

# BBN–ANG–242 Phonology

## 7. Stress; vowels in unstressed syllables; weak forms of function words

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# Stress

Gimsonian

hɪ'stɔrɪkəl

stænd

ˌdʒæpə'ni:z

ˌreprɪ'zent

kən'veɪtə'bɪləti

CUBE

hɪst'ɔrɪkəl

stánd

dʒàpən'ɪjz

rèprɪz'ɛnt

kənv'è:təb'ɪlətɪj

# Stress

Gimsonian

hɪ **'stɔ**ɪkəl

stænd

**'dʒ**æpə **'ni**:z

**'re**pɪ **'z**ent

kən **'v**ɜ:tə **'b**ɪlətɪ

CUBE

hɪst**'**ɔɪkəl

st**'**ænd

dʒ**'**æpən**'**ɪz

r**'**ɛprɪz**'**ɛnt

kənv**'**ɜ:tə**'**ɪlətɪj

Not necessary to mark **primary** and **secondary** stress differently:

it is always the last stressed vowel of a word that has the primary stress – it is predictable.

# Vowels in unstressed syllables

<b>CHECKED</b>		<b>ɪ ɛ ə ʌ ɔ ʊ</b>
<b>R</b>	<b>BROAD</b>	<b>ɑː əː oː</b>
	<b>SCHWA</b>	<b>ə</b>
	<b>SMOOTH</b>	<b>ɪː ɛː</b>
<b>FREE</b>		<b>ɪj ʊw ɛj əw ɑj aw oj</b>

# Vowels in unstressed syllables

<b>CHECKED</b>		ɪ ε a ʌ ɔ ʊ
<b>R</b>	<b>BROAD</b>	ɑ: ə: o:
	<b>SCHWA</b>	ə
	<b>SMOOTH</b>	i: e:
<b>FREE</b>		ɪj ʊw εj əw ɔj aʊ oʊ

# Vowels in unstressed syllables

**/ə, ɪ, ʊ, ɪj, ʊw, əw/**

- these vowels are referred to as **reduced vowels** when they are in unstressed syllables
- they are phonetically the same as their stressed counterparts (except for **ə**, which is always unstressed)
- e.g. *Jerúsalem* /dʒərúwsələm/, *críticism* /krítɪsɪzəm/,  
*gráduátion* /grádʒʊwéʃn/,  
*átom* /átəm/ – *atómic* /ətómɪk/,  
*refórm* /rɪfó:m/ – *réformátion* /réfəméʃn/

# Vowels in unstressed syllables

/ə, ɪ, ʊ, ɪj, ʊw, əw/

Schwa /ə/

- always in unstressed syllables  
e.g. *átom* /**átə**m/ – *atómic* /ə**tó**mɪk/  
*grámmar* /**grámə**/ – *grammátical* /grə**mát**ɪkl/
- before a consonant and word-finally (never before a vowel)  
e.g. *Chrístmas* /krɪsmə**s**/, *téacher* /tíjtʃə/  
*poétic* /pəwétɪk/, \*/pə**é**tɪk/

# Vowels in unstressed syllables

/ə, ɪ, ʊ, ɪj, ʊw, əw/

## Unstressed /ɪ/ and /ʊ/

- only if followed by a consonant (never before a vowel or word-finally) – just like checked /ɪ/ and /ʊ/

e.g. *village* /vɪlɪdʒ/, *accurate* /ækjʊrət/

- /ʊ/ is in free variation with /ə/, and very often so is /ɪ/:

e.g. *accurate* /ækjʊrət ~ əkjərət/, *regular* /rɛgjʊlə ~ rɛgjələ/

*élève* /ɪlévən ~ əlévən/, *Elizabeth* /ɪlízəbət ~ əlízəbət/



# Vowels in unstressed syllables

/ə, ɪ, ʊ, **ɪj**, ʊw, əw/

Unstressed /**ɪj**/

- before a vowel or word-finally  
e.g. *cíty* /sítɪj/, *abíility* /əbílətɪj/  
*creáte* /krɪjéjt/, *the énd* /ðɪ énd/

