READINGS IN BASIC ENGLISH for Higher Education

Chapter Eight

SPEAKING SKILLS

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8.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter aims at discussing speaking skills as they relate to the English Language. This discussion is necessary because any knowledge of a language that is devoid of the speaking aspect is virtually incomplete. The reason is that although there are basically two language media: spoken and written media, a language is more spoken than written by its users.

It is in recognition of this fact that the oral English component has been incorporated in the "Use of English" curriculum. It is believed that students who learn English as a Second Language should not only know how to write it but also be proficient in speaking it so that they can interact effectively and meaningfully both locally and internationally since English is now a global language. Besides, a good knowledge of the spoken English is a mark of educatedness. It distinguishes an individual and makes him an object of admiration by his listeners.

Therefore, we shall in this chapter discuss the speech sounds in English, the organs of speech, the articulation of vowel and consonant sounds and the segmental features, among other things.

8.2 THE ENGLISH SPEECH SOUNDS

As human beings we produce myriad of sounds. However, not all the sounds are meaningful or form part of the language we speak. Therefore, the speech sounds of a language are the meaningful sounds, which form part of the language produced by the individuals who use the language.

In English, for instance, there are forty-four speech sounds. These sounds are made up of twenty vowels and twenty-four consonants. The main difference between the vowels and the consonants is that in the production of the consonant sounds, the air stream from the lungs is either totally or partially obstructed at one point or the other in the oral cavity, whereas in the production of the vowel sounds, there is no obstruction whatsoever of the air stream.

It should be pointed out here that the forty-four speech sounds are not exactly the same as the twenty-six orthographic letters of the alphabet. To differentiate between the two, the forty-four speech sounds, which are represented in phonetic symbols, are usually enclosed in two slanting strokes, for example, /p/, /tʃ/, /i/, /e/, etc whereas the letters of the alphabet are not.

8.3 THE ORGANS OF SPEECH

The speech sounds are produced through the manipulation of some organs in the human system. These organs are phonetically referred to as the organs of speech. The following diagram shows the various organs

of speech.

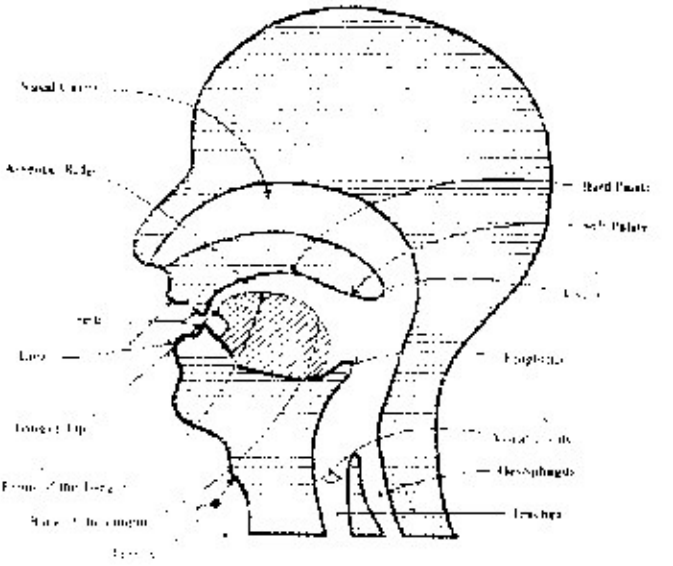

Fig: 1; Diagram of Organs of Speech (culled from Oral English for Schools and Colleges by Sam Onigbo)

8.3.1 Oral cavity and Nasal Cavity:

The oral cavity is the passage to the mouth where as the passage to the nose is called nasal cavity. Any sound which is produced when the airstream passes through the mouth is called oral sound. On the other hand, when the airstream passes through the nose, the sound produced is called nasal sound.

8.3.2 Alveolar Ridge:

This is also called the teeth ridge. It is the roof of the top front teeth and it is felt between the top front teeth and the hard palate. When a part of the tongue is in contact with it, it produces such sounds as /t, d, s, z, l, r, n/. The sounds produced at the alveolar ridge are called alveolar sounds.

8.3.3The Teeth (upper and lower):

They are as shown in the diagram above. Although they are primarily used for eating, they facilitate the production of speech sounds such as /,θ,ð ,f,v/ which are called dental sounds.

8.3.4The Lips (upper and lower):

The two lips as shown in the diagram above are manipulated to facilitate the production of some speech sounds. For instance, /p/ and /b/ are produced when the two lips come in close contact. On the other hand, the sounds /f/ and/v/ are produced when the upper teeth are in close contact with the lower lip. Also some vowels are produced when the lips are either rounded or spread.

8.3.5The Tongue:

The tip, front and back of the tongue, which are involved in speech sound production are as shown in the diagram above. Note that the tongue is described as the most versatile organ of speech. It is so described because it is involved in the production of several speech

sounds.

8.3.6 The Larynx (Voice Box):

The Larynx is as shown in the diagram above. It is ordinarily called the "Adams Apple". This organ houses the vocal cords which modify the airstream that indicates whether a sound is voiced or voiceless.

8.3.7 The Hard Palate:

This is also called the "roof of the mouth". It can be felt by raising one's tongue to touch the roof of the mouth. As the name suggests, it is hard when compared with other parts of the mouth. Speech sounds like /j/, /ʃ/, /ʒ/, /tʃ/, /dʒ/ are produced at that point.

