

CHAPTER 2

FRAMEWORK OF THE THEORIES

In connected speech, the pronunciation of a word will change depending on the words around it. Changes in pronunciation within and across word boundaries include changes to individual sounds and new sounds being inserted. Learners have to become aware of these changes in order to understand authentic speech, and to help their pronunciation. The aspects of connected speech are Rhythm, Assimilation, Elision and Linking. In this term paper, the writer discusses about elision.

2.1 Phoneme

A phoneme is a basic unit of a language's phonology, which is combined with other phonemes to form meaningful units such as words or morphemes. The phoneme can be described as "The smallest contrastive linguistic unit which may bring about a change of meaning". In this way the difference in meaning between the English words *kill* and *kiss* is a result of the exchange of the phoneme /l/ for the phoneme /s/. Two words that differ in meaning through a contrast of a single phoneme form a minimal pair. So, while there are infinitely many different sounds for any given language there are only finitely many phonemes, and the upper limit is around 120 while English has 40.

This level focuses on the smallest unit of structure in language, the phoneme. Linguistic rules at this level describe how sounds are pronounced in various contexts. For instance, there is a rule of voicing assimilation in English that stipulates that when a past tense marker is added to the stem of a verb, the last sound in the stem determines whether the marker is voiced or unvoiced. Phonemic is a part of descriptive linguistics, which undertakes to describe a language, no more and no less than that. There are a great many things that can be done about a language, other than just describing it. But, American linguists, ever since the early part of the twentieth century, have been in agreement that all those other language.

The solution is to adopt a phonetic alphabet which always has the same spelling for the same sound. Linguists use phonetic alphabet called the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA). In the IPA, the word fish would be spelt [fɪʃ]. Many IPA letters are the same as those of the English alphabet, so we place IPA spellings in square brackets to indicate that they are phonetic spellings. Note that many dictionaries give phonetic spellings as pronunciation guides, but not all dictionaries use the IPA. Likewise, the system of Phonics does not use the IPA. When looking at phonetic spellings, make sure you know what system you are using.

This was a radically new idea compared to the earlier treatments of phonetics, for now the phonetic alphabets were shown up as mere lists, and as lists they had no system, no structure. We begin by noticing some system, some patterns, which is already clear without the help of phonemic theory.

In fact, in written language they are represented by just one symbol. Thus, one distinguishes a phone (sound) from a phoneme (set of sound). While phones are language independent, phonemes are not. For example, the letter /p/ has two distinct realizations, an aspirated and an unaspirated one. The sounds of a language change slowly over time. If we could hear a tape recording of English spoken, say, one or two hundred years ago in one and the same region, we would surely notice a difference. The orthography however tends to be conservative. The good side about a stable writing system is that we can (in principle) read older texts even if we do not know how to pronounce them.

