

THE PRONUNCIATION OF THE "ED" MORPHEME OF THE REGULAR PAST VERBS
IN THE ENGLISH SPANISH PROGRAM AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NARIÑO

By

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ABSTRACT

Learning a language implies learning its functional, grammatical and linguistic systems in all the skills, which are reading, writing, listening and speaking. In the latter, the pronunciation plays an important role in order not to lead a learner's communicative competence to misunderstanding when speaking. The principal purpose of this research is to set out some factors that influence in the students' pronunciation of the morpheme 'ed' in the English and Spanish program in the University of Nariño. Taking into account this, it was necessary to do a bibliographic research about phonetic and phonological contents in a comparative study. After this, some conclusions were arisen about the factors that could affect positively or negatively the students learning process.

However, there have been implemented new strategies which are helping teachers as well as students to overcome the problems. Some of the new strategies are the application of the Communicative Approach, the participation in seminars, and the students' opportunity to interact with native speakers.

RESUMEN

El propósito de este proyecto es plantear los factores que influyen en la pronunciación del morfema *ed* por parte de los estudiantes de la Universidad de Nariño pertenecientes a semestres intermedios y avanzados del programa de Lengua Castellana e Inglés. Para ello, fue necesario hacer una revisión bibliográfica de contenidos fonéticos y fonológicos en un estudio comparativo que permitiera sacar conclusiones e identificar cuáles son los factores que pueden afectar positiva o negativamente el proceso de aprendizaje del estudiante.

Sin embargo, se ha llevado a cabo nuevas estrategias las cuales están ayudando a maestros y como los estudiantes superar los problemas. Algunas de las nuevas estrategias como la aplicación del Acercamiento Comunicativo, la participación en seminarios, y la oportunidad de los estudiantes de interactuar con hablantes nativos.

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Introduction

In a foreign language-learning environment, students have to focus their attention to improve their communication in a different way than people who are learning it in a second language setting. Some of the problems with learning a language as a foreign one have to deal with pronunciation. When learning a language, in this case English, it does not matter what the age, culture or level of the language learner is because English pronunciation can be difficult since it is not a phonetic language, that is to say that it is not pronounced the way it is written.

Bearing in mind this, this study intended to deal with one of the most common problems learners' of the fifth and seventh semesters have in the English-Spanish program in the University of Nariño in relation to the pronunciation of the 'ed' morpheme. Learners do not have this morpheme in their mother tongue, so they have to learn to form these new sounds correctly. Besides, studies show that it can be hard enough to learn something and even harder to correct incorrect learning, so when students face the problem of incorrect pronunciation they can suffer from embarrassment that leads to make mistakes without paying attention to the

correction and in some cases to fossilization.

On the other hand, this research took into account diverse factors that influence the foreign language learning and teaching process. Concerning this, this study also analyzed phonetic and phonological concepts for a deep comprehension regarding pronunciation.

It was hoped that this overview would increase the interest in language learners and teachers to be more interested in learning and teaching pronunciation in a deeper way.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Subject

Pronunciation of the 'ed' morpheme of the regular past verbs

Title

The pronunciation of the "ed" morpheme of the regular past verbs in the English Spanish Program at the University of Nariño

Description of the problem

Nowadays it is important not only to know another language but also to communicate through it. When people are learning a new language, it is necessary to take into consideration all four skills of a language: reading, writing, listening and speaking. In the part of speaking, it is essential to know how to pronounce the words so the process of communication can be successful. The creation of new linguistic systems, the learning of discourse and communicative functions in a new language are very important facts to be proficient and accurate when students are in an EFL (English as a Foreign Language) setting. In the universities of Colombia and in the University of Nariño there is a problem in some intermediate semesters regarding pronunciation because in general, the students seem to pronounce it as if the morpheme belonged to the Spanish language.

Taking into consideration this fact, the present study intended to identify some problems when pronouncing the morpheme 'ed' inside and outside the classrooms with students from the fifth and seventh semesters in the English-Spanish program in the University of Nariño.

Problem Statement

How well do the students of the fifth and seventh semesters of the English-Spanish program at the University of Nariño produce the morpheme 'ed' of the regular verbs in the English language in real conversational contexts?

