

## A Linguistic Analysis of Tennis Players' Speeches

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### Abstract

This study is under the title "A Linguistic Analysis of Tennis Players' Speeches", which tackles the English speeches that are delivered by tennis players (native and non-native speakers) in the championship's final game. The problem lies in encoding and decoding the native and non-native tennis players' speeches being unplanned, and they are delivered in a formal setting which is a rare case. In other words, in perceiving these speeches, there are many speech sounds that distract the native English listeners' ears like pronouncing the word *Zurich* as /θurik/; whereas the BBC pronunciation is ['zjʊəriʔk]. The study aims at detecting phonologically the differences between the English accent of the tennis players (native and non-native speakers) and BBC as well as showing how this causes a problem in the process of encoding and decoding.

**Keywords:** speeches, encoding and decoding, misunderstanding, native and non-native speakers, phonological analysis.

### 1.0 Introduction: An Overview of Tennis as a Game

Tennis is a sport that people usually play either individually against a single opponent ([singles](#)), or between two pairs of players ([doubles](#)). Every player uses a [racket](#) that is strung with cord to hit a hollow rubber [ball](#) back and forth over a net that is stretched across a marked court. The object of the game is to play the ball in such a way that the opponent is not able to play a good return. Tennis is an [Olympic](#) sport; it is played at all society levels, as well as ages; it has its own rules of vocabulary (register) for both singles and doubles. (Dictionary of Sport and Exercise Science, 2006: 207)

Tennis has its own register, a set of lexical items or a collection of two or more lexical items that shape the language of the tennis world. This register is mostly used inside the court, in press conference, or in an interview; sometimes, in formal as well as informal situations. Tennis register is difficult to be understood by anybody who is not interested in tennis. According to Halliday (2007:17), "the crucial criteria of any given register are to be found in its grammar and its lexis. Probably, lexical features are the most

obvious”, so that sports, in general, and tennis, in particular, are lexically characterised. For example the word 'break', in tennis, means to beat an opponent in a game in which the opponent is serving.

In any championship, after finishing the final match, the trophies are presented to both (the winner and the loser). Then, the presenter usually asks the players (one by one) to deliver their speeches. In some other championships, instead of asking the players to deliver a speech; they interview the players; the players are expected to show sportsmanship, composure, gratitude, and perspective, often in a second or a third language, in front of a crowd (of thousands and a television audience of millions). Tennis is probably the sport in which a player can most fully [express herself or himself honestly on court](#) . This event is held on court in front of the crowd; the setting is formal because such games are attended by Kings, Queens, and many celebrities, but the speeches there vary from formal (by the presenters, interviewers, and sponsors) to informal speeches (by the players).

This study tackles oral discourse in phonetics and phonology; it presents the characteristics of the spoken language. Phonetics and phonology and their relation are clarified. Encoding and decoding, interlanguage and the concept of misunderstanding and how this can affect the processes of encoding and decoding are also tackled. Then, the model is presented which is based on Major's (2001) “Ontogeny Phylogeny model (OPM)”; it is applied to five oral texts (three males' texts and two females' ones). The study ends with the analysis of the data, results, and conclusions. Endnotes are added.

### **1.1 Characteristics of the Spoken Language**

The speaker, during the period allotted to her/him, becomes under pressure to keep on talking; if the speaker says something which is heard by the listeners and s/he does not mean or intend it, s/he will have to undertake active, public 'repair', so a face to face interaction has its own advantages such as the ability of the speaker to monitor her/his listeners', minute-by-minute, reactions to what s/he says. The disadvantage of face to face interaction can be shown in the way the speaker suffers from exposing her/his own feelings, and of having to speak clearly and consciously as well as making an immediate response to whichever way her/his listeners react. (Brown and Yule, 1983: 5)

The spontaneity and rapidity of speech minimise the chance of complex preplanning, and promote features that help speakers to 'think standing up' –looser construction, rephrasing, repetition, filler phrases (e.g. *you know, you see*), and the use of intonation as well as pause to divide utterances into manageable chunks. There are also certain items of vocabulary which are rarely spoken, for instance, many polysyllabic chemical terms like *photosynthesis*<sup>1</sup> and

*oligosaccharide*<sup>2</sup>, or the more arcane<sup>3</sup> legal terms such as *plaintiff*<sup>4</sup>. Spoken vocabulary has certain items that cannot be written, such as *whatchamacallit*<sup>5</sup> (with no standard spelling), and certain slang, or obscene expression<sup>6</sup>. (Crystal, 2006: 149-150)

### **1.2 The Relationship between Phonetics and Phonology**

The two disciplines are concerned with the way utterances are produced (phonetics) and pronounced (phonology); these disciplines are phonetics and phonology. According to Kreidler (2004: 4-f), phonetics deals with “speech in its purely physical aspects – the way sounds are articulated by the speaker, the acoustic properties of sound waves, and the effects that these have on the ear of the hearer (and on the ear of the speaker, for that matter)”, whereas phonology is concerned with the way “speech sounds are organized into a system, the sound system of a specific language”.

