

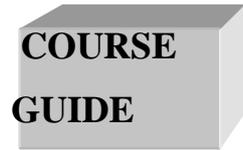


**NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA**

**DEPARTMENT OF LANGUAGES**

**COURSE CODE: FRE231**

**COURSE TITLE: INTRODUCTION TO FRENCH  
PHONOLOGY**



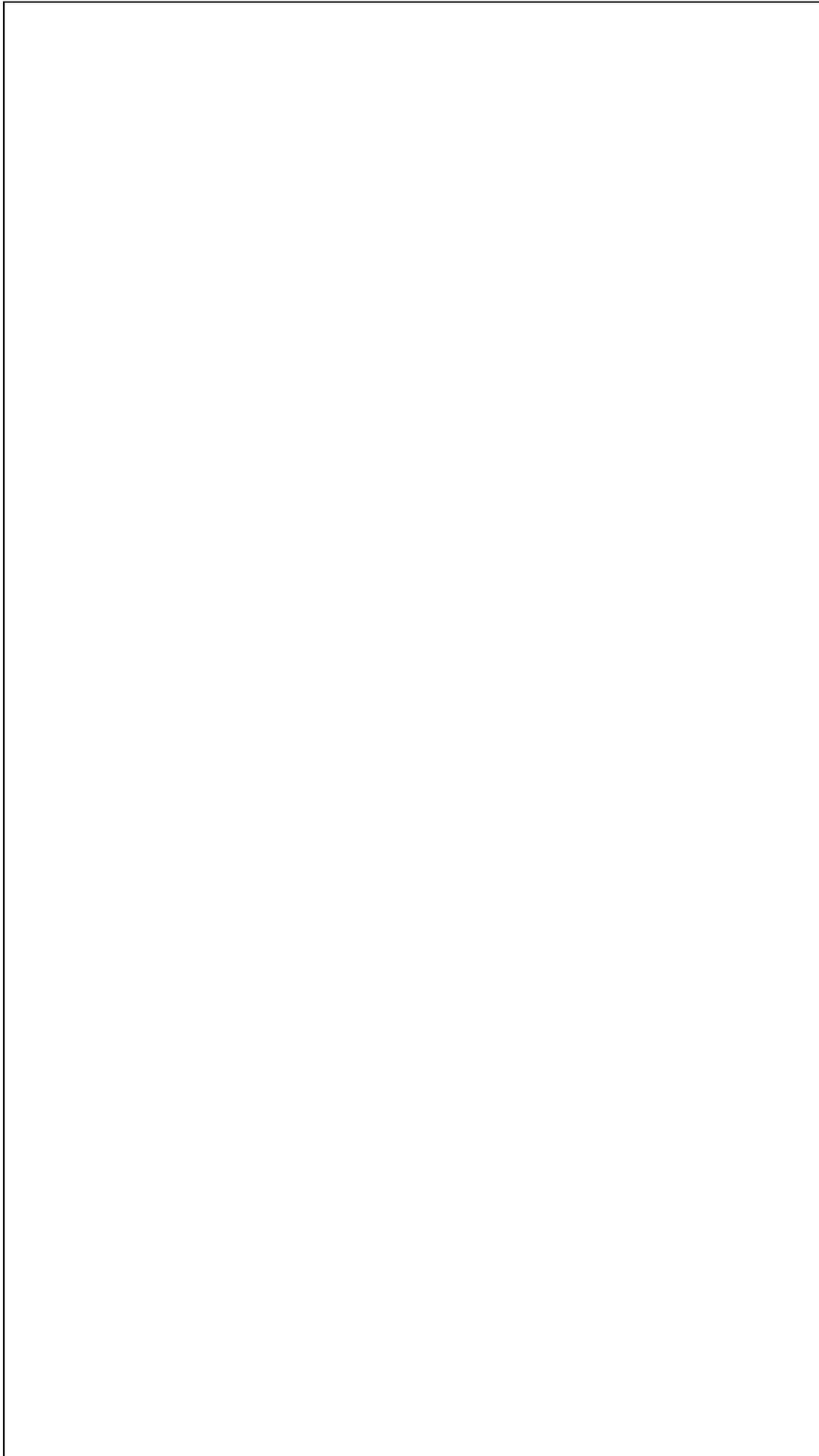
**FRE231**  
**INTRODUCTION TO FRENCH PHONOLOGY**

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Published by  
National Open University of Nigeria

Printed 2013

Reprinted 2014

REVIEWED 2020

ISBN: 978-058-342-4

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## INTRODUCTION

This is a one-semester course in the third year of B.A. (Hons.) in French studies. It is a two-credit unit course which introduces you to the essentials of phonology in French.

This course is important and necessary for you because it enables you to better understand the functioning of the French language sound system, so as for them to put into practice the phonological rules they acquire in the course of this programme.

This course guide tells you briefly what the course is about, the course materials you will use. It suggests some general guidelines for the amount of time you are likely to spend on each unit of the course in order to complete it successfully. There is also a detailed separate assignment file.

## WHAT YOU WILL LEARN IN THIS COURSE

The overall aim of *FRE 231: Introduction to French Phonology* is to acquaint you with the crucial aspects of phonology as applied to French language, and also with the trends in phonology in general.

## COURSE AIMS

This course aims at enabling you understand the basic principles of phonology in the French language. It also aims at teaching you how to use the knowledge you acquired to enhance your oral French.

This will be achieved by aiming to:

- outline the crucial aspects of French phonology for you
- outline for you, through concrete examples, the ways French phonology functions
- explain how you can effectively make use of the principles of French phonology.
- explain the various trends in phonology generally.

## COURSE OBJECTIVES

To achieve the aims set out above, the course sets overall objectives. Each unit also has its specific objectives. The unit objectives are found at the beginning of each unit. You need to read them before you

start working on the unit. You may want to refer to them during your study of the unit to check on your progress in the course. There is need for you to always look at the unit objectives after completing a unit to ensure that you have done what is required.

Below are the objectives of the course. You would have achieved the aims of the course if you are able to meet these objectives.

On completion of the course, you should be able to:

- discuss all about French phonology
- identify the phonological rules in French
- define the different types of phonology that exist
- do the exercises at the end of each unit
- put into practice the phonological rules when speaking French.

## **WORKING THROUGH THIS COURSE**

To complete this course, you are required to read the study units, set books and other materials related to French phonology. Each unit contains self-assessment exercises. You will also have to submit your tutor-marked assignments to your tutor.

This course will take you 20 to 25 weeks to complete. Find below the components of the course, what you have to do and how you should allocate your time to each unit in order to complete the course successfully on time.

## **COURSE MATERIALS**

Major components of the course are:

1. Course Guide
2. Study Units
3. Textbooks
4. Assignments File.

## STUDY UNITS

There are 20 study units in this course. They are:

### Module 1

- Unit 1 Qu'est-ce que la Phonologie?
- Unit 2 Phonétique et Phonologie
- Unit 3 Phonologie et Morphologie
- Unit 4 Description Phonologique des Phonèmes Vocaliques du Français
- Unit 5 Description Phonologique des Phonèmes Consonantiques du Français.

### Module 2

- Unit 1 Distribution Segmentale
- Unit 2 Allophones et Distribution Complémentaire
- Unit 3 Les Traits Phonologiques
- Unit 4 Les Traits Distinctifs
- Unit 5 Les Règles Phonologiques

### Module 3

- Unit 1 Les Réactions Phonologiques dans la Chaîne Parlée
- Unit 2 Les Principes De Liaison en Français
- Unit 3 Elision et Enchaînement en Français
- Unit 4 L'accent en Français
- Unit 5 L'intonation en Français

### Module 4

- Unit 1 La Phonologie Lexicale
- Unit 2 La Syllable en Français
- Unit 3 L'Assimilation
- Unit 4 La Phonologie Générative
- Unit 5 Les Tendances Générales en Phonologie

Although the titles of units are in French, the units are written in generally simple and straightforward English language. Each unit can be studied in one or two weeks. Each unit has its specific objectives, reading materials and explanations. It also contains tutor marked assignments. All this will assist you in achieving the learning objectives of the units and the whole course.

## SET TEXTBOOKS

- Anderson, J. M. Ewen, C. J. (1987). *Principles of Dependency Phonology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bloch, B. (1941). Phonemic Overlapping. "American Speech", "16", 278-284.
- Bloomfield, L. (1933). *Language*. New York: H. Holt and Company.  
(Revised version of Bloomfield's 1914 "An Introduction to the Study of Language").
- Chomsky, N. (1964). *Current Issues in Linguistic Theory*. In: J. A. Fodor & J.J. Katz (Eds). "The Structure of Language: Readings in the Philosophy Language." Englewood Cliffs, NJ: PrenticeHall.
- Chomsky, N. & Halle, M. (1968). *The Sound Pattern of English*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Katamba, F. (1989). *An Introduction to Phonology*. London; New York: Longman. (RES).
- Kenstowicz, M. & Charles, K. (1979). *Generative Phonology*. San Diego: Academic.
- Leon, P. (1993). *Precis de Phonostylistique*. Paris: Nathan. (RES).
- Martin, P. (1983). *Elements de Phonologie Fonctionnelle: Theorie et Exercices*. Chicoutimi, Quebec: G. Morin. (RES).

## ASSIGNMENT FILE

There is an assignment file with more than 20 assignments. These assignments carry 30% of the total mark for the course. The mark you obtain in the assignment will count towards the final mark you obtain for this course.

## ASSESSMENT

The assessment of this course is divided into two main parts. The first parts are the tutor-marked assignments and the second part is a written examination. The assignments must be submitted to your tutor for formal assessment in accordance with the deadline stated by the tutor.

The work submitted to your tutor for assessment will count for 30% of your total course mark. You will sit for a final examination of two hours duration at the end of the course. This examination will also count for 70% of your total course mark.

### **TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENTS (TMAs)**

There are 20 tutor-marked assignments in this course. You need to submit only five of the 20 assignments of which the highest four marks will be counted. Each assignment counts 10% towards your total course mark.

When you have completed your assignment, send it together with a TMA form to your tutor. Make sure each assignment reaches your tutor on or before the deadline.

### **FINAL EXAMINATION AND GRADING**

The final examination for FRN 331 will be of two hours and carry a total mark of 70% of the total course grade. The examination will reflect the types of self-assessment exercises and tutor-marked assignments. You need to revise before you sit for the examination. You may also need to revise the tutor-marked assignments and comments on them before the examination. The examination covers information from all parts of the course.

### **COURSE MARKING SCHEME**

The table below shows the breakdown of the course marking.

Assessment	Marks
Assignment 1 5	Best 4 marks of the 5 assignments count @ 10% = 30% of course mark
Final	70% of overall course marks
Total	100% o course marks

### **COURSE OVERVIEW**

There are 20 units in this course. You are to spend one week on each unit. Assignment 1 will come at the end of unit 3, assignment 2 at the end of unit 6, assignment 3 after finishing unit 9, assignment 4 at the end of unit 12, assignment 5 at the end of unit 16, and assignment 6 will come after completing unit 20.

## HOW TO GET THE MOST FROM THIS COURSE

The advantage of distance learning is that you can read and work through specially designed study materials at your own pace, and at your convenient time and place. The course material replaces the lecturer that stands before you in a face to face situation.

Each of the units has a common format. The course begins with a unit dealing with the notion and concept of phonology, especially the French phonology. You also have a set of learning objectives of the units. Those objectives tell you what you should be able to know and do on completion of the unit. When you finish every unit, you need to go back to the objectives to confirm whether you have or not achieved them accordingly.

You have assignments spread all over the units. Working through these assignments will help you tremendously to achieve the objectives of the units and prepare you for the examination. Do each as you meet them in the unit.

## SUMMARY

*FRE 231: Introduction to French Phonology* intends to acquaint you with the phonological principles and rules in French Language. On successful completion of the course, you will be equipped with the basic knowledge of various trends in phonology as they apply to French Language. You must have acquired enough knowledge that will enable you:

- identify the various French phonemes
- describe each phoneme, using the appropriate technical terms
- enhance your oral expression in French.
- mention the differences between French phonology, or any other language phonology for that matter.


**MAIN COURSE**
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## MODULE 1

Unit 1	Qu'est-Ce Que La Phonologie?
Unit 2	Phonétique et Phonologie
Unit 3	Phonologie et Morphologie
Unit 4	Description Phonologique des Phonèmes Vocaliques du Français
Unit 5	Description Phonologique des Phonèmes Consonantiques du Français

### UNIT 1 QU'EST CE QUE LA PHONOLOGIE?

#### CONTENTS

1.0	Introduction
2.0	Objectives
3.0	Main Content
3.1	Qu'est-Ce Que La Phonologie?
3.2	Definition
3.3	Some Major Schools of Thought
3.3.1	The Functionalists
3.3.2	The Generativists
3.4	Phonological Classification of Sounds
4.0	Conclusion
5.0	Summary
6.0	Tutor-Marked Assignment
7.0	References/Further Reading

#### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

This unit will introduce you to phonology in general, and to French phonology in particular. You will be given the definition of phonology and learn the difference between phonetics and phonology.

