

Unit 8

Syllables & Rhythm (2):

linking, stress, weak forms

Slides for the session of

Phonetics with Listening Practice (British)

held on

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English Phonetics: Unit 8:

/ˈɪŋ glɪʃ/ /fə ˈnet ɪks/ /ˈjuːn ɪt/ /ˈeɪt/
 [ˈɪŋɡlɪʃfəˈnɛtɪks | ˈjuːnɪt eɪt]

Syllables & Rhythm (2)

/ˈsɪl əb əlz/ /ən/ /rɪð əm/ /tuː/
 [ˈsɪləbɪzŋˈɪðm̩ | ˈtʰuː]

linking, stress, weak forms

/ˈlɪŋk ɪŋ/ /stres/ /ˈwiːk fɔːmz/
 [ˈlɪŋkɪŋ | ˈstɹɛs | ˈwiːk̩fɔːmz]

Outline

The phonological rank scale
for English

Linking

Rhythm

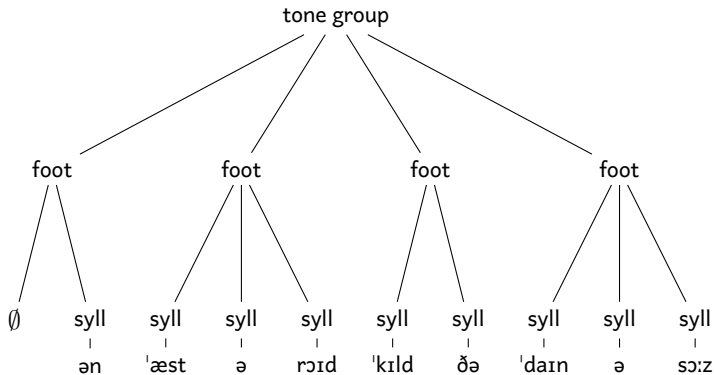
Weak Forms

1 The phonological rank scale for English

2 Linking

3 Rhythm

4 Weak Forms



(Context: 'What happened 65 million years ago?')

Linking (Liaison)

- **Why Germans sound so strange (!):**
[ʔaɪn ˌʔastɛʁɔ'i:t] ('ein Asteroid')

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Linking (Liaison)

- **Why Germans sound so strange (!):**
[ʔaɪn ʔastɛʁɔ'i:t] ('ein Asteroid')
- **Consonant-Vowel Linking:**
VC V → VC_̣V not VCʔV
/ən/ /'æst ə ɹɔɪd/ → [ən_̣'æstəɹɔɪd]

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/ən/ /'æst ə ɹɔɪd/ → [ən_̣'æstəɹɔɪd]

- **r-linking:**

V₁(r) V₂ → V₁rV₂ (V₁ = ə ə ɜ ə ɪ ə e ə ɔ ə aɪ ə aʊ ə)

/pɔə(r)/ + /ɪt/ → ['p^hɔə^ɹɪt] (pour it)

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/pɔə(r)/ + /ɪt/ → ['p^hɔə^ɹɪt] (pour it)
- **Intrusive r:**
V₁ V₂ → V₁rV₂ (V₁ = a: ɔ: ɜ: ə)
/pɔ:/ + /ɪt/ → ['p^hɔə^ɹɪt] (paw it)

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- **Intrusive j:**

V₁ V₂ \rightarrow V₁jV₂ (V₁ = i: eɪ aɪ ɔɪ)

/si:/ + /ɪt/ \rightarrow ['si:ʝɪt] (see it)

