Introductory lesson

- **<u>Consonants and vowels</u>**

An airstream, usually from the lungs, supplies the energy for speech. The degree of openness of the vocal folds sets up an alternation between oscillating and non-oscillating pulses of air. Yet this is not speech. The airstream must be altered in still other ways before speech will be intelligible. Speech sounds are divided into two major classes, consonants and vowels.

➢ **Consonants**

A **consonant** is produced when the pulses from the larynx, either voiced or voiceless, are impeded by a part of the vocal tract. The airstream can be immediately blocked by the momentary closure of the glottis (the gap between the vocal folds) followed by a sudden opening. Such a sound is called a *glottal stop*, for the location of the interruption of the airstream (the glottis) and the manner in which the stream is interrupted (momentarily stopped). When you cough, even though a cough is not a speech sound, you are creating this type of sound. When you respond with surprise by saying what might be represented in spelling as *uh-oh*, you are also making this kind of sound. In both cases, you should be able to sense the vocal folds being pressed together. The glottis is at one end of the vocal tract above the larynx. The lips are at the other end. In the initial sound of *pat*, the lips touch each other in a momentary obstruction of the airstream. This type of obstruction is called a *bilabial stop*. The obstructions that occur to create different types of consonants can take place at many locations between the glottis and the lips.

➢ **Vowels**

Vowels are sounds that are produced with no closure or obstruction of the airstream. The differences between various vowel sounds depend on which cavity (oral, nasal, or pharyngeal) is employed and what shape is formed in that resonance chamber. The shape of the oral cavity is primarily affected by the position of the lips and the placement of the tongue. For instance, the vowel sound in the word *to* is produced with the high point of the tongue in the back of the mouth, the oral cavity relatively closed, and the lips rounded. The vowel sound in *cat* is produced with the high point of the tongue toward the front of the mouth, the oral cavity relatively open, and the lips spread.

(Levine&Rowe, 2023)

TABLE 2.1 English consonants

Manner of articulation		Bilabial	Labiodental	Dental	Alveolar	Palatal	Velar	Labiovelar	Glottal
Stop	vl	p			t		k		
	vd	b			d		g		ʔ
Fricative	vl		f	θ	s	š			
	vd		v	ð	z	ž			h
Affricate	vl					č			
	vd					ǰ			
Nasal	vl								
	vd	m			n		ŋ		
Lateral	vl								
	vd				l				
Retroflex	vl								
	vd				r				
Glide	vl							ʍ	
	vd					y		w	

- This table is a simplification; finer distinctions can be made. Also, different linguists may use different terms for the places of articulation.
- In the production of nasal sounds, the airstream is, momentarily, completely obstructed in the oral cavity, so nasals can be considered to be stops.
- The [l] and [r] are also classified together as liquid sounds (see text).
- Some of the symbols used in this table and for the vowels later in the chapter are symbols used by many North American linguists and differ from the symbols used by linguists in other parts of the world. See Box 2.1 for an explanation of this.
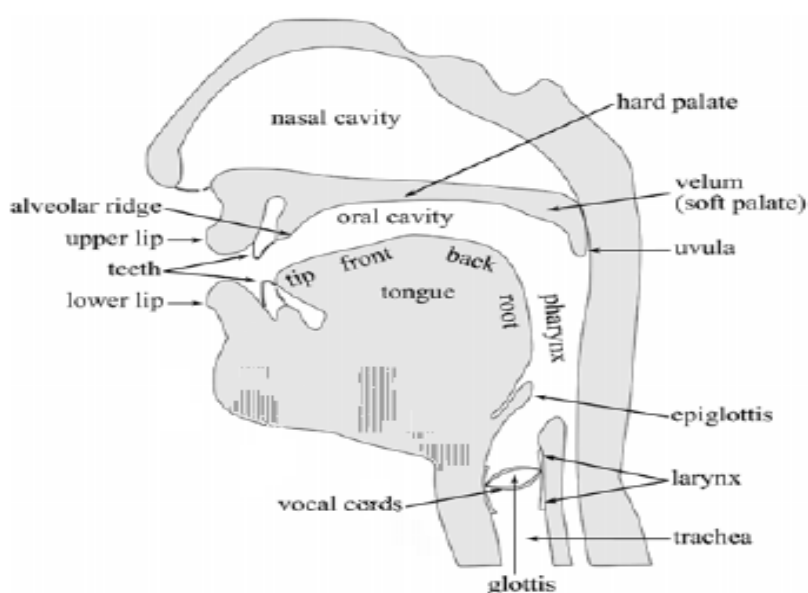
Fig. 1.1: The vocal tract

Word stress: mono-syllabic words, 2-3syllables, etc.

Lesson objectives

By the end of this lesson, learners will be able to:

1. Define word stress and understand its role in English pronunciation.
2. Recognize the stressed syllable in a word.
3. Apply rules to determine word stress in various types of English words (mono-syllabic words, 2-3syllables)
4. Recognize how word stress affects meaning in English.
5. Practice word stress in different contexts.

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1. Introduction to word stress

Stress refers to the degree of force or emphasis given to certain syllables within words and to certain words within utterances. Accordingly, stress is studied at two different levels: word level (word stress) and sentence level (sentence stress).

Word stress refers to the emphasis placed on a particular syllable within a word. It is like highlighting a syllable, making it stand out. This emphasis can change the meaning of a word and that is why it plays a significant role in pronunciation, comprehension, and meaning. *For instance*, the word "REcord" (noun) and "reCORD" (verb) have different meanings based on the stressed syllable. When a syllable is stressed, it is pronounced **louder**, **longer**, and with **higher pitch** than the others. We can as such study stress from the points of view of **production** and of **perception;** the two are obviously closely related, but are not identical. The production of stress is generally believed to depend on the speaker using more muscular energy than is used for unstressed syllables. Correct word stress is critical for clear communication because misplaced stress can lead to misconceptions.

2. Features of stressed syllables (How can we recognize stressed syllables? What are their characteristics?)

A stressed syllable is typically:

- **Louder** than the other syllables.
- Has a **longer** vowel sound.
- Is spoken at a **higher pitch**.

- Is often articulated **more clearly** than unstressed syllables.

From the perceptual point of view, all stressed syllables have one characteristic in common, and that is prominence. **Prominence**, then, is produced by four main factors: (i) loudness, (ii) length, (iii) pitch and (iv) quality.

3. Levels of stress

Famous British phoneticians (P. Roach and A.C. Gimson) usually distinguish three degrees of stress in the word: the primary stress is the strongest (the most prominent) indicated by a high vertical mark (ˈ) before the stressed syllable, the secondary stress is the second strongest indicated by a low vertical mark (ˌ) before the syllable, and all the other degrees are termed unstressed, they are typically shorter, quieter, and sometimes have reduced vowel sounds (often reduced to a schwa /ə/). *For example*, in the English word "INdicator", the first syllable is the most strongly stressed, the third syllable is the next most strongly stressed and the second and fourth syllables are weakly stressed, or unstressed. Secondary stress is marked by a low mark, so indicator is transcribed /ˈɪndɪˌkeɪtə /. Other examples are provided below:

ˌPhotoˈgraphic ˌpsychoˈlogical, Proˌnunciˈation ˌcrediˈbility

4. Placement of stress within the word

English word stress is not always predictable, but there are general guidelines that can help learners. These rules vary depending on the number of syllables in the word, whether it is a noun, verb, or compound word, and the word's origin. *For example,* the first syllable of words like 'father' 'open' is stressed, while the middle syllable is stressed in 'apartment' and 'relation', and that the final syllable is stressed in 'receive' and 'perhaps.

In order to decide on stress placement, it is necessary to make use of some or all of the following information:

i) Whether the word is morphologically simple, or whether it is complex as a result either of containing one or more affixes (i.e., prefixes or suffixes) or of being a compound word.

ii) What the grammatical category of the word is (noun, verb, adjective, etc.).

iii) How many syllables the word has.

iv) What the phonological structure of those syllables is.

Still the rules for complex words are different from those for simple words.