## 2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- define the system of sounds of any language, particularly of French sounds
- determine how these sounds function in the system of communication
- identify the various phonological theories
- distinguish between phonetics and phonology.

## 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

### 3.1 Qu'est-Ce Que La Phonologie?

Here, you will learn the definition of phonology and all about it.

### 3.2 Definition

In order to understand how phonetic transcription works, it is necessary to understand the basic principles of phonology.

Phonology is the description of the systems and patterns of sounds that occur in a language. (*La phonologie est l'étude des sons en tant qu'unités distinctives de sens. Elle est propre à une langue donnée*). It involves studying a language to determine its distinctive sounds and to establish a set of rules that describe the set of changes that take place in these sounds when they occur in different relationships with other sounds).

Many experts have worked on phonology. It is important for you to know these experts; they have been categorised according to their schools of thought.

### 3.3 Major Examples of Schools of Thought in Phonology

There are two major schools of thought as described below:

#### 3.3.1 The Functionalists

These experts believe that phonology is part of phonetics. In other words, phonetics and phonology are like two sides of the same coin.

The following are names of some functionalists: André Martinet, Gabriel Manessy, Maurice Housis, etc.

### 3.3.2 The Generativists

For these experts, phonetics and phonology are distinct areas of study; here, phonology is defined as the system of sound contrasts in a particular language. Among the generativists, you have Noam Chomsky, Morris Halle, Paul Kiparsky, etc.

## 3.4 Phonological Classification of Sounds

Note that every language has its own distinctive sounds. Also note that the smallest segments of sounds that can be distinguished by their contrast within words can be grouped together into phonemes. Phonemes are the abstract units that form the basis for writing down a language systematically and unambiguously (un phonème est l'unité de base pour les sons d'une langue donnée et peut inclure plusieurs phonèmes différents).

Taking French as an example, you have the following categories of phonemes: 17 consonant phonemes, 16 vowel phonemes and 3 semi-consonant/vowel phonemes. (Le système phonologique Français est composé de 36 phonèmes : 17 phonèmes consonantiques, 16 phonèmes vocaliques et 3 phonèmes semi-consonantiques/vocaliques). See details in units 4 and 5.

## 4.0 CONCLUSION

In this unit, you have learnt about the essentials of phonology, giving examples of French language to illustrate the theory. You should note that every language has its own peculiar phonological specifics. You must not generalise.

## 5.0 SUMMARY

This unit has equipped you with the basic knowledge in phonology; especially you are now aware of the concept of phonology and of how it works when you consider a particular language.

This unit will help you understand with ease the system of French sounds. This implies that this unit will be useful to fully understand this course.

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. What is phonology?
2. Are the sounds of French the same with those of your mother tongue?
3. What make(s) the difference(s) between languages?
4. List the different sounds in French and those of your mother tongue.
5. List sounds that are similar to French and your mother tongue.
6. List the French sounds that do not exist in your mother tongue.

## 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

- Alo, P. O. (1999). *Elément de base en Phonétique et le Phonétisme du Français*. Lagos: RothmedPress International.
- Brousseau, A. M. et Nikiema, E. (2001). *Phonologie et Morphologie du Français*. Montreal: Collection Champs Linguistiques, FIDES.
- Marchal, A. (1980). *Les Sons et la Parole*. Montreal: Collection et Société. Guérin.
- Robins, R. H. (1973). *Linguistique Générale; une Introduction*. Paris: Armand Colin.

## UNIT 2 PHONÉTIQUE ET PHONOLOGIE

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- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Phonétique et Phonologie
  - 3.2 Représentation des sons et des Phonèmes
    - 3.2.1 Représentation des sons
    - 3.2.2 Représentation des Phonèmes
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

In unit 1 of this course, you have learnt what phonology is all about. So also in the course FRE 201, you have learnt what phonetics is all about. This unit of FRE 305 is a way to bring both phonetics and phonology together with the view to making you realise and understand that it's all about the study of sounds (physically and functionally) of any given language.

### 2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- make a clear distinction between phonetics and phonology
- mention the phonetic and phonological descriptions of sounds of a language, especially French language, with more emphasis on the phonological aspects.

### 3.0 MAIN CONTENT 3.1 Phonetique et Phonologie

As a reminder (the distinction between phonetics and phonology has been taught in previous unit), you should retain that both deal with the study of speech sounds; while phonetics deals with the physical nature as well as the description of sounds produced, phonology treats the function of sounds in speech. You can study the phonetic characteristics of a language you do not understand or speak. But it is impossible for you to study the phonological aspects of a language if you do not speak nor understand that language.

In other words, phonology is concerned with the differences in pronunciation that correspond to differences in meaning: that is what is called distinctive oppositions. Consider the following examples for better understanding of the concept:

Rouge [Ruʒ] (red)

When you replace the first consonant type with [b], you then have two different words bouge [buz] (for move) and rough [Ruʒ] (for red) that constitute what is called *paire minimale*: two words that differ in meaning with only one sound making the difference between them. When you replace a sound with another one in a *paire minimale*, you do what is called *commutation*.

In phonetics, you talk of sound you can hear, produce and measure. In phonology, you talk of phoneme, which is an abstract entity as opposed to other phonemes in the language.

## 3.2 Répresentation Des Sons et Phonèmes

In transcription, as you were taught in phonetics, sounds and phonemes are represented differently.

### 3.2.1 Representation Des Sons

Sounds are transcribed the way they are produced or articulated and always put in what is known as *crochets phonétiques*: [ ]. For example, you consider the following words: une fille (a girl); garçon (a boy); livre (a textbook). These words are transcribed phonetically as follows [ ɛ̃fij ], [ gɑ̃ʁsə ] and [ livʁ ] respectively.

### 3.2.2 Representation Des Phonèmes

Phonemes are transcribed the same way like sounds and are put not in *crochets phonétiques* but rather in what is called *barres obliques* / /. For example, when you consider the same words as in 3.2.1 above, you have the following phonological transcriptions: / ɛ̃fij /, / gɑ̃ʁsə / and [livʁ] respectively.

Also, the symbol ~ is used to oppose two phonemes or two minimal pairs (paires minimales). For example, in [Ruʒ] and /buz/ which constitute a paire minimale, the phonemes /R/ and /b/ are opposed to one another; this opposition is represented as follows: /R/ ~ /b/.

#### 4.0 CONCLUSION

In this unit, you have learnt how to make the difference between phonetics and phonology, with necessary technical terms, using French language as example.

#### 5.0 SUMMARY

This unit has made you understand clearly the difference between phonetics and phonology as well as the respective symbolic representations in concrete terms. With this, you will encounter no difficulty in understanding the subsequent units of this course.

#### 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. What is phonetics?
2. What is phonology?
3. What is or are the difference(s) between phonetics and phonology?
4. Transcribe the following words both phonetically and phonemically and point out the differences between the transcription: classe; maître; la maîtresse; je mange; il sort;
5. Consider the two words: maître and naitre; transcribe them and explain the difference between them.
6. Give examples of paire minimale in your mother tongue or in English.

#### 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

- Brousseau, A. M. et Nikiema, E. (2001). *Phonologie et Morphologie du Français*. Montreal: Collection Champs Linguistiques, FIDES.
- Katamba, E. (1989). *An Introduction to Phonology*. London: Longman (RES).
- Marchal, A. (1980). *Les sons et la Parole*. Collection et Société. Montréal: Guérin.

Robins, R. H. (1973). *Linguistique Générale; une Introduction*. Paris: Armand Colin.

## UNIT 3 PHONOLOGIE ET MORPHOLOGIE

### CONTENT

1.0	Introduction
2.0	Objectives
3.0	Main Content
	3.1 La Morphologie ou Morphonologie
	3.2 Le Morphème
	3.3 La Représentation du Morphème
	3.4 La Représentation du Morpho phonème
4.0	Conclusion
5.0	Summary
6.0	Tutor-Marked Assignment
7.0	References/Further Reading

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

In this unit, you will learn the possibility of merging phonology and morphology in the description of various phonemes of words, particularly in speech. For better understanding, you need to know the definition of both words. You learnt what phonology is all about in the previous unit, revisit it. As for morphonology, it is defined as the study of word formation in a sentence, with the smallest significant entity called morphème.

### 2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- describe the different morphemes of a word, using phonological
- link sounds with meanings in a particular language.

### 3.0 MAIN CONTENT 3.1 La Morphologie ou Morphonologie

In linguistics, morphology is the study of words, how they are formed, and their relationship to other words in the same language. It also analyses the structure of words such as stems, root words, prefixes and suffixes. (La morphologie est l'étude de la formation des mots et de leurs variations).

While morphonology is the study of the phonological structure of morphemes (l'étude des moyens phonologiques mis au service de la morphologie).

## 3.2 Morpheme

As defined earlier, a morpheme is the smallest unit of meaning in a language. Or, a meaningful morphological unit of a language that cannot be further divided. For example, consider this sentence in French: “Les boxeurs souffrent”. In this example, the morphemes are as follows:

Le + s + box + eur + s + souffr + ent (you have a total of 7 morphemes). Each of these morphemes has a meaning, in the sense that it plays a vital role in the understanding of the whole sentence.

There are two categories of morphemes:

- (i) The lexical morphemes, also called *radicaux*, e.g. *box* and *souffr*.
- (ii) The grammatical morphemes, also called *affixes* (prefixes/suffixes); e.g. *le*, *s*, *eur*, *s*, and *ent*.

### 3.2 Representation Des Morphemes

In morphological representation, both categories of morphemes lexical and grammatical, are combined to give a word its full meaning. For instance, consider the following examples:

- les étudiantstravaillent beaucoup. The underlined words can morphologically be analysed as follows, sorting out the different morphemes.
  - (i) étudiants:
    - *etud* is the lexical morpheme (LM) or the radical nominal.
    - *i* is the first grammatical morpheme called morpheme suffixal verbal, as it is added to the LM to form the verb *étudier*.
    - *ant* is the second grammatical morpheme called morpheme suffixal nominal, as it is added to the morpheme verbal to obtain *étudiant*.
    - *s* is the last grammatical morpheme called morpheme suffixal du nombre pluriel.
  - (ii) travaillent
    - *travail*: lexical morpheme, the radical nominal
    - *i*: first grammatical morpheme called morpheme suffixal verbal, as it is added to the LM to form the verb *travailler*.

- ent: second grammatical morpheme called morpheme suffical verbal de terminaison, as it represents the normalending of the verb conjugated at the 3rd person plural of present tense.

### 3.3 Répresentation du Morphonophonème ou Morphoneme

From the definition of phoneme in unit 2 and of morpheme in unit 3 you can deduce that a morpheme is constituted of phonemes.

Examples: When you consider the lexical morphemes *etud* which is derived from *etude*, you have the following phonemes: /é/ + /t/ + /u/ + /d/, making four phonemes for the morpheme *étud*.

## 4.0 CONCLUSION

In this unit, you have learnt how phonology and morphonology are related, and how both constitute what is known as morphonology. You also learnt some technical terms like morpheme and morphoneme.

## 5.0 SUMMARY

This unit has enabled you get acquainted with the relationship between phonology and another aspect of linguistics which is morphonology, with the smallest meaningful unit called morpheme. Unit 1, unit 2, and unit 3 constitute altogether the first three aspects of French linguistics.

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. What is morphonology?
2. What is morphonology?
3. What is morpheme?
4. What is a morphoneme?
5. How is a morpheme represented?
6. Compare phonological and morphological representations, and show the difference between both.
7. Conjugate *parler* in present de l'indicatif, third person plural and analyse it morphologically.

8. Consider these words: *defaire*, *étudier*, *étudiante*, *appellation*, *découragement*. Analyse each word morphologically, explaining the various morphemes therein.

## 7.0

**REFERENCES/FURTHER READING**

Brousseau, A. M. et Nikiema, E. (2001). *Phonologie et Morphologie du Français*. Montreal: Collection Champs Linguistiques, FIDES.

*Dictionnaire de Linguistique et des Sciences du Langage*. (1999). Paris: Larousse.

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Robins, R. H. (1973). *Linguistique Générale; une Introduction*. Paris: Armand Colin.



