# TARGET SELECTION

FOR THE COMPLEXITY APPROACH

The complexity approach is a phonological target selection principle that prioritizes targeting 1 or 2 later-developing, complex sounds and/or clusters to achieve overall speech improvement more efficiently. This approach relies on several underlying principles, including markedness of sound classes.

MARKEDNESS: Sound classes can be categorized as *marked* and *unmarked* in relation to one another. According to complexity theory, **targeting sounds from a *marked* sound class** (i.e., more complex) will not only help that child produce that target sound, but also **improve production of sounds in the corresponding *unmarked* sound class** without treating each of those sounds directly. For example, in referencing the chart below, treating a fricative sound should not only improve the child's ability to produce fricatives, but also stops. Therefore, **targeting the *most marked* sound class** (e.g., 3-element clusters) will not only improve the child's ability to produce clusters (within-class generalization), but also corresponding unmarked sound classes, including 2-element clusters, affricates, fricatives, and stops (across-class generalization) **leading to broad system-wide improvement** in speech production.

MARKED SOUND CLASS	UNMARKED SOUND CLASS
fricatives	stops
affricates	fricatives
liquids	nasals
2-element clusters	affricates
3-element clusters	2-element clusters
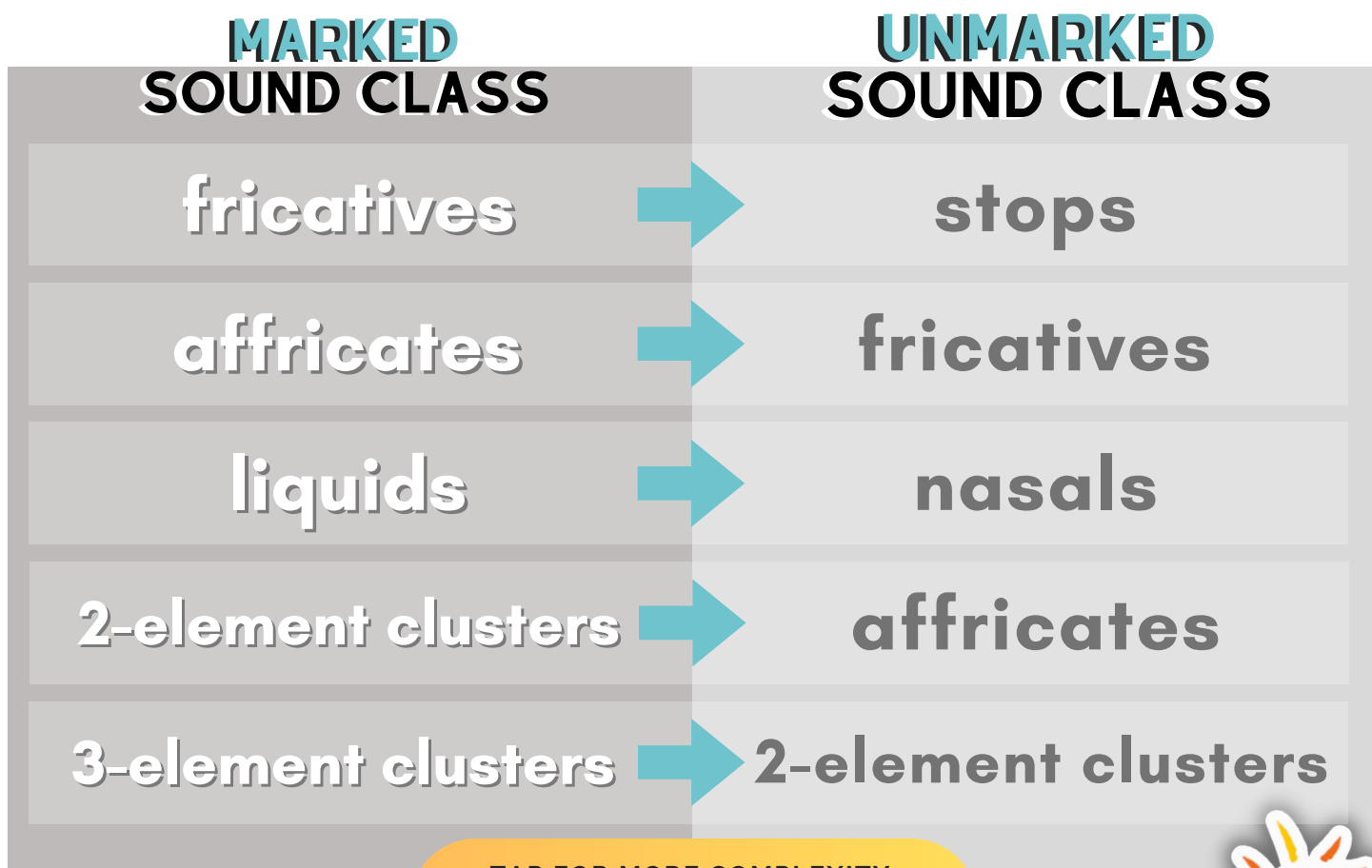
TAP FOR MORE COMPLEXITY APPROACH RESOURCES ON WWW.GRAHAMSPEECHTHERAPY.COM

Graham Speech Therapy

- Gierut, J. A. (2001). Complexity in phonological treatment: Clinical factors. Language, Speech, and Hearing Services in Schools, 32, 229–241.
- Storkel, H.L. (2018b) The Complexity Approach to Phonological Treatment: How to Select Treatment Targets. Language, Speech, and Hearing Services in Schools, 1–19.