

INTRODUCTION

In learning a foreign language we naturally assimilate the sounds of that language to the nearest similar sounds in our own language (mother tongue), and pronounce them accordingly. This causes problems where two or more sounds in the target language are assimilated to one sound in the mother tongue. The pupil/student then may find it difficult to make the difference between different-sounding words in the target language.

In fact, in Benin Republic, the problem caused by sounds interference may have a great magnitude since about fifty-two (52) languages (most of which are students' mother-tongues) are spoken in this country nowadays.

It is worth saying that a Beninese student/ learner who is learning English as a foreign language does not face exactly the same problems as a Nigerian student/learner for whom English is regarded as a second language. For the former, some English sounds may not have any equivalent sounds in his mother tongue, and not even in French which is Benin's official language whereas for the latter, it is mainly the non-existence of some English sound equivalents in his mother tongue which may cause him problems in the target language which is English.

As far as the English language is concerned, things are not so simple for written English is not always the same as spoken English for many reasons. Firstly, some English words are spelt the same, but they are pronounced differently (eg : **read** / **ri:d**/ and /**red**/).

Secondly, some English words are spelt differently, but are pronounced the same. (e.g. **I** /**aɪ**/ and **eye** / **aɪ**/). Besides these, some words in English are spelt very strangely. For example, **key** and **quay** are both pronounced /**ki**:/ . Many letters in some English words are silent (e.g. '**W**' in **sword**- the phonetic spelling of which

is /sɔ:d/. Unlike many Beninese languages, not all the syllables receive equal stress in English.

Usually, in English only **nouns, verbs, adjectives** and **adverbs, and yes/no questions** and **question words** like **where?** and **how?** receive some stress in a sentence, and if a stressed word contains more than one syllable, often only one syllable is stressed.

Furthermore, one can expect the fact that Nigeria is an English speaking and Benin's neighbouring country to foster a good command of the oral English by the Beninese English teachers and learners/students who frequently have a stay in Nigeria during holidays.

Paradoxically enough, this is not always the case for a set of reasons pertaining to mispronunciation which can even be noticed in Benin here when one interacts with some Nigerians who live in Benin chiefly for business purpose. As a matter of fact, according to *Junior English Project* and *Senior English Project* (a set of six English students' books written by **N. J. H. Grant et al**, edited by Longman), some Nigerians confuse [b] with [θ], others confuse [V] with [f]. Some people confound [θ] with [t] whereas others mix [θ] with [S]. Some Nigerians confuse [ð] with [d] while some mingle [ʃ] with [S].

The vowel [ʌ] is often confused with some other vowel sounds. Likewise, the vowel sounds such as [ɜ:], [ɑ:], [æ], are often confounded. The vowel sounds [ɒ] and [ɔ:] are frequently confused too. Similarly, the diphthong [eɪ] is spelt in several different ways. It is also reported that some Nigerians especially in the northern part of the country, confuse [eɪ] with [e]. It is even said that some Nigerians notably **Yoruba** people have problems with [h] sound because it is a rare sound in **Yoruba** and many **Yoruba** speakers drop it in English. When they want to say '**hear**'; it sounds like '**ear**'. Some Nigerians confuse [P] with [f]. Some other Nigerians who find it difficult to distinguish between [f] and [V] confound pairs of these words **safe/save** and **belief/believe** easily both in speech and writing. The

consonant sounds such as [S] and [Z] are also confused; as a result, for example, pairs of the words like *price/prize* and *cease/seize* become confused.

The vowel sound [æ] and the diphthong [eɪ] are confused by some people or rather they use [æ] in some words where they are supposed to use [eɪ]. The consonant sounds [j] ; [tʃ] ; [ʒ] and [dʒ] cause difficulty too. For instance, it is reported that some Nigerians find it difficult to discriminate between [j] and [tʃ], or make both of these two different sounds sound alike.

Similarly, the two consonant sounds [j] and [ʒ] are often confounded or often both are made to sound alike. Likewise, the vowel sounds [ʊ] and [U:] are frequently confused. Some Nigerian people confound [l] with [r] ; as a result, words like *'bleed'* and *'breed'* are often confused by some Nigerians. Some people have trouble in differentiating between [r] and [w] as in *'twist'* ; *'twee'* ; *'twice'* *'tryst'* ; *'tree'* ; *'trice'*. The two consonant sounds [θ] and [ð] are two different sounds both represented in spelling by *'th'*. Many Nigerians find them difficult because they are not in Nigerian languages. The suffixes of the regular verbs ending in [t] or [d] ; [ʃ] ; [s], [f] ; [p] ; [k] ; [b] ; [g] [v] ; [z] are frequently mispronounced by many Nigerians. All these mispronunciation errors have already crept in Benin, and consequently affect the way some secondary school English teachers and learners of English as a foreign language, pronounce many words in English. These recurrent pronunciation mistakes have *underlying causes* some of which may be discovered on the one hand through *the study of the English consonants and vowels* which are parts and parcels of the **English phonetics**, and on the other hand through the **comparative study of the phonetic lessons found in some Nigerian and Beninese students' books**. That is the reason why **the theme** of this research project work is **THE STUDY OF THE ENGLISH VOWELS AND CONSONANTS, AND THE COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE PHONETIC LESSONS FOUND IN SOME NIGERIAN AND BENINESE STUDENTS' BOOKS**.

THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The main purpose of my research work is to help students and expectant secondary English teachers to solve as many as possible mispronunciation problems while using all the resources at their disposal, to deal with the most pronounced tongue induced articulatory problem in their speech patterns. With that in mind, I hope this goal can be reached when the teacher provides a model for the students and help them to discriminate between sounds/stress taught with a view to inculcating in the English learners a better English pronunciation which is required by a great deal of communication in English in the modern world.

Besides, my intention is to provide students of English with information in order to overcome the problem of spelling pronunciation that appears to be a serious one in our use of the English language because this problem arises as a lack of knowledge of letter / sound correspondance that characterize the English language.

Finally, this project work is also intended to shed new light on the underlying causes of pronunciation errors which tend to be ubiquitous, so that foreign students and expectant teachers of English can make use of good pronunciation of English through many phonetic activities among which the description of the sound (S) under study, the examples set by the English teacher in his classroom, the comparison of some English sounds, the use of phonemic transcription, the contrast of sounds and their testing, which will enable the more experienced student to improve the general standard of his performance in conversation in English if the occasion arises.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This work signifies that teaching/learning English phonetics is very important for many reasons.

Firstly, **the study of the English consonants and vowels** can help the students to solve the most pronounced mother-tongue induced articulatory problems in their speech patterns.

Secondly, the knowledge of the English phonetics helps each one of us to avoid misspelling English words.

Thirdly, the study of the English phonetics may be an 'antidote' to 'broken English' in a modern world where a great deal of communication requires a great command of oral English.

Fourthly, a good knowledge of the English phonetics will help any English learner to develop his pronunciation sufficiently enough so as to permit his effective communication with the English native speakers. In other words, the mastery of the English phonetics by an English learner will contribute greatly to his success in making what **Jones (Jones, 1956, first published in 1909, P4-5)** called ***a good speech*** which may be defined as a way of speaking which is clearly intelligible to all the ordinary people speaking English as their mother tongue.

After having expounded on the problem statement, the purpose of this research project and the significance of this research project, let us move to what the next chapter will be about.

The first chapter of this project work will be based on the literature review while chapter 2 explores the vowels of English through description, examples, comparison, contrast, dialogue, phonemic transcription and comment.

Having examined the vowels of English, we will turn to chapter 3 based on the consonants of English through brief description, examples, comparison, contrast, phonemic transcription dialogues and comments. Chapter 4 explores some consonant sequences / clusters while chapter 5 surveys stress in English words. Finally, chapter 6 will deal with ***the comparative study of the phonetic lessons in the Beninese and Nigerian present English students' books***. This same

chapter is very important in the sense that it will help us to identify *some of the underlying causes of the mispronunciation* noticed both in Nigeria and Benin.

This final chapter will also contain some recommendations that are of paramount importance

CHAPTER I: LITERATURE REVIEW

CHAPTER ONE : LITERATURE REVIEW

1.1. Language learning and pronunciation

The areas of literature that have been chosen for review and analysis in this study are related to the research aims, which have been proposed in the introduction. This chapter reviews and analyses the theoretical frameworks of language learning, and the implications of these for the teaching of pronunciation.

What should be drawn to one's attention is that, in the process of communication, pronunciation plays a crucial role, since successful communication cannot take place without correct pronunciation. Many learners who learnt English as a foreign language (EFL) or a second language (ESL) seek to master native language - like pronunciation and want to speak English accurately and fluently.

However, some second language learners (L2) of Secondary School (SS) have lots of problems with pronunciation. A learner who consistently mispronounces a range of sounds cannot be understood by other users of the language. It can be very frustrating for the learner who may have a good command of grammar and lexis but have difficulty in understanding and being understood by a native speaker. Pronunciation performs an essential role in listening-comprehension, oral expression and oral interaction.

Research in pronunciation is very important in Foreign Language Acquisition (FLA), and a great number of researchers attempted to find methods and rules of teaching. There are many studies on teaching English pronunciation. Many researchers take different approaches. Lund (2003) pointed out that *"pronunciation is the only aspect of language that calls a close interaction between the cognitive and physiological processes. In acquiring newsounds we are also dealing with a complex re-organizing of*

the articulator processes (p. 16)". Good English pronunciation will make people understand you easily and be willing to listen to you. Conversely, poor English may confuse people and lead to an unpleasant talking and misunderstanding, even if you used advanced English grammar or vocabulary. Therefore, we can use simple words or grammar structures to make people understand us, but we cannot use simple pronunciation.

1.2. Communication and Pronunciation

The lack of interest in pronunciation has led to a corresponding lack of research. So pronunciation has once been seen as, a necessary element of the language instruction.

In an article entitled "The pronunciation component of teaching to speakers of other language", J. Morley asserted the importance of teaching pronunciation as well as the need for more empirical research into schools. Morley's article also provides advice for English teachers on how to teach effective pronunciation classes.

Dan Lu, assistant professor at the language centre of Hong Baptist University, discusses the Hong Kong education system failure to take responsibility for students' pronunciation instructions. He explains that students lack of the knowledge of English sounds and use of Chinese characters for transcribing English words lead to a systematic weakness in their English pronunciation. To remedy this, he proposes the teaching of phonetic symbols as a regular part of English classes. He also suggests that teachers receive training in the use of and instruction of these symbols. Mompeana researcher at the University of Murcia makes a similarity, in more general case. His article "Advantage of Phonetic Symbols in classroom", offers practical advice about how phonetic symbols can be effectively used in language instruction, including a variety of practice game and activities for instructions.

For Lightbown and Spade (1999), teachers and students must use correct pronunciation from the beginning because students who have learned correct pronunciation and speech patterns can begin to practise and ultimately improve their speech pattern.

According to Gelvanowsky (2002), pronunciation has an important social value,

which means that it should be related to prestige, such as intelligence, professional competence, persuasiveness, diligence, and social origin, and in most cases it is the most salient characteristic of non-native speakers. Some studies also find that pronunciation usually relates the indispensable factors for socio-economic success: intelligence, professional competence, persuasiveness, diligence, social privilege and so on (Hudson, 1980; Dalton & Seidlhofer, 1994).

To fulfill the role of the Teaching English Pronunciation in the learning, Celce-Murcia (1996) suggested that the communicative approach to the teaching of pronunciation is urgent and important because the non-native speakers need to have a threshold level of pronunciation. "If they fall below this threshold level, they will have oral communication problems no matter how excellent and extensive their control of English grammar and vocabulary might be" (p. 7). Otlouski and Fraser (1999) concurred with much research as that

the goals of pronunciation teaching should not necessarily be acquiring native-like pronunciation, but developing functional intelligibility. communicability increase, self-confidence the development of speech.

monitoring abilities and speech modification strategies for the use beyond the classroom (p.3).

In support of this, Harmer (2001) & also noted that the degree to which students acquired perfect pronunciation seemed to depend very much on their attitude to how they speak and how well they hear. A number of psychological issues may affect how they sound when a person speaks, and so teachers need to consider intelligibility as the prime goal of pronunciation teaching.

According to Bill, cited in Boyd Murphy (2002) the learners learn to pronounce the sounds not only by listening, imitating repeating but also through receiving feedback. Therefore, learners may receive feedback without suffering embarrassment in front of other students. So I noticed that it is very important for learners to make their message clear, precise and concise while dealing with new learners of a language, which the teaching of English pronunciation helps learners to accomplish. Then, it is in this respect

that Gilbert (1994) has explained that: *"This is because English speakers appear to store vocabulary with stress patterns, so a stress mistake can throw a conversation off track; especially if the speaker's control of English vowel sound is uncertain"* (p40).

The English pronunciation has been fully studied by Chen (2007). He listed a general historical view of the role of pronunciation in second language acquisition (SLA).

These centered studies measured and identified the place of English pronunciation in the teaching and learning context. Thus, this study demonstrates the importance of the teaching of English pronunciation in order to give a good picture of secondary school teachers and learners' beliefs about English teaching and learning.

CHAPTER II : THE VOWELS OF ENGLISH

Vowels are defined as the human speech sounds in which the breath is let out without any closing of the air passage in the mouth or throat. The simple vowel sounds of British English are /i:,ɪ, e, æ, ɑ:ɒ,ɔ:,ʊ,u:,ʌ,ɜ:ə/.

It is advised that vowels must be learnt by **listening** and **imitating**. In a classroom environment in a French speaking country like Benin Republic, it is obvious that English teachers should repeat these vowels before asking students to imitate them in order to reinforce the correct pronunciation. To do this requires a good knowledge of the description of these vowels and what makes them different from one another. Let us now examine the first vowel sound on this list, that is [i:] by describing it briefly first, by giving some examples of the words in which it occurs and by contrasting it with the second vowel sound on the list, that is [ɪ].

2. 1 [i:]

2. 1. 1- Description

To pronounce this vowel, the front of the tongue is raised to a height slightly below and behind the front close position ; the lips are spread ; the tongue is tense, with the side rims making a firm contact with the upper molar.

In other words, the vowel, [i:] is pronounced by pressing the sides of the tongue against the upper teeth with just a little space between the middle of the tongue and the roof of the mouth as though we were going to say the “y” in “yes”. The mouth is slightly open and the lips are spread.

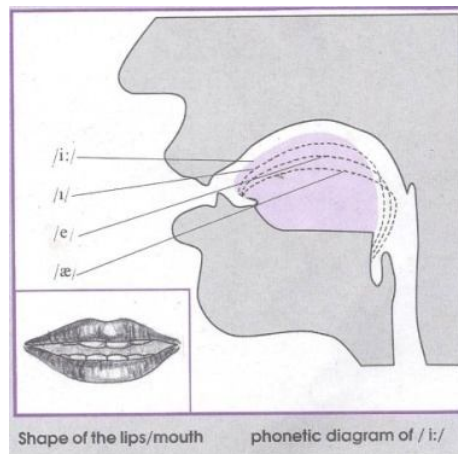


Figure n°1 showing the position of the speech organs in the production of the vowel sound [i:].
Source :Benson. O. Oluikpe et al. (1999). *Intensive English for Junior Secondary Schools*.
(Second edition). Book 1. Page 1.

2.1.2- EXAMPLES

ee – bee, cheese, canteen, been, feel, see, deep, feet, teeth, cheek, weed, sheet, wheel, seed, heed, seek, refugee, payee, employee, cree, eel, creek, creed, creep, fee, feed, deed, beef,

e – be, we, Peter, these, complete, concrete, etc.

ea – bean, bead, heal, cheat, leaf, reason, sea, cease, leave, leash, eaten, seat, neat, lease, beam, lead, tea, seal, weave, wheat, beat, clean, mean, league, tease, heave, measles, greasy, repeat, beast, beaten, meal, heat, leak, please, team

i – machine, police, kerozine, margarine, magazine, prestige, suite, etc.

ie, ey – piece, field, deceive, ceiling, receipt, key,

Note [i:] in 'quay / ki: /, people / pi:pl/.

2. 2 [I]

2. 2. 1 Description

The vowel [I] is pronounced with a part of the tongue nearer to centre than to front, raised above the close-mid position ; the lips are loosely spread ; the tongue

is lax (compared with the tension for [i:]), with the side rims making a light contact with the upper molars. [ɪ] may occur in all positions in the word.

In other words, to pronounce the vowel [ɪ], the tongue is not as high as when we pronounce [i:]. However, the sides of the tongue touch the upper teeth slightly. The tongue is relaxed and the mouth is slightly open.

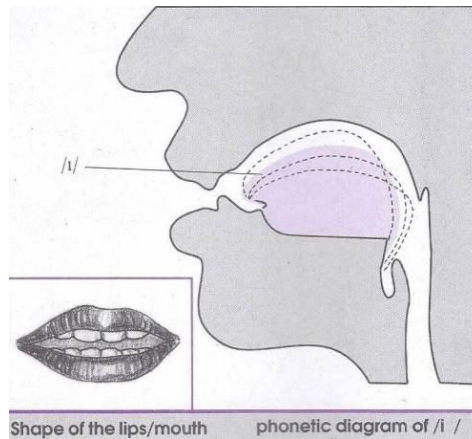


Figure 2 showing the position of the speech organs in the production of the vowel sound [ɪ].

Source : Benson. O. Oluikpe et al. (1999). *Intensive English for Junior Secondary Schools*. (second edition). book 1. page 12.

2. 2. 2. EXAMPLES

i – bin, tin, hill, kin, sin, fifth, rich, trick, lid, lit, will, wind, wit, hid, big, bit, chick, sick, chip, sin, lick, ship,

y – nymph, rhythm, symbol, lynx, cyst, hymn

e – pretty, wicked, depart, houses, needed, decided, omitted, wicket, pocket, except, careless, amoeba,

ie – ladies, cities, parties, carries,

a – village, private, manage, savage, marriage, damage, luggage, orphanage, language, average, carriage, cartilage, cabbage, ravage

(Note: build / bɪld /, Sunday / sʌndɪ / (and the other days of the week).

Busines/ bɪznɪs/, women /wɪmɪn/, minute (n) /mɪnɪt/ ; England /ɪŋɡlənd/

2.2.3 Contrast [i:] with [ɪ]

| | | | | | | | | |
|------|------|-------|-------|--------|-------|------|-------|--------|
| [i:] | lead | wheat | heels | cheeks | beans | seek | wheel | leaked |
| [ɪ] | lid | wit | hills | chicks | bins | sick | will | licked |

2.2.4 DIALOGUE : MY NEW PAIR OF SHOES.

Toni : This *seems* to be a new pairs of shoes.

Momo : Yes, but they are small and do not *fit* my *feet*.

Toni : It s because you *feed* well and so have large *feet*.

Momo : No, *feeding* has nothing to do with my *feet*.

Toni : But if you don't *feed* well, you won't grow *big*. Anyway, these shoes would *fit* smaller *feet*.

2.2.5 Some sentences

- a- Peter is *easy* to please.
- b- Give him some *peas* and *beans* and he'll dance in *glee*.
- c- The police *freed* the *meat thief*.
- d- Please take my *seat* and *leave* me alone.

2.2.6 Comment

The [ɪ] sound is made when the tongue is low, spread, and relaxed. It is half between [i:] and [e] It is always short.

The [i:] sound is like [ɪ] except that it is made when the tongue is stiff and pressed against the roof of the mouth, as if we were going to say 'y' in 'yes'. It also differs from it in length. It is always long.

In French [i:] and [ɪ] are confused, [i:] being used for both. Let us at present turn to the vowel [e].

2. 3. [e]

2. 3. 1. Description

To pronounce [e] the front of the tongue is raised between the-mid and open-mid positions, the lips are loosely spread and are slightly wider apart than for [ɪ], the tongue may have more tension than in the case of [ɪ], the side rims making a light contact with the upper molars.

In other words, to pronounce the vowel [e] the front part of the tongue is raised half way towards the roof of the mouth and is further forward than when we make the sound [ɪ]. The sides of the tongue touch the upper teeth slightly and the tip of tongue touches the lower front teeth while the mouth is a little more open than for [i:] and [ɪ].

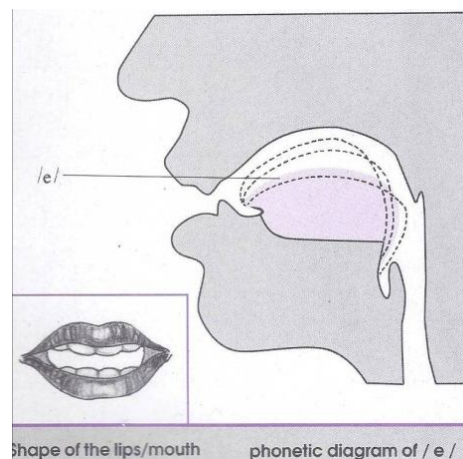


Figure n°3 showing the position of the speech organs in the production of [e].

Source : Benson. O. Oluikpe et al. (1999). *Intensive English for Junior Secondary Schools*. (second edition). book 1. page 13

2.3.2 EXAMPLES

e – bed, set, went, fen, felled, fence, felt, else, reggae, red, rends, wretch, rents, well, weld, welts, begs, belt, bench, sell, sends, sent, sense, led, legs, less, lest, left, pegs, tend, wrecks, hem, men, mess, nets, pen, tell, help, bell, ten, get, next, let, when, never, best, treks, desk, merry, selfish, penguin central, medal, betting, redder, better, tennis, fetch, wednesday, melt, elmheld, depth, chest, shell, spell, belle, etc.

ea – breath, breast, instead, head, dead, bread read (simple past/past participle), lead (metal), heavy, health,

a – many, Thames, any, many

ie – friend, friendly, friendship,

u – bury, burial,

ai – said,

(Note the following words with [e] ‘Geoffrey’*/dʒefri/, ‘Leicester’*/lestə/; ‘ate’ /et/ or /eit/, ‘again’/ə’gen/or/ə’geɪn/)

2.3.3 Comparison

| | | | | | | | | |
|------|--------|--------|--------|-------|------|-----|------|--------|
| [i:] | leafed | reach | field | wheel | bead | eat | seal | cheeks |
| [ɪ] | lift | rich | filled | will | bid | it | sill | chicks |
| [e] | left | wretch | felled | well | bed | ate | sell | checks |

2.4 THE SIMPLE VOWEL SOUND [æ]

2.4.1 Description

To pronounce [æ] the mouth is slightly more open than for [e]; the front of the tongue is raised to a position midway between open and open-mid, with the side rims making a very slight contact with the back upper molars, the lips are neutrally open.

In other words, to pronounce [æ] the mouth is slightly more open than it is for [e]. The tip of the tongue touches the lower front teeth and the back of the tongue touches the upper back teeth. The lips are spread.

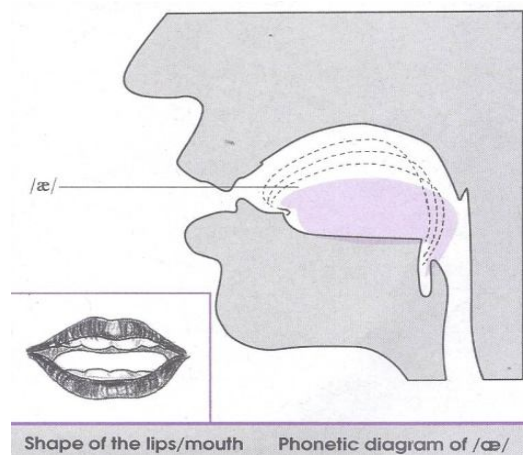


Figure n°4 showing the position of the speech organs in the production of [æ].

Source : Benson. O. Oluikpe et al. (1999). *Intensive English for Junior Secondary Schools*. (second edition). book 1. page 35.

2.4.2 EXAMPLES

a – hand, lamp, macho, rash, sat, man, cat, rat, bat, cap, ram, rags, mad, shall, sang, marry, tanker, thanks, pack, bag, bath, lamb, gnat, lack, black, clap, plank, land, plan, battle, cattle, catch, tan, sad, mass, badge, batch, balance, balcony, scab, scalp, clap, lack, dash, maths, tram, dam, damp, shack ; tramp, fan, van

ai – plaid, plait

ei – reveille /ri'væli/

i – timbre /'tæmbə/

2.4.3 Contrast

| | | | | | | | | |
|-----|--------|--------|------|--------|-----|------|-----|-------|
| [ɪ] | tinned | riks | hymn | tricks | fin | miss | lid | knits |
| [e] | tend | wrecks | hem | treks | fen | mess | led | nets |
| [æ] | tanned | racks | ham | tracks | fan | mass | lad | gnats |

2.5 The vowel sound [ɑ:]

2.5.1 Description

This normally long vowel is articulated with a considerable separation of the jaws and the lips neutrally open ; a part of the tongue between the centre and back is in the fully open position, no contact being made between the rims of the tongue and the upper molars.

In other words, to make this sound, we open our mouth fully and we let our tongue rest against our lower teeth. The front part of the tongue should stay down and the back part is pulled backwards.

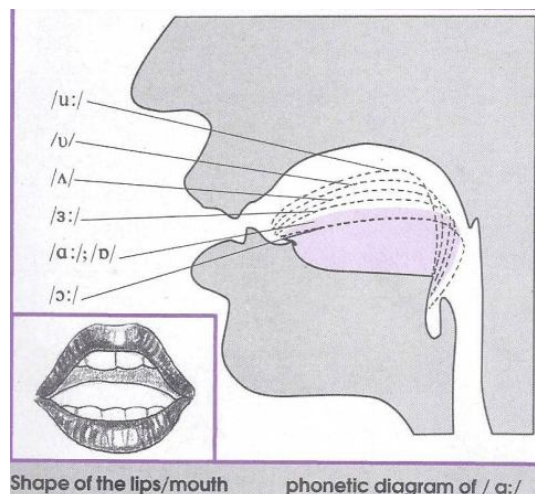


Figure n°5 showing the position of the speech organs in the production of [ɑ:]

Source : Benson. O. Oluikpe et al. (1999). *Intensive English for Junior Secondary Schools*. (second edition). book 1. page 35.

