

Diyala University ,  
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**Lecture No. ( 1 )**

**Phonological differences between British English  
And American English.**

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## **Behavioral Objectives**

- 1- To state the certain differences between British and American English in pronunciation .
- 2- To point the differences between the two varieties of English which is found in the utterance of syllables .
- 3- To show the effect of these differences in pronunciation .

## **Teaching Aids .**

- 1- The blackboard .
- 2- Color pieces of chalk .

## **Teaching Method .**

- 1- lecturing
- 2- Questions and Answers .

## **Introduction**

American English is not a separate language but a national variety of English. Yet , it differs from British English in some respects .These differences are called characteristics of American English.

What strikes one as a prominent of American English , even when one is not much familiar with it , is its 'drawl' and the 'nasal tone' . From the first when the early colonists came , divergence in pronunciation begin gradually to develop. This has been due in part to changes that have occurred here, but has resulted still more from the fact that the pronunciation of England has undergone further change that a variety of southern English has come to be recognized as the English received standard.

## Presentation

The pronunciation differences between ( AE ) and ( BE ) can be stated as follows.

The first difference is found in the vowel sound in such words as "**grass , dance and fast**". In BE , all these words are spoken with vowel / **a:** /. But in AE , they are spoken with the vowel / **æ** /. In other words , they are spoken as / græs/, /dæns / and / fæst / and not as /fa:st / , / da:ns / and / gra:s / .

The second difference of pronunciation is concerned with the **consonant /r/**. In BE, / **r** / is pronounced only before a vowel. An Englishman will not pronounce it in the words like " farm , lord and door ". But in AE , / **r** / is pronounced in all positions .

The third difference of the pronunciation is noticed in **stress or accent and intonation** . In AE , both word stress and sentence stress are weaker than in BE . Similarly , intonation in AE is **more leveled** as compared to intonation in BE. Consequently, **American conversation is more monotonous** than in BE English .

Finally , another point of pronunciation difference between the two varieties of English is found in **the utterance of syllables** . The Americans pronounce unstressed syllables with **greater clearness** as compared to the English . for example , they will pronounce the word 'necessary' as / nesesəri / rather than pronouncing it as / nisesri / .

Thus , there are certain differences between AE and BE as far as pronunciation is concerned .The differences make American English **slower in pronunciation** and also **give it a nasal effect** .

## References

- 1- Gimson , A.C.(1996) *An introduction to The pronunciation of English*. A revised edition.
- 2- Quirk, R et al . ( 1973 ) . *University Grammar of English* .London, Longman.
- 3- Quirk , R ( 1962 ) . *The use of English* . London. Longman.

## Lecture No. ( 2 )

### 1/ What is the syllable ?

#### Introduction

The syllable is a very important unit. Most people seem to believe that, even if they cannot define what a syllable is, they can count how many syllables there are in a given word or sentence.

### 2/ What is nature of the syllable

When we look at the nature of vowels and consonants, it was shown that one could decide whether a particular sound was a vowel or a consonant on phonetic grounds (in relation to how much they obstructed the airflow) or on phonological grounds (vowels and consonants having different distributions). We find a similar situation with the syllable, in that it may be defined both phonetically and phonologically. Phonetically (that is, in relation to the way we produce them and the way they sound). Syllables are usually described as consisting of a center which has little or no obstruction to airflow and which sounds comparatively loud; before and after this center (that is, at the beginning and at the end of the syllable), there will be greater obstruction to airflow and/or less loud sound.

Now we will look at some examples :

1- What we might call a **minimum syllable** would be a single vowel in isolation .e.g. the words 'are' / a: / , 'or' / ɔ: / , 'err' / ɜ: / . These are preceded and followed by silence . Isolated sounds such as / m / which we sometimes produce to indicate agreement , or / ʃ / to ask for silence , must also be regarded as syllables .

2- Some syllables have an **onset** ( that is , they have more than just silence preceding the center of the syllable ) :

e.g. bar / ba: / , key / ki: / , more / mɔ: /

3- Syllables may have no **onset** but have a **coda** :

e.g. am /æm/ , ought /ɔ:t/ , ease /i:z /

4- Some syllables have **onset** and **coda** :

e.g. run /rʌn/ , sat /sæt/ , fill /fil/

This is one way of looking at syllables .looking at them from the phonological point of view is quite different . What this involves is looking at possible combinations of English phonemes ; the study of the possible phoneme combinations of a language is called phonotactics . It is simplest to start by looking at what can occur in initial position – in other words, what can occur at the beginning of the first word when we begin to speak after a pause . We find that the word can begin with a vowel , or with one , two or three consonants . No word begins with more than three consonants . In the same way we can look at how a word ends with a pause ; it can end with a vowel , or with one , two , three or ( in a small number of cases ) four consonants . No word ends with more than four consonants .

## **References**

Roach , Peter . (2000) . *English Phonetics and phonology* .Third edition.  
Cambridge , Cambridge University Press .