A. Mono-Syllabic words

Mono-syllabic words have only one syllable. In general, most mono-syllabic words are stressed on the only syllable they have. If they are pronounced in isolation, they are said with primary stress. However, there are a few exceptions:

- Function words: Articles (a, an, the), some prepositions (in, on, at), conjunctions (and, but, or), pronouns (I, you, he, she, it), and auxiliary verbs (can, could, will, would) are usually unstressed/ *Example*: *I like apples.* (The stress is on "like.")

- Contractions: Contractions are often unstressed/ *Example*: *I'm going.* (The stress is on "going.")

B. Two-Syllable words

Bi-syllabic words have two syllables. The stress in bi-syllabic words can fall on either the first or second syllable. Here are some general rules:

a. Verbs and some prepositions

- In two-syllable **verbs** and **prepositions**, the second syllable is usually stressed. The basic rule for verbs is that if the second syllable contains a diphthong (except /əʊ /) or a long vowel, or if it ends with more than one consonant the second syllable is stressed.

   Examples: reLAX, arRIVE, atTRACT, beTWEEN, aHEAD.

b. Nouns and adjectives

- In two-syllable **nouns** and **adjectives**, the first syllable is usually stressed. (The same detailed rule of verbs applies to adjectives⬆). The rule for nouns is that if the second syllable contains a short vowel, the stress is usually on the first syllable (except if it contains / ə /). Otherwise, it will be on the second syllable.

   Examples: TAble, WINdow, *deSIGN,* HAPpy, QUIet, *diVINE , corRECT*

   ➢ Still, if the final syllable is weak, then the first syllable is stressed 'open' /ˈəʊpən/

- Also, a final syllable is also unstressed if it contains'əʊ' e.g. 'follow' /ˈfɒləʊ/)

- If the final syllable is strong, then that syllable is stressed even if the first syllable is also strong, e.g. /rɒʊˈteɪt/

………. There are many exceptions to these rules.

> ➢ There are many two-syllable words in English that can be pronounced in two different ways. The stress change also changes the part of speech of the word.
>
> **Example:**   PREsent = a gift (noun); non past or future (adjective)
>
>   preSENT = to give something to someone (verb)

Other two-syllable words such as adverbs and some prepositions seem to behave like verbs and adjectives. E.g. *'under, 'over, 'below, be'side(s)*

C. Three-Syllable words

Tri-syllabic words have three syllables. The stress in tri-syllabic words can fall on the first, second, or third syllable. There are no hard and fast rules, but here are some general guidelines:

- In verbs, if the final syllable contains a long vowel or a diphthong (except the endings *–ate* /eɪt/ and *–ize* /aɪz/), or ends with more than one consonant, that final syllable will be stressed. Otherwise, the penultimate syllable will be stressed/ *enter'tain , inter'vene, resur'rect, de'termine, di'scover.*

- In nouns, if the penultimate syllable contains a long vowel or diphthong, or if it ends with more than one consonant, it will receive stress. Otherwise, the first syllable will be stressed/ *di'saster, a'roma, 'quantity, 'origin.*

- Adjectives seem to need the same rule/ *'excellent, 'opportune*

    ⟶ **Stress rules based on word endings*:***

- In three-syllable words that end in **-er** or **-ly**, (especially nouns and adjectives), the first syllable is usually stressed.

    o ***Examples***: ORderly, QUIetly, WONderful, MAnager.

- In some three-syllable <u>verbs</u> and <u>adjectives</u>, the second syllable is stressed.

    o ***Examples***: deVElop, enCOUNter, reLAXing.

- Words ending in **-sion, -tion**, **-ious**, **-ic**, stress is on the **penultimate syllable** (second-to-last).

    o ***Examples***: nuTRItion, exTENsion, SPAcious, ecSTATic.

- Words ending in **-cy, -ty, -phy, -gy, -al, -ate, -ise**, stress is on the **antepenultimate syllable** (third-to-last).

- o ***Examples***: `deMOCracy, unCERtainty, geOGraphy, radiOLogy.`
    `CRItical, CLImate, JapanESE, EXERcise.`

✓ **REMEMBER:** Word stress is a complex topic, and there are many exceptions to the general rules. The best way to improve your pronunciation is to practice regularly and listen to native English speakers.

Conclusion

Mastering word stress is a vital part of English pronunciation. Students' fluency and clarity in spoken English will increase as they recognize stress patterns in syllables, grasp how stress impacts meaning, and practice in diverse circumstances. Regular practice with audio resources, sentence-level activities, and interactive assignments can assist to reinforce these concepts, resulting in more natural and confident speech.

Function vs. content words in English

Understanding function vs. content words in phonetics and speech patterns

Lesson Objectives

By the end of this lesson, learners will be able to:

1. Define and distinguish between function words and content words.

2. Understand how function and content words are treated differently in natural speech.

3. Identify how function words are often reduced or unstressed in connected speech.

4. Practice distinguishing and producing function and content words in sentences.

5. Explore the role of function and content words in sentence stress and intonation.

1. Introduction to function and content words

In English (and other languages), words are divided into two broad categories: **content words (lexical words)** and **function words**. The distinction between content words and function words is one of the key aspects of English stress and connected speech, because these categories play a significant role in **speech rhythm**, **intonation**, and **sentence stress.**

- **Content words**: these are words that carry the core meaning of a sentence; this includes nouns, main verbs, adjectives, adverbs, in addition to possessive pronouns *(mine, yours, theirs*), demonstratives *(this, that, these, those),* question words *(what, why, when, where),* and some long prepositions. Their function is to provide key information about who, what, where, and how. They are typically **stressed** in speech because they carry the most important meanings.

- **Function words**: these are words that have grammatical or structural roles in sentences, meaning that they are grammatical words that join a sentence together; this includes articles, conjunctions, short prepositions, most pronouns *(personal and relative*), possessive adjectives *(my, her, our),* auxiliary verbs, in addition to determiners and quantifiers *(some)*. There are roughly forty such words in English. Their function is to connect and organize the content words. They are usually **unstressed** or **reduced** in speech because they don't carry as much semantic weight.

> **Open classes of words** (or **content words**) are types of words (such as nouns, adjectives,
> verbs, and adverbs) that grow in number in a language.
> **Closed classes of words** (or **function words**) are types of words (such
> as prepositions and pronouns) the growth of which is very limited.

2. The Phonetic behavior of function and content words

These function words have a <u>weak form</u> and a <u>strong form</u>. They are in certain circumstances pronounced in their strong forms but which are more frequently pronounced in their weak forms. This means that the weak form is the usual pronunciation, but the strong form is used in specific contexts including:

- When it is emphasized.

- When spoken in isolation (on its own, not in a context).

- At the end of the sentence.

- When the word is being "cited" or "quoted"

- *Examples:*

are /ɑ:,ə/	have /hav,(h)əv/	were /wə:,wə/	to /tu:,tə/
for /fɔ:,fə/	but /bʌt,bət/	been /bi:n,bɪn/	he /hi:,(h)i/

- In the following example, "**I went** to the **hotel** and **booked** a **room** for **two nights** for my **father** and his **best friend**." The most important words (in bold), the content words, are stressed. The remaining words (function words), which do not communicate a large quantity of information, are unstressed and pronounced more quickly and at lower volume in comparison to the stressed syllables vowel, hence the weak form. "/aɪ went **tə** ðə həʊtel **ən** bʊkt ə ru:m **fə** tu: 'naɪts **fə** maɪ 'fɑːðər **ən hɪz** best frend/"

In natural speech, function and content words are treated differently in terms of stress, pronunciation, and phonetic reduction. In connected speech, function words tend to be pronounced as weak forms with one of the weak vowels **/ə,ɪ,i,u/**.

2.1. Content words in speech

- Content words are usually **stressed** in sentences. This means they are usually pronounced with: **greater loudness**, **longer duration**, and **higher pitch**.

   Example: "I **saw** a **beautiful house** by the **lake**."

Here, the words "saw" "beautiful" "house" and "lake" are content words and are stressed because they carry key meaning.

