

Phonetics and Phonology

FF1B

Lecture 2 Worksheet

CLASSIFICATION OF SOUNDS - CONSONANTS

This is an overview of the consonant phonemes in English (and the key to ex. 4):

English plosives (6 of them)

The articulators form, for a moment, a total stricture (closure)

- VPM characteristics
- 1. /p/ = a voiceless bilabial plosive
- 2. /b/ = a voiced bilabial plosive
- 3. /t/ = a voiceless alveolar plosive
- 4. /d/ = a voiced alveolar plosive
- 5. /k/ = a voiceless velar plosive
- 6. /g/ = a voiced velar plosive
- 4 phases of articulation: closure phase, hold phase, release phase, post-release phase

English fricatives (=continuants) (9 of them)

- Two articulators form a partial stricture (closure), causing friction
- VPM characteristics
- 1. /f/ = a voiceless labiodental fricative
- 2. /v/ = a voiced labiodental fricative
- 3. /θ/ = a voiceless dental fricative
- 4. /ð/ = a voiced dental fricative
- 5. /s/ = a voiceless alveolar fricative
- 6. /z/ = a voiced alveolar fricative
- 7. /ʃ/ = a voiceless palato-alveolar fricative
- 8. /ʒ/ = a voiced palato-alveolar fricative
- 9. /h/ = a voiceless glottal fricative

English affricates (2 of them)

- They both start as a plosive and finish as a fricative
- VPM characteristics:
 1. /tʃ/ = a voiceless palato-alveolar affricate
 2. /dʒ/ = a voiced palato-alveolar affricate

English nasals (3 of them)

- The velum (soft palate) must be lowered to enable the air to pass through the nose
- VPM characteristics
 1. /m/ = a voiced bilabial nasal
 2. /n/ = a voiced alveolar nasal
 3. /ŋ/ = a voiced velar nasal

English lateral (1)

- The air **does not escape**, as usual, **along the centre of the tongue** (in fact that part of the tongue forms a complete closure against the alveolar ridge) **but along the sides** of the tongue (side=latum)
- VPM characteristics
 1. /l/ = a voiced alveolar lateral (approximant – as some claim)

English aproximants (3 of them)

- The two articulators approach each other but do not get sufficiently close to each other to produce a 'complete' consonant, such as plosive, nasal or fricative

Proximus = near, close

- VPM characteristics:
 1. /r/ = a voiced post-alveolar approximant (non-rhotic = occurring only before vowels)
 2. /w/ = a voiced bilabial approximant
 3. /j/ = a voiced palatal approximant

English aproximants - cont.

- Phonetically, /w/ and /j/ behave like vowels (they are considered as semivowels), phonologically they behave as consonants
- /j/ - phonetically like /i:/; /w/ - phonetically like /u:/ but phonologically consonants
- A year , not *an year, a way, not *an way, the /ðə/ year, the /ðə/ way

English approximants – cont.

- It is a mistake to pronounce /w/ and /j/ as fricatives
- Except in cases like:
 - pure /pjʊə/, /pjɔ:/
 - tune /tju:n/
 - twin /twɪn/
 - queue /kju:/
 - quin /kwɪn/

Glottal stop / ʔ /

Though frequently used by speakers of RP (especially in rapid colloquial speech), the glottal stop is not considered a significant sound in that it *cannot* change the meaning of a word. Thus it is *not given* phonemic status and does not figure on the phonemic chart.

The glottal stop is a plosive produced by a complete block to the air stream at the glottis. The air pressure is then suddenly released. The stop itself is perceived as a *silence* beginning with

the sudden cessation of the previous sound and ended by the sudden onset of the following sound.

It can be described as an **unvoiced glottal plosive** (or stop), and is denoted by the symbol /ʔ/.

The glottal stop can be used:

1. to give emphasis to a syllable beginning with a vowel, eg *Am I?* /ʔæm aɪ/, *It's easy!* /ɪtsʔ i:zi/;
2. between adjacent vowels belonging to different syllables (instead of a glide), eg *co-operate* /kəʊʔəpəreɪt/;
3. to avoid an *intrusive* /r/, eg *I saw it* /... ʔɪt/
4. to replace an unvoiced plosive, mostly /t/ but also /p,k/ at the end of words, eg *what* /wʌʔ/, *shock* /ʃɒʔ/, etc.

You will notice the occurrence of /ʔ/ in authentic listening material and amongst many native speakers.

It is worth practising in context at the same time as practising the articulation it is replacing.

Do not forget though that it is a common feature of **rapid speech** and would sound unnatural when speaking slowly and carefully.