8.3.8 The Soft Palate (Velum):

The soft palate, otherwise known as the velum is after the hard palate and can be felt with the back of the tongue. Usually, it is raised to cover the nasal cavity so that air stream could pass through the oral cavity in order to give rise to oral sounds. It can also be lowered for nasal sounds to be produced. When the back of the tongue comes in contact with the soft palate, sounds like /k/ and /g/ which are called velar consonants are produced.

8.3.9 The Uvula:

The uvula is the end of the soft palate as shown in the diagram above. In some languages such as French, it is used in producing some sounds.

8.3.10 The Epiglottis:

This is as shown in the diagram above. It is a little flap of flesh at the back of the tongue. Its function is to close the trachea or wind pipe to prevent food particles from entering the respiratory channel.

8.3.11 The Vocal Cords:

These, as shown in the diagram, are like two small lips of elastic tissue lying opposite each other and connected with the muscles to the larynx. Their nature made it that they can come together or drawn apart for free passage of the airstream. When the vocal cords come together, they vibrate as the airstream passes through thereby giving rise to voiced sounds. But when they are drawn apart, they do not vibrate as the airstream passes through. When this is the case, the sound produced is voiceless.

8.3.12 The Oesophagus: This is as shown in the diagram. It is the passage through which food travels from the mouth to the stomach.

8.3.13 The Trachea (wind pipe): As the name suggests, the trachea or wind pipe is the channel through which the air we breath and the one that comes from the lungs for speech production pass.

Exercises:

1. Why do you think the Oral English component is

incorporated the "Use of English" curriculum?.

2. Which of the organs of speech is most versatile and why?
3. State one way you can differentiate between the phonetic symbols and the letters of the alphabet.
4. List the various organs of speech and state the functions each of them performs.

8.4. THE ENGLISH VOWELS

As we have stated earlier, the vowel sounds are produced when the airstream passes through the mouth without any form of obstruction. English language has a total of twenty vowels. The vowels are classified as follows:

8.4.1The Pure Vowels: These are vowels that are realized as single sounds. They are also called monothongs. The pure vowels are twelve and they include the following:

1. / i:/ as in seat, sheep, heat, feel
2. /i/ as in sit, ship, hit, fill
3. /e/ as in pet, met, set, felt
4. /æ/ as in man, sat, pat, fat
5. /ɑ: / as in heart, part, park, cart
6. /ɔ/ or /**D**/ as in pot, cot, stock, what
7. /ɔ:/ as in port, short, warn, court
8. /u/as in wood, book, put, full
9. /u:/ as in fool, pool, rule, school
10. /^/ as in come, blood, son, cut.

11. /3:/ as in work, bird, search, girl
12. /ə/ as in above, again, teacher, submit

8.4.2The Diphthongs: These are realized as two vowel sounds in a given position. They are produced when the tongue glides from one vowel position to another. The diphthongs are eight. They are as follows:
13. /ei/ as in day, break, wait, eight
14. /əu/ as in so, go, hope, goat
15. /ai/ as in eye, buy, find, tight
16. /au/ as in how, cow, now, tout
17. /ɔi/ as in boy, noise, voice, joy
18. /iə/ as in hear, fear, beer, ear
19. /eə/ or /ɛə/ as in bear, chair, hair, air
20. /uə/ as in poor, sure, tour, pure

Note that the twenty vowels are identified individually by their numbers .e.g.
vowel No.1 = / i:/ , vowel No. 10 = /ʌ/, vowel No.20 = /uə/

8.4.3The Triphthongs: These are vowels that are produced when the tongue glides from one vowel position to another and then to a third without interruption. It is like producing three vowel sounds in one position. Note that the triphthongs do not increase the number of the existing twenty vowels since they are among the twenty vowels earlier stated. They include the following:
1. /eiə/ as in lawyer, player, sayer
2. /əuə/ as in lower, mower, goer

3. /aiə/ as in liar, fire, chair
4. /auə/ as in power, hour, tower
5. /ɔiə/ as in loyal, royal, foyer

8.4.4Classification and Description of Pure Vowels: It is not possible to describe and classify vowels as it is the case with consonants. The reason is that vowels neither have place of articulation nor manner of articulation. Therefore to describe and classify the pure vowels, four factors are usually considered. They include:

(i) the length of the vowel,
(ii) the part of the tongue that is involved in the production of the vowel,
(iii) the level of jaw opening in the production of the vowel,
(iv) the shape of the lips.

The classification of the pure vowels can further be illustrated with the English Vowel Chart below.

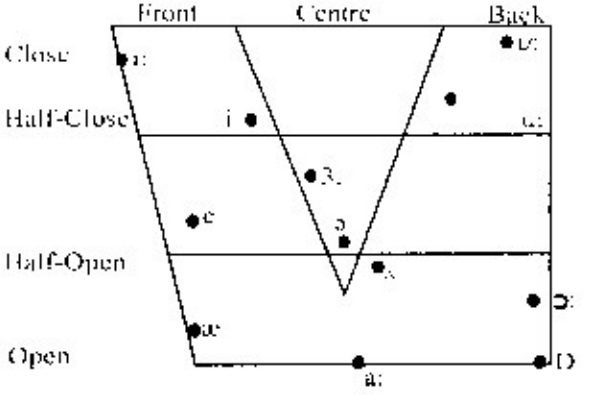

Fig. 2: The English Vowel Chart

8.4.4.1. Front, Back and Central Vowels:

As you can see in the chart above, the pure vowels can be described as front, central or back vowels depending on the part of the tongue that is involved in the production. For instance, if the front part of the tongue is involved in the production, the vowel is described as front vowel, if the central part of the tongue is used, it is referred to as central vowels; whereas it is described as back vowel if the back of the tongue is involved in the production. Note the following:

Front Vowels:

1. /i:/ as in seem, seat, sheep, heat
2. /ɪ/ as in sin, sit, ship, hit
3. /e/ as in bet, set, pet, bed
4. /æ/ as in bat, sat, pat, bd

BACK VOWELS

5. /a:/ as in part, cart, bar, park
6. /D/ as in pot, cot, spot, cod
7. /ɔ:/ as in port, court, sport, cord
8. /u/ as in pull, foot, wood, fuil,
9. /u:/ as in pool, food, wooed, fool
10. /ʌ/ as in up, much, money, come
11. /3:/ as in work, word, first, bird
12. /ə/ as in again, above, lecture, brother

8.4.4.2. Long and Short Vowels: The English vowels can also be classified as long or short vowel. The long

vowels are vowels that have long duration in their production whereas short vowel have short duration. Long vowels are usually accompanied by two dots. Note the following:

Long Vowels

1. /i:/ as in sheep, peace, deep, reach
2. /a:/ as in card, half, pass, bath
3. /ɔ:/ as in board, torn, horse, gaudy
4. /u:/ as in loose, soon, food, fool
5. /3:/ as in fern, purse, bird, firm

Short Vowels

6. /i/ as in ship, dip, rich, piss
7. /e/ as in peck, get, deck, leg
8. /æ/ as in rap, map, fan, bag
9. /D/ as in what, not, shot; spot
10. /u/ as in look, shook, hood, could
11. /ʌ/ as in son, love, bud
12. /ə/ as in police, obtain, doctor, today

8.4.4.3. Close and Open Vowels: Vowels can be classified as close or open depending on the degree of closeness or openness of the mouth in their production. The degree of closeness or openess of the mouth is usually determined by how close or far apart the tongue is from the roof of the mouth or palate. Based on this situation, vowels can be classified as open, half open, half close and close. Note the following:

Open Vowel:

1. /a:/ as in heart, part, cart, palm

Half-Open Vowels

2. /æ/ as in cat, pat, slap, nap
3. /ʌ/ as in cut, hut, hutch, pun
4. /D/ as in hot, cop, lock, stock
5. /ɔ:/ as in ward, born, torn, warm

Half-Close Vowels

6. /i/ as in build, village, pretty, minutes
7. /e/ as in pen, men, fed, bet
8. /u/ as in should, full, soot, shook
9. /3:/ as in third, turn, heard, learn
10. /ə/ as in honour, comfort, donor, measure

Close Vowels

11. /i:/ as in bead, lead, peak, been
12. /u:/ as in rule, rude, move, fruit

8.4.4.4. Rounded and Unrounded vowels

Another factor that is taken into consideration in classifying the vowel is the shape of the lips. The lips take three shapes in the production of the vowel sounds. They are rounded, spread, and neutral. However, for our purpose, the pure vowels would be classified into two, namely, rounded and unrounded. Note the following.

Rounded Vowels

1. /D/ as in sot, mock, mob, rob
2. /ɔ:/ as in sort, walls, port, fort
3. /u/ as in pull, full, would, food
4. /u:/ as in pool, fool, roof, blew

Unrounded Vowels

5. /i:/ as in heels, steal, quay, key
6. /i/ as in bin, pit, split, hit
7. /e/ as in bet, pet, help, set
8. /æ/ as in mat, sat, man, yam
9. /a:/ as in smart, park, mark, barn
10. /ʌ / as in much, up, cut, fun
11. /3:/ as in bird, nurse, birth, serve
12. /ə/ as in accept, oblige, suppose, colour

8.4.4.5 The Diphthongs

The diphthongs can simply be described as the occurrence of two vowel sounds in one position. This is usually the case when the tongue moves or glides from one vowel position to another. The diphthongs are divided into two, namely closing diphthongs and centring diphthongs.

8.4.4.5.1. Closing Diphthongs: These are diphthongs produced when the tongue glides to the close position. They include:

1. /ei/ as in paid, pain, face, eight
2. /əu/ as in load, home, go, so

3. /ai/ as in tide, time, fight, eye
4. /au/ as in loud, how, house, bout
5. /ɔi/ as in void, voice, boy, loin

The closing diphthongs are further illustrated in the following diagram:

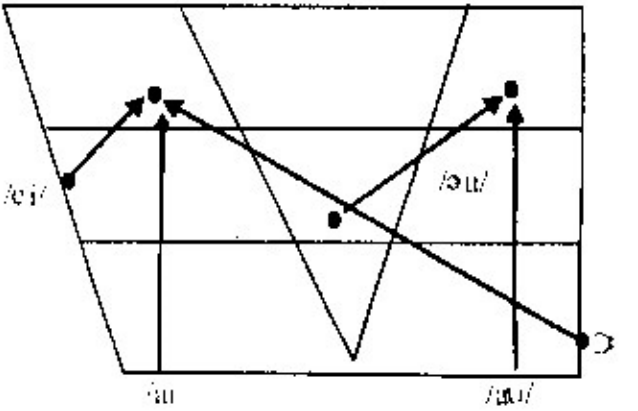

Fig. 3: Closing Diphthongs

8.4.4.5.2. Centring Diphthongs: These are the diphthongs produced when the tongue glides to the central position. They include:

1. /iə/ as in beard, fierce, ear, hear
2. /eə/ as in scarce, bare, bear, fair
3. /uə/ as in poor, tour, sure, pure

The Centring diphthongs are further illustrated in the following diagram:

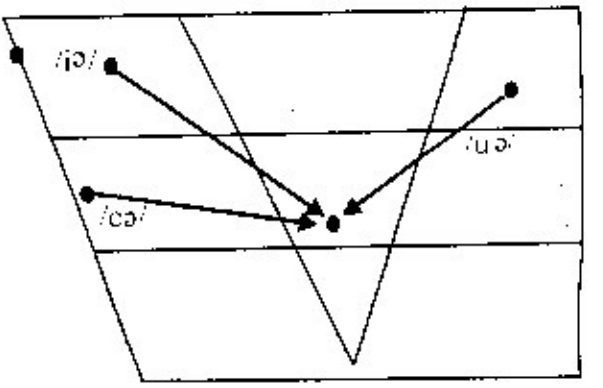

Fig. 4: Centring Diphthongs

So far we have been able to list and classify the twenty English vowels there are. We have also tried to list the words where these vowel sounds could be found. You are expected to familiarize yourself with the articulation of the vowel sounds and take note of the words where they can occur.

8.4.4.6 Vowel Contrast

In this section, you are expected to put into practice what you have learnt so far by contrasting the following vowels in pronunciation.

Oral Drill 1: /i:/, /i/, /e/:

Contrast the three vowel sounds above by pronouncing the following words across:

/i:/	/i/	/e/
seat	sit	set
feel	fill	fell
beat	bit	bet
peak	pick	peck
bead	bid	bed
heal	hill	hell
reach	rich	wretch

Oral Drill 2: /æ/ and /a:/
Contrast the two vowel sounds above by pronouncing the following words across.

/æ/	/a:/
pat	part
ban	barn
pack	park
cat	cart
match	march
hat	heart
fat	fart

Oral Drill 3: /ɔ/ and /ɔ:/: Contrast the two vowel sounds above by pronouncing the following words across.

/ɔ/	/ɔ:/
cod	cord
cot	court
fox	forks
shot	short
not	nought

spot	sport
cock	cork

Oral Drill 4: /u/ and /u:/

Contrast the two vowel sounds above by pronouncing the following words across.

/u/	/u:/
full	fool
pull	pool
wood	woed
could	coed
foot	food
should	shoed
hood	hewed

Oral Drill 5: /ʌ/ and /3:/

Contrast the two vowel sounds above by pronouncing the following words across.

/ʌ/	/3:/
fun	fern
shut	shirt
cub	curb
hub	herb
such	search
bud	bird
but	birth

Oral Drill 6: /ʌ/, /ɔ/ and / æ /

Contrast the three vowel sounds above by pronouncing the following words across.

/ʌ/	/ɔ/	/æ/
suck	sock	sack
nut	hot	hat
cut	cot	cat
cup	cop	cap
lust	lost	last
bug	bog	bag
rung	wrong	wrang

Oral Drill 7: /ei/ and /e/

Contrast the two vowel sounds above by pronouncing the following words across:

/ei/	/e/
late	let
raid	red
weight	wet
mate	met
gate	get
chased	chest
sale	sell

Oral Drill 8; /iə/ and /ɛə/

Contrast the two vowel sounds above by pronouncing the following words across:

/ɪə/	/ɛə/
clear	dare
here	there
fear	fair
cheer	chair
rear	rare
ear	air
steer	stare

Exercises

1. From the words lettered A-D choose the word that has the same vowel as the one represented by the underlined letter(s).

Example: bl<u>oo</u>d

A. food B. brood C. Come D. good

The answer is 'C';. Out of the four words, only "come" contains the same sound as the one underlined in "blood". You can now attempt the following questions:

i. d<u>a</u>re

A. dear B. fair C. rear D. raid

ii. p<u>oo</u>r

A. sure B. pur C. bore D. floor

iii. <u>a</u>gain

A. doctor B. pan C. apple D. gain

iv. beat

A. bet B. bat C. reap D. quay

v. bird

A. barred B. bed C. board D. nurse

vi. port

A. caught B. pot C. put D. cot

vii. great

A. wait B. head C. greet D. goat

viii. man

A. mark B. form C. pack D. palm

ix. slip

A. stake B. film C. sleep D. slide

x. full

A. fool B. pool C. should D. cooed

2. From the words lettered A-D, choose a word that contains the vowel represented by the given phonetic symbol.

Example: /i:/

A. quay B. sin C. firm D. pick

The correct answer is "A" because "quay" contains the vowel sound represented by the given symbol. You can now answer the following questions:

i. /ə/

A. pet B. man C. keep D. lecture

ii. /3:/

A. ship B. word C. film D. pork

iii. /e/

A. seek B. fell C. ream D. meat

iv. /ei/

A. gate B. get C. bread D. ate

v. /ʌ/

A. sun B. pull C. pot D. cat

vi. /u/

A. pool B. cute C. foot D. flood

vii. /ɔ:/

A. cut B. pot C. court D. rod

viii. /ɔi/

A. body B. noise C. naught D. port

ix. /æ/

A. map B. park C. met D. peak

x. /ai/

A. mail B. buy C. nail D. take

3. Indicate the vowel symbol that represents the vowel sound contained in each of the following words.

Example: **much** /ʌ/

i. word _____

ii. what _____

iii. time _____

iv. book _____

v. home _____
vi. build _____
vii. head _____
viii. birth _____
ix. heart _____
x. girl _____