# Vowels in unstressed syllables

/ə, ɪ, ʊ, ɪj, **ɪw**, əw/

Unstressed /**ɪw**/

- before a consonant, before a vowel and word-finally
- mostly after palatal consonants, i.e. /j, ʃ, ʒ, tʃ, dʒ/, or /r/

e.g. *módule* /módʒɪw/

*úsual* /júʒɪwəl/

*válue* /vájɪw/

# Vowels in unstressed syllables

/ə, ɪ, ʊ, ɪj, ʊw, əw/

Unstressed /əw/

- only word-finally

e.g. *potáto* /pə'teɪtəw/, *fóllow* /fóləw/

# Weak forms of function words

Function words (i.e. auxiliaries, prepositions, conjunctions, etc.) are much more frequently pronounced in their weak forms than in their strong forms.

e.g. *are* /á:/ → /ə/, *at* /át/ → /ət/, *has* /há:/ → /(h)əz/

*The girls are meeting us at seven.*

*/ðə gé:lz ə mɪjtɪŋ əs ət sévn/*

*See the detailed list of the weak forms of function words among the documents uploaded to the course web page.*

# Weak forms of function words

## Auxiliaries

	Strong form	Weak form
are	/ɑ:(r)/	/ə(r)/
was	/wɒz/	/wəz/
were	/wɛ:(r)/	/wə(r)/
do	/dúw/	/də/
does	/dáz/	/dəz, dz/
have	/háv/	/(h)əv, v/
has	/ház/	/(h)əz, z, s/
can	/kán/	/kən, kn/
could	/kúd/	/kəd/
would	/wúd/	/wəd, d/
must	/mást/	/məs(t)/

# Weak forms of function words

## Personal pronouns

	Strong form	Weak form
your	/jɔ:(r)/	/jə(r)/
his	/hɪz/	/(h)ɪz/
her	/hɜ:(r)/	/(h)ə(r)/
them	/ðɛm/	/ðəm, ðm/
us	/ʌs/	/əs/

# Weak forms of function words

## Prepositions

	Strong form	Weak form
at	/át/	/ət/
for	/fó:(r)/	/fə(r)/
from	/fróm/	/frəm/
of	/ón/	/əv/
to	/túw/	/təw, tə/

# Weak forms of function words

## Conjunctions

	Strong form	Weak form
and	/ánd/	/ən(d), n/
as	/áz/	/əz/
but	/bát/	/bət/
than	/ðán/	/ðən, ðn/
that	/ðát/	/ðət/



# Weak forms of function words

## Other words

	Strong form	Weak form
a	/éj/	/ə/
an	/án/	/ən/
just	/dʒást/	/dʒəs(t)/
not (n't)	/nót/	/nt/
some	/sám/	/səm, sm/
the	/ðíj/	/ðɪj, ðə/
there (is)	/ðé:(r)/	/ðə(r)/

# Weak forms of function words

Some of the function words might have the same reduced form:

a, are, her → /ə/

an, and → /ən/

have, of → /əv/

as, has → /əz/

had, would → /d/

the, there → /ðə/

# Weak forms of function words

## *Pronunciation practice*

There was a pen next to the pencil.

They were there, but they didn't see us.

Amanda and Jane can help them.

Your name sounds nicer than his.

Tell them that they should call her before John finds us.

# Weak forms of function words

## *Pronunciation practice*

*There /ðə/ was /wəz/ a /ə/ pen next to /tə/ the /ðə/ pencil.*

*They were /wə/ there, but /bət/ they didn't see us /əs/.*

*Amanda and /ən/ Jane can /k(ə)n/ help them /ð(ə)m/.*

*Your /jə/ name sounds nicer than /ð(ə)n/ his.*

*Tell them /ð(ə)m/ that /ðət/ they should /ʃəd/ call her /(h)ə/  
before John finds us /əs/.*

# Terms to check

**stress** (*hangsúly*)

**primary stress** (*főhangsúly*) and **secondary stress** (*mellékhangsúly*)

**vowel reduction** (*magánhangzó-redukció / sorvadás*)

**weak/reduced vowel** (*gyengén képzett / redukált / sorvadt magánhangzó*)

# Recommended reading

- **Word stress**

(<http://seas3.elte.hu/phono/notes/stress.html>)

*Note that here the offglides of the diphthongs are transcribed with **i** and **u** instead of **j** and **w** (i.e. **ɪj**, **ɛj**, **ɑj**, **oj**, **ɥw**, **əw**, **aw** = **ɪi**, **ɛi**, **ɑi**, **oi**, **ɥu**, **əu**, **au**).*