

Phonetics
Lecture 5

Aspects of connected speech
Weak forms

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Objectives: Introducing function words and the weak forms

Transcription practice

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Types of words

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graph TD; A[Types of words] --> B[content words]; A --> C[Function words]; B --> D["verbs, nouns, adjectives, adverbs"]; C --> E["auxiliaries, pronouns, conjunctions, prepositions, articles"];
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content words

verbs, nouns,
adjectives
adverbs

Function words

auxiliaries, pronouns,
conjunctions,
prepositions, articles



Follow up

- * Content words are also called lexical words
- * Function words are also called grammatical words or structural words.

What is the difference between them?

What about their pronunciation when they are alone?


What about their pronunciation when they are in connected speech?



Weak forms

Content words have one pronunciation form called **the strong form**.

Function words can have **two or more pronunciations** called the **weak forms**.



**The weak form shows reduction of the
vowels towards / ɪ/ , / ʊ/ and most of the
time towards / ə/**

Strong vowel	Weak vowel e	examples
/i:/	/ɪ/	be
/u:/	/ʊ/ or /ə/	do (aux)
/ɑ:/	/ə/	Are
/ɔ:/	/ə/	for
ɜ:/	/ə/	her
/æ/	/ə/	and
/ɒ/	/ə/	of
/ʌ/	/ə/	but
/e/	/ə/	them
/ʊ/	/ə/	could

Example

ENGLISH PHONETICS

Strong vs Weak forms

/hɪm/

/fɔː/

/tuː/

/miː/

Tell him to come for me.

/tel əm tə kʌm fə mi/





Look at these examples. What do you notice?

/ 'ti: fə 'tu: /

' ti: f ə: ' tu /

/ wɒt ə jʊ 'lʊkɪŋ f ə: /


Follow up

When function words are alone, at the end of the sentence or when the speaker wants to put emphasis on them, they are used in the strong form.

Refer to Peter Roach 4th edition for extra information

examples

PREPOSITIONS	WEAK FORM	STRONG FORM
from	/frəm/ OR /frm/	/frɒm/
to	/tə/ OR /tu/	/tu: /
at	/ət/	/æt/
in	/ɪn/	/ɪn/
on	/ɒn/	/ɒn/
of	/əv/ OR /əf/	/ɒv/ OR /ɒf/




Can you underline the function words in these sentences? Then transcribe them using the weak forms

I gave her a box of chocolate for her birthday.

Are you coming to the theatre with us tomorrow?

What does he do at the weekends?



Refer to the List of common function words that have weak forms you have been provided with.

Can you identify the words in weak forms?

/edʒʊ'keɪʃn ɪz ðə məʊst ɪm'pɔ:tnt 'fæktə fə
'hju:mən ,sɪvɪlaɪ'zeɪʃn | ɪt prə'vaɪdz ðə 'neɪʃn
wɪð mæn 'paʊəz | prə'məʊts 'næʃnəl 'ju:nɪti
ənd ,ʌp'lifts 'pʌblɪk ə'weənəs | ɪf 'pi:pəl ə
'edʒʊkeɪtɪd | 'ðeɪ kən ,ʌndə'stænd ðeə 'dju:tɪz
ənd raɪts | ɪn 'ɔ:də tu ,ʌp'lift 'hju:mən sə'saɪəti
| i:tʃʃəd bi 'keɪpəbəl tu ,ʌndə'stænd 'ʌðəz |