2.2. Function words in speech

- **Function words** are typically **unstressed** in sentences. They are often pronounced **more quickly** and with **less emphasis**, sometimes undergoing **phonetic reduction** (where sounds are shortened, simplified, or omitted). Common reductions include:

   Articles (a, an, the): pronounced as /ə/ in unstressed positions, as in "a book" (/ə bʊk/).

   Auxiliary verbs (can, have, will): often reduced, e.g., "can" as /kən/ or /kn̩/, "have" as /həv/ or /v/.

   Prepositions (to, for, at): reduced to /tə/, /fər/, /ət/.

   Conjunctions (and, but, or): reduced to /ənd/ or just /n̩/ in connected speech.

   he, his , him, her, have , has, had can be pronounced without the consonant /h / but retain it at the beginning of an utterance or when stressed.

   ➢ **Phonetic reduction of function words**

   In connected speech, function words are commonly reduced or merged into surrounding words. This helps maintain the **rhythm** and **flow** of speech. Some function words even change their phonetic form entirely when spoken quickly.

   - ➢ **To**: /tə/ in "I'm going t' the park."

   - ➢ **Can**: /kən/ or /kn̩/ in "I can go."

   - ➢ **Of**: /əv/ in "A cup o' tea."

   ➢ Contrastive Stress

   Sometimes function words are stressed for **emphasis** or **contrast**. *For example*:

   "I did the work."

   If there's a need to emphasize contrast, the function word "did" might be stressed: **"I DID the work"** (perhaps to emphasize that you, in fact, did it).

   ➡ *More examples:*

- ❖ "He is going to the store to buy some bread."

Content words:

He (pronoun, but can function as a content word in this case, providing key information)./ **Going** (main verb)/ **Store** (noun)/ **Buy** (main verb)/ **Bread** (noun).

Function words:

Is (auxiliary verb, reduced to /z/)/ **To** (preposition, reduced to /tə/)/ **The** (article, reduced to /ðə/)/ **Some** (determiner, reduced to /səm/).

3. Sentence stress and function vs. content words

In English, sentence stress is often placed on content words, while function words are either unstressed or reduced. The placement of emphasis is vital for conveying meaning and maintaining the natural rhythm of speech.

Example: "I **bought** a **new car**."

- o The words "bought" and "car" "new" are stressed because they are content words, carrying important meaning, while the function words "I", "a" are unstressed or reduced.

4. How function and content words affect speech rhythm

In English, the rhythm of speech is based on **stress-timed rhythm**, meaning that the time between stressed syllables (usually content words) is roughly equal. This results in function words being shortened or "squeezed" between the more emphasized content words.

Example:

- **Sentence**: "I'm going to the park."
- **Stressed Words**: "going" and "park".
- **Reduced Words**: "I'm", "to", and "the" are spoken more quickly to maintain the rhythm.

Conclusion

Understanding the distinction between function and content words is critical for grasping the rhythm and natural flow of English. Function words are frequently reduced or unstressed, leaving content words to convey the primary meaning and be highlighted. Identifying, rehearsing, and replicating natural speech patterns will help learners enhance their fluency and intelligibility in spoken English.

Weak Forms/ strong forms

Understanding strong vs. weak forms in English phonetics

Lesson objectives

By the end of this lesson, learners will be able to:

1. Define strong and weak forms in English pronunciation.

2. Identify the difference between the strong and weak forms of common English function words.

3. Understand when to use strong forms versus weak forms in natural speech.

4. Practice recognizing and producing strong and weak forms in various sentence contexts.

5. Understand the role of weak forms in connected speech and rhythm.

1. Introduction to strong and weak forms

In English, many function words (such as prepositions, conjunctions, articles, pronouns, and auxiliary verbs) have both **strong forms** and **weak forms**. The **strong form** is the full, stressed pronunciation of a word, while the **weak form** is an unstressed, reduced version of the word used in connected speech. Understanding when and how to use strong and weak forms is crucial for mastering the rhythm and natural flow of English language.

1.1. Strong forms

The **strong form** of a word is used when the word is stressed or when it occurs in isolation. There are some cases where the strong –form pronunciation is obligatory, including:

- **At the end of a sentence or phrase** (where the word is emphasized). *For example*, the word 'of ' has the weak form /əv/ in the following sentence: 'I'm fond of chips'. However, when it comes at the end of the sentence, as in the following example, it has the strong form /ɒv/ **:**'Chips are what I'm fond of'

- In situations where **clarity or emphasis is required**. "What did you say? I couldn't hear you." (Emphasizing the pronoun "you")

  Here, you is pronounced in its strong form: /ju:/

- When a weak-form word is **being "cited" or "quoted"**

  How are the words "should" and "than" spelt?

  I said "than" not "that".

- When a function word **contrasts** with another word (contrastive stress).

*The train isn't coming **from** London; it's going **to** London.*

*I gave it to **her**, not to **him**.*

- Negatives are always strong. "You **can't** do that" /jʊ kɑːnt duː ðæt/

1.2. Weak forms

o The **weak form** of a word is used when the word is **unstressed** in a sentence, when it is part of the regular flow of a sentence and is not stressed. Also, when the word occurs in the middle of a sentence, between other stressed content words.

In normal, connected speech, many function words are reduced to their weak form. These weak forms are shorter, quieter, and often involve vowel reduction (typically to the schwa sound /ə/).

Examples: ʹ**to** ʹ in isolation: /tuː/ (strong form).

In connected speech: "I'm going **to** the store." /tə/ (weak form).

2. Common examples of strong vs. weak forms

Here are some common function words with both strong and weak forms:

Word	strong form	weak form	Word	strong form	weak form
a/ an	eɪ / æn	ə/ ən	are	ɑː (r)	ə (r)
the	ði:	ðə / ði	can	kæn	kən
and	ænd	ən(d) / n	am	æm	əm
but	bʌt	bət	could	kʊd	kəd
for	f ɔː(r)	f ə(r)	must	mʌst	məst
from	frɒm	frəm	do	du:	du /də
at	æt	ət	were	wɜː(r)	wə (r)
of	ɒv	əv	does	dʌz	dəz
you	ju:	jə/ ju	will	wɪl	(w)əl
he	hi:	hi/ hɪ	have	hæv	(h)əv
her	hɜː(r)	(h)ə (r)	that	ðæt	ðət
your	jɔː(r)	jə (r)	as	æz	əz
them	ðem	(ð)əm	than	ðæn	ðən
me	mi:	mi/ mɪ	some	sʌm	səm
us	ʌs	əs	there	ðeə(r)	ðə(r)

4. Phonetic reduction in weak forms

In weak forms, vowel sounds are often reduced to the **schwa** (/ə/) sound, the most common vowel sound in English. This reduction allows weak forms to blend smoothly into the surrounding speech. *Examples:*

and: /ənd/ or /ən/ → "I'll have tea **and** biscuits." /ənd/ is reduced in connected speech.

can: /kən/ or /kn̩/ → "I **can** help." /kən/ becomes /kn̩/ in rapid speech.

⟶ *More examples:*

		Before consonants	Before vowels	
• ɪ/i to i	be	bɪ, bi	bi	aɪl bɪ 'ðeə
				aɪl bi 'əʊvə 'ðeə
	he	(h)ɪ, i	(h)i	ɪf ɪ 'wɒnts
				ɪf i 'ɑːsks
	she	ʃɪ, ʃi	ʃi	ʃɪ 'wɒnts tu
				ʃi 'ɔːt tu
• ə, u to u	do	də, du	du	'wɒt də wɪ
				du 'ɔːl əv əs 'wɒnt
	to	tə	tu	tə 'denmɑːk
				tu 'aɪslənd
	you	jə, ju	ju	'wɪl jə 'kʌm
				wɪl ju 'ɑːsk
• add −r	for	fə	fər	fə 'təʊni
				fər 'ælɪs
	her	(h)ə	(h)ər	hə 'mʌðə
				hər 'ʌŋkl̩
	there	ðə	ðər	ðə 'kɑːnt bi
				ðər 'ɪzn̩t eni
	are	ə	ər	ə ðeɪ 'ɔːl
				ər 'ɔːl əv ðəm
	were	wə	wər	wə ðeɪ 'ɔːl
				wər 'ɔːl əv ðəm
	your	jə	jər	jə 'mʌðə
				jər 'ɑːnt
articles:	a	ə	ən	ə 'dɔː
				ən 'əʊpən dɔː
	the	ðə	ði	ðə 'dɔː
				ði 'əʊpən 'dɔː

5. The role of weak forms in sentence rhythm

In English, weak forms are critical for maintaining the natural **stress-timed rhythm** of the language. Content words are stressed and function words (which often use weak forms) are typically unstressed, creating a rhythmic alternation.