2.1.1 Vowel

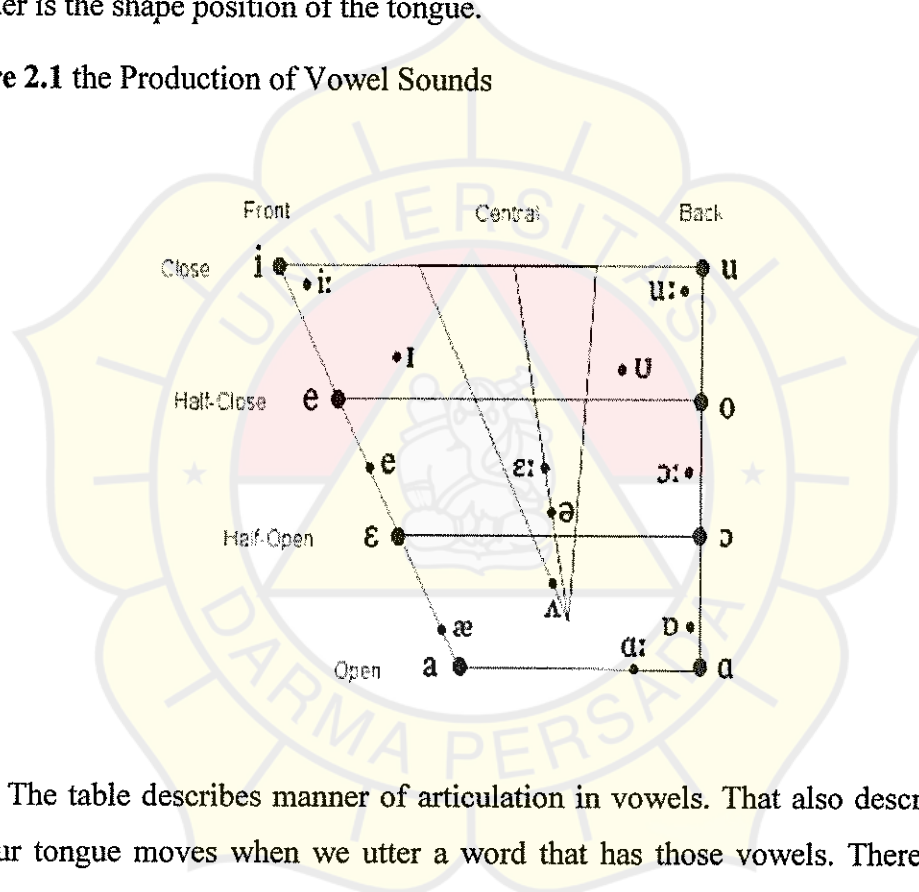
According to Phonology book by Peter Roach (1983:10) the words vowel and consonant are very familiar ones, when we study the sounds of speech, we find that is not easy to define exactly what they mean.

Vowels are sounds in which there is no obstruction to the flow of air as it passes from the larynx to the lips.

In Phonetics, a vowel is a sound in spoken language, such as the English ah! [ɑ:] or oh! [oʊ], pronounced with an open vocal tract so that there

is no build-up of air pressure at any point above the glottis. In Phonetics terms, each vowel has a number of properties that distinguish it from other vowels. These include the shape of the lips, which may be rounded, neutral, or spread. This contrasts with consonants, such as English sh! [ʃ:], there is a constriction or closure at some point along the vocal tract. A vowel is also understood to be syllabic: an equivalent open but non-syllabic sound is called a semivowel. We need to know in what ways vowels differ from each other. The first matter to consider is the shape position of the tongue.

Picture 2.1 the Production of Vowel Sounds



The table describes manner of articulation in vowels. That also describes how our tongue moves when we utter a word that has those vowels. There are long and short vowels. The vowels with /:/ are long vowels. Vowels sometimes become a strong form and also weak form.

2.1.1.1 Strong and Weak Form

In phonology, there are two forms of English words that can be pronounced. The following is the explanation about strong weak form.

There are two different ways to pronounce English words, which are called strong and weak forms. The strong forms are when native speakers of English utter English words with full sound. The example is

the word 'that' can be pronounced /ðæt/ (strong form) and /ðət/ (weak form). It is possible to use only strong forms in speaking, and some foreigners do this. Usually they can still be understood by other speakers of English. (Peter Roach 1983:86)

There are two main reasons; firstly, most native speakers of English find an 'all-strong-form' pronunciation unnatural and foreign sounding. Secondly, speakers who are not familiar with the use of weak forms are likely to have difficulty understanding speakers; since practically all native speakers of British English use them.

The weak forms are characterized by vowel reduction, especially by the manifestation of the schwa vowel, i.e. /ə/, in positions occupied by full vowels in the strong stressed forms.

