LEARNING OUTCOME

A the end of the lesson, students are able:

- to classify and describe English consonants in terms of manner of articulation
Manner of Articulation

What is manner of articulation?

- Describes how/the way a consonant sound is produced

  - Involves a *stricture*, i.e. a narrowing of the vocal tract which affects the airstream;

  - Covers both the degree or extent of the narrowing of the vocal tract
Manner of Articulation (cont’d)

- The manner of articulation can be described in terms of 3 possible types of stricture:
  1. complete closure
  2. narrow opening (close approximation)
  3. fairly wide opening (open approximation)

- Commonly, there are 8 recognized manners of articulation

- English has 9 manners of articulation
1. Plosive (Oral Stop)

- To produce a plosive – requires a complete closure within the oral cavity (e.g. the lips are in contact for bilabial plosives) behind which the air is compressed before being released explosively

- The velum is raised, shutting off the nasal cavity (to prevent air escaping through the nose)
3 distinctive phases in the production of a plosive:

i) the **closing/approach** phase: the articulators come together, e.g., for [p, b], the lower & upper lips come together

ii) the **hold/compression** phase: air is compressed behind the closure; can be accompanied by voice or voicelessness, or other types of phonation

iii) the **release** phase: the articulators forming the obstruction come rapidly apart & the air pent-up behind the closure is suddenly released with a ‘plosion’, hence the name ‘plosive’
FIGURE 3.9.1 Phases of a bilabial plosive

Movement of lip and jaw towards labial closure
Air stream
Lip closure
Pulse of turbulent airflow at the moment of occlusion release

Clark & Yallop, 1991: 83
2. **Nasal**

- The articulation of nasal consonants is similar to that of plosives.

- Like the articulation of a plosive, it involves a complete closure within the oral cavity, hence the label *nasal stop* (e.g. [m])

- However, unlike a plosive, it has no simultaneous velic closure (lowering of the velum, forming a closure to the oral cavity)

- The air-stream is therefore diverted & exits through the nose
Nasal (cont’d)

Examples:

- At the beginning of words:
  - man - [m] bilabial closure
  - nip - [n] alveolar closure

- At the end of a word:
  - wing - [ŋ] velar closure
3. **Fricative (median)**

- Involves a *narrow opening* formed by 2 articulators

- To produce a fricative, the articulators need to create a narrow opening in the oral cavity; the airstream is partially blocked & a turbulent air-flow is produced

- English fricatives:
  - [f], [v] in *fad & vain*
  - [θ], [ð] in *thin & this*
  - [s], [z] in *sap & zip*
  - [ʃ], [ʒ] & [h] in *ship, vision, & hive*
4. **Lateral fricative**

- Has alveolar contact as well as a simultaneous raising of the back of tongue towards the velum;

- Involves an obstruction along the centre of the oral pathway & an outflow of air through one or both sides of the tongue; the air escapes with a noise of friction as the lateral approximation is close & the airflow is faster than the airflow for [l],

- English dark ‘l’ [ɻ] at the end of *well*
5. **Approximant (median)**

- Produced by a *fairly open* oral cavity between the lips & in the velar region or alveolar region, with central passage of the air-stream;

- No noise of friction is produced (the air-stream is not turbulent)

  e.g., [ j ] in *yet* or the [ r ] used by most R.P. speakers in *rat*
6. **Lateral**

- Involves a stricture of *complete closure* at some point along the centre of the oral tract (typically the alveolar ridge for RP [ l ], while at the same time one or both sides of the tongue are slightly depressed allowing the air to escape laterally.
7. Tap/Flap

- Involves the *tongue making a single tap against the alveolar ridge* (a momentary contact: a brief stop), e.g. as in the middle of the word ‘letter’, the sound that Americans substitute for [ t ] in words such as ‘pity’.

- Only one vibration is produced.
8. **Trill**

- Produced when an articulator is set vibrating by the airstreams, e.g. the rolled [r] associated with the Scottish English accent & as in *brr* in English’ uttered when it is cold
9. **Affricates**

- The articulation begins like that of a plosive but ends like that of a fricative.

- The articulators part relatively slowly, producing *hormorganic* friction, i.e. friction at the same point of articulation

- The tongue momentarily blocks the breath as it does for the plosive, but the tongue & the impounded air is released with a friction & is turbulent

- Examples: [tʃ] and [dʒ] in the initial sounds of *chain* and *Jane*
READ UP,
YOU’LL BE ENLIGHTENED!