Example: "I want to go to the park."

- o **Content words**: "want", "go", "park" (stressed).
- o **Function words**: "I", "to", "the" (weak forms).

Without using weak forms, speech would sound choppy and unnatural.

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6. Sentence stress and emphasis

   While function words are usually unstressed and reduced to weak forms, they can also take on strong forms to emphasize or contrast. In certain instances, the choice of a strong form may shift the meaning or focus of the statement.

Example: "I said I **can** do it." (Emphasis on ability: strong form /kæn/).

   "I **can** do it if you want." (Unstressed, regular usage: weak form /kən/).

Conclusion

   Understanding the difference between strong and weak forms is essential for mastering the natural rhythm and pronunciation patterns of English. By learning when to reduce function words to weak forms and when to emphasize them in strong forms, learners will improve their fluency and sound more natural in connected speech.

   ➢   The most common weak-form words are introduced below as cited in (Roach, 2009)

1 'the'

Weak forms: ðə (before consonants)

'Shut the door' 'ʃʌt ðə 'dɔ:

ði (before vowels)

'Wait for the end' 'weɪt fə ði 'end

2 'a', 'an'

Weak forms: ə (before consonants)

'Read a book' 'ri:d ə 'bʊk

ən (before vowels)

'Eat an apple' 'i:t ən 'æpl̩

3 'and'

Weak form: ən (sometimes n̩ after t, d, s, z, ʃ)

'Come and see' 'kʌm ən 'si:

'Fish and chips' 'fɪʃ n̩ 'tʃɪps

4 'but'

Weak form: bət

'It's good but expensive' ɪts 'gʊd bət ɪk'spensɪv

5 'that'

This word only has a weak form when used in a relative clause; when used with a demonstrative sense it is always pronounced in its strong form.

Weak form: ðət

'The price is the thing that annoys me' ðə 'praɪs ɪz ðə 'θɪŋ ðət ə'nɔɪz mi

6 'than'

Weak form: ðən

'Better than ever' 'betə ðən 'evə

7 'his' (when it occurs before a noun)

Weak form: ɪz (hɪz at the beginning of a sentence)

'Take his name' 'teɪk ɪz 'neɪm

(Another sense of 'his', as in 'it was his', or 'his was late', always has the strong form)

8 'her'

When used with a possessive sense, preceding a noun; as an object pronoun, this can also occur at the end of a sentence.

Weak forms: ə (before consonants)

'Take her home' 'teɪk ə 'həʊm

ər (before vowels)

'Take her out' 'teɪk ər 'aʊt

26 'must'

This word is sometimes used with the sense of forming a conclusion or deduction (e.g. 'she left at eight o'clock, so she must have arrived by now'); when 'must' is used in this way, it is less likely to occur in its weak form than when it is being used in its more familiar sense of obligation.

Weak forms:	məs (before consonants)
	'You must try harder' ju məs 'traɪ 'hɑːdə
	məst (before vowels)
	'He must eat more' hi məst 'iːt 'mɔː
In final position:	mʌst
	'She certainly must' ʃi 'sɜːtn̩li 'mʌst

27 'do', 'does'
Weak forms:

'do'	də (before consonants)
	'Why do they like it?' 'waɪ də ðeɪ 'laɪk ɪt

23 'can', 'could'

Weak forms:	kən, kəd
	'They can wait' 'ðeɪ kən 'weɪt
	'He could do it' 'hiː kəd 'duː ɪt
	In final position: kæn, kʊd
	'I think we can' aɪ 'θɪŋk wi 'kæn
	'Most of them could' 'məʊst əv ðəm 'kʊd

24 'have', 'has', 'had'

Weak forms:	əv, əz, əd (with initial h in initial position)
	'Which have you seen?' 'wɪtʃ əv ju 'siːn
	'Which has been best?' 'wɪtʃ əz biːn 'best
	'Most had gone home' 'məʊst əd gɒn 'həʊm
In final position:	hæv, hæz, hæd
	'Yes, we have' 'jes wi 'hæv
	'I think she has' aɪ 'θɪŋk ʃi 'hæz
	'I thought we had' aɪ 'θɔːt wi 'hæd

25 'shall', 'should'

Weak forms:	ʃəl or ʃl̩; ʃəd
	'We shall need to hurry' wi ʃl̩ 'niːd tə 'hʌri
	'I should forget it' aɪ ʃəd fə'get ɪt
In final position:	ʃæl, ʃʊd
	'I think we shall' aɪ 'θɪŋk wi 'ʃæl
	'So you should' 'səʊ ju 'ʃʊd

In final position: frɒm

'Here's where it came from' 'hɪəz weər ɪt 'keɪm frɒm

18 'of'

Weak form: əv

'Most of all' 'məʊst əv 'ɔːl

In final position: ɒv

'Someone I've heard of' 'sʌmwʌn aɪv 'hɜːd ɒv

19 'to'

Weak forms: tə (before consonants)

'Try to stop' 'traɪ tə 'stɒp

tu (before vowels)

'Time to eat' 'taɪm tu 'iːt

In final position: tu (it is not usual to use the strong form tuː; the pre-consonantal weak form tə is never used)

'I don't want to' aɪ 'dəʊnt 'wɒnt tu

20 'as'

Weak form: əz

'As much as possible' əz 'mʌtʃ əz 'pɒsəbl̩

In final position: æz

'That's what it was sold as' 'ðæts 'wɒt ɪt wəz 'səʊld æz

15 'at'

Weak form: ət

'I'll see you at lunch' aɪl 'siː ju ət 'lʌnʃ

In final position: æt

'What's he shooting at?' 'wɒts i 'ʃuːtɪŋ æt

16 'for'

Weak form: fə (before consonants)

'Tea for two' 'tiː fə 'tuː

fər (before vowels)

'Thanks for asking' 'θæŋks fər 'ɑːskɪŋ

In final position: fɔː

'What's that for?' 'wɒts 'ðæt fɔː

17 'from'

Weak form: frəm

'I'm home from work' aɪm 'həʊm frəm 'wɜːk

c) 'we' wi
'How can we get there?' 'haʊ kən wi 'get ðeə
'We need that, don't we?' wi 'niːd ðæt 'dəʊnt wi

d) 'you' ju
'What do you think?' 'wɒt də ju 'θɪŋk
'You like it, do you?' ju 'laɪk ɪt 'duː ju

11 'him'
Weak form: ɪm
'Leave him alone' 'liːv ɪm ə'ləʊn
'I've seen him' aɪv 'siːn ɪm

12 'her'
Weak form: ə (hə when sentence-initial)
'Ask her to come' 'ɑːsk ə tə 'kʌm
'I've met her' aɪv 'met ə

13 'them'
Weak form: ðəm
'Leave them here' 'liːv ðəm 'hɪə
'Eat them' 'iːt ðəm

14 'us'
Weak form: əs
'Write us a letter' 'raɪt əs ə 'letə
'They invited all of us' ðeɪ ɪn'vaɪtɪd 'ɔːl əv əs

9 'your'
Weak forms: jə (before consonants)
'Take your time' 'teɪk jə 'taɪm
jər (before vowels)
'On your own' 'ɒn jər 'əʊn

