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ENGLISH CONSONANTS

There are twenty-two consonant sounds in English language. They have been described in terms of three labels — Place of articulation, manner of articulation and voicing pattern. As we have seen each consonant sound shows distinction from one another in at least one of these three characteristics.

The classification of these sounds according to manner of articulation indicates the nature of stricture involved. On the other hand, place of articulation indicates the active and passive articulators' role. The manner of articulation is the most technical index which the following types of consonant sounds have.

I. Plosives — /p/, /b/, /t/, /d/, /k/, /g/

II. Affricates — /tʃ/, /dʒ/

III. Nasals — /m/, /n/, /ŋ/

IV. Fricatives — /f/, /v/, /θ/, /ð/, /s/, /z/, /ʃ/, /ʒ/, /h/

V. Laterals — /l/

VI. Approximants — /w/, /r/, /j/

I. PLOSIVES:

These sounds are produced with a stricture of complete closure and sudden release of air causing a kind of explosive effect. Because of the complete closure of air-passage, these sounds are called stop sounds also. Soft palate is raised to block the nasal passage and so these are oral sounds. Out of six plosives, /p/ and /t/ are voiceless and /b/, /d/ and /g/ are voiced.

II. AFFRICATES:

These sounds are also produced with the stricture of complete closure, but here

the release of air is comparatively slow that causes an audible friction. The release is slow because the articulators gradually move apart. The sounds /z/ and /dz/ are approximants.

III. NASALS: These sounds are produced with the structure of complete oral closure and release of air through the nose. Since the air is released through nasal passage, the sounds are called nasal. /m/, /n/ and /ŋ/ are the three nasal sounds in English.

IV. FRICATIVES:

These sounds are produced with a structure of close approximation that means the two organs come very close to each other but some space is left between them through which the air escapes causing audible friction. Nasal passage is blocked by the raised soft palate. Fricatives are - /s/, /v/, /θ/, /ð/, /ʃ/, /z/, /tʃ/, /dʒ/, /h/.

V. LATERAL:

These sounds are produced with a structure of complete closure in the centre of the vocal tract, but air escapes through the sides of the tongue. Nasal passage is blocked by the raised soft palate. There is only one lateral sound - /l/.

VI. APPROXIMANTS:

These are the sounds produced with a structure of open approximation. It means during the articulation of these sounds, the gap between the active and passive articulators is wide enough through which the air escapes without any friction. Approximants are three in number - /w/, /r/, /j/.

(WUTHERING HEIGHTS)

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EXPLANATIONS

① One may guess.....in crawling along of the same.

These lines have been taken from the novel, Wuthering Heights written by Emily Brontë. In these lines Mr. Lockwood passes comments on the name and structure of the house of the Earnshaws, then owned by Heathcliff. Wuthering Heights is the name of the house of the Earnshaws, then owned by Heathcliff. The adjective 'wuthering' qualifying the noun 'Heights' is a provincial Yorkshire dialect word, meaning disturbance in the natural atmosphere. It describes the disturbance and deep depression which causes storms. This house situated at an elevated spot, is open to winds of high velocity. The occupations of this house got health-giving ventilation, constantly one can easily guess the power, the intensity and the velocity of the north wind blowing over the corner of the house. At the end of the house a few trees with undeveloped growth in height may be seen.

These trees seem to have come under the terrific force of the north wind and they have bent down under the fierce impact of the northerly storms. There is a range of undeveloped stunted thorn plants. These plants have been compared to human being begging alms of the sun-god. In other words, the thorns of the vicinity of the house look like beggars crawling around i.e. sunlight. The passage is remarkable for its use of nature-imagery. First, there is the imagery of storms and secondly there is the imagery of thorns as beggars crawling for sunlight. This is the poetic description of Wuthering Heights.