Version SS 2008

The Phonetics of English Pronunciation - Week 10

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Topics

- Transcription practice: "Linking" etc.
- "Cross-word effects"
 - Boundary conditions: Elision and Assimilation Read: Section VI.4, pp. 223-227
 - Stress patterns in compounds Read: Section VI.2, pp. 188-212

Transcription Exercise

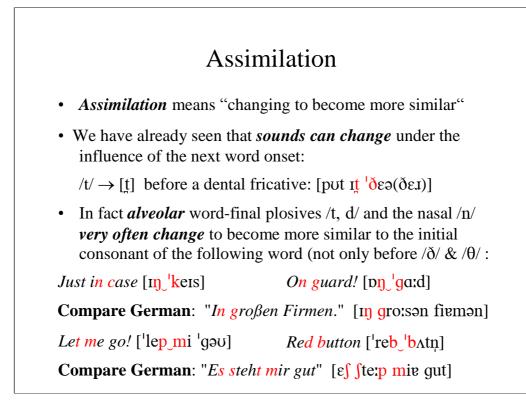
- Focus: Linking and Weak forms
- So segmental problems are not highlighted
 - R-sounds are symbolized with [r] not [J]
 - L-sounds are symbolized with [1] whether they are clear or dark.
 - Final-voiced consonants are not highlighted.
- This *doesn't mean they are any less important*! Please don't forget them.

Transcription

They expected him to arrive at the reception after all [ðer ^jık'spektıd ım tu ^wə'raıv ət ðə rə'sepʃən a:ftə 'rɔ:l rə'sepʃən æftə 'jɔ:l the other aunts and uncles had offered their ði ^jAðə 'ra:nts ə'n Aŋkəlz ə'd pfəd ðe(ə) ði ^jAðə 'ants ə'n Aŋkəlz ə'd a:fə d ðer congratulations to the excited couple. The object of kəŋgrætjə'leɪʃənz tə ði ^jık'saıtıd 'kApəl][ði ^{ij}pbdʒıkt əv ði ^jık'saıtıd [ði ^{ij}a:bdʒəkt əv the exercise was to give them a final treat. ði ^{ij}eksəsaız wəz tə 'gıv ðəm ə 'faınəl 'tri:t ði ^{ij}eksə saız

Commentary on linking:

- 1. vowel-to-vowel (intrusive [j]) in *"they expected"*, *"the other"*, *"the excited"*, *"the object"* and *"the exercise"* (Note: *"the"* becomes [ðɪ] before vowel onsets)
- 2. cons-to-vowel in "*expected him*" (because the weak form of "*him*" loses the initial /h/), "*arrive at*"(the vowel in "*at*" is weakened to schwa), "*reception after*", "*aunts and*"(with "*and*" reduced to [ən] or even [n]), "*and uncles*", "*uncles had*" (because "*had*" loses /h/ and is reduced to [əd]), "*had offered*", "*object of*" and "*them a*" (with the vowel in "*them*" reduced to schwa).
- **3. intrusive [w], vowel-to-vowel** in *"to arrive"* (because *"to"* normally weakens to [tu] instead of [tə] before words with vowel onset).
- **4. linking [r]** in *"after all"* and *"other aunts"* (Note: this is normal consto-vowel-linking in American pronunciation because the /r/ is always pronounced post-vocalically.
- **5.** Note too, that the dental articulation of /t, d, n, l/ preceding $\langle \delta \rangle$ and $\langle \theta \rangle$ is also a sort of linking phenomenon. The alveolar sound becomes dental before dental fricatives to make the transition from one word to the next smoother (= linking). This change of place of articulation to fit the following context is called *assimilation* (see following slides)



As we said in the nozes to the previous slide, the assimilation of word-final alveolars to the dental place of articulation of the initial consonant of the following word can be seen as a special sort of *linking*.