10 'she', 'he', 'we', 'you'
This group of pronouns has weak forms pronounced with **weaker vowels than** the iː, uː of their strong forms. I use the symbols i, u (in preference to ɪ, ʊ) to represent them. There is little difference in the pronunciation in different places in the sentence, except in the case of 'he'.
Weak forms:

a) 'she' ʃi
'Why did she read it?' 'waɪ dɪd ʃi 'riːd ɪt
'Who *is* she?' 'huː 'ɪz ʃi

b) 'he' i (the weak form is usually pronounced without h except at the beginning of a sentence)
'Which did he choose?' 'wɪtʃ dɪd i 'tʃuːz
'He was late, wasn't he?' hi wəz 'leɪt 'wɒznt i

du (before vowels)

'Why do all the cars stop?' 'waɪ du 'ɔːl ðə 'kɑːz 'stɒp

'does' dəz

'When does it arrive?' 'wen dəz ɪt ə'raɪv

In final position: duː, dʌz

'We don't smoke, but some people do' 'wiː dəʊnt 'sməʊk bət 'sʌm piːpl̩ 'duː

'I think John does' aɪ 'θɪŋk 'dʒɒn dʌz

28 'am', 'are', 'was', 'were'

Weak forms: əm

'Why am I here?' 'waɪ əm aɪ 'hɪə

ə (before consonants)

'Here are the plates' 'hɪər ə ðə 'pleɪts

ər (before vowels)

'The coats are in there' ðə 'kəʊts ər ɪn 'ðeə

wəz

'He was here a minute ago' hi wəz 'hɪər ə 'mɪnɪt ə'gəʊ

wə (before consonants)

'The papers were late' ðə 'peɪpəz wə 'leɪt

wər (before vowels)

'The questions were easy' ðə 'kwestʃənz wər 'iːzi

In final position: æm, ɑː, wɒz, wɜː

'She's not as old as I am' ʃɪz 'nɒt əz 'əʊld əz 'aɪ æm

'I know the Smiths are' aɪ 'nəʊ ðə 'smɪθs ɑː

'The last record was' ðə 'lɑːst 'rekɔːd wɒz

'They weren't as cold as we were' ðeɪ 'wɜːnt əz 'kəʊld əz 'wiː wɜː

Phonemic vs. phonetic transcriptions

Phonetic and phonemic transcriptions are important tools in linguistics and language teaching because they assist in documenting and understanding how sounds work in language. They are distinct techniques of encoding speech sounds, and each has its own function. In this lesson, we will examine each sort of transcription, their differences, and how they are used.

- *Transcription:*

Transcription is the use of phonetic symbols to write down clearly and consistently the way an utterance is pronounced. One of the most important goals of studying phonetics is to realise that spelling is often a poor guide to a word's pronunciation (for example, English is characterised by a host of orthographic inconsistencies: one letter for different sounds, one sound represented by different letter(s), letters for no sounds…). Transcription provides us with a shared system of symbols referred to as the **International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA)**. There are two kinds of transcription, based on how many details transcribers decide to ignore:

1. Phonemic transcription (broad transcription)

Phonemic transcription focuses on the abstract, meaningful sound units in a language, called **phonemes,** so it represents the utterance in terms of phonemes only. Phonemes are the smallest sound units that can change the meaning of a word in a particular language. *For example*, in English, the words *bat* and *pat* differ by only one sound, /b/ vs. /p/. Changing this sound changes the meaning of the word, so /b/ and /p/ are considered distinct phonemes in English.

-Key characteristics of phonemic transcription:

- **Broad representation:** phonemic transcription only shows sounds that are meaningful contrasts, without capturing the finer details of how they're pronounced, meaning that it ignores as many details as possible. The broad transcription of the word *felt* is /felt /. This is why it's sometimes called a "broad" transcription.

- **Symbols and slashes:** Phonemic transcription uses slashes around symbols (e.g., /bæt/ for *bat*) (e.g., /kæt/ for *cat*). Each symbol represents a phoneme, not an exact articulation.

- **Language-Specific:** Phonemic transcription depends on the sound distinctions that are relevant in a particular language. *For instance*, in English, /p/ and /b/ are phonemes

because they differentiate meaning, but in Korean, however, [p] and [b] are not distinguished by voicing, so they are not separate phonemes.

Example :

- o English: /pæt/ (pat) vs. /bæt/ (bat) → /p/ and /b/ are separate phonemes.

- o Spanish: /pero/ (but) vs. /perro/ (dog) → /r/ and /ɾ/ are separate phonemes.

To put it briefly, phonemic transcription is the process of recording a language's distinctive, meaning-carrying sounds without going into details about how they are articulated.

2. Phonetic transcription (narrow transcription)

Phonetic transcription, on the other hand, provides a detailed, specific representation of speech sounds, including indirect articulatory distinctions. This transcription aims to show the exact way sounds are produced, capturing both **phonemic** and **allophonic** differences. Allophones are different pronunciations of the same phoneme that do not change the meaning of a word but may differ slightly based on context.

-Key characteristics of phonetic transcription:

- **Detailed representation:** Phonetic transcription goes beyond phonemic contrasts and documents the exact articulation of sounds. It encodes more information about the exact pronunciation of sounds. In other words, it captures as many aspects of a specific pronunciation as possible and ignores as few details as possible. The narrow transcription of the word *felt is* [feɫt].

- **Symbols and brackets:** Phonetic transcription uses square brackets (e.g., [bæt] for *bat*) and can include additional symbols to show finer articulatory details; this is by the use of **diacritics**, small marks added to a phoneme symbol to modify its pronunciation. *For example*, the aspiration diacritic is a small raised h [**h**] next to the aspirated plosive. Other diacritics can be used through, over or under a phoneme symbol (e.g. [˜] , [ˇ], [ⁿ] , [̥] , [̩]).

- **Not language-specific:** Phonetic transcription captures physical sound characteristics, regardless of whether these distinctions are meaningful (phonemic) in a language. *For example,* both [pʰ] and [p] may represent the sound /p/ in English, but the aspiration is generally not meaningful.

Example:

- [tʰ] in *top* (aspirated at the beginning of a word).

- [ɾ] in *butter* (flapped in American English).

- [t̚] in *cat* (unreleased at the end of a word).

Each of these symbols ([tʰ], [ɾ], [t̚]) indicates a different way of pronouncing the /t/ sound, but all are allophones of the same phoneme /t/ in English.

- The word *pat* can be transcribed phonetically as [pʰæt], showing that the /p/ is aspirated (pronounced with a burst of air) at the start of the word in English. In contrast, *spat* may be transcribed as [spæt] without aspiration.

To put it briefly, in phonetic transcription, we are interested in how sounds are physically produced, which includes even non-contrastive features like aspiration.

3. Differences between phonetic and phonemic transcription

Aspect	Phonemic Transcription	Phonetic Transcription
Purpose	Shows distinctive sounds (phonemes)	Shows precise pronunciation
Symbols Used	Slashes (e.g., /p/)	Square brackets (e.g., [p])
Detail Level	Broad (abstract)	Narrow (precise)
Relevance to Meaning	Meaningful distinctions only	Includes all articulatory details
Language Dependence	Language-specific	Not language-specific
Use Cases	Linguistic analysis, language learning	Linguistic research, dialect study

4. Where to use phonemic vs. phonetic transcriptions

Each type of transcription serves different linguistic needs:

- **Phonemic transcription** is frequently used in dictionaries and language instruction because it simplifies pronunciation by concentrating only on sounds that alter word meanings. With this method, students may comprehend pronunciation patterns without being overloaded with extraneous details.

- **Phonetic transcription** is more detailed and is often used by linguists or speech pathologists who need to capture subtle differences in pronunciation. It is essential in dialectology, phonetic analysis, and understanding pronunciation variations within and across languages. Particularly for linguists, speech therapists, and phoneticians who analyze how sounds vary in different contexts, dialects, or languages.

5. Practical examples

- ➢ **Word:** Bat
  - o **Phonemic Transcription:** /bæt/
  - o **Phonetic Transcription:** [bæt] (basic pronunciation) or [bʲæt] if there's slight palatalization of the /b/.

- ➢ **Word:** Stop
  - o **Phonemic Transcription:** /stɑp/
  - o **Phonetic Transcription:** [stɑp] or [stɑp̚] (showing the unreleased /p/ sound often at the end of an English word).

