Consonants: Ways of Describing their Formation

I. Place of articulation: where in the mouth airstream is obstructed, tongue is placed
   a. lips, bilabial
   b. lower lip, upper teeth: labiodental
   c. tip of tongue and teeth: interdental
   d. tip of tongue and tooth ridge: alveolar
   e. blade of tongue and hard palate: alveo-palatal
   f. back of mouth: velum

II. Manner of articulation: the way the airstream is obstructed
   a. complete obstruction of airstream—stops
   b. partial obstruction of airstream—fricatives (disturbance in airstream)
   c. complex (affricative)—stop, followed by a fricative
   d. air escaping through nose—nasal
   e. liquids—air passing through in a fluid manner
   f. semi-vowels—little turbulence but made with wide opening of mouth

III. Voicing: whether or not vocal chords vibrate
Vowels: Ways of Describing their Formation

I.  Tongue height—high or low in mouth

II.  Frontness/backness of tongue

III.  Tenseness/laxness of muscles
      A. Facial muscles more involved in tense sound of each pair
      B. Tongue will be slighter higher with tense vowels

IV.  Lip rounding
      Rounded vowels all in back
Vowels: Ways of Describing their Formation
(continued)

V. Off-glides
Tense vowels of English: /iy/ uw/ there is movement of
tongue in their pronunciation. Are tense vowels+semi
vowels w or y. (Some phonologists include /ow/ /ey/)

VI. Diphthongs (complex vowels):
Involve more tongue and facial muscle/lip movement
then off-glides, contrasting with monothongs that
involve assuming and holding the lip and tongue shape.
/aw/ /ay/ /oy/ ow/ /ey/
IPA: /au/ /ai/ /ɔi/ /ou/ /ei/
Now, buy, boy, no, may
(Many phonologists do not include /ow/ /ey/.)
(There is no change in monothongs: /I/ /a/ /ɛ/ /ɔ/ /u/ /ʊ/ /ʌ/)

VII. /h/ The misfit
Technically a consonant, but since it assumes the
sound of whatever vowel follows it, is basically a
voiceless vowel. Try: heat, hat, hoot, hot
Syllables

I. Types
   a. CV       see /siy/
   b. CVC      sit /sIt/
   c. CCVC     spit /spIt/
   d. CCVCC    spits /spIts/
   e. CCCVCC   sprint /sprInt/

II. Three (pronounced) consonant maximum in English

III. Open syllables end with vowels; closed with cons.
   A. Japanese has all open syllables: CV-CV-CV
      Will add vowels for closed syllables, e.g.,
      “sit” becomes “sito”
   B. Italian doesn’t end word with closed syllable.
      So “big” becomes “biga”

IV. Two ESL difficulties with consonant clusters
   A. Learners insert vowels between them
   B. Learners delete one of the consonants.
   C. No consonant clusters in Japanese,
      Arabic speakers don’t use three consonants,
      both add vowels.
   D. Cantonese and Vietnamese have no
      consonant clusters, but they delete sound,
      rather than add (green=geen).
   E. No initial cc’s in Spanish. Will add
      shwa, so street becomes /strιyt/
**Non-contrastive Sounds of English**

**Positional Variations**

1. **Aspiration**, positional variation. Initial p, t, k vs. use in consonant clusters.
   
   Pie spy tie sty key ski
   Pool spool tool stool cool school
   Pear spear tore store core score

2. **Flapping**—a positional variation of /t/ that changes to a shortened version of /d/.
   Flapping of final t followed by a vowel:
   Got a goda
   Light at laydət
   A flapped /t/ can create a homophone with a flapped /d/
   Putting pudding pʊdən
   Latter ladder lǽdər
   Bitter bidder b Idər

3. **Glottalization**—air moving out of lungs momentarily blocked at the glottis. /t/ gets pronounced at toothridge and glottis simultaneously
   Button mutton mountain fountain
   Certain curtain

4. **Glottal Stop**—blockage of air at glottis, but tongue does not also touch the tooth ridge.
   British: “bo_le” “glo_al” “spi_le”
   North American English: “uh oh”
Non-contrastive Sounds of English
Positional Variations--continued

5. **Vowel lengthening**—another positional variation; a vowel is longer before a voiced consonant than it is before a voiceless one:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Voiceless</th>
<th>Voiced</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beat</td>
<td>b e a d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Back</td>
<td>b a g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bat</td>
<td>b a d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td>r a i s e</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. **r-coloring**—tense/lax vowel distinction is lost when vowels precede /r/. True for tense/lax contrasts:

| /I/ | beer | /iy/ |
| /ɔ/ | bore | /ow/ |
| /ɛ/ | bear | /ey/ |

Worried your ESL students struggle in producing the colored /r/? No need to—the Brits and Aussie’s can’t either!