**Lecture No. 12**

**Assimilation**

Assimilation is a pho9nological process where a sound ( a phoneme) at the end of a word changes according to the influence of a sound (a phoneme) at the beginning of the following word and vice versa. It is a characteristic of rapid casual speech. If the final consonant of a word changes to become similar to the consonant at the begining of the following word, the process is called regressive assimilation. If the first consonant of a word changes to beco9me similar to the consonant at the end of the preceding sound (pho9neme), the process is called progressive assimilation. Three types of assimilation can be identified: assimilation of place, of manner and of voicing. Assimilation of place can be illustrated in the following examples:

That place /ðæt pleis/ /ðæp pleis/

Light blue /lait blu:/ /laip blu:/

Meat pie /mi:t pai/ /mi:p pai/

In these examples, the final consonant of the first words is /t/. It changes ino a bilabial soud /p/ because the following words begin with bilabial sounds /p/ and /b/.There are other examples of assimilation of place:

That case /ðæt keis/ /ðæk keis/

Bright colour /brait kᴧl∂/ braik kᴧl∂/

In these examples, the alveolar consonant /t/ changes into the velar consonant /k/ because it is followed by a word beginning with /k/.

The consonant /s/ changes into /ʃ/ because it is followed by a word beginning with /ʃ/: this shoe /ðis ʃu:/ /ðiʃ ʃu:/

The consonant /z/ changes into /ʒ/ when it is followed by a word beginning with /j/ : those years /ð∂uz ji∂z/ /ð∂uʒ ji∂z/

The alveolar consonant /d/ becomes bilabial /b/ because it is followed by a word beginning with /b/ as in:

Good boy /gud boi/ /gub boi/

/b/ becomes /g/ when followed by a word beginning with /g/ as in:

Good girl /gud g∂:l/ /gug g∂:l/

**Assimilation of manner**

This type of assimilation is found in cases like the following:

27

The final plosive consonant /d/ becomes fricative as in:

**That side /ðæt said/ /ðæs said/**

The final plosive consonant becomes nasal as in:

Good night / gud nait/ /gun nait/

**Assimilation of voice**

This type of assimilation can be illustrated in the following cases of ''s'' suffix:

When the final consonant of a word is voiceless, the ''s'' suffix is pronou7nced /s/ as in: cats /kæts/, books /buks/, roofs /ru:s/, jumps /ʤᴧmps/.

When the final consonant of a word is voiced, the ''s'' suffix is pronounced /z/ as in:

Dogs /dogz/, runs /rᴧnz/, blames /bleimz/, hills /hilz/.

It should be noted that such examples of assimilation of voice illustrate a type of progressive assimilation.

28