Module: Phonetics

Level: L1-FILA

Time Allotted: 90 min

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Lecture 10: Nasals and Lateral /l/

**Nasals /m/, /n/, /ŋ/**

**Description**

What is particular for nasal consonants is that during their production, the air escapes through the nasal cavity and nostrils while there is a complete closure in the oral cavity when the velum is lowered. There are three (3)types of closures according to place of articulation:

Bilabial /m/: member /’membǝ/

Alveolar /n/: name /neɪm/

Velar /ŋ/: sing /sɪŋ/

N.B the phoneme /ŋ/ is never found in initial position, but only in mid and final position like in singing /’sɪŋɪŋ/. The nasal consonants have the same places of articulation as plosives but the manner is different. They are produced with nasality. The plosives are produced with plosion.

As far as the velar nasal consonant /ŋ/ is concerned, the consonant which follows is variably realised.

1. In words ending in ‘nk’ /k/ is always pronounced.

E.g. think /Ɵɪŋk/ bank /bæŋk/

2. But when the letter (g) follows (n), its pronunciation depends on the morphology of the word:

\*/g/ is never pronounced in final position. E.g. thing /Ɵɪŋ/, ring /rɪŋ/

\* In mid position (g) is pronounced if the word is, at the same time, one morpheme. E.g. finger/’fɪŋgǝ/

one morpheme

\*(g) is not pronounced if the word is constituted of two (2) morphemes

E.g. singing /’sɪŋɪŋ/ singer /’sɪŋǝ/

However, there is an exception: (g) is pronounced in mid position with the two morphemes of comparison: er- est

Stronger /’strɒŋgǝ/

The longest /’lɒŋgɪst/

**Lateral /l/**

**Description**

This consonant is called a voiced lateral alveolar. It is a lateral consonant because during its production, the air doesn’t flow the usual way along the tongue like other consonants but through the two sides of the tongue which are pulled down, while the tip of the tongue is against the alveolar ridge.

**Some Characteristics**

1. /l/ has two (2) realisations in complementary distribution depending on the context:
* *’clear l’* when followed by a vowel. E.g. alone [ǝ’lǝʊn] – leaf [li:f]: tip of the tongue against the alveolar ridge.
* *‘Dark l’* when followed by a consonant. E.g. milk [mɪɫk] - or in final position e.g. feel [fi:ɫ].

During the production of dark l [ɫ], the back of the tongue is raised towards the velum.



The phoneme /l/ has two realisations:

 **[l]** Clear l

**/l/**

 **[ɫ]** Dark l

These are two (2) allophones in complementary distribution where one realisation cannot be substituted for the other one.

1. The phoneme /l/ is often syllabic in final position when preceded by a consonant.

 **In final position**

**/l/ is often syllabic[ɫ̦] +**

 **Preceded by a consonant**

E.g. little [‘lɪtɫ̦] /’lɪtl/

**3.** /l/ is devoiced when preceded by a voiceless consonant

Please [pl̥i:z̥] clean [kl̥i:n]

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