i – mutation!
aka
front mutation

from the depths of HEL

i – mutation is a **conditional** sound change caused by the prehistorical presence of the /i/ sound the ends of words

i – mutation is a **confusing name** because the /i/ sound which caused the sound change is no longer there

i – mutation can affect all parts of speech, but the most recognizable are nouns with weird plurals: foot / feet

REVIEW::

Grimm's Law

an UNCONDITIONED sound change which affected all PIE stops

Helps us recognize **cognates** in non-Germanic languages

Proto-Indo-European

/p/

Grimm's Law!

/p/ *Italic*

Latin

pater

Spanish

padre

French

père

Italian

padre

/p/ *Hellenic*

Greek

patḗr

/p/ *Indic*

Sanskrit

pituh

/f/ *Germanic*

Old English

fæder

Mod Engl

father

Icelandic

faðir

German

Vater

Strong vs Weak:
Grimm's terminology

Strong = goes back to PIE
Weak= "new" feature of language

Strong Verbs:
have vowel ablaut in past tense:

swim, swam, swum
drink, drank, drunk

Weak Verbs:
add -d or –t in past tense:

walk, walked
sleep, slept

Strong nouns :

Old English (and all Indo-European languages) had lots and lots of different endings for different types of nouns

Strong nouns : in Old English

Nouns						
	Strong					
	Masc.	Neut.		Fem.		
		Short	Long	Short	Long	
N. sg.	stān	scip	þing	ġiefu	sorg	
A.				ġiefe	sorge	
G.	stānes	scipes	þinges			
D.	stāne	scipe	þinge			
N/A pl.	stānas	scipu	þing	ġiefa	sorga	
G.	stāna	scipa	þinga			
D.	stānum	scipum	þingum	ġiefum	sorgum	

Weak nouns :

A *new* thing in Old English (and other Germanic languages) was nouns with -n to show the plural

Weak nouns in Old English:

s		
Weak		
Masc.	Neut.	Fem.
nama	ēage	tunge
naman	ēagan	tungan
naman	ēagan	tungan
namena	ēagena	tungena
namum	ēagum	tungum

what about:???

man / men

goose / geese

foot / feet

what about:

man

ese

t / feet

nothing to do with
STRONG or WEAK

i-mutation! ! ! ! !

the Old English word for “man” was *mann*

i-mutation! ! ! ! !

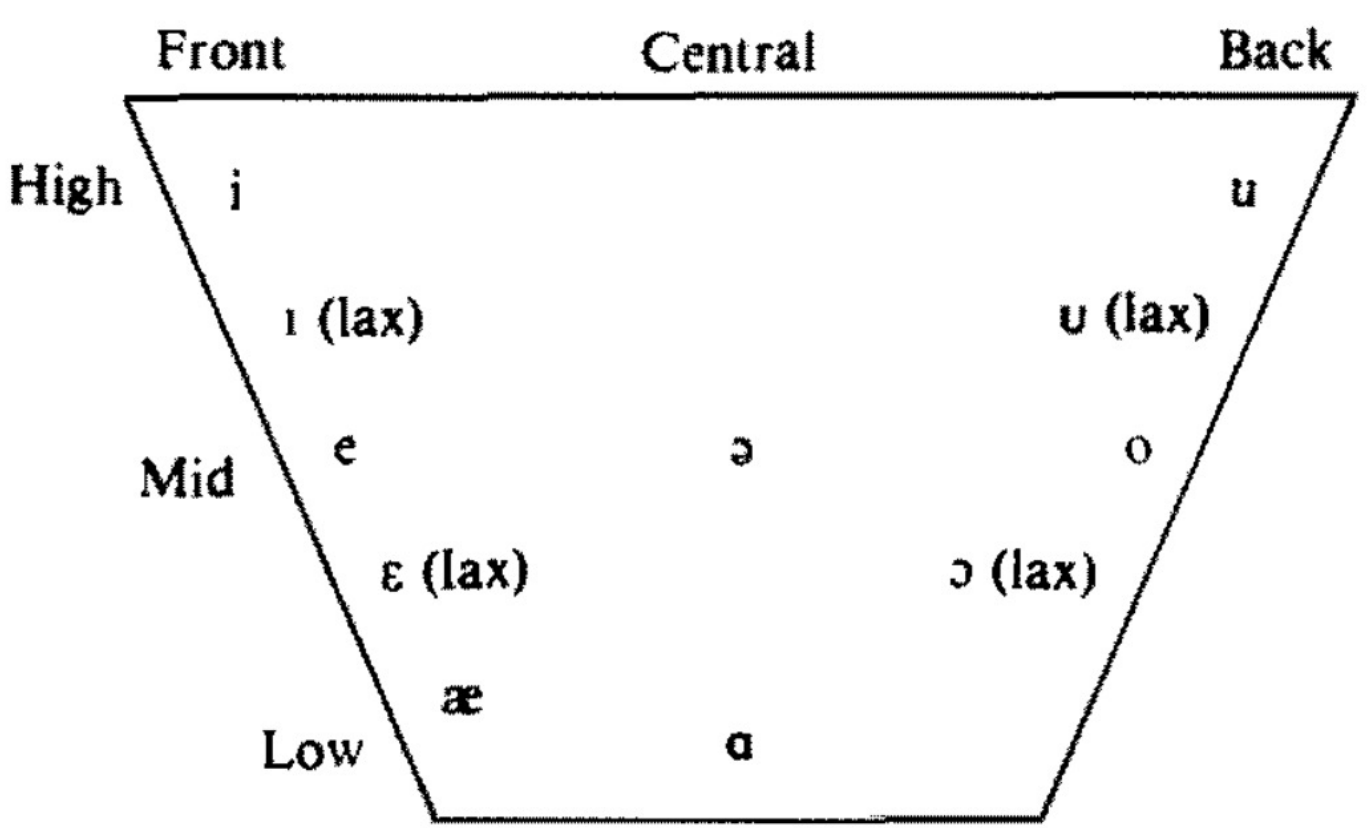
the Proto Old English word for “man” was **mann*

i-mutation! ! ! ! !

the plural of **mann* in Proto Old English was **manniz*

i-mutation! ! ! ! !