4. Identify the vowels that are contrasted in the following pair of words:

Pair of Words	Vowels Contrasted		
Example: fun – fern	/ʌ/	-	/3:/
i. sale – sell	_____		_____
ii. but – birth	_____		_____
iii. not – nought	_____		_____
iv. foot – food	_____		_____
v. march – match	_____		_____
vi. love – leave	_____		_____
vii. chart – chat	_____		_____
viii. blood – bled	_____		_____
ix. such – search	_____		_____
x. steer – stare	_____		_____

8.5. The English Consonants

As we have stated earlier, twenty-four out of the forty-four English speech sounds are consonants. The main difference between the consonant and the vowels lies in the fact that in the production of the consonants, there is total or partial obstruction of the air from the lungs whereas the air from the lungs flows freely when the

vowels are produced.

8.5.1. Classification of the Consonants

Three factors are usually considered in the description and classification of the consonants.

The factors are:-

(i) **Place of Articulation:** This refers to the point in the mouth where a particular sound is produced. Take for instance, the sounds /p/ and /b/ are produced when the air from the lungs is obstructed by the coming together of the lower and the upper lips, hence they are described as bilabial sounds.

(ii) **Manner of Articulation:** Manner of articulation has to do with the degree of obstruction of the airstream. In some cases, the obstruction of the air is partial while in other cases it is total. For instance, the obstruction of the airstream in the production of plosive, affricate and nasal sounds is total whereas it is partial when fricatives and semi-vowels are produced.

iii. **State of the glottis:** This has to do with the state of the vocal cords during sound production. The larynx houses the vocal cords, which are either open or drawn close during sound production. When they are open, the airstream passes freely and any sound produced at this juncture is described as voiceless sound. But when the vocal cords are drawn close, they vibrate as the airstream passes thereby giving rise to sounds that are

described as voiced sounds.

Given the three factors above, the consonants are classified as stated in the chart below:

Manner of Articulation	State of the Glottis		Place of Articulation
	Voiceless	Voiced	
Stop (Plosive)	p	b	Bilabial
	t	d	Alveolar
	k	g	Velar
Fricative	f	v	Labio-Dental
	θ	ð	Dental
	s	z	Alveolar
	ʃ	ʒ	Palato Alveolar
	h		Glottal
Affricative	tʃ	dʒ	Palato Alveolar
Lateral	-	l	Alveolar
Liquid	-	r	Alveolar
Semivowel	-	w	Bilabial
	-	j	Palatal
Nasal sounds	-	m	Bibial
	-	n	Alveolar
	-	ŋ	Velar

Fig. 5 English Consonant Chart (culled from Oral English for Schools and Colleges by Sam Onigbo)

Based on the consonant chart above, we can go further to discuss the various classes of consonants.

1. Plosives (Stop): The Consonants that are described as plosives are /p, b, t, d, k, g/. They are so called because when they are produced, first there is total obstruction of air; second, the air is released with an explosive noise.

2. Fricatives: The fricative sounds are produced when the air is partially obstructed by the coming together of two articulators and as the air struggles to escape, a frictional noise is produced. The fricative sounds in English are /f, v,θ,ð,s,z,ʃ,ʒ,h/.

3. Affricates: In the production of the affricate sound, there is total obstruction of air as in plosives. But unlike the plosives, the air is released gradually because the organs, which cause the obstruction of the air, are slowly separated. The affricates include /tʃ / and/dʒ/.

4. Lateral: The lateral sound is only one, and that is,/l/. It is produced when the tip of the tongue taps the alveolar ridge and partially blocks the air, which escapes through the sides of the tongue.

5. Liquid: The liquid sound /r/ is produced when the tip of the tongue comes close to the alveolar ridge without creating friction.

6. Semi-vowels (Approximants): The semi-vowels otherwise known as approximants are /w/ and /j/. They are called semi-vowel because there is no identifiable point of contact where they are produced. Instead the two lips are narrowed for /w/ while the tongue and palate are narrowed for /j/.

7. Nasals: The nasal sounds are produced when the soft palate is lowered to close the passage to the mouth and air passes through the nose. The three nasal sounds in English are /m,n,ŋ/

5.2 Identification of the individual consonant sounds. With the information above, we can go further to identify the twenty-four consonants individually and list words where they can occur.

1. /p/= Voiceless bilabial plosive, as in pen, depend, tap
2. /b/= Voiced bilabial plosive, as in ban, shabby, stab
3. /t/= Voiceless alveolar plosive, as in take, total, start.
4. /d/= Voiced alveolar plosive, as dog, lady, feed.
5. /k/= Voiceless velar plosive, as in cap, tackle, peck.
6. /g/= Voiced velar plosive, as in ghost, forgive, flag.
7. /f/= Voiceless labio-dental fricative, as in find, stifles, rough, physics.
8. /v/= Voiced labio-dental fricative as in very, river, weave
9. /θ/=Voiceless dental fricative, as in think, rethink, north, thank.
10. /ð/ =Voiced dental fricative, as in there, mother, bathe

