**Lecture No. 11**

**Rhythm**

Rhythm involves some noticeable event happening at regular intervals of time. This can be illustrated in the rhythm of a heart beat, a flashing light and a piece of music. It has been claimed that English speech is rhythmical, and that the rhythm is detectable in the regular occurance of stressed syllables. Such regularity is relative,i.e. the timing is not as regular as a clock. English has stress – timed rhythm which implies that stressed syllables occur at relatively regular intervals whether they are separated by unstressed syllables or not; this will not be the case in mechanical speech. Consider the following sentence in which the stressed syllables are given numbers: syllables 1 and 2 are not separated by any unstressed syllables, 2 and 3 are separatedby by one unstressed syllable, 3 and 4 by two and 4 and 5 are separated by three unstressed syllables.

1 2 3 4 5

The stress – timed rhythm theory states that the times from each stressed syllable to the next will tend to be the same, irrespective of the number of intervening unstressed syllables

26