2.5.2 EXAMPLES

a – *Bach*, *pass*, *bath*, *tomato*, *father*, *branch*, *camouflage*, *last*, *barrage*, *garage*,
staff, *after*

ar – *part*, *car*, *march*, *card*, *cart*, *harm*, *farm*, *large*, *larch*, *hard*, *dart*, *raft*, *lark*,
arm, *star*, *guard*, *barn*, *bark*, *partner*, *gardener*, *garden*, *charming*

ear – *heart*, *hearth*,

er – *clerk*, *derby*, *sergeant*,

al – *calm*, *palm*, *half*, *psalm*, *alms*,

au – *aunt*, *laugh*

2.5.3 Contrast

| | | | | | |
|------|-------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|
| [ɑ:] | <i>cart</i> | <i>heart</i> | <i>park</i> | <i>march</i> | <i>aunt</i> |
| [æ] | <i>cat</i> | <i>hat</i> | <i>pack</i> | <i>match</i> | <i>ant</i> |

2.6 [ɒ]

2.6.1 Description

This short vowel is articulated with wide open jaws and slight, open lip- rounding ; the back of the tongue is in the fully open position, no contact being made between the tongue and the upper molars.

In other words, to pronounce the vowel [ɒ] the mouth is wide open and the tongue is down. The lips are slightly rounded. Except for the shape of the lips, it is very much like the position for the pronunciation of [ɑ:]

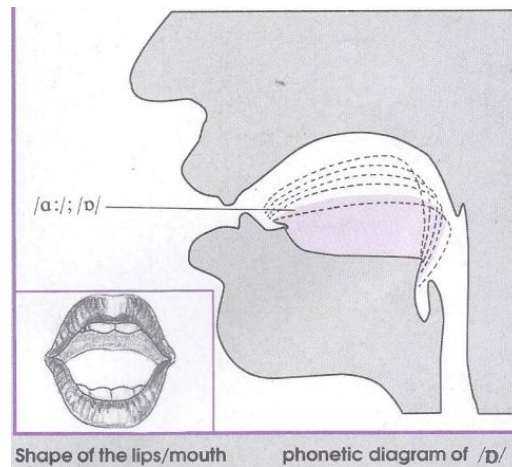


Figure n°6 showing the position of the speech organs in the production of [ɒ].

Source : Benson. O. Oluikpe et al. (1999). *Intensive English for Junior Secondary Schools*. (second edition). book 1. page 85.

2.6.2 EXAMPLES

o – dog, dock, holiday, sorry, gone, cot, lock, pot, hot, cod, lot, not, dot, porridge, rob, shop, shod, pod, rock, knock, knob, lodge, lost, boss, loss, top, tot, toss, mock, songs, bottle, cotton, bodge, stock, bonds, wrong, pond, cost,

a–was, what, swan, want, watch, quality, wash, wasp, wander, wrath, wan,

ou, ow – cough, trough, Gloucester, knowlege,

au – because, sausage, laurel, **A**ustralia, **A**ussie, **A**ustria, cauliflower,

(Note [ɒ] in `yatch /jɒt/)

2.6.3 Contrast

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------|------|------|------|-------|------|------|-------|-------|-------|------|------|-------|-------|------|
| [ɒ] | pot | cot | don | hot | cod | dock | stock | bodge | bonds | lost | moll | box | shone | hock |
| [ɑ:] | part | cart | darn | heart | card | dark | stark | barge | barn | last | marl | barks | shan | hark |

2.7. [ɔ:]

2.7.1. Description

This relatively long vowel is articulated with medium lip – rounding ; the back of the tongue is raised between the open – mid and close – mid positions, no contact being made between the tongue and the upper molars.

In other words, the vowel [ɔ:] is made with the back of the tongue. To pronounce it we should pull the back of the tongue more than we do for the production of [ɑ:]. The lips are rounded as we pronounce this sound. It is a really long vowel.

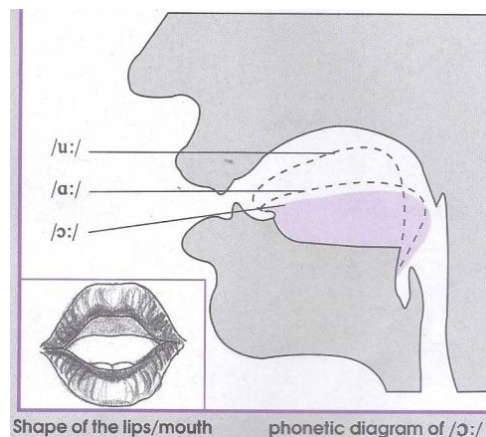


Figure n°7 showing the position of the speech organs in the production of [ɔ:].

Source : Benson. O. Olukpe et al. (1999). *Intensive English for Junior Secondary Schools*. (second edition). book 1. page 95.

2. 7. 2EXAMPLES

ar, or – war, quart, cord, horse, dwarves, ward, warm, sword, born, warp fork,
lord, port, short, cork, sort, organ, worn, orb, form, chord, chorus, shorn

ore – before, more, snore, shore, chore, tore, core, bore, store.

our– court, four, pour, source, your, yours

oar, oor – board, roar, oars, door, floor,

au, augh – fault, cause, daughter, caught, fauna, vault, taught, Paul, cauliflower,
auction, Auckland, sauce, fraud, clause, Auden, audible, August, aught, auk
aura, auto, autumn ; gauze, auditory, audio, audience, audit, maul, fraught.

a– all, talk, walk, chalk, wall, fall, salt, water, tall, hall, halt, waltz, alter, alright,
already, although, always, also, alter, false, ball.

aw – saw, lawn, jaw, law, awesome, flaw gnaw, maw, raw, draw, claw, caw,
dawn, dawdle, awe, awl, bawl, fawn, gawk, gawp, hawk, paw, paw-paw, pawn,
prawn, straw, tawdry, thaw, trawl, yawl, yaw, yawn, yaws.

ou, ough – bought, thought, ought, sought, fought, brought, nought, wrought,
trough /trɔ:f /, / trɒf /, us / trɑ:f /

Note [ɔ:] in `broad / brɔ:d / ; sure / ʃɔ:(r) /poor /pɔ:(r) / with alternative [ʊə]
in `sure' / ʃʊə(r)/ and / poor / pʊə(r)

2.7. 3. Contrast

1.

| | | | | | | | |
|------|------|-------|--------|-------|--------|------|--------|
| [ɒ] | pot | shot | knɒt | stock | cot | sot | tot |
| [ɔ:] | Port | short | nought | stork | caught | sort | taught |

2. Dialogue : Mr Ayewa wants a drink.

Mr Ayewa : Darling, I need something to drink. .

Mrs Ayewa : But there' s no drink in the fridge.

Mr Ayewa : There' s no something here. I poured some **port** from the jar into the pot.

Mrs Ayewa : No! This pot is not meant for **port**

Mr Ayewa : There was no jug ; so, I used the pot instead.

Mrs Ayewa : Then, make **sure** you finish the **port** in the pot.

2. 8. The short vowel [ʊ]

2. 8. 1. Description

The short vowel [ʊ] is pronounced with a part of the tongue nearer to centre than to back raised just above the close – mid position, it has, therefore, a symmetrical back relationship with the front vowel [i]; the tongue is laxly held (compared with the tenser [u:], no firm contact being made between the tongue and the upper mollars. The lips are closely but loosely rounded. This vowel occurs in both accented and unaccented syllables, being present in the accented syllable of a relatively small number of words, though some of these are of common occurrence, e.g. **put**, **good**, **look**, **would**. [ʊ] does not occur in word – initial positions nor before [ŋ], and finally only in an unaccented form of **to** [tʊ].

In other words, to pronounce the vowel [ʊ] the back of the tongue is raised towards the roof of the mouth and the lips are rounded.

2. 8. 2 Examples

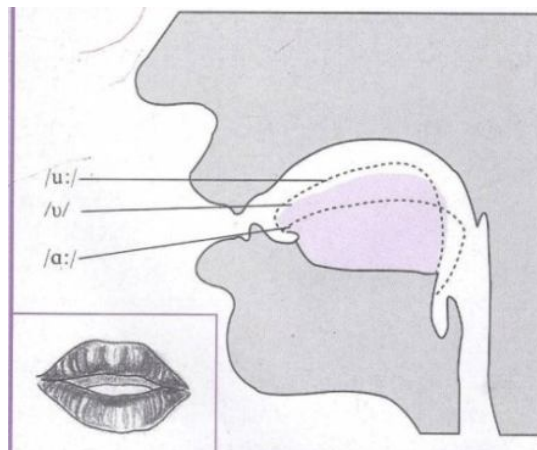
u – **butcher**, **cellular**, **cushion**, **European**, **euro**, **full**, **put**, **sugar**, **push**, **bush**, **bull**, **bullet** **bulldozer**, **pull**, **fulsome**,

oo – **book**, **good**, **wood**, **wool**, **foot**, **football**, **shook**, **soot**, **stood**, **took**, **look**, **goodness**, **bookcase**, **firewood**, **brook**, **crook**.

o – **wolf**, **bosom**, **woman**

ou – **would**, **could**, **should**, **courier**

(Note 'Worcester' */wʊstə/, 'worsted' /wʊstɪd/)



Shape of the lips / Phonetic diagram of [ʊ]

Figure n°8 :showing the position of the speech organs in the production of [ʊ].

Source : Benson. O. Oluikpe et al. (1999). *Intensive English for Junior Secondary Schools*. (second edition). book 1. page 105.

2. 8. 3. Contrast

| | | | | | | | | |
|------|------|--------|------|--------|-------|------|------|--------|
| [ɔ:] | ward | fought | pall | baulks | gored | cork | sort | shored |
| [ʊ] | wood | foot | pull | books | good | cook | soot | should |

2. 9. The long vowel[ʊ:]

2. 9.1. Description

The long vowel [ʊ:] is a close back vowel, but the tongue-raising is relaxed from the closest position and is somewhat centralized from true back ; its relationship with [ʊ] is similar to that between [i:] and [ɪ], the articulation of [ʊ:] being tense compared with that of [ʊ], although no firm contact is made between the tongue and the upper molars. The lips tend to be closely rounded. [ʊ:] does not normally occur before [ŋ].

In other words, to pronounce this vowel the tongue is raised higher than it is for [ʊ] so that the sides touch the back teeth. The sound is made right at the top and the back of the mouth and the lips are closely rounded.

2. 9. 2 Examples

u – *rude, June, Susan, crucial, rude, tune*

oo– *food, soon, moon, spoon, too, tooth, broods, cool, coo, loop, loon, school, roo, tool, roof, fool, pool, shoot, woo, boot room, stool, stook, smooth, rood, broom, groom , bloom,*

o –*do, who, move, lose, tomb, two*

ou – *group, soup, wound (n), through,*

ew – *chew, flew, askew, stew, drew, brew, threw, ewe / jʊ: /*

u(e), ui,oe - *blue, juice, fruit, suit, true, clue, shoe, ruler.*

Note : In many cases of the spelling **u, eu, ew, ui** [ʊ:] is preceded by [j];

e.g. *music, duke, neuter, new, few, knew, stew, dew, hue, ewe /jʊ:/,*

hue, duty, due, argue, nuisance, beauty ; insome words, both [ʊ:] and [jʊ:] are

heard, e.g. *suit, dew, enthusiasm / m'θjʊ:ZIæZ(ə)m/,stew, due, sue,*

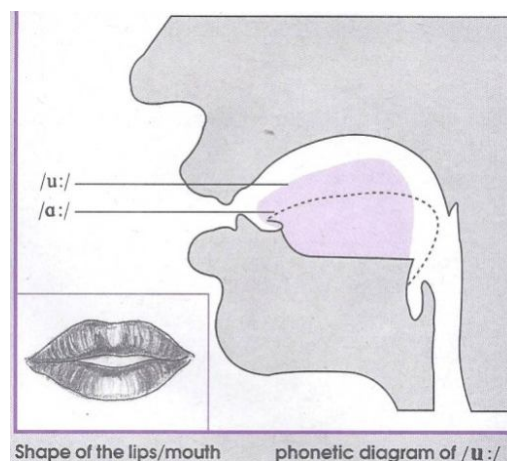


Figure n°9 showing the position of the speech organs in the production of [ʊ:]

Source : Benson. O. Oluikpe et al. (1999). *Intensive English for Junior Secondary Schools*. (second edition). book 1. page 115.

2.9.3 Comment

For the French people and for most of the people whose countries have French as official language, [ʊ:] and [ʊ] are confused, [ʊ:] being used for both.

2.10 The short vowel[ʌ]

2.10.1 Description

The short vowel [ʌ] is articulated with a considerable separation of the jaws and with the lips neutrally open, the centre of the tongue (or a part slightly in advance of the centre) is raised just above the fully open position, no contact being made between the tongue and the upper molars. [ʌ] does not occur in final, open syllables.

In other words, to pronounce this short vowel [ʌ], the mouth is open though not as wide as for [ɑ:]. The middle of the tongue is slightly raised.

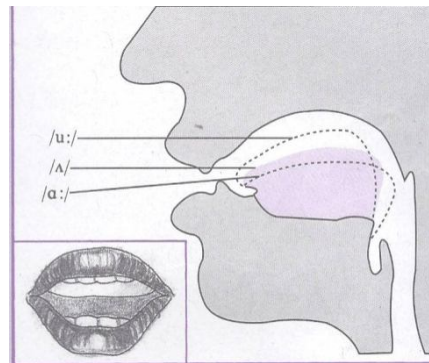
2.10.2. Examples

u – cut, drug, dull, sun, jupp*e*, jump, **u**p, gun, duck, but, hut, hum, stuff, pus, much, luck, nut, button, bug, fun, run mud, bud, under, cup, lust, sup, suck, result, pulse, bulge, bulb, lump, lunch, fund, bump, pun, **u**m, pulp, pump, mull, stuck, cud, putt, buck, shun, huck, sum, gush, sung, shrung, hurry, fuzz, fudge, pub, puff, punch, fuss, just, judge, jug, ugly, public, study, such, hung, hunt, hutch, drum, gull, rum, num.

o – son, come, among, **o**ne, done, month, come, **o**nion, London, **o**ven, love, some, won, comrade, ton, son, worry, does, brother, combat, constable, mother, wonder, honey, front, colour, monkey, nothing, doxen, cover, accomplish,

oo – blood, flood.

ou – country, southern, couples, enough, rough, tough, trouble, cousin, young,



Shape of the lips / mouth **Phonetic digram of /ʌ/**

Figure n°10 showing the position of the speech organs in the production of [ʌ].

Source : Benson. O. Olukpe et al. (1999). *Intensive English for Junior Secondary Schools*. (second edition). book 1. page 171.

2.10.3 Contrast

1)

| | | | | | | | | |
|-----|-------|-----|-----|------|--------|-------|------|--------|
| [æ] | drags | pan | ham | gash | fanned | match | sang | shrank |
| [ʌ] | drugs | pun | hum | gush | fund | much | Sung | shrunk |

2)

| | | | | | | | | |
|------|------|-------|-------|------|--------|------|-------|--------|
| [æ] | ham | match | bans | lack | mad | cat | Sam | backed |
| [ʌ] | hum | much | buns | luck | mud | cut | sum | bucked |
| [ɑ:] | harm | march | barns | lark | marred | cart | psalm | barked |

2.11 The long vowel [ɜ:]

2.11.1 Description

The long vowel [ɜ:] is articulated with the centre of the tongue raised between close-mid and open-mid, no firm contact being made between the tongue and upper molars ; the lips are neutrally spread.

In other words, this long vowel is pronounced with the middle of the tongue raised as in [ʌ]. The difference is that the mouth is almost shut with only a small gap between the teeth.

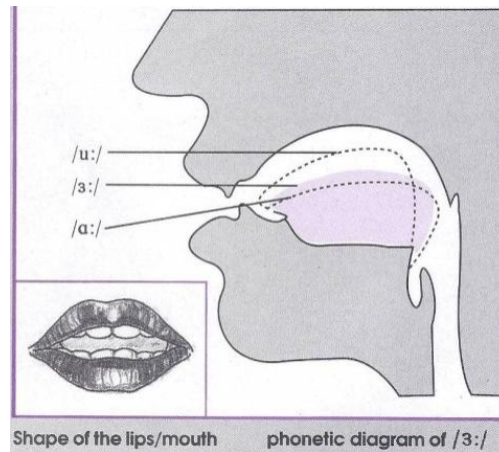


Figure n°11 showing the position of the speech organs in the production of [ɜ:].

Source : Benson. O. Oluikpe et al. (1999). *Intensive English for Junior Secondary Schools*. (second edition). book 1. page 182.

2.11.2 Examples

er, err – *her, serve, err, verb, herb, germ,*

ur, urr – *turn, church, nurse, purse, purt, cursor, hurt, curt, bur, blurb, blurt*

burn, burg, burp, burst, curse, curl, curve, shurn, lurk, surge, urge, fur, surf

curl, Thursday, hurl,

ir, yr – *bird, first, myrtle, myrrh, skirt, girl, firm, whirl, birth, third, shirt*

w + or – *word, work, world, worm, worse, worth, worst, worthy,*

ear – *earth, heard, learn, early, search, earl, pearl,*

our – *journey, scourge, courtesy,*

Note [ɜ:] in colonel [kɜ:nl]

2.11.3 Contrast

1)

| | | | | | | | | |
|------|-------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|
| [ʌ] | <i>cud</i> | <i>fussed</i> | <i>buns</i> | <i>such</i> | <i>thumb</i> | <i>luck</i> | <i>hull</i> | <i>shut</i> |
| [ɜ:] | <i>curd</i> | <i>first</i> | <i>burns</i> | <i>search</i> | <i>therm</i> | <i>lurk</i> | <i>hurl</i> | <i>shirt</i> |

2.12 The short vowel [ə].

2.12.1 Description

The [ə] is made in the middle of the mouth with the tongue slightly raised, the lips are relaxed and spread, and the mouth slightly open. It is always short and weak.

The [ɜ:] sound is like [ə] except that it is strong and always long.

[ə] can occur in medial position, in initial position, in final position and in the weak forms.

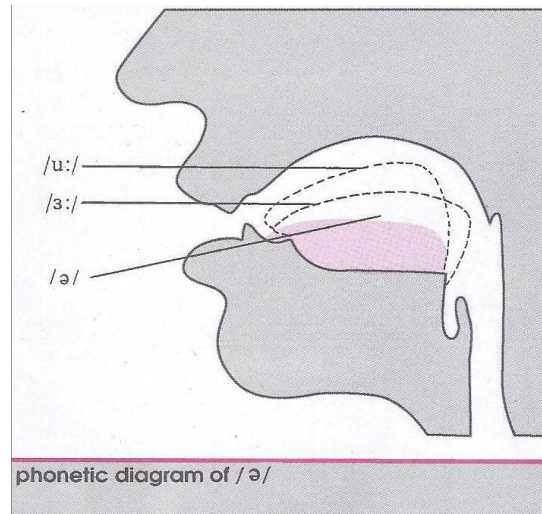


Figure n°12 showing the position of the speech organs in the production of [ə].

Source : Benson. O. Oluikpe et al. (1999). *Intensive English for Junior Secondary Schools*. (second edition). book 2. page 36.

2.12.2 EXAMPLES

In medial position

| | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| perhaps /pə'hæps/ | contain /kən'teɪn/ |
| entertain /,entə'teɪn/ | embarrass /ɪm'bærəs/ |
| dinners /'dɪnəz/ | hindered /'hɪndəd/ |
| contain /kən'teɪn | glamorous /'glæməərəs/ |
| amateur /'æmətə/'æmətɜ:/ | component /kəm'pəʊnənt/ |
| comfortable /'kʌmfətəbl/ | characters /'kærəktəz/ |
| ignorant /'ɪgnərənt / | menace /'menəs/ |
| understand /,ʌndə'stænd/ | terrible /'terəbl/ |
| pilot /'paɪlət/ | courageous /kə'reɪdʒəs/ |
| permanent /'pɜ:mənənt/ | nicotine /'nɪkəti:n/ |

2°) In initial position

| | | |
|--------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| obey/ə'beɪ/ | attend/ə'tend/ | approve / ə'pru:v/ |
| allow/ə'laʊ/ | obstruct/əb'strʌkt/ | appear/ə'piə |
| amount/ə'maʊnt/ | achieve/ə'tʃi:v/ | offence/ə'fens/ |
| analysis/ə'næləsis | account/ə'kaʊnt/ | aside/ ə'saɪd/ |
| adore/ ə'dɔ:/ | annoy/ ə'nɔɪ | agree/ ə'gri:/ |
| | | adjourn/ə'dʒɜ:n/ |

3°) In final position

| | |
|----------------------|---------------------|
| sooner / ʃu:nə/ | doctor/ ˈdɒktə/ |
| measure/ ˈmeɪzə/ | sailor/ ˈseɪlə/ |
| sulphur / ˈsʌlfə/ | chauffeur/ ˈʃəʊfə/ |
| Africa*/ ˈæfrɪkə/ | America*/ə'merɪkə/ |
| Persia/ pɜ:ʃə/ | Canada*/ ˈkænədə/ |
| flatterer/ ˈflætərə/ | admirer/ədmaɪərə/ |
| colour/ ˈkʌlə/ | zephyr/ ˈzefə/ |
| picture/ ˈpɪktʃə/ | China*/ ˈtʃaɪnə/ |
| murderer/ ˈmɜ:dərə/ | composer/kəm'pəʊzə/ |

4°) In weak forms

| Words | Weak forms | Strong forms | Words | Weak forms | Strong forms |
|-------|------------|---------------|-------|------------|--------------|
| a | /ə/ | /eɪ/ | can | /kən/ | /kæn/ |
| and | /ənd/ | /ænd/ | could | /kəd/ | /kʊd/ |
| are | /ə/ | /ɑ:(r)/ | does | /dəz/ | /dʌz/ |
| as | /əz/ | /æz/ | for | /fə/ | /fɔ:/ |
| at | /ət/ | /æt/ | from | /frəm/ | /frɒm/ |
| am | /əm/ | /æm/ | some | /səm/ | /sʌm/ |
| must | /məst/ | /mʌst/ | them | /ðəm/ | /ðem/ |
| of | /əv/ | /ɒv/ | were | /wə/ | /wɜ:/ |
| shall | /ʃəl/, | /ʃæl/,/ʃɔ:l/, | would | /wəd/ | /wʊd/ |

| | | | | | |
|------|-------|-------|-----|-------|-------|
| to | /tə/ | /tu:/ | had | /həd/ | /hæd/ |
| was | /wəz/ | /wɒz/ | us | /əs/ | /ʌs/ |
| but | /bət/ | /bʌt/ | | | |
| is | /əz/ | /ɪz/ | | | |
| have | /həv/ | /hæv/ | | | |

The following table can help us to deal with the English vowels in general.

| Numbers (N°) | English vowels | EXAMPLES (Illustrations) | 3 TL |
|-----------------|-------------------|-----------------------------|---|
| 1 | i: | leaf/li:f/ | a close front and spread vowel sound |
| 2 | ɪ | bid/bɪd/ | a half close front and more spread (than N°3) vowel sound |
| 3 | e | set/set/ | a half open front and more spread (than vowel sound N°4) vowel sound |
| 4 | æ | sat/sæt/ | an open front less spread vowel sound |
| 5 | ɑ: | car/kɑ:(r)/ | an open back and less rounded vowel sound |
| 6 | ɒ | hot/hɒt/ | a half open back and more (than vowel sound N°5) vowel sound |
| 7 | ɔ: | law/lɔ:/ | a half close back and more rounded (than vowel sound N°6) vowel sound |
| 8 | ʊ | look/lʊk/ | a half close back and less rounded (than vowel sound N°7) vowel sound |
| 9 | U: | food/fu:d/ | a close back and rounded vowel sound |
| 10 | ʌ | lung/lʌŋ/ | a half open centre and neutral vowel sound |
| 11 | ɜ: | Sir/sɜ:/ | a half open central and less neutral (than vowel sound N°10) |
| 12 | ə | about/ə'baʊt/ | a half close and less neutral (than vowel sound N°11) |

Table N°1: Table of the simple English cardinal vowels

To sum up, the twelve English vowels that I have considered so far can be classified into two categories namely **short vowels**(**ɪ, ə, e, æ, ʌ, ɒ, ʊ**), and **long vowels** (**i: ɜ: ɑ: ɔ:**). We can also remember that when the vowels are followed

by a strong consonant they are shorter than when they are followed by a weak consonant, so that *beat*/bi:t/, *bit* /bit/ and *bet*/bet/ all have shorter vowels than *bead*/bi:d/, *bid*/bid/and *bed*/bed/, but even so the vowel [i:] is always longer than the vowels [ɪ]and [e] in any one set.

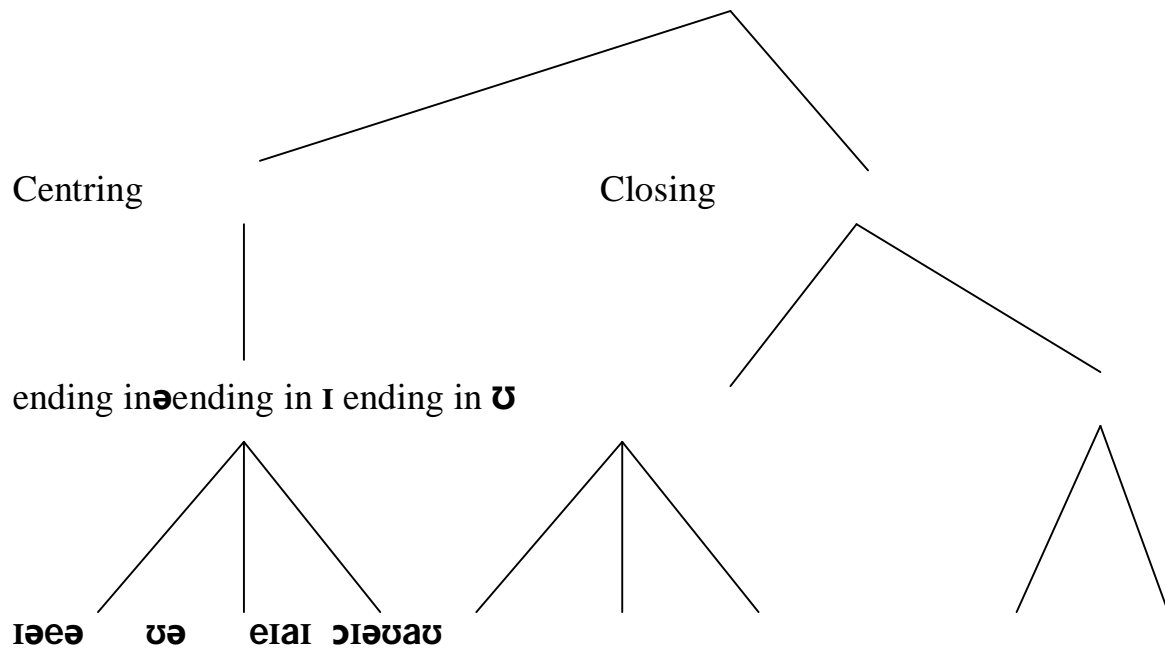
2.13 Diphthongs

BBC pronunciation has a large number of **diphthongs** which are defined as **sounds which consist of a movement or glide from one vowel to another**. A vowel which remains constant and does not glide is called **pure vowel**.