11. /s/=Voiceless alveolar fricative, as in sin, recite, pots, scene.
12. /z/= Voiced alveolar fricative, as in zoo, lose, praise, judges
13. /ʃ/= Voiceless palato-alveolar fricative, as in shy, ashamed, push.
14. /ʒ/ = Voiced palato alveolar fricative, as in genre, measure, garage.
15. /h/= Voiceless glottal fricative, as in hot, inherit, ahead.
16. /tʃ/= Voiceless palato-alveolar affricate, as in church, future, watch.
17. /dʒ/= Voiced palato-alveolar affricate, as in judge, soldier, change
18. /l/ = Voiced alveolar lateral, as in lap, fellow, pull.
19. /r/ = Voiced alveolar liquid, as in ripe, wright, merit.
20. /w/ = Voiced bilabial semi-vowel (approximant), as in win, reward, sweet.
21. /j/ = Voiced palatal semi-vowel (approximant), as in you, student, music.
22. /m/= Voiced bilabial nasal, as in map, remain, tomb.
23. /n/= Voiced alveolar nasal, as in nap, banner, man
24. /ŋ/ = Voiced velar nasal, as in sing, singer, bank.

Consonant Contrast

Having identified the consonants individually and given examples of words where they can occur, we shall in this section go further to contrast some of the consonants.

Oral Drill 1: /f/ and /v/

Contrast the two consonant above by pronouncing the following words across.

/f/	/v/
fan	van
few	view
fast	vast
leaf	leave
strife	strive
safe	save
calt	carve

Oral Drill 2: /θ/ and /ð/

Contrast the two consonant sounds above by pronouncing the following words across.

/θ/	/ð/
thigh	thy
wreath	wreathe
bath	bathe
cloth	clothe
teeth	teathe
sooth	soothe
sheath	sheathe

Oral Drill 3: /s/ and /z/

Contrast the two consonant sounds above by pronouncing the following words across.

/s/	/z/
sip	zip

place	plays
loose	lose
soon	zoon
seal	zeal
hence	hens
vice	vise

Oral Drill 4: /ʃ/ and /ʒ/

Contrast the two consonant sounds above by pronouncing the following words across.

/ʃ/	/ʒ/
machine	measure
marshal	casual
fashion	fusion
mission	vision
digression	diffusion
ensure	leisure
confession	confusion

Oral Drill 5: /tʃ/ and /dʒ/

Contrast the two consonant sounds above by pronouncing the following words across.

/tʃ/	/dʒ/
chin	gin
chest	jest
cheap	jeep
cheer	jeer
watch	dodge
larch	large

rich	ridge

Oral Drill 6: /t/ and /θ/

Contrast the two consonant sounds above by pronouncing the following words across.

/t/	/θ/
tin	thin
tank	thank
taught	thought
pat	path
boat	both
bat	bath
sheet	sheath
team	theme

Oral Drill 7: /d/ and /ð/

Contrast the two consonants above by pronouncing the following words across.

/d/	/ð/
den	then
day	they
dine	thine
murder	mother
bad	bathe
die	thy
dare	there

8.6 PHONEMIC TRANSCRIPTION OF WORDS

Your knowledge of the articulation of the vowel and

pronunciation skill. It is expected that as from now you can identify the phonemes that make up a word, articulate them and pronounce the word accordingly. To further enhance your pronunciation skill, you should attempt to transcribe some words phonemically.

By phonemic transcription we mean a transcription which simply shows only the phonemes contained in a word. It is different from phonetic transcription which is a more detailed transcription. In phonetic transcription, the details of the realization of the phonemes that make up a word are shown.

Examples of phonemic transcription:

i. **come:** Although this word contains four letters of the alphabet orthographically, phonemically, it contains only three phonemes. They are:

a. the voiceless velar plosive - /k/
b. vowel no 10 - /ʌ/
c. Voiced bilabial nasal - /m/

Thus, the word "come" is transcribed as /kʌm/

ii. **Teacher:** This is made up of four phonemes, namely,

a. Voiceless alveolar plosive - /t/
b. Vowel no 1 - /i:/
c. Voiceless palato-alveolar affricate - /tʃ/
d. Vowel no 12 - /ə/

Thus, "teacher " is transcribed as /ti:tʃə/.

Other Examples

go	/gəu/	mother	/mʌðə/

go	/gəu/	mother	/mʌðə/
word	/w3:d/	church	/tʃ3:tʃ/
work	/w3:k/	proud	/praud/
lecture	/lektʃə/	nasty	/næsti/
girl	/g3:l/	love	/lʌv/
boy	/bɔi/	nation	/neiʃn/
people	/pi:pl/	womb	/wu:m/
apple	/æpl/	climb	/klaim/
judge	/d_3ʌd_3/	sleep	/slip/
father	/fa:ðə/	man	/ mæn/

Exercises

1. List and discuss the three factors that are taken into account in describing and classifying the English Consonants
2. Compare and contrast plosive and affricates.
3. Describe the following phonemes

i	/tʃ/	vi	/p/
ii	/j/	vii	/m/
iii	/d_3/	viii	/s/
iv	/θ/	ix	/f/
v	/ð/	x	/k/

4. Attempt a phonemic transcription of the following words:

i school	vi blood
ii book	vii buy
iii culture	vii steal
iv discover	ix education
v so	x luxury

5. Write out the phonetic symbol of the initial sound in each of the following words.

	Word	Phonetic symbol of initial sound
Example:	city	/s/
	psychology	_____
	honest	_____
	european	_____
	gnaw	_____
	philosophy	_____
	character	_____
	sure	_____
	thank	_____
	pneumonia	_____
	calm	_____

6. From the words lettered A to D, choose the word that contains the consonant represented by the given phonetic symbol

Example: /z/

A. books B. lose C. pots D. stops

The correct answer is "B". The sound of the letter 's' in the word "lose" is /z/.

