

Lecture 9 Weak forms

I. Weak Forms

Many words have two pronunciations called ‘strong’ and weak forms. The weak forms show reduction or obscuration of vowels towards /ɪ/, /ʊ/ and in most cases /ə/. Most of the words having weak forms belong to the grammatical category, called function words such as auxiliary verbs, prepositions, conjunctions, pronouns, possessive adjectives and articles.

Vowel changes

| Strong Vowel | Weak Vowel | Examples |
|--------------|------------|----------|
| i: | ɪ | be |
| u: | ʊ/ə | do |
| ʊ | ə | could |
| e | ə | them |
| æ | ə | and |
| ʌ | ə | but |
| ɑ: | ə | are |
| ɒ | ə | of |
| ɔ: | ə | for |
| ɜ: | ə | her |

Activity : Transcribe the following sentences using the weak forms when necessary.

1. I went to the hotel and booked a room for two nights for my father and his best friend

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2. Give it to me!

3. It takes three hours to get from here to London

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4. Could you give me the salt, please?.....

5. What’s that knife for?.....

6. The book that she bought was more expensive than mine.

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7. They can walk to school tomorrow; they’re old enough.

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8. He’s as good as his brother at playing cards; you should watch him some day.

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9. These carrots are from Granny. She’s fond of vegetables.

.....

10. That boy over there is very clever.....

11. There’s enough water in the glass.....

12. How are you?.....

13. She has gone very early.....

14. They have three houses.....