### 3.1.1 Description Phonologique Des Phonèmes Vocaliques Oraux

Each oral vowel phoneme is described with specific phonological features as follows:

Phonème /i/	Sonant	+	Arrière	-
	Syllabique	+	Coronal	-
	Consonantique	-	Arrondi	-
	Continu	+	Voisé	+
	Nasal	-	Antérieur	-
	Haut	+		
	Bas	-		
Phonème /e/	Sonant	+	Arrière	-
	Syllabique	+	Coronal	-
	Consonantique	-	Arrondi	-
	Continu	+	Voisé	+
	Nasal	-	Antérieur	-
	Haut	-		
	Bas	-		
Phonème /ɛ /	Sonant	+	Arrière	-
	Syllabique	+	Coronal	-
	Consonantique	-	Arrondi	-
	Continu	+	Voisé	+
	Nasal	-	Antérieur	-
	Haut	-		
	Bas	+		
Phonème /a/	Sonant	+	Arrière	+
	Syllabique	+	Coronal	-
	Consonantique	-	Arrondi	-
	Continu	+	Voisé	+
	Nasal	-	Antérieur	-
	Haut	-		
	Bas	+		
Phonème /ɔ/	Sonant	+	Arrière	-
	Syllabique	+	Coronal	-
	Consonantique	-	Arrondi	+
	Continu	+	Voisé	+
	Nasal	-	Antérieur	-
	Haut	+		

	Bas	-		
Phonemes / $\Phi$ /, / $\vartheta$ /	Sonant	+	Arrière	-
	Syllabique	+	Coronal	-
	Consonantique	-	Arrondi	+
	Continu	+	Voisé	+
	Nasal	-	Antérieur	-
	Haut	-		
	Bas	-		
Phoneme / $\text{œ}$ /	Sonant	+	Arrière	-
	Syllabique	+	Coronal	-
	Consonantique	-	Arrondi	+
	Continu	+	Voisé	+
	Nasal	-	Antérieur	-
	Haut	-		
	Bas	-		
Phoneme / $u$ /	Sonant	+	Arrière	+
	Syllabique	+	Coronal	-
	Consonantique	-	Arrondi	+
	Continu	+	Voisé	+
	Nasal	-	Antérieur	-
	Haut	+		
	Bas	-		
Phoneme / $o$ /	Sonant	+	Arrière	+
	Syllabique	+	Coronal	-
	Consonantique	-	Arrondi	+
	Continu	+	Voisé	+
	Nasal	-	Antérieur	-
	Haut	-		
	Bas	-		
Phoneme / $\text{ə}$ /	Sonant	+	Arrière	+
	Syllabique	+	Coronal	-
	Consonantique	-	Arrondi	+
	Continu	+	Voisé	+
	Nasal	-	Antérieur	-
	Haut	-		
	Bas	-		
Phoneme / $\alpha$ /	Sonant	+	Arrière	+

Syllabique	+	Coronal	-
Consonantique	-	Arrondi	+
Continu	+	Voisé	+
Nasal	-	Antérieur	-
Haut	-		
Bas	+		

### 3.2 Phonèmes Vocaliques Nasaux

You should note that there are three nasal vowels in French, which include:

- voyelle antérieure [ɛ̃]
- voyelle médiane [œ̃]
- voyelle postérieures [ɔ̃]

#### 3.2.1 Description Phonologique des Phonèmes Vocaliques Nasaux

Each nasal vowel phoneme is described with specific phonological features.

Phoneme /ɛ̃/	Sonant	+	Arrière	-
	Syllabique	+	Coronal	-
	Consonantique	-	Arrondi	-
	Continu	+	Voisé	+
	Nasal Haut	+	Antérieur	-
	Bas	+		
Phoneme /œ̃/	Sonant	+	Arrière	+
	Syllabique	+	Coronal	-
	Consonantique	-	Arrondi	+
	Continu	+	Voisé	+
	Nasal	+	Antérieur	-
	Haut	-		

	Bas	+		
Phoneme / <i>ɔ̃</i> /	Sonant	+	Arrière	+
	Syllabique	+	Coronal	-
	Consonantique	-	Arrondi	+
	Continu	+	Voisé	+
	Nasal	+	Antérieur	-
	Haut	-		
	Bas	+		

#### 4.0 CONCLUSION

In this unit, you have learnt what the vowel phonemes are in the French sound system. You have also learnt the phonological description of each of the 16 vowel phonemes existing in the language.

#### 5.0 SUMMARY

This unit has enabled you to identify the different vowel phonemes of the French language. This unit has also availed you with the proper phonological description of the phonemes using the appropriate technical terms.

#### 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Trouvez des paires minimales pour opposer les phonèmes /u/et /i/ aux autre voyelles fermées.
2. Trouvez des paires minimales pour opposer le phonème /oe/ aux autres voyelles ouvertes.

#### 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

- Alo, P. O. (1999). *Éléments de base en Phonétique et le Phonétisme du Français*. Lagos:Rothmed International Ltd.
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## **UNIT 5      DESCRIPTION PHONOLOGIQUE DES PHONÈMES CONSONANTIQUES DU FRANÇAIS**

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Phonèmes Consonantiques
  - 3.2 Les Occlusives
    - 3.2.1 Les Occlusifs Oraux
    - 3.2.2 Les Occlusifs Nasaux
  - 3.3 Les Constrictifs
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

This unit will introduce you to the phonological description of French consonant phonemes. You will learn the total number of consonant phonemes existing in the French language and sound system and their respective phonological features.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

At the end this unit, you should be able to:

- identify the different consonant phonemes in the French language system
- describe each consonant phoneme phonologically.

### 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

#### 3.1 Les Phonèmes Consonantiques Du Français

In the French language system, you have two categories of consonant phonemes: 'les occlusives' and 'les constrictives.'

#### 3.2 Les Occlusives

You should learn that there are 6 occlusives in French which are: [p, b, t, d, k, g].

##### 3.2.1 Description Phonologique Des Occlusives

You have the following features to describe each of the phonemes called occlusives:

Phonème /p/	Sonant	-	Arrière	-
	Syllabique	-	Coronal	-
	Consonantique	+	Arrondi	-
	Continu	-	Voisé	-
	Nasal	-	Antérieur	-
	Haut	-		
	Bas	-		
Phonème /b/	Sonant	-	Arrière	-
	Syllabique	-	Coronal	-
	Consonantique	+	Arrondi	-
	Continu	-	Voisé	-
	Nasal	-	Antérieur	-
	Haut	-		
	Bas	-		
Phonème /t/	Sonant	-	Arrière	-
	Syllabique	-	Coronal	+
	Consonantique	+	Arrondi	-
	Continu	-	Voisé	-
	Nasal	-	Antérieur	+

	Haut	-		
	Bas	-		
Phonème /d/	Sonant	-	Arrière	-
	Syllabique	-	Coronal	+
	Consonantique	+	Arrondi	-
	Continu	-	Voisé	+
	Nasal	-	Antérieur	+
		Haut	-	
	Bas	-		
Phonème /k/	Sonant	-	Arrière	+
	Syllabique	-	Coronal	-
	Consonantique	+	Arrondi	-
	Continu	-	Voisé	-
	Nasal	-	Antérieur	-
		Haut	+	
	Bas	-		
Phonème /g/	Sonant	-	Arrière	+
	Syllabique	-	Coronal	-
	Consonantique	+	Arrondi	-
	Continu	-	Voisé	+
	Nasal	-	Antérieur	-
		Haut	+	
	Bas	-		

### 3.3 Les Constrictives

Note that there are 13 constrictives in French divided into different categories as follows:

- 6 Fricatives: [ f, v, s, z, β, ʒ, ]
- 3 Nasales: [ m, n, ŋ ]
- 2 Latérales: [ l, R ]
- 2 Médiannes: [ j, W ]

### 3.3.1 Description Phonologique Des Constrictives

Suivant ces traits, le système consonantique du français standard est représenté dans le tableau des consonnes ci-après :

Lieu d'articulation		Bilabiales	Labio-dentales	Apico-dentales	Apico-alvéolaires	Palatales	Labio-vélaire	Vélales	Glottal	
<b>Mode d'articulation</b>										
Occlusives - sourd		p		t				k		
+ sonore		b		d				g		
C O N S T R I C T I V E S	<b>Fricatives</b>									
	- sourd			f		s	ʃ		(h)	
	+ sonore			v		z	ʒ			
	S O N A N T E S	Nasales								
				m		n		ɲ		
		Latérale					l			
		Médianes						j	w	
	Trille					R				

You should note that the constrictives are described each as shown below:

Phonème /f/	Sonant	-	Arrière	-
	Syllabique	-	Coronal	-
	Consonantique	+	Arrondi	-
	Continu	+	Voisé	-
	Nasal	-	Antérieur	+
	Haut	-		
Phonème /v/	Bas	-		
	Sonant	-	Arrière	-
	Syllabique	-	Coronal	-
	Consonantique	+	Arrondi	-
	Continu	+	Voisé	+
	Nasal	-	Antérieur	+
Haut	-			
Bas	-			

Phonème /s/	Sonant	-	Arrière	-
	Syllabique	-	Coronal	+
	Consonantique	+	Arrondi	-
	Continu	+	Voisé	-
	Nasal	-	Antérieur	+
	Haut	-		
	Bas	-		
Phonème /z/	Sonant	-	Arrière	-
	Syllabique	-	Coronal	+
	Consonantique	+	Arrondi	-
	Continu	+	Voisé	+
	Nasal	-	Antérieur	+
	Haut	-		
	Bas	-		
Phonème /ʃ/	Sonant	-	Arrière	-
	Syllabique	-	Coronal	+
	Consonantique	+	Arrondi	-
	Continu	+	Voisé	-
	Nasal	-	Antérieur	-
	Haut	+		
	Bas	-		
Phonème /ʒ/	Sonant	-	Arrière	-
	Syllabique	-	Coronal	+
	Consonantique	+	Arrondi	-
	Continu	+	Voisé	+
	Nasal	-	Antérieur	-
	Haut	-		
	Bas	-		

Phonème /m/	Sonant	+	Arrière	-
	Syllabique	-	Coronal	-
	Consonantique	+	Arrondi	-
	Continu	+	Voisé	+
	Nasal	+	Antérieur	+
	Haut	-		
	Bas	-		
Phonème /n/	Sonant	+	Arrière	-
	Syllabique	-	Coronal	+
	Consonantique	+	Arrondi	-
	Continu	+	Voisé	+
	Nasal	+	Antérieur	+
	Haut	-		
	Bas	-		
Phonème /ɲ/	Sonant	+	Arrière	-
	Syllabique	-	Coronal	-
	Consonantique	+	Arrondi	-
	Continu	+	Voisé	+
	Nasal	+	Antérieur	-
	Haut	+		
	Bas	-		
Phonème /l/	Sonant	+	Arrière	+
	Syllabique	-	Coronal	-
	Consonantique	+	Arrondi	-
	Continu	+	Voisé	+
	Nasal	-	Antérieur	-
	Haut	-		
	Bas	-		
Phonème /R/	Sonant	+	Arrière	-
	Syllabique	-	Coronal	+

	Consonantique	+	Arrondi	-
	Continu	-	Voisé	+
	Nasal	-	Antérieur	+
	Haut	-		
	Bas	-		
Phonème /j /	Sonant	+	Arrière	-
	Syllabique	-	Coronal	-
	Consonantique	+	Arrondi	-
	Continu	+	Voisé	+
	Nasal	-	Antérieur	-
	Haut	+		
	Bas	-		
Phonème /w /	Sonant	+	Arrière	+
	Syllabique	-	Coronal	-
	Consonantique	+	Arrondi	+
	Continu	+	Voisé +	
	Nasal	-	Antérieur	-
	Haut	+		
	Bas	-		

#### 4.0 CONCLUSION

In this unit, you have been taught the consonant phonemes of the French language system. You have also learnt the phonological description of each of the phonemes.

#### 5.0 SUMMARY

This unit has enabled you identify the 19 consonant phonemes of the French language. This unit has also availed you with the proper phonological description of each of the consonant phonemes using appropriate features.

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Find out the phonemes contained in the following words: ville, agneau; papa; maison; chaussure, signe.
2. Attempt the phonological description of each of the phonemes you found in (1) above.
3. Trouvez des paires minimales avec les phonèmes suivants: /d/, /t/ et /g/.
4. Prononcez ce phonème plusieurs fois et donnez 5 exemples des mots ayant ce phonème consonantique



## 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

- Alo, P. O. (1999). *Éléments de base en Phonétique et le Phonétisme du Français*. Lagos: Rothmed International Ltd.
- Brousseau, A. M. et Nikiema, E. (2001). *Phonologie et Morphologie du Français*. Montreal: Collection Champs Linguistiques, FIDES.
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- Robins, R. H. (1973): *Linguistique Générale; une Introduction*. Paris: Armand Colin.



**MODULE 2**

Unit 1	Distribution Segmentale
Unit 2	Allophones et Distribution Complémentaire
Unit 3	Les Traits Phonologiques
Unit 4	Les Traits Distinctifs
Unit 5	Les Règles Phonologiques

**UNIT 1 LA DISTRIBUTION SEGMENTALE****CONTENTS**

1.0	Introduction
2.0	Objective
3.0	Main Content
3.1	Phonemes et Distribution des Segments
3.2	Paire Minimale
3.3	Representation des Paires Minimales
4.0	Conclusion
5.0	Summary
6.0	Tutor-Marked Assignment
7.0	References/Further Reading

**1.0 INTRODUCTION**

In phonology, there is a systematic relationship between some sounds. Sounds appear in different contexts or environments they have what is called distribution.

**2.0 OBJECTIVE**

At the end this unit, you should be able to:

- work out the distribution of words in a particular environment as well as the evolving paire minimale.

### 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

#### 3.1 Phonemes et Distribution des Segments

The different contexts in which sounds or segments appear (in a word or in a syllable, the nature of its phonetic environment) altogether form what is called distribution.

The best way to know whether two sounds that are similar differ phonetically or phonologically is to use the techniques of *paire minimale*.