- ➢ **Word:** Butter **(American English)**
  - o **Phonemic Transcription:** /bʌtər/
  - o **Phonetic Transcription:** [ˈbʌɾɚ] (showing the use of a "flap" sound for /t/ in American English).

- ➢ Phonemically, the word has four phonemes: /b/, /ʌ/, /t/, and /ər/. This representation tells us the basic sounds needed to distinguish *butter* from other words, ignoring pronunciation details. This transcription shows a pronunciation variant, indicating how the /t/ sound changes in context.
  - o [ˈbʌɾɚ]: In American English, the /t/ is often pronounced as a flap [ɾ], a quick tapping sound similar to the Spanish r.
  - o [ˈbʌtər] or [ˈbʌɾər] depending on dialectal differences.

6. Key concepts

A- Phonological Environment (Context)

An environment or a context refers to the parts of the utterance that directly surround a given sound (adjacent sounds or a break in the sound, such as at the beginning or the end of a syllable, word or phrase). So, it is the context or the environment in which the phoneme occurs.

Examples:

- the environment of the sound [æ] in the word *cat* is [k_t].

-the environment of the sound [t] in the word *cat* is [kæ _#].

- the environment of the sound [k] in the word *cat* is [#_æt].

B. Complementary Distribution

Complementary distribution is the mutually exclusive relationship between two allophones, it means where one occurs, another cannot. *For example*, the allophone of / p/ in *po*rt, which is the aspirated allophone [pʰ] is the only one that can occur in this environment and the allophone of / p / in *sport* , which is the unaspirated allophone [p] is also the only allophone that can occur in this environment. So, the two allophones [pʰ] and [p] here are said to be in complementary distribution.

C. Free Variation

Free variation is a condition in which phonetically different sounds (phonemes or allophones) may occur in the same environment without changing meaning. For example, in word-final position before silence (pause), the / p / in *ship* may be pronounced as either [p˥] or [p]. In this case, the two allophones are said to be in free variation. It is important to note that there are only a small number of allophones that can be in free variation with each other. examples include the phonemes /i: / and /aɪ / in the realisation of *either* as / i:ðə / or /aɪðə / and /e / and /i:/ in the realisation of *economics* as /i:kənɒmɪks/ or /ekənɒmɪks/

-Allophonic variations of English consonants

Category	Pho-neme	Allophones (with examples)
plosives	/p /	Aspirated [pʰ] *port* - unaspirated [p] *sport*
	/b/	Voiced [b] *about* - devoiced [b̥] *lab*
	/t /	Aspirated [tʰ] *tall* - unaspirated [t] *sport* – dental [t̪] *eighth* – retracted [t̠] *tree*
	/d /	Voiced [d] *today* - devoiced [d̥] *band* – dental [d̪] *width* – retracted [d̠] *drew*
	/k /	Aspirated [kʰ] *kill* - unaspirated [k] *skill* – advanced [k̟]- retracted [k̠]
	/g /	Voiced [g] *ago* - devoiced [g̥] *bag* – advanced [g̟] – retracted [g̠]

nasals	/m /	fundamental [m] *my*- labiodental [ɱ] *comfort*
	/n /	fundamental [n] *not*- labiodental [ɱ] *confirm* – dental [n̪] *invite*
	/ ŋ /	No striking allophonic variation: [ŋ]
fricatives	/f /	No striking allophonic variation: [f]
	/v /	Fundamental [v] *vote* - devoiced [v̥] *leave*
	/ θ /	No striking allophonic variation: [θ]
	/ ð/	Fundamental [ð] *then* - devoiced [ð̥] *breathe*·
	/s /	No striking allophonic variation: [s]
	/z /	Fundamental [z] *zoo* - devoiced [z̥] *prize*
	/ ʃ /	No striking allophonic variation: [ʃ]
	/ ʒ /	Fundamental [ʒ] *measure* - devoiced [ʒ̥] *beige*
	/ h /	Fundamental [h] *happy* - voiced [ɦ] *behave*
affricates	/ tʃ /	No striking allophonic variation: [tʃ]
	/ dʒ /	Fundamental [dʒ] *job* - devoiced [dʒ̥] *village*
lateral	/ l /	Clear [l] *light* – dark [ɫ] *well* – devoiced [l̥] *clay* – dental [l̪] *health*
Approximants	/r /	Fundamental [ɹ] *red* – devoiced [ɹ̥] *pray* – fricative [ɹ] *drive*
	/w /	Fundamental [w] *wet* - voiceless [ʍ] or [w̥] *quick, twin*
	/j /	Fundamental [j] *yes* – fricative voiceless [ç] *pure, huge*

-Allophonic variations of English vowels

Shortened vowels	No shortening
Seed [iˑ]	*seat* [i:]
Hard [ɑˑ]	*heart* [ɑː]
Save [ĕɪ]	*safe* [e ɪ]
Height [ăɪ]	*hide* [ai]
Cap [ǽ]	*cab* [æ]
Lock [ɒ̆]	*log* [ɒ]
rough [ʌ̆]	*rub* [ʌ]

Nasalised vowels		No nasalisation	
Men	[ẽ]	met	[e]
Among	[ə̃], [ʌ̃]	ahead	[e]
Ham	[æ̃]	had	[æ]
Think	[ĩ]	thick	[ɪ]
Can't	[ɑ̃:]	calves	[ɑ:]
Room	[ũ:]	rude	[u:]

Different allophones of consonants are realised as a result of changes that occur on phonemes. The most important ones are **aspiration, (de)voicing**, variations in **place of articulation**, variations in **manner of articulation** and glottal replacement/**glottal reinforcement**.

1.1. Aspiration

Aspiration can be defined as the presence of a puff of air accompanying the release of the voiceless plosives. It is symbolized with [h]. In the example, / p / is aspirated and represented as [pʰ]. In English, voiceless plosives / p t k / are aspirated when initial or at the beginning of a stressed syllable, weakly aspirated at the beginning of unstressed syllables or word finally and unaspirated where a plosive follows /s/ within the same syllable.

1.2. Devoicing

Devoicing is a process affecting a sound which we would normally expect to be voiced but which is pronounced without voicing in a particular context. The diacritic used to indicate devoicing is a small circle (̥) is put under a devoiced sound. Provided below are the most important rules that are concerned with devoicing:

➢ plosives, fricatives, and affricates are devoiced when they occur before voiceless consonants or before silence (at the end of an utterance). *Examples:*

  had to with sympathy   yours truly   a red bag   fast food   a page

➢ The liquids and the glides / l, r, w, j / (which are voiced) are devoiced when they follow the voiceless consonants / p, t, k / in syllable initial position. *Examples:*

     Quick   play   cry   pray   twice

> ➤ The voiceless glottal /h / becomes voiced when it occurs between voiced segments (*behind, behave*). Voiced /h / is symbolised [ɦ].

1.3. Variations in place of articulation

Some allophones are realised when the place of articulation of the phonemes changes under the influence of the context in which the phoneme appears. The most common variations in place of articulation occur within words and even at word boundaries. They include the following cases:

> ➤ **Dentalization:** when the alveolar consonants / t, d, n, l / occur before the dental fricatives / θ / and / ð /, they are articulated as dentals. Dentalization is symbolised by [ˌ] under the symbol of the phoneme/ *in theory, wealth, with thanks*

> ➤ **Retraction / advancement:** When the alveolar consonants / t, d / precede /r /, they are retracted (pronounced with a post-alveolar articulation). Retraction is indicated by adding the minus mark [-] under the symbol of the phoneme. the velar plosives /k, g / are advanced before front vowels and retracted before back vowels. the minus mark [-] and the plus mark [+] under the symbol of the phoneme are used to symbolise retraction and advancement, respectively.