Another point to remember is that when weak-form words whose spelling begins with /h/ occur at the beginning of a sentence, the pronunciation is with initial /h/ even though this is omitted in other contexts. There are many kinds of weak forms that used:

1. 'HIS' (when it occurs before a noun)

Weak form: iz

'Take his name' /teik iz neim/

2. 'HER' (when used with possessive sense, preceding a noun; as an object pronoun, this can also occur at the end of a sentence)

Weak form: ə (before consonants)

'Take her home' /teik ə 'həʊm/

ər (before vowels)

'Take her out' /teik ər 'aʊt/

3. 'AND'

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

'Come and see' /kʌm ən si: /

'Fish and chips' /fɪʃ n tʃɪps/

4. 'BUT'

Weak form: bət

'It's good but expensive' /its 'gʊd bət iks'pensiv/

5. 'YOUR'

Weak forms: jə (before consonants)

'Take your time' /teik jə'taim/

jər (before vowels)

'on your own' /on jər 'əʊn/

6. 'HIM'

Weak form: im

'Leave him alone' /li:v im ə'ləʊn/

7. 'THEM'

Weak form: ðəm

'Leave them here' /li:vðəm 'hiə/

'Eat them' /i:tðəm/

8. 'FOR'

Weak form: fə (before consonants)

'Tea for two' /ti: fə tu:/

fər (before vowels)

'Thanks for asking' /θæŋks fər ɑ:skiŋ/

9. 'OF'

Weak form: əv

'Most of all' /məʊst əv ɔ:l/

10. 'TO'

Weak form: tə (before consonants)

'try to stop' /traɪ tə 'stɒp/

Tu (before vowels)

'Time to eat' /taɪm tu i:t/

2.1.2 Consonant

Most people would have no doubt that sounds like /s/ and /d/ should be called consonants. However, there are many cases where the decision is not so easy to make. One problem is that some English sounds that we think of as consonants, such as the sounds at the beginning of the words 'hay' and 'way', do not really obstruct the flow of air more than some vowels do.

In articulatory phonetics, a consonant is a speech sound that is articulated with complete or partial closure of the vocal tract. Examples are [p], pronounced with the lips; [t], pronounced with the front of the tongue; [k], pronounced with the back of the tongue; [h], pronounced in the throat; [f] and [s], pronounced by forcing air through a narrow channel (fricatives); and [m] and [n], which have air flowing through the nose (nasals). Contrasting with consonants are vowels. (Peter Roach 1983:10)

Since the number of possible sounds in all of the world's languages is much greater than the number of letters in any one alphabet, linguists have devised systems such as the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) to assign a unique and unambiguous symbol to each attested consonant. In fact, the English alphabet has fewer consonant letters than English has consonant sounds, like "ch", "sh", "th", and "zh" are used to extend the alphabet, and some letters and digraphs represent more than one consonant. For example, the sound spelled "th" in "this" is a different consonant than the "th" sound in "thin". (In the IPA they are transcribed [ð] and [θ], respectively.)

Picture 2.1 Place and Manner of Articulation

		Place of Articulation							
		Bilabial	Labio-dental	Inter-dental	Alveolar	Alveo-palatal	Palatal	Velar	Glottal
Manner of Articulation	Stop	p b			t d			k ɡ	ʔ
	Fricative		f v	θ ð	s z	ʃ ʒ			h
	Affricate					tʃ dʒ			
	Nasal		m			n			ŋ
	Lateral Approximant				l				
	Retroflex Approximant				ɭ				
	Glide		w				j		
			State of the Glottis						
		Voiceless				Voiced			

In this case, a consonant, either /l/, /r/ or a nasal, stands as the center of the syllable instead of the vowel. It is usual to indicate a consonant is syllabic by means of a small vertical mark. The example is 'cattle' /kætl/. Here are the consonants that result syllabic.