A complex relationship is between phonetics and phonology in a way that phonology can be considered as 'narrowed-down' phonetics. According to McMahon (2002: 3), this can be explained in the sense that phonetics is broader than phonology because it contains information beyond the need of the speaker. Phonology, on the other hand, deals with specific information that speakers and hearers require, so it reduces the amount of information which phonetics provides. For instance, at the first stage of the children's speech (babbling), they produce sounds which are, sometimes, never heard before, but as they grow up, the amount of sounds will be reduced till they reach those sounds of their language. The perspective of this relationship can be described by McMahon (ibid) as moving from “more units to fewer, from huge variety to relative invariance, from absolutely concrete to relatively abstract (as in transcription)”.

Catford (1988: 187) explains that these two disciplines are dependent on each other; phonetics depends on phonology in order to indicate areas of linguistic importance and relevance; while phonology depends on phonetics heavily because phonetics shows the insights which enable one to find out what sound features are utilised. Phonetics also provides the terminology for the classification and description of the linguistically relevant features of sounds. Catford (ibid) adds that “the human sound-producing potential is universal”.

### **1.3 Native and Non-native Speakers**

According to the view of discourse competence that what constitutes native speaker fluency is “the ability to handle connected discourse, and the ability to do this in real time without prior rehearsal”. A native speaker has the ability to use language under the communicative stress as s/he can improvise, respond immediately to unexpected utterances, maintain continuity in speech as well as comprehension, make rapid changes of topic and speaker, and so on.

There are moments of normal non-fluencies in unplanned discourse such as: normal hesitation phenomena, repetitions, filled pauses, false starts, etc. (Stubbs, 1983: 35, 36)

The native speaker has basic stability in her/his habits of speech production and pronunciation as well as considerable ability in the reception and comprehension of other forms of English; these forms show marked divergences in their phonetic and phonological characteristics. The reason behind receptive efficiency is the aural exposure through radio and television, in particular to most of the important spoken forms of the languages. Thus, a Londoner may have difficulty in understanding the commoner forms of American English, although s/he may experience some difficulty with more extreme and popular types of Glasgow or Belfast speech. (Gimson, 1980: 300-301)

Native speakers have the ability to distinguish between 'accidental and systematic gaps in phonotactics'; they can, intuitively, show the difference between \*blik and \*bnik as the first is a possible English word; whereas the latter is not because *blik* does not violate the phonotactic constraints; while *bnik* does as, in English, there is a constraint against "syllable-initial clusters" of [bn]. English speakers can notice the non-words by making a comparison between these words and the words that exist in their lexicon, or by checking if the phonotactic rules are violated by the 'nonce' forms. Native speakers can sense the acceptability of English words or sequence of letters, but they do not possess a set of categorical constraints in order to judge the possibility of English words. Bybee (2003:93) states that "judgments of acceptability or well-formedness are based on the experience of the language user. More familiar strings are viewed as more acceptable". (Bybee, 2003: 90-ff)

Non-native speakers usually acquire English in an artificial and intermittent fashion, which makes it difficult for them to approach the native's receptive and productive competence. In early stages of language, non-native speakers' productive performance is mostly on one type of spoken English, they have no ability to alter their pronunciation according to style or situation in the way that native speakers do; they restrict themselves to what is called the 'careful, colloquial' style. As they gain performance confidence, productive precision, and fluency in the single style; they can gradually be exposed to other important regional types for the purposes of widening receptive competence. (Gimson, 1980: 301)

People can achieve success in speaking a foreign language, but with the phonetic and phonological system of their own language; this will make them unintelligible to most native listeners of that language or, at best, comprehensible only to the extent that a small number of information points can be decoded as a result of the general context of

situation. Sometimes, considerable intelligibility can be achieved within a defined context, basic syntactic patterns, and with an adequate stock of words even though the pronunciation is deformed. For example, at a dinner table, according to Gimson (*ibid*, 304), “someone who asks for the *potatoes* – pronounced as [bə'de:do:z] – is likely to be understood without difficulty, though it should be noted that an accentually divergent form such as ['bœ:do:z] might perplex”. (*ibid*, 304)

It is difficult, sometimes, for non-native speakers to pronounce the English utterances in a proper way; the main reason for that is the effect of their mother tongue. O' Connor (1980: 2) explains this reason by giving an example to show what happens in our heads: he points out that the habits of the mother tongue are so strong and the combination of sound-units which are put together to form words, by time, people become dominated by these sound-units; as if there are certain fixed number of boxes in the heads of people. These boxes are represented by sounds; whenever, one hears a sound, s/he takes it to the right box, and if s/he wants to speak, s/he will take the sounds out from the boxes. Over the years, the effect of these boxes get stronger that even when people hear sounds of a different language, they will try to place them in these boxes; but the point is that every language has its own boxes; moreover, they are arranged differently in different languages. For instance, in English, the initial segments [f], [θ], and [s] in (*fin* [f'in], *thin* [θ'in], and *sin* [s'in]) are contained in three boxes; other languages have similar boxes for /f/ and /s/, but they do not have box for /θ/. So, in a language where there is no box for /θ/ the non-native speaker will put it in either the box of /f/ or of /s/ when pronouncing the utterance 'thin'. (*ibid*)