say **manniz*

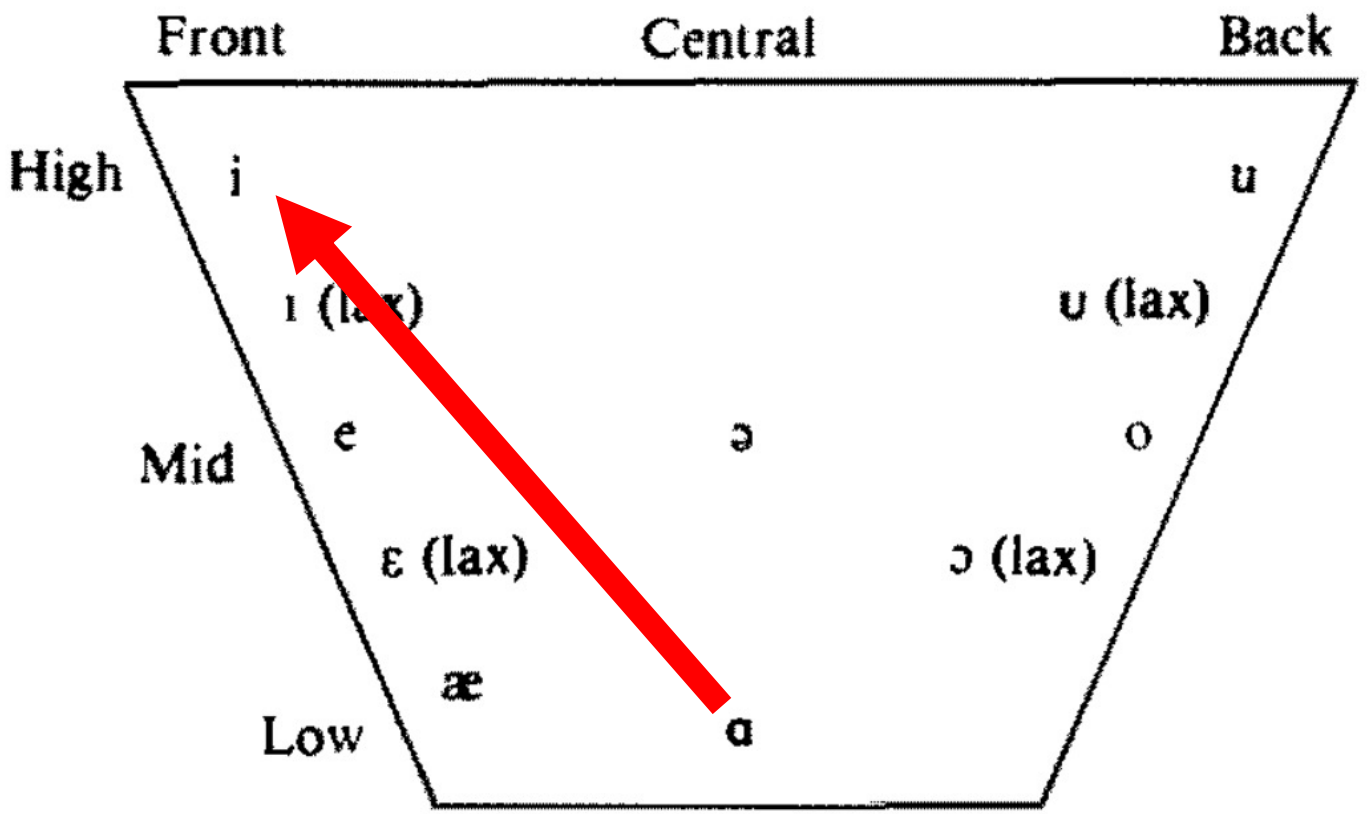


Key

*manniz

/æ/ cad /ɔ/† cawed

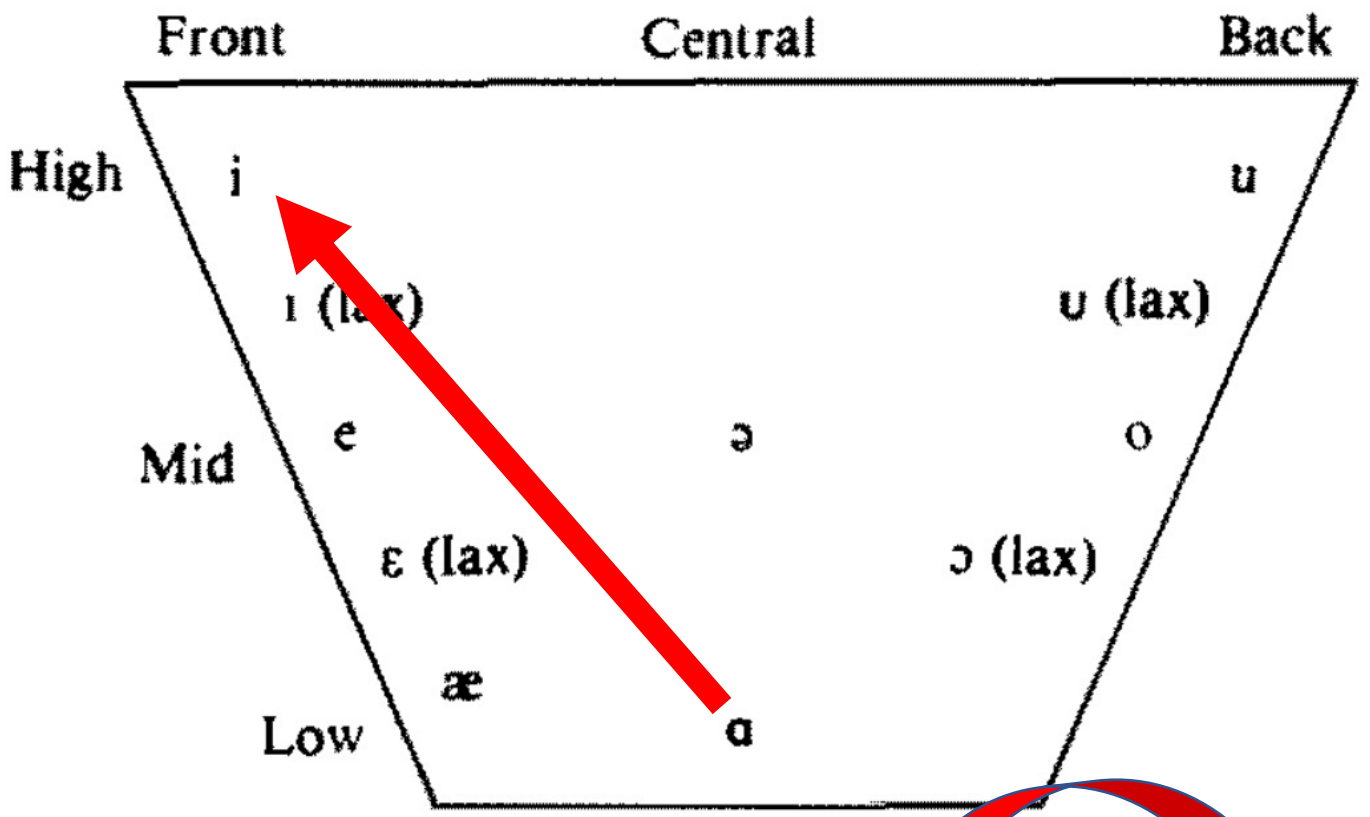
/ə/* cud, curd



Key

*manniz

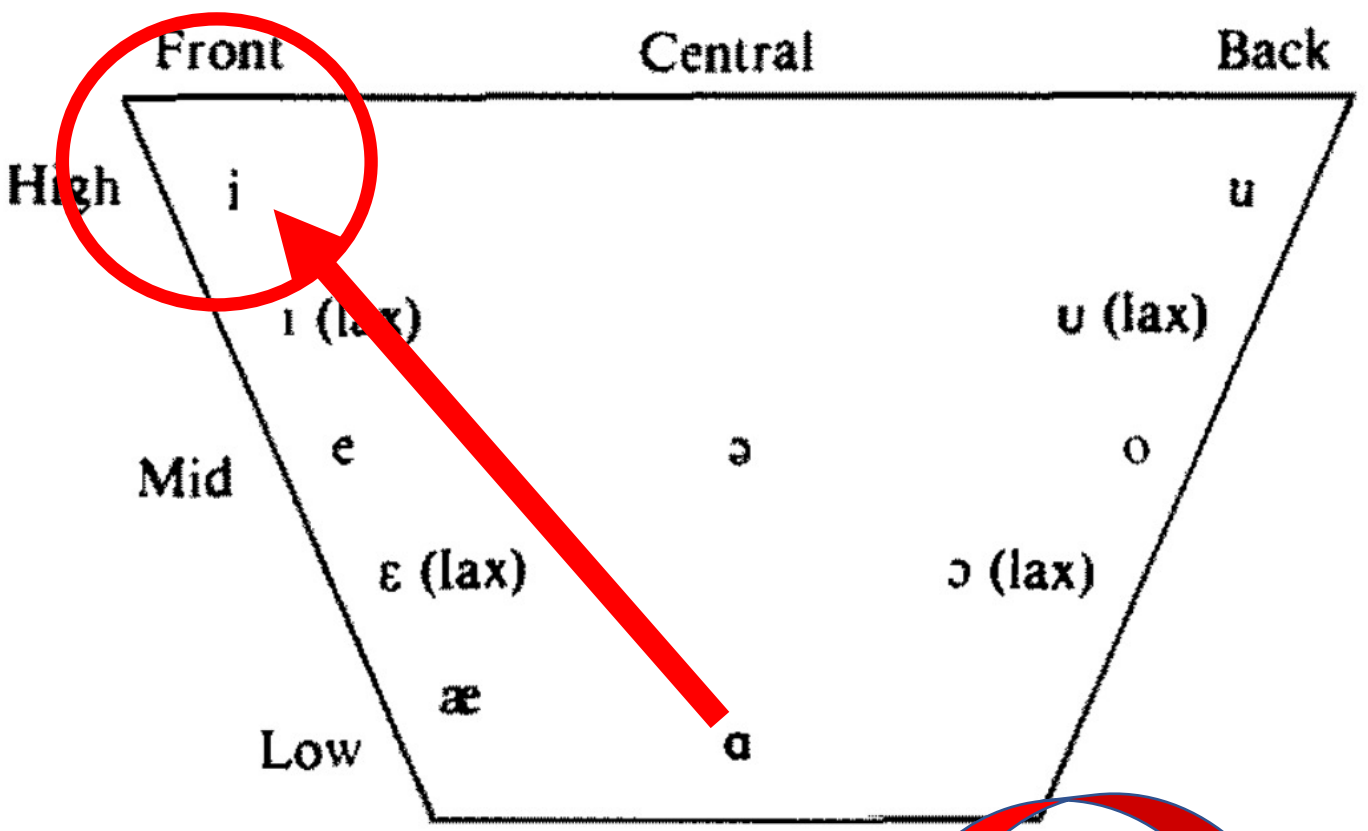
/æ/	cad	/ɔ/†	cawed
/ə/*	cud, curd		



