

# The Phonetics of English Pronunciation

## Session 08

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# Topics

- *Linking*
- The forgotten German consonant [ʔ]  
(The German desire for “clarity”)
- The “binding” English inheritance from French
- The “joys of variety” (different types of linking)

Read: Section VI.1, pp. 177-187

## Today's topic: *linking*

- One of the most important differences between spoken English and German (together with “weak forms”), is the way in which words are *linked* together in running speech!
- We shall look at the reason *why* German speakers *do not link words in the same way*, and then look at the *different types of linking* in English.

## Reason: The forgotten German consonant [ʔ]

- It is quite possible to argue that  
“No German syllable can begin with a vowel”
- Evidence:
  - ⟨Auge⟩ = [ˈʔaʊ.gə]
  - ⟨Eiche⟩ = [ˈʔaɪ.çə]
  - ⟨Insel⟩ = [ˈʔɪn.zəl]
  - ⟨oben⟩ = [ˈʔoː.b̩]
  - ⟨uneben⟩ = [ˈʔʊn.ʔeː.b̩]
- So [ʔ] can be defined as a consonant phoneme /ʔ/:  
[fɛ̥.ˈraɪz̩] ≠ [fɛ̥.ˈʔaɪz̩]

## Versus the “binding” inheritance from French

- English speakers do not have the German desire to separate one word from another.
- This may be an historical influence from the partially Romance origins of English, but that must remain pure conjecture. . .
- The fact remains that *we only separate words with a glottal stop if they are being emphasized:*

“What an awful idea!”

[wɒt ʔən ʔɔ:fʔ ʔaɪdɪə] vs. [wɒt\_ən\_ɔ:fʔ\_aɪdɪə]

## Different types of linking

- The linking problems stem from the *second* word (the one beginning with a vowel).
- But the *preceding* word can
  - a) end in a **consonant** (*hit, gave, push, etc.*), or
  - b) end in a **vowel** (*so, why, how, etc.*)

and these two conditions lead to two basically *different linking phenomena*, which we can call:

- a) **consonant-to-vowel** linking and
- b) **vowel-to-vowel** linking

## Consonant-to-vowel linking

- This is the easiest type of linking to explain: The final consonant *also* becomes the initial consonant of the next word (the two syllables share the consonant):

“Put it on immediately!” [ˈpʊtɪtənɪˈmiːdɪətli]

[ˈpʊrɪrənɪˈmiːdɪətli]

“Take it off again!” [ˈteɪkɪˈtɒfəɡən]

[ˈteɪkɪˈrɒfəɡən]

“Stick it in a bag!” [ˈstɪkɪtɪnəˈbæɡ]

[ˈstɪkɪrɪnəˈbæɡ]

## Linking [r]

- For American English speakers, this is just normal consonant-to-vowel linking: *far away* [fɑɹə'weɪ]
- For British English speakers it is special, because post-vocalic ⟨r⟩ is not pronounced (in non-rhotic varieties)

But before vowels it becomes *intervocalic*, and therefore has to be pronounced:

“How far can you see?”

[haʊ 'fɑ: kən jə 'si:]

“How far is it?”

[haʊ 'fɑ:ɹɪzɪt]

“Can you spare the time?”

[kən jə 'spɛə ðə 'taɪm]

“Can you spare a moment?”

[kən jə 'spɛəɹə 'məʊmənt]



## A limerick for practice!

*Did you hear of this farmer from Frattonne  
Who would go to church with his hat on?  
“If I wake up,” he said,  
“With my hat on my head,  
I shall know that it has not been sat on.”*

[dɪd jə 'hi:ɪv ðɪs 'fɑ:mə frəm 'frætɒn  
hu wəd 'gəv tə 'tʃɜ:ʃ wɪðɪz 'hætɒn  
ɪfai 'weɪkʌp | hi 'sed  
wɪð maɪ 'hætɒn maɪ 'hed  
aɪ ʃəl 'nəv ðətɪ'tæzŋ bɪn 'sætɒn]

## A limerick (US version)

*Did you hear of this farmer from Frattonne  
Who would go to church with his hat on?  
“If I wake up,” he said,  
“With my hat on my head,  
I shall know that it has not been sat on.”*

[dɪɹ̥ə 'hiəɹ̥əv ðɪs 'fɑɹ̥mər frəm 'frætən  
hu wəd 'gou tə 'tʃəʃ wiðɹ̥ɪz 'hæɹ̥ən  
ɹ̥fɑɹ̥ 'weɪkɹ̥əp | hi 'sed  
wiðɹ̥ məɹ̥ 'hæɹ̥ən məɹ̥ 'hed  
ɑɹ̥ ʃəl̥t̥ 'nou ðəɹ̥ɪt̥ 'hæzn̥ bɪn̥ 'sæɹ̥ən]

## Vowel-to-vowel linking

- If there is no consonant at the end of the word, it cannot be linked, so the end of the vowel is drawn across.
- Words ending with ⟨i⟩ vowels /i: eɪ aɪ ɔɪ/ insert a weak [j]:  
“We [j] always do”, “Free [j] access”, “tea [j] up!”
- Words ending with ⟨u⟩ vowels /u: əʊ (oʊ) aʊ/ insert a sort of [w]:  
“How [w] are you?”, “Throw [w] out”, “go [w] in”

## Intrusive [r] linking

- This is a peculiarity of Southern British English as a *non-rhotic dialect*.  
some /ɑ:/, /ɔ:/ and /ə/ words are written with, some without an ⟨r⟩:  
*ma, ta, fah, Shah, mar, tar, far, car,*  
*saw, flaw, Shaw, vs. soar, floor, shore,*  
*sonata, pizza, etc. barter, bitter, etc.*
- The greater frequency of the ⟨r⟩ spelling has led speakers to extend the linking [r] to the words without ⟨r⟩:  
“Sonata <sup>[ɹ]</sup> in B flat”, “Pizza <sup>[ɹ]</sup> and salad”, etc.

# Homework

Read Section VI.1, pp. 177-187  
and  
hand in the exercise sheet by Thursday.