The other problem, that faces the non-native speakers, has to do with the vowels at the beginning of words especially if they are stressed. For example, the sentence: *he's always asking awkward questions*, in this sentence the words ('ɔ:lwɪz, 'a:skɪŋ, and 'ɔ:kwəd) start with stressed vowels. For English speakers, they have no problem moving from one word to another without break or hesitation, but with non-native speakers, the case is different; they usually put a glottal stop between the two words; this makes a very jerky effect in the English language; they have to move from one word to the other word continuously, smoothly, without glottal stop, and break.

[hi:z 'ɔ:lwɪz 'a:skɪŋ 'ɔ:kwəd 'kwɛstʃənz]

In order to break the sound habits of the mother tongue and acquire new ones, one has to establish new ways of using speech organs, new ways of hearing, and new speech habits, but “Unfortunately, it is never easy to establish good habits, it is always the bad ones which come most”. (O' Connor, 1980: 3,101)

#### 1.4 Encoding and Decoding

In order to communicate in this world, the speaker starts conceptualising the event and then s/he uses the grammar of her/his language to encode that conceptualisation. Through the *phases of speech*, a term refers to a series of events, the hearers can understand the utterances which are linguistically encoded; these phases begin with the speakers and end with the hearers, who decode the utterances and reach a conceptualisation that supposedly matches the speakers' one; assuming that the hearers are familiar with the speakers' language who start the whole process. (Catford, 1988: 3-f)

The two processes of conceptualisation, encoding and decoding, have nothing to do with phonetics (i.e. outside the domain of phonetics). The only phonetic part through the whole process, supposedly, is with the phase of 'neurolinguistic programming' of the utterance; this part starts with "the execution of a short term neural programme in the central nervous system, which is triggered by the lexico-grammatical structure of the utterance and determines the nature and the sequencing of everything that follows". (ibid, 4)

After 'neurolinguistic programming', specific 'motor commands' flow out through "motor nerves to muscles in the chest, throat, mouth, etc". These muscles, as a result, contract – in part or in whole, simultaneously or successively, less or more strongly; the second phase is the 'neuromuscular' phase which includes the whole process of motor commands (the outflow of neural impulses from the central nervous system), together with indissolubly related muscular contractions.

The third phase is the 'organic' phase which results from muscular contractions that occur in the 'neuromuscular' phase, the organs that these muscles are attached to make particular movements or adopt particular postures are "the rib-cage may contract, the vocal folds in the larynx may be brought close together, the tongue adopt a particular configuration, and so on". Therefore, the sequel to the 'neuromuscular' phase is a movement or posturing of all organs in the vocal folds.

The fourth phase is the 'aerodynamic' phase of speech which results from the movements, during the 'organic' phase, of organs that act upon the air contained within the vocal folds. They dilate the air or compress it, and they set it moving in various ways "in rapid puffs, in sudden bursts, in a smooth flow, in a rough, eddying, turbulent stream, and so on". (Catford, 1988: 4)

The fifth phase is the 'acoustic' phase of speech which is constituted by the sound waves that are generated from the 'aerodynamic' events. From the speakers' mouth, in this 'acoustic'

phase, an airborne sound-wave radiates and reaches the speakers and any person's ear within the hearing distance.

When the hearers' ear-drum is impinging, the sound-wave makes it vibrate in step with the wave-form, and by the little bones of the middle ear, these vibrations are moved to the inner ear, or cochlea, "where they stimulate sensory endings of the auditory nerve". From the nerve-endings, neural impulses move to the auditory nerve to the brain, "when they give rise to sensations of sound". The sixth phase is the 'neuroreceptive' phase which results from the above process of peripheral stimulation and afferent neural transmission.

The seventh phase is the 'neurolinguistic identification' and it can be as less or more the observer of the neurolinguistic programming phase and with it the phonetic event begins. This phase results from "an interpretative process occurs in which the incoming neuroreceptive signals are identified as this or that particular vocal sound or sound-sequence". In this phase, there is awareness of sound, and the identification as particular speech-sound is underneath the threshold of consciousness. The attention is mostly given to the meaning instead of the sound, in what has been said in an actual exchange of conversation; even though the meaning is manifested through the sound.