Justification

English is currently considered a compulsory subject not only in schools and high schools, but also in universities all over the world. Due to this fact, it is necessary to master its grammatical rules and to know how to communicate in a less artificial way even in EFL settings because it can inhibit successful communication. To reach this purpose, it is necessary to pronounce words in a proper way so people communicate their thoughts.

This research provides a theoretical research on phonetic and phonological aspects learners and teacher have to take into account when pronouncing English since it is not a phonetic language, so it is not pronounced the way it is written. Besides,

some surveys were carried out to obtain information about the students' pronunciation of the morpheme 'ed' that at the same time can be used as teaching material in this subject.

On the other hand, it can encourage teachers and students to focus more on pronunciation considering the real uses of it in different conversational contexts than simply mastering grammatical structures and forms.

Objectives

General Objective

To determine if the students of the fifth and seventh semester of the English Spanish program at the University of Nariño recognize the 'ed' morpheme of the regular past verbs and how it is pronounced.

Specific Objective

To know if the students of the English-Spanish program recognize theoretically the production of the regular verbs in the English language

To identify how well they produce the 'ed' morpheme in conversational contexts.

To establish some factors that influence students' pronunciation of the 'ed' morpheme.

To analyze the results obtained

Geographical Delimitations

The present research took place at the University of Nariño in Pasto located in the Panamericana Avenue.

Limitations

The results of this investigation and the conclusions cannot be generalized to the entire English and Spanish program because it was taken a sample from some semesters in the former career.

One of the limitations was the different academic activities held in the institution, which sometimes impeded the development of this process in the survey and the reading a text using verbs regular verbs in past.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Reference Framework

Antecedents

Nativist theories of Chomsky and Eric Ingeberg say that children are born with an innate ability for language acquisition, and that this ability makes the duty of learning a first language easier. Said that is a natural part of the human stage compared as the faculty in the animals to fly, in the birds, or to swim in the fish.

Chomsky (1965) originally theorized that children were born with a hard-wired language acquisition device in their brains, which means that this is genetically, people born with a language acquisition device in the brain; this process goes with at the same time as people grow.

Other hypothesis explains that the language learning is a result from general cognitive abilities and the interaction between learners and their community.

Nativist theories hold that children are born with an innate propensity for language acquisition, and that this ability makes the task of learning a first language easier than it would otherwise be.

On the other hand, second language acquisition is the process by which people learn a second language in addition to their native language. This process is called Second Language because a person acquires other language after the acquisition of the mother tongue.

In this process, there are very important findings to be taken into account; one of them corresponds to errors. It is an approach influenced by behaviorism through which applied linguists sought to use the formal distinctions between the learners' first and second languages to predict errors. One of these errors is when the learner makes inferences about the rules of the new language.

These errors could be catalogued according to the type in ommisive, additive, substitutive. To summarize, teaching pronunciation is of paramount importance in foreign language learning.

Furthermore, to ensure effective pronunciation teaching, there are certain factors that should be considered such as biological, personal, sociocultural, pedagogical, mother tongue influence, and setting realistic goals. Nevertheless, teaching pronunciation should not only focus on segmental features, i.e., teaching specific sounds or nuances of sounds, but also on suprasegmental or prosodic features, i.e., stress, rhythm, pitch,

and intonation, which greatly contribute to communication. Naturally, all this cannot be achieved unless teachers follow certain principles of effective pronunciation teaching: learning to describe pronunciation, creating a non-threatening atmosphere, and teaching pronunciation systematically. As it can be seen there is a need to develop more research on the field of pronunciation.

Review of literature

Preliminary Considerations in the Teaching of Pronunciation

According to several authors in the effective teaching of pronunciation, it is necessary to make some considerations.

In order to make pronunciation teaching (PT) effective, the following factors have to be considered:

Biological Factors

According to some authors, it is futile to teach pronunciation after a certain age (after about 14 years of age), because of learners' decreasing ability to develop native-like pronunciation in a second or foreign language (Lenneberg, 1967; Krashen, 1973). However, Flege (1981) claims: 'neither physiological maturation nor neurological reorganization renders an adult incapable of speaking a foreign language without an accent'

Brown (1994) argues that there are also some psychomotor factors at work that should be given some consideration. Command of foreign language phonology also taps into the neuromuscular domain, which may play a crucial role.

