

Aspects of Connected Speech

Second Class/ Department of English

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Aspects of Connected Speech

When words are pronounced separately in their citation forms, their pronunciation differs from pronunciation in natural connected speech (spontaneous speech) in which they are joined together without any clear boundaries.

Connected speech is a factor of fluency, when we speak quickly, we utter groups of words which are continuous and may not have pauses between them, and this causes changes to the shape of the words.

The most common features of connected speech are the weak forms and contractions of grammatical and some lexical words, some of which are acceptable in written English e.g. (can't, won't, didn't, I'll, he'd, they've ... etc.).

Utterance is a piece of speech which starts with stress and ends with a pause (silence).

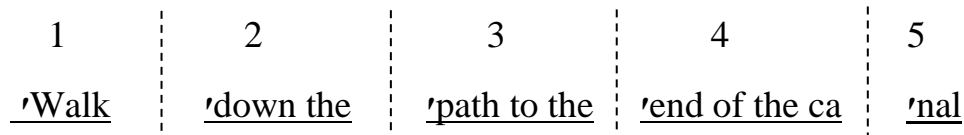
Various features contribute to characterise natural connected speech:

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

Rhythm:

It can be said that rhythm stands for that regular timing of beats we can recognise in songs. English is very rhythmical language, so that a learner who can maintain the rhythm of the language is more likely to sound both natural and fluent. The two components of the system which have the greatest influence on rhythm are **sentence stress** and **various features of connected speech**, i.e. what happens to words when we put them in an utterance. Rhythm is regular occurrence of stressed syllable, the **foot** begins with a stress syllable and includes all following unstressed

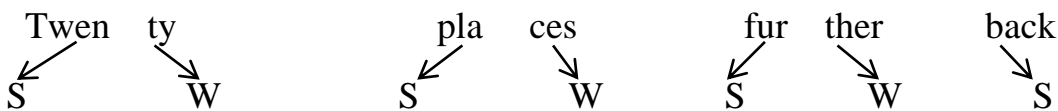
syllable up to (not including) the following stressed syllable. The following sentence would be divided into five feet as following:



Rhythm is an aspect of connected speech involves some noticeable events happening as **stressed-time rhythm**, it implies that stressed syllables will tend to occur at relatively regular intervals whether they are separated by unstressed syllable or not (unstressed). Content words are stressed and the functional words are unstressed. The time between walk and down is the similar to the time between down the, end of the ca and nal the foot beings with a stress syllable and includes all following unstressed syllable up to (not including) the following stressed syllable. Stress syllable + unstressed syllable, some of utterance beings with unstressed syllable. When the following sentence is analysed with two feet:-



Note: There is tendency in English to avoid having two stressed syllables coming close to each other. This will influence stress syllable is avoidable. The phrase:



S: stands for strong

W: stand for weak

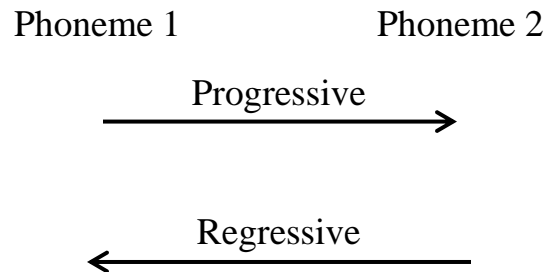
Assimilation

It's a process of connected speech in which two neighbouring sounds influence in one feature or more. In relatively rapid speech adjacent consonant sounds often influence one another to produce changes involving modification in voicing place of 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 neighbouring sound. This process is called assimilation. If the influence is forward the assimilation, it is called progressive.

In a summary, if a phoneme is affected by one than comes later in the sentence, the assimilation is termed regressive.

If a phoneme is affected by one that came earlier in the utterance, the assimilation is termed progressive.



Progressive Assimilation

When two words are combined; the first of which ends with a single final consonant (^fC) and the sound of which starts with a single initial consonant (ⁱC). If ^fC changes to become like ⁱC in some way i.e. the influence is forward (the preceding consonant influences the following one, the assimilation is called regressive.

Usually progressive assimilation occurs within words example:

Dog+s → /dogz/, ask +ed → /æskt/, beg+ed → /bægt/

ⁱC $\xrightarrow{\text{effects on}}$ ^fC

Regressive Assimilation

The phoneme that comes first is affected by the one that comes after it.

ⁱC $\xleftarrow{\text{effected by}}$ ^fC

The influence is backward (the following sound influence the preceding one) so it will be regressive, for example:

Have to /hæv tu/ → /hæf tu/

news /nju:z/ → newspaper /nju:speipə/

Sometimes the two consonant sounds combine into one which is different from both sounds the result is a new sound. This process is called **merging** or **coalescence**.

Merging: is happened when two consonants combine into one sound which differs from the both, for example:

t+j → aren't you /a:nt ju/ → /a:ntʃ u/
d+j → would you /wud ju/ → /wudʒ u/
 during /djuərɪŋ/ → /dʒuərɪŋ/
 educate /edʒukeit/ → /edʒukeit/

Assimilation may result in different ways. The main differences between consonants are of three types:

a- Voicing

b- Place of articulation

c- Manner of articulation

These differences might be summarized as followings:

1. /t/ changes to /p/ before /m/ /b/ or /p/

basket maker, mixed bag, mixed blessing, best man

2. /d/ changes to /b/ before /m/ /b/ or /p/

bad pain, good cook, blood bank

3. /n/ changes to /m/ before /m/ /b/ or /p/

action planning, iron man, on me, open prison, open book

4. /t/ changes to /k/ before /k/ or /g/

cigarette card, short cut, cut glass, first class

5. /d/ changes to /g/ before /k/ or /g/
bad girl, hard copy, sand castle
6. /n/ changes to /ŋ/ before /k/ or /g/
action group, open court, town clerk
7. /s/ changes to /ʃ/ before /ʃ/ or /j/ followed by a rounded vowel sound
dress shop, nice yacht, nice shoes
8. /z/ changes to /ʒ/ before /ʃ/ or /j/ followed by a rounded vowel sound
cheese shop, these sheep, where's yours?
9. /θ/ changes to /s/ before /s/
earth science, fifth set, fourth season