Unit 6

Consonants (2)

English consonants from a German point of view

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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)ɔɪ̯nt‿ə(v) ˈvjuː]

1   Initial consonants (and consonant clusters)

The system of 'initials' in English

- See the list in your handout, also available at:
  http://spence.saar.de/courses/phonetics/syllablestructure/initials.pdf
- 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 syllable in (the phonological realization of) a word').
- 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.)
- 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

- If you have problems producing the English voiced approximants [w] ('labiovelar'), [ɹ] ('postalveolar') and [j] ('palatal'), then start with [u], [ə] and [i], and gradually decrease the openness of your mouth.
- Make sure the airflow is still 'laminar' (smooth), not 'turbulent'.
- As an alternative for [ɹ]: start with [ʒ] and gradually *increase* the openness of your mouth.

6.4

Practising English approximants (Sauer 6 1 to 6 2: /w/)

we	Gwendolyn	inward	worm	wolf	bewitch
[wiː]	[ˈɡwẹn.də.lɪn]	[ˈɪn.wəd]	[wɜːm]	[wʊlf]	[bɪ.ˈwɪtʃ]
wigwam	Wycliffe	Wyoming	where	whistle	while
[ˈwɪɡ.wæm]	[ˈwɪk.lɪf]	[waɪ.ˈəʊm.ɪŋ]	[wẹ.ə̣]	[ˈwɪs.ɫ̣]	[waɪɫ]

twist	twine	Twiggy	tweed	twig	Twain
[tw̥ɪst]	[tw̥a.ɪn]	[ˈtw̥ɪɡ.i]	[tw̥iːd]	[tw̥ɪ.ɡ]	[tw̥ẹ.ɪn]
quite	qualify	quack	quaint	queer	quiver
[kw̥aɪt]	[ˈkw̥ɒl.ɪ.faɪ]	[kw̥æk]	[kw̥ẹɪnt]	[kw̥ɪ.ə̣]	[ˈkw̥ɪv.ə]
squeak	squirm	squeal			
[skwiːk]	[skwɜːm]	[skwiːɫ]	[skwiːᵊɫ]		

Gwyn	Quinn	guano	quote		
[ɡwɪ.n]	[kw̥ɪ.n]	[ˈɡwɑː.nəʊ]	[ˈkw̥əʊt]		
dwell	twelve	Dwight	twice		
[dwẹ.ɫ]	[tw̥ẹ.lv]	[dwaɪt]	[tw̥aɪs]		

wise	vies	wet	vet	Wales	vales
[wa.ɪz]	[va.ɪz]	[wẹt]	[vẹt]	[wẹ.ɪɫz]	[vẹ.ɪɫz]
worse	verse	wick	Vic	wiper	viper
[wɜ.s]	[vɜ.s]	[wɪk]	[vɪk]	[waɪp.ə]	[vaɪp.ə]
weird	veered	wine	vine	wary	vary
[wɪ.əd]	[vɪ.əd]	[wa.ɪn]	[va.ɪn]	[wẹ.əɹ.i]	[vẹ.əɹ.i]

6.5

Practising English approximants (Sauer 6 3: /w/)

Walter wanted vodka and wine. | His advice was too obvious. /ˈwɔːl.tə ˈwɒnt.ɪd ˈvɒd.kəɹ ənd ˈwaɪn/ | /hɪz əd.ˈvaɪs wəz ˈtuː ˈɒb.vɪ.əs/

Winifred read Advanced Linguistics. /ˈwɪn.ɪ.fred ˈred əd.ˈvɑːnst lɪŋ.ɡwɪst.ɪks/

Whether the weather be fine | Or whether the weather be not, /ˈweð.ə ðə ˈweð.ə bɪ ˈfaɪn/ | /ɔː ˈweð.ə ðə ˈweð.ə bɪ ˈnɒt/

Whether the weather be cold | Or whether the weather be hot, /ˈweð.ə ðə ˈweð.ə bɪ ˈkəʊld/ | /ɔː ˈweð.ə ðə ˈweð.ə bɪ ˈhɒt/

We'll weather the weather | Whatever the weather, /wiːl ˈweð.ə ðə ˈweð.ə/ | /wat.ˈev.ə ðə ˈweð.ə/

Whether we like it or not. /ˈweð.ə wi laɪk ɪt ɔː ˈnɒt/

We were invited for a glass of whiskey. /wɪ wəɹ ɪn.ˈvaɪt.ɪd fəɹ ə ˈɡlɑːs əv ˈwɪsk.i/