## Lecture No. ( 3 )

### 1/ Assimilation in English language .

#### Introduction

In cases where we find a phoneme realized differently as a result of being near some other phonemes belonging to a neighboring word we call this an instance of assimilation.

In relatively rapid speech , adjacent consonant sounds often influence one articulation , or in both voicing and place . These changes may occur between words or within a word when one speech sound comes to resemble or become identical with a neighboring sound .

#### Presentation

Generally speaking , the cases that have most often been described are assimilation affecting consonants . As an example , consider a case where two words are combined , the first of which ends with a single final consonant ( which we call----  $C^f$                        $C^i$  -----

#### **Word boundary**

If  $C^f$  changes to become like  $C^i$  in some way , then the assimilation is called regressive ( the phoneme that comes first is affected by the one that comes after it ) ; if  $C^i$  changes to become like  $C^f$  in some way , then the assimilation is called progressive . We have seen the main differences between consonants are of three types :

- 1- Differences in place of articulation.
- 2- Differences in manner of articulation .
- 3- Differences in voicing .

## 1- Differences in place of articulation .

a- /t/ becomes /p/ before /p, b, m/

e.g. that place /ðap pleis/ , that boy /ðap boi/

that man /ðap man/

b- /t/ becomes /k/ before /k, g/

e.g. that girl /ðak gə:l/ , that kind /ðak kaind/

c- /d/ becomes /b/ before /p, b, m/

e.g. good bye /gud bai/ /gubbai/ , good man /gub man/

d- /d/ becomes /g/ before /k, g/

e.g. good girl /gug gə:l/

e- /n/ becomes /m/ before /p, b, m/

e.g. ten points /tem points/

f- /n/ becomes /ŋ/ before /k, g/

e.g. ten cats /teŋ kats/ , one girl /wʌŋ gə:l/

g- /s/ becomes /ʃ/ before /ʃ, j/

e.g. this shirt /ðɪʃ ʃə:t/ , this year /ðɪʃ jɪə/

## 2- Differences in manner of articulation :

Assimilation of manner of articulation is much less noticeable , and is only found in the most rapid and casual speech; generally speaking , the tendency is a gain for regressive assimilation and the change in manner is most likely to be towards an easier consonant—one which makes less obstruction to the airflow. It is thus possible to find cases where a final plosive becomes a fricative or nasal.

e.g. that side / ðæs saɪd / , good night / ɡʊd naɪt /

In one particular case we find progressive assimilation of manner, when a word-initial ð follows a plosive or nasal at the end of a preceding word; it is very common to find the C<sup>i</sup> becomes identical in manner to the C<sup>f</sup> but with dental place of articulation.

e.g. in the /ɪn ðə/ /ɪnə/ , get them /ɡet ðəm/ /ɡet təm/

read these /ri:d ði:s/ /ri:d di:s/

### 3- Differences in voicing :

e.g. with thanks /wɪð θaŋks/ /wɪθ θaŋks/

these socks /ði:z sɒks/ /ði:s sɒks/ , of course /əv kɔ:s/ /əf kɔ:s/

newspaper /nju:zpeɪpə/ /nju:speɪpə/ , good time /ɡʊd taɪm/ /ɡʊt taɪm/

used to /ju:zd tu/ /ju:st tu/

A similar example of a type of assimilation of voice with the suffixes **s** and **z**; when a verb carries a third person singular 's' suffixes, or a noun carries an 's' possessive suffix, that suffix will be pronounced as **s** if the preceding consonant is fortis ("voiceless") and as **z** if the preceding consonant is lenis ("voiced"), thus

Cats /kæts/ , dogs /dogz/

Jumps /dʒʌmps/ , runs /rʌnz/

Pat's /pæts/ , Pam's /pæmz/

### Reference

Roach, Peter. (2000). *English Phonetics and Phonology*. Cambridge, Cambridge university press.



## Lecture No. ( 4 )

### Elision in English language

#### Introduction

The nature of elision can be stated quite simply : under certain circumstances sounds disappear; one might express this in more technical language by saying that in certain circumstances a phoneme may be reduced as zero , or have zero condition or be deleted. As with assimilation , elision is typical of rapid casual speech. Producing elision is something which foreign learners do not need to learn to do, but it is important for them to be aware that when native speakers of English talk to each other, quite a number of phonemes that the foreigner expect to hear are not actually pronounced .

#### Presentation

Elision is the omission of a phoneme ( vowel or consonant ) or more in certain cases . Sometimes a whole syllable is omitted . Elision is characteristic of rapid , colloquial speech.

#### **1- Elision of vowels**

Elision of vowels is likely to take place especially in a sequence of unstressed syllable.

1- temperature / 'tempərɪtʃə /      / 'tempri:tʃə /

2- murderer    / 'mə:dərə /            / 'mə:drə /

3- natural      / 'nætʃərəl /            / 'nætʃrəl /

4- carefully    / 'keəfʊli /            / 'keəfli /

5- national     / 'næʃənəl /            / 'næʃnəl /

6- police        / 'pəli:s /            / plɪ:s /

## 2- Elision of consonant

a- Established or Historical

The underlined consonants in each of the following words are elided.