*manniz

/æ/ cad /ɔ/† cawed

/ə/* cud, curd

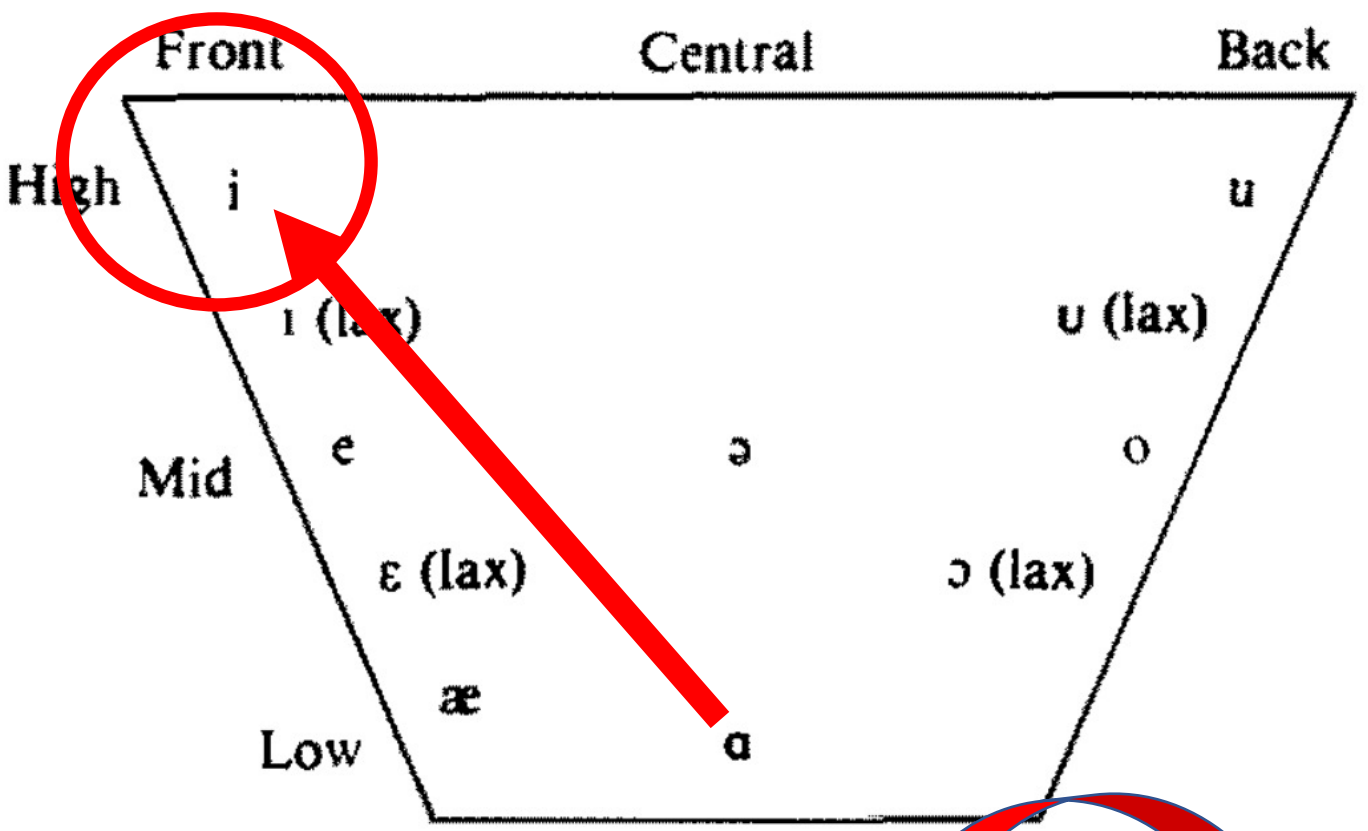


*manniz

/æ/ cad /ɔ/† cawed

/ə/* cud, curd

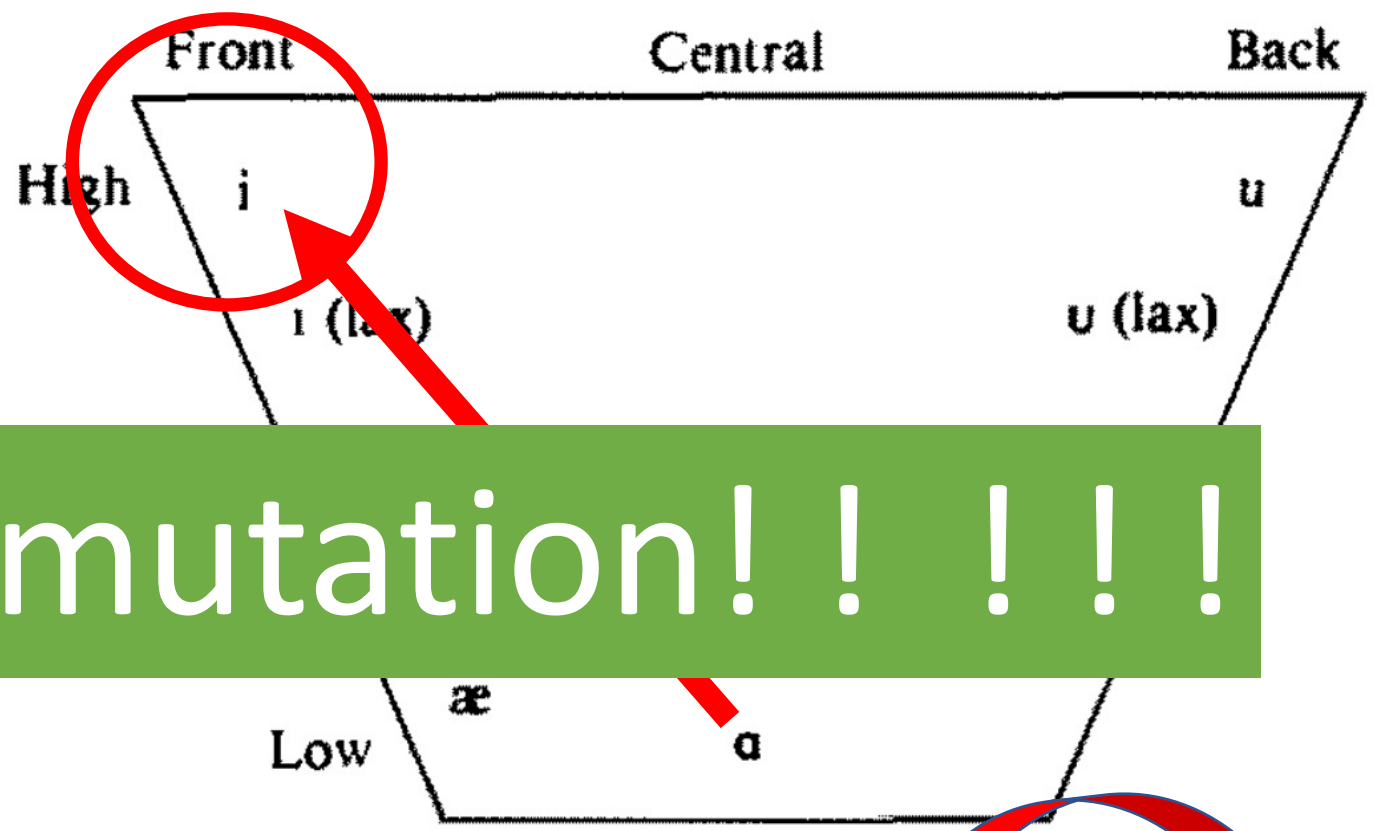
i-mu



*menniz

/æ/ cad /ɔ/† cawed

/ə/* cud, curd



i-mutation! ! ! ! !

*menniz

Key

/æ/	cad	/ɔ/†	cawed
/ə/*	cud, curd		

i-mutation! ! ! ! !

Proto Old English:
singular: **mann*
plural: **menniz*

i-mutation! ! ! ! !

Proto Old English:
singular: **mann*
plural: **menniz*

i-mutation! ! ! ! !