Personality Factors

Linguistic expectations of interlocutors, ego permeability, attitude toward the foreign language, and type of motivation (Celce, Brinton & Goodwin, 1996), all have their share in the development of pronunciation skills. Outgoing, confident learners, for example, might have more opportunities to practice their foreign language pronunciation simply because they are more often involved in interactions with native speakers (Avery & Ehrlich, 1992). In addition, some learners feel bizarre pronouncing 'weird' sounds and, with time, they decide that English pronunciation is next to impossible to attain (Laroy, 1995).

Sociocultural Factors

People from some cultural backgrounds often think that it is impossible for them to pronounce English well. In some cases, improving pronunciation may be frowned upon within some communities, and the EFL learners might be discouraged from making any progress. If English, supposing, is associated with

invasion and oppression, then it may be very difficult for learners to master the language.

Mother Tongue Influence

Among other things, the sound system of learners' mother tongue might be transferred into the foreign language in the following ways:

1) When there is a sound in the foreign language, which is absent from the native sound inventory, or vice versa, learners might be incapable of producing or even perceiving the sound.

2) Sound combination rules, which are different from those obtained in the native language, might also present a difficulty for learners.

3) Suprasegmental patterns might also be transferred from the native language (Avery & Ehrlich, 1992).

Pedagogic Factors

In general, English teachers must make sure that:

- Learners produce large quantities of sentences by themselves.

- Learners hear many different native models (in other words, they should be exposed to a wide variety of vernacular dialects and different pronunciations).

- Learners receive feedback.

- Suprasegmentals (amplitude, duration and pitch) are emphasized.

- Learners should feel relaxed in the language learning setting (Kenworthy, 1987; Eskenazi, 1999).

Bearing the above factors in mind, teachers should follow some principles of effective pronunciation teaching such as they should learn to describe pronunciation and show how foreign language sounds are physically articulated (Phonetic or phonemic symbols can come in handy). Besides, they should record their learners' speech and have them listen to recordings of themselves and they should be aware of their own pronunciation (a teacher's accent may be different from the Received Pronunciation, which students may think to be correct). They should create a non-threatening, confidence-raising atmosphere. They should teach pronunciation a little at a time (presenting segmental first, then suprasegmentals). They should set realistic goals.

A Few Words on Suprasegmental (Prosodic) Features.

Teaching experience shows that it is worthwhile to introduce sounds in prosodic patterns even at the initial stage of

learning, as it brings the idea of 'contextualized' sounds into connected speech. It could be argued that in speech, suprasegmental features of stress, rhythm, pitch, and intonation are equally important in achieving cohesion and coherence, two terms usually associated with written discourse only.

There are two main reasons to focus on prosodic features:

- Prosody serves several communicative functions
- Prosody facilitates or constrains other dimensions of communication (Hargrove & McGarr, 1994: 4).

As a communicative means, prosody performs the following functions:

- Pragmatic (to focus attention on important information, differentiate old information from new information, signal turns in discourse, link sentences to create texts)
 - Syntactic (to mark syntactic structures)
 - Lexical (to differentiate words)
 - Attitudinal (to identify patterns common to various groups)
- (Couper-Kuhlen, 1986)
- Intelligibility function (modifications in prosody influence speech comprehension, if prosodic information becomes more important; even segmentally correct speech with minor prosodic

errors may not be intelligible (Allen & Hawkins, 1980; Lieberman, 1967); prosodic errors reduce attention to the meaning of utterances.

