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**The Description of English Consonant Sounds**

Consonant sounds are classified in terms of three dimensions: Voicing, place of articulation, and manner of articulation

1. **Voicing**: refers to the activity of the vocal folds. When they are wide apart, the consonants are said to be voiceless. When they are closely together and vibrating, the consonants are said to be voiced.
2. **Place of Articulation:** refers to the area where the articulators are brought together for sounds’ production.
3. **Manner of Articulation:** refers to the way the articulators are set so that the resonance effect is possible

**1.The place of Articulation of English Consonant sounds**:

* 1. **Bilabials**:

There are four bilabials /m, b, p, w/. The first three consonant sounds voiced, but the last one is voiceless. For their production, the upper lip articulates with lower lip (producing a firm contact). For the manner of articulation, the soft palate is raised for the production of /p, b,w/ so that the air escapes solely through the oral cavity. However; for /m/, the velum is lowered to allow the air to pass through the nose and the mouth (Nasal sounds).For example: mouth, bee, park.

* 1. **Alveolar**:

There are six alveolar consonants in English /t, d, s, z, n, l, r/. /t, s/are voiceless whereas the remaining sounds are voiced. For their articulation, the tip of the tongue articulates with the alveolar ridge. For example: try, dry, say, zoo, name, late.

**1.3.Velar:**

/k,g, ŋ / are velar consonant sounds. /k/ is voiceless, and /g, ŋ / are voiced. Those sounds are produced by the back of the tongue against the soft palate. For example: key, girl, song.

* 1. **Labio-dental:**

There are two labio-dental sounds in English /f/and /v/. The first sound is voiceless and the second one is voiced. In their production, the lower lip articulates with the upper teeth. For example: feel, vein.

**1.4.Dental:**

In dental sounds, there is a soft contact between the tip of the tongue and the upper teeth. /θ/ and/ð / are two dental sound in English. / θ / is voiceless, but /ð/ is voiced. For example: think, then.

* 1. **Palato-alveolar:**

There are four palato-alveolar consonant sounds in English /**ʃ, ʒ, ʈʃ, dʒ** /. For the first two, the blade of tongue is arched near the alveolar ridge with a simultaneous approximation of the front of the tongue towards the hard palate. For the remaining sounds, besides the close approximation of the front part of the tongue near the hard palate, the blade of the tongue come in contact with the alveolar ridge and separates progressively. For example: shoes, measure, chain, John.

* 1. **Palatal:**

Palatal sounds are produced by a contact made between the front part of the tongue and the hard palate. There is one palatal sound in English /j/. For example: yesterday.

* 1. **Glottal:**

There is one glottal sound in English /h/. Glottal refers to the glottis, where this consonant sound is produced by the close contact made by the vocal folds. For example: hot.

1. **Manner of Articulation of English consonant sounds:**

**2.1. Stops (Plosives):**

Stops involve a complete closure of the articulators, preventing the escape of the air. After the closure, there is a release stage. In English, there are six oral stops /p,b/,/t,d/, /k,g/ and three nasal stops /m,n, ŋ/.In case of the oral stops, the air escapes when the closure disappears. However, the air escapes through the nose for nasal stops as the soft plate is lowered.

**2.2.Fricatives:**

Fricatives are produced with a close approximation with the articulators to allow the air to pass by producing a friction. It is important to know that friction does not mean a complete closure, but it is rather a degree of constriction in the way the articulators are set.

**2.3.Approximants**:

/w, r, j/ are approximant consonants in the English language. They are produced with neither an obstruction nor a narrowing but the air escapes through the oral cavity. They are phonetically moving vowels.

**2.4.Affricates:**

An affricate is a sequence of a stop and a fricative. The articulators are set together then the release stage is done progressively, producing friction. /tʃ,d**ʒ**/ are English affricates. It is considered as a single sound despite the fact that it consists of combination of two articulatory sequences.

* 1. **Nasals:**

For nasal consonants, there is a complete obstruction at the level of the oral cavity so that the airflow escapes only through the nasal cavity. /m,n, ŋ/ are English nasal consonants.

* 1. **Lateral:**

A lateral consonant is one in which air escapes from the mouth along the sides of the tongue. For example: light 9RLFLQJ E 3ODFHRIDUWLFXODWLRQ