- /l/

Syllabic /l/ is perhaps the most noticeable example of the English syllabic consonant, though it would be wrong to expect to find it in all accents. It depends to some extent on the nature of that consonant. For example, if the preceding consonant is alveolar, as in 'bottle' /bɒtl/. It is useful to look at him spelling as a guide. The most obvious case is where we have a word ending with one or more consonant letters followed by 'le'. Examples are

- i) With alveolar consonant preceding
 - 'cattle' /kætl/
 - 'wrestle' /resl/
- ii) With non-alveolar consonant preceding
 - 'couple' /kʌpl/

‘struggle’ /strʌɡl/

- /n/

Syllabic /n/ is most common after alveolar plosives and fricatives; in the case of /t/ and /d/ followed by /n/ the plosive is nasally released by lowering the soft palate, so that in the word ‘eaten’ /i:tn/, for example, the tongue does not move in the /tn/ sequence but the soft palate is lowered at the end of /t/ so that compressed air escapes through the nose.

Syllabic /n/ after non-alveolar consonants is not so widespread. In words where the syllable following a velar consonant is spelt ‘an’ or ‘on’ (for example. ‘toboggan’, ‘wagon’) it is rarely heard, the more usual pronunciation being /təbɒɡən/, and /wæɡən/. After bilabial consonants, in words like ‘happen; ‘happening’, ‘ribbon’ we can consider it equally acceptable to pronounce them with syllabic /n/, /'hæpən, 'hæpənɪŋ, rɪbən/. As we will see, syllabic /n/ is also possible in this context. In a similar way, after velar consonants in words like ‘thicken’, ‘waken’, syllabic /n/ is possible but /ən/ is also acceptable. Syllabic velar nasal /ŋ/ is also possible in this context.

After /f/ or /v/, syllabic /n/ is or common than /ən/ (except, as with the other cases described, in word-initial syllables). Thus ‘seven’, ‘heaven’, ‘often’ are more usually /sevn, hevn, əfn/.

- /m/ and /ŋ/

Both consonants occur as syllabic, but only as a result of processes such as assimilation and elision. We find them sometimes in words like ‘happen’ which can be pronounced /'hæpn/. Examples of possible syllabic velar nasals would be ‘thicken’ /θɪkən/, and ‘broken key’ /brʊkənki:/, where the nasal consonant occurs between velar consonants (again, /n/ or /ən/ could be substituted for /ŋ/ and ‘uppermost’ would be pronounced as /ʌpəmʊst/ would be more usual.

- /r/

In many accents of the type called “rhotic” such as most American accents, syllabic /r/ is very common. The word ‘particular’, for example, would probably be pronounced /pə'tɪkjəlɹ/ by most American, while RP speakers would

pronounce this word /pə'tɪkjələ/. Syllabic /r/ is less common acceptable alternative pronunciations without the syllabic consonants. Here are some examples:

- a. Where non-syllabic /r/ is also acceptable

'history' /histri/ (not usually /histəri/)

- b. Where /ər/ is also acceptable

'buttering' /bʌtrɪnɪŋ/

'flattery' /flætəri/

2.2 Elision

Elision can be defined as the "omission of sounds in connected speech" (Crystal, 2003: 158). In this respect, Underhill (1998:61) indicates that "elision is a natural result of the speech organs cutting corners in connected speech, mainly to word boundaries"

Elision is the omission of one or more sounds (such as a vowel, a consonant, or a whole syllable) in a word or phrase, producing a result that is easier for the speaker to pronounce. Sometimes, sounds may be elided for euphonic effect. Some of the sounds that are heard if words are pronounced slowly and clearly appear not to be pronounced when the same words are produced in a rapid, colloquial style, or when the words occur in a different context; these "missing sounds" are said to have been elided.

It is easy to find examples of elision, but very difficult to state rules that govern which sounds may be elided and which may not. Elision of vowels in English usually happens when a short, unstressed vowel occurs between voiceless consonants, e.g. in the first syllable of 'perhaps' /pə'hæps/, 'potato' /pə'teɪtəʊ/ and the second syllable of 'bicycle' /baɪsɪkl/ or the third syllable of 'philosophy' /fə'lɒsəfi/. In some cases, we find a weak voiceless sound in place of the normally voiced vowel that would have been expected.