> ➤ **Labiodentalization:** when /m / and /n / precede / f / and / v/, they become labiodentals. The same symbol [ɱ] is used to indicate a labiodental / m / and a labiodental /n /.
>
> Compare /m / income and comfort (emphasis, emphatic) <u>and</u> Compare /n / in can and converse (convince, infant)

> ➤ **Velarization:** It is a secondary articulation of consonants whereby the back of the tongue is raised toward the soft palate during the articulation of the consonant. The diacritic used to symbolize velarization is a tilde [˜] through the letter l [ɫ]. The English phoneme / l / has two main allophones:
>
> **Clear** /l / [l] : occurs before vowels and / j / (life, led, failure) <u>and</u> **Dark** /l / [ ]: occurs word-finally (when syllabic, it is dark) and before consonants. (mall, sell, felt, help, pickle, table **)**

1. **4. Variations in manner of articulation**

A consonantal phoneme can be realised differently by changing its manner of articulation in a specific context. The most striking cases involve /r /, /j / and the plosives. *For example*, change from frictionless to fricative:

- The / r / is articulated as a fricative after /d/ and unaspirated /t /(*dry*/ *stream*)

- The /j / becomes fricative (and voiceless) when it combines with /h/ (*huge)* and when preceded by the aspirated voiceless plosives (*pure, cues, tune*).

Also, changes in the release of the plosives: **No release (inaudible release)/ Nasal release/ Lateral release.**

1. **5. Glottal replacement/ glottal reinforcement**

A sound that is frequently used by RP speakers, but which is not a significant sound in the RP system, is the glottal stop. The latter, which is symbolised as [ʔ] in the IPA, is a consonant formed by the closure of the vocal cords. A distinction is made between glottal replacement and glottal reinforcement.

Conclusion

To summarize, phonemic transcription represents sound distinctions crucial to meaning in a simple, abstract manner, whereas phonetic transcription provides a refined, thorough explanation of actual pronunciation. Understanding both allows for more exact language analysis and the use of appropriate instruments for teaching, learning, and studying language sound systems. To reinforce the notion, practice determining if a transcription is phonemic or phonetic by studying the symbols and detail level.

Aspects of connected speech: assimilation, elision, linking and juncture

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Native speakers do not necessarily adhere to grammar rules when speaking quickly, colloquially, and without pauses. This results in a fast-paced, rhythmic speech known as "connected speech," which incorporates many processes such as assimilation, elision, linking, and juncture.

Lesson objectives

By the end of the lesson, students will be able to:

1. Understand the features of connected speech and their importance in natural communication.

2. Define and identify assimilation, elision, linking, and juncture in spoken English.

3. Practice recognizing and using these features in real-life communication.

I.   **Definition:**

Connected speech refers to the way we string and link words together in natural fluent speech. It's characterized by several processes that can make it challenging for language learners to understand, especially when spoken at a natural pace. Words blend together in spoken English to create smoother transitions, a key feature of **connected speech**.

II.   **Features of connected speech:**

1. Assimilation

- Definition: The most typical feature of connected speech is assimilation. Assimilation is the process by which a sound (assimilated sound) is impacted by another sound (the conditioning sound) and becomes more similar to it. More specifically, assimilation happens when a sound adopts the characteristics of a nearby sound, becoming more similar to it and so generating a change in pronunciation. It behaves like a sound chameleon, adapting to its surroundings.

- *Examples:*

    - *Input* → /ˈɪnpʊt/ becomes /ˈɪ**m**pʊt/ (the /n/ changes to /m/).

    - *Green park* → /ˈɡriːn ˈpɑːk/ becomes /ˈɡriː**m** ˈpɑːk/.

    - *credit card* → kredɪtkɑːd/ pronounced as /kredɪ**k**kɑːd/

    - *good boy* → ɡʊdbɔɪ/ pronounced as /ɡʊ**b**bɔɪ/

    - *that soup* → ðætsuːp/ pronounced as / ðæ**s**suːp/

- Types: Assimilation can be of several different types corresponding to the direction of assimilation, the extent of assimilation and the nature of change assimilated sounds undergo.

A. Types according to the extent of assimilation

Assimilation can be partial or complete.

✓ **Complete assimilation:** occurs when the assimilated sound changes to become identical to the conditioned sound.

ten mice / te**mm**aɪs /   *good girl* /gʊ**gg**ɜːl/   *that soup* / ðæ**ss**uːp/

✓ **Partial Assimilation:** occurs when the assimilated sound changes to become the same as the conditioned sound.

That girl / ðæ**kg**ɜːl /   *Ten cars* /te**ŋk**ɑːz/   brown bear /braʊ**mb**eə/

B. Types according to the direction of assimilation

In English, there are three types of assimilation according to the direction of assimilation: Regressive assimilation, progressive assimilation and coalescence.

✓ **Regressive assimilation** is the most frequently occurring type of assimilation. It occurs when the assimilated sound precedes the conditioning sound (which follows):

Sound A ← Sound B

↓

Sound B or a sound more similar to B

This type is also called right to left assimilation or anticipatory assimilation. All the examples above are examples of regressive assimilation.

✓ **Progressive assimilation:** It is also called perseverative assimilation or left to right assimilation. In this type, the assimilated sound follows the conditioned sound:

Sound A → Sound B

↓

Sound A or a sound more similar to B

Examples of types of assimilation are the regular plural /s /vs /z / alternation and the regular past tense /t /vs / d /in which the final consonant conditions the voiced/voiceless form of the suffix.

✓ **Coalescence (coalescent assimilation):** It is a type of reciprocal assimilation: two sound influence each other, they fuse completely and create a new sound. In other words, the first sound and the second sound in a sequence influence each other and mutually condition the creation of a third sound which features from both original sounds.

Sound A + Sound B

\   /

Sound C

Example:

Could you help me: /kʊd ju help mi / → /kʊdʒu help mi /

Here, the two sounds /d/ and /j / influence each other and produce /dʒ/.

C. Types according to the nature of the sound change

✓ **Assimilation of Place**: Assimilation of place is the most common and the most frequently occurring type of assimilation in English. It occurs mainly when a word final <u>alveolar /t, d, n, s, z/</u> assimilates to the place of the following consonant that is <u>not alveolar</u> whilst retaining the original voicing. Provided below are some rules of assimilation of place.

  ☐ /t,d,n / are replaced by bilabials before the bilabials /p,b, m/. more specifically,

  - ✓ /t / → /p/ *that pen / that boy / that man*
  - ✓ /d/ →/b/ *bad pain /red bag / good man*
  - ✓ /n/ → /m / *ten players / brown bear / ten men*

  ☐ / t,d,n / are replaced by velars before the velars /k, g /. More specifically,

  - ✓ /t / → /k/ *that cup / that girl*
  - ✓ /d/ →/ g / *good concert / bad girl*
  - ✓ /n/ → / ŋ / *ten cups / green grass*

  ☐ / s,z / are replaced by palato-alveolars before consonants containing a palatal feature /ʃ, tʃ, dʒ, j /

  - ✓ /s / → / ʃ / *this shirt / cross channel / this judge / this year*
  - ✓ /z/ →/ ʒ / *those young men / cheese shop/ those churches/ Has she?*

  ☐ /θ , ð/ may assimilate to /s,z/ before /s / in fast speech:

  - ✓ *earth science / birth certificate / both sides / fifth set /*
  - ✓ *I loathe singing*

  ☐ When there are two alveolar stops at the end of a word, and they are followed by a word starting with a bilabial or velar, they can both assimilate.

  - ✓ *I can't go* / aɪ kɑŋk gəʊ/
  - ✓ *Don't move*! /dəʊmp muːv/

✓ **Assimilation of Manner**: In this type of assimilation, which is rare, the assimilated sound changes its of its manner of articulation to become similar to a neighbouring sound. In the sentence Get some of that soup, the expected normal pronunciation is /get sʌm əv ðæs suːp/ ; however, the pronunciation /ges sʌm əv ðæs suːp/ is heard in fast speech. In this pronunciation, the /t/ of get changes to /s /before /s /of some and /t / of that changes to /s/ before /s / of soup.

  Other examples :

  - ✓ same night pronounced as /seɪn naɪt /
  - ✓ good night pronounced as /gʊn naɪt/

✓ **Assimilation of voicing:** Assimilation of voicing takes place only in a limited way. More specifically, it occurs in set phrases. The latter are words that occur together on a very frequent basis, such as *have to* , *has to*, *used to* and *supposed to*. In this case,

the following voiceless consonant /t/ affects the voicing of the previous sound and causes it to change its voicing from a voiced to a voiceless consonant.