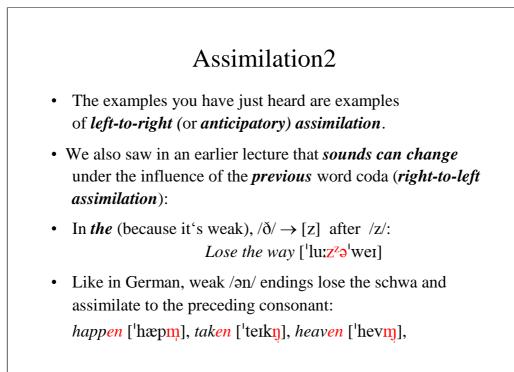
We dealt with it as a special articulatory fact in connection with alveolars preceding "th" sounds. But the ease of transition from one word to the next is exactly what "linking" is. We can see it as *"consonant-to-consonant"* linking.

But alveolar consonants do not only assimilate to dental fricatives (though that is obligitary). They may (optionally, in casual speech) lose their place of articulation and become *bilabial* before /p, b, m/ or *velar* before /k, g/ (see the examples in the slide). But note that this is *optional; it is a question of speaking style (more casual) and tempo (fast).*

Note also, that this sort of change occurs in German in exactly the same way. However, you don't think about it, and the influence of the orthography will make you think you DON'T do it!

But think of expressions like:

"In großen Firmen"	[1 <mark>1] g</mark> ro:sən fivmən]
"Es steht mir gut"	[ɛ <mark>∫ ∫</mark> te:p miɐ gut]

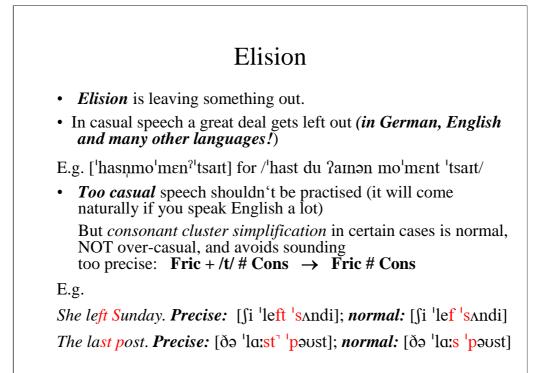


All the changes in the previous slide showed the effect of the initial consonant of the following word on the final alveolar of the preceding word. I.e., the beginning of the next word was being partially anticipated at the end of the word before it.

However, there are effects in the other direction, sometimes called ",carry-over" (or ",perseveratory") effects. We saw an example of this in an earlier lecture, with the weakened ",*the*" following words ending in /s/ or /z/.

It also happens a lot with the many words ending with schwa + /n/.

This parallels the phenomena in German, where it is even more frequent because there are so many *-en* inflections (verb endings, adjectival endings).



In phonological terms, dropping a sound (like dropping the schwa in *"happen, taken, heaven"*, etc.) is called *elision*. It can happen in casual speech to sounds that are not essential for the identity of the word.

Since the structure of language is highly redundant (it has to be because we don't always hear every detail of what is said) that is the case for many words in context. So elision takes place in all languages, and it occurs in places where it is articulatorily "more economical" (= easier!) if the sound is dropped.

When you speak a foreign language, you usually speak more slowly than most native speakers, so extreme elision should not occur. As you improve, and speak more quickly, elision will occur in ways that are articulatorily determined, so we do not really need to practise them.

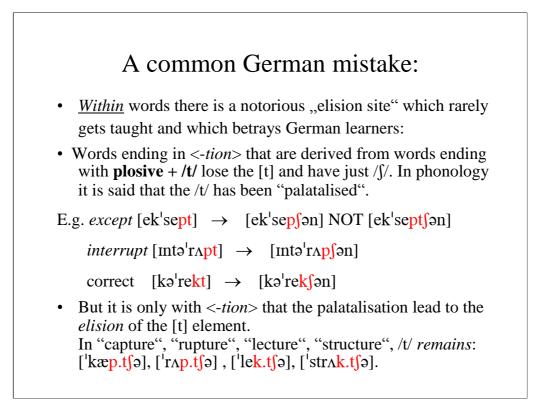
But there are some consonant clusters that become simplified in non-casual speech, and if German learners of English don't reduce them they sound overprecise (and pedantic).