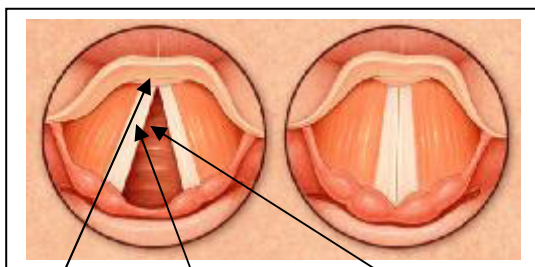
How speech sounds are made

According to Avery Ehrlich (1994), speech sounds are made by an air stream from the lungs which goes through the trachea and the oral and nasal cavities. It involves four processes: Initiation, phonation, oro-nasal process and articulation.

The initiation process is the moment when the air is expelled from the lungs. In English, speech sounds are the result of 'a pulmonic egressive air stream' (Giegerich, 1992) although that is not the case in all languages (ingressive sounds).

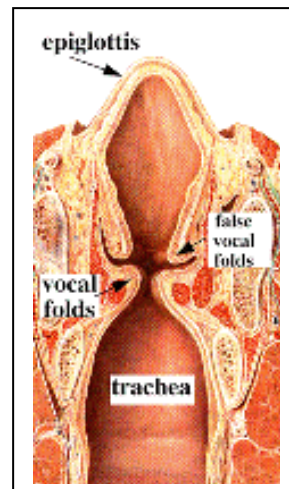
The phonation process occurs at the larynx. The larynx has two horizontal folds of tissue in the passage of air; they are the vocal folds. The gap between these folds is called the glottis.

Open glottis Fig. 2 Closed glottis Fig 1.
Voiceless Voiced



Epiglottis , Vocal cords and , Glottis

Fig. 3



Voiceless Voiced, Epiglottis, Vocal cords and Glottis: The glottis can be closed, as in figure 1. Then, no air can pass or it can have a narrow opening, which can make the vocal folds vibrate producing the 'voiced sounds'. Finally, it can be wide open, as in normal breathing, and thus, the vibration of the vocal folds is reduced producing the 'voiceless sounds'.

After it has gone through the larynx and the pharynx, the air can go into the nasal or the oral cavity. The velum is the part responsible for that selection. Through the oro-nasal process, the nasal consonants (/m/, /n/, /ŋ/) and other sounds can be differentiated.

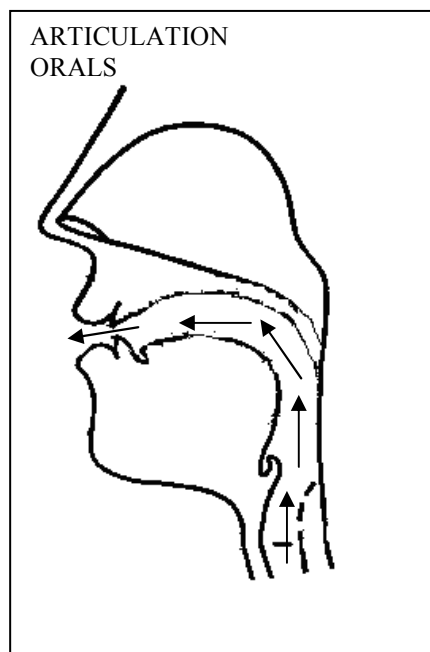
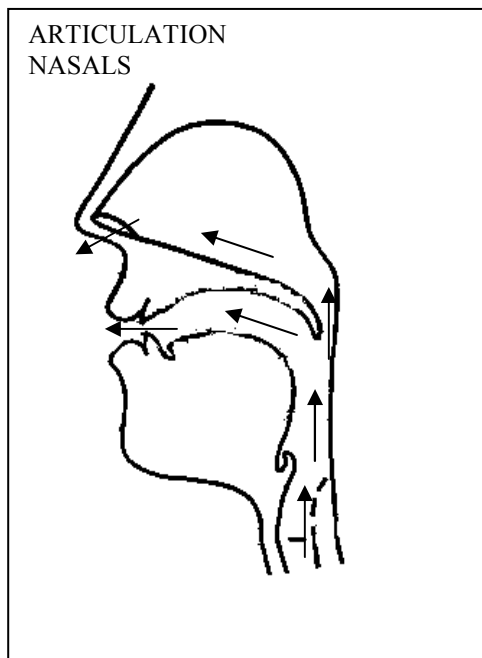