At last, "the hearer's decoding and ultimate conceptualization – are outside the domain of phonetics, just as were the matching conceptualization and encoding in the speaker". From the previous seven phases, there are only three which lend themselves to categorisation for general phonetic purposes: they are the 'organic' phase, the 'aerodynamic' phase, and the 'acoustic' phase. (Catford, 1988: 4-ff)

There are many factors, according to Cook (1989: 9-f), which have to do with the process of encoding and decoding such as the paralinguistic features (logically, body language plays a role in speech). In communication, the participants concentrate not only on the language itself but also on other factors such as: what they are doing with their face, eyes, and body while speaking; they may be smiling, looking away, or shaking fists. The other factor is the quality of the speakers' voice whether it is shaking, or the speakers have a particular accent, or slur their utterances, or hesitate, these features are lost in a written text.

### **1.5 Inter language**

Inter language (IL) refers to the linguistic system that one creates in the process of learning a foreign language, and it is different from the native language as well as the target language that is acquired. IL shows how the learner develops through different stages, and how s/he is affected by other processes like: transfer (which is the influence of

the mother tongue), contrastive interference as well as overgeneralization. (Crystal, 2008: 24)

Foreigners' non-native characteristics are usually due to the concept of transfer (negative transfer) which means "the system of the first language (L1) is transferred to the second language (L2)". Transfer happens in all the linguistic levels: lexicon, phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, discourse, and culture. Errors occur if the phenomena of L1 and L2 are different, and that is called "negative transfer", but if the phenomena are the same in L1 and L2, "positive transfer" will occur. Positive transfer is also called "free ride" because the learner does not need to learn something new as s/he has it in her/his mother tongue. An example of "positive transfer" is that Spanish and English both have the same word order which means that Spanish learners do not need to learn the English word order; example of "negative transfer" is that Spanish speakers produce the /ʃ/ in shoe as /tʃ/ in chew. (Major, 2001: 1, 3)

IL consists of elements from L1, L2, and other elements which have nothing to do with L1 and L2, for example, Does he goes to school? Which is said by a Chinese speaker of English; the error in the above sentence does not result from L1 transfer, because Chinese has no verb inflections at all. The same kind of error is made by the Chinese tennis player Li Na in her speech when she said "he do a lot job", referring to her husband. Such types of errors, which cannot be attributed to L1 transfer, and are not native like in the L2, can be considered "universals"; these universals include 'overgeneralisation' which involve "general cognitive processes" (e.g. two foots), other universals are linguistic in nature (e.g. "all languages have syllables composed of consonant plus vowel; all languages have noun-like elements but not all languages have adjectives"). Universal Grammar (UG), defined "the core grammar of all languages, which limits what and what is not a possible language, and the parameters, or the specific settings individual languages have", is included within the set of linguistic universals. (ibid, 3)

### **1.5.1 Misunderstanding**

In the process of communication, participants have a link between their conscious minds; this is considered to be 'the achievement of coordinated social action' which refers to the success of 'understanding'. Bailey (2004: 395) states that "understanding is the foundation of social life". The problem does not lie in 'understanding' because it is something natural and transparent in everyday life, but the problem lies in 'misunderstanding'. Bailey (ibid) clarifies that "misunderstanding points to an implicit ideology of communication: that to "understanding" is normal, and to "misunderstanding" represents a breakdown or failure of something that is natural". For



example, Li Na's speech in Australian Open (2014) is "Okay, now, of course my husband, you em you em famous in China. So, thanks for him give up everything just traveling with me to be my hitting partner, fix the drink, and fix the racket, so he do a lot job"; the grammatical mistakes, errors and the phonological mismatches can cause a failure in the process of decoding (when the crowd decode her speech) because her speech can be interpreted in different ways whether she is complimenting her husband, or rebuking and criticising him indirectly.

According to Kreidler (1997: 8), misunderstanding can be caused by using different words with different meanings that the others cannot recognise (vocabulary differences). Sometimes, speakers choose different word forms, for instance, the past tense of the word *dive* [d'aɪv] *dove* or *dived* [də'ʊv] or [d'aɪvd], and *get* [g'eʔt] *got* or *gotten* [g'ɒʔt] or [g'ɒʔtɪ] (differences of morphology). One can notice the difference in the arrangement of words as to express meaning (differences in syntax); even though, the syntactic differences are minor in English. For instance, does one say *he gave it me* [hi g'eɪv ɪʔt mɪ] or *he gave me it* [hi g'eɪv mɪ'ɪʔt] ? (the first one is unacceptable in standard English, the proper one is *he gave it to me*; whereas the second one is correct) *I looked out the window* [aɪ l'ʊʔkt a'ʊʔt ðə w'ɪndəʊ] or *I looked out of the window* [aɪ l'ʊʔkt əʊʔt əv ðə w'ɪndəʊ] ? (which is a matter of difference in the use of the preposition *of* between British English "with of" and American English "without of"). Perhaps one cannot remember that s/he has heard something which is unfamiliar.