Old English:
singular: *mann*
plural: *menn*

i-mutation! ! ! ! !

Proto Old English:
singular: **gōs*
plural: **gōsiz*

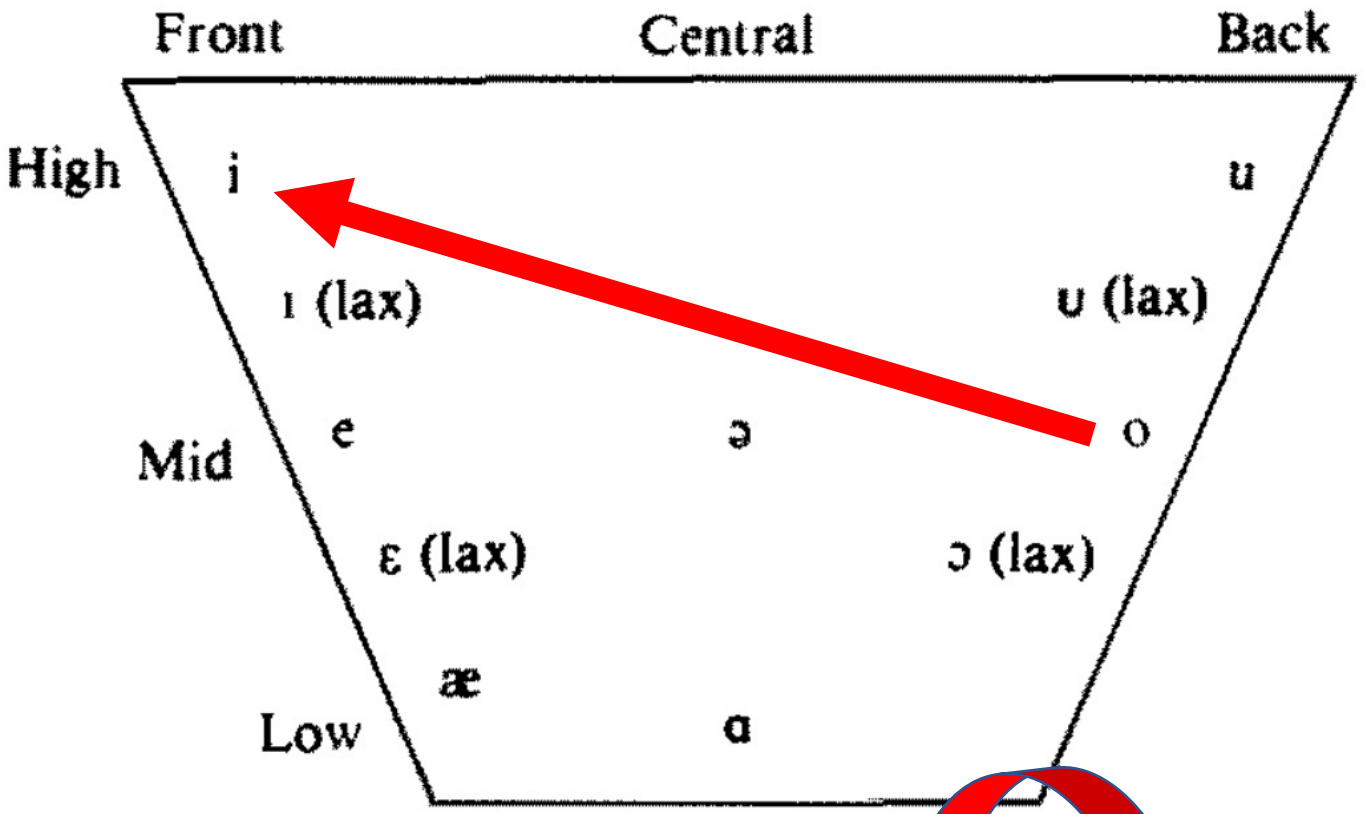
i-mutation! ! ! ! !

Proto Old English:

singular: **gōs*

plural: **gōsiz*

i-mu



*gōsiz

/æ/ cad /ɔ/† cawed

/ə/* cud, curd

i-mutation! ! ! ! !

Proto Old English:
singular: **gōs*
plural: **gēsiz*

i-mutation! ! ! ! !

Proto Old English:

singular: **gōs*

plural: **gēsiz*

i-mutation! ! ! ! !

Old English:
singular: *gōs*
plural: *gēs*

i-mutation! ! ! ! !

foot — feet

mouse — mice

louse — lice

tooth — teeth

man — men

i-mutation! ! ! ! !

but wait there's more!
(it's not just plurals!)

i-mutation! ! ! ! !