In terms of **length**, **diphthongs** are similar to the following **long vowels** such as **i:**, **ɜ:**, **ɑ:**, **ɔ:**and **u:**. Another important thing to remember about all the **diphthongs** is that the first part is much **longer** and **stronger** than the second part; for example, most of the diphthong [aɪ] as in the words ‘*eye*,’ ‘*I*’) consists of the vowel [a], and only in about the last quarter of the diphthong does the glide to [ɪ] become noticeable. As the glide to [ɪ] happens, **the loudness** of the sound **decreases**. Consequently, the [ɪ] part is **shorter**and **quieter**. We, foreign learners/students of English should, therefore, always remember that the last part of the English diphthongs must not be made too strongly.

The total number of the English diphthongs is eight (though [ʊə] is increasingly rare). The following figure can help us learn them easily.

DIPHTHONGS



ENGLISH DIPHTHONGS

Comment

The *diphtongs of English* are in **three(3) groups** :

Those which end in [ə] (such as **ɪə**, **eə**, and **ʊə**)

Those which end in [I](such as **eɪ**, **aɪ**, and **ɔɪ**)

Those which end in [ʊ] (such **əʊ** and **aʊ**)

Let us now examine them one by one in order to see how they occur in some English words.

2.13.1.[eɪ]

2.13.1.1 Examples

a – *ape*, *late*, *mate*, *make*, *lady*, *waste*, *hate* *base*, *same*, *gate*, *lake*, *face*, *safe*, *ache*, *game*, *gaze*, *race*, *safe*, *bate*, *male*, *plate*, *fate*, *plane*, *gate*, *date*, *paper*, *escape*, *tale*, *pale*.

ay – *day*, *may*, *way*, *tray*, *play*, *clay*, *ray*, *lay*, *say*, *slay*, *stray*, *bay*, *gay*, *pay*, *say*.

ai – *waist*, *rail*, *aim*, *snail*, *rain*, *fail*, *tail*, *sail*, *mail*, *pain*, *train*, *drain*, *brain*, *pail*, *paint*, *complain*, *straight*, *wait*, *maid*, *main*, *maim*, *plain*, *vain*, *nail*, *jail*, *raid*.

ei,ey – *eight*, *veil*, *weigh*, *rein*, *reign*, *neigh*, *neighbour*, *they*, *whey*, *vein*, *freight* *grey*.

ea – *great*, *steak*, *break*.

Note: *gauge*/geɪdʒ/,*gaol*/dʒeɪl/,

bass'(music) /beɪs/.

2.13.1.2 Constrast

1)

| | | | | | | | |
|------|------|------|-------|--------|--------|--------|------|
| [e] | let | get | test | letter | pepper | wetter | tell |
| [eɪ] | late | gate | taste | later | paper | waiter | tale |

2) Dialogues

a) A: When's the next *plane* to *Lagos*, please?

B: *Eight* *twenty*. But it's *ten* minutes *late*.

b) A: I'm *waiting* for a *letter*.

B: The *mail* is *late* today. Come back *later*.

c) A: Shall I give you some *pepper*?

B: *Yes*, please. Put it in this *paper*.

3) Another comparison

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------|------|--------|------|-------|-------|---------|-------|-------|-------|------|------|------|
| [e] | red | chest | sell | sent | etch | trend | fleck | wedge | west | led | pen | fell |
| [eɪ] | raid | chased | sale | saint | aitch | trained | flake | wage | waist | laid | pain | fail |

2.13.2 [aɪ]

2.13.2.1 Examples

i – *time, write, bite, climb, lime, line, like, white, ride, rise, bite, Liberia, Nigeria, kite, bike, wife, life, knife, side, mine, nine, pipe, rice, mice, lice, file, abide, China, chime, child, find, Bible, bind, bide, biology, bicycle, blind, hide, cite, cline, dine, ice, confide, confine, deride, smile, ripe, mile, microbe, migrate, Nile, nitrite, nitrate, nitre, pine, nitrogen, pile, pipeline, pride, price, prize, private, primary, prime, mild, prime, prise, rime, riot, rite, rive, rife, rind, rival, guide, quite, thrive, tiger, tine, tiny, title, five, trial, triangle, triad, tribe, tribalism, trine, tripe, trite, triumph, vile, unite, preside, precise, recline, recognise, remind, mind, rewind, hepatitis, rhino, rhinitistwɪ /raɪ'naitɪs/ ,*

ie – *die, lie, tie, vie, diet, pie, fiery tried, fie, tries,*

y, ye – *cry, dry, try, fly, by, dye, sky, hydrid, hyaena, hydrogen*

igh, eigh – *high, tight, light, might, right, fight, height, night, plight, flight, fright, frighten, sight, sigh, thigh*

ei, ai – *either(also / ɪ:ðə/), neither(also /ni:ðə/), eider, aisle,*

ig – *sign, design,*

Note : [aɪ] in '*eye*' '*I*', *buy* /baɪ/, *pint* /paɪnt/, *kind*/kaɪnd/, *wind*(verb) /waɪnd/

2.13.2.2 Constrast

1)

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------|------|------|-------|------|-------|--------|------|------|------|------|-------|------|-------|
| [æ] | bat | sat | fat | van | pan | hat | sad | bad | cat | rad | rat | rap | tat |
| [aɪ] | bite | site | fight | vine | pine | height | side | bide | kite | ride | right | ripe | tight |
| [æ] | pap | fan | ram | lamb | lat | | | | | | | | |
| [aɪ] | pipe | fine | rime | lime | light | | | | | | | | |

2)

| | | | | | |
|------|------|------|------|------|-------|
| [aɪ] | ride | pile | like | rice | light |
| [eɪ] | raid | pail | lake | race | late |

2.13.3 [ɔɪ]

2.13.3.1 Examples

- *oi* – *boil, noise, poise, coin, voice, choice, join, loin, oil, foil, foible, soil, toil, toilet void, avoid, joist, coil, poignant, cloister, loiter*
quoit /kɔɪt/, coif, joint, point,

oy – *boy, oyster, toy, Roy, royal, voyage, coy, royalty, employ, soy,*

Note : ‘buoy’ /bɔɪ/

2.13.3.2 Comparison

Long : *joy /dʒɔɪ/, joys /dʒɔɪz/, boy/bɔɪ /, buoys /bɔɪz/, boils /bɔɪlz/ ; coy/kɔɪ /, coins/kɔɪnz/ , coiled/kɔɪld/, poise/pɔɪz/.*

2.13.4. [əʊ]

2.13.4.1 Examples

o – *so*, *old*, *home*, *choke*, *both*, *folk*, *bimbo*, *clone*, *zero*, *go*, *pose*, *post*, *cold*, *rope*, *told*, *most*, *both*, *bold*, *woke*, *robe*, *close*, *tone*, *hope*, *phone*, *alone*, *no*, *ago*, *hole*, *bolt*, *role*, *roll*, *noles*, *wrote*, *cold*, *mobile*.

oe – *toe*, *doe*, *sloe*, *foe*, *hoe*, *woe*.

oe – *oak*, *road*, *foal*, *foam*, *goal*, *toast*, *oath*, *boat*, *coat*, *coal*, *moan*, *moat*, *loan*, *soap*, *goat*, *loathe*, *loaf*.

ou – *soul*, *though*, *shoulder*, *dough*, *boulder*, *moult*.

ow – *know*, *slow*, *blow*, *grow*, *show*, *own*, *low*, *row*, (a neat line of people or things), *mow* (verb: to cut down), *bow* (noun: for shooting), *arrow*, *sow* (verb: to plant seed) *hollow*, *below*, *fellow*, *row* (verb: to move a boat) *blow*, *blown*.

Note: [əʊ] in '*mauve*', '*brooch*,' *beau*,' '*sew*,' '*don't*', '*won't*'

2.13.4.2. Contrast

1)

| | | | | | | | | | |
|------|-------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|----------------|--------------|---------------|------------|
| [ɔ:] | <i>four</i> | <i>porch</i> | <i>born</i> | <i>walk</i> | <i>gall</i> | <i>coursed</i> | <i>hoard</i> | <i>caught</i> | <i>saw</i> |
| [3:] | <i>fur</i> | <i>perch</i> | <i>burn</i> | <i>work</i> | <i>girl</i> | <i>cursed</i> | <i>heard</i> | <i>curt</i> | <i>Sir</i> |
| [əʊ] | <i>foe</i> | <i>poach</i> | <i>bone</i> | <i>woke</i> | <i>goal</i> | <i>coast</i> | <i>hoed</i> | <i>coat</i> | <i>sew</i> |

2)

| | | | | | | |
|------|---------------|-------------|---------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| [əʊ] | <i>boat</i> | <i>foam</i> | <i>close</i> (verb) | <i>tone</i> | <i>bone</i> | <i>loan</i> |
| [ɔ:] | <i>bought</i> | <i>form</i> | <i>clause</i> | <i>torn</i> | <i>born</i> | <i>lorn</i> |

3)

| | | | | | | |
|------|------|-----|------|--------|------|------|
| [əʊ] | road | own | hope | toast | robe | roam |
| [ɒ] | rod | on | hop | tossed | rob | rom |

2.13.4.5.[aʊ]

2.13.5.1 Examples

ou – house, sound, out, council, round, ground, found, bound, mouse, bout, flout, stout, wound, (from wind (verb)) rouse, shout, about, tout, foul, doubt, thou/ðəʊ/, loud, mouth, couch, lout, mound, louse, fount, mouthe, drought, rought, rout, hour.

ow – allow, how, wow, cow, town, owls, cowl, fowl, gown, brown, now, power bow(verb: bend body) row, (noun: quarrel), row (verb: to quarrel) sow (noun:pig, metal, channel for metal) howl, down,

Note: Macleod*/mə'klaʊd/

2.13.5.2. Contrast

1)

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------|------|-------|-------|--------|------|-----|-----|-----|-------|--------|-------|------|------|------|
| [əʊ] | boat | float | stoat | phoned | load | no | hoe | oat | dote | though | rose | tote | tone | foal |
| [aʊ] | bout | flout | stout | found | loud | now | how | out | doubt | thou | rouse | tout | town | foul |

2) **Dialogue:** Mrs Godji in Fatima 's house.

Mrs Godji: Where ' s your mummy *now*, Fatima?

Fatima: She's *out* to buy some *oats*,

Mrs Godji: Why do you *blow* your nose into your *blouse*?

Fatima: I think I've caught a *cold*.

Mrs Godji: There' s *no doubt* that your mummy *dotes* on you.

Fatima: Why do you think so, Mrs Godji?

Mrs Godji: Otherwise, you *won't blow* your nose into your new *blouse*.

2.13.6 [ɪə]

2.13.6.1 Examples

er, ere, eer – material, *here beer, cheer, deer, steer, mere, peer, leer,*

ear–*dear, tear*(drop of liquid) *fear, ear, near, clear, hear, beard, shear, shearer,*
appear, spear, rear,

eir, ier, ir – *weird, fierce, pierce, fakir, tier, bier,*

ia, ea – material, brilliant, *Ian, idea,*

eu, eo – museum, theory, theological

Note : ‘hero’ /hɪərəʊ/, ‘zero’ /zɪərəʊ/ ; ‘year’/jɪə/ or year/jɜ:/ ; ‘hideous’ /hɪdiəs/
‘carrier’ /kæriə/ ;

‘easier’ /i:ziə/ ; genius’/dʒi:nɪəs/ ; ‘billiard’/bɪliəd/

‘idiom’ /ɪdiəm/ ; morphia /mɔ:fiə/

2.13.6.2 Contrast

| | | | | | | |
|------|--------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|
| [ɪə] | <i>beard</i> | <i>feared</i> | <i>speared</i> | <i>smearly</i> | <i>cheery</i> | <i>sheared</i> |
| [e] | <i>bed</i> | <i>fed</i> | <i>sped</i> | <i>merry</i> | <i>cherry</i> | <i>shed</i> |

2.13.7 [eə]

2.13.7 Examples

are –*rare, rarity, care, share, mare, bare, dare, fare, hare, rarely, aware, scare,*

air – *air, fair, pair, chair, hair,*

ear – *bear, pear, wear, tear, (verb) swear*

Note : [eə] occurs in the following words namely

‘there’ /ðeə/, ‘their’ /ðeə/, Mary */ ‘meəri/, ‘heir’ /eə/, ‘scarce’ /skeəs/, sarah

*/seərə/, ‘aorist’ /eərɪst/ or /‘eɪərɪst/ ‘aerobic’ /eəˈrɒbɪk/

2.13.7.2 Constrast

| | | | | | | | |
|------|---------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|--------------|-------------|
| [ɪə] | <i>beard</i> | <i>feared</i> | <i>speared</i> | <i>smeary</i> | <i>sheared</i> | <i>dear</i> | <i>rear</i> |
| [eə] | <i>bared</i> | <i>fared</i> | <i>Mary</i> | <i>spared</i> | <i>shared</i> | <i>dare</i> | <i>rare</i> |
| [ɪə] | <i>cheery</i> | <i>beer</i> | <i>fear</i> | <i>hear</i> | <i>mere</i> | <i>Shear</i> | |
| [eə] | <i>cherry</i> | <i>bare</i> | <i>fare</i> | <i>hare</i> | <i>mare</i> | <i>Share</i> | |

3) Dialogue : Rebecca is crying [e] versus [ɪə] versus [eə]

Mrs Toba : Clara, what's wrong with Rebecca ?

Clara : She's shedding *tears* because of the *tear* in her dress.

Mrs Toba : Really ? I know she *rarely* cries. Who tore her dress ?

Clara : She *fell* on the *barbed wire*.

Mrs Toba : I know the dress is *dear* and she *dares* not *tell* her mother.

2.13.8 [ʊə]

2.13.8.1 Examples

oor – *poor*, *moor*, *boor*, *Poore*, *Moore*

our – *tour*, *dour*, *gourd*

ure – *pure*, *endure*, *cure*, *sure*, *lure*, *secure*, *endure*, *bureau*,

ur – *curious*, *jury*, *during*, *security*, *furious*.

ue, *ua* – *cruel*, *fluent*, *actual*, *mutual*,

Note : [ʊə] may also occur in the following words namely 'jewel' /dʒʊəl/ or /dʒu:əl/

'incongruent' /in'kɒŋgrʊənt/, pleurisy /'Plʊərɪsɪ/, 'influence' /ɪnflʊəns/

valuable /'væljʊəbl/, vacuum /'vækjʊəm/, jaguar /'dʒæɡjʊə/.

The words 'poor' moor, poore, boor have alternative forms of pronunciation which are 'poor' /pɔ:/, Poore */pɔ:/ moor /mɔ:/, Moore */mɔ:/, 'boor' /bɔ:/.

2.13.8.2. Constrast

a) **Dialogue**: The angry father [eə] versus [ɪə] versus [ʊə] versus [aʊ] versus [əʊ]

Dossou : *Our* father was to go on *tour* but the *air-fare* had gone up.

Dossa : That was possibly why he was *furios*.

He *rarely* behaves in that way.

Dossou : *Fair* enough, but I am *sure* he sometimes *shouts* and roars at us.

Dossa : We are not his *peers*. He only loses temper when we become naughty and *careless*.

2.13.8.2 Constrast

b) **Dialogue**: The angry father [eə] versus [ɪə] versus [ʊə] versus [aʊ] versus [ɔ:] versus [ɒ] versus [əʊ] versus [ʌ] versus [æ] versus [aɪ] versus [eɪ]

Dossou : *Our* father was to go on a *tour* but the *air – fare* had gone up.

Dossa : That was possibly why he was *furios*. He *rarely* behaves in *that way*.

Dossou : *Fair* enough but I am *sure* he sometimes *shouts* and *roars at us*.

Dossa : We are not his *peers*. He *only* *shouts* when we become *naughty* and *careless*.

Phonetic transcription of some words

our /aʊə/

was /wɒz/ (strong form), shout /ʃaʊt/

air /eə/, fare /feə/ ; roars /rɔ:z/

go /geʊ/ ; on /ɒn/, at /æt/ (strong form)

tour /tʊə/ or /tɔ:/

had /hæd/, gone /gɒn/, us /ʌs/ (strong form)

but /bʌt/ (strong form) not /nɒt/ ; peers/piəz/
up /ʌp/ ; that / ðæt/ (strong form), only /əʊnlɪ/
possibly ' pɒsəblɪ/ ; become/bɪ' kʌm/
why /waɪ/, furious /' fjʊəriəs/ ; naughty /' nɔ:tɪ/
rarely /reəli/ ; way/weɪ/ ; careless /keələs/
fare /feə/ ; enough /'nʌf/
I /aɪ/ ; am [æm] ;
sure / [ʃʊə/ or /ʃɔ:/ ; sometimes/' sʌmtaɪm/

To sum up, the diphthongs of English are in three groups : those which end in [ə] (such as **ɪə**, **eə** and **ʊə**), those which end in [ɪ] (such as **eɪ**, **aɪ** and **ɔɪ**), and those which end [ʊ] (such as **əʊ** and **aʊ**).

In terms of length, the diphthongs of English are similar to the following long vowels such as **i:**, **ɜ:**, **ɑ:**, **ɔ:** and **u:**. Another important thing to remember about all the English diphthongs is that the first part is much longer and stronger than the second part. As the glide happens, the loudness of the sound decreases. Consequently, the last part of any English diphthongs is shorter and quieter. We foreign learners/students of English should, therefore, always remember that the last part of English diphthongs must not be made too strongly.

Let us now move on to the **triphthongs** of English in order to look into them.

2.14 The triphthongs of English

A **triphthong** is a glide from one vowel to another and then to a third, all produced rapidly and without interruption. For instance, a careful pronunciation of the word '*hour*' begins with a vowel quality similar to [ɑ:], goes on to a glide towards the back close rounded area (for which we use the symbol **ʊ**) then ends with a mid-central vowel (shwa, **ə**). We use the symbol /**auə**/ to represent the pronunciation of '*hour*'.

The triphthongs of English can be obtained by adding **ə** to each of the closing diphthongs dealt with before. Thus we get :

eɪ + ə = eɪə ; əʊ + ə = əʊə ;

aɪ + ə = aɪə ; aʊ + ə = aʊə ;

ɔɪ + ə = ɔɪə

Let us examine these five English triphthongs one by one.

2.14.1 [eɪə]

The triphthong [eɪə] occurs in the following words :

gre^yer /gr**eɪə**/

play^er /pl**eɪə**/

betray^{al} /bɪ' tr**eɪə**l/

pray^er /pr**eɪə**/

convey^{or} /kən'v**eɪə**/

lay^er /l**eɪə**/

may^{or} /m**eɪə**/ or /m**eə**/

Mayer */meɪə/

2.14.2 [aɪə]

The triphthong [aɪə] occurs in the following words.

empire / 'empaɪə/diamonds/ 'daɪəməndz/

pyres /paɪəz/fire /faɪə

tiring / 'taɪərɪŋ/tyre /taɪə/,riot/raɪət, ire /aɪə/

aspire/ə 'spaɪə/tired / 'taɪəd/, byre /baɪə/

admires /əd 'maɪəz/wired/waɪəd/, buyer /baɪə/

spire /spaɪə/drier/draɪə/, sires/saɪəz/

violent / 'vaɪələnt/entire /In'taɪə/,shire/ʃaɪə/

tyrant / 'taɪərənt/quiet/kwaɪət/, reliable /rɪ'laɪəbl/

society /sə 'saɪətɪ/liable / 'laɪəbl/, trial/traɪəl/

desirable /dɪ'zaɪərəbl/liar/laɪə/, flyer /flaɪə/

pious /paɪəs/, iron /aɪən/

whyatt /waɪət/

2.14.3 [aʊə]

The triphthong [aʊə] occurs in the following words :

bower/baʊə/, sour/saʊə/, allowable /ə 'laʊəbl/

hour /aʊə/, shower/ʃaʊə/,

towered/taʊəd/, nowadays/ 'naʊədəɪz/

tower /taʊə/, towel /taʊəl/, dowry/ 'daʊəri/

flower /flaʊə/, power/paʊə/, coward/kaʊəd/
devour /di'vaʊə/, empower/im'paʊə/

2.14.4 The triphthong [ɔɪə]

The triphthong [ɔɪə] occurs in the following words :

royal /rɔɪəl/, **loyal** /lɔɪəl/ , **buoyancy**/'bɔɪənsɪ/
employer /ɪm'plɔɪə/ , **boyar** /'bɔɪə/
lawyer /lɔɪə/, **buoyant** /'bɔɪənt/

2.14.5 The triphthong [əʊə]

The triphthong [əʊə] occurs in the following words :

grower grəʊə, **mower** /məʊə/
lower /ləʊə/, **sower**/səʊə/, **rower**/rəʊə/
sower /səʊə/ , **rowan** /'rəʊən/ or **rowan**/'raʊən/, **thrower** /'θrəʊə/
narrower/'nærəʊə/, **shower** /ʃəʊə/(someone who shows)or**shower** (fall of rain)
/ʃaʊə /
goer /'gəʊə /, **follower** /'fɒləʊə /
Noah /*'nəʊə/ **yellower** /'jeləʊə /

I can reach a partial conclusion from the study of the English triphthongs by saying that they seem to be the most complex English sounds of the vowel type. They can be rather difficult to pronounce, and very difficult to recognise since in any English triphthong there is a glide from one vowel to another and to a third, all produced rapidly and without interruption.

Apart from the simple vowel sounds, the diphthongs and triphthongs, there are other English sounds called consonants which also deserve our attention during this project work.

CHAPTER III : THE CONSONANTS OF ENGLISH

3.1 DEFINITIONS

According to **LONGMAN DICTIONARY OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND CULTURE**(new edition), a **consonant** is “any of the speech sounds made by partly or completely stopping the flow of air as it goes through the mouth. “It is also “ a letter representing a consonant sound “ ; it is “ any of the letters of the English alphabet except **a, e, i, o, u** “ (pp274).

According to **OXFORD ADVANCED LEARNER’S DICTIONARY**, a **consonant** is “ a speech sound made by completely or partly stopping the flow of air being breathed out through the mouth. “ It is also “ a letter of the alphabet that represents a consonant sound, for example ‘ **b**’, ‘**c**’, ‘**d**’, ‘**f**’, etc (pp244).

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*) ; [**m**] and [**n**], which have air flowing through the nose (*nasals*). Contrasting with consonants are vowels.

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.

Consonant letters in the English alphabet are **B, C, D, F, G, H, J, K, L, M, N, P, Q, R, S, T, V, X, Z**, and usually **W** and **Y**, the letter **Y** stands for the consonant [j] in "yoke", the vowel [ɪ] in "myth" and the vowel [i] in "funny", and "yummy" for both consonant and vowel, for example.

There are 21 letters that are consonants whereas English has mainly 24, consonant sounds namely [b], [d], [θ], [dʒ]; [f], [g]; [h], [j], [k]; [l]; [m], [n], [ŋ], [p], [r], [s], [ʃ], [t], [tʃ], [θ], [v], [w], [z], [ʒ].

Let us at present examine these English consonant sounds by describing them briefly, by giving examples, by contrasting them with some other consonant sounds and by taking into account some confusions made by some Nigerians, and which have already started affecting the pronunciation of some English learners /students and even some English teachers in Benin.

These 24 consonantal phonemes are classified in Table 2 below.

MANNER OF ARTICULATION

| PLACE OF ARTICULATION | | Plosive | Affricate | Fricative | Nasal | Approximant |
|-----------------------|-----------------|-------------|---------------|-------------|----------|-------------|
| | Bilabial | P, b | | | m | (W) |
| | Labiodental | | | f, v | | |
| | Dental | | | θ, ð | | |
| | Alveolar | t, d | | S, Z | n | l |
| | Post -alveolar | | | | | r |
| | Palato-alveolar | | tʃ, dʒ | ʃ, ʒ | | |
| | Palatal | | | | | j |
| | Velar | K, g | | | ŋ | W |
| | Glottal | | | h | | |

TABLE 2 : THE DISTINCTIVE CONSONANTS OF ENGLISH

3.2 Friction Consonants

There are nine phonemes whose main sounds all have friction as their important feature. They are /f, v, θ, ð, s, z, ʃ, ʒ, h/. For all of them the lungs push air through a narrow opening where it causes friction of various kinds. Let us look into these fricative consonants in twos.

3.2.1 [f] and [V]

3.2.1.1 Brief description

To pronounce [f] sound, we press the lower lip firmly against the upper front teeth before expelling the air. This sound is not voiced.

To pronounce the [V] sound we also press the lower lip against the upper front teeth before expelling the air. The [V] sound is **voiced**.

The difference between [f] and [V] is mainly one of the **strength** : [f] is a strong consonant, [V] is a weak one. [f] is rather *longer* than [V].

So [f] is a strong, voiceless, long consonant whereas [V] is a weak, voiced, short consonant.

It is said that some Nigerians find it difficult to distinguish between [f] and [V]. Pairs of the words that easily get confused as a result, both in speech and writing, are **safe/ save** and **believe / belief**.

3.2.2.2 Comparison

| | | |
|-----------------|------------------|--------------------------------------|
| leaf /li:f/ | leave/li:v/ | life /laɪf/ live (adjective) /laɪv/ |
| half /hɑ:f/ | halve/hɑ:v/ | strife/straɪf/ strive/straɪv |
| calf /kɑ:f/ | carve /kɑ:v/ | Ralph */reɪf / rave /reɪv/ |
| proof /pru:f/ | prove /pru:v/ | waif /weɪf/ wave/weɪv/ |
| surf/sɜ:f/ | serve/sɜ:v/ | safe /seɪf/ save/ seɪv |
| belief/bɪ'li:f/ | believe bɪ'li:v/ | relief /rɪ' li:f/ relieve /rɪ' li:v/ |

| | |
|--------------|----------------|
| stiff /stɪf/ | sieve /sɪv/ |
| cliff /klɪf/ | live (v) /lɪv/ |
| sniff /snɪf/ | give /gɪv/ |
| R.A.F/ræf / | have /hæv/ |
| off /ɒf/ | of /ɒv/ |
| rough /rʌf/ | dove /dʌv/ |
| bluff /blʌf/ | love /lʌv/ |
| fluff /flʌf/ | glove /glʌv/ |

For both [f] and [v] the speech organs are in the position shown in Figure 13

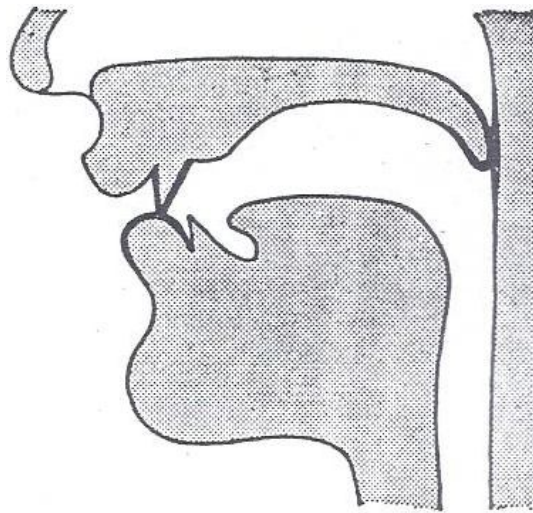


Figure n°13 showing the position of the speech organs in the production of [f] and [v].