Sometimes, the speaker ends her/his utterance with a rising tone when expectations are with falling voice and vice versa; these are features of intonation (differences in pronunciation); it is a common fact that speakers of English, and most other languages, speak in melodies which are meaningful; one considers an intonational difference because s/he is taking the identical, familiar types of intonation for granted. (ibid)

The processes of encoding and decoding have to do with the concept of misunderstanding because if the process of encoding does not go well, the process of decoding will be affected, and this will cause misunderstanding. For example, when speakers try to send a message to someone; there are waves which enter her/his ear drums; these waves will be analysed and decoded into her/his ears to the brain when the message proceeds semantically, pragmatically, syntactically, phonologically. The waves are a physiological and physical phenomenon into the language itself; however, they might cause misunderstanding as they play an important role in speaking. Sound waves and waves of the air affect one's speech in her/his

segmentation, autosegmentation, acoustic (the production and transmission of sounds), and auditory (perception, understanding of speech sounds).

The reason of misunderstanding can be semantically, syntactically, or phonologically oriented. In accordance with the data, there are many participants who are non-native speakers of English that is why it is easy to be misunderstood especially because of their wrong pronunciation. Mannell and Cox<sup>7</sup> have their point of view concerning the pronunciations of native speakers “Speakers are at liberty to modify their pronunciations in various ways. Speakers differ from each other in their precise pronunciation and the same speaker may vary the pronunciation of the same word in different contexts”. The researcher agrees with them that native speakers vary their pronunciations, and they can be understood by others who speak the same accent; however, people who speak different accents may have difficulty in understanding the different kinds of pronunciations. For example, British speakers and American speakers are both English speakers but with different accents that is why misunderstanding can easily occur between them.

The role of clapping (when the crowd clap for the participants) can be considered a means of encouragement, and it can also show if the crowd are in rapport with the speaker or not. There are cases when the speaker stops as s/he is thinking that the crowd will clap, but they take time to clap, and this happens with many speakers (e.g. Mr. OH 'even though his speech was planned', Wawrinka, and Li Na).

### **1.6 The Phonological Level: Ontogeny Phylogeny Model**

Ontogeny Phylogeny Model (OPM) deals with the acquisition of the second language, and it is proposed by Major (2001). This model is more of performance than competence. Ontogeny, in traditional biological terms, means “the life cycle of a single organism”, and phylogeny means “the evolutionary development of groups of organisms, such as the origin and development of species”; in terms of language, ontogeny refers to the life cycle of individual’s language; whereas phylogeny deals with the whole languages and language types life cycle, and it includes phenomena like language contact, language loss, historical change, and dialect variation. (Major, 2001: 80, 81)

According to Yavas (2011: 213), OPM refers to the following:

in the earlier stages of L2 acquisition, L1 interference is the dominant factor; the role of universals is minimal. Gradually, the influence of L2 and universals increase, and the role of L1 decreases. In later stages of acquisition, the only element on the rise is the influence of L2, with concurrent decline of the role of L1 and universals

The main components of this model are L1, L2, and universals; OPM shows how the second language can be acquired under the effect of these components. OPM works hand in hand with the concept of interlanguage, which is governed by the above three components, and these components affect the learners production.

Major's model is about these three components (L1, L2, and universals); while the researcher's phonological model is based on the idea of Major's model but the components and the way of analysis are different in order to serve the purpose of the present work. In the researcher's work, the main component is L2 as most of the players speak English as a second language, but there are other players who speak English as their mother tongue L1, so a comparison will be made between English that is spoken by all the players and BBC, then analysing these differences. This analysis will help to discover if the players speak BBC or other different accents and whether different pronunciations (especially if the players' pronunciation is wrong) can cause misunderstanding as well as detecting the differences between females/males' pronunciation.

### 1.6.1 BBC Allophonic Rules

The segments in BBC English are pronounced according to certain phonotactics; these allophones are as follows:

#### 1. Aspiration [p<sup>h</sup>][t<sup>h</sup>][k<sup>h</sup>]

Aspiration refers to a strong explosion of breath. When the segments [p] [t] [k] (voiceless, fortis, and plosives) come in initial position followed by a vowel (pure, diphthong, and triphthong); they are pronounced as aspirated allophones.

e.g. *put* [p<sup>h</sup>ʊʔt], *take* [t<sup>h</sup>eɪʔk], *key* [k<sup>h</sup>i:]

#### 2 Glottalisation [ʔp] [ʔt] [ʔk]

When these segments [p] [t] [k] (voiceless, fortis, and plosives) come in medial or final position preceded by a vowel (pure, diphthong, and triphthong); they are pronounced as glottalised allophones.

e.g. *pepsi* [p<sup>h</sup>eʔpsi], *sport* [sp<sup>h</sup>ɔ:ʔt], *actor* [ˈæʔktə]

#### 3. Devoicing

When the segments [p] [t] [k] (voiceless, fortis, and plosives) come in initial position followed by the voiced segments [l, r, w, j]; these voiced segments are pronounced as devoiced allophones [l̥, r̥, w̥, j̥]. e.g. *please* [pl̥i:z], *twice* [tw̥aɪs], *try* [t̥ɹaɪ], *tube* [t̥j'u:b]