You can now attempt the following questions

i. /k/

A. know B. cat C. knowledge D. chalk.

ii. /ð /

A. done	B. bathe	C. think	D. dash

iii. /tʃ/

A. teach	B. shop	C. machine	D. champagne

iv. /d/

A. plait	B. stopped	C. liked	D. loved

v. /θ/

A. thin	B. tank	C. though	D. part

vi /f/

A. enough	B. whisper	C. palm	D. death

vii. /p/

A. physics	B. psychology	C. pheumonia	D. top,

viii. /ŋ/

A. tongue	B. dental	C. winner	D. kin

ix. /ʒ/

A. judge	B. church	C. measure	D. shop

x./r/

A. doctor	B. whisk	C. write	D. player

8.7. THE SUPRA-SEGMENTAL FEATURES

The supra-segmentals are the features of language which cannot be broken down into discrete segments as

vowels and consonants. The features include stress, intonation and rhythm. According to Onuigbo (1989:85), "they are called the supra-segmental features because they function within larger units like words, phrases, and sentences".

8.7.1 **STRESS:**

Stress is to English what tone is to the Nigerian languages. Thus, whereas English is described as a stress-timed language, Nigerian languages such as Igbo, Yoruba and Hausa are called tonal languages.

Stress simply means placement of prominence on a particular syllable in a given word, that is, pronouncing a particular syllable in a word louder than other syllables in the same word. For instance, the word "education" is made up of four syllables, viz: e – du- CA – tion. In pronunciation, the syllable "CA" is louder than others in the word. Thus, the word "education" is said to be stressed on "CA".

To indicate a stressed syllable in a word, the syllable is either written in capital letter(s) or a short stroke is placed on the syllable. Examples:

edCAtion or edu'cation
draMAtic or dra'matic
STUdent or 'student

8.7.1.1 WORD STRESS

On how to determine the syllable that should carry stress on a word, Onuigbo (1989:86) provides the following guidelines.

i. Monosyllabic (one syllable) words are not ordinarily stressed unless for contrastive or emphatic purposes. Such monosyllabic words include come, go, man, write, etc.

ii. Disyllabic (two syllables) words are stressed on the first syllable but where they begin with prefix, they are stressed on the second syllable. Examples:

Two syllable words without prefix
STUdent
TEAcher
STUpid
COver
STRuggle

Two syllable words with prefix
preTEND
aGAIN
aBOVE
preVIEW
exPORT

iii. Polysyllabic words (words of three or more syllables) are stressed as follows:

(a) For words that end in -ic, -ion, -ial, and -ian, stress the second syllable from the end of the word. Examples:

-ion	-ian
examiNAtion	ciVilian
organiZAtion	poliTIcian
proJECtion	phySIcian
eduCAtion	egaliTArian

-ic	-ial
straTEgic	coLOnial
draMAtic	inDUStrial
meCHAnic	superFIcial
orGAnic	confiDENtial
scienTIfic	poTENtial

(b) for words that end in -ity and –ate, stress the third syllable from the end of the word. Examples.

-ity	-ate
CHArity	cerTIficate
hospiTAlity	coMMunicate
capTIvity	incaPAcitate
uniVERsity	FORtunate

Stress could be shifted from one syllable to another on the same word thereby changing it from one class (part of speech) to another. Examples:

Noun	**Verb**
REfuse	reFUSE
IMport	imPORT

EXport	exPORT
CONvict	conVICT
CONtest	conTEST

8.7.1.2. SENTENCE STRESS

As we already know, a sentence is a combination of related words. Usually, the words that make up sentences do not have equal importance. Hence words are classified into content and grammatical words. The content words are nouns, verbs, adverbs and adjectives. On the other hand, grammatical words include pronouns, conjunctions, prepositions, auxiliary verbs and articles. The content words usually convey meaning in a sentence while grammatical words perform grammatical function.

In terms of sentence stress, it is the content words that are stressed. What this implies is that in a sentence, grammatical words are usually hurried over while emphasis is placed on content words. For instance, in the sentence. "The MAN has BOUGHT a NEW CAR." Only "man", "bought", "new" and "car" are stressed.

Read the following sentences aloud and stress the appropriate words:

i. JOHN has NOT VISITED for TWO YEARS.
ii. The CRIMINAL REFUSED to COOPERATE with the POLICE.
iii. He is PLAYING in the FIELD.
iv. MARY READS in the CLASS ALWAYS
v. The TEACHER is HAPPY with MARY.

8.7.1.3 CONTRASTIVE STRESS

Stress could be used for contrastive or emphatic purposes. Where this is the case, any word, whether content or grammatical could be stressed. When stress is used for contrastive purposes, the word that indicates the contrast is stressed while the stress on the other words is generally reduced. Note the following examples.

i. John STOLE the book (John did not buy the book).
ii. He slept IN the house (he did not sleep outside the house).
iii. I MUST pass this course (Nothing stops me from passing the course).
iv. Ada AND Kate, failed the course (insisting that both failed).
v. I saw JANE at the party. (insisting that it is Jane and nobody else that I saw).

Exercises

1. From the words lettered A-D, choose the one that has the correct stress pattern. Example:
A E-du-ca-tion B e-du-CA-tion C. e-du-ca-Tion. D. eDUcation.

The correct answer is 'B' because the word "education" carries primarily stress on the syllable "CA".