Source: J.D.O' Connor. (1980). *Better English Pronunciation* (Low-Price edition). Cambridge University Press. Page 33.

Dialogue : What is your *f*avourite way of travelling ? ([f] versus [v] sounds)

Toni : What is your *f*avourite way of travelling ?

Momo : By train, *d*efinitely !

Toni : I like travelling by train, too.

Momo : Yes, you have a good *v*iew of *e*verything.

Toni : A good *f*ew of what ?

Momo : No, no ! View, not few !

Toni : Sorry ! I very often confuse F and V sounds.

PHONETIC TRANSCRIPTION OF THE DIALOGUE

Dialogue : /wɒt ɪz jɔ : 'feɪvərɪt Weɪv 'trævəlɪŋ/

*/təʊni// wɒt ɪz jɔ : 'feɪ vərɪt Weɪv 'trævəlɪŋ/

*/məʊməʊ//baɪtreɪn/ 'defɪnɪtli/

*/təʊni//aɪlək 'trævəlɪŋbaɪ treɪn tu: /

*/məʊməʊ// jes ju: hæv eɪ ɡʊd vju: ɒv

'evrɪθɪŋ/

*/təʊni// əɡʊd fju: ɒv wɒt/

*/məʊməʊ// nəʊ// nəʊ/ vju: nɒt fju: /

*/təʊni// sɒrɪ // aɪ verɪ'ɒftən kən'fju: z [f] ənd [v] saʊndz/

3.2.1.3 Another comparison

[f] fowl /faʊl/ few /fju: / surface /sɜ: fis/

[v] vowel /vaʊəl/ view /vju: / service /sɜ: vɪs/

[f] laughter / 'lɑ:ftə/ wife's /waɪfs/

[v] larva /'lɑ:və/ wives /waɪvz/

Comment

Since some Nigerians find it difficult to distinguish between [f] and [v], it is of vital importance that we Beninese learners /students of English do our best to master not only these different consonant sounds but also other English consonant sounds in order to avoid being misled. Let us at the moment move on to deal with some of the most common English words which contain [f] and [v].

3.2.1.4. Examples

3.2.1.4.1- Some of the most common English words which contain [f] are:

family, far, for, father, feel, few, fried, first, foe, four, five, from, friend, front, before, after, afraid, different, difficult, left, office perfect, prefer, suffer, awful, after, often, half, off, knife, life, laugh, self, wife, safe, cough, safe, rough, stuff.

3.2.1.4.2- Some of the most common English words which contain [v] are:

very, valve, visit, voice, value, violent, vast, van, view, ever, never, over, river, seven, several, travel, even, every, heavy, live, of, give, love, move, prove, receive, believe, save, serve, twelve, wave, five, have.

Here are some of the words which contain [f] and [v] sounds which are commonly mispronounced mainly because of the ignorance of the knowledge of English phonetics :

[f] **fast** /fɑ:st/ few /fju:/ feel /fi:l/

[v] **vast** /vɑ:st/ **view** /vju:/ veal /vi:l/

[f] fear /fiə/ foal /fəʊl/file /fail/

[v] veer /viə/ vole /vəʊl/vile/vail/

[f] ferry /'ferɪ/ fat /fæt/ fan /fæn/

[v] very /'veri/ vat /væt/ van /væn/

[f] fail /feɪl/ defied /di'faɪd/ safe /seɪf/

[v] veil /veɪl/ divide di'vaɪd/ save /seɪv/

very fast /veri fɑ:st/ fine furs /faɪn fɜ:z/

very vast /veri vɑ:st/ fine verse /faɪn vɜ:s/

four fans /fɔ: fænz/ a good few /ə'gʊd fju:/

four vans /fɔ: vænz/ a good view /ə'gʊd vju:/

I feel fine /aɪfi:l faɪn/

I feel vile /aɪfi:l vaɪl/

3.3. [θ] and [ð]

[θ] and [ð] are also friction sounds, [θ] is strong and [ð] is weak.

Both have the position of the speech organs shown below.

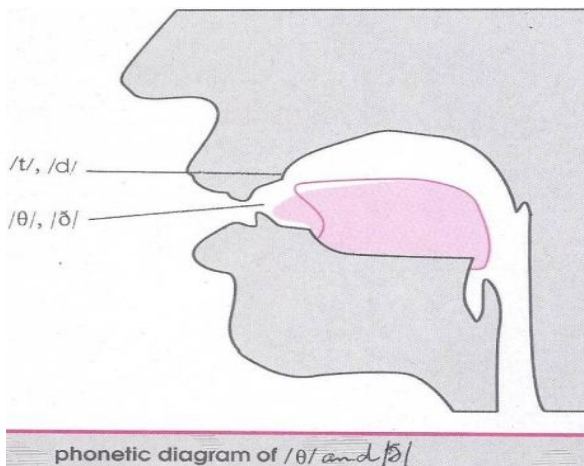


Figure n°14/A

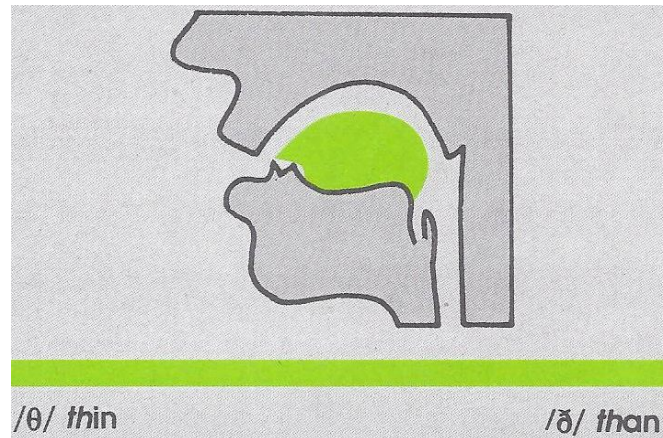


Figure n°14/B

showing the position of the speech organs in the production of [θ] and [ð].

Source : Benson. O. Oluikpe et al. (1999). *Intensive English for Junior Secondary Schools*. (second edition). book 2. page 110

3.3.1 Brief description

While making both consonant sounds, the soft palate is raised so that all the breath is forced to go through the mouth. Secondly, the tip of the tongue is close to the upper front teeth : this is the narrowing where the friction is made. Thirdly, the noise made by the friction for [θ] and [ð] is not very great, much less than for [S] and [Z]. [θ] is **stronger** and **longer** and always **voiceless** whereas [ð] is **weaker**, **shorter** and **voiced**.

To pronounce [θ], we fix the tip of our tongue between the front teeth and breathe out through the mouth.

To pronounce [ð], we fix the tip of our tongue between the front teeth and breathe out through the mouth with a little noise.

3.3.2 Examples of some of the most common English words which contain [θ] and [ð].

3.3.2.1 Some of the most common English words which contain [θ] are : thank, thick, thin, thing, thirsty, thousand, three, through, throw, Thursday, thought, thirty, healthy, wealthy, something, anything, both, bath, breath, cloth, earth, fourth, health, wealth, month, north, south, path, worth, theme, birth, ethics, athlete, pith, thought, think, theory, forth, birthday, mouth, growth, moth, myth, wrath, death, author, path, truth, thermometer.

3.3.2.2 Some of the most common English words which contain [ð] are :

the, this, these, those, there, their, they, them, though, than, other, mother, father, brother, either, further, clothes, leather, together, weather, whether, breathe, with, smooth, gather, worthy.

3.3.3 Comparison

1°) [θ] thigh /θaɪ/ ether /'i:θə/ wreaths /'ri:θs/

[ð] thy / ðaɪ/ breather / 'bri:ðə/ wreathes /'ri:ðz/

[θ] teeth /ti:θ/ breath /breθ/

[ð] teethe /ti:ð/ breathe /bri:ð/

2°) [θ] thought /θɔ:t/ ; three /θri:/ oath /əʊθ/

[f] fought /fɔ:t/ ; free /fri:/ oaf /əʊf/

[t] taught /tɔ:t/ ; tree /tri:/ ; oat /əʊt/

3°) [ð] thine /ðaɪn/ ; either /aɪðə/ ; breathe /bri:ð/

[d] dine /daɪn/ eider /aɪdə/ breed /bri:d/

[ð] then /ðen/ than ðæn/ bathe /beɪð/

[d] den /den/ dan /dæn/ bade/beɪd/

[θ] both /bəʊθ/ ; faith /feɪθ/ death /deθ/ forth /fɔ:θ/

[t] boat /bəʊt/ ; fate /feɪt/ ; debt /det/ ; fort /fɔ:t/

Comment

Most Nigerians confuse [θ] with [t]. As a result, they mispronounce the following words in the same way : *boat/both, forth/fort/ fourth,thought/taught, faith/fate,death/debt*. Likewise, they confuse [ð] with [d]. Consequently, they mispronounce the following words : **dine/thine ;breed/breathe ; then/den/bathe/bade/ ; than/dan/ ;either /eider/.**

So, in the sentence like the one below pronounced by most Nigerians (*The fisherman threw the net into the river*) we can have some of the confusions while listening to them. The phonetic transcription of what we hear is this :

/*dɪ fɪ'ʃɑ: mæn tru:dɪ net ɪntu: dɪrɪvɑ:/

Instead of : / ðə'fɪʃəmən θru: ðə net ɪntəðə'rɪvə/

It is not uncommon to hear this pronunciation from some Beninese learners of English and even from some Beninese secondary school English teachers who are used to sojourning many days in Nigeria before coming back to Benin.

As Beninese learners / students of English we need to be cautious about this way of pronouncing English words in order not to be misled by this.

3.4. [S] and [Z]

3.4.1 Description

[S] is a strong friction sound and [Z] is a weak one. Firstly, the soft palate is raised so that all the breath is forced to go through the mouth.

Secondly, the tip and blade of the tongue are very close to the alveolar ridge.

There is a very considerable narrowing at this point, **not** near the teeth and **not** near the hard palate. Thirdly, the teeth are very close together.

Fourthly, the friction for these sounds, especially for [S], is much greater than for /f, v, θ and ð).

[S] is longer and always voiceless, the weak one, [Z] is quite short, and is voiced.

To pronounce [S], we place the tip of the tongue behind the upper teeth by forcing the air through the mouth without vibrating the vocal cord whereas to pronounce [Z] we attach the tip of the tongue behind the upper teeth by forcing the air through the mouth while vibrating the vocal cord. We pronounce [S] if the letter 'S' occurs after such final consonants as 'p' 't' 'k' whereas we pronounce [Z] if the letter 'S' occurs after such final consonants as 'b' 'd' 'g' 'n' 'm' ; 'l' or if it occurs in the middle of a word between two vowels, or it is immediately followed by a voiced sound as in '*husband*' 'hʌzbənd/.

The position of the speech organs for these sounds is shown in Figure

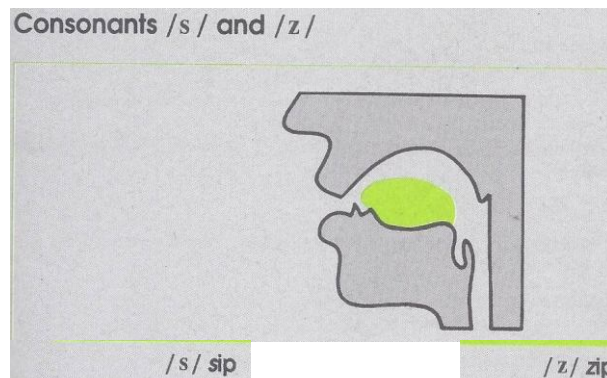


Figure n°15 showing the position of the speech organs in the production of [s] and [z].

Source: Elisie A. Ogbona et al. (1999). *Intensive English for senior Secondary Schools*. (second edition). book 1. page 49.

3.4.2 Some of the very many common words containing [S] and [Z].

3.4.2.1 Some of the very many words containing [S] are :

same, sing, sit, Saturday, Sunday, save, see, say, second, seem, self, send, six, seven, side, since, sleep, slow, small, so, son, sister, soon, start, stop, still, against, almost, beside, least, lost, loss, last, listen, message, mister, Mrs, use(noun), face, miss, across, advice, case, eats, takes, pass, less-ness, nice, piece, price, yes, mice, lice, rice, niece, perhaps, cats...

3.4.2.2 Some of the very many words containing [Z] are :

noisy, busy, reason, easy, lazy, losing, as, his, hers, cause, use (verb), has, is, lose, was, days, dogs, does, moves, noise, please.

3.4.3 Comparison

1) [S] looser /'lu:sə/ sink /sɪŋk/ sue /su:/

[Z] loser /'lu:zə/ zinc/zɪŋk/ zoo/zu:/

[S] lacy /'leɪsɪ/ coarser /'kɔ:sə/ seal /si:l/

[Z] lazy /'leɪzɪ/ causer /kɔ:zə/ zeal /zi:l/

[S] fussy/'fʌsɪ/ buses /bʌzɪz/ race /reɪs/

[Z] fuzzy/'fʌzɪ/ buzzes /bʌzɪz/ raise /reɪz/

[S] place /pleɪs/ niece /ni:s/ price /praɪs/

[Z] plays /pleɪz/ knees /ni:z/ prize/prai:z/

[S] loose /'lu:s/ hearse /hɜ:s/ bus /bʌs/ hiss /hɪs/

[Z] lose /lu:z/ hers//hɜ:z/ buzz /bʌz/ his /hɪz/

[S] ass /æs/ ceases /'si:sɪz/ once / wʌns/

[Z] as /æz/seizes /'si:zɪz/ ones / wʌnz/

2°) **Dialogue** : The news of Sue's success[S] versus[Z]

Sarah : Have you heard the news of Sue's success ?

Zita : Yes. I was amazed. She passed all her exams with flying colours !

Sarah : So, she won the first prize too.

Zita : Do, you mean the price of her new dress ?

Sarah : No! No! That is the Suzuki car given to her by the education minister as a reward for her assiduity

Zita : Oh ! I have guessed your thoughts.

PHONEMIC TRANSCRIPTION OF THE DIALOGUE

Sarah : /hæv ju: h3: dðə nju:z ðv *Sju:z sə:k'ses/

Zita : /jes/ai wɒz ə'meɪzd/ʃi: pɑ:st ɔ:l h3:ɪg'zæmz wɪðflaɪŋ'kʌləz/

Sarah : /səʊ/ ʃi: wʌnðə fɜ: st praɪz tu: /

Zita : /du:ju: mi:n ðə praɪs ðv h3: nju: dres/

Sarah : /nəʊ/nəʊ/ðæt ɪz ðə sə'zu:kɪ kɑ: gɪvŋ tu: h3:baɪði:edʒʊ'keɪʃən
mɪnɪstəæzəri 'wɔ:d fɔ: h3:æsi 'dju:əti/

Zita : /əʊ//aɪhæv gest ʃɔ: θɔ:ts/

3.5 [ʃ] and [ʒ]

3.5.1 Description

[ʃ] is a strong friction sound and [ʒ] is a weak one. Firstly, the soft palate is raised so that all breath is forced to go through the mouth. Secondly, there is a narrowing between the tip of the tongue and the back of the alveolar ridge.

Thirdly, the front of the tongue is higher than for [S] and [Z]. Fourthly, the lips are very slightly rounded. [ʒ] does not occur at the beginning of English words but [ʃ] quite frequently does.

To pronounce [ʃ], we place the tip of the tongue on the teeth ridge while forcing the air through the mouth but without vibrating the vocal cord. [ʃ] is a voiceless consonant sound.

To pronounce [ʒ], we place the tip of the tongue on the teeth ridge while forcing the air through the mouth and by vibrating the vocal cord.

The position of the speech organs for these sounds is shown in Figure 16.

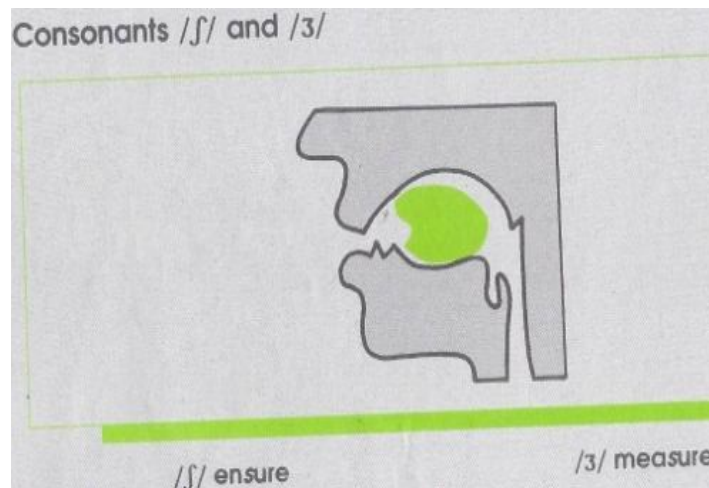


Figure n°16 showing the position of the speech organs in the production of [ʒ] and [ʒ].

Source: Elisie A. Ogbona et al. (1999). *Intensive English for senior Secondary Schools*. (second edition). book 1. page 66.

3.5.2 Some of the commonest words containing [ʒ] and [ʒ]

3.5.2.1 Some of the commonest words containing [ʒ] are :

shape, she,ship, sharp,shop,shall, should, shut, shout, show, shown,shoulder, shoes, shoot, shine, shore, sure, anxious, ashamed, machine, patient,position, station, motion, nation, ocean, Asia, mention,pressure, precious, bush, crash, crush,fish, flesh,foolish,fresh,greenish,(etc),punish,push,rush,selfish,wash,wish,dish,ancient,s pecial,chauffeur,mission,ship,shine.

3.5.2 Some of the commonest words containing [ʒ] are :

measure, pleasure,
usual,division,television,revision,collision,invasion,vision,inclusion,illusion,provis
ion,explosion,leisure,garage,barrage,rouge,beige,cohesion,decision,measure,evasio
n.

3.5.3 Comparison

1°) [ʃ]ruche /ru:ʃ/ fission /`fiʃn/ pressure /`preʃə/

[ʒ]rouge /ru:ʒ/ vision /`viʒn/ pleasure /`pleʒə/

2°) [S]sow /səʊ/ lease /li:s/ person /`pɜ:sn/

[ʃ] show /ʃəʊ/leash /li: ʃ/ persian /`pɜ:ʃn/

3°) [Z] composer /kəm `pəʊzə/ Caesar /`si:zə/ bays /beɪz/

[ʒ] composure / kəm `pəʊzə/ seisure /`si:zə/ beige / beɪʒ/

3.6 [h]

3.6.1 The production of [h] sound.

First of all, the [h] sound occurs only before a vowel. It is produced by expelling air from the mouth (not from the throat).The [h] sound is therefore not voiced.

The [h] sound is spelled with the letter **h**. However ; it can also be slept with a *wh* in words such as *who*, *whom*, *whose*, and *whole*.

The letter h is silent in the following words : *hour*, *heiress*, *heir*, *honour*, *honest*, and *honourable* ; and also in the question words such as *what*, *when*, *where*, *which*, and *why*.

3.6.2 Some of the commonest words containing [h] are :

half, hand, hat, head, high, history, hit, hot, hold, hole, home, hope, horse, house,how, hundred, husband, behind, beforehand, household, anyhow, greenhouse, manhole, inhale, rehearse, coherent, heat, harm, heel, heal, hill, hedge, hear, hall, he, she.

3.6.3 Comparison

[h] harm /hɑ:m/ heat /hi:t/ hall /hɔ:l/

arm /ɑ:m/ eat/i:t/ all /ɔ:l/

[h] hedge /hedʒ/ hair /heə/ hill /hɪl/

edge /edʒ/ air /eə/ ill /ɪl/

[h] hear /hɪə/ heart /hɑ:t/ halter /ˈhɔ:ltə/

ear /ɪə/ art /ɑ:t/ alter //ˈɔ:ltə/

[h] hurl /hɜ:l/ hake /heɪk/ heel /hi:l/

earl /ɜ:l/ ache /eɪk/ eel /i:l/

Comment

It is said that some Nigerians especially **Yoruba** people ‘drop’ the [h] because this sound is very rare in Yoruba. As a result they pronounce the words ‘hear’ and ‘ear’ in the same way (/ɪə/) instead of (hear/hɪə/) and (ear/ɪə/). So caution is needed here too.

3.7. Stop consonants

In stop consonants the breath is completely stopped at some point in the mouth, by the lips or tongue - tip of tongue - back, and then released with a slight explosion. There are four pairs of phonemes containing stops ([**P,b**], [**t,d**], [**K, g**] and [**tʃ, dʒ**]), and like the friction consonants one of each pair is strong and the other weak.

3.1.7. [P] and [b]

3.7.1.1. Description

[**P**] is a *strong* stop consonant whereas [**b**] is a *weak* one.

First of all, the lips are close firmly and the soft palate is raised so that the breath cannot get out of either the nose or the mouth but is trapped for a short time. Secondly, when the lips are opened suddenly the breath rushes out with a slight explosion or popping noise.

Before the lips are opened, the rest of the mouth takes up the position for the following sound, a vowel position if a vowel follows, as in **pool/pu:l** / or a consonant position if a consonant follows, as in **play /pleɪ/**

To make the [P] sound, we press our lips close together and suddenly open them while letting the air out forcefully. We make this sound from our mouth not from our throat as if we wanted to blow out a candle.

When we make the [b] sound, we also press our lips together gently, and then we gently open them, while letting the air out.

We make the [b] sound from our throat, and not from our mouth.

The position of the speech organs for these sounds is shown in Figure 17.

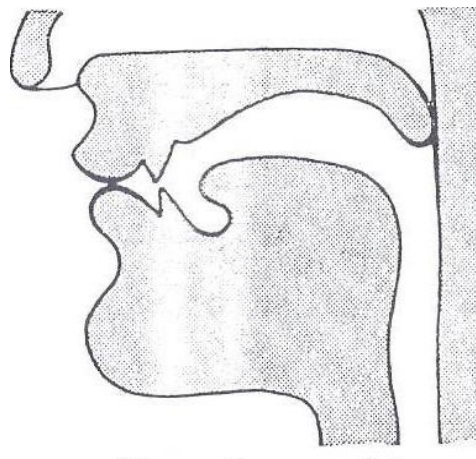


Figure 17 showing the position of the speech organs in the production of [P] and [b].

Source: J.D.O'Connor. (1980). *Better English Pronunciation* (Low-Price edition). Cambridge University Press. Page 52.

3.7.1.2 Some of the commonest words containing [P] and [b].

3.7.1.2.1. Some of the commonest words containing [P] are :

page, pair, paper, pardon, part, pass, pay, people, perhaps, piece, place, plate, play, please, play, please, plenty, poor, possible, post, pound, pretty, price, pull, push, put, appear, April, poor, possible, company, complain, complete, copy, expect, happen, happy, important, Open, sleep, cheap, patient, position, pressure, precious, push, punish, push, special, ship (etc....)

3.7.1.2. Some of the commonest words containing

[b] are : back, bad, bath, be, beautiful, because, become, bed, before, begin, behind, believe, belong, below, besides, best, between, big, black, blue, both, boy, break, breakfast, bring, but, busy, by, brown, able, about, above, September (etc.), February, habit, harbour, husband, neighbour, number, obey, possible, probable, public, remember, table, job, rub, rob, club, slab, grab, robe.

3.7.1.3 Comparison

1°) [P] peak /pi:k/ pit /pit/ pack /pæk/ park pɑ:k/

[b] beak /bi:k/bit / bit/ back /bæk/ bark /bɑ:k/

[P] Port /pɔ:t/ pul /pʊl/ pride /praɪd/ plays /pleɪz/

[b] bouht/bɔ:t/ bull /bʊl/ bride / braɪd/blaze /bleɪz/

[P] supper / `sʌpə/ repel / `ri:pel/ rip /ri:p/ wrap /ræp/

[b] rubber / `rʌbə/ rebel (verb/ri `bel/ rib /ri:b/ grab /græp/

[P] cap/kæp/rope /rəʊp/ tripe/traɪp/ tap /tæp/

[b] cab/kæb/robe /rəʊb/tribe/traɪb/ tab /tæb/

2°) [P] pill /pɪl/ rapid / `ræpɪd / pulp /pʌlp/

[b] bill / bɪl/ rabid / `ræbɪd/ bulb /bʌlb/

[P] mopped /mɒpt/ simple / `sɪmpl/ played /pleɪd/

[b] mobbed /mɒbd/ symbol / `sɪmbəl/ blade /bleɪd/

[P] prayed /preɪd/ open / `əʊpən/

[b] braid /breɪd/ Holborn */ `hɒlbɔ:n/

[P] pan /pæn/pen /pen/ pet /pet/ mop /mɒp/

[b] ban /bæn/Ben*/ben/ bet /bet/ mob /mɒb/

[P] pop /pɒp/ pelt /pelt/ plot /plɒt/

[b] bob /bɒb/ belt /belt/ blot /blɒt/

[P] poll /pɒl/push /pʊʃ/ post /pəʊst/

[b] boll /bɒl/ bush /bʊʃ/ boast /bəʊst/

[P] peach /pi:tʃ/ dapple / `dæpl/plead /pli:d/ pray /preɪ/

[b] beach /bi:tʃ/ dabble / `dæbl/bleed /bli:d/ bray /breɪ/

Notes

* [P] - voiceless (regularly spelt with 'p' but note '*hiccough*' /'hɪkʌp /. Note also silent p in '*pneumonia*' /nju:məʊniə/ '*psalm*' /sɑ:m/*ptarmigan* /'tɑ:migən/, '*receipt*' /rɪ'si:t/, '*cupboard*'/'kʌbəd/ , '*psychology*' /saɪ'kɒlədʒɪ/ etc..)

