

PHONOLOGY

DEFINITION

- **Phonetics** deals with the production of speech sounds by humans, often without prior knowledge of the language being spoken.
- **Phonology** is about **patterns of sounds**, especially different patterns of sounds in different languages, or within each language, **different patterns of sounds in different positions in words** etc.

TOPICS

- **Connected speech** phenomena – assimilation, elision, linking sounds, weakening
- **Syllable**
- **Accent**
- **Intonation**

Connected speech

- Communication....
- Chat...talk...sing...

let's string
words
together!

Aspects of connected speech

- rhythm
- weak forms (reductions)
- assimilation
- elision (contractions)
- linking

“Tale of a machine”

- Scientists tried to develop a machine that would produce speech from a vocabulary of pre-recorded words
- Result: negative (limited, at best)
- Reason: ?
- differences between human speech and “mechanical speech”

What is connected speech?

- Fluent speech flows with a **rhythm** and the words bump into each other.
- To make speech flow smoothly the way we pronounce **the end and beginning of some words can change** depending on the sounds which precede and follow those words.



FLOWING

Connected speech, continued

- If we want to speak English fluently, **we must try to avoid pronouncing each word as if it were isolated**. We must try to **link words together smoothly and naturally**. In English one word is not separated from another by pausing or hesitating; the end of one word flows straight on to the beginning of the next,
- e.g. *First of all, some of us* .

- **Speed** is a factor in fluency. When we speak quickly, we speak in groups of words which are continuous and may not have pauses between them. This changes to the 'shape' of words. **Unstressed words always sound different** when used in a sentence as opposed to being said in isolation.

- The most common features of connected speech are the **weak forms** of grammatical and some lexical words (*and, to, of, have, was, were*) and **contractions**, some of which are acceptable in written English (*can't, won't, didn't, I'll, he'd, they've, should've*). However, we often ignore **other features** which preserve rhythm and make the language sound natural.

Features of connected speech

□ Changing Sounds

- **Sometimes the sound at the end of the first word takes on the quality of the sound at the beginning of the second word.** e.g. *She's a good girl.* (pronounced as: **GOOG GIRL**)

Examples:

- Good boy - go**o**b boy
- Ten pounds – **te**m pounds
- Good morning – go**o**b morning
- Not quite – no**k** quite
- So..

d~b n~m
t~k

Features of connected speech

Linking sounds

- **Consonant to vowel linking** – when the first word ends with a consonant sound and the second word begins with a vowel sound.
E.g. Fried eggs / a box of eggs (oveggs) / cup of tea (cupov)
We change the sounds to make it flow!
- **Vowel to vowel linking** –when the first word ends in a vowel and the next words begins with a vowel sound. **We add a 'w' or 'y' sound.**
E.g. ' go in / say it/ do it/ two eggs/ hiya!
- **Consonant to consonant linking** – when the first word ends in a consonant and the next one begins with a consonant sound. We don't hear both separately, we just hear one. E.g. We only hear one /t/ E.g. A bit tired / lot to do

Features of connected speech

Disappearing sounds

- In **rapid speech** the /t/ or the /g/ sound at the end of the word often disappears completely if there are consonant sounds on either side. e.g. **next week / can't swim**
- This also happens with the /d/ sound. e.g. **sandwich – san(d)wich. Fish and chips – fish an(d) chips/bread an(d) cheese.**
- The /h/ sound is often deleted. E.g. **You shouldn't (h)ave told (h)im/ We could (h)ave.**
- The unstressed **schwa** is often lost. E.g. **See you t(o)night**

Features of connected speech

Weak sounds

- There are a large number of words in English which can have a 'full form or a 'weak form'. This is because English is a stress-timed language, and in trying to make the intervals between stressed syllables equal, to give us rhythm, we tend to "swallow" non-essential words. Thus, we lose pronouns, conjunctions, prepositions, auxiliaries and articles. E.g.
- And – a table 'n chair
- Can – She c/ə/n speak English
- Of – A cup /ə/v coffee
- Have – /ə/v you finished?
- Should – You sh/ə/d /ə/v told me.
- The verb 'to be' – I'm, He's

RHYTHM

- ▶ Noticeable **event** happening **at regular intervals** of time (heart-beat, flashing light, piece of music)
- ▶ Rhythm in speech: **regular** occurrence of **stressed syllables**
- ▶ English speech is **rhythmical**
- ▶ Stress-timed rhythm: **stressed syllables tend to occur at relatively regular intervals whether they are separated by unstressed syllables or not** (not characteristic for "mechanical speech")

Pronunciation

Sentence stress

1 63.2 Listen.

I have to go to the bank.

2 63.3 Listen and repeat.

1 I have to go

I have to go to the bank.

2 She has to buy

She has to buy a stamp.

3 We have to go

We have to go to a meeting.

4 He has to write

He has to write a letter.

5 I have to send

I have to send a text.

Example

- The time from each stressed syllable to the next will tend to be the same, irrespective of the number of intervening unstressed syllables
- English is therefore **a stress-timed language**

- Dogs chase cats.
- The dogs chase cats.
- The dogs chase the cats.
- The dogs will chase the cats.
- The dogs will be chasing the cats.



To sum up....

- Connected speech consists of:
- Changing sounds
- Linking sounds
- Disappearing sounds
- Weak sounds
- It is characterised by a specific rhythm.



Study questions

- Define phonology.
- What topics are studied within phonology?
- What is connected speech?
- What characterises connected speech?
- Give examples of some of the connected speech phenomena.
- What kind of rhythm does English have? What does that mean?