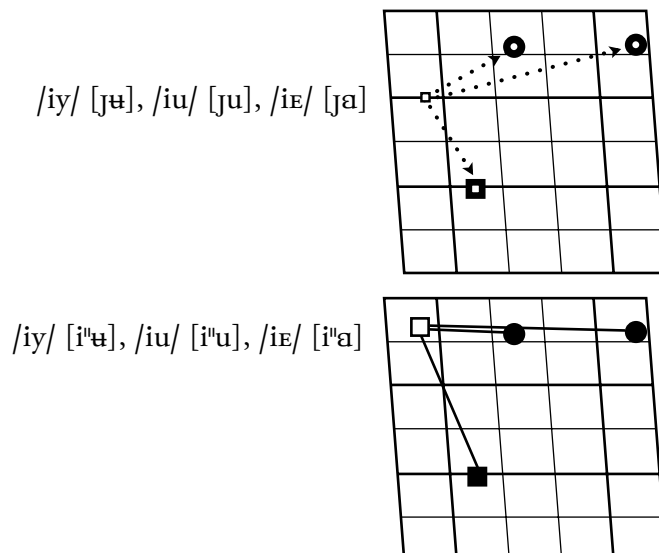
fig 9. *Mediatic* Finnish: main diphthongs.fig 10a. *Mediatic* Finnish: different realizations of /iy, iu, iɛ/.

fig 10b. *Mediatic* Finnish: different realizations of /yi, yo/, /ui, uo/.

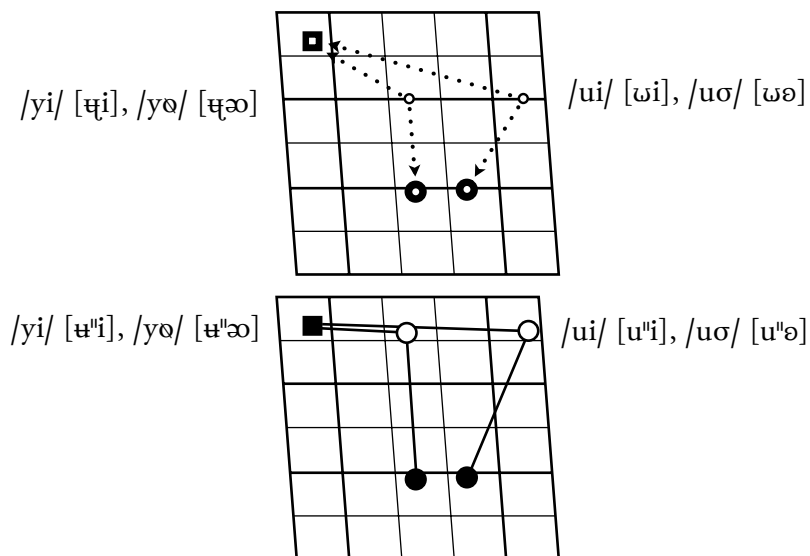
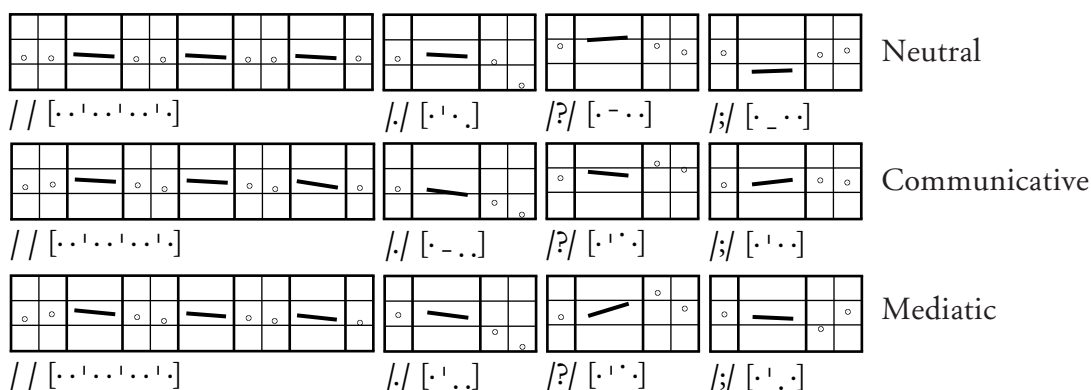


fig 11. The *consonants* of the three Finnish accents presented, including some dialectal variants (and xenophonemes).

m	[m]	[n]		n		[ŋ]	ŋ	
p (b)		t d	[t̪ d̪]	[t̪ d̪]	(tʃ dʒ)	[k̟ g̟]	k (g)	ʔ
	(f) v	(ts dz)	[ʃ (z)	ʃ (z)	(ʃ z)	[h̟]	j	[h̟]
(ϕ) [v]	(f) [v]					[j] [ɥ]	[ɥ]	h [h̟]
						[ɥ]	[w]	
				[ɹ]				
				[ɹ]	[ɹ̥]			
				[ɹ]	ɹ̥			
				[l]	l̥	[l̥]		
		[l]	[l̥]					

We also find opposition after different consonants: *korpi* /'korpi/ ['kɔ̞ɤpi], *korppi* /'kɔ̞ɤppi/ ['kɔ̞ɤɸpi]. More examples follow: *Pertti* /'pɛɾtti/ ['pɛɾti], *kauppa* /'kauppa/ ['kauppa], *pankki* /'pankki/ ['paŋki], *Mirja* /'mirja/ ['miɾ-jɹ] (the latter example shows heterosyllabic division, too).

fig 11. The *intonation* patterns of the three Finnish accents.



There is moderate vowel harmony (except in loanwords) for /y, ø, æ/ and /u, σ, α/, while /i, ɛ/ behave as neutral elements. Words like *yksi* are often pronounced with final [ɪ, ɪ̃].

Word *stress* might be said to fall on the first syllable of lexemes, with alternating secondary stresses in longer words. However, especially in longer words, long vowels and diphthongs may attract the stress, more frequently so with marked protunes and tunes, not only for emphasis, but also for rhythmic reasons.

In addition, in real conversations, (main and secondary) stress is also determined by the phrasal ‘heaviness’ of the different syllables actually present in the messages. Let us also notice cases like *puunaama* [ˈpuu.nɑɑmɑ] ‘wooden face’, different from a plain word like *puunaama* [ˈpu.ru.nɑɑmɑ] ‘which was cleaned’.