The most common of these is the *final /t/* (an alveolar again!), when it occurs *after a fricative and is followed by a consonant*.

Speak the examples in the slide and observe what your articulators are doing.

- A full /fts/ in ,...*left Saturday*" requires you to make a full alveolar closure after the /f/ and then introduce the complex /s/ slit into that closure. Since the initial /s/ is more important than the final /t/, the full closure part easily disappears.

- In *"..last post*", the /s/-groove in the tongue tip has to be closed for /t/. Since the /p/-closure follows immediately, the auditory effect if the /t/ closure is negligible, so the fine tongue adjustment can be left out at no cost to understanding.



The /t/ is not a very stable sound, and it is not only during the concatenation of words that it can disappear.

The <-tion> ending is a common pronunciation trap for German learners.

Although a /tʃ/ is pronounced in "*capture*" (['kæpt $\mathfrak{f}\mathfrak{d}$]), "*lecture*" (['lekt $\mathfrak{f}\mathfrak{d}$), etc., only /ʃ/ is pronounced following a /p/ or a /k/:

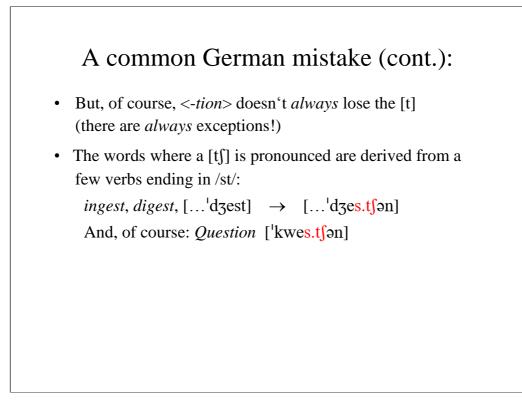
Compare "*caption*" (['kæp \int ən]) and "election" ([I'lek \int ən) with the words bove.

Also, words with <-ntion>, i.e., when /n/ precedes the <-tion>, are also pronounced with / \int /:

"intention" ([m'ten fan]), "mention" ([men fan]), "attention" ([a'ten fan]), etc.

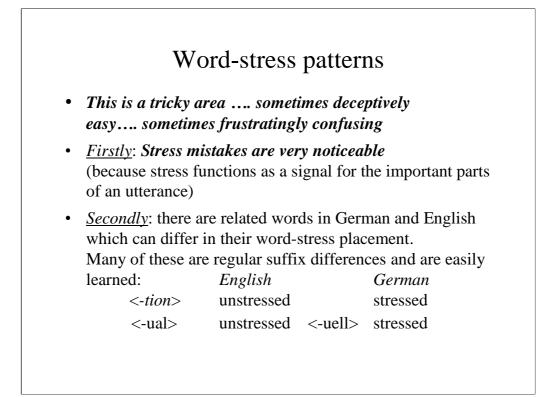
Other cases of /t/ palatalisation where the /t/ remains are words ending in <tual>, in words like "*nuptual*" (['nʌp.tʃuəl]), "factual" (['fæktʃuəl]), "eventual"([I'ven.tʃuəl]), etc.

But "essential" – with <-ial> – ($[\vartheta' sen \vartheta]$) has no $[t \vartheta]$ but only $[\vartheta]$.



There is no difference between <-tion> and <-ture> endings if the consonant preceding the /t/ is /s/.