#### 3.2 Paire Minimale

A pair is a group of two forms that have different meanings and differ by only one segment in the same position in the word (*une paire minimale désigne quand deux mots se ressemblent et n'ont qu'un seul son pour les différencier*).

Examples:

- |    |               |                           |
|----|---------------|---------------------------|
| a. | [ose] hausser | differs from [oze] oser   |
| b. | [diR ] dire   | differs from [IiR ] lire  |
| c. | [fɛ:t] fête   | differs from [tɛ:t] tête  |
| d. | [tabl] table  | differs from [kabl] cable |

In those examples, [ose] and [oze], [diR] and [IiR], [f :t] and [t: t], [tabl] and [kabl] form respectively *une paire minimale*. In [ose] and [oze ], /s/ and /z/ are distinct phonemes, since both forms have different meanings altogether.

Note that the same goes for the other *paireminimales*: /d/ and /l/, /f/ and /t/, /t/ and /k/ are distinct phonemes.

#### 3.3 Representations Des Paires Minimales

You should note that *paireminimales* are established based on phonetic transcription and not on orthographic transcriptions. For instance, in the examples above, [oze] is written *oser*, [kabl ] is written *cable*, whereby letters *s* and *c* become respectively phonemes /z/ and /k/.

In other words, you must always do the phonetic transcription of two words in order to know whether or not the said words can form a *paire minimale*.

#### 4.0 CONCLUSION

In this unit, you have learnt what is called segmental distribution in phonology, with examples in French. You have also learnt what is called *paire minimale* and how it is represented.

#### 5.0 SUMMARY

This unit has taught you to know and note that the context in which sounds are used are very important, in the sense that they determine whether or not two particular sounds are distinct phonemes.

#### Exercises

##### Les sons vocaliques

###### [y]/[u]

Il est audessous de tout. / Il est audessus de tout.  
Elle s'est tue. / Elle sait tout.  
Elle est pure/ Elle est pour.  
Tu es sourd. / Tu es sûr.  
Il est tout fou. / Il est touffu.  
Il est à nu. / Il est à nous.  
Vous rugissez. / Vous rougissez.  
Prends cette roue. / Prends cette rue.

###### [œ] / [ɛ]

Il est à l'heure. / Il est à l'air.  
C'est un petit feu. / C'est un petit fait.  
Il est sans père./ Il est sans peur.  
Je veux m'en aller. / Je vais m'en aller.  
Il y a un jeune en trop. / Il y a un gêne en trop.  
Ses serres sont belles. / Ses sœurs sont belles.

###### [ɛ]/[œ]/[ã]

Il pince, il ponce, il pense  
La teinte, la tonte, la tente,  
Reims, ronce, rance  
Quinte, conte, Kant  
Peindre, pondre, pendre  
Feinte, fonte, fente  
Pinte, ponte, pente  
Mainte, monte, menthe

##### Les sons consonantiques

###### [k]/[g]

Car/gare  
Case/ gaz  
Classe / glace  
Coûter / goûter

###### [v] / [f]

Un vœu / un feu  
Une ville / une file  
Ils vont / ils font  
Je vais / je fais  
Le vent / le faon

###### [v] / [b]

Va / bats  
Vin / bain  
Vent / banc  
Vol / bol  
Je vois / je bois

###### [s] / [z]

Les cieux / les yeux  
Les sœurs / les heures  
Les sauts / Les os  
Les soies / les oies  
Je l'essaie / je les ai  
Ils s'écrivent / Ils écrivent

###### [j] / [z]

Paille / page  
Pille / pige  
Fille / fige  
Caille / cage  
Bouillie / bougie  
Rouille / rouge

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. What is segmental distribution?
2. Why do you have segmental distribution?
3. What is paire minimale?
4. Give five pairesminimales in French
5. What do you do to determine a paire minimale?
6. Why do you have to transcribe phonetically a word or group of words before talking of distribution?
7. Find some pairesminimales to oppose the following phonemes:

/f/, v/, /z/, /u/ /œ/, /ɛ/, /e/
---------------------------------

## 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

Brousseau, A. M. et Nikiema, E. (2001). *Phonologie et Morphologie du Français*. Montreal: Collection Champs Linguistiques, FIDES.

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**UNIT 2****ALLOPHONES ET DISTRIBUTION  
COMPLEMENTAIRE****CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Phonemic Representations
  - 3.2 Allophones
  - 3.3 Les Variantes Libres
  - 3.4 Les Variantes Conditionnées
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

**1.0 INTRODUCTION**

In this unit, you will learn the function of a phoneme in communication: the distinctive function according to which an abstract unit known as phoneme corresponds to various representations depending on the context.

**2.0 OBJECTIVES**

At the end this unit, you should be able to:

- Know the various representations of different phonemes placed in particular contexts (that is what is called segmental distribution).

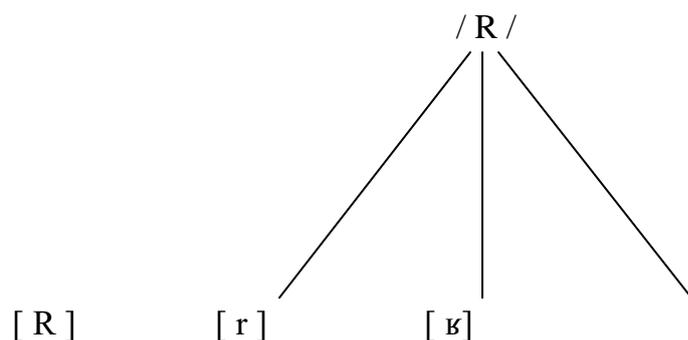
**3.0 MAIN CONTENT 3.1 Phonemic Representations**

Here, you should note that there are three types of phonemic representation called variantes: les allophones; les variantes libres and les variantes conditionnées.

**3.1 Les Allophones**

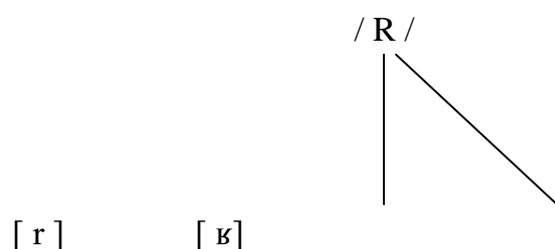
Allophones are various phonetic representations of a phoneme. In other words, a phoneme is articulated differently depending on its environment.

For example, in French, /R/ is pronounced 3 different ways: [R ], [ r ] or [ ʀ ] depending on its position amidst of other sounds in a word. [R], [ r ] and [ ʀ ] will be called allophones of the same phoneme, hence you have:



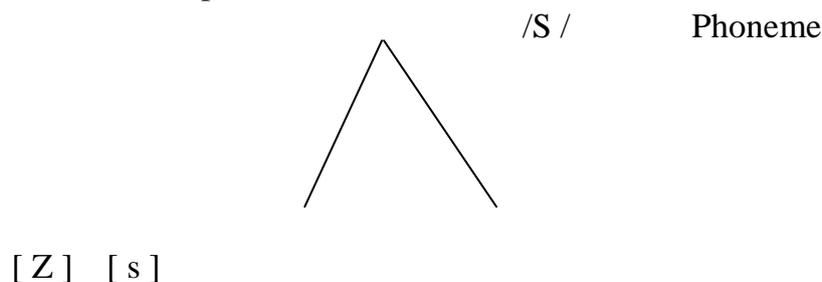
### 3.3 Les Variantes Libres

Variantes libres are interchangeable allophones that are said to be in free variation. For example, the consonant [R] in Paris can be pronounced either as a dental [ r ] or as a uvular [ R ]: both seem apply without any rule. [ R ] and [ r ] will therefore be said to be variantes libres of the phoneme /R/.



### 3.4 Les Variantes Conditionnees

Variantes conditionnées are allophones that are not in free variation; their distribution is regulated: some appear in a given phonetic context and the other in another entirely different phonetic environment. Such allophones will be said to be in distribution complémentaire. For example, phoneme /s/ is pronounced [ z ] when it is between two vowels, and it is pronounced s in the other contexts. This is represented as follows:



Allophones eu distribution complémentaire

#### 4.0 CONCLUSION

In this unit, you have learnt the various phonemic representations in French phonology, and how each representation works in the French sound system. You have also learnt how each representation is called in technical terms.

#### 5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have become familiar with the technical terms used for phonemic representations in the French language. You are to use those technical terms as appropriate whenever you find them, and you should be able to apply them where and whenever necessary.

#### 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Consider the following words: *assez*; *asile*; *série*. Study consonant [s] in the 3 different environments. Give the corresponding phonemic representations.
2. What is variante in French phonology?
3. What is variante libre?
4. What are allophones?
5. When are allophones in distribution complémentaire?
6. Give examples of such allophones (in 5) in French.
7. Are there such phonemes in your mother tongue?

#### 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

- Alo, P. O. (1999). *Elements de Base en Phonétique et le Phonétisme du Français*. Lagos: Rothmed International Ltd.
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## **UNIT 3 LES TRAITS PHONOLOGIQUES**

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Phonological Features
  - 3.2 Definitions
    - 3.2.1 What is a Feature?
    - 3.2.2 Distinctive Feature
    - 3.2.3 Segmental Matrix
  - 3.3 Phonological Features of Consonants
  - 3.4 Phonological Features of Vowels
  - 3.5 Vocabulary
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References /Further Reading

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

This unit will learn what is called phonological features, especially as applied to French phonology. You will also learn the different features that exist for French sounds.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

At the end this unit, you should be able to:

- describe a phoneme by its appropriate characteristics known as features
- identify a sound, giving its phonological features, and make a difference between features of the two categories of sounds in French-consonant and vowels.

### 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

#### 3.1 Phonological Features

Phonemes are described according to their features.

#### 3.2 Definitions

##### 3.2.1 What is a Feature?

A feature is a minimal phonetic unit contained in a matrix that defines a segment. If a segment has a feature, it is marked (+) and if it does not have the feature, it is marked (-).

##### 3.2.2 Distinctive Feature

A distinctive feature helps to identify minimal pairs. For examples in French, you have the following as distinctive features:

- Voiced as opposed to voiceless (voisé/non-voisé)
- Oral as opposed to nasal (oral/nasal)
- The different places of articulation of sounds, etc.(lieu d'articulation...)

##### 3.2.3 Segmental Matrix

A matrix is the putting together of all the features that characterise a given segment. Taking phonemes /u/ and /m/ as examples, you have the following as their respective matrix:

/u/		/m/
- Consonant + vocalique +haut + arrondi - Bas	+  +	+ consonant - vocalique labial voisé
	nasal	

**Fig. 1: representation of matrix of /u/ and /m/**

### 3.3 Phonological Features of Consonants

French consonants have each a matrix of features that characterise them. All the features are put together in a table as shown below:

	p	t	K	g	f	s	ʃ	v	z	
[Syllabique]	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
[consonant]	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
[antérieur]	+	+	-	-	+	+	-	+	+	-
[postérieur]	-	-	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-
[arrondi]	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	-
[nasal]	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
[continu]	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+

### 3.4 Phonological Features of Vowels

The phonological features of vowels are as follows:

	i	e	ɛ	a			œ	ə	u	ɛ	ǎ	œ	ə
[Syllabique]	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
[consonant]	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
[antérieur]	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-
[postérieur]	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	-	-	-	-
[arrondi]	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	+	+
[nasal]	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	+

### 3.5 Vocabulary

You have learned the technical terms used in French phonology, especially with regards to this unit. Below is the list of words in form of lexicon (English - French):

English	French
- <i>a feature</i>	<i>un trait</i>
- <i>phonological features</i>	<i>les traits phonologiques</i>
- <i>segmental matrix</i>	<i>une matricesegmentale</i>
- <i>a segment</i>	<i>un segment</i>
- <i>distinctive features</i>	<i>les traits distinctifs</i>
- <i>front</i>	<i>antérieur</i>
- <i>back</i>	<i>postérieur</i>
- <i>+ voiced</i>	<i>voisé</i>

- *voiceless* *mon voisé*

#### 4.0 CONCLUSION

In this unit, you have learnt the various features used in describing phonemes with the necessary technical terms needed for that purpose.

#### 5.0 SUMMARY

This unit has acquainted you with the way to describe a sound as phoneme, given all its characteristics termed features. You also become familiar with the way to differentiate between phonemes, using their respective phonological features.

#### 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Put the following segments in a table and specify for each the phonological features:
  - a. l, r, n, m
  - b. f, z, R, s
  - c. b, d, k, p
  - d. I, y, u
  - e. œ, y, i,
  - f. u, ə, o, a
2. List all the segments corresponding to the following description:
  - a. [ + syllabique; - consonantique ]
  - b. [ + voice ]
  - c. [ + syllabique; + arrondi ]
  - d. [ + syllabique; - consonantique, + arrondi, + nasal ].
3. Identify minimal pairs (paires minimales) in the list of words below:
  - a. loin, toin, soïn, coin, point
  - b. classe, glace, place, passé, tasse, trace, grasse
  - c. graisse, grosse, glace, grasse, grise, glisse
  - d. gros, eau, rot, beau, peau, seau, taux, dos, haut, fléau.