Proto Old English

**tal* = “a story”, “tale”

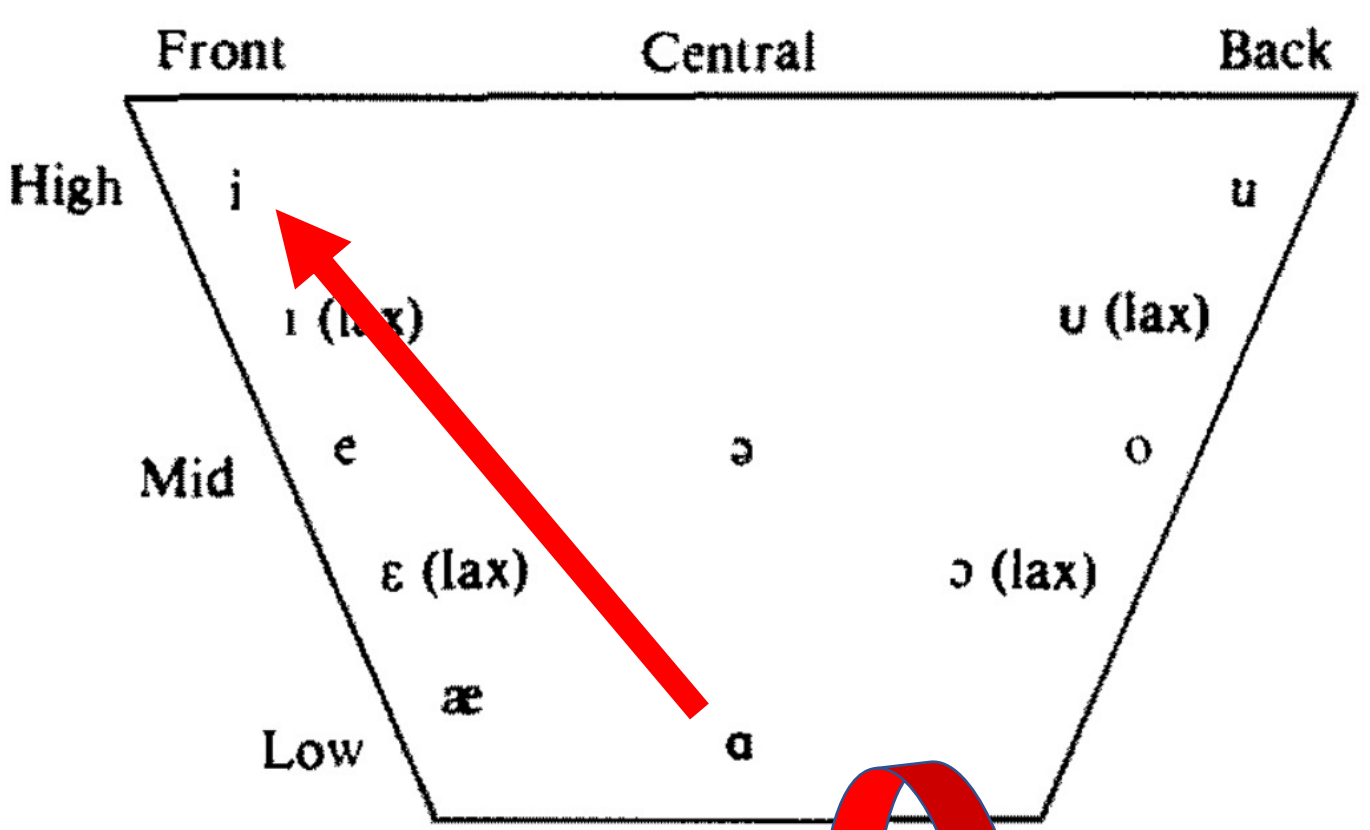
i-mutation! ! ! ! !

Proto Old English

tal + **ian =*

“make a story”

i-mu

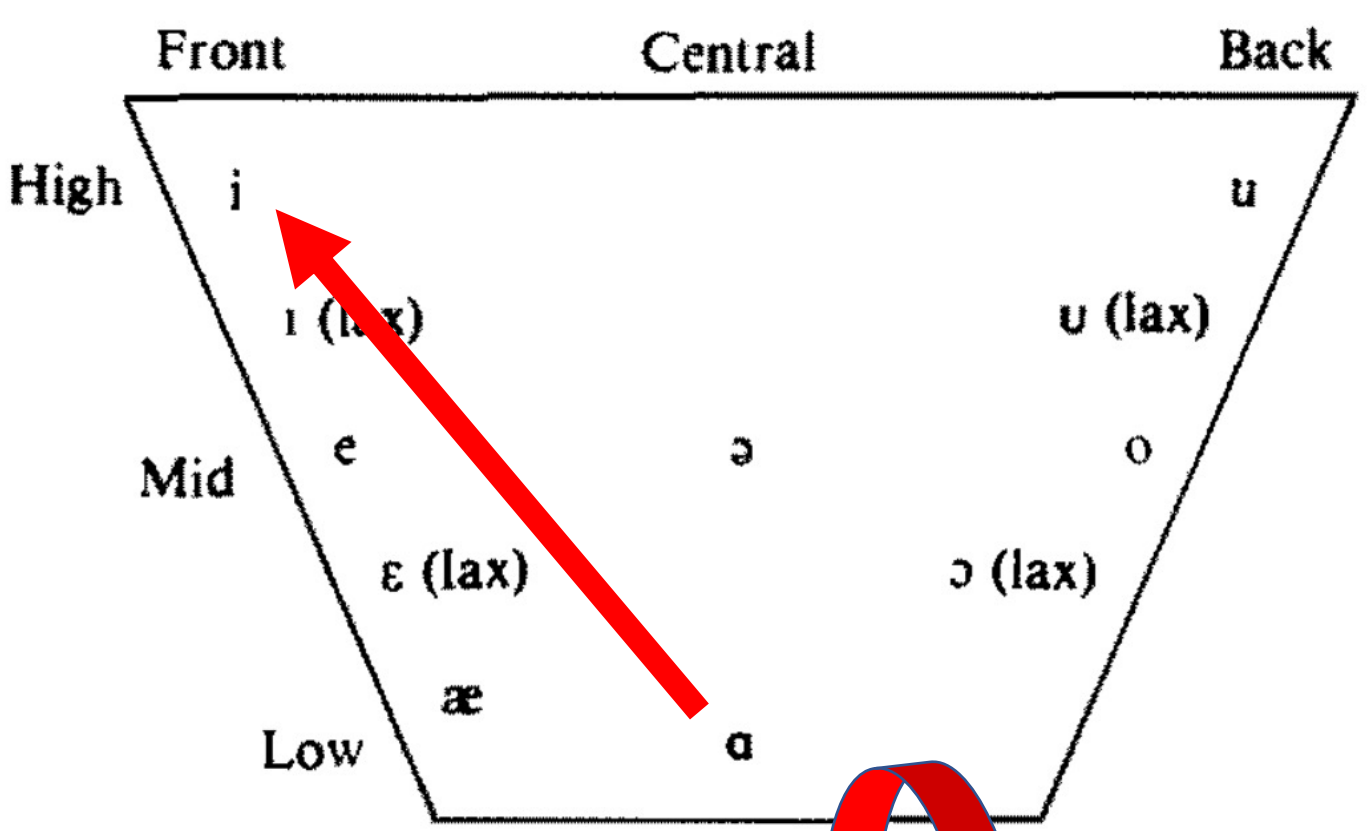


*talian

/æ/ cad /ɔ/† cawed

/ə/* cud, curd

i-mu



*telian

/æ/ cad /ɔ/† cawed

/ə/* cud, curd

i-mutation! ! ! ! !

tale > tell

i-mutation! ! ! ! !

NOUNS > VERBS!

food > to feed

knot > to knit

blood > to bleed

gold > to gild

doom ('judgment’) > to deem (to judge)

lust > to list (“do as you list”)

i-mutation! ! ! ! !

ADJECTIVES > VERBS!

full > to fill

whole > to heal

i-mutation! ! ! ! !

