**STUDY MATERIALS**

**PG: Second Semester**

**Sub: English**

**Course No 204: Language and Communicative Skills** **(CBCS)**

**The organs of speech:**

It is necessary that the student of phonetics should have a fairly clear idea of the structure and functions of the organs of speech. Those who have not already done so should make a thorough examination of the inside of the mouth by means of a hand looking-glass.

**Roof of the mouth: (08 marks)**

The roof of the mouth is divided, for the purposes of phonetics, into three parts called the teeth-ridge, the hard palate, and the soft palate. The teeth-ridge is defined as the part of the roof of the mouth just behind the upper teeth which is convex to the tongue.

The remainder of the roof of the mouth comprises the other two parts, the front part constituting the hard palate, and the back part the soft palate or velum, the end of which is called the uvula. These two parts should be examined carefully in the looking glass; they may be felt with the tongue or with the finger. The soft palate can be moved upwards, and when raised to its fullest extent, it touches the back wall of the pharynx. The soft palate can be lowered to let the air escape through the nose. This is the normal position in breathing. If the mouth passage is also open, a nasalized vowel is produced. If no air escapes through the mouth, a nasal consonant is produced, e.g., /m/ and /n/ in ‘man’.

**Pharynx, larynx, and vocal cords: (08 marks)**

The pharynx is the cavity situated in the throat immediately behind the mouth. Below it is the larynx which forms the upper part of the windpipe (the passage leading to the lungs). The epiglottis is a sort of tongue situated just above the larynx. The vocal cords are situated in the larynx; they resemble two lips. They run in a horizontal direction from back to front. The space between them is called the glottis.

The cords may be kept apart or they may be brought together so as to touch and thus close the air passage completely. When we cough, the glottis is tightly closed and the air from the lungs is held up beneath it and then suddenly released. When we breathe out, the glottis held open. If the vocal cords are held sufficiently close together, they vibrate when the air from the lungs passes between them. This vibration produces voice. Speech sounds can be voiced or voiceless. Thus /f/ and /v/ are respectively voiceless and voiced.

**The sounds of English consonants:**

**Plosives: (04 marks)**

A plosive or stop consonant is produced by

1) a complete closure of the air passage in the mouth

2) the holding of the closure and compression of the air coming from the lungs

3) a sudden release of air with explosion

British R.P. (Received Pronunciation) has three pairs of plosive phonemes: /p,b/ (bilabial); /t,d/ (alveolar); and /k,g/ (velar)

**Affricates: (04 marks)**

Affricates are produced by a complete closure of the air passage and a slow release causing friction. In the production of British R.P. / tʃ ,dʒ/ the air passage in the mouth is completely closed by a contact between the lip and blade of the tongue and the teeth ridge, the rims of the tongue making a contact with the upper side teeth. The front of the tongue is also raised towards the hard palate. The soft palate is raised to shut off the nasal passage. When the air is released slowly, it escapes with friction between the front of the tongue and the hard palate and between the blade of the tongue and the teeth ridge. The vocal cords are wide apart for / tʃ / but vibrate for / dʒ/

**Fricatives: (04 marks)**

Fricative consonants are produced by bringing two organs so near each other that the air stream has to pass through a narrow passage and comes out with audible friction. The following are the fricative phonemes in British R.P.:

/f,v/ - labio-dental

/θ, ð / - dental

/s,z / - alveolar

/ʃ, ʒ / - palate-alveolar

/h/ - glottal

**Lateral consonant: (04 marks)**

For a lateral consonant there is a closure in the middle and the air comes out through the sides. For the English lateral phoneme /l/, the tip of the tongue makes a contact with the teeth ridge but the sides of the tongue are lowered so that there is a free passage for the escape of air on the sides. The vocal cords are in vibration. In British R.P. two varieties of /l/ are used: a clear variety for which the front of the tongue is also raised towards the hard palate; a dark variety for which the back of the tongue is raised towards the soft palate. Indian English has only the clear variety.