#### 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

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## **UNIT 4 LES TRAITS DISTINCTIFS**

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Définitions
  - 3.2 Les Différents Traits Distinctifs en Français
    - 3.2.1 Le Voisement
    - 3.2.2 La Nasalité
    - 3.2.3 L'Antériorité
    - 3.2.4 L'Arrondissement
    - 3.2.5 Les Différents Lieux d'Articulation
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

This unit will introduce you to the distinctive features of sounds in the French language sounds system. You will learn the various features as they apply to different categories of sounds in the language.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

At the end this unit, you should be able to:

- state what distinctive feature is all about
- identify the various distinctive features, compare and classify different phonemes according to their features.

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT 3.1 Definition**

In the last unit, you learnt the role of a distinctive feature in a given language. As a definition, you can say that distinctive features are those features that distinguish phonemes between themselves. In other words, distinctive features oppose a particular phoneme to the other phonemes in the language.

Also note that the number of distinctive features is less than the number of phonemes in a language.

## 3.2 The Various Distinctive Features in French

Here, you will learn the various distinctive features existing in the French language. Among those features, you have:

- *le voisement (voisé versus non voisé) - la nasalité (oral versus nasal) - l'antériorité (antérieur versus postérieur) - l'arrondissement (arrondi versus non arrondi)*
- *les différents lieux d'articulation.*

### 3.2.1 Le Voisement

This is a distinctive feature opposing a voiced phoneme to a voiceless phoneme. Examples:

Phonemes /b/, /d/, /g/ are voiced (voisé), while phonemes /p/, /t/, /k/ are voiceless (non voisé). The two categories of phonemes are opposed by the feature of voice 'voisement'.

### 3.2.2 La Nasalité

This is a feature opposing oral phonemes to nasal phonemes. Examples:

Phonemes /i/, /a/, /o/ are oral, while phonemes /ɪ/, /ɔ̃/ / ð̃/ are nasal. The distinctive feature of nasalité opposes both categories.

### 3.2.3 L'antériorité

The feature opposes front (antérieur) phonemes to back (postérieur) phonemes. Examples:

Phonemes /i/, /e/, /ɛ/ are front vowel phonemes, while /u/, /o/, /ə/ are back vowel phonemes. The distinctive feature antériorité opposes both categories.

### 3.2.4 L'arrondissement

This feature opposes round (arrondi) phonemes to non-round (non arrondi) ones. Examples:

Phonemes /i /, /e/, /ɛ / are non-round vowel phonemes, while / u /, /o /, /œ/ are round vowel phonemes. The distinctive features or roundness is used to oppose the two categories of phonemes.

### 3.2.5 Les LieuxD'articulation

You should also learn that the different places of articulation are used as distinctive features. For instance, labial phonemes are opposed to velar phonemes in French as in English. Examples:

Phonemes / p/, /b/, /m/ are labial phonemes, while phonemes /k/, /g/,/w/ are velar phonemes. The first category of sounds (labial) are characterised by the feature [+labial]. The distinctive feature [labial] is used to oppose the two categories.

## 4.0 CONCLUSION

In this unit, you have learnt the different distinctive features of phonemes in French. Examples are given to illustrate each of the features commonly used in the phonological description of sounds in the French language.

## 5.0 SUMMARY

With this unit, you now know how to define a distinctive feature. You also know now how to identify the various distinctive features that exist in the French language, using some examples to demonstrate their application.

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Trouvez des traits distinctifs utilises en anglais, mais absents en Français, et vice-versa.
2. Trouvez les traits distinctifs des phonèmes vocaliques du Français!
3. Trouvez les traits distinctifs des phonèmes consonantiques du Français!

## 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

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## **UNIT 5    LES REGLES PHONOLOGIQUES**

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Règles Dérivationnelles
    - 3.1.1 Règles d'épenthèse
    - 3.1.2 Règles d'élision
    - 3.1.3 Règles d'assimilation
  - 3.2 Les Règles Transformationnelles
    - 3.2.1 Règles de Liaison
    - 3.2.2 Règles de Nasalisation
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

In phonology, there are laid-down rules guiding the proper functioning of French sounds in speech. This unit will acquaint you with the main phonological rules in the French language.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

At the end this unit, you should be able to:

- identify the types of phonological rules that exist in the French language sound system
- apply those rules when and where necessary.

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

You have various types of phonological rules in the French sound system.

Those rules are in two categories:

- (i) les règles dérivationnelles
- (ii) les règles transformationnelles

### 3.1 Les Règles Dérivationnelles

There are three main derivational rules in French. Below is the description of each of them:

#### 3.1.1 Règle D'épenthèse

This rule consists in inserting a segment in a given context, and it is represented as follows:

$\emptyset \rightarrow B/C - D$  (this simply means that a segment B is inserted between C and D). Examples:

- Comment va-elle? In this example, it is not phonologically right to leave the a of va and the e of elle as they are, because they constitute what is called hiatus. A **hiatus** is a gap between two vowels which needs to be filled. A consonant type is usually used to fill the said gap. That consonant is termed *consonne épenthétique*. In the example above, t is the right *consonne épenthétique* to use; so it becomes: comment va-t-elle?. Other examples:

(a)	a-ilmangé	becomes	a-t-ilmangé?
(b)	mange-il bien?	becomes	mange-t-il bien?

#### 3.1.2 Règle D'élision

This rule consists in canceling a segment in between two other segments. It is represented as follows:

$A \rightarrow \emptyset / C - D$  (A is the segment cancelled between C and D)

Example:

Département is pronounced with the second e cancelled; thus you have depart-ment. Also, the ə at the end of some words are usually cancelled, as in the examples below:-

*Table* / tablə / .....t-a-b-l  
*Vide* / vidə / .....v-i-d  
*Livre* / livRə / .....l-i-v-R

### 3.1.3 Règle D'Assimilation

This rule describes a phonetic change undergone by a segment under the influence of another segment. You should note that assimilation can occur backward as well as forward, as shown in the examples below. When assimilation occurs backward, you talk of assimilation regressive; when it occurs forward, you talk of assimilation progressive.

Examples:

#### (a) Assimilation regressive (occurs backward/right to left)

Absorber is pronounced a-p-s-ə-R-b-e. In this example, /b/ is a voiced stop which became voiceless /p/ under the influence of the voiceless sound /s/ that follows it. Other examples are: / ə- p-s-ε-Rv-e/ for observer /m-e-t-s-i-n/ for medicine, or obtenir [opteniR].

#### (b) Assimilation progressive (occurs forward/left to right)

This occurs when a sound becomes more like the sound that was just pronounced before it or the one that lingers from the sound articulated (C'est l'influence du premier son au deuxième son).

Example: Il n'a pas is pronounced il-n-ã-pa (the a of n'a has been influenced by the nasal consonant n, and so, changed from an oral vowel to a nasal one).

## 3.2 Les Règles Transformationnelles

There are two main transformational rules in French.

### 3.2.1 La Règle De Liaison

This rule consists in moving the final consonant of a word to the beginning of the following word. It is represented as follows: C##V

→ ##CV

s	·f-ã
	·-a-m-i
	[-a-m-i

### 3.2.2 La Règle De Nasalisation

This rule consists in nasalizing an oral vowel which placed before a nasal consonant. It is represented as follows:

V → {+nasal} / - C {+ nasal } #

Examples: Mon ami /mən ## ami/ m- ə -n-a-m-i

#### 4.0 CONCLUSION

In this unit, you have learnt the main phonological rules that are commonly used in the French sound system. Take note and put them to practice where necessary.

#### 5.0 SUMMARY

With this unit, you now know what a phonological rule is, and how it is used in context. You have also learnt the various types of rules and their respective applications in the French language system.

#### 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. What is a phonological rule?
2. Name the existing rules in French sound system.
3. Study the following words and pronounce each one, apply the correct phonological rule in each case:
  - observateur
  - le maître de parole - je veux te le dire - que fais-tu maintenant?
  - Annuel
  - Analphabet.

#### 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

Alo, P. O. (1999). *Éléments de Base en Phonétique et le Phonétisme du Français*. Lagos: Rothmed International Ltd.

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**MODULE 3**

Unit 1	Les Réactions Phonologiques dans la Chaîne Parlée
Unit 2	Les Principes de Liaison en Français
Unit 3	Elision et Enchaînement en Français
Unit 4	L'accent en Français
Unit 5	L'intonation en Français

**UNIT 1 RÉACTIONS PHONOLOGIQUE DANS LA CHAÎNE PARLÉE****CONTENTS**

1.0	Introduction
2.0	Objectives
3.0	Main Content
3.1	Reactions Phonologiques dans la Chaîne
3.1.1	L'ellision
3.1.2	L'enchaînement
3.1.3	L'liaison
4.0	Conclusion
5.0	Summary
6.0	Tutor-Marked Assignment
7.0	References/Further Reading

**1.0 INTRODUCTION**

In this unit, you will learn how sounds/phonemes interact and function in the French language system. You will also learn the interaction between sounds provoke some phonological reactions in speech such as élision, enchaînement and liaison.

**2.0 OBJECTIVES**

At the end this unit, you should be able to:

- explain the phonological reaction of sounds in the French language system
- apply the resulting phonological phenomena whenever you speak French.

### 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

#### 3.1 Reactions Phonologiques

In speech, there are series of sounds produced, and some phonological reactions take place in the course of their production. Here, you will study only the commonest reactions, which are: *élision*, *enchaînement*; and *liaison*.

##### 3.1.1 L'élision

You have already learnt in the phonological rules, among which is *l'élision*. Emphasis was laid on the *élision* of *e muet*, that is (ə).

Some examples:

Le livre: i-ə-I-i-v-R-ə ..... I- ə -I -i v- R

Le un et le autre > l'un et l'autre:

**I-ə-œ-e-I-ə-o-t-R-ə ..... I-œ-e-I-o-t-R**

In these examples, the final ə in *livre* has undergone *élision*, just like the ə of *le* and the ə of **autre**.

In this unit, you will learn more cases of *élision* that are systematic.

Examples:

- *élision* of final letters of words:  
enfant ( ă f ă ) (where the t has undergone *élision*)  
  
Les étudiante (lezetdjă) (where s and ts are not pronounced, having undergone *élision*).
- *élision* of identical sounds  
siils (siil) → /s-i-l/ (where the i of si has undergone *élision*)  
  
la alliance (laalijăs ) → /I-a-I-j-ă-s/ (where the a of la has undergone *élision*).

You should note that all these examples are not similar. Each case is peculiar. You should therefore not generalise; rather, you learn the peculiarities in each case.

### 3.1.2 L'enchainement

This consists in changing the frontier between syllables. This change occurs when two words follow each other, with the first word ending with a consonant type, and the second word beginning with a vowel.

Example:

Une petite amie ..... /yn-pə -ti-ta-mi/

### 3.1.3 La Liaison

In the case of enchainement, there is movement of syllabic frontier, but the total number of phonemes does not change. On the contrary, in the case of liaison, there is a number of adjustments that change the number of phonemes, depending on the context. For example:

1. Ilsont /ilzə/
2. Trois heures /tRwazœR/
3. ont-ils /ətɪl/
4. Sept heures trios /sɛtœRtRwa/

(a) In the examples (1) and (2), there is consonant z between the two words: it is the **s** at the end of **ils** that changes to z to allow for **liaison** with the vowel o beginning the word ont. This type of liaison is termed liaison obligatoire, because it is the case of a pronoun ils depending on the verb **ont**.

In the examples (3) and (4), you have the case of liaison **obligatoire**, **ont** and **sept** depending on **ils** and **heures** respectively.

(b) There are cases where liaison is not possible at all, because the words in contact do not depend on each other. Examples:

Jean attend	/ʒɑ̃ɑ̃ɑ̃ɑ̃/
Un soldatarmé	/œsəɛl daaRme/

In the two examples, Jean and soldat do not depend respectively on attend and arme.

- (c) Also note that there are cases where you may or may not apply the liaison, depending on the competence of the speaker.

Example:

Je suis allé may be pronounced /ʒəsyizale/ or /ʒəsyiale/ (in the first instance, there is liaison, while in the second there is no liaison). More details and examples will be given in the next unit.

#### 4.0 CONCLUSION

In this unit, you have learnt that some phonological reactions are inherent whenever speech is produced; the main reactions are elision, enchaînement, and liaison. You have also learnt that there are three different types of liaison: compulsory, impossible and optional.

#### 5.0 SUMMARY

With this unit, you have learnt some more technical terms in French phonology, especially terms relating to the way sounds interact in the course of speech production. It is also a way for you to learn how to be fluent or proficient in French language.

#### 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Explain with illustrations the following: elision; liaison; enchaînement.
2. Study the following sentences and apply the main phonological reactions accordingly:
  - Je te le jure, je suis innocent
  - une grande étudiante est à la porte - nous sommes enfin réunis.