Elision also occurs when a vowel occurs between an obstruent consonant and a sonorant consonant such as a nasal or a lateral: this process leads to syllabic consonants, as in 'sudden' sdn! , 'awful' ɔfl! (where a vowel is only heard in the

second syllable in slow, careful speech). Elision of consonants in English happens most commonly when a speaker “simplifies” a complex consonant cluster: ‘acts’ becomes ks rather than kts, ‘twelfth night’ becomes /twelθnait/ or /twelfnait/ rather than /twelfθnait/. It seems much less likely that any of the other consonants could be left out: the l and the n seem to be unleadable.

It is very important to note that sounds do not simply “disappear” like a light being switched off. A transcription such as ks for ‘acts’ implies that the t phoneme has dropped out altogether, but detailed examination of speech shows that such effects are more gradual: in slow speech the t may be fully pronounced, with an audible transition from the preceding k and to the following s, while in a more rapid style it may be articulated but not given any audible realization, and in very rapid speech it may be observable, if at all, only as a rather early movement of the tongue blade towards the s position.

Much more research in this area is needed (not only on English) for us to understand what processes are involved when speech “reduced” in rapid articulation. The following are eight rules of elision that commonly used and will be analyzed.

2.2.1 Loss of weak vowel after /p/, /t/, /k/.

In words like ‘potato’, ‘tomato’, ‘canary’, ‘perhaps’, ‘today’, the vowel in the first syllable may disappear; the aspiration of the initial plosive takes p the whole of the middle portion of the syllable. Resulting in these pronunciations (where ^h indicates aspiration): /p^hteitəʊ/, /t^hmatəʊ/, /p^hhæps/, /t^hdei/.

2.2.2 Weak vowel + n, l or r becomes syllabic consonants.

Roach (2000: 142) notes that “a weak vowel + /n/, /l/ or /r/ becomes a syllabic consonant:

- *tonight* /tnait/
- *police* /pli:s/
- *correct* /krekt/

2.2.3 Avoidance of complex consonant clusters

It has been said that no normal English speaker would ever pronounce all the consonants between the last two words of the following:

- 'George the Sixth's throne' /dʒɔ:dʒ θə sɪksəs θrəʊn/

In the underline words, that are consonant clusters of three plosive or two plosives plus a fricative, the middle plosive may disappear.

2.2.4 Loss of final /v/ in 'of' before consonants.

Gimson (1977: 143) indicates that the phoneme /v/ in the word of is elided when followed by a consonant:

- lots of them / lots ə v ð ðəm // lots ə ð ðəm /

In the same respect, Crystal (2003: 247) says that a word such as "of" is prone to elision before consonants":

- lots o' people / lots ə pi:pl /

In addition, Collins and Mees (2008: 121) note that the elision of /v/ in of is common when followed by / ð /:

- three of the websites / ɜ ri: ə v ð ð websaɪts // ɜ ri: ə ð ð websaɪts /

Usually, foreigner say 'of' word is like just say 'ə'. They omit 'f' in a word. There are other words that loss /v/ in the final, 'official' the illustration is 'ə'fɪʃl'.

2.2.5 When the final syllable has /t/ and /d/

Many linguists affirm that /t/ and /d/ are considered the most commonly elided phonemes in English. In this respect, Finch (2005: 44-45) points out that such a type of elision is due to "casual speech " as illustrated in the following examples:

- mostly /moustli/ becomes /mousli/
- handsome /handsəm/ becomes /hansəm/

Similarly, Collins and Mees (2008: 118) note that such an elision is involved when changing from "the ideal form in connected speech ". In addition, Underhill (1998:61) states that /t/ and /d/ are elided when they occur in a sequence of three consonants in connected speech:

- next please / nekst pli:z / /neks pli:z /
- you and me /ju: and mi:/ becomes /ju: ən mi:/

