

Unit 3: Aspects of Connected Speech

Lesson 2: Assimilation

Phonetics - Term 4

Department of English

What is Assimilation?

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- Assimilation is the influence of a sound on a neighboring sound so that the two become similar.

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- Assimilation is the influence of a sound on a neighboring sound so that the two become similar.
- “More likely in rapid, casual speech and less likely in slow, careful speech” (Roach, 2009).

Directions of Assimilation

1. Progressive assimilation:

Sound is influenced by the one before it.

Examples:

- Washed /wɒʃt/
- Loved /lʌvd/

Directions of Assimilation

2. Regressive assimilation:

Sound is influenced by the one after it.

Examples:

- Light blue → /laɪp blu:/
- Bright colour → /braɪk 'kʌlə/

Types of assimilation

1. Assimilation of place
2. Assimilation of manner
3. Assimilation of voice

1. Assimilation of Place

Assimilation of place is when a sound changes its place of articulation to another place.

This change of place depends on the place of articulation of the neighboring sounds.

1. Assimilation of Place

Examples

1. Assimilation of Place

Examples

Regressive: /**t**/ changes to /**p**/ before the bilabial /p, b, m/.




- Secret police → /'si:kri:t pə'li:s/
- Put back → /pʊt bæk/
- Foot brake → /fʊt breɪk/

1. Assimilation of Place

Examples

Regressive: /t/ changes to /p/ before the bilabial /p, b, m/.

- Secret police → /'si:kri



 pə'li:s/
- Put back → /pʊ

p bæk/
- Foot brake → /fʊ

p breɪk/

1. Assimilation of Place

Examples

/d/ changes to /b/ before the bilabial /p, b, m/



Bad pain → /bæd peɪn/

Blood pressure → /blʌd 'preʃə/

Hold back → /həʊld bæk/

1. Assimilation of Place

Examples

/d/ changes to /b/ before the bilabial /p, b, m/

Bad pain → /bæ**b** peɪn/

Blood pressure → /blʌ**b** 'prɛʃə/

Hold back → /həʊl**b** bæk/

1. Assimilation of Place

Examples

/n/ changes to /ŋ/ before the velar /k/ or /g/.



Golden gate → /'gəʊldən geɪt/

Iron curtain → /'aɪən 'kɜ:tɪn/

1. Assimilation of Place

Examples

/n/ changes to /ŋ/ before the velar /k/ or /g/.

Golden gate → /'gəʊldə[↗]ŋgeɪt/

Iron curtain → /'aɪənŋ'kɜ:tɪn/

2. Assimilation of Manner

Assimilation of manner refers to two neighboring sounds becoming similar in their manner of articulation.

2. Assimilation of Manner

Examples

2. Assimilation of Manner

Examples

Progressive: /ð/ follows the preceding plosive or a nasal sound



Get them → /get ðəm/

Read them → /ri:d ðəm/

2. Assimilation of Manner

Examples

Progressive: /ð/ follows the preceding plosive or a nasal sound



Get them → /get^tə^ðm/

Read them → /ri:^də^ðm/

2. Assimilation of Manner

Examples

Regressive: /θ/ changes to /s/ before /s/



Both sides /bəʊθ saɪdz/

Earth science /ɜːθ 'saɪəns/

2. Assimilation of Manner

Examples

Regressive: /θ/ changes to /s/ before /s/



Both sides /bæʊ**s** saɪdz/

Earth science /ɜː**s** 'saɪəns/

3. Assimilation of Voice

Assimilation of voice refers to the influence of voicing quality in neighboring sounds.

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.

3. Assimilation of Voice

Progressive:



- Dogs and cats → /dɒg^z ænd kæt^s/
- Happened → /'hæpənd/

Regressive:



- Has to → /hæ^s tu:/ {due to the voiceless /t/}
- Have to → /hæ^s tu:/ {due to the voiceless /t/}

Practice Time