#### 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

Juilland, A.G. (1965). *Dictionnaire Inverse de la Langue Française*. La Haye: Mouton. (REF)

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## UNIT 2 LES PRINCIPES DE LIAISON EN FRANÇAIS

### CONTENTS

	1.0	Introduction	
	2.0	Objectives	
3.0	Main Content	3.1	
	What Liaison?	is	
		3.2	Liaison Obligatoire
		3.3	Liaison Impossible
		3.4	Liaison Facultative
	4.0	Conclusion	
	5.0	Summary	
	6.0	Tutor-Marked Assignment	
	7.0	References/Further Reading	

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

In the previous unit you learnt what liaison is about. In this unit you will learn the rules and principles guiding the application of liaison. In effect, there are many principles and rules for an acceptable pronunciation in French. The principles of liaison are part of these rules and principles. And each type of liaison has its particular rule and principle, be it compulsory (obligatoire), optional (facultative) or forbidden (impossible).

### 2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end this unit, you should be able to:

- acquaint yourself with liaison as it is correctly used in French
- state the two main causes of liaison
- identify compulsory, forbidden and optional liaisons.

### 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

#### 3.1 What is Liaison?

Liaison can be defined as the linking of the final and usually silent consonant of a word with the beginning vowel sound of the following word. It is an oral principle in French whereby two words are pronounced as if they are one. For liaison to take place, however, the first word must end with an unpronounced consonant, while the second word begins with a vowel sound. For instance, study the illustration below:

#### **Nous aimons nos amis**

In this sentence, there will be a liaison between the first two words - nous **aimons**, the first word ending with an unpronounced consonant **s** and the second word beginning with a vowel sound **ε**. Between the second word **aimons** and the third word **nos**, there cannot be any liaison because the former ends with an unpronounced consonant **s** and the latter begins too with a consonant **n** and not with a vowel sound. But between **nos** and **amis**, another liaison will take place; this is made possible because **nos** ends with an unpronounced consonant **s** and **amis** begins with a vowel sound **a**. To pronounce this sentence correctly therefore, you will have n-u-z- -m- ə- n-o- z-a-m-i (whereby **s** will be produced as **z** as a result of the liaison).

#### 3.2 Liaison Obligatoire

Compulsory liaison (liaison obligatoire) means that a liaison must take place between two words, provided they satisfy the criteria already discussed above. Remember that the two criteria are that:

1. there must be two words and they come one after the other in a sentence.
2. the first word ends with an unpronounced consonant while the second word begin with a vowel sound.

Liaison is compulsory in the cases enumerated below:

1. *Between an article and a noun.*  
e.g les-amis, les-étudiants, de-hommes un-an
2. *Between an article and an adjective*

- e.g les -anciens combatants,
- 3. *Between an adjective and a noun*  
e.g mon-ami, grand-homme, bon-amis, petit-enfant
- 4. *Between a pronoun and a verb*  
e.g nous-avons, ils-ont, vous-êtes, nous les-avons
- 5. *Between a verb and a noun or an adjective*  
e.g il est-avocat, nous sommes-impatients
- 6. *After the auxiliary verb être*  
e.g ilest-allé, elles sont-arrivés, il était-allé, il est-ici, je suis-ici.
- 7. *After a monosyllabic preposition, adverb or conjunction*  
e.g. chez-eux, en-Amérique très\_intéressant, quand-elle parle
- 8. *In certain expressions of compound words.*  
Accent -aigu, pas-encore, avan-hier, petit-a petit, tout-à coup, tout-à fait, tout-à l'heure, vis-à-vis, de plus-en plus, de moins-en moins, de temps-en temps de mieux-en mieux etc.

### 3.3 Liaison Impossible

There are situations where liaison is forbidden (impossible), even when the two major criteria earlier discussed are met. In the three cases below, there is no liaison:

- 1. *After a singular noun.*  
e.g. Le pied # ou la jambe
- 2. *with the conjunctions “et” and “ou”*  
e.g. femmes et # homes, lui et # elle, du pain # ou un croissant.
- 3. *Before a verb coming after an inversion*  
e.g. Vont-ils # arriver?
- 4. *After an interrogative adverb*  
e.g. quand # est-il arrivé? Combine # en as-tu?
- 5. *After a proper noun*  
e.g. Jean # est là, Jacques # a dormi.
- 6. *Between a singular noun and adjective coming after the noun.*  
e.g. un étudiant # américain, une femme # élégante
- 7. *In certain fixed expressions*  
e.g. nez # à nez, mort # ou vif, riz # au lait.
- 8. la # haine, le # heros, le # hazard, la #honte, le # haut, le #hariot, la # Hollande.

Note that “h” can be silent and therefore behave as a vowel. It can also be aspirated and behave as a consonant. This is why there cannot be liaison between for example la honte because the “h” in honte is aspirated. Meanwhile, the “h” in words like heure and homme are

silent and so, there is compulsory liaison between the two words *les* and *hommes*, *les* ending with *s*, and *hommes* beginning with silent *h*.

### 3.4 Liaison Facultative

In the case of optional liaison (*liaison facultative*), you are at liberty to either use liaison or not. The following situations bring about optional liaison:

1. *Between plural nouns and adjectives.*  
e.g. *des romans # - italiens, des appartements #- élégants, des femmes #- élégantes.*
2. *Between auxiliary or modal and their principal verbs.*  
e.g. *il doit # apprendre, je suis # arrivé*
3. *After adverbs*  
e.g. *vraiment # - inutile, considérablement # - accepté*
4. *After conjunctions (note that liaison is forbidden after the conjunction “et”* e.g. *mais # - enfin,*
5. *Chez # Anne, sans # Henri*

Note the use of the symbols: *#* means there must be a liaison; the symbol *#* means that liaison is forbidden, and *# -* means you may or not apply liaison.

### 4.0 CONCLUSION

Liaison constitutes a source of wrong pronunciation in French language by many. Nevertheless, if you devote time to learning liaison, you will end up having a solid background in the pronunciation of French. To concretise what you have learnt, you are advised to do some practices of liaison, using the internet. I recommend to you two websites:

<http://www.languageguide.org/français/grammar/pronunciation/> and <http://www.courseweb.edteched.uottawa.ca/phonetique/pages/phonetique/intro.htm>.

When you get to each of these sites, click on *liaison*, and you will have the opportunity of listening to the pronunciation of some examples of *liaison*.

### 5.0 SUMMARY

Through this unit, you have learnt the principles and rules of liaison. As a reminder, you have learnt that before a liaison can take place, there must be two words coming one after the other and that the first word should end with a consonant while the second word should begin with a vowel sound. In the same vein, you have learnt the three different situations in liaison: compulsory, forbidden or optional. You are strongly advised not to go into the next unit until you have thoroughly understood the principle of liaison. Note that there is no pronunciation in French without obeying the rules of liaison.

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

The assignment below is to be done and submitted to your tutor as indicated in the assignment file.

1. Briefly define a French pronunciation.
2. State the two main criteria for a liaison in French
3. In the following sentences, indicate where there should be compulsory, forbidden or optional liaison, using appropriate symbols:
  - a. - compulsory liaison
  - b. # forbidden liaison
  - c. # optional liaison

- Nous allons au restaurant chez Antoine. - Les étudiants sont absolument intéressés - Quand est-ce que Emma va arriver? - Je suis ici se soir pour prier - Jean a tout a fait raison.

## 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

Chantal, P.T. *et al.* (1989). *Cahier de Laboratoire et d'Exercices écrits*, McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc, New York.

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<http://www.languageguide.org/Français/grammar/pronunciation/> and <http://www.courseweb.edteched.uottawa.ca/phonetique/pages/phonetique/intro.htm>.

## **UNIT 3      ÉLISION ET ENCHAINEMENT EN FRANÇAIS**

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 L'Élision
  - 3.2 Enchaînement
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

You learnt that elision, liaison and enchaînement are normal phonological reactions in speech in French. You also learnt the principles guiding liaison in French pronunciation. In this unit, you will learn the rules and principles of elision and enchaînement for an effective and efficacious pronunciation in French. At this juncture, you should note that lack of adequate learning and mastery of these pronunciation principles have caused many learners of French to have bad command of French pronunciation. Good understanding of the functioning of these principles will help you to build a solid background in the pronunciation of French language in general.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- define both élision and enchaînement
- recognise when to use élision and enchaînement in speech
- identify the difference between liaison, élision and enchainment.

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1 L'élision En Question**

Élision is a process by which some words drop their final vowel and replace it with an apostrophe before words beginning with a vowel sound. It must be noted here that élision does not only have

pronunciation implication; it also has orthographic implication. Generally in French, when words ending with a vowel sound are followed immediately by another word beginning with a vowel sound, the vowel sound of the first word drops to be replaced with apostrophe, as illustrated in the examples below:

<b>L</b> ahirondelle	becomes	<b>l'</b> (h)irondelle
<b>L</b> eétudiant	becomes	<b>l'</b> étudiant
<b>L</b> aardoise	becomes	<b>l'</b> ardoise
<b>L</b> e enfant	becomes	<b>l'</b> enfant

Also, when the conjunction **si** is followed by the pronoun **il** or **ils**

Examples:

**Si il** veut parler becomes **s'il** veut parler  
**Si ils** sont là becomes **s'ils** sont là

At this juncture, it should be noted that there cannot be élision between the conjunction **si** and the personal pronoun **elle**. In other words, you cannot have:

Si elle	becoming	<b>s'elle</b>
Si elles	becoming	<b>s'elles</b>

So, **sielle** and **sielles** remain as they are; there is no change.

Also note that there cannot be élision between the vowel letter u and letter e. You cannot therefore have:

Tu es mon ami becoming **t'es** mon ami

### 3.2 L'enchânement En Question

There are two types of enchaînement in French: enchaînementvocalique and enchaînementconsonantique. The first type occurs when a word ends with a pronounced vowel and the word that follows it immediately begins with a vowel. In the second type, the word ends with a pronounced consonant but followed by another word beginning with a vowel sound.

(i) Examples of enchaînement vocalique:

- Il va-au cinéma

- Jai-eu -un billet
  - Il a - eu un ami
  - Il a parlé- une langue inconnue.
- (ii) Examples of enchaînement consonantique: -
- Il - est treiz(e) - heure(s)- à Paris
  - Ell(e) \_ adore \_ êtr(e) - amiable
  - Un bel \_oiseau.

#### 4.0 CONCLUSION

Elision and enchaînement constitute a source of wrong pronunciation of French words among people learning French as a foreign language, especially among English-speaking learners of French. However, this can be corrected if adequate time is devoted to their learning, right from the first year. You are therefore advised to make sure you have thoroughly mastered these principles before you proceed to the next unit. Do not rush to go to the next unit if you discover that you still have problem in understanding and using these principles of practical French.

#### 5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have learnt the principles of élision and enchaînement as they relate to pronunciation in French. At the beginning of the unit, you were told that if you fail to have a solid background in these principles, you may have difficulties in future to correct the errors associated with them. You also learnt the difference between liaison and enchaînement. As you have been advised earlier on, make sure you master the functioning of these phonological principles before you proceed to the next level of the course.

#### 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Differentiate between élision and enchaînement.
2. Differentiate between enchaînement and liaison.
3. Give three examples each to identify the function of élision and enchaînement.
4. Correct the following expressions if necessary using the principle of elision.
  - a. tuest une fille
  - b. le home et la hirondelle
  - c. Je suis allé à le hôpital
5. Put the symbol - to indicate enchaînement in the following expressions: Elle adore Arthur Port-au-prince

Port-Hacourt  
Par exemple  
Après avoir entendu.

## 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

Chantal, P.T. *et al.* (1989). *Cahier de Laboratoire et d'Exercices écrits*. McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc. New York.

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Weinreb, R.P. (1996). *Façons de Voir: French in Review*. New York: McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc.

<http://www.languageguide.org/Français/grammar/pronunciation/>  
[andhttp://www.courseweb.edteched.uottawa.ca/phonetique/pages/pho\\_netique/intro.htm](http://www.courseweb.edteched.uottawa.ca/phonetique/pages/pho_netique/intro.htm).

## UNIT 4 L'ACCENT EN FRANÇAIS

### CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 L'Accent
  - 3.1 L'Accent Final
  - 3.2 L'Accent d'Insistance
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Previously, you learnt some phonological phenomena that govern fluency in French speech production, such as *élision*, *enchaînement* and *liaison*. In this unit, you will learn yet another phonological phenomenon called Accent (stress). Accent is characteristic of every sound produced in speech, especially in the French language. Your ability to speak French with a “French accent” will inform your proficiency in that language.

### 2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- define what is called accent
- determine where an accent should be placed in a word when speaking French
- distinguish between French accent and English accent
- speak French with the appropriate accent where necessary.

### 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

#### 3.1 L'accent

In speech, we produce series of sounds. Each sound produced is characterised by some fundamental varying parameters which include: energy, frequency and duration. A sound produced with energy is determined by a heavy air flow from the lungs, which causes an important vibration of the vocal cords. Also, a sound can be produced

with an increase in the frequency of the voice, thereby causing a rapid vibration of the vocal cords; so also can a sound be produced longer in duration than the other sounds. Those are the three factors that define Accent in a given language.