Fig. 4. The oro-nasal process

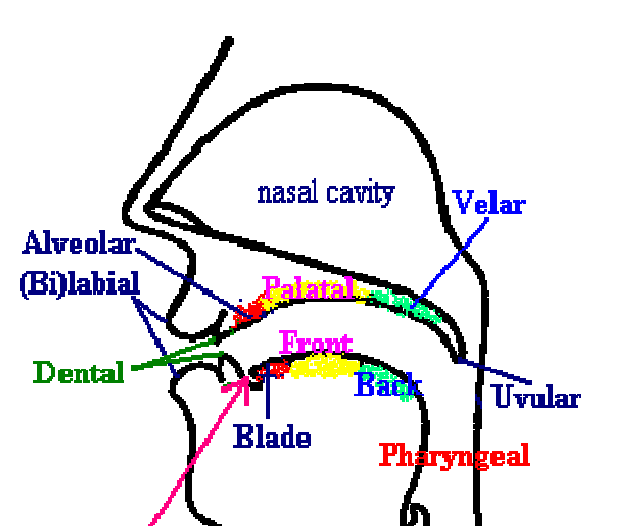
In figure 4, The oro-nasal process, the articulation is the most obvious one. It takes place in the mouth and it is the process through most speech sounds can be distinguished. In the mouth, the oral cavity is separated, which acts as a resonator, and the articulators, which can be active or passive: upper and lower lips, upper and lower teeth, tongue (tip, blade, front, back) and roof of the mouth (alveolar ridge, palate and velum). Therefore, speech sounds are distinguished from one another in terms of the place where and how they are articulated. (Jones D, 1990).

Consonants

Description of Consonants

	Consonants	Place
	/p/	Bilabial
	/b/	Bilabial
	/t/	Tip-alveolar
	/d/	Tip-alveolar

	/k/	Back-velar
	/g/	Back-velar
	/tʃ/	Blade/front -palato- alveolar
	/dʒ/	Blade/front -palato- alveolar
	/m/	Bilabial
	/n/	Tip-alveolar
	/ŋ/	Back-velar

/f/	Labio-dental	
/v/	Labio-dental	
/θ/	Tip-dental	
/ð/	Tip-dental	
/s/	Blade-alveolar	

/z/	Blade-alveolar
/ʃ/	Blade/front - palato-alveolar
/ʒ/	Blade/front - palato-alveolar
/h/	Glottal
/l/	Tip-alveolar
/r/	Blade- postalveolar
/w/	Bilabial back- velar
/j/	Front-palatal

According to Roberth & Judith (1982), a consonant is a sound in spoken language that is characterized by a constriction or closure at one or more points along the vocal tract.

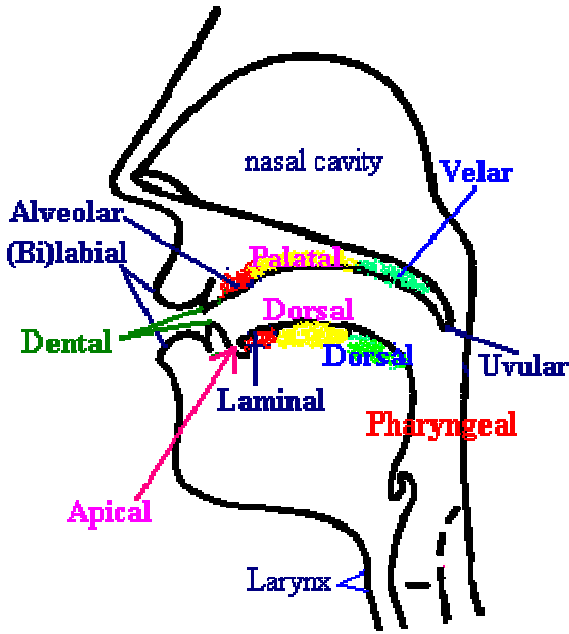
The consonants are classified in three basic characteristics:

1. Place of articulation
2. Manner of articulation

3. Voicing

Place of articulation

PLACE OF ARTICULATION	<i>Nouns</i>	<i>Adjectives</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The place of obstruction of air at some points in the vocal cords. used to classify consonants each place of articulation has an adjective applied to a consonant 	Lips	Labial/ Bilabial
	Teeth	Dental
	Alveolar ridge	Alveolar
	Hard palate	Palatal
	Soft palate	Velar
	Uvula	Uvular
	Pharynx	Pharyngeal
	Tip	Apical
	Blade	Laminal
	Front	Dorsal
	Back	Dorsal



The active articulator usually moves in order to make the constriction. The passive articulator usually just sits there and gets approached.