#### 4. Shortening Long Vowels and Diphthongs

Fortis, fricatives and stops shorten the long vowels, short vowels except short [ə], and diphthongs that precede them. So, when these voiceless, fortis, fricative, stop segments [s, θ, ʃ, f, p, t, k] come in final position preceded by long vowels, diphthongs, and triphthongs; this results in shortening them using this symbol [ ̥ ].

e.g. *house* [h'aʊs], *twice* [twɪ'aɪs], *knife* [n'aɪf], *great* [gr'eɪʔt]

5. Segment [l] has four allophones:

a. Clear (light) [l] is pronounced when the segment [l] comes in initial position followed by a vowel, or surrounded by vowels.

e.g. *love* [l'ʌv], *Helen* [h'elən]

b. Devoiced [l̥] (see point 3).

c. Dark [ɫ] is pronounced when the segment [l] comes in final position, or it precedes a consonant.

e.g. *oil* ['ɔɪɫ], *help* [h'eɪɫ]

d. Syllabic [l̩] is pronounced when the words in orthography (written form) end with -el, -al, or -le.

e.g. *little* [l'ɪʔt̩], *bottle* [b'ɒʔt̩]

6. Nasal [n] becomes syllabic [n̩] at the end of an utterance following immediately an obstruent (stops [p, b, t, d, k, g] + fricatives [f, v, θ, ð, s, z, ʃ, ʒ, x, h]).

e.g. *button* [b'ʌʔt̩], *garden* [g'ɑd̩], *listen* [l'ɪs̩], *reason* [r'i:z̩]

Note: [n] does not become syllabic after [m, n, tʃ].

e.g. *question* [kw'estʃən], *salmon* [s'æmən]

7. Linking Allophones

A linking allophone refers to a segment between two utterances; BBC has three of them:

a. Linking [r] is pronounced when there are two utterances; the first one ends with any vowel except [ɪ] and [ʊ]; the second one starts with a vowel.

e.g. *for example* [fə'rɪʔk'æmpəl], *four hours* [f'ɔ:'a'ʊəz], *for eggs* [fə'r'egz]

b. Linking [w] is pronounced when there are two utterances; the first one ends with the short [ʊ] or long vowel [u:] (neutralised[u]), and the second one starts with a vowel.

e.g. *you are* [ju<sup>w</sup>'ɑ:]

c. Linking [j] is pronounced when there are two utterances; the first one ends with the vowels [ɪ] and [i:], and the second one starts with a vowel.

e.g. *the apple* [ðɪ<sup>j</sup>'æpl]

The above transcriptions show that most non-native tennis players speak English with a foreign accent because of the phonological mismatches between their mother tongue and English. Phonological mismatches, according to Yavs (2011: 185), are difficult to avoid in comparison with other fields like syntax because in syntax, one can avoid certain construction (e.g. if the non-native speaker does not know the difference between 'simple past' and 'past perfect', s/he can get by with using only the simple past); whereas in phonology, it is difficult to avoid pronouncing certain segments. For example, if one has a problem with the interdental fricatives of English; s/he cannot

simply avoid utterances that contain /θ/ and /ð/ specially /ð/ which is frequently used in the grammatical morphemes like the definite article *the* [ðə], the case forms of personal pronouns (e.g. *them* [ðem]), the demonstrative pronouns (e.g. *this* [ðis], *that* [ðæt], etc), and some common adverbs (e.g. *then* [ðen], *thus* [ðʌs]), so /ð/ by itself can create a disastrous situation.

Interlanguage and transfer are considered to be the main reasons that create those phonological mismatches. The researcher will review the phonological mismatches and the reason behind them depending on Yavas (2011: 183-ff).

1. One of the problems that is faced by almost all non-native speakers is the pronunciation of /θ/ and /ð/, these interdental fricatives are considered to be absent in many of the world's languages; they are usually replaced by /s,z/ or /t,d/ respectively.

Examples:

- Nadal has pronounced “this trophy” as /dɪs 'træfi/.
- Federer has pronounced “equals me with” as /'i:kwəlz mɪ wɪz/.
- OH has pronounced “this year” as /dɪz jɪr/.
- Wawrinka has pronounced “with you” as /wɪz ju/, and “this two weeks” as /dɪs tu: 'wi:ks/.
- Dominika has pronounced “this was” as /tɪs wəz/, and “I think everything for me” as /aɪ tɪŋk 'evrɪtɪŋfɔ:r mɪ/.
- Li Na has pronounced “this winter” as /tɪs 'wɪntər/.

2. The differences of lateral liquids across languages such as *clear* [l] and *dark* [ɫ] do not create a breakdown of communication as it does not change meaning.

Example:

- Nadal has pronounced “Well” as /wel/ not as [weɫ].
3. Spanish speakers have a problem pronouncing the following English phonemes /v, θ, ð, z, ʃ, ʒ, dʒ, ŋ/ because they do not exist in the Spanish inventory that is why Spanish speakers try to substitute them by the closest sounds.