The Wizard of Oz is a wonderful movie. /ðə ˈwɪzəd əv ɒz ɪz ə ˈwʌn.də.fʊl ˈmuː.vi/

6.6

Practising English approximants (Sauer 6 3: /w/) (continued)

We value the love of our brothers and sisters. /wɪ ˈvæl.ju ðə ˈlʌv əv ɑː ˈbrʌð.əz ən ˈsɪst.əz/ (N.B. pronunciation of "our")

Is it worth while working in the vineyard? /ɪz ɪt ˈwɜːθ ˈwaɪl ˈwɜːk.ɪŋ ɪn ðə ˈvɪnjəd/

Vampires usually ravish virgins. /ˈvæm.paɪəz ˈjuːʒ.u.əl.i ˈræv.ɪʃ ˈvɜːdʒ.ɪnz/

What weather will Vivian have in Venice? /ˈwɒt ˈweð.ə wɪl ˈvɪv.ɪ.ən ˈhæv ɪn ˈven.ɪs/

We watched the Woodstock Festival on television. /wɪ ˈwɒtʃt ðə ˈwʊd.stɒk ˈfest.ɪv.l ɒn ˈtel.ə.vɪʒ.n/

She couldn't find any vegetables at Woolworth's. /ʃɪ ˈkʊd.nt ˈfaɪnd en.i ˈvedʒ.təb.lz ət ˈwʊl.wəθs/

They visited Worcester and Wolverhampton. /ðeɪ ˈvɪz.ɪt.ɪd ˈwʊst.ər ənd ˈwʊlv.ə.hæm.tən/

Harvard University and the University of Pennsylvania are very well known. /ˈhɑːv.əd juːn.i.ˈvɜːs.ɪt.i ənd ðə juːn.i.ˈvɜːs.ɪt.i əv pens.ɪl.ˈveɪn.ɪ.ər ə ˈver.i ˈwell ˈnəʊn/

Practising English approximants (Sauer 6 3: /w/) (concluded)

There was an old woman and what do you think? /ðeə ˈwɒz ən əʊld ˈwʊm.ən ənd ˈwɒt dʊ jʊ ˈθɪŋk/ She lived upon nothing but victuals and drink. /ʃɪ ˈlɪvd ə.pɒn ˈnʌθ.ɪŋ bət ˈvɪt.lz ənd ˈdrɪŋk/ [1ex] And though victuals and drink were the chief of her diet, /ənd ðəʊ ˈvɪt.lz ənd ˈdrɪŋk wə ðə ˈtʃiːf əv hə ˈdaɪ.ət/ This plaguy old woman could never be quiet. /ðɪs ˈpleɪg.i əʊld ˈwʊm.ən kʊd ˈnev.ə bɪ ˈkwaɪ.ət/[1ex] She went to the baker, to buy her some bread, /ʃɪ ˈwent tə ðə ˈbeɪk.ə tə ˈbaɪ hə səm ˈbred/ And when she came home her old husband was dead. /ənd ˈwen ʃi keɪm ˈhəʊm hə əʊld ˈhʌzbənd wəz ˈded/ [1ex] She went to the clerk to toll the bell, /ʃɪ ˈwent tə ðe ˈklɑːk tə ˈtəʊl ðə ˈbel/ And when she got home, her old husband was well. /ənd ˈwen ʃɪ gɒt ˈhəʊm hə əʊld ˈhʌzbʌnd ˈwəz ˈwel/

A further note on pronouncing English /r/

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

  1. /r/ → [ɹ] ([ɹ] = voiced postalveolar approximant);
  2. /pr/, /kr/ → [pɹ̥], [kɹ̥] ([ɹ̥] = devoiced postalveolar approximant);
  3. /θr/ → [θɾ] ([ɾ] = voiced alveolar tap or flap);
  4. /tr/ → [t̠ɹ̥] ([ɻ̥] = devoiced retroflex approximant); cf [tʃ].
  5. /dr/ → [d̠ɻ] ([ɻ] = voiced retroflex approximant); cf [dʒ].

· Note that the IPA symbol [ɹ] can stand for a dental, alveolar, or postalveolar 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-) postalveolar) and labialized (lips rounded), as in ⟨red⟩ /red/ → [ɹʷe̞d] or [ɹʷɛ̝d].

