

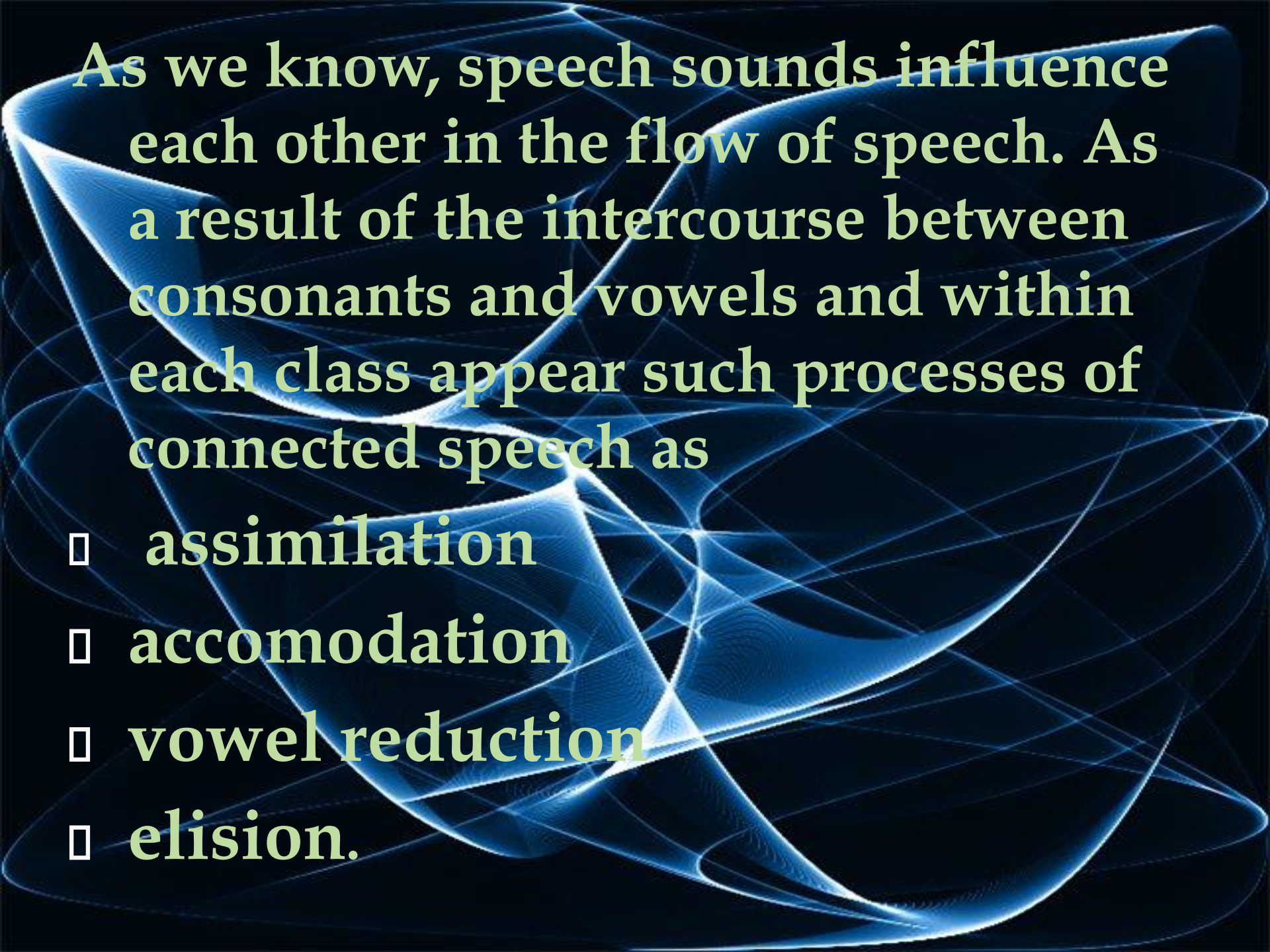
MODIFICATION OF CONSONANTS IN CONNECTED SPEECH

Language in everyday use is not conducted in terms of isolated, separate units; it is performed in connected sequences of larger units, in words, phrases and longer utterances.

And there are actually some remarkable differences between the pronunciation of a word in isolation and of the same word in a block of connected speech.

Though these changes are mostly quite regular and predictable, there is still problem of defining the phonemic status of sounds in connected speech. It happens because of the numerous modifications of sound in speech.

These modifications are observed both within words and at word boundaries.

The background of the slide features a complex, abstract design of glowing blue and white lines that swirl and curve across a black field, creating a sense of motion and depth. The lines vary in thickness and opacity, some appearing as sharp, bright streaks while others are more diffuse and ethereal.