In the same way, Roach (2000:143) points out that "in clusters of three plosives or two plosives plus a fricative, the middle plosive may disappear ". Consider the following instances in which the medial plosive /t/ is elided:

- acts /akts/ becomes /aks/
- looked back /lukt bak/ becomes /luk bak/

In addition, Yule (1996:59-60) says that /t/ and /d/ are elided in consonant clusters especially in "coda position ", i.e. after the center of the syllable as the following instances illustrate:

- aspects /aspekts/ becomes /aspek/
- friendship /frendʃɪp/ becomes /frenʃɪp/

/t/ and /d/ are also elided when they occur finally preceded by /n/ and followed by a word beginning with a consonant as in: hand that to tom /hand ðæt tə tom/ /hanðæt tə tom/

Gimson (1977:297-298) points out that "the alveolar plosives are apt to be elided in rapid speech when they occur in the following sequences followed by a word beginning with a consonant":

/-st/, /-ft/, /-ʃt/, /-nd/, /-zd/, /-d/, /-vd/, /-pt/, /-kt/, /-tʃ t/, /-bd/, /-gd/, /-dʒ d/:

- last chance / la:st tʃans/ /la:s tʃans/
- kept quiet /kept kwaɪət/ /kep kwaɪət/

Collins and Mees (2008: 121) say that the sequence /tt/ is reduced to /t/ in the following forms: ought to, want to, got to:

- We ought to visit him / wi o:tə vɪzɪt ɪm/

2.2.5.1 Elision of /t/ in Contracted Forms

The phoneme /t/ of the negative form is often elided, particularly in disyllables, before a following consonant:

- You mustn't lose it / ju mʌsn lu:z ɪt / .
- Wouldn't she come? / wʊdn ʃi kʌm / .

(Gimson, 1977:298), Elision of /t/ may sometimes occur before a vowel:

- *You mustn't over eat it* / ju m ʌ sn ʊv ə r i: ɪt /

2.2.6 The elision of /ə/

This can often occur. In connected speech /ə/ can easily disappear at word end when the sound comes at the start of a word, positioned between two stressed syllables, as in:

- Go away is pronounced /'gəʊ_ 'weɪ/

Or when it is followed by a stressed syllable beginning with /r/ or /l/

- Secretary pronounced /'sekɹətri/
- Police pronounced /pli:s/
- Memory pronounced /'memri/

Elision can also happen when the sound is produced in the middle or final combinations

- Preferable is pronounced /'prefrəbəl/
- Library is pronounced /'laɪbrɪ/

2.2.7 The loss of /h/

The sound /h/ is lost in pronominal weak forms. The elision occurs at the end of sentences with this sound.

For example, the /h/ of the two masculine pronouns is retained at the beginning of the sentence

- He passed his exam is pronounced /hɪ 'pa:stɪzɪg'zæm/
- Did you see him last night? /dɪdju: si: ɪmlɑ:snart/
- At Chile, Both of them, live happily /ət 'tʃɪlɪboʊθəvəmlɪv 'hæpɪli

2.3 Types of Elision

According to, <http://www.nativlang.com/linguistics/historical-sound-changes.php> there are three types of elision.

1. Aphaeresis is an initial of deletion: the elision of a sound at the beginning of a word (generally of an unstressed vowel).
Example: Speakers may shorten about time to 'bout time.
2. Syncope is formative-internal deletion: the term is most frequently used for vowels loss, but some writers extend it to consonant as well. We can see the results of syncope in comparisons of American and British forms of certain words.
Example: Speaker may omits the vowel in the middle of word, cotton /'kɑ:tŋ/. The second /o/ is omitted.
3. Apocope is loss of a final element. Apocope of consonants is also quite common: in many varieties of English, for instance, final /t/ deletes before a word beginning with another consonant.
Example: The word 'thumb' lost its final /b/