In the case of French language, the last factor, that is duration, is prominent. French language uses two types of accent: accent final and accent d'insistance

### 3.2 L'accent Final

In French, stress (l'accent) is always placed on the final syllable of a word, and that is why in French we talk of accent final. Stress placement in French is totally different from that of English because in English, the syllable that bears the stress varies according to the word itself; thus the stress can be on the initial, medial or final syllable of a particular word. The implication of this difference is that the study and use of stress in French is easier than the one in English. Study the examples below for illustration:

#### Examples:

- i. la fille [la 'fij] ii. la  
petite fille [la pətit 'fij]  
iii. la petite fille malade [la pətit 'fijma'lad]

You will notice that in all the three groups of French words, it is the last syllable of each group that is stressed: fij, fij and lad respectively.

#### Autresexemples:

1. Il aime regarder la téléVISION
2. Je finirai le devoir deMAIN
3. Les étudiantssont fainéants

### 3.3 L'accent D'insistance

This is the sound type of accent in French. It is used to lay emphasis on a syllable in particular within a series of syllables. Contrary to what is done in the case of accent final, the accent d'insistance is placed, not at the final syllable, but rather at the beginning of each word. Very often, the Accent d'insistance is manifested by the frequency rising of the voice.

Examples:

1. C'est par sur la table, c'est sous la table [sɛpa 'syr la 'tabl sɛ 'su la 'tabl]
2. Moi je trouve ça inacceptable [mwaʁətRuv sa 'i naksep 'tabl]

In those examples, the accent final falls on the last syllable tabl while the accent d'insistance falls on sur, sous and i respectively.

**4.0 CONCLUSION**

In this unit, you have learnt what stress (accent) entails in French and how it is used in different situations. The more you understand and practice it, the better your oral expression in that language.

**5.0 SUMMARY**

In this unit, you have been taught French stress (accent). You have learnt about the stress pattern of French, especially how it is different from what you have in English. Always make sure that you are not confused and that you have adequately understood the content of this unit. As it is often said, PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT. So, do not relent in your effort to put all those phonological aspects in practice anytime you express yourself in French.

**6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

This assignment is compulsory and you are to do it and submit to your tutor as indicated in the assignment file.

1. What is stress in language diction generally?
2. State the difference between English and French stress.
3. Put the stress on the following words and sentences:
  - Le Nigeria est un beau pays - Le nigeria est un beau pays de l'Afrique
  - Le nigeria est un pays de l'Afrique de l'ouest.

**7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING**

Chantal, P.T. *et al.* (1989). *Cahier de Laboratoire et d'exercices écrits*. McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc. New York.

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## UNIT 5 L'INTONATION EN FRANÇAIS

### CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 L'Intonation en Général
  - 3.2 L'Intonation en Français
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Having learnt French pronunciation principles such as liaison, elision and enchaînement in the previous units, you are now, more than ever before familiar with the pronunciation of words in French. Meanwhile; there are still few principles that you will need to learn. In this unit, you will learn the principles of intonation. These principles are essential to good pronunciation of French sounds and letters.

### 2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- define both intonation and stress in a language
- distinguish between intonation and stress in pronunciation
- identify the intonation pattern that goes with each type of sentence in French.

### 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

#### 3.1 Definition of Intonation

The *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* defines intonation as a pattern of rise and fall in the level of the voice, which often adds meaning to what is being said; e.g. to show that the speaker is angry or elated, etc. The *Oxford Advanced Learner Dictionary* corroborates this definition by defining intonation as the rise and fall of voice in speaking especially as it affects the meaning of what is being said.

The pattern of intonation in English is not the same as that of French. So, as you go further in this unit to learn about French intonation, it is important for you to note that you are learning the pronunciation of a language that is different from English. Before you go into learning French intonation, try to pronounce the following English sentences:

- (a) Could you please come?
- (b) Your name was mentioned.
- (c) What a nice attempt!

If your voice goes up towards the end of the sentences, then the intonation is said to be a rising one, but if your voice comes down, then it is a descending or falling intonation. Now, suggest the type of intonation in each of the three sentences.

### 3.2 Intonation in French

A good French pronunciation requires mastery of several elements as has been underlined in the previous units. Intonation is a major element of pronunciation in French language. In French, as in other languages, Intonation refers to the varying pitch levels of speech often referred to as the “melody” of a language, intonation is associated with certain sentence types: declarative, exclamative, imperative and interrogative (questions). In French, rising intonation is called intonation montante, while the falling intonation is called intonation descendante.

Declarative intonation:

- Short declarative sentences typically have a falling intonation.  
Je mange du riz Nous allons à l'école Il est Nigérian Maman viendra demain.
- Longer declarative sentences often have a rise then a fall intonation  
S'il pleut, je ne sortirai pas Les animaux dans la forêt sont sauvages Le vice-chancelier de l'université est une femme J'étudie le Français à l'Université Convent.

### Exclamative intonation

- Exclamative intonation is marked by a sharp fall in pitch:  
Quelle bonne idée! Oh la la! Comme elle est belle !  
Quel mauvais sort !

### Imperative intonation

- Imperative intonation is similar to exclamative intonation - that is, a sharp fall at the end.

Donnez-moi de l'argent Ouvre la porte Allons à la maison Viens ici  
Interrogative intonation A/ Yes/No (oui ou non) questions are marked by a sharp rise of intonation at the final syllable Vous êtes Nigeria?

Est-il le président de l'association? Est-ce qu'il est étudiant ?  
Tu prends de la bière ?

B/ Information questions begin with a rise in intonation on the question word (où, pourquoi, comment, quand, qu'est-ce que, quel, etc) and then gradually fall.

Comment vous appelez-vous ? Quand est-ce que tu es arrivé ? Qu'est-ce que vous voulez ? Où se trouve le Togo?

## 4.0 CONCLUSION

In this unit, you have learnt what intonation is about in French and how it is used in different situations. The more you understand and practice it, the better your oral expression in that language.

## 5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have been taught French intonation as it applies to different sentence patterns. You have learnt that French intonation is generally the same as what is obtained in other languages. Remember that a falling intonation is characteristic of declarative sentences, while a rising intonation characterises interrogative sentences. As it is often said, PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT. So, do not relent in your efforts to practice these intonation patterns anytime you express yourself in French.

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. What is intonation?
2. What are the characteristics of French intonation?
3. Apply appropriate intonation patterns to each of the following sentences:
  - Je ne suis pas blanc.
  - Les étudiants étant partis, je pus me reposer un peu. -  
Que font-ils debout dans la cour de récréation?
  - Pourquoi n'es-tu pas venir me voir?

## 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

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**MODULE 4**

Unit 1	La Phonologie Lexicale
Unit 2	La Syllable en Français
Unit 3	L'Assimilation
Unit 4	La Phonologie Générative
Unit 5	Les Tendances Générales en Phonologie

**UNIT 1 LA PHONOLOGIE LEXICALE****CONTENTS**

1.0	Introduction
2.0	Objectives
3.0	What is Lexical Phonology?
3.1	Levels of Lexical Phonology
3.2	Level 1 of Lexical Phonology
3.3	Level 2 of Lexical Phonology
4.0	Conclusion
5.0	Summary
6.0	Tutor-Marked Assignment
7.0	References/Further Reading

**1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Traditionally, the lexicon has been regarded as nothing more than an appendix to the grammar which contains the idiosyncratic properties of lexical items and morphemes. But nowadays, lexicon is recognised as a central component of the grammar which contains not only idiosyncratic properties of words and morphemes, but also regular word-formation and phonological rules, hence the type of phonology termed lexical phonology.

In this unit, you will learn the definition of lexical phonology as well as the levels of operation of lexical phonology as it applies to a particular language.

**2.0 OBJECTIVES**

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- mention what is called lexical phonology
- define the different levels of lexical phonology
- mention how lexical phonology functions in a given language
- mention the difference between lexical phonology and the other types of phonology.

### 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

#### 3.1 What is Lexical Phonology?

Lexical phonology concerns the relation between phonology, morphology and lexicon. And its name suggests, lexical phonology gives the lexicon a key role.

#### 3.1 Levels of Lexical Phonology

One of the claims of lexical phonology is that both inflexional and derivational word-formation processes can be displayed on a series of linked levels, also called strata, as shown in the diagram below: basically, there are two levels of lexical phonology: level 1 and level 2.

#### 3.2 Level 1 of Lexical Phonology

Level 1 contains what is called bound morphemes, that is morphemes which cannot occur independently but must always be attached to some other form. Examples:

Ac-cept-er  
 Con-jug-uer  
 Per-cev-oir  
 Con-ten-ir

The above examples show one of the important characteristics of level 1 affixes which tend to be semantically opaque, that is their meaning is difficult to get.

#### 3.3 Level 2 of Lexical Phonology

Level 2 contains affixes (usually suffixes) which do not have any effect on stress, whereby words are stressed the same way regardless of the presence or absence of these suffixes. Here you have morphemes that can occur independently. Examples:

Courag-eux Conscienc-ieux Respect-able Vol-eur Vol-euse Enchant-é-e

In these examples, each affixe is semantically transparent, with a meaning easy to get.

#### 4.0 CONCLUSION

In this unit, you have acquired basic knowledge on lexical phonology. You have also learnt two fundamental levels as contained in lexical phonology. The more you understand and practice it, the better your understanding of French phonology in particular.

#### 5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have been taught lexical phonology as it applies to French language. You have learnt that there are two levels of analysis of morphemes: level 1 deals with what is called bound morphemes which cannot occur separately, and level 2 with morphemes that can occur independently and have meaning on their own, unlike level 1 morphemes. You must endeavour to understand this unit very well before you proceed to the next unit.

#### 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. How do you define lexical phonology?
2. What are the levels characterising lexical phonology?
3. Consider the list of words below and determine their respective level in lexical phonology:
  - Accompanyer
  - Accusateur - Récréation -
  - Calculateur.

#### 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

- Juilland, A. G. (1965). *Dictionnaire Inverse de la Langue Française*. La Haye: Mouton. (REF).
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## **UNIT 2 LA SYLLABE**

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 La Syllabe Française
  - 3.2 Représentation de la Structure de Syllabe
  - 3.3 La Syllabification
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

In this unit, you will learn another important aspect in the study of French language: the syllable (la syllabe). You should note that each language has its own pattern of syllable, hence the need for you to understand the one that is peculiar to your language of study - French. Make sure you understand and master this unit very well.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- define what is syllable in French
- explain the syllable pattern in French
- explain the roles of syllable in French
- place stress (accent) correctly on syllables
- divide words into syllables correctly.

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1 La Syllabe Française**

In French, a syllable is a group of sounds that are pronounced together at once. A syllable is made of either one (1) single vowel or one (1) vowel and one (1) or more consonants.

Examples:

- (i) A vowel as syllable: a-y-é-à, etc.
- (ii) 2 vowels or more as a syllable; au - ou-eau-eu, etc.
- (iii) A vowel plus a consonant or a consonant plus a vowel: il-ça-fi-si, etc.
- (iv) A vowel plus several consonants: autre-arc-outr-entre, etc

**3.2 Représentation De La Structure Syllabique**

You should note here that there are several structures of syllable in French. Taking the examples above, you have the following structures:

- (i) A vowel: V
- (ii) 2 vowels or more: vv-vvv
- (iii) A vowel + a consonant: vc
- (iv) A consonant + a vowel: cv
- (v) A vowel + several consonants: vcc

**3.3 La Syllabification**

Syllabification is the process of cutting words into syllables. In French, you have the following principles for cutting words into syllables:

- (a) In the case of a single vowel or many vowels pronounced as a sound, the word is the syllable: no cutting

Examples: a - eu - eau

- (b) In the case of word with one consonant, as in (iii) and (iv) above, the whole word is considered a syllable.

Examples: il - fi - si

- (c) In the case of a word with two similar consonants, you cut in between the two consonants

Examples:ef-fet; ar-rêt; ac-cord

- (d) In the case of a word with two different consonants, you separate the consonants, except if at the end of the word.

Examples: as-pect; ab-sen-ce.

- (e) In the case of a word with three consonants, you cut after the second consonant

Examples: cons-cien-ce; obs-ti-né; comp-ter, except in words where you have ‘ph’, ‘ch’, ‘th’, ‘gn’ as in: mar-cher, as-phy-xie or where you have r or l as the last letter of the word: ar-br, ap-plau-dir.

You should note the following rules:

- When you have a word where there is a group of letters that are pronounced as a single sound, you do not separate the group. Examples: é-chan-ger; é-le-phant; a- théé; mon-ta-gne.
- Also, when you have two or three vowels together in a word, you do not separate the vowels either. Examples: théa-tre; oa-sis; ré-gion; es-pion; bout; as-seoir; beau-té.

#### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

In this unit, you have learnt another aspect of phonology called syllable, particularly with regard to French language. You also learnt how to recognise syllables in given words, and the rules or principles governing their structure.

#### **5.0 SUMMARY**

In this unit, you learnt various aspects of syllable in the French language, its various structures and all possible cases of syllabification, with the rules and exceptions governing its process. Thus, you have the following syllable structures: a single vowel (V), a combination of two or more vowels (VV or VVV), a combination of vowel and consonant (VC or CV), etc. The rules governing syllabification must be mastered. It would be a good thing for you to do a lot of exercises on syllabification to enhance mastery.