VERBS > other VERBS!

fall > fell

dole > deal

wander > wend

sit > set

lie > lay

i-mutation! ! ! ! !

ADJECTIVES > NOUNS

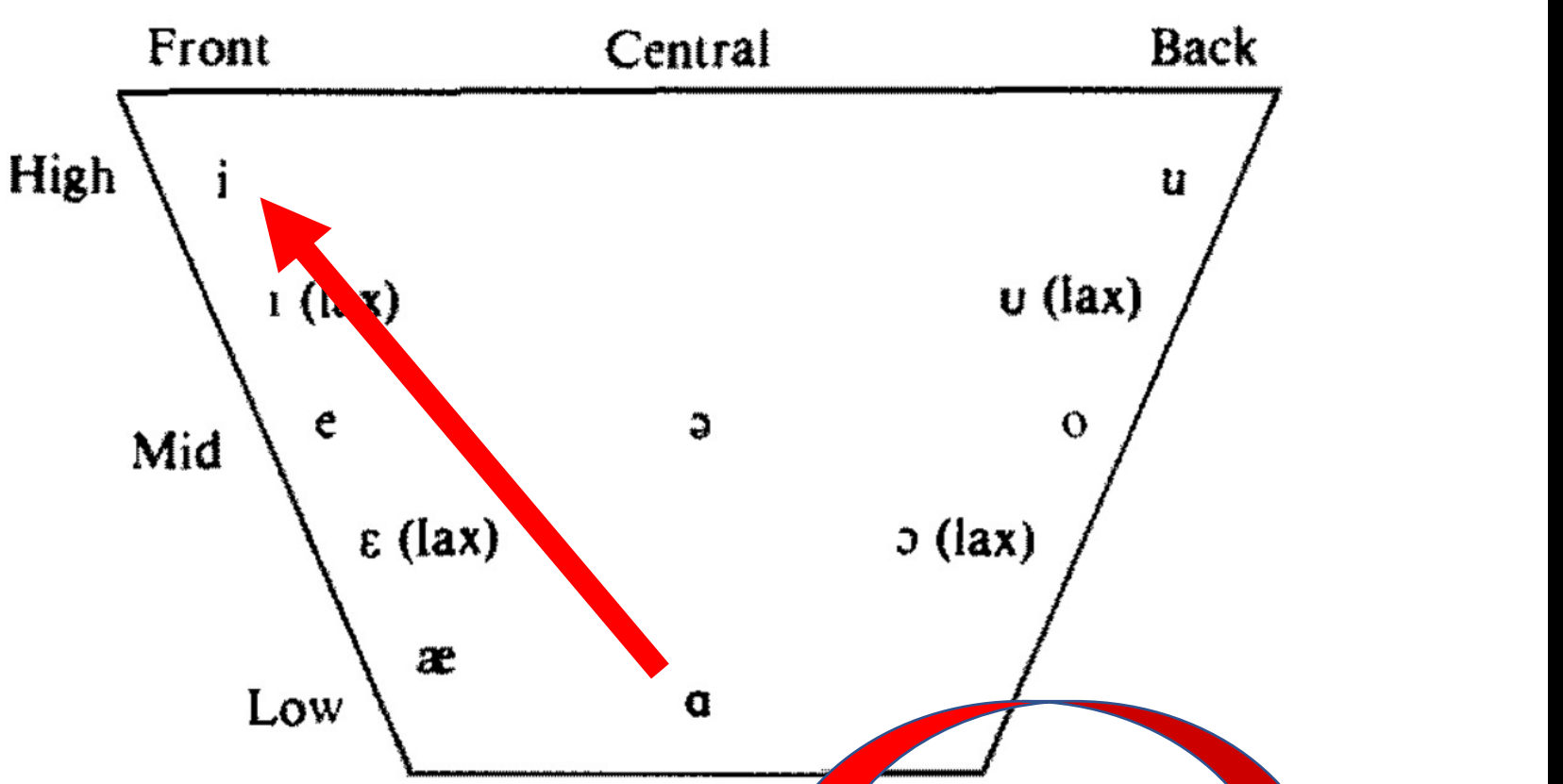
Proto Old English *-*ip*

i-mutation! ! ! ! !

