
BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

Tim's Pronunciation Workshop

Assimilation of /s/



Tim

Hi. I'm Tim and this is my Pronunciation workshop. Here I'm going to show you how English is really spoken. Come on, let's go inside. You know how they say that British people are obsessed with the weather? Well I'm feeling under it today. Under the weather – that's an expression which means 'I'm not feeling very well'. Excuse me! What do you say in your language when someone sneezes? Do you know what we say in British English? Let's ask the people of London.

Voxpops

Bless you.

Bless you.

Bless you.

Bless you.

Tim

Thank you! Bless you! Now the word 'bless' ends in /s/ and 'you' begins with /j/. But what happens to the /s/ sound when we put the two words together? Watch and listen again.

Voxpops

Bless you.

Bless you.

Bless you.

Bless you.

Tim

In fluent speech, when a /s/ sound is followed by a /j/ then the /s/ changes to a /ʃ/ sound, and this change also happens if the next word begins with the /ʃ/ sound itself. So 'bless you' becomes 'bleshyou' and 'this shirt' becomes 'thishirt'. This is an example of assimilation. And don't forget this can also happen if the /s/ is followed by a /t/, because as you might remember from a previous

video, the /t/ sound disappears between two consonants. Here are some more examples.

Examples

Can you **just shut** the door please?!

This yacht is beautiful.

Don't worry, **that's usual**.

He always **makes you** feel good.

Tim

Right, so you've heard the examples, and now it's your turn. Listen and repeat.

Examples

Can you **just shut** the door please?!

This yacht is beautiful.

Don't worry, **that's usual**.

He always **makes you** feel good.

Tim

Well done. Now remember, if you want to learn more about pronunciation, then please visit our website, bbclearningenglish.com. And that is about it from the pronunciation workshop for this week. I'll see you soon. Bye bye! Now, my mum always said that this stuff is great when you're feeling under the weather. What is it? It's just yoghurt. Ewww. Umm... better not. Toasty.