As we know, speech sounds influence each other in the flow of speech. As a result of the intercourse between consonants and vowels and within each class appear such processes of connected speech as

- assimilation
- accomodation
- vowel reduction
- elision.

As it was mentioned above, speech sounds influence each other in speech flow, thus becoming pronounced in a different way. These modifications of speech sounds are observed both within words and at word boundaries. Such intercourse between sounds in connected speech is termed **coarticulation**» (the term was first suggested by a Spanish phonetician **A. de Lacerda**).

Coarticulation results in assimilation, when one of the sounds becomes fully or partially similar to the adjoining sound. The word **«assimilation»** is an example of this phenomenon. This Latin word is composed of the preposition **«ad»** – *to*, and the adjective **«similis»** *alike, similar, ad-similatio – assimilatio: [ds>ss]* ([d] under the influence of the following [s] was changed to [s]).

More terminology...

- ▣ The sound that changes is called the **assimilated sound or the target.**
- ▣ The sound that causes the change is called the **conditioning sound or trigger.**
- ▣ Two sounds that have the same place of articulation are called **homorganic**



direction

degree of completeness

degree of stability

Direction of Assimilation.

The influence of the neighbouring sounds in English can act in a *progressive, regressive or reciprocal (double) direction.*

When some articulatory features of the following sound are changed under the influence of the preceding sound, which remains unchanged, assimilation is called **progressive**.

When the following sound influences the articulation of the preceding one assimilation is called **regressive**.

Reciprocal or double assimilation means complex mutual influence of the adjacent sounds.

Progressive Assimilation

Conditioning Sound



Assimilated Sound

Regressive Assimilation

Assimilated Sound



Conditioning Sound

Degree of Completeness.

According to its degree, assimilation can be **complete** and **incomplete**.

Assimilation is called **complete** in the case the two adjoining sounds become alike or merge into one. It always takes place when the two sounds differ only in one articulatory feature.

Eg. less shy ['les']ai > 'le']ai].

Assimilation is called **incomplete** when the likeness of the adjoining sounds is partial as the assimilated sound retains its major articulatory features.

For example, the sonorants [w, l, r] are partly devoiced when preceded by the voiceless [p, t, k, s, f, ð] within words: *sweet* [swi:t], *place* [pleis], *try* [traɪ].

Degree of stability

Many assimilatory phenomena of older stages in the development of the language have become obligatory in modern English, they may, or may not be reflected in spelling. Such changes which have taken place over a period of time within words are called historical, eg *orchard* (*ort* + *yard*) – [*'o:tjəd* > *'o:tʃəd*].

Besides there are a lot of widely spread but non-obligatory cases of assimilation which can be traced mainly at word boundaries, eg *ten minutes* [*'ten 'minits* > *'tem'minits*]

Place of articulation

t, d > dental before [ð, θ]: *eighth, at the, said that*

t, d > post-alveolar before [r]: *tree, true, dream, the third room*

s, z > post-alveolar before [ʃ]: *this shop, does she*

t, d > affricates before [j]: *graduate, could you*

m > labio-dental before [f]: *symphony*

n > dental before [θ]: *seventh*

n > velar before [k]: *thank*

The manner of articulation is also changed a result of assimilation, which is illustrated by following types:

- **1. LOSS OF PLOSION.** In the sequence of two plosive consonants the former loses its plosion: glad to see you, great trouble, and old clock (occlusive consonants [p],[b],[t],[d],[k],[g] lose the plosion, when they are followed by another occlusives or affricates [tʃ],[dʒ] *example: the dark garden*)
- **2. NASAL PLOSION.** In the sequence of a plosive followed by a nasal sonorant the manner of articulation of the plosive sound and the work of the soft palate are involved, which results in the nasal character of plosion release: “sudden”, “not now”, “at night”, “Let me see”. (alveolar consonants [t]&[d] are followed by nasal consonants [n]&[m]).
- **3. LATERAL PLOSION.** In the sequence of a plosive followed by the lateral sonorant [l] the noise production of the plosive stop is changed into that of the lateral stop: “settle”, “table”, “at last”.

The voicing value of a consonant may also change through assimilation. This type of assimilation affects the work of the vocal cords and the force of articulation.

The vibration of the vocal cords is not something that can be switched on and off very swiftly, as a result groups of consonants tend to be either all voiced or all voiceless.