Examples:

- Nadal has pronounced “receive” as /,rɪs'i:f/ not as [rɪsi:v], “deserve” as /,dɪz'z:rf/ not as [dɪz'z:v], “twelve” as /'twelf/ not as [t'wɛɫve], and “having” as /hævɪn/ not as [hævɪŋ].
4. /ð/ is a separate phoneme in English; whereas in Spanish /ð/ and /d/ are allophones of the same phoneme.

Example:

- Nadal has pronounced “this” either as /dɪs/ or /ðɪs/.
5. Spanish allows only /s, n, r, l/ (and maybe /d/) to occur in the final position that is why there are many cases of final consonant elision.

Examples:

- Nadal has pronounced “your support” as /jɔ:r sɒp'ɔ:r/, and “without” as /wiðʊ/, he elides the final consonant /t/.

6. In Spanish, the alveolar lateral /l/ is always realised as “clear [l]” (i.e. non-velarised), and Spanish has two r-sounds: trill [r] and flap [ɾ]. The most important difference between Spanish and English is that Spanish has only five vowels which is a small number in comparison with English that has twenty vowels (i.e. twelve pure and eight diphthongs).

Examples:

- Nadal has pronounced “I tried hard” as /aɪ 'traɪd h'ɑ:rd/ not as [ 'aɪ tɹɪ'aid h'ɑ:d], and check the example above (see point 2) about /l/.

7. Voiceless stops are always unaspirated in Spanish; whereas in English, they are aspirated [p<sup>h</sup>], [t<sup>h</sup>], and [k<sup>h</sup>] when they come at the beginning of an utterance followed by a vowel (see 1.6.1 point 1).

Examples:

- Nadal has pronounced “tournament” as /t'ɔ:rnəmənt/ not as [t<sup>h</sup>ʊnəmənt], and “I couldn't” as /aɪ kɒ'ldnt/ not as [ 'aɪ k<sup>h</sup>'ɒdnt].

8. One of the problems that Japanese speakers face is the pronunciation of English clusters; it is known that the English utterances can have three onsets and three codas (clusters); whereas Japanese has no clusters.

Examples:

- OH has pronounced “Australia” as /'ɔ:zeɪ,liə/ not as [ 'ɒstreɪliə].
- Li Na has pronounced “Fault” as /'fɔ:lt/ not as [f'ɒlt].

9. In addition to the above problems, the mismatch of stress, intonation and the prosodic features can make the foreign accent obvious. The most recognisable foreign accents are by Spanish and Chinese players.

Examples:

- Nadal has pronounced “First thing that I want to say” as /'fɜ:rst 'θɪŋ ðæt aɪ 'went tu 'seɪ/.
- Li Na has pronounced “so start now” as /səʊ 'stɑ:rt na/, and “thanks for the crowd come to supporting us” as /'θæŋks fɔ:r ðə 'kraʊ 'kʌm tu sə'pɔ:rtɪŋ əs/.

Most of the participants (non-native speakers) fail to use the correct form of the utterances (whether it is weak or strong) since, in connected speech, it is proper to use the weak form for prepositions, pronouns, coordinators, definite and indefinite articles, and auxiliary verbs. Pronouncing utterances, according to Roach (2009: 89), in a wrong form sounds bizarre to native speakers who are accustomed to weak forms. So, speakers who do not use weak forms will have a difficulty in understanding speakers who use them. The following examples will clarify the idea:

- Federer has pronounced “and” as /ænd/ not as [ən].
- Nadal has pronounced “for”, “of”, “your”, “and”, “to” as /fɔ:r/, /ɒf/, /jɔ:r/, /ənt/, /tu/ not as [fə], [əv], [jə], [ən], [tʰə] respectively.
- OH has pronounced “of”, “to”, “at”, “and” as /ɒv/, /tu/, /æt/, /ænd/ not as [əv], [tʰə], [əʔt], [ən] respectively.
- Wawrinka has pronounced “for”, “to”, “of” as /fɔ:r/, /tu/, /ɒf/ not as [fə], [tʰə], [əv] respectively.
- Dominika has pronounced “to”, “of”, “for”, “from”, “and” as /tu/, /ɒf/, /fɔ:r/, /frɒm/, /ænd/ not as [tʰə], [əv], [fə], [frəm], [ən] respectively.
- Li Na has pronounced “for”, “your”, “are”, “to” as /fɔ:r/, /jɔ:r/, /ɑ:r/, /tu/ not as [fə], [jə], [ə], [tʰə] respectively.
- Agnieszka has pronounced “from”, “to”, “for” as /frɒm/, /tu/, /fɔ:r/ not as [frəm], [tʰə], [fə] respectively.

In certain circumstances, according to Roach (2009: 89), function words can be pronounced in their strong form. For example, the Chinese sponsor Mr. OH has pronounced *do* in “I do believe” in its strong form /du:/ because he has used it for emphasis.

