

CHAPTER 4

PRONUNCIATION OF SOUNDS IN CONNECTED SPEECH

4.1. CHARACTERISTIC FEATURES OF CONNECTED SPEECH

Sounds are seldom pronounced separately in speech. They are usually pronounced in combinations to form syllables, words and sentences. Sounds undergo some changes in speech under the influence of each other, as well as under the influence of stress, position of sounds in a word, etc.

The articulation of any isolated speech sound consists of three phases – on-glide, stop- or retention-stage and off-glide.

During the first phase of the articulation (on-glide) the organs of speech leave their neutral position and move to the position typical of the given sound.

During the second phase (stop-stage) the organs of speech remain in the position characteristic of the given sound.

During the third phase (off-glide) the organs of speech return to their neutral position.

Thus, for example, in pronouncing the English [t] the tip of the tongue raises to occupy the position characteristic of this sound (on-glide).

Then it is pressed to the alveoli (stop-stage). This position is immediately followed by plosion and the tongue returns to its neutral position (off-glide).

The same phases of articulation plus the vibration of the vocal chords during the stop-stage are observed in making the English [d].

The phases of articulation of an isolated sound are as a rule not equal in time. In pronouncing vowels and most consonants the shortest phase is the on-glide. The off-glide occupies a somewhat longer period of time. The on-glide and the off-glide are much shorter than the stop-stage. In most cases the stop-stage occupies even more time than the on-glide and the off-glide taken together.

In articulating occlusive consonants the stop-stage is very short, the off-glide is somewhat longer than in vowels and all other consonants.

The three phases characteristic of an isolated sound are not usually realized in speech.

The joining of sounds in speaking implies a certain phase of one sound serving as the initial position for the following sound. Thus, the first sound [n] in the English word *intone* [ɪn'tɔ:n] has no final phase (off-glide), the following sound [t] has no initial phase (on-glide), as the stop-stage of the sound [n] provides the position of the speech organs for the English [t]. The position of the soft palate, which is raised for the sound [t], makes the only difference here.

In the Ukrainian word *весна* [BECHÁ] the sound [C] has no off-glide, the sound [H] has no on-glide, as the stop-stage of the first sound [C] provides the position of the speech organs for the following sound [H]. The vocal chords are made to vibrate, the soft palate is lowered.

The phenomenon of “lateral explosion” which occurs in English in the sound combinations [tl], [dl], etc., is explained by the interpenetration of the phases, typical of sounds in speech, namely by the absence of the on-glide of [l] as the stop-stage of the preceding [t] or [d] provides the position of the speech organs for the following [l], e.g.

kettle ['ketl];
needle ['ni:dł].

The same phenomenon is found in the Ukrainian language, e.g.

атлет [АТЛÉТ];
тліти [ТЛÍТИ];
петля [ПЕТЛÁ];
підлога [П'ІДЛÓГА].

The phenomenon of “loss of plosion” is also explained by the interpenetration of the phases, the absence of the off-glide of the preceding sound and of the on-glide of the following sound, e.g.

act [xkt];
pact [pxkt];
begged [begd], etc.

The loss of plosion does not exist in Ukrainian, where there are two subsequent plosions in this case, e.g.

пакт [ПАКТ];
акт [АКТ].

The length of vowels in English depends to some degree on stress and on the position of the vowel in the word.

English vowel phonemes become shorter before voiceless consonants and longer before voiced. They are much longer before sonants and at the very end of the word in an open syllable. For example, in the words *knee* [ni:], *kneel* [ni:l], *need* [ni:d], *neat* [ni:t] the English vowel [i:] is the longest in the word *knee*. It is shorter before the sonant [l] and the voiced consonant [d] in the words *kneel* and *need* and still shorter in the word *neat*.

Such length of vowels is called positional. One should carefully observe the rules of positional length of vowels, as it is very characteristic of English.

In the Ukrainian language long vowel phonemes do not exist. Ukrainian short vowels become somewhat longer when under stress.

Such length of consonants in English also varies but not to the same extent as that of vowels. However, it is important for a learner to remember that final sonants in English are comparatively long. They are especially long when preceded by a short vowel or followed by an unstressed syllable beginning with [j] or [w].

Examples:

seen [si:n] – sin [sIn];
bile [ball] – bill [bll];
therm [T3:m] – thumb [TAm];
billion ['blljqn];
billiards ['blljqdz];
bulwark ['bVlwqk].

In speech sounds form syllables, syllables form words, words form sentences.

The connection of words in a sentence has its peculiarities in every given language.

In the English language there are no pauses between words closely connected by meaning, especially when a word ending in a consonant is followed by one beginning with a vowel.

The syllabic structure of the word is retained here despite the absence of pauses

because of the strong beginning and weak end of the final consonant of the preceding word, e.g.

My name is Klim.
[mal 'nɛlm̩ Iz ↗ klim̩ ||].
The text is short.
[Dq 'tekst̩ Iz ↗ SLt̩ ||].
We are in Odessa.
[wl qr̩ In qVY desq̩ ||].
The car is in the street.
[Dq 'kRr̩ Iz In DqV% stri:t̩ ||].

Interpenetration of the phases, stress, the influence of surrounding sounds and some other factors lead to reduction and assimilation.