Overview of the Teaching of Pronunciation in ESL
Aspects of Oral Intelligibility
Aspects of Oral Intelligibility

• Phoneme production (40-58), at syllable level
• Lowest denominator of sound impacting meaning, as in /bİt/ vs. /pİt/
• For example: /s/ /ɛ/ /ʃ/
## Allophones of /t/

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Artic. Descrip.</th>
<th>Sound Environ.</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Released, aspirated</td>
<td>Syllable initial</td>
<td>Top</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unreleased, preglott.</td>
<td>Ends word, after v.</td>
<td>Pot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glottal stop</td>
<td>Before syllabic /n/</td>
<td>Kitten</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flap</td>
<td>VOWEL/t/ vowel</td>
<td>Letter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alveopalatal stop</td>
<td>Syllable initial</td>
<td>Train</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>before /r/</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Released, unaspir.</td>
<td>None of above</td>
<td>Stop</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Aspects of Oral Intelligibility

• Stress
Aspects of Oral Intelligibility

- Stress
  1. vowel in syllable lengthened
  2. vowel is said louder
  3. Intonation rises
  4. Unstressed syllable becomes schwa

  ex.: GOTHic /Gaθ ək/
Aspects of Stress

1. stress changes vowel qualities:
   \[dʒiy \underline{a} \text{ grə fiy} \text{ vs. } dʒiy \underline{ə} \text{ gréf} \underline{ə}K\]

2. Within a Word (/KəT ədʒ / = COTT age)

3. Focus word with a Sentence: “It’s the proof not the solution that’s important.”

4. Focus sentence within a series: “You can come late for class; you can turn your papers in late; you can come late for lab; but don’t even think about coming late for the exam.”
Elements of O.I.

• Intonation
Elements of O.I.: Intonation

• Intonation is the music, the pitch/melody of language

  1. In English, intonation changes meaning change at the sentence level.

Ex.: He wants you to speak now.
Elements of O.I.: Intonation

2. Intonation lends interest/variety to speech
Elements of O.I.

- Rhythm
Elements of O.I.: Rhythm

• English is stress-timed, not (like most languages), syllable timed.

  DOG BITES MAN

• Beats per sentence based on number of primary stresses.
The dog will bite the man.
The dog will have bitten the man.
The DOG will have BITten the MAN.
Aspects of Rhythm

- Schwa is critical to comprehension, helping listener tune out function elements to tune in important content.
- Oral “punctuation” in rhythm.
- Segmentation provides meaning clues

John said Susan is a jerk.

“John,” said Susan, “is a jerk.”

(5+3) * 2 = ___  
5+ (3*2) = ___
Elements of O.I.

• PROJECTION
Elements of O.I.: Projection

- Speech cannot be comprehensible if it isn’t audible.
- Projection is linked to communicative confidence.
- Confidence linked to lowered affective stress necessary for clear articulation.
Elements of O.I.

- LINKING
- e.g., It’s a big surprise.
  It’s a big surprise.
Elements of O.I.: Linking

a. **consonant** to vowel: stopit, cashout, He’sa, laughabout

- b. **clusters** followed by vowel: handout, lastoffer, nextup

- c. **cons. to cons.**—stop ending at word not released: stoptrying, fatchance, keepspeaking, lapdog, bigzoo

- d. **identical cons.**: ripeplum, hurtTom, grabBill, ifFred
More on Linking

- **Assimilation**: linking cons. to cons can change articulation of first cons: n, m, ng
  i. I can believe it [ay kæm be liyv ət]
     /n/ to changed to /m/
  ii. I saw him in Korea [ay sa əm Ing Kər iy ə]
     /n/ to /ng/
  iii. I don’t believe it [ay domp be liyv ət]
     /nt/ to /mp/
More on Linking

• Phonotactics
  Why tongues twist:
  Peggy Babcott
  Irish wristwatch
Elements of O.I.

1. REDUCTIONS
   e.g., Waddy’ wann’ do t’mor’?
Elements of O.I.: Reductions

- Why native speakers reduce (eliminate) sounds in speech:
  1. To avoid tripping over difficult sound combinations.
  2. To maintain stress-timed rhythm that’s critical for comprehensibility.
What’s reduced?

1. Function words in context
   *vowel is reduced to a schwa
   *initial and final consonants usually lost or clipped:
   can (kən), will (əl), have (əv), to (tə), he (iy), them (əm) and (n), of (v), if (əf)
   did he=/dɪdiə/, cup of coffee = /kəpəkəfiə/
More on Reduction

• Word ending in consonant cluster followed by word beginning with cons. will delete last cons. in 1st word.

Examples: band shell to banshell

left field to leffield
Type of Reduction: palatalization

• Final /d/ + initial /y/ becomes /dʒә/
  Example: Diʢә you /dɹdʒә/
  /t/ + /y/ to /tʃә/ (wanʢә you= wantʃә)
  /s/ + /y/ to /ʃә/ (tossʢә you= taʃә)
  /z/ + /y/ to /ʒә/ (wasʢә you= waʒә)
Palatalization

• Not yet: /natʃɛt/
• Where did you go: /werdɪdʒuwɡow/
• This year: /ðɪʃiɹ/
• Where’s Union Station?:
  wer3yuwnynən steyʃən?
More on Reductions (palatalization)

- Teach most common reduced forms—so students can create stress-timed speech:
  - Would you: /wʊdʒə/
  - Could you: /kʊdʒə/
  - Want to: /wanə/
  - Going to: /gənə/
  - Don’t know /dənə/
Elements of O.I

• NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION
Elements of O.I.: Nonverbal

- Nonverbal communication includes:
  1. Gestures
  2. Eye contact
  3. Proxemics
  4. Posture
  5. Facial expressions
  6. Conformity (or not) to culture code

*Discrepancy Arousal Theory*
Elements of Oral Intelligibility

- Phonemes
- Stress
- Intonation
- Rhythm
- Projection
- Linking
- Reductions
- Nonverbal Communication