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V₁(r) V₂ → V₁rV₂ (V₁ = aə ɔə ʒə ə ɪə eə ɔə aɪə aʊə)
/pɔə(r)/ + /ɪt/ → ['p^hɔə^dɪt] (pour it)
- **Intrusive r:**
V₁ V₂ → V₁rV₂ (V₁ = a: ɔ: ʒ: ə)
/pɔ:/ + /ɪt/ → ['p^hɔə^dɪt] (paw it)
- **Intrusive j:**
V₁ V₂ → V₁jV₂ (V₁ = i: eɪ aɪ ɔɪ)
/si:/ + /ɪt/ → ['si:ʒɪt] (see it)
- **Intrusive w:**
V₁ V₂ → V₁wV₂ (V₁ = u: əʊ aʊ)
/səʊ/ + /ɪt/ → ['səʊ^wɪt] (sew it)

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Weak Forms

English as a 'stress-timing' language

- French is **syllable**-timing:

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Weak Forms

English as a 'stress-timing' language

- French is **syllable**-timing:
 - each syllable takes as much time to say as each other syllable does

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Weak Forms

English as a ‘stress-timing’ language

- French is **syllable**-timing:
 - each syllable takes as much time to say as each other syllable does
 - how would a French speaker read aloud “an asteroid killed the dinosaurs”?

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- French is **syllable**-timing:
 - each syllable takes as much time to say as each other syllable does
 - how would a French speaker read aloud “an asteroid killed the dinosaurs”?
- English is **stress**-timing:
 - some syllables are **stressed** – they ‘stand out’ (are ‘salient’) because they are louder and/or longer than the others:
[ən 'æstɹɪɔɪd 'kɪld ðə 'dɪnəsɔ:z]

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 - the time from one stressed syllable to the next is roughly constant.

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- The phonological unit of rhythm is the **FOOT**:

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- The phonological unit of rhythm is the **FOOT**:
 - each foot starts with a stressed syllable or with a ‘silent beat’.

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 - each foot starts with a stressed syllable or with a ‘silent beat’.
 - we will use a forward slash (/) to indicate a foot boundary.

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- The phonological unit of rhythm is the **FOOT**:
 - each foot starts with a stressed syllable or with a ‘silent beat’.
 - we will use a forward slash (/) to indicate a foot boundary.
- Practise making each foot the same length:
 - / John / bought / five / black / ties / ^ /
 - / Mary's / buying / seven / yellow / dresses / ^ /
 - / Jennifer's / purchasing / seventy / violet / cardigans / ^ /
 - / Nicholas is / contemplating / twenty-seven / multicoloured / carpet-slippers / ^ /

Which syllables are stressed?

- Definitions:

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Weak Forms

Which syllables are stressed?

- Definitions:
 - 'Content' words = common nouns, proper nouns, lexical verbs, adjectives, and (most) adverbs.

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- Monosyllabic ‘function’ words are unstressed: *an, the*

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- Monosyllabic ‘content’ words are stressed: *killed*
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- Polysyllabic words (including compounds) have at least one stressed syllable: 'asteroid, 'Oxford Street, 'after, be'fore

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- Polysyllabic words (including compounds) can have more than one stressed syllable: **polysyl'labic**, **Oxford 'Road**
- Difference between secondary or minor stress (_ˌ) and primary or major stress (ˈ) is not very important:

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- Difference between secondary or minor stress (_ˌ) and primary or major stress (ˈ) is not very important:
 - It's **polysylLABic**. (versus) They're **polysyllabic WORDS**.

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- Difference between secondary or minor stress (,) and primary or major stress (') is not very important:
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 - It's **POLysyllabic** not **MONosyllabic**.

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- Polysyllabic words (including compounds) can have more than one stressed syllable: ₁polysyl'labic, ₁Oxford 'Road
- Difference between secondary or minor stress (₁) and primary or major stress (') is not very important:
 - It's polysylLABic. (versus) They're polysyllabic WORDS.
 - It's POLysyllabic not MONosyllabic.
- Sometimes a syllable will be stressed just to maintain the rhythm (here: the syllable **for**):
 - Surely TOM can write it for us

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Weak Forms

Weak Forms versus Strong Forms: the difference is important!