The phonological level has resulted in the following points:

1. Most players (non-native speakers) have the tendency to speak American English rather than BBC English.
2. The phonological mismatches (for non-native speakers) results from the interference with the participants’ mother tongue, and how different their native language is from English. For example, English is a stressed language; [Chinese](#) is a tonal language; Spanish is a syllabic language, so phonemes are different in each as well as the way the mouth, teeth, and tongue are used.
3. Other causes of phonological mismatches (for native and non-native speakers) are stress, anxiety, sadness, happiness, tiredness (physically and mentally), and fear. One can feel the effects of these causes through listening to the players’ speeches (their shaky voice, trouble putting thoughts to words, quiet voice, dry throat/loss of voice, and stuttering).
4. Most non- native players have used the strong form for function words instead of the weak form.
5. Misunderstanding results from the difficulty that listeners face because if they need to guess what segments the speakers are trying to pronounce, it will be difficult to understand the ideas that they are trying to convey.

### 1.7 Endnotes

1. Photosynthesis [foh-tuh-sin-thuh-sis]: noun, Biology, Biochemistry, "the complex process by which carbon dioxide, water, and certain inorganic salts are converted into [carbohydrates](#) by green plants, algae, and certain bacteria, using energy from the sun and [chlorophyll](#)". ([Dictionary.com](#), online Dictionary) <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/photosynthesis>
2. Oligosaccharide [ol-i-goh-sak-uh-rah-yd, -rid] : noun, Chemistry, "any carbohydrate yielding few monosaccharides on hydrolysis, as two, three, or four". ([Dictionary.com](#), online Dictionary) <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/oligosaccharide>
3. Arcane [ɑ:'kem]: ( adj) "requiring secret knowledge to be understood; mysterious; esoteric" (The Free Dictionary, online Dictionary) <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/arcane>
4. Plaintiff ['pleɪntɪf]: 1. (Law) (formerly) "a person who brings a civil action in a court of law. Now replaced by: claimant". (The Free Dictionary, online Dictionary) <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/plaintiff>
5. Whatchamacallit : (n) "something unspecified whose name is either forgotten or not known". For example, *I can't find the whatchamacallit that holds the door open.*(The Free Dictionary, online Dictionary) <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/whatchamacallit>
6. Obscene expressions: obscene "is connected with sex in a way that most people find offensive: obscene gesture/language/books". (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 2010: 1049)
7. Mannell, Robert and Felicity Cox. " Phonetics and Phonology: Phonetic (Narrow) Transcription of Australian English". [http://clas.mq.edu.au/speech/phonetics/transcription/phonetic\\_transcription/phonetic\\_transcription.html](http://clas.mq.edu.au/speech/phonetics/transcription/phonetic_transcription/phonetic_transcription.html) (accessed on March, 23th, 1015).

### Conclusions

The study has reached the following conclusions:

1. Pronunciation mismatches are inevitable since the players are from different nationalities, but because English is a global language, and the players are stars (they have their own image which they have to protect), and they represent role models for younger generations, such kinds of pronunciation mismatches attract so much attention. The other reason is the formality of the setting (the setting is formal and there are kings, queens, and many celebrities who attend the game) that is why the players have to exert more control over their speech segments. Today, so much attention is given not only to the game but also to the players and their speeches.
2. The success of encoding and decoding processes are affected by the state of the players, which influence their speech performance that is



why the crowd have difficulty in decoding some speech utterances. Stress makes the players lose control over their speech organs especially the vocal cords when the vibration (one of the forms of stress) causes the players to speak in a shaky voice (instability of the speaker's voice).

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### التحليل الخطابي لأحاديث لاعبي التنس

#### المسخلص

تعنى هذه الدراسة بالتحليل اللغوي لأحاديث لاعبي التنس إذ تتناول الأحاديث الإنكليزية التي يلقونها لاعبو التنس (من أبناء اللغة الأم وسواهم) في المباراة الختامية. تكمن المشكلة في تشفير وفك شفرة احاديث لاعبي التنس من أبناء اللغة الأم وسواهم كونها ارتجالية غير مخطط لها وتلقى في سياق رسمي، وهي حالة نادرة. تمت في تلقي الأحاديث، بعبارة أخرى، أصوات كلامية عدة تشتت أذن السامع الإنكليزي من أبناء الإنكليزية مثل تلفظ كلمة Zurich بصيغة /θurik/، في حين يأتي تلفظ هيئة الإذاعة البريطانية (BBC) بصيغة ['zjʊərɪk]. تهدف الرسالة إلى استقصاء الفوارق الصوتية بين اللكنة الإنكليزية التي يستخدمها لاعبو التنس (من أبناء اللغة الأم وسواهم) وتلفظ هيئة الإذاعة البريطانية (BBC) وتبيان كيفية تسبب ذلك بإشكالية في التشفير وفك الشفرة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: خطابات، تشفير وفك شفرة، سوء الفهم، أبناء اللغة الأم وسواهم، التحليل الصوتي.