Attempt the following questions
i. A. cer-TI-fi-cate B. cer-ti-FI-cate
C. cer-ti-fi-CATE D. CER-ti-fi-cate
ii. A. CI-vi-lian B. civiLIAN

C. ci-VI-lian D ci-vi-LI-an

iii. A. ma-the-ma-TICS
B. ma-the-MA-tics
C. MA-the-ma-tics
D. ma-THE-ma-tics

iv. A. de-pen-de-BI-li-ty
B. DE-pen-de-bility
C. de-PEN-de-bi-li-ty
D. de-pen-de-bi-LI-ty

v. A. AD-ver-tise-ment
B. ad-ver-TISE-ment
C. ad-VER-tise-ment
D. ad-ver-tise-MENT

vi. A. DRA-ma-tic
B. dra-ma-TIC
C. dra-ma-TI-c
D. dra-MA-tic

vii. A. pho-to-GRA-phic
B. pho-to-gra-PHIC
C. pho-TO-gra-phic
D. PHO-to-gra-phic

viii. A. PRE-tend
B. pre-TEND
C. PR-e-tend
D. pre-TE-ND

ix. A. con-TEM-po-ra-ry
B. con-tem-PO-ra-ry
C. CON-tem-po-ra-ry
D. con-tem-po-RA-ry

x. A. a-ccu-MU-late
B. a-ccu-mu-LATE
C. A-ccu-mu-late
D. a-CCU-mu-late

2. Each of the following words could be used either as a noun or verb depending on the stress pattern. Stress

each of them indicating whether it is a noun or a verb.

	NOUN	VERB
Example: import	IMport	imPORT
Object		
Refuse		
Convict		
Export		
Rebel		
Record		
Transport		
Escort		
Protest		

8.7.2 INTONATION

Intonation is one of the supra-segmental features that add meaning to utterance. When appropriately used, it indicates the speaker's attitude to what he is saying or to his listener. For instance, intonation can indicate doubt, certainty, disbelief, interest or indifference.

Intonation should not be confused with accent. Whereas accent has to do with a peculiar way an individual speaks that indicates his regional background, intonation is the rise and fall of the pitch of the voice. This can be illustrated with the following sentence:

Although he came ↗, he did not do any thing ↘.

The two arrows indicate the intonation suitable for the sentence. You can see that in reading the sentence

aloud, the pitch of the voice rises at "came" while it falls at "thing".

In English there are two basic intonation patterns, namely:

i. Falling Tune (Tune I)

ii. Rising Tune (Tune II)

8.7.2.1. **FALLING TUNE (TUNE I) ↘:** Just as the arrow indicates, the falling tune is the intonation pattern that indicates when the pitch of the voice falls. It is usually used to express such utterances as statement (declarative sentence), command (imperative sentence), exclamation (exclamatory sentence) and wh-questions?.

i. **Statements**

(a) Obi works very hard↘.

(b) He is a very responsible gentleman↘.

(c) The lecturer came late ↘.

ii. **Commands**

(a) Be a good student ↘.

(b) Stop making a noise ↘.

(c) Go away from here ↘.

iii. **Exclamation**

(a) How beautiful you are↘!

(b) What a nice day ↘!

(c) What a pleasant surprise ↘!

iv. **Wh-question**

(a) Where did you go↘?

(b) Why are you here↘?

(c) How old are you↘?

8.7.2.2. **RISING TUNE (TUNE II):**

This is the intonation pattern used to indicate when the pitch of the voice rises. It is suitable for polar question (yes or no question), incomplete statement, listing items and utterances showing indifference.

i. **Polar questions**

(a) Do you want to go ↗?

(b) Have you finished ↗?

ii. **Incomplete statements**

(a) As soon as he came ↗.....

(b) Although he worked hard ↗.....

(c) If I were you ↗.....

iii. Listing items ↗

(a) He has a book ↗, a pen ↗, a pencil ↗and a piece of paper↘.

(b) She instructed her maid to sweep the kitchen; ↗wash plates ↗prepare breakfast ↗and wash the children's dresses↘.

iv. Utterance showing indifference ↗

(a) You can wait ↗.

(b) Do I know ↗.

(c) That's what he said ↗.

8.7.2.3 COMBINATION OF FALLING AND RISING INTONATION PATTERNS

In longer utterances, the intonation patterns are combined as follows:

i. Rise and Fall Pattern is used in the following cases.

(a) When the truth is known ↗, my stand will be vindicated ↘.

(b) As soon as he came ↗, he started teaching ↘.

(c) You didn't come yesterday ↘, did you ↗?

(d) You have finished ↘, haven't you ↗?

ii. Rise-Rise Pattern is used in the following cases.

(a) "Are you leaving us so soon ↗? " he asked anxiously ↗.

(b) "Did you see the criminal ↗?"the police man inquired ↗.

(c) "Will you go to school today ↗?" the man asked his son ↗.

(d) "Have you had your dinner ↗?" the woman asked the children ↗.

EXERCISES

1. Apply the correct intonation pattern on each of the following sentences.

i. The man is very patriotic.
ii. Which of these books is yours?
iii. Did you do very well in the examination?
iv. Come over here and help us.
v. Stop the argument.
vi. When I came, he was sleeping.
vii. "Stop making a noise," he shouted angrily.
viii. You do very well always, don't you?
ix. He has a plot of land, two cars, a factory and a hostel.
x. "Did you see my mother?" the baby asked gently.