Unit 6

Consonants (2)

English consonants from a German point of view

Slides for the session of
Phonetics with Listening Practice (British)
held on
4 / 6 frimaire, an CCXXVIII de la République
25 / 27 November 2019

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LangSciTech
Saarland University

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Consonants (2)

Outline

Initial consonants (and consonant clusters)

Final consonants (and consonant clusters)

Some work for you!

φων

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English Phonetics: Unit 6:
/ˈɪŋ ɡlɪʃ fə ˈnet ɪks ˈjuːn ɪt ˈsɪks/

Consonants (2)
[ˈkɒnsənənts ˈtuː] (broad)
[ˈkʰɒnsənəns ˈtʰʊu̯] (narrow)
[ˈkʰɒnsənəns ˈtʰʊu̯] (alternative representation of diphthong)

English consonants from a German point of view
[ˈɪŋɡlɪʃ ˈkʰɒnsənən(t)s fɹəm‿ə ˈdʒɜːmən ˈp(w)ɔɪnt‿ə(v) ˈvjuː]

4 / 6 frimaire, an CCXXVIII de la République
[katʁ]/[si fʁi.mɛ(ː)ʁ | ã dø.sã.vɛ̃t.hɥit də la ʁe.py.blik]
25 /27 November 2019
[ˈtwent.i.ˌfɪfθ‿əv]/[ˈtwent.i.ˌsev.(ə)n̩θ‿əv nə(ʊ).ˈvem.bə ˈtwent.i‿ˌnaɪ̯n̩.ˈtʰiːn]

❶ **Initial consonants (and consonant clusters)**

❷ **Final consonants (and consonant clusters)**

❸ **Some work for you!**

The system of 'initials' in English

- See the list in your handout, also available at:
  http://spence.saar.de/courses/phonetics/syllablestructure/
  initials.pdf

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- This is a list of consonants and consonant-clusters that can occur
  'word-initially' (i.e. 'as the Onset of a syllable which is the first
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- It is based on a formula put forward by Benjamin Lee WHORF in a popular-science article originally published in the 1940s ('Linguistics as an exact science'. In: B. L. Whorf, *Language, Thought and Reality*. ed. J. B. Carroll. Cambridge (Mass.), M. I. T. Press, 1956.)

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- It has been checked against all the words in a major dictionary.

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- The system for the beginning of a syllable "in the middle of a word"
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- It has been checked against all the words in a major dictionary.

- The system for the beginning of a syllable "in the middle of a word" might be slightly different.

- Can you pronounce all the consonants and consonant-clusters on the list?

A tip for producing English approximants

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- If you have problems producing the English voiced approximants [w] ('labiovelar'), [ɹ] ('(post-)alveolar' or '(palato-)alveolar') and [j] ('palatal'), then start with [u], [ə] and [i], and gradually decrease the openness of your mouth.

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- Make sure the airflow is still 'laminar', not 'turbulent'.

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- Make sure the airflow is still 'laminar', not 'turbulent'.

- As an alternative for [ɹ]: start with [ʒ] and gradually *increase* the openness of your mouth.

A further note on pronouncing English /r/

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- Note the following positional variants ("allophones") of the English phoneme /r/ that are used by many speakers:

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  2. /pr/, /kr/ → [pɹ̥], [kɹ̥] ([ɹ̥] = devoiced post- or palato-alveolar approximant);

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    5. /dr/ → [dɻ] ([ɻ] = voiced retroflex approximant); cf [dʒ].

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- Note that the IPA symbol [ɹ] can stand for a dental, alveolar, or palatoalveolar voiced approximant, corresponding to the voiced fricatives [ð], [z], or [ʒ].

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- Note that the IPA symbol [ɹ] can stand for a dental, alveolar, or palatoalveolar voiced approximant, corresponding to the voiced fricatives [ð], [z], or [ʒ].

- If you really want to go into detail, you can indicate that /r/ is normally produced by many native speakers as [ɹʷ], i.e. retracted (not (laminal-) alveolar but (laminal-) palatoalveolar) and labialized (lips rounded), as in ⟨red⟩ /red/ → [ɹʷɛ�д] or [ɹʷɛd].

One more reason why English /r/ [ ] is *post-* or *palato*-alveolar

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(in Onset position in native English words:)		/m/	/n/	/w/	/l/	/r/	/j/
alveolar fricative	/s/	/sm/	/sn/	/sw/	/sl/	—	/sj/
palatoalveolar fricative	/ʃ/	—	—	—	—	/ʃr/	—

What follows the sound? What precedes the sound?

