CONNECTED SPEECH

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REDUCTION, LENITION, ASSIMILATION AND ELISION
VOWEL REDUCTION

- A reduction in the length of a vowel, usually accompanied by a change in the vowel quality

- Consider the word *robust*
  - the first syllable is being unstressed
  - the first syllable is pronounced with a short [o], rather than the full diphthong [ou]/[əʊ].
  - it may even be pronounced simply with a schwa.
ASSIMILATION

- The effect of phonetic conditioning whereby a phoneme is realized differently due to the influence of a neighbouring sound (phoneme) in a word; e.g. in the English word *broadcast*:

  - /'brɔ:dkɑːst/ - in careful pronunciation (the ideal form)
  - /'brɔːɡkɑːst/ - in connected speech (the assimilated form)

In the above, the phoneme /d/ has been replaced by /g/ under the influence of the phoneme /k/

- Assimilation varies in extent according to speaking rate & style; more likely to occur in rapid, casual speech;
ASSIMILATION - DIRECTION OF INFLUENCE

• Regressive assimilation/Leading assimilation

The phoneme that comes earlier is affected by the one that comes later; e.g.:

white pepper / wait 'pepə/ / waɪp 'pepə/

• Progressive assimilation/Lagging assimilation

The phoneme that comes later is affected by the one that comes earlier, e.g.:

on the house / ən ðə 'haʊs/ / ən ðə 'haʊs/
CONSONANT ASSIMILATION

**Fat thing**  [fætθɪŋ]
- With a dental stop at the end of the word fat.
- The alveolar stop in this word has shifted its place of articulation in anticipation of the following dental sound;
- It has assimilated to the following sound in terms of place of articulation

- Other examples: fat cat- [fækkæt], fat man- [fæpmæn]
CONSONANT ASSIMILATION (CONT’D)

- Nasal stops assimilate in place of articulation to a following consonant.

Ten pin bowling
- [tʰɛɲpʰɪmboulinŋ]
- Alveolar nasals in ten and pin assimilate in place of articulation to the following bilabial stops.

Ten kinds
- [tʰɛŋkʰainz]
- The alveolar nasal in ten assimilates to the following stop and become velar.
CONSONANT ASSIMILATION (CONT’D)

[s] and [z] at the end of a word
- Followed by an [i] or a [j] at the beginning of the text.

Miss you
- [mɪˈjuː]
- Alveolar fricative assimilated partially to the following palatal sound and become palato-alveolar
CONSONANT ASSIMILATION (CONT’D)

[t] and [d] at the end of a word
- Is followed by [i] or a [j] at the beginning of the next.

Consider the phrase *Hit you* [hɪtʃu]
- The alveolar stop [t] and the palatal approximant [j] have ‘coalesced’ into a palato-alveolar affricate.
Coalescence therefore entails assimilation both for place of articulation and for manner of articulation.
CONSONANT LENITION

- A diminution in the degrees of constriction of a consonant and/or
- The voicing of a voiced consonant, and/or
  The length of time the construction is held
CONSONANT LENITION (CONT’D)

Flapping

- Occurs in many dialects of American English

  e.g., /t/ and /d/ are realized as an alveolar tap (flap) in words such as *letter* /lɛrəl/ & *betting* /bɛtɪŋ/

- However, take note of exceptions (refer to p. 105-106 for examples)
CONSONANT LENITION (CONT’D)

- Reduction of oral stops to glottal stops

- As in *put it right* when pronounced as [puʔiʔaiʔ]
**COMPLETE ELISION OF SEGMENTS**

- Which is already evident in the phrase ten kinds, discussed above in slide 4)
- Happens with both consonants and vowels

- Take the phrase *sixth months*:
  - 6 = [sɪksθ], dental fricative tends not to be pronounced at all the phrase *the sixth month*,
  - Which is typically pronounced as [ðəsɪksmʌnθ]

- Where clusters of consonants arise through the combination of words into phrases, they are frequently reduced in this way.
COMPLETE ELISION OF SEGMENTS (CON’T)

- Example: the phrase *crisp bowl*,

- Often pronounced as [kʰɾɪsbouɬ],
- With the final stop in crisp elided.

- Is also common in words of a non-lexical category.

- Words such as and, have and of often pronounced with elided consonants, as in Bill and Ivy [bɪlənaɪvi], Should have gone [ʃudəɡʌn], and cup of tea [kʰʌpətʰiː:]
**Vowel elision**

- May result in the loss of an entire syllable, as in *university* when it is pronounced as [juːˈnɪvɜːsti].

- This is clearly of some considerable help in reducing the number of unstressed syllables to be articulated.

- May result in the syllabification of a consonant, as in support when it pronounced [ˈspɔːt],

- Or in the pronunciation of *and* as [ŋ], as in Bill and Ivy [bɪlŋaɪvɪ]
EPENTHESIS

- A low level phonetic rule which breaks up clusters of consonants

Examples:

*film* is realized as *[filim]*
*arm* is realized as *[arəm]*
ARE YOU FAMILIAR WITH ANY OF THOSE SIMPLIFICATION PROCESSES IN YOUR CASUAL SPEECH?