A sound's place of articulation is usually named by using the Latin adjective for the active articulator (ending with an 'o') followed by the Latin adjective for the passive articulator. For example, a sound where the tongue tip (the 'apex') approaches or touches the upper teeth is called an 'apico-dental'. Most of the common combinations of active and passive articulator have abbreviated names (usually leaving out the active half).

These are the abbreviated names for the places of articulation used in English:

Bilabial: The articulators are the two lips. (We could say that the lower lip is the active articulator and the upper lip the passive articulator, though the upper lip usually moves too, (at least a little.) English bilabial sounds include [p], [b], and [m].

Labio-dental: The lower lip is the active articulator and the upper teeth are the passive articulator. English labio-dental sounds include [f] and [v].

Dental: Dental sounds involve the upper teeth as the passive articulator. The active articulator may be either the tongue tip or (usually) the tongue blade-diacritic symbols can be used if it matters which. Extreme lamino-dental sounds are often called interdental. English interdental sounds include [ð] and [θ].

Alveolar: Alveolar sounds involve the alveolar ridge as the passive articulator. The active articulator may be either the tongue blade or (usually) the tongue tip, diacritic symbols can be used if it matters which. English alveolar sounds include [t], [d], [n], [s], [z], and [l].

Palatal: The active articulator is the tongue body and the passive articulator is the hard palate. The English glide [j] is a palatal.

Velar: The active articulator is the tongue body and the passive articulator is the soft palate. English velars include [k], [g], and [ŋ].

Glottal: This is not strictly a place of articulation. Glottal sounds are made in the larynx. For the glottal stop, the vocal cords close momentarily and cut off all airflow through the vocal tract. English uses the glottal stop in the interjection uh-uh (meaning 'no'). In [h], the vocal cords are open, but close enough together that air passing between them creates friction noise.

Manners of articulation

A class of sounds where there is obstruction to the flow of air. There are six different degrees of obstruction:

1. <u>plosives</u> (oral stop)	p	b	t	d	k	g
	<u>p</u> en	<u>b</u> ee	<u>t</u> ea	<u>d</u> ay	<u>k</u> ey	<u>g</u> et

2. <u>fricatives</u>	f	v	θ	ð	h
	<u>f</u> an	e <u>v</u> en	<u>th</u> in	<u>th</u> e	<u>h</u> at
	s	z	ʃ	ʒ	
	<u>s</u> ea	<u>z</u> oo	<u>sh</u> ee <u>p</u>	lei <u>s</u> ure	

3. <u>affricates</u>	tʃ	dʒ	4. <u>nasals</u>	m	n	ŋ
	<u>ch</u> ur <u>ch</u>	<u>j</u> ud <u>g</u> e		<u>m</u> an	<u>n</u> ow	<u>si</u> ng

5. <u>lateral approximants</u>	l	6. <u>approximants</u>	r	w	j
	<u>l</u> ip		<u>r</u> abbit	<u>w</u> as	<u>y</u> et

The consonants according to the manner in which the organs articulate them, there are eight main classes:

Stops: formed by completely closing the air passage and suddenly removing the obstacle (or one of the obstacles), so that the air escapes making an explosive sound. Examples p,d.

Bilabial	Labiodental	Interdental	Alveolar	Alveopalatal	Velar
p			t		k
b			d		g

Fricative: formed by a narrowing of the air passage at some point so that the air in escaping makes a kind of hissing sound. Examples f, z, fricative r.

Bilabial	Labiodental	Interdental	Alveolar	Alveopalatal	Velar
	f	θ	s	l	
	v	ð	z	ʒ	

Affricate: resembling a plosive but with separation of the articulating organs performed less quickly, with the result that a fricative sound is perceived during the process of separation.