- Sally can write the report in Hungarian for us.
/ **S**ally can / **w**rite the re- / **p**ort in Hun- / **G**ARian / **f**or us
can = POLARITY: positive: unmarked
[kŋ] ('weak form') (eine einfache Bejahung)
(nicht rhythmisch hervorgehoben)

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can = POLARITY: positive: unmarked
[kɪ] ('weak form') (eine einfache Bejahung)
(nicht rhythmisch hervorgehoben)
- I can't write reports in Hungarian, but
I can find a translator for you
I / **can't** / **w**rite re- / **p**orts in Hun- / **G**ARian but
I / **can** / **f**ind a trans- / **L**ATor / **f**or you
can = POLARITY: positive: marked
[kʰæɪn] ('strong form') (eine stärkere Bejahung)
(rhythmisch hervorgehoben)

Weak Forms versus Strong Forms: the difference is important!

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[kʰæɪn] ('strong form') (eine stärkere Bejahung)
(rhythmisch hervorgehoben)
- You **can** write reports in Hungarian!
You / **CAN** / **write** re- / **ports** in Hun- / **gar**ian!
can = POLARITY: positive: marked: contrastive
[kʰæɪn] ('strong form') (eine trotzige Bejahung)
(rhythmisch *und melodisch* hervorgehoben)

How many 'degrees of stress' are there in English? Two or five?

- *Context:* 'What happened 65 million years ago?'

- *Utterance:* // . ˌ ˌ ə n / æ s t ə r ɔɪ d / k ɪ l d ð ə * / d a m ə s ɔː z //

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- (1) unstressed syllable with reduced vowel: ə n ə ɔ̃ ə

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- (2) unstressed syllable with normal vowel: rɔɪd sɔːz
- (1) unstressed syllable with reduced vowel: ən ə ðə ə

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• *Utterance*: // . ˌ ˌ ə n / æ s t ə r ɔɪ d / k ɪ d ɔ̃ ə * / d æ m ə s ɔː z //

- (3) stressed syllable: kɪd
- (2) unstressed syllable with normal vowel: rɔɪd sɔːz
- (1) unstressed syllable with reduced vowel: ən ə ɔ̃ ə

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How many 'degrees of stress' are there in English? Two or five?

- *Context:* 'What happened 65 million years ago?'

- *Utterance:* // _{. 1} ^ ən / æst ə rɔɪd / kɪd ðə* / dɑm ə sɔ:z //

- (4) stressed syllable, first stress in utterance: æst
- (3) stressed syllable: kɪd
- (2) unstressed syllable with normal vowel: rɔɪd sɔ:z
- (1) unstressed syllable with reduced vowel: ən ə ðə ə

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Syllables & Rhythm (2):

Outline

The phonological rank scale
for English

Linking

Rhythm

Weak Forms

How many 'degrees of stress' are there in English? Two or five?

- *Context:* 'What happened 65 million years ago?'
- *Utterance:* // . 1. ^ ən / æst ə rɔɪd / kɪd ðə* / dɑm ə sɔ:z //
-
- (5) stressed syllable, melodically prominent: daɪn
- (4) stressed syllable, first stress in utterance: æst
- (3) stressed syllable: kɪd
- (2) unstressed syllable with normal vowel: rɔɪd sɔ:z
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- NERD ALERT!
- cf also John C. Wells on ‘Syllabification and Allophony’:
<https://www.phon.ucl.ac.uk/home/wells/syllabif.htm>

English in the future?

- Standard English = stress-timing; Indian English = syllable-timing

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- Which form of English will be most important by 2122?

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Syllables & Rhythm (2):

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- Which form of English will be most important by 2122?
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- First paragraph of 'A Tale of Two Cities' by Charles Dickens (1859):
It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to Heaven, we were all going direct the other way—in short, the period was so far like the present period, that some of its noisiest authorities insisted on its being received, for good or for evil, in the superlative degree of comparison only.

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- English 1,000 years ago | English today | English in 100 years:
<https://www.audible.com/blog/science-technology/hear-what-scholars-think-english-will-sound-like-in-100-years>