One more reason why English /r/ [ɹ] is *post*alveolar

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

Practising allophones of /r/:

wrist	rock	Rome	race	raze	rhetoric
[ɹɪst]	[ɹɒk]	[ɹə̝ʊ̝m]	[ɹe̝ɪs]	[ɹe̝ɪz]	[ˈɹet.ə.ɹɪk]

proud	practice	priest	crib	crest	Christ
[pɹ̥a̝ʊ̝d]	[pɹ̥ækt.ɪs]	[ˈpɹ̥iːst]	[kɹ̥ɪb]	[kɹ̥est]	[kɹ̥aɪst]

try	chai	trip	chip	drain	Jane
[t̠ɹ̥a̝ɪ]	[tʃa̝ɪ]	[t̠ɹ̥ɪp]	[tʃɪp]	[d̠ɻe̝ɪn]	[dʒe̝ɪn]

trill	drill	trout	drought	trawler	drawler
[t̠ɹ̥ɪˑl]	[d̠ɻɪˑl]	[t̠ɹ̥a̝ʊ̝t]	[d̠ɻa̝ʊ̝t]	[ˈt̠ɹ̥ɔːl.ə]	[ˈd̠ɻɔːl.ə]

through	thrombosis	throw
[θɾuˑ]	[θɾɒm.ˈbə̝ʊ̝s.ɪs]	[θɾə̝ʊ̝]

here	here and there	hither	hither and thither
/hɪə/	/hɪɹ ən ðeə/	/ˈhɪð.ə/	/ˈhɪð.əɹ ən ˈðɪð.ə/
⟨hier⟩	⟨hier und dort⟩	⟨hierher⟩	⟨hierher und dorther⟩

hence	thence	hens
[hens]	[ðens]	[he̝nz]
⟨hierhin⟩	⟨dorthin⟩	⟨Hühner⟩

3

- · 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) …
- · … and are still recovering from the preceding sound when the next one starts:
    - – /ˈpɒpgʌn/ → [ˈpʰɒp̚ˌg̊ʌn]
    - – (devoicing of the lenis velar plosive);
    - – but note that this is still different from the voiceless fortis velar plosive in [ˈpʰɒp̚ˌkʰɔːn]

Voice Onset Time (see Wikipedia article)
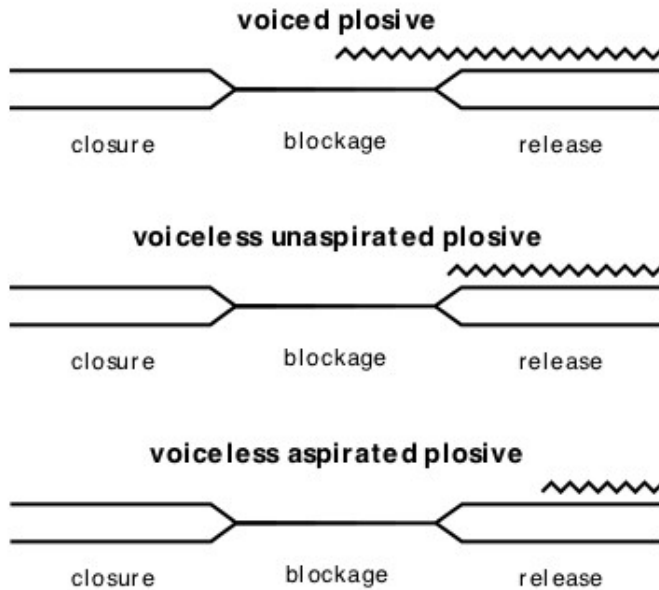
Frz. ⟨gâches⟩	Engl. ⟨gash⟩	Frz. ⟨caches⟩ Kölsch ⟨Kölsch⟩	Engl. ⟨cash⟩ Hochdt. ⟨Kölsch⟩
voiced (fully)	voiced (partially)	voiceless unaspirated	voiceless aspirated

2 Final consonants (and consonant clusters)

The system of 'finals' in English

- · See the list of 'finals' in your handout, also available here:
  `http://spence.saar.de/courses/phonetics/syllablestructure/finals.pdf`
- · This is a list of consonants and consonant-clusters that can occur 'word-finally' (i.e. 'as the Coda of a syllable which is the last syllable in (the phonological realization of) a word').
- · 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:
    - producing a voiced final consonant.
- The secret is to remember
    - that such a consonant has to be lenis (weak, relaxed) in English, not fortis (strong, tense) as in German,
    - 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!
- Try practising this now:

⟨bit⟩ [bɪt]	⟨bid⟩ [bɪˑd]	⟨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!

- 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]
- 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".

3   Some work for you!

Homework (if you haven't done it already…)

- Read the chapter on sound-spelling correspondences: http://www.spence.saar.de/courses/phoneticswithlistening/unit04a_20211/englischephonetik_06.pdf