- ✓ **Have to:** /hævtu:/ → /hæftə/ - Has to: /hæztu:/→ /hæztə/
- ✓ **Used to:** /ju:zd tu:/ → /ju:stə/
- ✓ **Supposed to:** /səpəʊ zd tu:/ → /s əp əʊstə/

✓ **Yod coalescence:** Yod coalescence is a form of assimilation which takes place when /j/ is preceded by certain consonants, most commonly /t/ and /d/:

/t/ + /j/ = /tʃ/	What you need.	/wɒtʃu ni:d/
/d/ + /j/ = / dʒ/	Could you help me?	/kʊdʒu help mi /

2. **Elision**

- o <u>Definition</u>: Elision, usually referred to as deletion or omission, is a fundamental feature of connected speech. It is a process in which a sound gets dropped or disappears in a certain condition. This process involves dropping one or more phonemes inside a word (word). To simplify pronunciation, words may be omitted internally or at word borders. The process is pervasive. It is normally unintentional (many native speakers may be unaware of the process or where it occurs), but it may be deliberate.

- o *Examples*:
  - ▪ *Friendship* → /ˈfrɛn(d)ʃɪp/ (the /d/ is dropped).
  - ▪ facts → /fæks / (the /t/ is dropped)
  - ▪ *Next day* → /nekst deɪ/ becomes /neks deɪ/.
  - ▪ /h/ sound at the beginning of words, especially in unstressed syllables "he is" becomes "e's"

  - o <u>Common Cases of Elision in English</u>

✓ **Weak forms elisions:**

- - <u>h-dropping</u>: the most important case of elision associated with weak forms is h - dropping. The /h /of function words can be dropped but not at the beginning of an utterance or when stressed.

  Give her the book. → /gɪvə ðə bʊk/   *Tell him the truth.* → /telɪm ðə tru: θ/

- - <u>Loss of other consonants</u>: the consonants of 'and, will, must, them' can also be elided when unstressed.

    John will have finished by now. → /dʒɒn əl əv fɪnɪʃt baɪ naʊ /

    Tables and chairs. → /teɪblz ən tʃeəz /

✓ **Consonant cluster reduction:** when two or more consonants come together, there is a tendency in English to simplify such a cluster by eliding one of them. Cluster reduction can occur in between as well as inside words and mainly involves the deletion of alveolar plosives.

last chance /lɑː st tʃ ɑːns / → /lɑː s tʃ ɑːns /

Asked them /ɑːskt ðəm / →/ /ɑːst ðəm /

I won't do it. → / aɪ wəʊndu ː ɪt /

✓ **Loss of weak vowel after p, t, k**

In English, a short unstressed vowel occurring between voiceless consonants or in general after p, t, k may disappear. This is the case, for example, with the first syllable of 'potato' /pəteɪtəʊ/, which becomes /pteɪtəʊ/, the second syllable of 'bicycle' /baɪsɪkl/ which becomes / baɪskl/.

✓ **Loss of final v in 'of' before consonants:**

This is very common in English, and examples of these include 'lots of them'/lɒts ə ðəm/ and 'waste of money' /weɪst ə mʌnɪ/.

3. Linking

- o <u>Definition</u>: Linking involves connecting sounds between words to create a smoother flow. Particularly, it is the way in which the end of one word is linked to the following sound. Linking entails the smooth movement from the final sound of one word to the initial sound of the next. In some cases, this involves the addition of a sound that does not exist in the individual words. In other words, to help one word flows to the next, other sounds may be added. (It's like a bridge between words)

- o *Examples:*
    - ▪ *Law and order* → /ˈlɔː ənd ˈɔːdə/ becomes /ˈlɔː rənd ˈɔːdə/ (linking /r/).
    - ▪ *I saw it* → /aɪ ˈsɔː ɪt/ becomes /aɪ ˈsɔː rɪt/.
    - ▪ *Be‿ᶨ able / bi ʲeɪbl /*
    - ▪ *Blue‿ʷink*

- o <u>Common Types of Linking</u>

There are many kinds of linking: consonant to vowel linking, [j , w] linking , linking /r / and intrusive / r/.

✓ **Consonant-vowel Linking:**

- • When a word ends in a consonant sound and the next word starts with a vowel sound, we sometimes link the two sounds, especially if they are different sounds.

an‿aim → / əneɪm / (it may sound like *a name*)

Pets ‿enter → /petsentə/ (it may sound like *pet centre*)

- ✓ **[j , w] Linking :**

- When a word ending with a tense vowel or diphthong meets a word starting with a vowel, they are linked with a [j]or a [w] sound. If the lips are round (the case of high back vowels /uː, əʊ, aʊ/ a linking [w]is inserted, and if they are spread (the case of /iː/, or a diphthong which finishes with /ɪ /), a linking [j]may follow.

<div align="center">

Say ⌣ʲ it   My ⌣ʲ own

you ⌣ʷ and me   go ⌣ʷ inside

</div>

- ✓ **Linking / r /**

For speakers of non-rhotic accents (e.g. RP) /r / is not pronounced unless it is followed by a vowel. While a speaker of a rhotic accent (American English) pronounces all r letters , anspeaker of a non rhotic accent does not pronounce the letter *r* or *re* before consonants or in word final positions:

Word	Non-rhotic pronunciation	Rhotic pronunciation
Read	/ riːd /	/riːd /
Port	/pɔːt /	/pɔːrt
Bore	/bɔː /	/bɔːr /

When words ending with the letter(s) *r* or *re* combine with words beginning with vowels, the /r /is pronounced by the speakers of non-rhotic accents. Such an /r / is called linking /r /. It is a phonological phenomenon that occurs when the speakers who do not pronounce the final *r* or *re* (speakers of non-rhotic accents) will add it when the next word begins with a vowel.

Word	Word in connected speech
Far / fɑː/	Far away / fɑːrəweɪ / (the /r /here is Linking /r /)
More / mɔː /	More ice /mɔːraɪs / (the /r /here is Linking /r /)

- ✓ **Intrusive /r /**

A word ending in a vowel can be linked to a word beginning with a vowel by inserting an /r/ sound which is non-existent in the spelling of both words. This /r / , which is historically unjustified, is called intrusive /r /. It usually occurs when the first word ends in the schwa or a centring diphthong. Less common is the insertion of /r / after the non-high vowel / ɑː, ɔː /.

<div align="center">

the idea of →the idea[r] of /ðiaɪdɪər ɒv/

law and order →law [r] and order /lɔːrənɔːdə/

</div>

4. **Juncture**

- o <u>Definition</u>: Juncture refers to the pauses and breaks between words or phrases in connected speech or how the boundaries between words are marked or blurred. It helps us understand the meaning and structure of sentences.

  N.B – linking and intrusive '**r**' are special cases of juncture.

- *Example:*

  - *I scream* (*Close* Juncture**:** No pause or break between words*.)* vs. *Ice cream* (Open Juncture: A pause or break between words.)

  - *Might rain /maɪt reɪn/   My train /maɪ treɪ n/*

  - *He lies /hi: laɪz/   Heal eyes /hi:l aɪz/*

  - *keeps ticking   /ki:ps ˈtɪkɪŋ/   keep sticking   / ki:p ˈstɪkɪŋ/*

  - *Can I have some <u>more rice</u>?   Can I have some <u>more ice</u>?*

…. Notice that although the phonemes involved in each of these examples are the same, subtle differences (articulation) help us tell where is the difference. These are differences of juncture. Listeners, most of the time have no difficulty in telling where the join is, and context clearly plays a role here.

⌐➔ By understanding these aspects of connected speech, you can:

-Improve your listening comprehension skills.

-Enhance your pronunciation and fluency.

-Sound more natural and native-like.

Conclusion

Understanding the nuances of connected speech is essential for effective communication in English. By mastering the processes of assimilation, elision, linking, and juncture, you can improve your pronunciation, fluency, and overall language skills.