*[b] voiced (regularly spelt with 'b' but note silent 'b' in '*limb*' /lɪm/, '*thumb*' /θʌm/, '*comb*' /kəʊm/, '*tomb*' /tu:m/, '*dumb*' /dʌm/, '*climb*' /klaɪm/, etc., and '*debt*' /det /, '*subtle*' /sʌtl /, '*doubt* /daʊt/).

34.7.2 Alveolar Plosives [t, d]

3.7.2.1 Description

First of all, [t] is a **strong** stop consonant and [d] is a **weak** one. The tip of the tongue (not the blade) is firmly against the middle of the alveolar ridge, not too near the teeth and not near the hard palate. Secondly, the soft palate is raised, so the breath cannot escape through either the nose or the mouth, but is trapped for a short time.

Thirdly, the sides of the tongues are firmly against the sides of the palate so that the breath cannot pass over the sides of the tongue.

Fourthly, when the tongue tip is lowered suddenly from the teeth ridge the breath rushes out with a slight explosion or popping noise.

To pronounce [d], we block the air stream with the tip of the tongue behind the upper teeth ridge while releasing the obstructed air at once with the vibration of the vocal cord.

To pronounce [t], we also block the air stream with the tip of the tongue behind the upper teeth ridge while releasing the obstructed air at once without the vibration of the vocal cord.

The position of the organs of speech for these stop consonants is shown below in Figure 18.

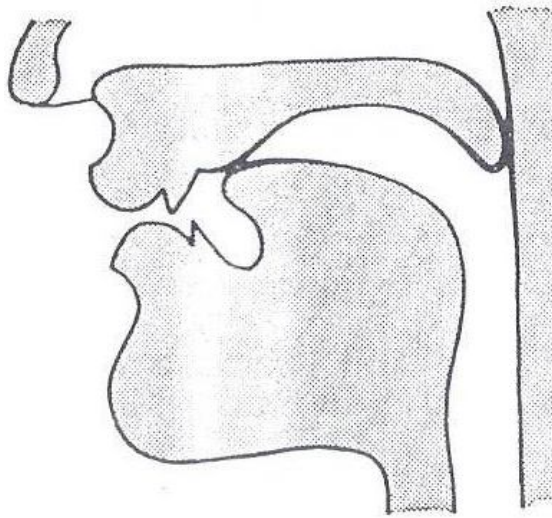


Figure 18 showing the position of the speech organs in the production of [t] and [d].

Source: (Idem). page 56

3.7.2.2. Some of the many common words containing [t] and [d].

3.7.2.2. 1 Some of the many common words containing [t] are :

table, take, tell, ten, time, to, today, together, too, top, towards, town, Tuesday, turn, twelve, two, talk, taste, after, better, between, city, dirty, hotel, into, matter, notice, boat, but, coat, eat, eight, fat, flat, gate, great, hot, it, let, lot, not, ought, might, put, what, particular, protect, quarter, Saturday, water, writer, about, at, beat, bite, notice.

Note

[t] - voiceless (regularly spelled **t**, **tt**, sometimes with **th**, e, g, 'Thames' */teɪmz/,

'Thomas' */ˈtɒməs/ ; also

-ed in verbal past tenses and participles after **voiceless consonants** other than [t] e,

g, 'jumped' /dʒʌmpɪd/, 'looked' /lʊkt/, 'laughed' /lɑːft 'guessed' /gest/ , 'placed'

/pleɪst / , 'pushed' /pʊʃt/ 'stopped' /stɒpt/, 'watched' /wɒtʃt/ , 'punished' /'pʌnɪʃt/

'missed' /mɪst 'kicked' /kɪkt/.

t is silent in 'castle' /'kɑːsl/, Christmas / 'krɪsməs/ , listen /'lɪsn/ etc...)

4.7.2.2.2. Some of the many common words containing [d] are :

day, dead, dear, December, decide, depend, different, difficult, do, dinner, dog, door, down, during, date, already, Monday, (etc), holiday, idea, lady, ladder, medecine, body, ready, shoulder, study, today, under, add, afraid, bad, hard, sad, bed, bird, could, would, end, friend, good, had, head, old, read, side, dry.

Note :

Let us also notice the past tense of verbs ending in a vowel, a voiced consonant, and [t], e.g: ‘owed’ /əʊd/ ‘failed’ /feɪld/, ‘started’ /stɑ:tɪd/ ‘decided’ /dɪˈsaɪdɪd/, ‘omitted’ /əʊˈmɪtɪd/ , ‘permitted’ /pɜ:ˈmɪtɪd/ ‘arrived’ /əˈraɪvd/ ‘begged’ /begd/ ‘loved’ /lʌvd/, ‘robbed’ /rɒbd/

Comparison

1°)

| | | | |
|---------------------|-------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| [t] two /tu:/ | ten /ten/ | torn /tɔ:n/ | tie /taɪ/ |
| [d] do /du:/ | den /den/ | dawn /dɔ:n/ | die /daɪ/ |
| [t] ton /tʌn/ | town /taʊn/ | tune /tju:n/ | twin /twɪn/ |
| [d] done /dʌn/ | down /daʊn/ | dune /dju:n/ | dwindle /ˈdwaɪndl/ |
| [t] writer /ˈraɪtə/ | latter /ˈlætə/ | wetting /wetɪŋ/ | |
| [d] rider /ˈraɪdə/ | ladder /ˈlædə/ | wedding /wedɪŋ/ | |
| [t] water /ˈwɔ:tə/ | whitish /ˈwaɪtɪʃ/ | putting /pʊtɪŋ/ | |
| [d] warder /ˈwɔ:də/ | widish /ˈwaɪdɪʃ/ | pudding /ˈpʊdɪŋ/ | |

2°)

| | | | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------|-------------|--------------|----------------|
| [t] riding /raɪdɪŋ/ | breeding /bri:dɪŋ/ | loading | /ˈləʊdɪŋ/ | latter /ˈlætə/ |
| [ð] writhing /raɪðɪŋ/ | breathing /bri:ðɪŋ/ | loathing | /ˈləʊðɪŋ/ | lather /ˈlæðə/ |
| [t] bet /bet/ | heart /hɑ:t/ | late /leɪt/ | sight /saɪt/ | set /set/ |
| [d] bed /bed/ | hard /hɑ:d/ | laid /leɪd/ | side /saɪd/ | said /sed/ |
| [t] brought /brɔ:t/ | | | | |
| [d] broad / brɔ:d/ | | | | |

3°)

| | | |
|---------------------|---------------|---------------|
| [d] breed /bri:d/ | ride /raɪd/ | side /saɪd/ |
| [ð] breathe /bri:ð/ | writhe /raɪð/ | scythe /saɪð/ |

4°)

| | | | |
|------------------|-----------|--------------|-----------------|
| [t] built /bɪlt/ | hit /hɪt/ | mottle /mɒtl | written /'rɪtn/ |
| [d] build /bɪld/ | hid /hɪd/ | model /mɒdl | ridden /'rɪdn/ |
| [t] tip/ tɪp/ | sat /sæt/ | mat/ mæt/ | bat/bæt/ |
| [d] dip/ dɪp/ | sad /sæd/ | mad/ mæd/ | bad/bæd/ |

5) Dialogue : Mother and son ([t]versus [d] versus [θ] versus [ð])

Mother : Thankyou for the tank you bought for me.

Son : I noticed you had nothing to, store water in.

Mother : I had a tin butthat thin boy broke It open.

Son : That must be why Dotou fought with him the fourthtime yesterday.

Mother : They fight everyday over one thing or another.

Phonemic transcriptin of the dialogue above

Dialogue : /'mʌðə ənd sʌn/

Mother : /θæŋkjə fə ðætæŋkjə bɔ:t fəmi:/

Son : /aɪ 'nɒstɪstjə həd'nʌθɪŋtəstɔ: 'wɔ:tərɪn/

Mother : /aɪ həd ə tɪn bət ðæt θɪŋ bɔɪbrəʊkɪt 'əʊpɪn/

Son : /ðæt məst bɪ waɪ'dəʊtu: fɔ:t wɪð hɪm ðə'fɔ:θ taɪm 'jestədeɪ/

Mother : /ðeɪ faɪt 'evrɪdeɪ 'əʊvə wʌn θɪŋɔ:rə 'nʌðə /

Comment

Most Nigerians and some Beninese English learners/ students and even some Beninese English secondary school teachers mispronounce the ending **ed** of the past tense of **regular verbs**. That is the reason why caution is needed here too in order not to be misled

3.7.3. Velar Plosives [k, g]

3.7.3.1 Description

To begin with, [k] is a **voiceless stop consonant** whereas [g] is a **voiced one**.

The back of the tongue is in firm contact with the soft palate, and the soft palate is raised, so that the breath is trapped for a short time.

Secondly, when the tongue is lowered suddenly from the soft palate, the breath rushes out of the mouth with a slight explosion or popping noise.

In other words, when we make the [k] sound, we place the back of our tongue against the back of our mouth. Then we suddenly let the air out forcefully. We make this sound from our mouth, not from our throat.

To make the [g] sound we almost do it in the same way, as the [k] sound, but we make it from our throat, not from our mouth.

The position of the speech organs for these sounds is shown in Figure 19 below.

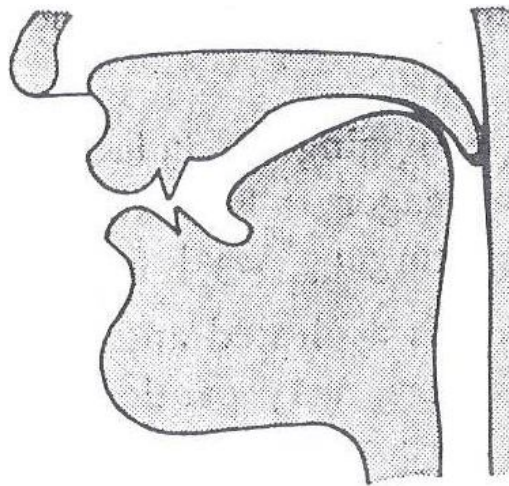


Figure 19 showing the position of the speech organs in the production of [k] and [g].

Source: (Idem). page 62.

3.7.3.2. Some of the commonest words containing [k] and [g].

3.7.3.2.1 Some of the commonest words containing [k] are :

call, can, car, carry, case, catch, cause, kind, kitchen, kill coal, coat, cold, come, cook, corner, count, breakfast, excuse, pocket, second, walking, local, ask, back, black, book, break, dark, drink, lake, like, lock, make, mistake, music, neck, o'clock, quick, take, weak, secret.

3.7.3.2.1 Some of the commonest words containing [g] are :

game, garden, gate, get, girl, glass, go, good, grass, great, grey, ground, grow, guess, gun, again, against, ago, agree, angry, August, exact, exam, forget, language, regular, together, longer, bigger, tiger, begin, bag, beg, big, dog, fog, leg, rug, plug, flag, drug.

3.7.3.3 Comparison

1°)

| | | | |
|----------------------|-----------------|---------------|------------------|
| [k] cap /kæp/ | coat/kəʊt/ | clue /klu:/ | decree /di`kri:/ |
| [g] /gæp/ | goat/gəʊt/ | glue /glu:/ | degree /di`gri:/ |
| [k] bicker/`bɪkə/ | stacker/`stækə/ | lacked/lækt/ | |
| [g] bigger/`bɪgə/ | stagger/`stægə/ | lagged/lægd/ | |
| [k] ankle /æŋkl/ | hackle/`hækl/ | pick /pɪk/ | |
| [g] angle/ æŋgl/ | haggle `hægl/ | pig /pɪg/ | |
| [k] back /bæk/ | duck/dʌk/ | crate /kreɪt/ | |
| [g] bag /bæg/ | dug /dʌg/ | great /greɪt/ | |

2°)

[k] cave /keɪv/ card /kɑ:d/ curl /kɜ:l/ could /kʊd/

[g] gave /geɪv/ guard /gɑ:d/ girl /gɜ:l/ good /gʊd/

[k] cap /kæp/ coal /keʊl/ class /klɑ:s/ crow /krəʊ/

[g] gap /gæp/ goal /gəʊl/ glass /glɑ:s/ grow /grəʊ/

[k] licking /lɪkɪŋ/ lacking /lækɪŋ/ weaker /wi:kə/

[g] digging /dɪgɪŋ/ lagging /lægɪŋ/ eager /i:gə/

[k] thicker /θɪkə/ market /mɑ:kɪt/ pick /pɪk/

[g] bigger /bɪgə/ target /tɑ:ɡɪt/ big /bɪg/

[k] dock /dɒk/ back /bæk/ lack /læk/ lock /lɒk/

[g] dog/dɒg/ bag /bæg/ lag/læg/ log/lɒg/

[k] lake /leɪk/ broke /brəʊk/ cane /keɪn/ skein/skeɪn/

[g] plague /pleɪg/ rogue /rəʊg/ gain /geɪn/ gain/

[k] ruck /rʌk/ lacked /lækt/ rankle /'ræŋkl/

[g] rug /rʌg/lagged /lægd/ wrangle/'ræŋgl/

[k] crew /kru:/ thicken/ 'θɪkən/

[g] grew /gru:/ organ /'ɔ: gən/

Notes

[k] – Voiceless (spelt in k ; c , cc, in front of [əʊ]; [ɑ:], [æ],[aɪ], [ɔ:] ; qu, ch, e.g:

'kind'/kaɪnd/ , 'cake' /keɪk/ ; 'accord' /ə'kɔ:d/ 'conquer' /'kɒŋkə/

'stomach' /stʌmək/, 'chemist' /'kemɪst/, bouquet /bu'keɪ/,

qu'/kw/ in 'quiet'/kwaɪət/ 'quat'/kwɔ:t/ ; 'quite' /kwaɪt/ etc...

silent c or k in 'muscle' /mʌsəl/ 'know'/nəʊ/,

'knew' /nju:/, 'knit' /nɪt/, 'knowledge' /'nɒlɪdʒ/

'knock'/nɒk/, knob /nɒb/, knag/næg/, knee/ni:/

'kneel' /ni:l/, knight /naɪt/ but present in 'knish' /kə'nɪʃ/

• [g] voiced (regularly spelt g, gg, sometimes gh, gu, e.g: 'ghost' /gəʊst/

'guard'/gɑ:d/, 'dinghy' /dɪŋɡɪ /,

[g] silent in 'gnaw' /nɔ:/ gnat /næt/,

'diaphragm' /'daɪəfræm/, 'sign' /saɪn/ 'reign' /reɪn/,

'sight' /saɪt/ , 'dough' /dəʊ /, 'though' /ðəʊ/

'through' / θru:/, 'rough' /rʌf/ ; rouge /ru:ʒ/).

2) Dialogues ([k] versus [g])

A : Why did the girls **giggle** at the **back** of the **class** ?

B : Probably because the **chemicals** began to bubble.

A : How did **Garba** **get** by the **guards** ?

B : He **gave** them a **big bag** of **gold**.

Phonetic transcription of the dialogues

A : /waɪdɪ ðə ɡɜ:lz 'ɡɪɡl ət ðə bæknvðə klɑ:s/

B : /prɒbəblɪ'kɒz ðə 'kemɪkl bi'gæn/ tə'bʌbl/

A : /həʊ dɪd*ɡɑ:bæ get baɪðə ɡɑ:dz/

B : /hi: geɪv ðem ə big bæɡ əv ɡəʊld/

3.7.4 Palato – alveolar affricates [tʃ, dʒ]

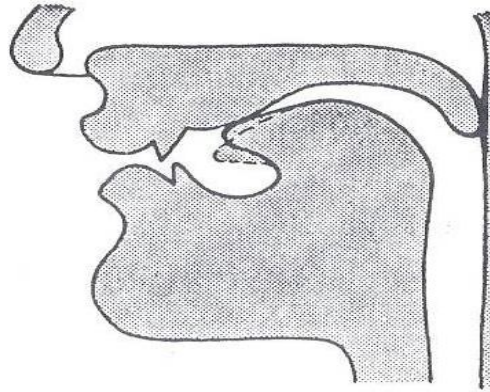
3.7.4.1 Description

Firstly, the tongue – tip touches the back part of the alveolar ridge, and the soft palate is raised so that the breath is trapped for a short time. Secondly, the rest of the tongue is in the [ʃ, ʒ] position.

Thirdly, the tongue – tip moves away from the alveolar ridge a little way, and the whole tongue is then in the [ʃ, ʒ] position, so that a short period of this friction is heard. The friction of [tʃ] and [dʒ] is not so long as for [ʃ] and [ʒ] alone.

[tʃ] is a voiceless consonant sound whereas [dʒ] is a voiced one.

The position of the organs of speech for [tʃ] and [dʒ] is shown in Figure 20 below.



Figure^o20 showing the position of the speech organs in the production of [t] and [dʒ].

Source: (Idem). page 61.

3.7.4.2 Some of the commonest words containing [t] and [dʒ]

3.7.4.2.1 Some of the commonest words containing [t] are :

Chair, chance, change, cheap, chief, child, choice, choose, church, fortune, future, kitchen, nature, picture, question, catch, each, March, much, reach, rich, speech, stretch, such, teach, touch, watch, which, children.

3.7.4.2.2 Some of the commonest words containing [dʒ] are :

general, gentleman, January, join, joke, journey, joy, judge, July, jump, June, just, danger, imagine, soldier, subject, object, age, arrange, bridge edge, language, knowledge, large, manage, village, damage, luggage.

3.7.4.3. Comparison

1^o) [t] chin /tʃɪn/ choke /tʃəʊk/ cheer /tʃɪə/

[dʒ] gin /dʒɪn/ joke /dʒəʊk/ jeer /dʒɪə/

[t] chain /tʃeɪn/ choice /tʃɔɪs/ chest /tʃest/

[dʒ] Jane */dʒeɪn/ Joyce */dʒɔɪs/ jest /dʒest/

[t] riches /rɪtʃɪz/ fetching /fetʃɪŋ/ catching /kætʃɪŋ/

[dʒ] ridges /rɪdʒɪz/ logging /lɒdʒɪŋ/

[t] H /eɪt/ fetch /fetʃ/ watch /wɒtʃ/

[dʒ] age /eɪdʒ/ edge /edʒ/ lodge /lɒdʒ/

[t] nature /'neɪtʃə/ leech /li:tʃ/ larch /lɑ:tʃ/

[dʒ] major /'meɪdʒə/ liege /li:dʒ/ large /lɑ:dʒ/

[tʃ] a venture /əˈventʃə/ perch /pɜ:tʃ/ lunch /lʌntʃ/

[dʒ] avenger /əˈvendʒə/ purge /pɜ:dʒ/ lunge /lʌŋdʒ/

[tʃ] cinch /sintʃ/ beseech /ˈbiːsi:tʃ/

[dʒ] singe /sɪndʒ/ besiege /ˈbiːsi:dʒ/

2°) [ʃ] shoe [ʃu:] washing /wɒʃɪŋ/ wish /wɪʃ/

[tʃ] chew tʃu:/ watching /wɒtʃɪŋ/ witch /wɪtʃ/

3°) [ʒ] leisure /ˈleɪʒə/ measure /ˈmeɪʒə/

[dʒ] ledger /ˈledʒə/ major /ˈmeɪdʒə/

4°) [ʃ] shop /ʃɒp/ cash /kæʃ/

[tʃ] chop /tʃɒp/ catch /kætʃ/

5) **Dialogues** ([tʃ] versus [dʒ] versus [ʃ])

At school :

Charles : Excuse me, sir. I'm sorry to disturb you, but it's an emergency.

Teacher : *Charles*, what's wrong ?

Charles : *Geofroy* has just injured his *chin* in a *match*. It could be dangerous.

Teacher : We'd better take him to hospital.

In the hospital

Doctor : How is the *patient* doing ?

Nurse : I think he's all right. I've put on a clean bandage and I don't think there are any *germs*.

Doctor : Is he in *much* pain ?

Nurse : Yes, He's complaining about his *jaw*.

Doctor : Get the syringe. He needs an *injection* right away.

PHONETIC TRANSCRIPTION OF THE DIALOGUES

Charles : /ek ' skju:z/ mi:/ sɜ:/ /aɪm sɔrɪtə dɪstʃ: bjə / bət ɪtʒ ən i ' mɜ:dʒənsɪ/

Teacher : */tʃɑ:lz/ wɒtʒ rɒŋ/

Charles: */ ' dʒefri hæz dʒʌst ' ɪndʒəd hɪz tʃɪnɪnə məetʃ//ɪt kʊdbɪ ' deɪndʒərəs/

In the hospital /ɪn 'hɒspɪtl/

Doctor : /həʊɪzðə 'peɪʃənt/ du:ɪŋ/

Nurse : /aɪθɪŋkɪzɔ:l 'raɪt/ /aɪv pʊtənə kli:n 'bændɪdʒ ənd aɪ dəʊnt θɪŋk ðeər 'enɪdʒ
3:mz/

Doctor : /ɪz hɪm mʌtʃ peɪn/

Nurse : /jes/ /hɪz kəm 'pleɪnɪŋə 'baʊt hɪz dʒɔ:/

Doctor : /get ðə sɪ 'rɪndʒ //hɪ ni:dzən m 'dʒekʃən raɪt ə 'weɪ/

3.8 Nasal consonants

There are three phonemes in English which are represented by **nasal consonants, [m, n, ŋ]** In all nasal consonants the soft palate is lowered and at the same time the mouth passage is blocked at some point, so that all the air is pushed out of the nose.

3.8.1 Bilabial Nasal [m] and alveolar nasal [n].

3.8.1.1. Description

To begin with, the soft palate is lowered for both **[m]** and **[n]**. Secondly, for **[m]** the mouth is blocked by closing the two lips, for **[n]** by pressing the tip of the tongue against the alveolar ridge, and the sides of the tongue against the sides of the palate.

Thirdly, both sounds are voiced in English, as they are in other languages and the voiced air passes out through the nose.

The sound **[m]** is made with the **two lips** pressed tightly together so that the air cannot pass through. It is called a **nasal sound** because the air is released through the **nose**.

The [n] sound is like the [m] sound because it is also a **nasal consonant sound** but it differs from [m] because it is made when the tongue is placed firmly on the **alveolar ridge** while the air passes through the nose.

The position of the speech organs for these sounds is shown in Figure 21

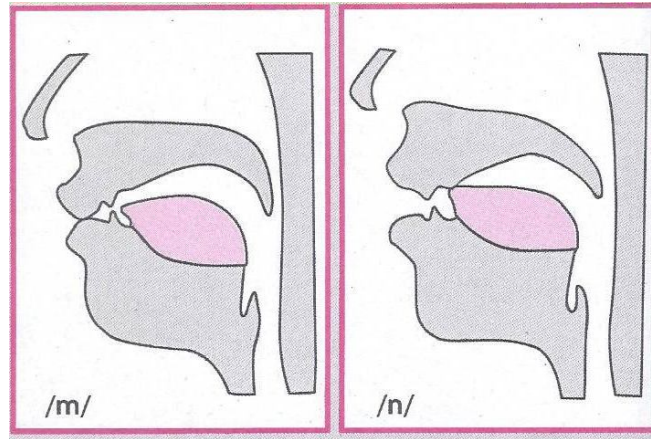


Figure n°21 showing the position of the speech organs in the production of [m] and [n].

Source : Benson. O. Oluikpe et al. (1999). *Intensive English for Junior Secondary Schools*. (second edition). book 2. page 130.

3.8.1.2. Some of the commonest words containing [m] and [n]

3.8.2.2. Some of the commonest words containing [m] are :

make, man, many, marry, matter, may, me, mean, meat, middle, mind, money, more, month, move, much, must, my, almost, among, common, complete, family, promise, remember, simple, summer, tomorrow, woman, am, arm, become, come, farm, form, from, him, home, room, same, seem, some swim, them, time, warm, welcome.

3.8.2.2 Some of the commonest words containing

[n] are : *name, neither, never, next, nice, night, know, knife, knee, no, and, nine, noise, nose, north, notice, now, number, funny, answer, any, behind, country, dinner, enough, finish, general, journey, manner, many, penny, since, undergo, want, winter, again, alone, been, begin, between, can, done, down,*

green, in, join, learn, on, one, rain, run, skin, son, sun, teenager, ten, than, then, knight, notice.