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Consonants (2)

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Initial consonants (and consonant clusters)

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Some work for you!

- Note that people start preparing for a sound before they get to it:

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- Note that people start preparing for a sound before they get to it:
  - /eɪtθ/ → [eɪ̪t̪θ]

What follows the sound? What precedes the sound?

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- Note that people start preparing for a sound before they get to it:
  - /eɪtθ/ → [eɪt̪θ]
  - (dental t instead of alveolar t, because of the following dental fricative) ...

What follows the sound? What precedes the sound?

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  - /eɪtθ/ → [eɪt̪θ]
  - (dental t instead of alveolar t, because of the following dental fricative) ...
- ... and are still recovering from the preceding sound when the next one starts:

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  - /ˈpɒpgʌn/ → [ˈpʰɒp̚ˈg̊ʌn]

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- ... and are still recovering from the preceding sound when the next one starts:
  - /ˈpɒpgʌn/ → [ˈpʰɒp̚ˌg̊ʌn]
  - (devoicing of the lenis velar plosive);

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  - /ˈpɒpgʌn/ → [ˈpʰɒpʲ̚g̊ʌn]
  - (devoicing of the lenis velar plosive);
  - but note that this is still different from the voiceless fortis velar plosive in [ˈpʰɒpʲ̚kʰɔːn]
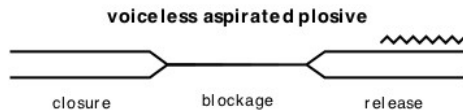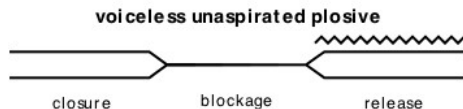
Voice Onset Time (see Wikipedia article)

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Some work for you!

voiced plosive

closure · blockage · release

voiceless unaspirated plosive

closure · blockage · release

voiceless aspirated plosive

closure · blockage · release

Frz. ⟨**g**âches⟩	Engl. ⟨**g**ash⟩	Frz. ⟨**c**aches⟩	Engl. ⟨**c**ash⟩
		Kölsch ⟨**K**ölsch⟩	Hochdt. ⟨**K**ölsch⟩
voiced	voiced	voiceless	voiceless
(fully)	(partially)	unaspirated	aspirated

The system of 'finals' in English

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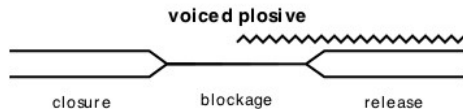**Consonants (2)**

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- Many of the combinations only occur due to the inflexional and derivational morphology of English words: ⟨-(e)s⟩, ⟨-ed⟩, ⟨-th⟩, etc.
- The system would be even more complicated if we included the possible ways a syllable can end in the *middle* of an English word.

Voiced final consonants

- The most important thing to practise is:

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Voiced final consonants

- The most important thing to practise is:
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- The secret is to remember

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  - and that the relaxedness applies to the whole of the Rhyme (including the Nucleus). Don't rush! Don't "clip" the vowel! Take your time!

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- Try practising this now:
-

⟨bit⟩ [bɪt]	⟨bid⟩ [bɪˑd]	⟨bead⟩ [biːd]	⟨beat⟩ [biˑt]
('bisschen')	('bieten')	('Perle')	('schlagen')

Voiced final consonants

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- Try practising this now:
-

⟨bit⟩ [bɪt]	⟨bid⟩ [brd]	⟨bead⟩ [biːd]	⟨beat⟩ [biˑt]
('bisschen')	('bieten')	('Perle')	('schlagen')

  - When practising, turn the voice off right at the beginning of a voiceless final consonant, but let it go right through and beyond a voiced one, producing a slight schwa at the end.

Don't try too hard!

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- How do you pronounce <clothes> ('Kleider') – as opposed to <cloths> ('Tücher'), the plural of <cloth> ('Tuch')?

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- Officially: /kləʊðz/, so therefore [kləʊ̯ðz]

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- How do you pronounce <clothes> ('Kleider') – as opposed to <cloths> ('Tücher'), the plural of <cloth> ('Tuch')?
- Officially: /kləʊðz/, so therefore [kləʊ̯ðz]
- But if you're lazy, try [kləʊ̯vz] or [kləʊ̯zː]

Don't try too hard!

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Consonants (2)

Outline

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- Why?
- You're in the neutral position (schwa), then you start closing your lips slightly, as if for w; then you have to get from there to z, but the tip of your tongue gets horribly in the way. So just "smooth things out a bit".

Homework

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Consonants (2)

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Initial consonants (and consonant clusters)

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- Read the chapter on sound-spelling correspondences (see email).