#### **6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

1. How do you define a syllable?

2. Do you have the same types of syllable in French and English or your mother tongue?
3. Give examples of the types of syllable you have in French, and their structures respectively!
4. How do you syllabify in French?
5. Give words of one, two, three and more syllables, and give their respective structures.

## 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

Juilland, A. G. (1965). *Dictionnaire Inverse de la Langue Française*. La Haye: Mouton. (REF).

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## UNIT 3 L'ASSIMILATION

### CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 L'assimilation
  - 3.2 L'assimilation Régressive
  - 3.3 L'assimilation Progressive
  - 3.4 L'assimilation Double
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Assimilation is a typical sound change process by which the phonetics of a speech segment becomes more like that of another segment in a word (or at a word boundary), so that a change of phoneme occurs. You should remember that assimilation can occur, influencing a preceding segment (forward) or a following segment (backward).

### 2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- discuss the concept of assimilation as it applies to French language
- identify the different types of assimilation
- explain satisfactorily each type of assimilation
- apply the different types of assimilation where necessary and correctly when speaking French.

### 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

#### 3.1 L'assimilation

If sound changes with reference to a following segment, it is traditionally called “regressive assimilation”; changes with reference to a preceding segment are traditionally called

“progressive”. These terms seem to be confusing, as they seem to mean the opposite of the intended meaning. Accordingly, a variety of alternative terms have arisen - not all of which avoid the problem of the traditional terms.

Regressive assimilation is also known as right-to-left or anticipatory assimilation. Progressive assimilation is also known as left-to-right or perseveratory or preservative or lag assimilation.

### 3.2 L'assimilation Regressive

It is important for you to note here that this type of assimilation is called regressive because the sound that is influenced (= assimilated) is placed before the sound influencing (= assimilating) it.

#### Examples:

- Celavadesoit

When you pronounce slowly the underlined words, you say: [dəswa], but when you pronounce rapidly, you say [tswa], because after elision of the sound ə, [d] becomes [t] by the process of its assimilation by the voiceless sound [s] which follows it.

- Nous avonsobserver

When you pronounce slowly the underlined word, you say: [əbsɛRvɛ], but when you pronounce rapidly, you say: sound [əpsɛRvɛ], because the voiced sound [b] has been affected through assimilation by the voiceless sound [s] following it.

- Mon médecinest très gentil

When you pronounce slowly the underlined word, you say [Pɛdɛsɛ], but

When you pronounce rapidly the underlined word, you say: [Pɛtsɛ], because, after elision of the sound [ə], [d] becomes [t] under the influence of the voiceless sound [s] which follows it.

### 3.3 L'assimilation Progressive

You should note here that this type of assimilation is called progressive because the sound that is influenced (= assimilated) is placed after the sound influencing (= assimilating) it.

Examples:

- Mescheveuxsont touffus

When you pronounce rapidly the underlined word, you say:

[ʃəY ], but When you pronounce rapidly the underlined word, you say: [ʃf ], because after elision of [ ə], the voiced sound [ v] becomes [ I] through assimilation, being in direct contact with the voiceless sound [ ʃ ]which precedes, that is comes before it.

- Il n'a pas bien fait

When you pronounce slowly the underlined word, you say: [ilnapa], but

When you pronounce rapidly the underlined word, you say: [ilnápD], because the oral vowel sound [ a] becomes a nasal vowel sound [á ] by assimilation, being in direct contact with the nasal consonant sound [ Q] which comes before it.

### 3.3 L'assimilation Double

You should learn here that an assimilation double is an assimilation which is both regressive and progressive, that is the sound affected is assimilated by both the preceding and the following sounds.

Examples:

- Pendant les vacances, je voyagerai en Europe
- When you pronounce slowly the underlined words, you say: [pãdãlevakãs], but
- When you pronounce rapidly the underlined words, you say:
- [[pãñãlevakãs]], whereby [d] becomes [n] because of the influences of the preceding nasal vowel [ã] and the following nasal vowel [ã]. In other words, the oral stop sound [d] is nasalised, thus changing to the nasal constructive sound [n].

## 4.0 CONCLUSION

In this unit, you have learnt more about Assimilation, particularly with regard to French language. You have also learnt the different types of assimilation you can get in French, and how each one of them functions.

## 5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, you learnt various types of assimilation in the French language, viz. regressive assimilation, progressive assimilation and double assimilation. In other words, you have learnt that a given sound can be influenced by either the preceding or the following sound or both sounds at the same time, and that those affected sounds change from their nature to the nature of the influencing sounds.

Thus under the said influence, a voiced sound becomes voiceless, and a voiceless becomes voiced, etc. It would be in your own interest to endeavour to master those assimilation principles.

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. How do you define assimilation?
2. How many types of assimilation do you have in French?
3. Give examples illustrating each type of assimilation.
4. Consider the following words:
  - absent
  - subtil
  - anecdote

Transcribe those words phonetically, applying the appropriate assimilation in each case.

## 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

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## UNIT 4 LA PHONOLOGIE GENERATIVE

### CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Definition
  - 3.2 Components of Generative phonology
  - 3.3 Levels of Representation
  - 3.4 Phonological Rules
  - 3.5 Derivations
  - 3.6 Distinctives Features
  - 3.7 Linearity
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

In this unit, you will learn one of the basic schools of thought in phonology - the generative phonology, with all it entails as components. You will also learn what each of these components is.

### 2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- define what generative phonology is
- mention the concept of generative phonology
- mention the components of generative phonology
- define each component.

### 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

#### 3.1 Definition

Generative phonology is a component of generative grammar that assigns the correct phonetic representations to utterances in such a way as to reflect a native speaker's internalised grammar.

### 3.2 Components of Generative Phonology

Generally, there are five components of generative phonology, which are:

- (i) Levels of representation
- (ii) Phonological rules
- (iii) Derivations
- (iv) Distinctive features
- (v) Linearity

### 3.3 Levels of Representation

- Generative phonology posits two levels of phonological representation:
  - An underlying representation is the most basic form of a word before any phonological rules have been applied to it. Underlying representations show what a native speaker knows about the abstract underlying phonology of the language.
  - A phonetic representation is the form of a word that is spoken and heard.

### 3.4 Phonological Rule

Phonological rules map underlying representations onto phonological representations. They delete, insert, or change segments, or change the features of segments.

### 3.5 Derivations

A Phonological derivation is the set of stages used to generate the phonetic representation of a word from its underlying representation. Here is a diagram of the stages in a derivation. Phonological rules influence each stage of a derivation:

#### Examples

Here are some examples of the derivations of words having the negative prefix /In/:

### 3.6 Distinctive Features

Distinctive features make it possible to capture the generalities of phonological rules.

### 3.7 Linearity

A stream of speech is portrayed as a sequence of discrete sound segments. Each segment is composed of simultaneously occurring features.

## 4.0 CONCLUSION

In this unit, you have learnt the general concept of generative phonology. It is a theory on which the phonological description of any language is based. In other words, generative phonology is the basic theory for the phonological study of all languages, including French

## 5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have learnt the basic concept about generative phonology.

You have also learnt the inherent components of generative phonology, which include the two levels of representation of a word in a particular language - the underlying and the phonetic, phonological rules and features; and the derivations and the linearity of features. You should take time to study this unit and make sure you understand it very well before you proceed to the last unit of this course.

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Define generative phonology.
2. What are the main components of generative phonology?
3. Explain each component with concrete examples in French.
4. Consider two vowels and two consonants in French and give their respective distinctive features.
5. What do you know about liaison, elision and accent in French?

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## **UNIT 5 LES TENDANCES GÉNÉRALES EN PHONOLOGIE**

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Trends in phonology
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

In this unit, you will learn various schools of thought in phonology - from traditional to generative, then to plurilinear phonology, and the names of great phonologists and their respective schools of thought.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

At the end of this course, you should be able to:

- have a general idea about phonology
- mention the various schools of thought
- mention the differences between the various schools
- identify each school of thought by its characteristics.

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1 Trends in Phonology**

In ancient India, the Sanskrit grammarian Panini (c. 520-460 BC), who is considered the founder of linguistics, in his text of Sanskrit phonology, the Shiva Sutras, discovers the concepts of the phoneme, the morpheme and the root. The Shiva Sutras describe a phonemic notational system in the fourteen initial lines of the *Astādhyāyī*. The notional system introduces different clusters of phonemes that serve special roles in the morphology of Sanskrit, and are referred to throughout the text. Panini's grammar of Sanskrit had a significant influence on Ferdinand de Saussure, the father of modern structuralism, who was a professor of Sanskrit.

The Polish scholar Jan Baudouin de Courtenay, (together with his former student MikolajKruszewski) coined the word phoneme in 1876, and his work, though often unacknowledged, is considered to be the starting point of modern phonology. He worked not only on the theory of the phoneme but also on phonetic alternations (i.e. what is now called allophony and morphophonology). His influence on Ferdinand de Saussure was also significant. Prince Nikolai Turbetzkoy's posthumously published work, the *Principles of Phonology* (1939), is considered the foundation of the Prague School of Phonology. Directly influence by Baudouin de Courtenay, Turbetzkoy is considered the founder of orphophonology, though morphophonology was first recognised by Baudouin de Courtenay. Trubetzkoy split phonology into phonemics and archiphonemics; the former has had more influence than the latter. Another important figure in the Prague School was Roman Jakobson, who was one of the most prominent linguists of the twentieth century.

In 1968 Noam Chomsky and Morris Halle published *The Sound Pattern of English* (SPE), the basis for Generative Phonology. In this view, Phonological representations are sequences of segments made up of distinctive features. The features were an expansion of earlier work by Roman Jakobson, Gunnar Fant, and Morris Halle. The features describe aspects of articulation and perception, are from a universally fixed set, and have the binary values + or -. There are at least two levels of representation: underlying representation and surface phonetic representation. Ordered phonological rules govern how underlying representation is transformed into the actual pronunciation (the so called surface form). An important consequence of the influence SPE had on phonological theory was the downplaying of the syllable and the emphasis on segments. Furthermore, the Generativists folded morphophonology into phonology, which both solved and created problems.

Natural Phonology was a theory based on the publications of its proponent David Stampe in 1969 and (more explicitly) in 1979. In this view, phonology is based on a set of universal phonological processes which interact with one another, which ones are active and which are suppressed are language-specific. Rather than acting on segments, phonological processes act on distinctive features within prosodic groups. Prosodic groups can be as small as a part of a syllable or as large as an entire utterance. Phonological processes are unordered with respect to each other and apply simultaneously (though the output of one process may be the input to another). The secondmost prominent Natural Phonologist is Stampe's wife, Patricia Donegan; there are many Natural phonologists in Europe, though also a few others in the U.S., such as Geoffry Pullum. The principles of Natural phonology were extended to morphology by Wolfgang U.

Dressler, who founded Natural Morphology.

In 1976 John Goldsmith introduced autosegmental phonology. Phonological phenomena are no longer seen as operating on one linear sequence of segments, called phonemes or feature combinations, but rather as involving some parallel sequences of features which reside on multiple tiers. Autosegmental phonology later evolved into Feature Geometry, which became the standard theory of representation for the theories of the organization of phonology as different as Lexical Phonology and Optimality Theory. Government Phonology, which originated in the early 1980s as an attempt to unify theoretical notions of syntactic and phonological structures, is based on the notion that all languages necessarily follow a small set of principles and vary according to their selection of certain binary parameters. That is, all languages' phonological structures are essentially the same, but there is restricted variation that accounts for differences in surface realizations. Principles are held to be inviolable, though parameters may sometimes come into conflict. Prominent figures include Jonathan Kaye (Linguist), Jean Lowenstamm, Jean Roger Vergnaud, Monik Charette, John Harris, and many others.

In 1991, Alan Prince and Paul Smolensky developed Optimality Theory - an overall architecture for phonology according to which languages choose a pronunciation of a word that best satisfies a list of constraints which is ordered by importance: a lower-ranked constraint can be violated when the violation is necessary in order to obey a higher-ranked constraint. The approach was soon extended to morphology by John McCarthy and Alan Prince, and has become the dominant trend in phonology. Though this usually goes unacknowledged, Optimality Theory was strongly influenced by

Natural Phonology; both view phonology in terms of constraints on speakers and their production, though these constraints are formalised in very different ways.

#### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

In this unit, you have learnt the different schools of thought in phonology, beginning from the foundation to the present-day phonology. You have also learnt the great names in phonology, from Panini to Trubetzkoy, then from Chomsky to Goldsmith, then to Saussure, etc.

#### **5.0 SUMMARY**

In this unit, you have learnt the whole history of phonology, right from its foundation by Panini till the present day, through the various schools of thought. You have also learnt the general evolution of phonology for many decades, with the names of the phonologists that made the evolution possible.

#### **6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

1. Trace briefly the history of phonology.
2. Who is Panini?
3. Who is Trubetzkoy?
4. Who is Chomsky?
5. Compare Generative theory to functionalist theory?
6. What do you know about auto-segmental theory?

#### **7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING**

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