3.8.3 Practice

1°) [m] him /hɪm/, lamb /læm/, room /ru:m/,
limp /lɪmp/, lamp /læmp/, lump /lʌmp/,
games /geɪz/, hums /hʌmz/, hump /hʌmp/,
complain /kəmˈpleɪn/, complaint /kəmˈpleɪnt/,
lamb /læm/, tomb /tu:m/, comb /kɒm/,
climb /klaɪm/, mine /maɪn/,
might /maɪt/, simmer /ˈsɪmə/, sum /sʌm/,
some /sʌm/, rim /rɪm/,
[n] night /naɪt/, sinner /ˈsɪnə/, sun /sʌn/, run /rʌn/

2°) Further practice

[m] man /mæn/, meat /mi:t/, mat /mæt/
[n] noun /naʊn/, now /naʊ/, nurse /nɜ:s/, none /nəʊn/
[m] match /mætʃ/, name /neɪm/, comb /kɒm/
[n] knot /nɒt/, knight /naɪt/, final /ˈfaɪnəl/, pen /pen/,
[m] womb /wu:m/, lamb /læm/, comb /kɒm/
[n] nine /naɪn/, monitor /ˈmɒnɪtə/, coin /kɔɪn/
[m] many /ˈmeni/, summer /ˈsʌmə/
[n] any /ˈeni/, runner /ˈrʌnə/
[m] hamlet /ˈhæmlət/, sermon /ˈsɜ:mən/, rim /rɪm/
3°) [m] rhythm /ˈrɪðm/, rhythmic /ˈrɪðmɪk/
[n] sudden /ˈsʌdn/, hidden /ˈhɪdn/, ridden /ˈrɪdn/

- [m] mysticism /'mɪstɪsɪzəm/ ; socialism /'səʊʃlɪzəm/
[n] written /'rɪtən/, bitten /'bɪtən/person /'pɜːsən/
[m] nationalism /'næʃənəlɪzəm/ prism /'prɪzəm /,
[n] vision /'vɪʒən/ fashion /'fæʃən/ listen /'lɪsən/,
[m] racism /'reɪsɪzəm/, tribalism /traɪbəlɪzəm/
[n] reason /'riːzən/, dozen /'dʌzən/ cotton /'kɒtən/,
[m] animalism /'ænɪmɪzəm/
[n] button /'bʌtən/, poison /'pɔɪzən/ prison /'prɪzən/
[m] animism /'ænɪmɪzəm/, nepotism /'nepətɪzəm/
[n] kitten /'kɪtən/, mutton /'mʌtən/, smitten /'smɪtən/
[m] colonialism /kə'lɒniəlɪzəm/, fantasm /'fæntæzəm/
[n] strengthen /streŋθən/ beaten /'biːtən/striven /'strɪvən/
[m] fanaticism /fə'nætɪsɪzəm/
[n] Britain */'brɪtən/ broaden/'brɔːdn/
[m] hybridism /'haɪbrɪdɪzəm/, symbolism /'sɪmbəlɪzəm/
[n] stridden /'strɪdn/, lesson /'lesən/, eleven /ɪ'levn/

Notes

- All the words in 3) have alternative ways of transcribing them phonetically namely /'rɪθm/ /'rɪðəm/, 'rhythmic' /'rɪðəmɪk/,
'sudden' /'sʌdən/, hidden /'hɪdən/, ridden /'rɪdən/
'mysticism' /'mɪstɪsɪzəm/, socialism /'səʊʃəlɪzəm/
'written' /'rɪtən/, bitten /'bɪtən/ person /'pɜːsən/
nationalism /'næʃənəlɪzəm/ prism /'prɪzəm/
vision /'vɪʒən/ fashion/'fæʃən/, listen /'lɪsən/
racism /'reɪsɪzəm/, tribalism /traɪbəlɪzəm/,
reason /'riːzən/, dozen /'dʌzən/ cotton /'kɒtən/

animalism /'æniməlɪzəm/, button /'bʌtən/

poison /'pɔɪzən/, prism /'prɪzəm/, animism /'ænimɪzəm/,

nepotism /'nepətɪzəm/, kitten /'kɪtən/

mutton /'mʌtən/, smitten /'smitən/

colonialism /kə'ləʊniəlɪzəm/, fantasm /'fæntæzəm/

strengthen /streŋθən/ beaten /'bi:tən/

striven /'strɪvən/, fanaticism /fə'nætɪsɪzəm/

Britain* /'brɪtən/ broaden /'brɔ:dən/

hybridism /haɪbrɪdɪzəm/, symbolism /'sɪmbəlɪzəm/

stridden /'strɪdən/, lesson /'lesən/, eleven /ɪ'levən/

• The [n] sound is silent in the following words : *hymn* /hɪm/, *column* /'kɒləm/,
autumn /'ɔ:təm/, *damn* /dæm/, *condemn* /ken'dem/

3.8.4. Comparison

1° [m] mow (verb) /məʊ/, moon /mu:n/, main /meɪn/

[n] no /nəʊ/noon /nu:n/, name /neɪm/

[m] me /mi:/, game /geɪm/ ; seem /si:m/, warm /wɔ:m/

[n] knee /ni:/, gain /geɪn/ ; seen /si:n/, warn /wɔ:n/

[m] some /sʌm/ ;prism /'prɪzəm/or/'prɪzəm/

[n] son /sʌn/ ;prison /'prɪzən/ or/'prɪzən/

2° [m] maim /meɪm/ ; simmer /'sɪmə/ ; some /sʌm/

[n] name / neɪm/, sinner /'sɪnə/ ; son /sʌn/

3° **Dialogue** : Miguel is asking about his friend Toni from Mr Dossou ([m]
versus [n] versus [ŋ]).

Miguel : Good morning, Sir. I'm looking for your son, Toni.

Mr Dossou : Good morning, Miguel. My son is doing some work behind the house.

Miguel : I haven't seen him this week. It seems he has been very busy.

Mr Dossou : Yes, he has been helping me on the farm because I have a bad knee.

Miguel : I want to remind him of the game this evening. He has a lot to gain from playing the game.

Mr Dossou : That is, if he finishes the work in time.

Phonetic transcription of the dialogue

Dialogue: */mɪɡelɪz æskɪŋ ə'baʊt hɪz n frend */təʊni frɒm'mɪstə *dəʊsu:/ ([m] versus [n] versus [ŋ])

Miguel : /ɡʊd'mɔ:nɪŋ/ sɜ: //aɪm lʊkɪŋ fɔ: jɔ: sʌn 'təʊni/

Mr Dossou : /ɡʊd'mɔ:nɪŋ *mɪ'ɡel // maɪsʌnɪz 'du:ɪŋsʌm
wɜ:k bi'hænd ðə haʊs/

Miguel : /aɪ'hævənt si:n hɪm ðɪs wi:k //ɪt si:mz hi: hæz bi:n 'veri'bɪzi /

Mr Dossou : /jes/ hi: hæz bi:n helpɪŋmi :ɒn ðə fɑ:m br'kɒz aɪhæv ə bæd ni: /

Miguel : /aɪ wɒnt tə rɪ'maɪnd hɪm əvðə /geɪm/ðɪs'i:vniŋ// hɪ hæz əlɒt tə /geɪn/

Mr Dossou : /ðæt ɪz / ɪf hɪ fɪnɪʃɪz ðə wɜ:k ɪn taɪm/

3.8.2 Velar Nasal

3.8.2.1 Description

The sound [ŋ] is the third English nasal consonant and the only one likely to cause trouble, because many languages do not have a consonant formed like [ŋ].

To make this consonant sound, the soft palate is lowered and all the air passes out through the nose. The mouth is blocked by the back of the tongue pressed against the soft palate. The velar nasal [ŋ] is **voiced**.

In other words, we make the [ŋ] sound, by raising the back of the tongue and placing it firmly on the back roof of the mouth. The air from the lungs cannot pass through the mouth and so escapes through the nose when the sound is produced.

The position of the speech organs for [ŋ] is shown figure 22 below

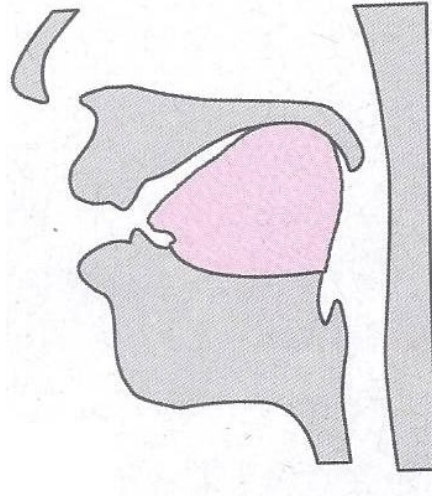


Figure 22 showing the position of the speech organs in the production of [ŋ].

Source: (Idem). page 141.

3.8.2.2 Some of the commonest words containing [ŋ] are :

anger, anxious, drink, finger, hungry, language, sink, thank, think, among, bring, ring, during, evening, hang.

- ing, morning, song, sing, king, spring, string, strong, thing, wrong, young, rang, singer, sung, rung, tongue, ankle, uncle, sang, hunger, thing, single, ring, longing, conquer, hanger, anger, angry, strength, long, monkey, mango, orange, ringing, monk.

3.8.2.3 Practice

1°) sing /sɪŋ/, sang /sæŋ/, song /sɒŋ/, sung /sʌŋ/,

ring /rɪŋ/, rang /ræŋ/, wrong /rɒŋ/, rung /rʌŋ/,

2°) singer /sɪŋə/, long ago /lɒŋə ˈgəʊ/, hang up /hæŋʌp/,

wrong again /rɒŋə ˈɡeɪn/or/rɒŋ ə ˈɡeɪn/, singing /sɪŋɪŋ/
hanging /hæŋɪŋ/, bringit /brɪŋɪt /
among others / ə ˈmʌŋ ˈlʌðəz/ banging /bæŋɪŋ/

3.8.2.4 Contrast

1°/ [n] sin /sɪn/, son /sʌn/ ran /ræn/, sinner /sɪnə/

[ŋ] sing /sɪŋ/, song /sɒŋ/ rang /ræŋ/, singer /sɪŋə/

[n] tons /tʌnz/, thin /θɪn/banner/bænə/, gone /ɡɒn/

[ŋ] tongues /tʌŋz/, thing /θɪŋ/banger/bæŋə/, gong /ɡɒŋ/

[n] mountain / ˈmaʊntɪn/,kin/ kɪn/, ban/ bæn/,

[ŋ] mounting / ˈmaʊntɪŋ/,king/ kɪŋ/, bang/ bæŋ/,

Dialogue : The *naughty* boy ([n] versus [ŋ])

Letitia : Who did this *thing* here ? It must be that *thin* boy who was here.

Isabelle : Do you mean *Fonligan* ? He *ran into* the class when the bell *rang*.

Letitia : That boy *knows* how to provoke my *anger*. See what he's *done* to my *hanger*.

Isabelle : Listen to him *singing* in the class and you'll *think* he's *never* committed a *sin*.

Letitia : That boy *considers* himself *strong*, but I'll show him I'm *stronger* than he is.

Phonetic transcription of the dialogue

Dialogue : / ðə ˈnɔ:tɪbɔɪ/ ([n] versus [ŋ])

Letitia : /hu: did ðɪs θɪŋhɪə // ɪt məst bɪ ðæt θɪnbɔɪhu:wɒz hɪə/

Isabelle : /du: ju: mɪ:n *fɒnlɪgæn// hɪræn ɪntə ðə klɑ:s wen ðə bel ræŋ/

Letitia : /ðæt bɔɪ nəʊz haʊ tə prəˈvəʊk maɪ ˈæŋgə// sɪ:wɒt hɪ z dʌn tə maɪˈhæŋə/

Isabelle : /lɪsn tə hɪm sɪŋ ɪŋɪn ðə klɑ:s ənd jə lθɪŋk hɪ z ˈnevə kəˈmɪtɪd ə sɪn/

Letitia : /ðæt bɔɪ kən'sɪdəz hɪm'self strɒŋ/ bæt aɪl ʃəʊ hɪmɪm strɒŋgə ðæn hɪɪz/

3.9 Lateral approximant consonant [l]

3.9.1 Description

The [l] sound is **voiced**. The **soft** palate is raised. The tongue – tip and the sides of the tongue are in firm contact with the alveolar ridge, obstructing the centre of the mouth. The sides of the remainder of the tongue are not in contact with the sides of the palate, so that the air can pass between the sides of the tongue and the palate, round the central obstruction formed by the tip and blade of the tongue and so out of the mouth.

In other words, the [l] sound is made by placing the tongue firmly on the teeth ridge as the air escapes through the sides of the mouth. It is produced with **vibration**.

The position of the organs of speech for [l] is shown in the figure 23 below.

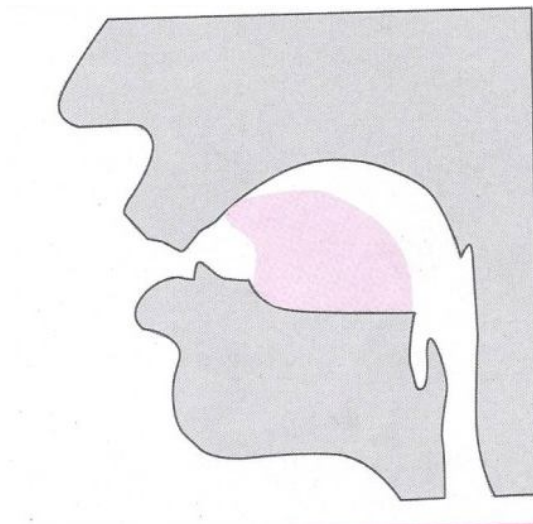


Figure n°23 showing the position of the speech organs in the production of [l].

Source: (Idem). page 155

4.9.2. **Some of the commonest words containing [l] are :**

lady, land language, last, late, laugh, lead, leave, left, less, let, like, listen, little, live, long, lot, lack, lose, love, low, allow, along, almost, already, always, sold, colour, difficult, early, eleven, else, fault, help, o'clock, old, told, self, yellow, able, all, beautiful, fail, fall, feel, full, girl, meal, mile, parcel, people, possible, real, school, shall, still, table, tell, until, well, small.

3.9.3 Comparison

1°/

| | | | | | |
|-----|-----------|--------------|--------------------|--------------|-----------|
| [n] | no /nəʊ/ | night /naɪt/ | neighbour /'neɪbə/ | | |
| [l] | low /ləʊ/ | light /laɪt/ | labour /'leɪbə/ | need /ni:d/ | nip /nɪp/ |
| [n] | net /net/ | node /nəʊd/ | not /nɒt/ | | |
| [l] | let /let/ | load /ləʊd/ | lot /lɒt/ | lead /li:d/, | lip /lɪp/ |

Dialogue : The missing boots [n] versus [l]

Mr Roger : Can I see you for a minute ?

Mr LEOTO : Ok. What is it ?

Mr Roger : Did you see any boots behind that low wall when you came in last night.

Mr LEOTO : There was no light in that room last night so, I couldn't see them if they were there.

Mr Roger : Our neighbour needs the boots. Those boots are good for farm labour.

PHONETIC TRANSCRIPTION OF THE DIALOGUE

Dialogue : / ðə mɪsɪŋbu:ts /([n] versus [l])

Mr Roger : /kæ n aɪ si: jə fə ə'mɪnɪt/

Mr LEOTO : /əʊ'keɪ // wɒt ɪz ɪt /

Mr Roger : /dɪd ju:si: 'eni bu:ts bi'haʊnd ðæt ləw wɔ:l wen jə keɪm ɪn lɑ:st naɪt/

Mr LEOTO : /ðeə wɔz neʊ laɪt ɪn ðətru:msəʊ/aɪ kʊdnt si:ðemɪf ðeə weə ðeə/

Mr Roger : / aʊə'neɪbə ni:dz ðə bu:ts// ðəʊz bu:tsɑ: gʊd fə fɑ:m 'leɪbə/

Notes

. The sound [l] is silent in some words such as in the following one : **folk** /fəʊk/, **psalm** /sɑ:m/

could /kʊd/, **half** /hɑ:f/, **calf** /kɑ:f/

would /wʊd/, **talk** /tɔ:k/, **chalk** /tʃɔ:k/

should /ʃʊd/, **walk** /wɔ:k/, **palm** /pɑ:m/

calm /kɑ:m/, **balm** /bɑ:m/, **salmon** /'sæmən/

. However, it is pronounced in the following words **milk** /mɪlk/, **silk** /sɪlk/, **build** /bɪld/, **field** /fi:ld/ ; **film** /fɪlm/, **kiln** /kɪln/ ; **fold** /fəʊld/ **mould** /məʊld/

melt /melt/, **belt** /belt/

malt /mɔ:lt/ **salt** /sɔ:lt/, **hulk** /hʌlk/, **bulk** /bʌlk/

3.10 Post – alveolar approximant /r/

3.10.1 Description

The sound [r] is **voiced**. The soft palate is raised and the nasal resonator is shut off, the tip of the tongue is held in a position near to, but not touching, the rear part of the upper teeth ridge ; the back rims of the tongue are touching the upper molars ; the central part of the tongue is lowered, with a general contraction of the tongue.

In other words, to pronounce the sound [r] the tip of the tongue comes near the upper teeth ridge while the centre of the tongue is lowered with its back rims touching the upper molars.

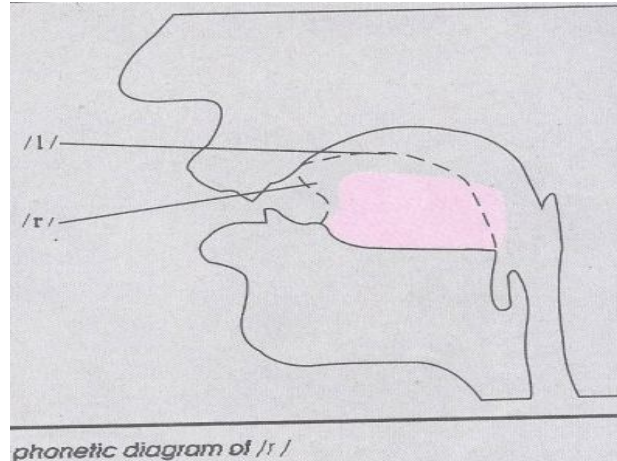


Figure n°24 showing the position of the speech organs in the production of [r].

Source : (Idem). page 167.

3.10.2 Some of the commonest words containing [r] are :

rain, rather, reach, read, real, ready, red, remember, rest, right, road, roof, room, round, rule, run, write, wrong, wrong, agree, already, arrange, borrow, bread, bring, cross, direct, dress, drink, every, foreign, from, great, interest, marry, pretty, price, prize, serious, sorry, terrible, true, try, very, worry, wrath, wreath, dream.

3.10.3 Comparison

1°) [l] light /laɪt/, low /ləʊ/, lead /li:d/, led /led/,

[r] right /raɪt/, row /rəʊ/, read /ri:d/, red /red/,

[l] lock /lɒk/ ; bleed /bli:d/, ply /plaɪ/, lack /læk/

[r] rock /rɒk/ ; breed /bri:d/, pry /praɪ/, rack /ræk/

[l] lag /læɡ/, play /pleɪ/, loom /lu:m/ lip /lɪp/,

[r] rag /ræɡ/, pray /preɪ/, room /ru:m/ rip /rɪp/,

- [ɪ] splay /spleɪ/, laughed /lɑ:ft/, clash /klæʃ/
[r] spray /spreɪ/, raft /rɑ:ft/, crash /kræʃ/
[ɪ] glow /gleʊ/, bloom /blu:m/ glass /glɑ:s/
[r] grow /greʊ/, groom /gru:m/ grass /grɑ:s/
[ɪ] pleasant /'plezənt/,
[r] present (adjective) /'prezənt/,
[ɪ] player /pleɪə/ ; loyal /lɔɪəl/, flesh /fleʃ/
[r] prayer /preɪə/ ; royal /rɔɪəl/, fresh /freʃ/,
[ɪ] blouse /blaʊz/, clown /klaʊn/, lolly /lɒli/,
[r] brouse /braʊz/, crown /kraʊn/, lorry /'lɒri/,
[ɪ] flight /flaɪt/ leaf /li:f/, light /laɪt/
[r] bright /braɪt/ reef /ri:f/, write /raɪt/
[ɪ] pilot /'paɪlət/, cramp /kræmp/
[r] pirate /'paɪərət/, clamp /klæmp/
[ɪ] blade /bleɪd/ flee /fli:/, plays /pleɪz/
[r] braid /breɪd/ free /fri:/, praise /preɪz/

2° **Dialogue** : At the doctor's ([ɪ] versus [r])

Doctor : Good morning. What can I do for you ?

Patient : Good morning, doctor. I'm not *sleeping very well*.

Doctor : I see. *Let me ask you a few questions. Do you smoke ?*

Patient : No.

Doctor : What about *drink* ?

Patient : Not at *all*.

Doctor : Is there a history of heart disease in your family ?

Patient : Not as *far* as I know.

Doctor : What about exercise ?

Patient : *Well*, er, I don't do enough exercise, *really*.

Doctor : I see. *Well*, I suggest that you take more exercise – even just walking is good for you.

Patient : I see.

Doctor : And eat plenty of *fruit* and *vegetables*. I think you *will* *feel* much better.

Patient : Thank you *very* much.

Doctor : You are *welcome*.

PHONETIC TRANSCRIPTION OF THE DIALOGUE

Dialogue : / æt ðə 'dɒktəz / ([n] versus [l])

Doctor : /gʊd'mɔ:nɪŋ/ wɒt kən aɪdu: fəjə/

Patient : /gʊd'mɔ:nɪŋ/ 'dɒktə // aɪm nɒt sli:pɪŋ/wel/

Doctor : /aɪsi: // let mɪɑ:skjə fju: 'kwɛstʃən// du:jəsməʊk/

Patient : /nəʊ/

Doctor : /wɒt ə'baʊt/ drɪŋk/

Patient : /nɒt ət ɔ:l /

Doctor : /ɪz ðeəə'hɪstriəv hæ:t drɪ'zɪ:z ɪn jə 'fæmɪli/

Patient : /nɒt əz fɑ:r əz aɪ nəʊ /

Doctor : /wɒt ə'baʊt 'ek sə saɪ z/

Patient : wel /3:/ aɪ dəʊnt du: mʌtʃ 'eksəsaɪz rɪəli/

Doctor : /aɪ siː// wel/ aɪ sə'dʒest ðæt jə teɪk mɔːr'eksə s aɪz -'iː vndʒʌst wɔːkɪŋɪz
gʊd fəjə/

Patient : /aɪ siː/

Doctor : /ænd iːt plentɪv fruːt ænd 'vedʒtəbl//aɪθɪŋk jə wɪl fiːl mʌtʃ 'betə

Patient : /θæŋk jə 'veri mʌtʃ/

Doctor : /juː ɑː 'welkəm/

3.11 Palatal Approximant [j]

3.11.1 Description

The sound [j] is a quick glide from the position [i:] or [I] to any other vowel. We usually transcribe the word 'yes' as /jes/ and the word 'yet' as /jet/, 'yard' /jɑːd/, 'yacht' /jɔt/, 'your' /jɔː/, 'you' /juː/.

When [j] follows /p, t, k,/ it loses the voice which it usually has, and is made voiceless, this cause some friction to be heard.

We can have [j] plus the following vowels and diphthongs as in the following words :

[j + I] as in *yiddish* /'jɪdɪʃ/

[j + e] as in *yell* /jel/

[j + æ] as in *yap* /jæp/

[j + ɔ] as in *yacht* /jɔt/

[j + u] as in *you* /ju/ (weak form)

[j + ʌ] as in *young* /jʌŋ/

[j + ə] as in *failure* /'feɪljə/

[j + iː] as in *yeast* /jiːst/

[j + uː] as in *youth* /juːθ/

[**j** + **ɑ:**] as in *yard* /jɑ:d/

[**j** + **ɔ:**] as in *inyawn* /jɔ:n/

[**j** + **ɜ:**] as in *yearn* /jɜ:n/

[**j** + **eɪ**] as in *inyea* /yeɪ/

[**j** + **ɔɪ**] as in *Yoick* /jɔɪk/

[**j** + **əʊ**] as in *yeoman* /'jəʊmən/

[**j** + **aʊ**] as in *yowl* /jaʊl/

[**j** + **ɪə**] as in *year* /jɪə/

[**j** + **eə**] as in *Yare* /jeə/

[**j** + **ʊə**] as in *lure* /ljʊə/or /lʊə /

It is also possible to have consonant + [j] in the following words :

[**b** + **j**] as in *beauty* /bju:tɪ/

[**k** + **j**] as in *cue* /kju:/

[**d** + **j**] as in *duty* /dju:tɪ/

[**f** + **j**] as in *few* /fju:/

[**g** + **j**] as in *gules* /gju:lz/

[**h** + **j**] as in *human* /'hju:mən/

[**l** + **j**] as in *lure* /ljʊə/

[**m** + **j**] as in *music* /'mju:zɪk/

[**n** + **j**] as in *new* /nju:/

[**p** + **j**] as in *pure* /pjʊə/

[**s** + **j**] as in *sue* /sju:/

[**t** + **j**] as in *tune* /tju:n/

[**v** + **j**] as in *view* /vju:/

4.11.2 Some of the commonest words containing [j] are :

yard, year, yellow, yes, yesterday, yet, you, young, your, use, usual, useful, Europe, amuse, beautiful, cure, during, duty, dune, during, educate, excuse, failure, few, huge, Tuesday, accuse, computer, que, tune, knew, music, new, suit, value, due, human, humid, hew, pupil, yolk, yield, yaw, yam, yacht, yet, yell, you, young, yeast, yea, cube, yes, yawn, unity, university, uniform, ewe, European, argue, onion, familiar, colonial, puce, tubular, cucumber, particular, nephew, phobia, beauty, purity, stupor, refuse, security, yellow, youth, interview, opinion.

3.12. Labial – Velar Approximant [w]

3.12.1 Description

This consonant consists of a quick glide from the vowel [u:] or [ʊ] to whatever vowels follow. The lips are rounded quite firmly.

When [w] follows a consonant it is made in the same way, but the lips are rounded ready for [w] before the previous consonant is finished. So in 'sweet' /swi:t/ the lips gradually become rounded during the [s], and when it ends they are firmly rounded ready for [w]. This is true for all the following words:

sweet /swi:t/, *swim* /swim/, *sweat* /swet/, *swear* /sweə/, *dwelling* /dweliŋ/.

When [w] immediately follows [t] or [k] the glide is **not voiced**, though the lips are again rounded during the stop consonant as in the following words :

twice /twais/, *twenty* /twenti/, *twelve* /twelv/, *quite* /kwait / *quick* /kwik/, *quiet* /kwaiət/ *twin* /twin/, *swell* /swel/, *queen* /kwi:n/, *twist* /twist/.

3.12.2 Some of the commonest words containing

[w] are:

one, watch, wet, white, win, we, wait, where wood, wool, which, why, where, walk, want, warm, wash, water, way, week, well, what, when, will, wish, with, woman, word, work, always, away, between, quarter, question, quick, quite, quiet, sweet, twelve, warm, twenty, twice, wine, well, worse, wheel, wall, while, reward, forward, highway, sweat, dwindle, swim, language, wonderful, wife.

3.12.3 Comparison

[v] vent /vent/, vain /veɪn/, verse /vɜ:s/,

[w] went /went/, wane /weɪn/, worse /wɜ:s/,

[v] vile /vaɪl/, veered /viəd/, vary /'veəri/,

[w] while /waɪl/, weird /wiəd/, wary /weəri/,

[v] veal /vi:l/, vine /vaɪn/, veil /veɪl/

[w] wheel /wi:l/, wine /waɪn/, wail /weɪl/

Notes

- The [w] sound is silent in the following words: **write** /raɪt/, **wrong** /rɒŋ/
two /tu:/, **answer** /'ɑ:nsə/, **sword** /sɔ:d/, **new** /nju:/, **knew** /ŋju:/, **few** /fju:/,
stew /stju:/, **dew** /dju:/, **written** /'rɪtɪn/, **who** /hu:/, **wrack** /ræk/, **wrench** /rentʃ/,
wrangle /'ræŋgl/, **wrist** /rɪst/, **whole** /həʊl/, **whom** /hu:m/, **brew** /bru:/,
wretch /retʃ/, **wring** /rɪŋ/ writhe /raɪð/, **wrinkle** /'rɪŋkl/, **know** /nəʊ/, **blow** /bləʊ/ **low**
/ləʊ/, **slow** /sləʊ/, **grew** /gru:/, **blew** /blu:/, **screw** /skru:/, **drew** /dru:/,
threw /θru:/ **yellow** /'jeləʊ/, **wrath** /rɒθ/, **wrap** /ræp/, **wrest** /rest/ **wrought** /rɔ:t/ **wry**
/raɪ/.