1- bought / bo:t /

2- walk / wo:k /

3- wrong / rɒŋ /

4- listen / lɪsn /

5- lamb / lam /

## 3- Colloquial or Contextual

a- /t/ and /d/ may be elided when they occur medially in a cluster of three consonant .

e.g. mostly / 'məʊstli / ---- / 'məʊsli /

friends / 'frendz / ----- / frenz /

builds / 'bildz / ----- / bilz /

handbag / 'hændbæg / ---- / 'hænbæg /

just one / 'dʒʌst 'wʌn / ----- / 'dʒʌs 'wʌn /

wristwatch / 'ristwɒtʃ / ----- / riswɒtʃ /

b- /l/ may be elided when preceded by /o: / .

e.g. always / o:lweiz / --- / o:weiz / , all right / o:l rait /--- / o: rait /

c- /k/ or /g/ may be elided when it occurs after /ŋ/ .

e.g. length / lenkθ / ---- / lenθ /

singer / sɪŋə / ---- / sɪŋə /

c- Sometimes whole syllables may be elided in rapid speech especially where there is a sequence of / r / sounds .

e.g. library / 'laibrəri / ---- / 'laibri /

February / 'februəri / --- / 'febri /

In words like ' potato ' , ' canary ' , ' perhaps ' , ' today ' , the vowel in the first syllable may disappear ; the aspiration of the initial plosive takes up the whole of the middle portion of the syllable , resulting in these pronunciation ( where **h** indicates aspiration ) :

e.g. p<sup>h</sup>teitəu          t<sup>h</sup>ma:təu          k<sup>h</sup>neəri          p<sup>h</sup>hœps          t<sup>h</sup>dei

## **References**

Roach , Peter . ( 2000 ) *English Phonetics and Phonology* . Cambridge , Cambridge University Press .

' Complex word stress '  
' Compound words and Word- Class Pairs '

**Introduction**

The main characteristic of compound words is that it can be analyzed into two words , both of which can exist independently as English words.(Some compounds are made of more than two words, but we will not consider these ).As with many of distinctions being made in connection with stress, there are area of uncertainty. For example, it could argued that ' photograph' may be divided into two independent words. ' photo ' and ' graph ' ; yet we usually do not regarded as compound , but as a simple word .( If , however , someone drew a graph displaying numerical information about photos , this would be perhaps be called a ' photo-graph' and the word would be regarded as a compound ) .

**Presentation**

Compound words are written in different ways ; sometimes they are written as one word – e.g. 'armchair' , 'sunflower'- sometimes with the word separated by a hyphen – e.g. 'gear-change' , 'fruit-cake' and sometimes with two words separated by a space - e.g. 'desk lamp' , 'battery charger' .

As far as stress is concerned , the question is simple . When is primary stress is placed on the first constituent word of the compound and when on the second ? a few rules can be given , although these are not reliable . Words which do not receive primary stress normally have secondary stress, although for the sake of simplicity this is not marked here. Perhaps the most familiar type of compound is the one which combines two nouns and which normally has the stress on the first element , as in :

- 1- 'typewriter'                      'taɪpraɪtə                      'suitcase'                      'su:tkeɪs '                      'sunrise' 'sʌnraɪz  
'car – ferry '                      'kɑ:fəri                      'tea- cup '                      'ti:kʌp

2- An adjectival first element and the ed- morpheme at the end, stress will be on the second element.

e.g. bad- 'tempered, half- 'timbered, heavy- 'handed

3- Compounds in which the first element is a number in some form also tend to have final stress.

e.g. three- 'wheeler, second- 'class, five- 'finger

4- Compounds functioning as adverbs are usually final- stressed.

e.g. head- 'first, North- 'East, down 'stream

5- Compounds which function as verbs and have an adverbial first element take final stress.

e.g. down- 'grade, back- 'pedal, ill- 'treat

## Word - Class Pairs

### Presentation

One aspect of word stress is best treated as a separate issue. There are several dozen pairs of two-syllable words with identical spelling which differ from each other in stress placement, apparently according to word class (noun, verb or adjective). All appear to consist of prefix + stem. We shall treat them as a special type of word and give them the following rule: if a pair of a prefix-plus-stem words exists, both members of which are spelt identically, one of which is a verb and the other of which is either a noun or an adjective, then the stress is placed on the second syllable of the verb but on the first syllable of the noun or adjective.

Some common examples are given below (V)= verb, (A)= adjective, N= noun.

'abstract'    'æbstrœkt (A)                      œb'strœkt (V)

'Perfect'	'p3:fikt ( A )	pə'fekt ( V )
'import'	'impɔ:t ( N )	im'pɔ:t ( V )
'escort'	eskɔ:t ( N )	is'kɔ:t ( V )
'present'	'preznt ( N ,A )	pri'zent ( V )

### **References**

Roach , Peter . ( 2000) . *English Phonetics and Phonology* . Cambridge ,Cambridge University Press .