ADJECTIVES > NOUNS

strang (“strong”) **-ip*

i-mu

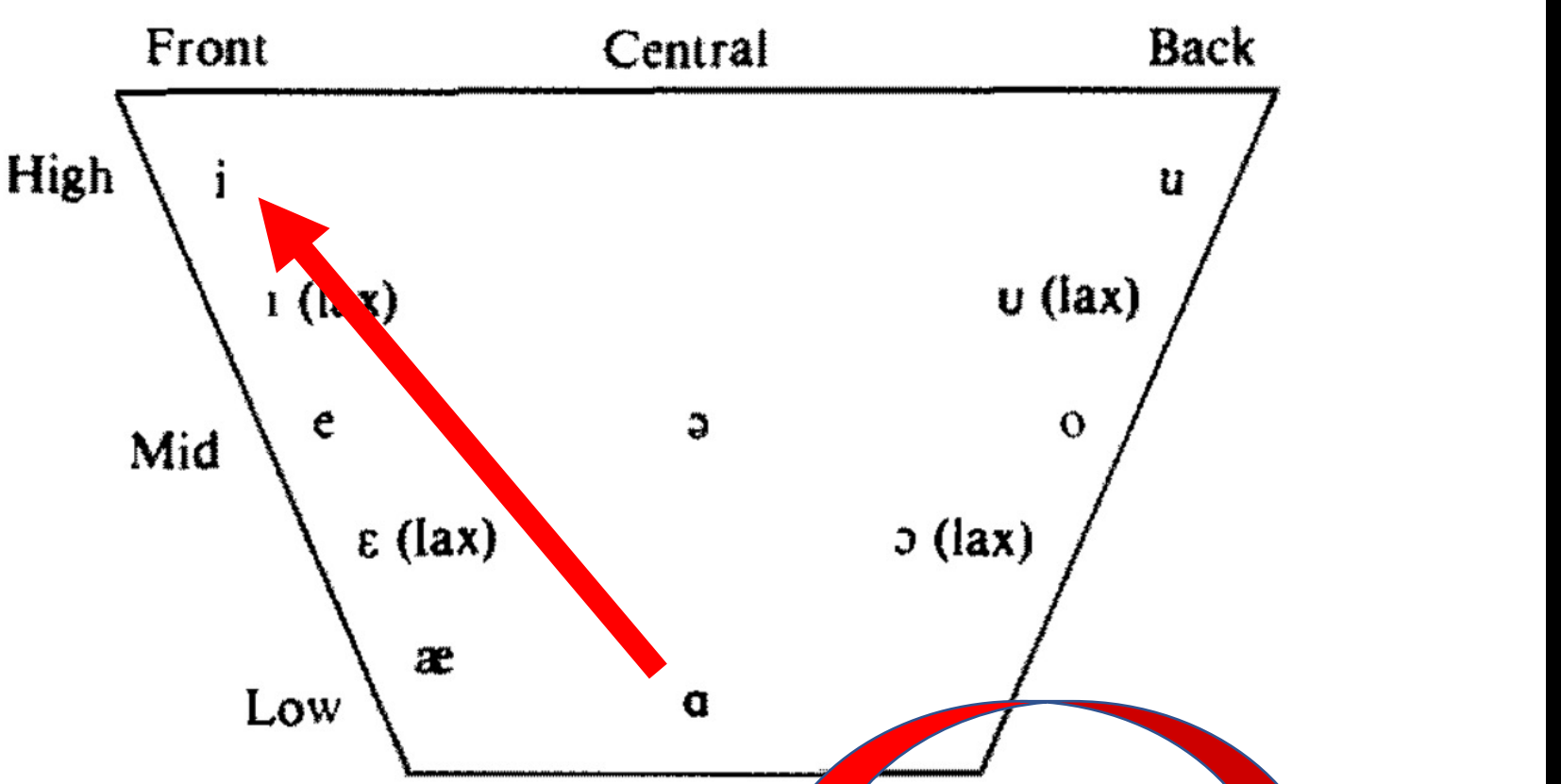


*strang + iþ

/æ/ cad /ɔ/† cawed

/ə/* cud, curd

i-mu

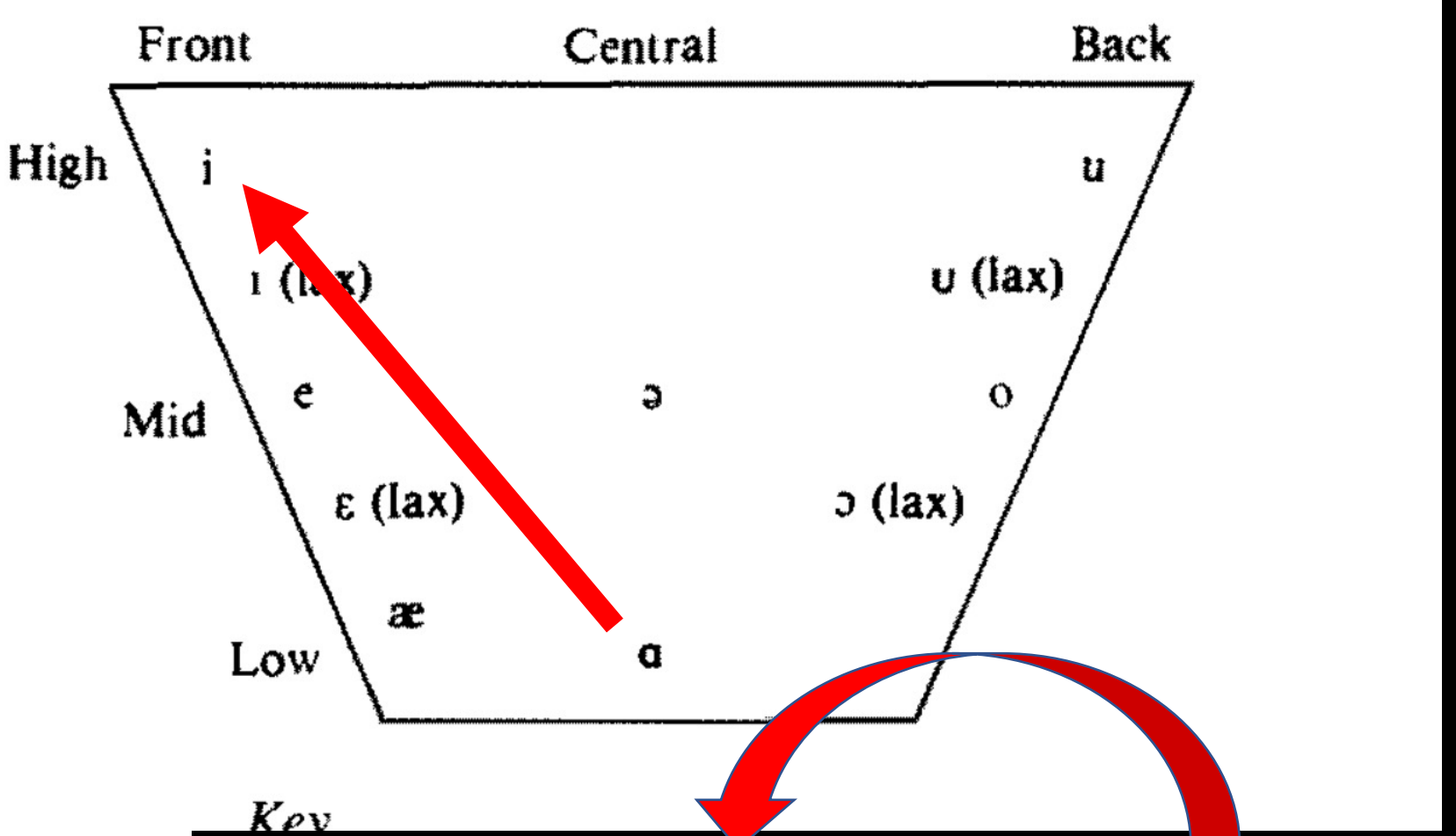


*strang + iþ

/æ/ cad /ɔ/† cawed

/ə/* cud, curd

i-mu



*strengiþ

/æ/ cad /ɔ/† cawed

/ə/* cud, curd

i-mutation! ! ! ! !

ADJECTIVES > NOUNS

strong > strength

long > length

foul > filth

broad > breadth

high > heighth (later changed to *height)*

i-mutation! ! ! ! !

ADJECTIVES > VERB

straight > stretch

i-mutation! ! ! ! !

in other forms of word

fox > vixen

old > elder / eldest