- The sound [w] is usually spelt 'w', but also as 'u' after 'q' and in some other words.
- The word '*choir*' is pronounced as if written '*quire*' /kwaɪə/.

CHAPTER IV: CONSONANT SEQUENCES / CLUSTERS

In chapter three I saw how single consonants are made, but there are many cases where two or three or four or even more consonants follow one after the other. Some examples are : *scheme* /ski:m/, *cream* /kri:m/, *scream* /skri:m/, *necks* /neks/, *next* /nekst/, *texts* /teksts/.

People whose languages do not have these **consonant sequences** or **clusters** may find it difficult to pronounce these consonant clusters in English.

This chapter is designed to deal with **these consonant sequences** or **clusters**.

4.1 Initial sequences

At the beginning of English words there may be either two or three consonants in sequence .

4.1.1 Sequences of two consonants initially

There are two main kinds :

1. [S] followed by one of [**p, t, k, m, n, l, w, j,**] e.g. as in **spy, stay, sky, sphere, small, snow, sleep, swear, suit.**

2. One of [**p, t, k, b, d, g, f, θ, ʃ, v, m, n, h**] by one of [**l, r, w, j**]. The full list is:

[p] followed by [**l, r, j**] as in **play, pray, pure**

[t] followed by [**r, w, j**] as in **try, twice, tune,**

[k] followed by [l, r, w, j] as in **climb, cry, quite, cure,**

[b] followed by [l, r, j] as in **blow, bread, beauty,**

[d] followed by [r, w, j] as in **dress, dwell, duty,**

[g] followed by [l, r,] as in **glass, grass, glitter, great,**

[f] followed by [l, r, j] as in **fly, flower, from, few,**

[θ] followed by [r, w] as **throw, thwart** (rare)

[ʃ] followed by [r] as in **shriek, shrink, shrewd,**

[v] followed by [j] as **view, Vietnam,**

[m] followed by [j] as in **music, mute, mule,**

[n] followed by [j] as in **new, pneumonia**

[h] followed by [j] as in **huge, human, hew,**

4.1.2 Some examples of the English words containing two consonant clusters are :

stay /steɪ/, spy /spaɪ/ spur/ spɜː/, spear /spiə/, spare /speə/,

star /stɑː/, store /stɔː/ , steer /stiə/,

sky /skaɪ/, scar /skɑː/, score /skɔː/, scare /skeə/,

sphere /sfiə/, smile /smaɪ/, smoke /sməʊk/,

smell /smel/, smear /smiə/, snow /snəʊ/,

snore /snɔː/, snake /sneɪk/, snack /snæk/,

slow /sləʊ/, sly /slaɪ/, slip /slɪp/, slack /slæk/,

sweet /swi:t/, sway /swei/ swan/swɒn/,

swear /sweə/, swag /swæg/, swarf /swɔːf/,

sword /swɔːd/, sweater /'swetə/, sweep /swi:p/

swell /swel/, swim /swɪm/, swoop/swu:p/,

suit /sju:t/, sue /sjuː/, assume /ə'sju:m/, pursue /pə'sjuː/

play /pleɪ/, pray /preɪ/ pure /pjəʊ/or pjɔ:/, try /traɪ/
twice twaɪs/, tune /tju:n/, climb /klaɪm/
cry /kraɪ/, quite /kwaɪt/ cure /kjʊə/,
blow /bləʊ/ bread /bred/, beauty/bju:tɪ/,
dress /dres/dwell /dwel/, duty /dju:tɪ/
glass /glɑ:s/, grass /grɑ:s/, green /gri:n/
fly /flaɪ/, from /frɒm/, few /fju:/ view /vju:/,
music /'mju:zɪk/, new /nju:/
pneumonia /nju:'mæʊniə/ knew /nju:/
three /θri:/, throw /θrəʊ/, threw /θru:/
shriek /ʃri:k/, shred /ʃred/, shrill /ʃrɪl/,
shrewd /ʃru:d/, shrink /ʃrɪnk/, shrimp /ʃrɪmp/,
shrivel /'ʃrɪvəl/shrive /ʃraɪv/,
shroud /ʃraʊd/, Shropshire */'ʃrɒpʃə/
shrub /ʃrʌb/, shrug /ʃrʌg/ shrank /sræŋk/
schwa /ʃwɑ:/

4.1.3 Sequences of the three consonants initially

These are [spr, str, skr, spj, stj, skj, spl, skw] and are a combination of the [sp] type of sequence and the [pr] type. The [s] at the beginning is cut off by the stop, and during the stop, the following consonant is fully prepared. Some of the examples are the following words :

spread /spred/straight streɪt/, screw /skru:/,
spurious /'spjʊəriəs/, stupid /'stju:pɪd/
skewer /skjʊə/, splendid /'splendɪd/,

square /skweə/, squalid /'skwɒlɪd/

squab /skwɒb/, squire /skwaɪə/, squirrel /skwɪrəl/,

squirm /skɜ:m/, squirt /skɜ:t/, squeeze /skwi:z/

4.2 Final sequences

Sequences of consonants at the ends of words are more varied than at the beginning mainly because [s] or [z] have to be added to most nouns to give their plural forms, as in 'cats' /kæts/, 'dogs' /dɒgz/, 'facts' /fækts/, 'fields' /fi:ldz/, 'hats' /hæts/, etc..., and [t] or [d] have to be added to most verbs to form their past tense, as in 'wished' /wɪʃt/, 'raised' /reɪzd/, 'risked' /rɪskt/, missed /mɪst/, stopped /stɒpt/, begged /begd/ arrived /ə'raɪvd/, plunged /plʌŋdʒd/, kicked /kɪkt/, etc...

[θ] is also used to form nouns like strength /streŋθ/, breadth /bredθ/, depth /depθ/ and numerals like fifth /fɪfθ/ twelfth /twelfθ/, thousandth /'θaʊzəndθ/ hundredth /'hʌndrədθ/ (and all these can have plurals - /streŋθs/, /bredθs/ depθs/, fɪfθs/, twelfθs/, /'θaʊzəndθs/, /'hʌndrədθs/)

Some examples of the words in which there are these final sequences are :

dragged /drægd/, robbed /rɒbd/,

dripped /drɪpt/, slept /slept/, washed /wɒʃt/,

watched /wɒtʃt/, backed /bækt/,

engaged /ɪn'geɪdʒd/ loved /lʌvd/,

looked /lʊkt/, longed /lɒŋd/, booked /bʊkt/,

halved /hɑ:vd/, laughed /lɑ:ft/,

selpt /slept/ felt /felt/ smelt / smelt/,

cooked /kʊkt/, slapped /slæpt/,

cleft /kleft/, clenched /'klentʃt/,

drenched /drentʃt/, craft /krɑ:ft/
flogged /flɒgd/ boats /bəʊts/
leaves /li:vz/ clubs /klʌbz/, boots /bu:ts/
interrupts /Intəˈrʌpts/, contacts /'kɒntæktz/
reacts /rɪˈæktz/, adopts /ə'dɒpts/,
protects /prə'tektz/
written /'rɪtn/, hidden /'hɪdn/, certain /'sɜ:tn/,
pardon /'pɑ:dn/ Britain */'brɪtn/, burden /'bɜ:dn/,
frighten /'fraɪtn/, wooden /'wʊdn/
important /ɪmˈpɔ:tnt/importance /ɪmˈpɔ:tns/
frightened /'fraɪnd/ curtains /'kɜ:tnz/
pittance /'pɪtns/ pardoned /'pɑ:dnd/
wouldn't /wʊdnt/ , gardens /'gɑ:dnz/,
oughtn't /'ɔ:tnt/ riddance /'rɪdnz/ buttons /'bʌtnz/,
shortened /ʃɔ:tnd/
middle /'mɪdl/ battle /'bætl/ little /'lɪtl/,
muddle /'mʌdl/
cups /kʌps/, weeks /wi:ks/, jobs /dʒɒbz/,
dams /dæmz/, eggs /egz/, songs /sɒŋz/
proved /pru:vd/,
seemed /si:md/, gazed /geɪzd/,
banged /bæŋd/ goods /gʊdz/,
turns /tɜ:nz/ drives /draɪvz/, wells /welz/
missed /mɪst/, breathed /bri:ðd/ owned /əʊnd/

judged /dʒʌdʒd/, filled /fild/
lapsed /læpst/, taxed /tækst/
lifts /lɪfts/, rests /rests/, beds /bedz/,
bends /bendz/ fields /fi:ldz/,
bronzed /brɒnzd/,
width /wɪdθ/ breadth /bredθ/, tenth /tenθ/,
health /helθ/, fifth /fɪfθ/, length /leŋθ/,
width /wɪdθ/ hundredth /ˈhʌndrədθ/,
ninth /naɪnθ/, length /leŋθ/, thirteenth /θɜ:ti:nθ/,
eighths /eɪtθs/ twelfth /twelfθ/,
help /help/ fault /fɔlt/, milk /mɪlk/,
shelf /ʃelf/, else /els/, welsh /welʃ/,
shelve /ʃelv/, bulge /ˈbʌldʒ/, film /fɪlm/,
helps /helps/ helped /helpt/, belts /belts/
milks /mɪlks/, milked /mɪlkt/, shelves /ʃelvz/
bulged /bʌldʒd/, filmed /fɪlmd/,
films /fɪlmz/, mixed /mɪkst/, prompt /prɒmpt/
bottled /bɒtld/, sensed /sensθ/, jumps /dʒʌmps/,
punched /pʌntʃt, revenged /rɪˈvendʒd/,
wants /wɒnts/, jumped /dʒʌmpt/,
thanked /θæŋkt/, thanks /θæŋks/,
triumphs /ˈtraɪəmfz/

4.3 Long consonant sequences

4.3.1 Three consonants

best man / best mæn/, long skirt /lɒŋskɜ:t/,
fix this /fiks ðɪs/, perhaps not /pə'hæpsnɒt/
thank you /θæŋkjʊ:/, help me /help mi:/,
watch cricket /wɒtʃkriki:t/, change one /tʃeɪndʒ wʌn/
nice tune /naɪstju:n/tall tree /tɔ:l tri:/,
loud cry /laʊd kraɪ/long skirt /lɒŋskɜ:t/,
page twenty /peɪdʒ'twenti:/,

4.3.2 Four consonants

next Sunday /nekst 'sʌndɪ/twelfth night /twelfθnaɪt/
bottled wine /'bɒtlɪd waɪn/
he thanked them /hi:θæŋkt ðəm/,
vast scale /vɑ:st skeɪl/, that's true /ðætstru: /
strange dream /streɪndʒ dri:m/ small square /smɔ:l skweə/
long street /lɒŋstri:t/,
fifth floor /fɪfθflɔ:/, big splash /bɪɡsplæʃ/
good student /ɡʊd stju:dnt/,

4.3.3 Five consonants

e.g:

milk's free /mɪlksfri:/, prompt start /prɒmpstɑ:t/
mixed sweets /mɪkstswi:tɪs/, bent screw /bent skru: /
act stupidly /ækt 'stju: pɪdli/
that's splendid /ðætɪs splendɪd/

4.3.4 Six consonants

e.g:

next spring /nekstsprɪŋ/ he thinks straight /hi:θɪŋks streɪt/

a fenced square /əfenst skweə/

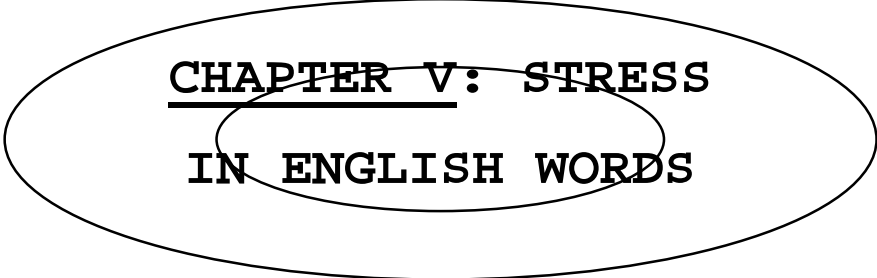
twelfth street /twelfθ stri:t/

4.3.5 Seven consonants

e.g:

The text's stupid/ ðəteksts'stju:pɪd/

She tempts strangers /ʃi:temptz 'streɪndʒəz/



CHAPTER V: STRESS
IN ENGLISH WORDS

5.1 What is stress ?

According to **OXFORD ADVANCED LEARNER'S DICTIONARY, 6th edition, pages 1185, 'stress'** is any extra force used when pronouncing a particular word or syllable.

It is obvious that we need to know what a *syllable* /'sɪləbl/ is before we can deal with *stress* in English words successfully. What then is a **syllable** ?

According to **LONGMAN DICTIONARY OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND CULTURE, new edition, pages 1369, a syllable** is 'a word or part of a word

which contains a vowel sound or a consonant acting as a vowel'. For instance, there are two syllables in '*window*', *win*-and, *dow*.

Some examples of words with **one syllable** are :

bar, are, is, car, key, am, more, ought, ease, ran, sat, fill, spray, string, stew, spew, screw, screen, speak, book, pen, leaf, square, spit, he, two, one, good.

Some of the words with **two syllables** are :

mother, father, brother, sister, battle, table, healthy, better, anger, hunger, handle, Peter, handsome, written, bitten, students, carry, hurry, human, about, again, attend, support, suppose, struggle, structure, button, woman, cushion, sugar, looking, pulling, woollen, pushing, around, prepare, remove, middle, over, pepper, explain, coffee, enough, cupboard, advice, advise, sudden, doctor, measure, fellow, unjust, listen, aloud, because, upon, even, nothing, supper, prefer, absurd, return, infer, abroad, ledger, nature, trouble, cattle, little, noble, settle, giggle, cradle, label, camel, final, channel, novel, local, pencil, evil, funnel, vowel, rhythm, spasm, prism, fasten, open, frozen, organ, nation, sharpen, reason, curtain, lengthen, alert, collect, believe, derive, receive, acquire, enjoy, employ, excite, reflect, invite, inform, result, amend, consume, fourteen, fifteen, prepaid, unclean, sixteen, trombone, sardine, bamboo, teacher, splendid, fifty, custom, preacher, certain, finish, argue, motive, thankful, someone, cycle, forward, puppet, distress, exchange, firewood, madam, approach, Britain, bottom, salad, perfume, forget, allow, many, leader, correct, marry, wedding, complain, demand, success, challenge, tonight, market, problem.

Some of the words with **three syllables** are : **popular, favourite, president, customer, advertise, everyone, quality, animal, ignorant, different, profession, important, effective, specific, persuaded, mistaken, apparent, behaviour, advantage, persuaded, refugee, understand, reproduce, magazine, afternoon,**

misinform, entertain, Japanese, discussion, character, uncertain, languages, telephone circulate, develop, paragraph, absentee, interview, calculate, fortunate, emanate, liquidate, navigate, operate, castigate, formulate, elevate, laminate, navigate, validate, delicate, renovate, dramatic, strategic, tobacco, tomato, indicate, penetrate, candidate, activate, liquidate.

Having got a view of what a syllable is, let us move on to **stress pattern in a two syllable words.**

5.2 Stress pattern in two- syllable words.

In the case of simple two-syllable words, either the first or the second syllable *is stressed – not both*. There is a general tendency for verbs to be stressed nearer the end of a word and for nouns to be stressed nearer the beginning. Let us look first into verbs. If the final syllable is weak, then **the first syllable is stressed**. Thus we have the following words:

enter /'entə/, envy /'envɪ/, open /'əʊpən/,
equal /'i:kwəl/, answer /'ɑ:nsə/, lengthen /'leŋθən/,
strengthen /'streŋθən/, hearten /'hɑ:tən/,
heighten /'haɪtən/ brighten /'braɪtən/, widen /'waɪdən/

A final syllable is also **unstressed** if it contains [əʊ] as in 'follow' /'fɒləʊ/, borrow /'bɒrəʊ/,

If the final syllable is **strong**, then that syllable is **stressed** even if the first syllable is also strong. So, we have the following examples: 'apply' /ə'plai/, 'supply' /sə'plai/, 'comply' /kəm'plai/, 'reply' /rɪ'plai/, 'imply' /ɪm'plai/, 'rely' /rɪlaɪ/, 'arrive' ə'raɪv/, 'attract' /ə'trækt/, 'assist' /ə'sɪst/, 'attend' /ə'tend/, 'maintain' /meɪn'teɪn/ 'rotate' /rəʊ'teɪt/.

mimosa /mi'məʊzə/, potato /pə'teɪtəʊ/,

disaster /di'zɑ:stə/, synopsis /sɪ'nɒpsɪs/,

police /pə'li:s/, polite /pə'laɪt/, policeman /pə'li:smən/

banana /bə'nɑ:nə/, analysis /ə'nælɪsɪs/.

When a three-syllable noun has a **strong final syllable**, that syllable will not usually receive **the main stress** as in the following words :

intellect /'ɪntələkt/, marigold /'mæriɡəʊld/

alkali /'ælkəlaɪ/, stalactite /'stæləktait/.

The same rule seems to be applied to some adjectives such as :

opportune /'ɒpətju:n/, **insolent** /'ɪnsələnt/,

derelict /'derəlɪkt/, **anthropoid** /'ænθrəpɔɪd/.

The above rules certainly do not cover all English words. They apply only to major categories of lexical words (nouns, verbs and adjectives) not to function such as articles and prepositions. Let us now examine some other rules which govern stress in the English words.

5.4 Stress patterns in the words ending in *ance, ence, ness, ly*

Some words which end in *-ance, ence, ness, ly* have a stress on **the first syllable**.

Some examples of these are :

| | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| | entrance /'entrəns/ |
| patience /'peɪjəns/ | relevance /'reləvəns/ |
| presence /'prezəns/ | balance /'bæləns/ |
| absence /'æbsəns/ | ambulance /'æmbjələns/ |
| violence /'vaɪələns/ | distance /'dɪstəns/ |
| diffrence /'dɪfərəns/ | dissonance /'dɪsənəns/ |
| influene /'ɪnfluəns/ | tolerance /'tɒlərəns/ |
| evidence /'eɪdɪns/ | permanence /'pɜ:mənəns/ |
| audience /'ɔ:diəns/ | hindrance /'hɪndrəns/ |

| | |
|--|---------------------------|
| | maintenance /'meɪntənəns/ |
| | vengeance /'vendʒəns/ |

| | |
|----------|-----------------------------------|
| darkness | /'dɑ:knis/ or /'dɑ:knəs/ |
| darkness | /'dɑ:knis/ or /'hɑ:knəs/ |
| harness | /'hɑ:nɪs/ or /'hɑ:nəs/ |
| illness | /'ɪlnɪs/ or /'ɪlnəs/ |
| sickness | /'sɪknɪs/ or /'sɪknəs/ |
| business | /'bɪznɪs or /'bɪznəs/ |
| witness | /'wɪtnɪs or /'wɪtnəs/ |
| kndness | /'kaɪndnɪs/ or /'kaɪndnəs/ |
| deadly | /'dedli/ |
| probably | /'prɒbəbli/ |
| daily | /'deɪli/ |
| totaly | /'təʊtli/ |
| friendly | /'frendli/ |
| equally | /'i:kwəli/ |
| nearly | /'niəli/ skilfully /'skɪlfəli/ |
| finally | /'faɪnəli/ |
| badly | /'bædli/ |
| possibly | /'pɒsɪbli/ |

Note

Two syllable **verbs** ending in **ly** stress the **ly**, which is pronounced //aɪ/, as in the following **verbs** :

apply /ə'plaɪ/, **reply** /rɪ'plaɪ/,

supply /sə'plaɪ/, **imply** /ɪm'plaɪ/,

comply /kəm'plaɪ/, **rely** /rɪ'laɪ/,

5.5 Stress patterns of the three - syllable words ending in *ate* suffix

The first syllable of a word that ends in **ate** is **stressed** if the word has **three or more syllables**. Some examples of the words that end in **ate** are :

calculate /'kælkjəleɪt **formulate** /'fɔ:mjəleɪt/

fortunate /'fɔ:tʃənət/ **elevate** /'elɪveɪt/

emanate /'emənət/ **lamine** /'læmɪneɪt/
liquidate /'lɪkwɪdeɪt/ **germinate** /'dʒɜːmɪneɪt/
navigate /'nævɪgeɪt/ **nominate** /'nɒmɪneɪt/
meditate /'medɪteɪt/ **motivate** /'məʊtɪveɪt/
operate /'ɒpəreɪt/ **activate** /'æktɪveɪt/
castigate /'kæstɪgeɪt/ **oscillate** /'ɒsɪleɪt/
candidate /'kændɪdeɪt/ **regulate** /'regjəleɪt/
dominate /'dɒmɪneɪt/
imitate /'ɪmɪteɪt/ **renovate** /'renəveɪt/
delicate /'delɪkət/ **validate** /'vælɪdeɪt/
tolerate /'tɒləreɪt/ **indicate** /'ɪndɪkeɪt/
formulate /'fɔːmjəleɪt/ **penetrate** /'penɪtreɪt/
implicate /'ɪmplɪkeɪt/ **dedicate** /'dedɪkeɪt/
generate /'dʒenəreɪt/ **constipate** /'kɒnstɪpeɪt/
complicate /'kɒmplɪkeɪt/ **nominate** /'nɒmɪneɪt/
postulate /'pɒstjələt **medicate** /'medɪkeɪt/
differentiate /'dɪfərəntʃeɪt/ **mediate**(adjective) /'miːdiət/
defecate /'defəkeɪt/ **mediate**(verb) /'miːdiət/
deligate /'deɪgeɪt/
terminate /'tɜːmɪneɪt/ **vaccinate** /'væksɪneɪt/
labiate /'leɪbeɪt/ **vacillate** /'væsɪleɪt/, **denigrate** /'denɪgreɪt/

Here are some exceptions :

discriminate /dɪs'krɪmɪneɪt/
evaluate /ɪ'væljueɪt/
evacuate /ɪ'vækjueɪt/

geometricalgrammatical / grə'mætɪkəl/

historical / hɪ'stɔrɪkəl/

rhetorical /rɪ'tɔrɪkəl/

political /pə'lɪtɪkəl/

reciprocal /rɪ'sɪprəkəl/

illogical /ɪ'lɒdʒɪkəl/

geological

/dʒi:ə'lɒdʒɪkəl/

methodical /me'θɒdɪkəl/

economical /ekə'nɒmɪkəl/

geographical /dʒi:ə'græfɪkəl/

pathologic /pæθə'lɒdʒɪkəl/

biological /baɪə'lɒdʒɪkəl/mathematical /mæθɪ'mætɪkəl/

genealogical / ,dʒi:nə'lɒdʒɪkəl/

5.7 Stress patterns of some words ending in (t) ion, sion, ity.

If a word ends in **(t)ion, sion**, we **stress the second syllable** from the end of that word. Here are some examples of these : administr**ation** confeder**ation**, co-operation, privatiz**ation**, communic**ation**, examin**ation**, consider**ation**, **station** education, **nation**, tradit**ion**, televis**ion**, condit**ion**, depress**ion**, convers**ation**, **question**, **injection**, **objection**, populat**ion**, **action**, **permission**, **revision**, **destination**, organisat**ion**, indigest**ion**, discriminat**ion**, **incursion**, **inversion**, **indignation**, **perfection**, **projection**, **qualification**, **provision**, **protection**, **formation**, **indication**, **demonstration**, **investigation**, **constipation**, **penetration**, **application**, **conversion**, **formulation**, **situation**, **conclusion**, **introduction**, **decision**, **omission**, **reduction**, **pronunciation**, **imagination**, **edition**, **comprehension**, **operation**, **attention**.

Note

* When a word ends in '**ic**' – '**ial**' and '**ian**', the stress falls on the second syllable from the end of the word. The following words are some examples : **academic** **economic**, **dramatic**, **colonial** **tutorial**, **proverbial**, **civilian**, **comedian**, **grammarian**.

* Likewise, when a word ends in '*ity*' the stress is on the syllable which precedes *ity*. Here are some examples below :

quantity, *finality*, *captivity*, *identity*, *nationality*, *agility*, *ability*, *unity*, *university*,
personality, *reliability*, *activity*, *equality*, *possibility*, *electricity*, *community*,

authority, *majority*, *commodity*, *necessity*, *minority*, *mutuality*,
locality, *perceptibility*, *possibility*, *impossibility*, *objectivity*, *probability*,
curiosity, *criminality*, *culturality*, *curability*, *culpability*, *generosity*, *liminosity*,
capability, *capacity*, *authenticity*, *availability*, *causality*, *casualty*, *elasticity*,
civility, *durability*, *credibility*, *conductivity*, *stability*, *principality*, *possibility*,
acceptability, *responsibility*.

But *difficulty*

5.8 Stress pattern for the verbs that start with a prefix

Most verbs that start with a prefix are stressed on the syllable after it. Here are some examples below.

dislike, *dismiss*, *disperse*, *distinguish*, *discriminate*, *disturb*, *undo*, *unlock*, *unwind*,
unnoticed, *mislead*, *misuse*, *maltreat*, *mistreat*, *malfunction*, *outrun*, *outlive*,
outweigh, *outnumber*, *collect*, *collide*, *conclude*, *cooperate*, *transplant*, *transport*,
subside, *submerge*, *fortell*, *predict*, *postpone*, *resettle*, *remember*, *understand*,
submit, *discourage*. Some exceptions are *disagree*, *undisturbed*, *subdivide*,
forecast.