Example tʃ

Bilabial	Labiodental	Interdental	Alveolar	Alveopalatal	Velar
				tʃ	
				dʒ	

Nasal: formed by completely closing the mouth at some point, the soft palate remaining lowered so that the air is free to pass out through the nose. Example, m.

Bilabial	Labiodental	Interdental	Alveolar	Alveopalatal	Velar
m			n		ŋ

Lateral: formed by an obstacle placed in the middle of the mouth, the air being free to escape at one or both sides. Example l.

Rolled: formed by a rapid succession of taps of some elastic part of the speech mechanism. Example rolled r.

Flapped: formed by a narrowing of the air passage at some point so that the air in escaping makes a kind of hissing sound. Examples f, z, fricative r.

Semi-vowel: a gliding sound in which the speech organs start at or near a 'close' vowel and immediately move away to some

other vowel (or occasionally to some other sound of equal or greater prominence, such as syllabic l). Example w.

Classification of English Consonants

Place of articulation	Manner of articulation				
	plosive	fricative	semi-vowel	liquid s, incl. laterals	nasal
labial (<i>lips</i>)	p b		w		m
labio-dental (<i>lips and teeth</i>)		f v			
dental (<i>teeth</i>)		θ th			
alveolar (<i>gums</i>)	t d	s z	y	l r	n
palatal (<i>hard palate</i>)		sh zh			
velar (<i>soft palate</i>)	k g				ŋ
glottal (<i>glottis (vocal folds)</i>)		h			

Voicing and aspiration

Avery & Ehrlich (1982) define voice or voicing like a term used in phonetics and phonology to characterize speech sounds, with sounds described as either voiceless (unvoiced) or voiced. The term, however, is used to refer to two separate concepts.

Voicing can refer to the articulatory process in which the vocal cords vibrate. This is its primary use in phonetics to describe phones, which are particular speech sounds. It can also refer to a classification of speech sounds that tend to be associated with vocal cord vibration but do not need actually to

be voiced at the articulatory level. This is the term's primary use in phonology when describing phonemes, or in phonetics when describing phones.

At the articulatory level, a voiced sound is one in which the vocal cords vibrate, and a voiceless sound is one in which they do not. Voicing is the difference between the pairs of sounds that are associated with the English letters 's' and 'z'.

The two sounds are symbolically written [s] and [z] to distinguish them from the English letters, which have several possible pronunciations depending on context. If one places the fingers on the voice box (i.e. the location of the Adam's apple in the upper throat), one can feel a vibration when one pronounces zzzz..., but not when one pronounces ssss... In European languages such as English, vowels and other sonorants (consonants such as m, n, l, and r) are modally voiced.

According to Jones D. (1990), English speech sounds are classified into two classes: voiced & voiceless.

VOICED SOUNDS: the vocal cords are in vibration. All vowels are voiced sounds. Consonants can be made with or without the voice.

- sounds are produced with the glottis closed
- the vocal cords are pressed together
- airflow is interrupted

- the vocal cords are made to vibrate
- voiced sounds use less energy to say

VOICELESS SOUNDS: the vocal cords are not in vibration. All vowels are voiced sounds. Consonants can be made with or without the voice.

- voiceless sounds are produced with the glottis open
- the vocal cords are separated
- airflow is free
- there is no vibration of the vocal cords
- voiceless sounds use more energy

When used to classify speech sounds, voiced and unvoiced are merely labels used to group phones and phonemes together for the purposes of classification.

English has four pairs of fricative phones which can be divided into a table by place of articulation and voicing. The voiced fricatives can readily be felt to have voicing throughout the duration of the phone.

Voicing contrast in English fricatives		
Articulation	Voiceless	Voiced
Pronounced with the lip against the teeth:	[f] (f an)	[v] (v an)

Pronounced with the tongue against the teeth:	[θ] (thin , thigh)	[ð] (then , thy)
Pronounced with the tongue near the gums:	[s] (sip)	[z] (zip)
Pronounced with the tongue bunched up:	[