

AAE103

L6 : Letter-to-Sound Rules Consonants

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outline

- origins of problems
- spelling reform?
- principles for transcription

changes in pronunciation

- *knight* used to be pronounced [kniçt]

multiple origins

- words with 'f' come from Anglo-Saxon or Latin
friend, field, food
feudal, fibula, follicle
- words with 'ph' come from Greek
photon, phonetic, phoenix

recent borrowings

- from Spanish
junta, marijuana
- from French
chic, genre, precis, debris
- from German
schadenfreude, zeitgeist

words gradually get anglicised

do you have /dʒ/ or /ʒ/ at the end?

- village
- voyage
- garage
- massage
- collage
- entourage

spelling reform?

- whose pronunciation?
- loss of patterns

whose pronunciation?

- should we show the /r/s in *car park*?
- should we differentiate *which* from *witch*?

patterns

- 'c' is sometimes /k/ and sometime /s/
- this links the derivation of some words:

electric ~ electricity

ethnic ~ ethnicity

atomic ~ atomicity

silent letters

- sometimes become pronounced in derivations

sign ~ signature

bomb ~ bombardment

column ~ columnist

Five Principles

- Principle 5 : 'th' is /θ/ or /ð/
- Principle 6 : 'th' in content/function words
- Principle 7 : /tʃ/ before /k/ and /g/
- Principle 8 : /r/ only occurs before vowels
- Principle 9 : 's' at the end of function words

Principle 5 : the dental fricatives

- 'th' is pronounced as /θ/ or /ð/
thousand, athlete
therefore, brother
- exceptions
thyme, Thames, Thai, Thailand
Theresa, Thomas, Anthony
- 't' is never pronounced as /θ/ or /ð/

Principle 6 : 'th' in function words

- 'th' at start of content words = /θ/
thumb, thought, theatre, three
- 'th' at start of function words = /ð/
this, that, then, therefore, though
- this only applied to the start of the word

Principle 7 : /ŋ/ before /g/ and /k/

- /n/ never occurs before /g/ and /k/:
anger, angle, think, finger, thankful
- be careful: 'g' is sometimes /dʒ/; /n/ occurs here:
ranger, angel, revenge,

Principle 8 : /r/ only occurs before vowels

- /r/ occurs in:
rain, ready, free, very, arrange, abroad
- /r/ does not occur in:
car, park, teacher, pardon, where, are
- linking /r/ can occur if next word begins with a vowel:
where is, are out

Principle 9 : 's' as /z/ in function words

- 's' at the end of function words is /z/
his, hers, is, was, has, these, those, as,
- exception: *this* /ðɪs/

rhotic accents

- some accents (eg AmE) have /r/ wherever 'r' occurs
- these are called rhotic
- /r/ after a vowel is called "postvocalic /r/"
- SgE seems to be becoming more rhotic

Reading

- pronunciation of consonants: SoE 73 – 74
- for postvocalic /r/ in Singapore: TELISROP 69-70; ESPROC 12