5.9 Alternating stress pattern in some English words

There are several dozen pairs of two-syllable words with identical spelling which differ from each other in stress placement, apparently according to word class (noun, verb or adjective). All appear to consist of **prefix + stem**. Some common examples are given below (V= verb, A= adjective, N = noun).

| | | |
|----------------|----------------|--------------------|
| abstract (A) | /'æbstrækt/ | /æb'strækt/ (v) |
| conduct (N) | /'kɒndʌkt/ | /kən'dʌkt/ (v) |
| constrat (N) | /'kɒntrɑ:st/ | /kən'trɑ:st/ (v) |
| desert (N) | /'dezət/ | /dɪ'zɜ:t / (v) |
| escort (N) | /'eskɔ:t/ | /ɪ'skɔ:t/ (v) |
| export (N) | /'ekspɔ:t/ | /ɪ'kspɔ:t/ (v) |
| import (N) | /'ɪmpɔ:t/ | /ɪm'pɔ:t / (v) |
| object (N) | /'ɒbdʒekt/ | /əb'dʒekt/ (v) |
| perfect (A) | /'pɜ:fɪkt/ | /pə'fekt/ (v) |
| permit (N) | /'pɜ:mɪt/ | /pə'mɪt/ (v) |
| present (N, A) | /'preznt/ | /prɪ'zent/ (v) |
| produce (N) | /'prɒdju:s/ | /prə'dju:s/ (v) |
| protest (N) | /'prɒtɛst/ | /prə'test/ (v) |
| rebel (N) | /'rebl/ | /rɪ'bel/ (v) |
| record (N) | /'rekɔ:d/ | /rɪ'kɔ:d/ (v) |
| subject (N) | /'sʌbdʒekt/ | /səb'dʒekt/ (v) |
| contest (N) | /'kɒntest/ | /kən'test/ (v) |
| convict (N) | /'kɒnvɪkt/ | /kən'vɪkt/ (v) |
| torment (N) | /'tɔ:ment/ | /tɔ:'ment/ (v) |
| transport (N) | /'trænsɔ:t/ | /træn'spɔ:t/ (v) |
| transplant (N) | /'trænsplɑ:nt/ | /træn'splɑ:nt/ (v) |
| refuse (N, A) | /'refju:s/ | /'ri'fju:z/ (v) |
| refund (N) | /'ri:fʌnd/ | /'ri'fʌnd(v) |
| refill (N) | /'ri:fil/ | /'ri:'fɪl/ (v) |
| refit (N) | /'ri:fit/ | /'ri:'fɪt/ (v) |
| reject (N) | /'ri:dʒekt/ | /'ri:'dʒekt/ (v) |
| transfer (N) | /'trænsfɜ:/ | /'træns'fɜ:/ (v) |
| advert (N) | /'ædvɜ:t/ | /əd'vɜ:t/ (v) |
| affect (N) | /'æfekt/ | /ə'fekt/ (v) |
| alternate (N) | /'ɔ:l'tɜ:nət/ | /'ɔ:l'tənɛɪt/ (v) |
| attribute (N) | /'ætrɪbjʊ:t/ | /ə'trɪbjʊ:t/ (v) |

| | | |
|------------------------------|--------------|--------------------------------|
| bombard (N) | /'bɒmbɑ:d/ | /bɒm'bɑ:d/ (v) |
| cashier (N) | /kæʃ'ɪə/ | /kəʃ'ɪə/ (v) |
| collect (N) | /'kɒlekt/ | /kə'lekt/ (v) |
| combine (N) | /'kɒmbaɪn/ | /kəm'baɪn/ (v) |
| commune (N) | /'kɒmjʊ:n/ | /kə'mjʊ:n/ (v) |
| compress (N) | /'kɒmpres/ | /kəm'pres/ (v) |
| concert (N) | /'kɒnsɜ:t/ | /kən'sɜ:t/ (v) |
| concord (N) | /'kɒŋkɔ:d/ | /kən'kɔ:d/ (v) |
| confect (N) | /'kɒnfekt/ | /kən'fekt/ (v) |
| concrete (A, N) | /'kɒŋkri:t/ | /kən'kri:t/ (v) (solidify) |
| confine (N) | /'kɒnfain/ | /kən'faɪn/ (v) |
| conflict (N) | /'kɒnflɪkt/ | /kən'flɪkt/ (v) |
| conjunct (N) | /'kɒndʒʌŋkt/ | /kən'dʒʌŋkt/ (A) |
| conjure (v: charge solemnly) | /kən'dʒʊə/ | /'kʌndʒə/ (v: summon by magic) |
| conscript (N) | /'kɒnskript/ | /kən'skript/ (v) |
| console (N) | /'kɒnsəʊl/ | /kən'səʊl/ (v) |
| consort (N) | /'kɒnsɔ:t/ | /kən'sɔ:t/ (v) |
| construct (N) | /'kɒnstrʌkt/ | /kən'strʌkt/ (v) |
| consummate (A) | /kən'sʌmət/ | /'kɒnsəmeɪt/ (v) |
| content (N) | /'kɒntent/ | /kən'tent/ (A, v) |
| control (N) | /'kɒntrəʊl/ | /kən'trəʊl/ (v) |
| convert (N) | /'kɒnvɜ:t/ | /kən'vɜ:t/ (v) |
| converse (N, A) | /'kɒnvɜ:s/ | /kən'vɜ:s/ (v) |
| convert (N) | /'kɒnvɜ:t/ | /kən'vɜ:t/ (v) |
| defect (N) | /'di:fekt/ | /dɪ'fekt/ (v) |
| dictate (N) | /'dɪkteɪt/ | /dɪk'teɪt/ (v) |
| digest (N) | /'daɪdʒest/ | /daɪ'dʒest/ (v) |
| discard (N) | /'dɪskɑ:d/ | /dɪ'skɑ:d/ (v) |
| discount (N) | /'dɪskaʊnt/ | /dɪ'skaʊnt/ (v) |
| discharge (N) | /'dɪstʃɑ:dʒ/ | /dɪs'tʃɑ:dʒ/ (v) |
| discourse (N) | /'dɪskɔ:s/ | /dɪs'kɔ:s/ (v) |

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| discord (N) /'diskɔ:d | /dis'kɔ:d/ |
| excerpt (N) /'eks3:pt/ | /ek's3:pt/ (v) |
| excise (N) /'eksəɪz/ | /ek'səɪz/ (v) |
| exploit (N) /'eksplɔɪt//ɪk'splɔɪt/(v) | |
| foretaste (N) /'fɔ:teɪst/ /fɔ:'teɪst/(v) | |
| frequent (A) /'fri:kwənt/ /fri:'kwent/ (v) | |
| impact(N) /'ɪmpækt//ɪm'pækt/(v) | |
| implant (N) /'ɪmplɑ:nt/ | /ɪm'plɑ:nt/ (v) |
| impregnate (A) /ɪm'pregneɪt/ /'ɪmpregneɪt/ (v) | |
| imprint (N) /'ɪmprɪnt/ | /ɪm'prɪnt/ (v) |
| impress (N) /'ɪmpres/ | /ɪm'pres/ (v) |
| incarnate (A) /ɪn'kɑ:neɪt/ | /ɪnkɑ:neɪt/ (v) |
| incense (N) /'ɪnsens/ /ɪn'sens/ (v) | |
| incline (N) /'ɪnkleɪn/ | /ɪn'kleɪn/ (v) |
| increase (N) /'ɪnkri:s/ | /ɪn'kri:s/ (v) |
| incurvate (A) /ɪn'k3:veɪt/ | /ɪnk3:veɪt/ (v) |
| indent (N) /'ɪndent/ | /ɪn'dent/ (v) |
| inlay (N) /'ɪnleɪ/ /ɪn'leɪ/ (v) | |
| insert (N) /'ɪns3:t/ | /ɪn's3:t/ (v) |
| inset (N) /'ɪnset/ | /ɪn'set/ (v) |
| insult (N) /'ɪnsʌlt/ /ɪn'sʌlt/ (v) | |
| interact (N) /'ɪntərækt//ɪntər'ækt/ (v) | |
| intercept (N) /'ɪntəsept/ /ɪntə'sept/(v) | |
| interdict (N) /'ɪntədɪkt/ | /ɪntə'dɪkt/ (v) |
| interface (N) /'ɪntəfeɪs/ | /ɪntə'feɪs/(v) |
| intern (N) /'ɪnt3:n/ /ɪn't3:n/ (v) | |
| interspace (N) /'ɪntəspeɪs/ /ɪntə'speɪs/ (v) | |
| introvert (N) /'ɪntrəʊv3:t//ɪntrəʊ'v3:t/ (v) | |
| invalid (N.V) /'ɪnvəlɪd/ | /ɪn'vælɪd/ (A) |
| invert (A) /'ɪnv3:t/ | /ɪn'v3:t/ (A) |
| invite (v) /ɪn'vaɪt/ | /ɪnvaɪt/ (N) |
| minute (A) (very small) /maɪ'nju:t/ | /mɪnɪt/(N) (division of time) |
| misconduct (N) /mɪ'skɒndʌkt/ | /mɪskən'dʌkt/ (v) |
| miscount (N) /'mɪskəʊnt/ /mɪ'skəʊnt/ (v) | |

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|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| mismatch (N) /'mɪsmætʃ/ | /mɪs'mætʃ/ (v) |
| misprint (N) /'mɪsprɪnt/ | /mɪ'sprɪnt/ (v) |
| offset (N) /'ɒfset/ | /pɪ'fset/ (v) (compensate) |
| outlay (N) /'aʊtleɪ/ | /aʊt'leɪ/ (v) |
| outpour (N) /'aʊtpɔː/ | /aʊt'pɔː/ (v) |
| outreach (N) /'aʊtri:tʃ/ | /aʊt'ri:tʃ/ (v) |
| outwork (N) /'aʊtwɜ:k/ | /aʊt'wɜ:k/ (v) |
| overbid (N) /'əʊvəbɪd/ | /əʊvə'bɪd/ (v) |
| overdose (N) /'əʊvədəʊs/ | /əʊvə'dəʊs/ (v) |
| overdress (N) /'əʊvədres/ | /əʊvə'dres/ (v) |
| overdrive (N) /'əʊvədraɪv/ | /əʊvə'draɪv/ (v) |
| overflow (N) /'əʊvəfləʊ/ | /əʊvə'fləʊ/ (v) |
| overhang (N) /'əʊvəhæŋ/ | /əʊvə'hæŋ/ (v) |

Let us examine some suffixes at present.

5.10 Suffixes carrying primary stress

There are some English suffixes that carry primary stress. These suffixes that carry primary stress are :

- **ee** : as in '*refugee*' /refjʊ'dʒiː/,
'*evacuee*' /'ɛkjuːiː/, '*payee*' /peɪiː/,
'*employee*' /ɪm'plɔɪiː/ or /'emplɔɪiː/,
- **eer** : '*mountaineer*' /'maʊntɪ'niə/ , /'vɒlən'tiə/,
- **ese** : '*Japanese*' /'dʒæpə'nɪz/ '*Portuguese*' /'pɔːtʃə'giːz/,
'*journalese*' /'dʒɜːnəl'iːz/
- **ette** : '*cigarette*' /'sɪgə'ret/, or 'i /'sɪgə'ret/, /'lɔːn'dret/
- **esque** : '*picturesque*' /'pɪktʃr'esk/ '*icaresque*' /'pɪkər'esk/

There are also some suffixes that do not affect stress placement. Let us look into them.

- **able** : *comfort* /'kʌmfət/, *comfortable* /'kʌmfətəbl/,
- **age** : *anchor* /'æŋkə/ *anchorage* /'æŋkərɪdʒ/,
- **al** : *refuse* (verb) /rɪ'fju:z/ *refusal* /rɪ'fju:zəl/,
- **en** : *wide* /waɪd/, *widen* /'waɪdn/,
- **ful** : *wonder* /'wʌndə/, *wonderful* /'wʌndəfl/,
- **ing** : *amaze* /ə'meɪz/, *amazing* /ə'meɪzɪŋ/,
- **like** : *bird* /bɜ:d/, *birdlike* /'bɜ:dlaɪk/,
- **less** : *power* /'paʊə/ *powerless* /'paʊəles/,
- **ly** : *hurried* /'hʌrɪd/ ; *hurriedly* /'hʌrɪdli/,
- **ment** : (noun) : *punish* /'pʌnɪʃ/, *punishment* /'pʌnɪʃmənt/,
- **ness** –*sick* /sɪk/, *sickness* /'sɪknəs/,
- **ous** : *poison* /'pɔɪzn/, *poisonous* /'pɔɪznəs/,
- **fy** : *glory* /'glɔ:rɪ/, *glorify* /'glɔ:rɪfaɪ/,
- **wise** : *other* /'ʌðə/ ; *otherwise* /'ʌðəwaɪz/,
- **y'**: (adjective or noun) *fun* /fʌn/, *funny* /'fʌni/
- **ish'** in the case of adjectives does not affect stress placement : *devil* /'devl/, *develish* /'devlɪʃ/, however, verbs with stems of more than one syllable always have the stress on the syllable immediately preceding **ish** for instance, *finish* /'fɪnɪʃ/, *diminish* /dɪ'mɪnɪʃ/)

Let us now move on to some suffixes that influence stress in the stem /root.

5.11 Suffixes that influence stress in the stem /root

In the examples below *primary stress* is on the last syllable of the stem /root.

- **eous** : *advantage* /əd'vɑ:ntɪdʒ /, *advantageous* /ədvən'teɪdʒəs/
- **graphy** : *photo* /'fəʊtəʊ/, *photography* /fə'tɒgrəfi/,
- **ial** : *proverb* /'prɒvɜ:b/, *proverbial* /prə'vɜ:bɪəl/,

- **ic** : **climate** /'klaɪmət/, **climatic** /klaɪ'mætɪk/,
- **ion** : **perfect** /'pɜ:fɪkt/, **perfection** /pə'fekʃn/,
- **ious** : **injure** /'ɪndʒə/, **injurious** /ɪn'dʒʊəriəs/,
- **ty** : **tranquil** /'træŋkwɪl/ ; **tranquility** /træŋ'kwɪləti/
- **ive** : **reflex** /ri:fleks/ ; **reflexive** /rɪ'fleksɪv/.

**CHAPTER VI : THE COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE PHONETIC
LESSONS IN THE BENINESE AND NIGERIAN PRESENT
STUDENTS' ENGLISH TEXTBOOKS.**

6.1 Some common points

There are a few common points found in the teaching of the English pronunciation in the secondary schools both in Nigeria and Benin Republic. To begin with, the method of the English teachers' pronunciation by the students learning English, is used in teaching English pronunciation to the students both in Nigeria and Republic.

Moreover, the listening activity is also used in teaching English pronunciation to the Nigerian and Beninese students.

Besides this, the teaching of the pronunciation of some vowel and consonant sounds is found both in Beninese textbooks and Nigerian textbooks.

Furthermore, the teaching of some stress patterns in English is used in both Nigerian and Beninese English textbooks.

After having dealt with these few common points, let us now explore the so many big differences noticed in the teaching of the English pronunciation to the secondary students both in Nigerian and Beninese English textbooks.

6.2 Differences

When I look into the Nigerian and Beninese English text books, I realise that there are so many big differences. For example, the phonetic lessons covered in the first cycle of the secondary schools English textbooks (*Intensive English for Junior secondary schools, books 1, 2, 3 meant for the Nigerian students*) include **all the English vowel sounds and nine(09) English diphthongs**.

Moreover, **seventeen English consonant sounds** (/ b, d, ð, g, h, j, l, m, n, ŋ, p, r, ʃ, θ, ʒ, t, k/) are studied by the Nigerian students **in the first cycle of the secondary schools** whereas neither the English vowel sounds nor the English consonant sounds are dealt with in (Documents d'accompagnement 6^e, 5^e, 4^e, 3^e.) by Beninese students learning English as a foreign language in the first cycle of the secondary schools. The fact that the Beninese students in the first cycle of the secondary schools are not taught these vowel and consonant sounds may cause them pronunciation problems later.

Besides having been taught all the **twelve (12) basic English vowel sounds and seventeen English consonant sounds properly**, these Nigerian students in the Junior Secondary students have also been taught **some English clusters and various stress patterns**. This implies that these Nigerian students in the first cycle of the Secondary schools have been fully equipped with the '*phonetic tools*' which can foster **a good command of oral English in them at an early age**. As a result, they will be able to have **a good command of oral English** if they live in '*a good linguistic environment*' because according to ADRIAN AKMAJIAN et al, in *LINGUISTICS ; AN INTRODUCTION TO LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION*, fifth edition, page 503, "the children's ability to learn language (their own native language or foreign language) continues to be **strong** from two years to the onset of **puberty**".

Given that neither the English vowel sounds nor the English consonant sounds are dealt with by the Junior Beninese students (in Documents d'Accompagnement 6^e, 5^e, 4^e and 3^e) learning English as a foreign language, it is obvious that failure to teach the Beninese Junior students these basic English sounds at an early age may cause them problem of pronunciation later because according to the same source mentioned above, **'the ability to learn languages begins to decline to a greater or lesser extent depending on the individual'**. J.D.O'Connor in BETTER ENGLISH PRONUNCIATION, (second edition, page 1) in dealing with problems in pronunciation, points out the great difficulty encountered by adults learning a language when he says that adults have great difficulty in mastering pronunciation as well as other parts of foreign languages. J. D.O'Connor explains that this is due to the fact that **'by the time we are grown up the habits of our own language are so strong that they are very difficult to break'** (page 2 of BETTER ENGLISH PRONUNCIATION by J. D.O'Connor, second edition).

In the second cycle of the secondary schools English textbooks (**INTENSIVE ENGLISH** for SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS and **Go FOR ENGLISH**, seconde, première and terminale) **150 phonetic lessons** have been dealt with totally. In the **INTENSIVE ENGLISH FOR SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS**, **116 phonetic lessons** have been studied with the percentage of **77.33%** of the phonetic lessons whereas it is only **34 phonetic lessons** that have been studied with the percentage of **22.66%** in **Go For English 2^{nde}, 1^{ère}** and **Tle**.

It is also worth mentioning that most of the phonetic lessons studied in **GOFOR ENGLISH 2^{nde}, 1^{ère}** and **Tle** have already been covered in the **INTENSIVE ENGLISH FOR JUNIOR SECONDARY STUDENTS** (students' books 1,2,3) with effective methods.

Evenif there are some listening activities in GO FOR ENGLISH 2^{nde}, 1^{ère} and Tle, these few listening activities test only the students' ability to **listen and to understand** an English speaker. But since these English vowel and consonant sounds have not been taught to them in the first cycle of secondary schools, we cannot expect these Beninese students using these English textbooks designed for the African French speaking countries to carry out these **too demanding activities successfully**.

Furthermore, a close look at GO FOR ENGLISH 2^{nde}, 1^{ère} and Tle, and the scrutiny of Documents d'Accompagnements (6^e, 5^e, 4^e, 3^e) reveal that **the phonetic lessons** found in all these seven students' books designed for the Beninese students and others, are not sufficient enough so as the enable our students to achieve **abetter English pronunciation** (The percentage of these phonetic lessons is 22.66 % when compared with the phonetic lessons covered in all the six books designed for (Nigerian students). Besides, these phonetic lessons insufficiency, the methods used in GO FOR ENGLISH books seem to be very poor and ineffective.

Likewise, a careful analysis of GO FOR ENGLISH books 2^{nde}, 1^{ère} and Tle, reveals that **most of these English vowels and consonants** introduced into those three books in the 2nd cycle are taught to our students when most of them are no longer children. As a result, one can expect these adult students to be faced with **mispronunciation** since most of them have already reached adulthood when "**the knack for languages declines**".

The scrutiny of the **INTENSIVE ENGLISH FOR JUNIOR AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS** (a set of six English textbooks meant for the Nigerian students) shows that by the time a Nigerian student completes his secondary studies he will have already mastered **all the essentials of the English phonetics**.

But an important question that is raised is : Why do most Nigerians still mispronounce so many English words ?

There may be **two root causes** for this. **The first underlying cause of mispronunciation** may result from the **lack of the English phonetics**. The second **root cause** may be their **'linguistic environment'** in which, **'broken English'** is **nearly ubiquitous** because as B.F. Skinner (1904 – 1990) pointed it out, **'although the child is endowed at birth with the general learning ability but not with any language specific knowledge, linguistic behaviour is molded (i.e) externally reinforced by adult speakers and imitation plays an important role'**. (children are viewed as imitating others' speech). So the students that are learning English can not be expected to achieve **'a better English pronunciation'** if **'their English linguistic environment is bad'** (i.e) when **adult speakers of the English language do not set for them a good example of better English pronunciation**.

To sum up, there are three main underlying causes that may account for mispronunciation in English namely the **lack of the knowledge of English phonetics, the bad linguistic environment, and the difficulty encountered by adults while learning a language**.

Our suggestions and recommendations will be made by taking into account these three main underlying causes of pronunciation errors.

6.3 Suggestions and recommendations to the secondary English teachers in Benin

In the modern world where a great deal of communication requires a great command of oral English, it is evident that anybody for whom English is not their mother-tongue and who wants to use it to communicate successfully, cannot do without **the mastery of English phonetics**. In this regard, we, the secondary teachers should be models for our students. Just as it is impossible to give what we

do not have to anybody, likewise, we cannot teach English phonetic lessons to our students successfully if we ourselves do not have **a thorough mastery of English phonetics**. That is the reason why we are recommended to get acquainted with **the best phonetic books and CDs**, designed to foster a better English pronunciation. Even though we do not have any phonetic lessons in the **Documents d'Accompagnement 6^e, 5^e, 4^e and 3^e**, it is **our duty** to find **ways and means** to teach our students **the English vowel and consonant sounds** at the very beginning of our lessons in the junior secondary schools for some reasons. Firstly, it will help our junior secondary students to distinguish the different English vowel and consonant sounds. Secondly, it will help them to avoid the problems caused when two or more sounds in the target language are assimilated to a single sound in their mother-tongues. Thirdly, finding ways and means to impart **the knowledge of diphthongs, and triphthongs** by using the **International Phonetic Alphabet (I.P.A) to transcribe English words phonetically will reinforce our** students' pronunciation in English.

Consequently, it will allow them to make the difference between **written and spoken English** thereby preventing them from using **bad pronunciation**.

It is also our duty to teach our students some basic rules which govern the stress patterns of so many English words. At this level, a careful preparation of our English lessons is of the vital importance. Whenever we are not sure of the pronunciation of any English words, let us be humble enough **to look up** the word in the **ENGLISH PRONOUNCING DICTIONARY** or in any other good English dictionaries before going to school. By so doing, I am sure that we shall equip our students with the phonetic tools that will prevent them to some extent from mispronouncing many common English words.

The Beninese Secondary English teachers are not the only people that need recommendations and suggestions in this field. There are also the educational authorities as well.

6.4 Suggestions and recommendations to the educational authorities

Designing English textbooks is not an easy task. In fact, there are so many flaws in our English syllabi and curricula which are neither suitable nor efficient. The educational authorities should revise things so as to improve the contents of the English textbooks in Benin Republic. But how should they do this in order to make sure that more phonetic lessons are included in those English textbooks destined for our students ? They can do this by associating **linguists** especially English phoneticians with the other designers of these **English textbooks. Then, the English phoneticians will design the phonetic lessons which will cover the essentials of English phonetics.**

It is high time the educational authorities understood that any English textbooks designed without including sufficient phonetic items in them can do more harm than good in the French speaking countries like ours.

It is obvious that designing English textbooks in Benin should **not be the prerogative** of a few individuals who are in power, and who are often chosen to be the designers of our national syllabi and curricula whether they are more experienced and qualified or not.



CONCLUSION

In a nutshell, thanks to the study of the English vowels I can say that although /i:, e, ʌ, ɒ, u:, ə/ have no obvious equivalents in French, they may not cause any difficulty. But the great difficulties lie in the following vowels for the French speaking students learning English as a foreign language. For example /i:/ and /ɪ/ are confused, /i:/ being used for both. Likewise, /æ/ and /ʌ/ are confused, /ʌ/ being used for both. /ɔ/ is often pronounced in a way that makes it sound like the English /ʌ/.

/ɔ:/ is replaced by the vowel + /r/ in French 'form' 'shape', when there is a letter r in the spelling, or by the vowel in French 'beau' 'beautiful' when there is no r. /u:/ and /ʊ/ are confused, /u:/ being used for both.

/ɜ:/ is replaced by the lip-rounded vowel + /r/ in French 'heure' 'hour'. /ə/ is often replaced by other vowels because of the spelling.

The study of the English vowels has also revealed that vowels are usually short in French, compared with English, and care must be taken to make the long vowels of English long enough.

Through the study of the English consonants we can notice that the students that are learning English as a foreign language in a French speaking country are faced with difficulties. For example, /θ/ and /ð/ do not occur in French and are replaced by /S/ and /Z/, or less commonly /f/ and /v/. Similarly, /h/ does not occur in French and is omitted in English by the French speakers. /P, t, K/ are not generally aspirated in French, which may lead to confusion with /b, d, g/ in English. /t/ and /d/ are dental stops in French. /ŋ/ does not occur in French and is

replaced in English by the consonant at the end of French 'gagne' 'earns' /l/ in French is always clear. /r/ in French is usually a weak, voiced, uvular friction or glide sound.

Besides all these difficulties listed above, there are other difficulties that deserve mentioning too.

/eɪ/ is replaced by the non diphthongal vowel in French 'gai' 'gay'. Likewise, /ɪə, eə, ʊə/ are replaced by the vowel + /r/ in French 'lire' 'read', 'terre' 'earth' 'lourd' 'heavy'.

It also matters to say that although sequences of four final consonants do not occur in French and sequences of three are rare, English consonant sequences cause little difficulty except when /θ, ð, h, ŋ/ are concerned.

The study of the stress patterns of English words has also shown that contrary to French where each syllable in French has approximately the same length and the same stress, English rhythm based on the stressed syllable and the resulting variations of syllable length cause great difficulty and must be given special attention, together with weak forms of words, which do not exist in French.

Furthermore, the study of the English vowels and consonants has also revealed that these difficulties can be lessened if great effort can be made to teach English vowels, consonants, diphthongs, triphthongs, and consonant clusters to the junior students from their early years of the life till puberty.

Finally, the comparison of the Beninese English textbooks and some Nigerian English textbooks has shed light on some underlying causes of English mispronunciation namely **the lack of the knowledge of English phonetics**, **the bad linguistic environment**, and **the difficulties encountered by adults while learning English language**. The problems of pronunciation of English induced by our mother – tongues can be further **understood** through the **contrastive analysis of the sounds of about fifty-two languages spoken in Benin**, and **the sounds of the English language in later research work**.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS USED IN THIS DOCUMENT

1. I.P.A. stands for the International Phonetic Alphabet. It also stands for the International Phonetic Association.
3. E.S.L: English as a Second Language.
4. M.A: Master of Arts
5. D.I.P: Direction de l'Inspection Pédagogique (in French) or Direction of the Pedagogical Inspection (in English)

TRANSLATION OF SOME STUDENTS' BOOKS TITLES INTO FRENCH

- 1) *Document d'Accompagnement 6^{ème} ~~Students~~ Students' book for junior secondary schools.*
book 1.
- 2) *Document d'Accompagnement 5^{ème} ~~Students~~ Students' book for junior secondary schools.*
book 2.
- 3) *Document d'Accompagnement 4^{ème} ~~Students~~ Students' book for junior secondary schools.*
book 3.
- 4) *Document d'Accompagnement 3^{ème} ~~Students~~ Students' book for junior secondary schools.*
book 4.