

## UNIT 4\_ STANDARD SOUTH AFRICAN ENGLISH. REVIEW EXERCISES (✍) (1 h 10')

*Focus:* **South African English: Historical Background (optional = not compulsory)**

*Time:* 45 minutes

*Level of Difficulty:* Intermediate

**Exercise 1:** Explain the following statements about the history of South African English, based on what you have read:

- a) British interest in South Africa began during the Napoleonic wars.
- b) During the twentieth century, RP gradually lost its status as the prestige model.
- c) English has been one of South Africa's eleven official languages since 1993.

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**KEY to Exercise 1:** Open answer. It should be based on the information provided in the document *UNIT 4\_THEORY*: section *South African English*. You may also include additional relevant information from further reading, if you wish.

**Focus: South African English: Description of the Accent**

*Time:* 35 minutes

*Level of Difficulty:* Intermediate

**Exercise 2:** Complete the blanks in the following statements that describe the segmental and suprasegmental characteristics of Standard South African English. Choose the appropriate word from the box.

tap, tap, two, /ɪ/, monophthongs, closer, unaspirated, /r/, retracting, wine, non-rhotic

- a) The vowel /ɪ/ has split into \_\_\_\_ allophones in complementary distribution.
- b) The vowel /æ/ is slightly \_\_\_\_ than in RP.
- c) The vowel in *bard* has a very \_\_\_\_ pronunciation.
- d) /l/ has a \_\_\_\_ and lowering effect on preceding vowels.
- e) The consonant /r/ tends to be a \_\_\_\_ in intermediate position (with the first vowel stressed), as in *lorry*.
- f) *Whine* sounds the same as \_\_\_\_.
- g) Central diphthongs tend to be pronounced as \_\_\_\_ in South African English.
- h) Voiceless plosives are \_\_\_\_ in stressed word-initial position.
- i) South African English is a \_\_\_\_ accent; therefore, *car* is pronounced /kɑː/.
- j) /t/ can be produced as a voiced \_\_\_\_ in inter-vocalic position ('V\_V).

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**KEY to Exercise 2:**

- a) The vowel /ɪ/ has split into **two** allophones in complementary distribution.
- b) The vowel /æ/ is slightly **closer** than in RP.
- c) The vowel in *bard* has a very **back** pronunciation.
- d) /l/ has a **retracting** and lowering effect on preceding vowels.
- e) The consonant /r/ tends to be a **tap** in intermediate position (with the first vowel stressed), as in *lorry*.
- f) *Whine* sounds the same as **wine**.
- g) Central diphthongs tend to be pronounced as **monophthongs** in South African English.
- h) Voiceless plosives are **unaspirated** in stressed word-initial position.
- i) South African English is a **non-rhotic** accent; therefore, *car* is pronounced /kɑ:/.  
j) /t/ can be produced as a voiced **tap** in inter-vocalic position ('V\_V).

**Focus: South African English vs. RP**

*Time:* 35 minutes

*Level of Difficulty:* Intermediate

**Exercise 3:** Tick the following statements regarding the differences between the pronunciation of RP and Standard South African English as True (T) or False (F). Provide reasons for your False answers.

- a) Words that have /ɑ:/ in RP before voiceless fricatives (/θ, f, s/) or before clusters of a nasal plus another consonant (as in *dunce, plant...)* usually have /æ/ in SAE. True  or False
- b) The *Weak Vowel Merger* occurs in SAE. True  or False
- c) SAE /u:/ is usually centralised [ɯ:] or more fronted, significantly more forward than its RP equivalent. True  or False
- d) SAE short front vowels (/æ, e/) are more open than in RP. True  or False
- e) In SAE, as in RP, /eə/ undergoes an elision of its second element, resulting in a monophthong [e:] (represented as /e:/). True  or False
- f) As in RP, there is a tendency in SAE for Yod coalescence. True  or False
- g) /l/ is clear in all environments in SAE but only in certain contexts in RP. True  or False
- h) There is a tendency to strengthen final stressed syllables at the end of an intonation unit where the nuclear tone is rising. True  or False

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**KEY to Exercise 3:**

- a) True  or False
- b) True  or False
- c) True  or False
- d) True  or False
- e) True  or False
- f) True  or False
- g) True  or False
- h) True  or False

*Rationale:*

**a)** SAE usually has /ɑ:/ rather than /æ/ in these contexts.

**d)** These vowels are closer than in RP.

**e)** This process occurs in SAE, although it can also be found in RP.

**f)** In SAE, /t/ and /d/ followed by /j/ are coalesced in both stressed and unstressed syllables.

**g)** /l/ have two allophones in RP, and in SAE for most native speakers. For speakers who exhibit the clear/dark distinction, the consonant is velarised when in final position or before another consonant, as in RP.

**h)** This general trend occurs in final unstressed syllables at the end of an intonation unit where the nuclear tone is rising.

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