Posture, *pasture*, *gesture*, etc., have the and $/t \int / pronunciation$, as expected, but so do the <-stion> words such as *"question"*, *"(in)digestion"*, etc.,

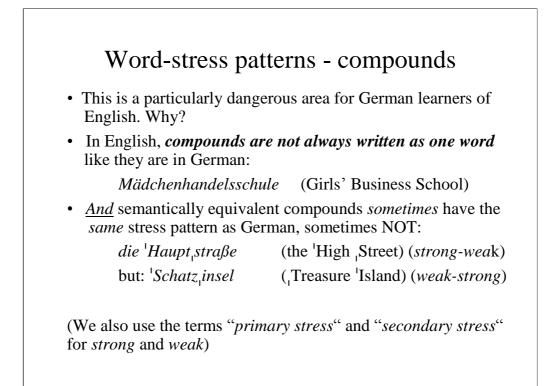


We have already underlined the fact that *any new word* should be checked for its pronunciation, and that includes *checking the word-stress pattern* in words of more than one syllable.

Regular differences between related words in German and English are soon mastered. You are presumably very aware that <...tion> words in English have the main stress immediately before the unstressed final syllable, while they always bear the lexical stress in German: E.g., *attraction* [$a^{t}trackfon$]. vs. *Attraktion* [atrak'tsio:n].

Other suffic differences are the *-al* words in English (*virtual, partial, segmental*), which are all unstressed vs. the *-al/ell* words in German (*virtuell, partiell, segmental / segmentell*).

Other suffixes do not differ in their stressing behaviour; e.g. English *-ic* and German *-isch* as in *iconic* and *ikonisch*.



But the area of *compound words* is also confusing because there are some *parallels* and some *divergencies* between English and German (both in spelling conventions and in the stress allocation):

Established English compound-word expressions are often written as separate words (though they are also sometimes hyphenated).

Examples:

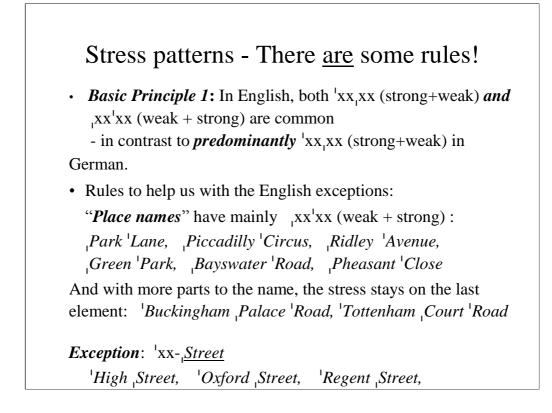
Written as one word: 'green_house, 'lawn_mower, 'gamesman_ship, 'glad_rags, etc.

Witten with a hyphen: 'grave-digger, 'hand-me-down, etc.

Written separately: '*door handle* (but '*door bell*), '*cookery book*, '*leap year* (but '*leap*,*frog*) etc.

The *default* stress pattern for established compounds, even when written as separate words, is with the *stress on the first syllable* with a secondary stress on the second lexical element (see all the examples above).

This is the same as in German and there lies the problem, because *there are exceptions* (as there are in German, but you know those!)



There are some groups of words that diverge for the default compound pattern, and if you can learn these, life will become much easier!

Place names – as used in addresses have the main stress on the second element

- except for _____ Street)

Your 5th exercise (*To hand in by Thursday 18.00*)

Print this page in *"Notes Page"* format and transcribe the following sentences in the lower half of the page, Please transcribe with *all <u>weak forms</u>, <u>linking forms</u> and <u>segmental variants</u>, and mark with ' the <u>stressed</u> syllable of the <u>accented</u> words (i.e., the words that are <i>"important"* for the message of the sentence):

1. There was no excuse for leaving the old lady standing in the middle of the road,

2. Constant practice is boring, but it is essential for success.

3. How could the group have avoided the frictions and disagreements that led to their break-up?

4. They had no idea who the last person was who saw the young girl on Monday.

5. Where on earth have I put my spectacles?

<u>*Transcribe*</u> and mark the <u>primary</u> (1) and <u>secondary</u> (1) stress in the following address names:

Eton Place; Brighton Road; Carnaby Street; Ridley Avenue; Oxford Street; Pageant Court; Gordon Square; Smugglers Wharf; Conduit Street; Chestnut Lane; Pheasant Close.