

-Why when dealing with speech sounds, it is advised to start with consonant rather than vowels?

because they are easier to describe and understand in sense that consonant contribute more to making English understood than vowels. Second, consonants are made by a definite interference of the vocal organs with the air stream.

The Consonants

There are 24 sounds of consonants in English. They can occur in different positions: initially, medially and finally. And, there are 20 vowels in English. Some of them short and others are long. Besides, diphthongs.

Friction Consonants

They are consonant sounds that cause friction of various kinds in their production. They are 9 in number. They include /f/, /v/, /θ/, /ð/, /s/, /z/, /ʃ/, /ʒ/, /h/.

How Friction sounds are produced?

-The lungs push air through a narrow opening where it causes friction of various kinds.

How can you produce (the place of articulation) of /f/ and /v/ ?

The soft palate is raised so that no air goes through the nose all it is all forced through the mouth. Then, the bottom lip is very close to the upper front teeth. The tongue is not directly concerned in making these sounds.

Describe the /f/, /v/ :

/f/ is strong ,voiceless, long consonant.

/v/ is weak, voiced, short consonant.

Important Rule:

-Strong consonants at the end of words **shorten** the preceding vowels.

-Weak consonant **lengthen** the vowels.

2- / θ / , / ð / fricatives sounds

/ θ / is stronger, longer and voiceless . While, / ð /is weak, shorter, voiced.

The place of articulation, how / θ / , / ð / produced?

The soft palate is raised so that all the breath is forced to go through the mouth. Then, the tip of the mouth is close to the upper front teeth. And, the noise made by the friction for / θ / , / ð /is not very great less than /s/ and /z/.

3- /s/ and /z/

/s/ is stronger, longer and voiceless . While, / z /is weak, shorter, voiced.

The place of articulation, how/s/ and /z/ produced?

The soft palate is raised so that all the breath is forced to go through the mouth. Then, the tip and blade of the tongue are very close to the alveolar ridge .The teeth are very close together. The friction of /s/ and /z/ is much greater than for /f/,/v/, / θ /and / the / ð / .

4- /ʃ/, and /ʒ/

/ʃ/ is stronger, longer and voiceless. While, /ʒ/ is weak, shorter, and voiced.

The place of articulation, how /ʃ/ and /ʒ/ are produced?

The soft palate is raised so that all the breath is forced to go through the mouth. Then, there is a narrowing between the tip of the tongue and back of the alveolar ridge. The front of the tongue is higher than for /s/ and /z/. The lips are slightly rounded.

Note: /ʒ/ does not occur at the beginning of English words. It also rare to occur at the end of the words. /ʒ/ makes the vowel sound before it longer.

/h/ : How to produce /h/? , place of articulation of /h/

In order to make /h/ sounds, the mouth is held ready for the vowel and a short gasp of breath is pushed up by the lungs. /h/ does not make very much noise, but it must not be left out when it should be sounded, for two reasons. First, many words are distinguished by the presence or absence of /h/ like "here", and "ear". Second, English speakers consider that the leaving out of /h/ is the mark of an uncultivated speaker. For that reason leaving out /h/ is dangerous and /h/ is too noisy.

/h/ occurs in initial and middle positions. When it occurs at the end it is always not pronounced.