Consider the different endings of 'dogs' /dɒgz/ and 'cats' /kæts/, of the past forms of the regular verbs such as 'kissed' /kɪst/ and 'sneezed' /sni:zd/. In these cases the fact of the final consonant of a word being voiced or not determines the choice of whether the suffix will be voiced or voiceless. In the case of the suffixes for plural nouns, for the third person singular in the present simple, for regular verbs in the past simple and for the genitive the application of this rule is predictable, with only a few exceptions (e.g. leaf → leaves)

word/combinati on	no assimilation	assimilation	type of change	trigger
(Lancashire) hotpot	[hɒtpɒt]	[hɒppɒt]	alveolar plosive ⇒ bilabial plosive	bilabial plosive
apprenticeship	[əpɹɛntɪsʃɪp]	[əpɹɛntɪʃʃɪp]	alveolar fricative ⇒ palato-alveolar fricative	palato-alveolar fricative
good bye	[gʊdbaɪ]	[gʊbbaɪ]	alveolar plosive ⇒ bilabial plosive	bilabial plosive
good point	[gʊdpɔɪnt]	[gʊbɔɪnt]	alveolar plosive ⇒ bilabial plosive	bilabial plosive
good night	[gʊdnɑɪt]	[gʊnnaɪt]	alveolar plosive ⇒ alveolar nasal	alveolar nasal
ten points	[tɛnpɔɪnts]	[tɛmpɔɪnts]	alveolar nasal ⇒ bilabial nasal	bilabial plosive
thin coat	[θɪnkəʊt]	[θɪŋkəʊt]	alveolar nasal ⇒ velar nasal	velar plosive
give me	[gɪvmi:]	[gɪmmɪ]	labio-dental fricative ⇒ bilabial nasal	bilabial nasal

The term **accomodation** is often used by linguistics to denote the interchanges of 'vowel + consonant type' or 'consonant + vowel type', for instance, some slight degree of nasalization of vowels preceded or followed by nasal sonorants: never - men.

LIP POSITION may be affected by the accommodation, the interchange of consonant+ vowel type. Labialisation of consonants is traced under the influence of the neighbouring back vowels (accommodation), e.g. **pool, moon, rude, soon, who, cool**. It is possible to speak about the spread lip position of consonants followed or preceded by front vowels [i:], [i], e.g. **tea-beat, meat-team; feat-leaf, keep-leak; sit-miss**.

The position of **the soft palate** is also involved in the accommodation. Slight nasalization as the result of prolonged lowering of the soft palate is sometimes traced in vowels under the influence of the neighbouring sonants **[m]** and **[n]**, e. g. **and, morning, men, come in.**

Vowel reduction is a quantitative or qualitative weakening of vowels in unstressed positions:

board - blackboard man - postman

This means they are pronounced less distinctly, often becoming simply a **schwa** ([ə]).

Schwa is the most common reduced vowel in English, and orthographically it may be denoted by any of the vowel letters:

- The *a* in **a**bout.
- The *e* in **e**synthesis.
- The *o* in **o**harmony.
- The *u* in **u**medium.

There are actually three levels of stress in English words:

Primary stress: 'bánał' [beynəl]

Secondary stress: 'banáality' [benæłəri]

No stress: 'banál' [bənál]

The other sounds that can serve as the peak of reduced syllables are the syllabic consonants. The consonants that can be syllabic in English are the nasals /m/, /n/, /ŋ/, and /l/ (actually a dark l). For example:

The *m* in *prism* is sometimes a syllabic /m/.

The *on* in *button* is a syllabic /n/ in dialects that pronounce Intervocalic 't' as a glottal stop.

The word *and* in the phrase *lock and key* in more rapid speech is sometimes pronounced as a syllabic /ŋ/.

The *le* in *cycle* and *bottle* is a syllabic /l/.

Elision is a complete loss of sounds, both vowels and consonants. In informal speech we can lose many sounds. The process cannot be neglected in defining the phonemic status of speech sounds. These phenomena represent the economy of energy from the part of the speaker. Usually the listener doesn't even notice this because these changes don't influence the meaning. The target of listener is usually to understand the meaning but sometimes the meaning can also be influenced, **for example [z]** can represent has, is, does, plural, possessive, third person singular.

1. Loss of /h/ in personal and possessive pronouns he, his, her, him and the forms of the auxiliary verb have, has, had is wide-spread,
e. g. What has he done? /'wat əz i d^n/
2. /l/ tends to be lost when preceded by /ɔ/:
e. g. always, already, all right.
3. Alveolar plosives are often elided in case the cluster is followed by another consonant,
e.g. next day /'neks 'dei/, just one /'dʒ^s 'w^n/
4. Historical elision: write, know, knight.

Выполнила студентка группы

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