**Diphthongs: (02 marks)**

Diphthongs are vowel glides within a syllable. A common form of British R.P. contains twelve essential diphthong phonemes like /ei/, /ou/, /au/ etc. There exist nine further unessential diphthongs in Southern English, namely /oi/, /ui/ etc.

**Consonant Clusters: (02 marks)**

Two or more consonants sometimes come together at the beginning or the end of an English syllable.

Examples of initial clusters: /pl/ in ‘play’

Examples of final clusters: /mp/ in ‘camp’

**The syllable: (02 marks)**

A syllable is any of the units into which a word is divided, containing a vowel sound and usually one or more consonants. The syllables in a language have their own patterns of structure, and vowels generally take the central position in the syllable.

**Nasals: (02 marks)**

There are three nasal phonemes in English: /m/, /n/, and /ŋ/ For the production of nasal consonants a complete closure is made in the mouth, but the soft palate is lowered and the air comes out through the nose.

**Primary and secondary accent: (02 marks)**

The syllable on which there is a pitch change is said to have the primary or tonic accent. Any other prominent syllable is said to have secondary accent. In the word ‘photograph’ [ˈfəutəˌɡra:f] the primary accent is on the first syllable and the secondary accent on the second syllable.

**Linking /r/: (02 marks)**

In British R.P. /r/ is used only before vowels; it does not occur finally and before consonants: e.g. ‘better’ /betə/, ‘here’ /hiə/. But when the next word begins with a vowel, /r/ is inserted, e.g. Here it is / hiər it iz/.

**Phonetic Symbols:**

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| **Consonants** | |
| **p** | *pen, copy, happen* | |
| **b** | *back, baby, job* | |
| **t** | *tea, tight, button* | |
| **d** | *day, ladder, odd* | |
| **k** | *key, clock, school* | |
| **g** | *get, giggle, ghost* | |
| **tʃ** | *church, match, nature* | |
| **dʒ** | *judge, age, soldier* | |
| **f** | *fat, coffee, rough, photo* | |
| **v** | *view, heavy, move* | |
| **θ** | *thing, author, path* | |
| **ð** | *this, other, smooth* | |
| **s** | *soon, cease, sister* | |
| **z** | *zero, music, roses, buzz* | |
| **ʃ** | *ship, sure, national* | |
| **ʒ** | *pleasure, vision* | |
| **h** | *hot, whole, ahead* | |
| **m** | *more, hammer, sum* | |
| **n** | *nice, know, funny, sun* | |
| **ŋ** | *ring, anger, thanks, sung* | |
| **l** | *light, valley, feel* | |
| **r** | *right, wrong, sorry, arrange* | |
| **j** | *yet, use, beauty, few* | |
| **w** | *wet, one, when, queen* | |

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| --- | --- |
| **Vowels** | |
| **ɪ** | *kit, bid, hymn, minute* |
| **e** | *dress, bed, head, many* |
| **æ** | *trap, bad* |
| **ɒ** | *lot, odd, wash* |
| **ʌ** | *strut, mud, love, blood* |
| **ʊ** | *foot, good, put* |
| **iː** | *fleece, sea, machine* |
| **eɪ** | *face, day, break* |
| **aɪ** | *price, high, try* |
| **ɔɪ** | *choice, boy* |
| **uː** | *goose, two, blue, group* |
| **əʊ** | *goat, show, no* |
| **aʊ** | *mouth, now* |
| **ɪə** | *near, here, weary* |
| **eə** | *square. fair, various* |
| **ɑː** | *start, father* |
| **ɔː** | *thought, law, north, war* |
| **ʊə** | *poor, jury, cure* |
| **ɜː** | *nurse, stir, learn, refer* |
| **ə** | *about, common, standard* |
| **i** | *happy, radiate. glorious* |
| **u** | *thank you, influence, situation* |

**Reading List:**

1. Daniel Jones, *An Outline of English Phonetics.* Kalyani Publishers. 1994.

2. J.D. O’Connor, *Better English Pronunciation.* Cambridge University Press, 1967.

3. R.K. Bansal & J.B. Harrison, *Spoken English for India.* Orient Longman, 1989.