

# Unit 8

## Syllables & Rhythm (2):

assimilation, elision, morphophonology

Slides for the session of

*Phonetics with Listening Practice (British)*

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⟨English Phonetics: Unit 8:⟩

/'ɪŋ.gɫɪf/ /fə.'net.ɪks/ /'ju:n.ɪt/ /eɪt/

[ 'ɪŋ.gɫəf.fə.'ner.əks.'jʌ:n.əɪ.'aɪt̩ ] (AusE, broad)

⟨Syllables & Rhythm (2)⟩

/'sɪl.əb.əlz/ /ən/ /'rɪð.əm/ /tu:/

[ 'sɪl.əb.ɪz.n̩. | ɹ̩wɪð.m̩. | 'tʰɹ̩: ] (AusE, broad)

⟨assimilation, elision, morphophonology⟩

/ə.sɪm.ə.'leɪf.ən/ /i.'lɪz.ən/ /,mɔ:f.əʊ.fəʊ.'nɒl.ədʒ.i/

[ ə.sɪm.ə.'ləɪf.n̩ | ə.'lɪz.n̩ | ,mɔ:f.əʊ.fə.'nɒl.ədʒ.i ] (AusE, broad)

## 1 Assimilation

## 2 Morphophonology

## Assimilation and elision: theory

- Consonants at the edge of one syllable often adapt to neighbouring consonants — becoming more similar to them (ASSIMILATION) or disappearing altogether (ELISION) — so as to make the pronunciation smoother.

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## Assimilation and elision: theory

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- (Assimilation: a change in quality; elision: a change in quantity.)

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- The next slide contains examples from Eckert and Barry:



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## Assimilation and elision: examples

- ['kɫmænd 'getɪt] → ['kɫmənə 'getɪt]

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- ['kʌmənd 'getɪt] → ['kʌməŋ 'getɪt]
- ['stænd 'bæk] → ['stæm: 'bæk]

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- [bɪt ʔən 'kɔ:s] → [bɪtəf 'kɔ:s]
- [aɪ kən 'du: ɪt] → [aɪkŋ 'du:ɪt]

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## Flexional morphophonology: plural and/or genitive

- The regular plural morpheme (typical spelling: ⟨s⟩) is realized phonologically in three different ways:

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- American and Australian pronunciation is more like [əz] than [ɪz].

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- Note:
  - ⟨Governors-General⟩ (plural)
  - ⟨Governor-General's⟩ (genitive singular).

## Flexional morphophonology: past tense

- The regular past tense morpheme (typical spelling: ⟨ed⟩) is realized phonologically in three different ways:

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## Flexional morphophonology: past tense

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  - /d/ after a voiced consonant or a vowel/diphthong (typically)  
<fazed> /feɪzd/  
<laid> /leɪd/
  - /ɪd/ after /t/ or /d/  
<fated> /'feɪtɪd/ <faded> /'feɪdɪd/

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  - In earlier forms of English, ⟨ed⟩ and ⟨'d⟩ were used to spell /ɪd/ and /d/ (or /t/) respectively.
  - In modern English, ⟨èd⟩ and ⟨ed⟩ are used instead.
  - “His work was soon in rehearsal  
Because he always usèd Purcell” (Flanders and Swann).

## Derivational morphophonology (plus lexical and syntactic stress)

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- See Eckert and Barry, pages 239 to 243.

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- We will examine some of these issues from a different perspective in the next class.