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CONNECTED SPEECH IN EFL PEDAGOGY

Abstract: The following article discusses the alterations that form an integral part in native-like English fluid speech, or connected speech, and its role in English Language Teaching (ELT) and English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning.

The first section will analyse what exactly happens when native speakers speak in a fast and unrestricted way. The analysis will make reference to 4 specific phenomena associated with connected speech: assimilation, elision, catenation/intrusion, and vowel reduction/centralisation, respectively.

The second section will briefly detail some of the issues connected speech causes for learners of English, such as the lack of similarities between their native language and their target language.

The third section will outline at length some methods through which instructors in EFL classrooms can bring connected speech into their language teaching arsenal. Both receptive and productive activities are included here to suit a variety of teaching styles and learner preferences.

Keywords: teaching connected speech, teaching phonology, connected speech activities, teaching EFL/ELT.

What is connected speech and why is it important to take it into consideration?

Connected speech is effectively the reverse of segmental speech, which would be taking each word in isolation and giving it its dictionary pronunciation. Take the quintessentially British lunch time meal: a lovely portion of fish and chips. Enunciated staccato, these words would be pronounced /fɪʃændʒɪps/ (look in any dictionary for the phonetic transcription and this is what will be found); if they

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were delivered at native-like speed and rhythm, they would be rendered /fɪʃəntʃɪps/ instead. Connected speech can therefore be considered to be „spoken language when analysed as a continuous sequence” (Crystal 2008, p. 101), as in the prior example, we might point to the reduction of the vowel sound /æ/ in ‘and’ to the unstressed schwa, the catenation between this reduced form and the preceding consonant sound /f/ in ‘fish’, and the elision of the consonant /d/ occurring between the second and third word in the phrase, and so on. In just one short binomial, we saw three phonological changes; ergo, it is a safe assumption that such alterations are incredibly frequent in natural speech, and, of course, they very much are. The implications of this are that students have to be made aware of the phenomena occurring in connected speech so that they can understand it better, consequently improving their listening skills and confidence to boot.

Any teacher of EFL will attest to the occasional moans and groans or feelings of panic and helplessness encountered when impending listening activities are announced. Students, particularly of a lower level, typically have psychological problems associated with getting stuck on what they deem incomprehensible speech (Ur 1984), and this naturally results in their inability to pick apart whatever is being said. Think about the students you have taught: has it ever occurred to you that, after listening to whichever text is being worked on, they announce that they have not understood a single thing? It certainly has with mine, and the reasons for this are often unconnected to the difficulty of the lexis presented within the text, but rather owing to the changes occurring in connected speech which phonologically disrupt the stock pronunciation of the words the students already know. Many teachers fall into the trap of focussing solely on the end product, or, in other words, whether the students got the multiple-choice questions correct, and not on the process of listening itself; indeed, such an approach „does not mean that they take away from the experience the kind of generalised technique that will enable them to avoid a similar problem of understanding if one occurs in future” (Field 2008b, p. 29). Resultantly, focus must be paid to the logic behind misunderstandings, and often it is only by raising awareness of such phenomena that students can take something away from the experience and do better further down the road.

Three of these phenomena have been superficially determined in the opening paragraph, but we must first also consider these, and other phonological changes that can occur in native-like speech, in more depth, so that we can then consider how instructors can go about teaching them in EFL classrooms to improve listening skills. Before we do though, it must be acknowledged that, while listening is rightly said to involve both bottom-up and top-down processes when conducted effectively (Santos, Graham 2018), it is not the intention of this article to deal with the latter, and that, rather, I will be dealing with the interpretation of speech streams from a bottom-up perspective. Nor will I be touching on intonation, as a separate article on teaching this is also readily available.

Assimilation

The first of the phenomena associated with connected speech to be dealt with is assimilation. This refers to the „influence exercised by one sound segment upon the articulation of another, so that the sounds become more alike” (Crystal 2008, p. 39). If you were inviting out a speaker of English with native-like phonological control on a damp British evening, and they told you they were just going to grab their green parka before heading out to meet you, they might realise the phrase ‘green parka’ (in isolation /gri:npɑ:(r)kə/) as /gri:mpɑ:(r)kə/. What is happening here is that the mouth is anticipating the upcoming /p/ sound so that it moves to more closely resemble it by changing /n/ to /m/. The sounds resultantly become more alike as they are both bilabial, formed with both lips, the only difference being the manner in which they are articulated, the former being nasal and the latter being a plosive, meaning that the phrase requires less work from the articulators to enunciate. Assimilation, then, is essentially the phonological equivalent to cutting out the middleman so as to avoid unnecessary lengthening of a negotiation process.

It is said to have various sub-categories. The first of these is regressive assimilation, also labelled anticipatory assimilation, wherein a sound anticipates some feature of the following sound, as in our example of the green parka. The second is progressive assimilation, wherein a sound continues from the causing sound to the following sound (Nathan 2008). Admittedly, there seem to be precious few examples of progressive assimilation at more than a word level in English, since the one commonly cited by academic publications is the completely nonsensical „lunch score” (Crystal 2008, p. 40; Meyer 2005, p. 130). Where it does seem to be far more common, on a word level, is the realisation of plural nouns, third person plural verb forms or past tense/participle markers, in particular how the consonants /s/ and /z/, /t/ and /d/ are voiced (Skandera, Burleigh 2011). Thus in ‘my friend showed up an hour late’, the last consonant sound of the verb ‘showed’ is determined by the voicing of the vowel; similarly, in ‘at least he looked good in his green parka’, the last consonant sound of the verb ‘looked’ is determined by the voicing of the consonant sound /k/ (this velar plosive is unvoiced, and therefore this voicing follows through to ‘(e)d’, changing from voiced to unvoiced)). The third is coalescent assimilation, also termed reciprocal assimilation, wherein two sounds come together (or coalesce) as one. This is highly common in phrases involving (negative) auxiliaries followed by the subject pronoun ‘you’, as in ‘the bar we eventually went to was playing Don’t You Want Me by The Human League’, here, the /t/ in the negative auxiliary and the /j/ in the following subject pronoun in the song’s title coalesce as /tʃ/; similarly, asking someone directly whether they want to dance (‘Do you want to dance?’) might see the coalescence of /d/ and /j/ as /dʒ/.

It must be noted here that a full list of sounds affected by regressive assimilation and coalescent assimilation is sufficiently lengthy not to be included in this article,

but those without such knowledge can look to various sources on phonology for relief (see, for example, Kelly 2000, or Koster 1987).

Elision

The second of the phenomena inherent in native-like connected speech is elision. This is essentially the omission of sounds within fluent speech (Crystal 2008). As we saw in the introductory paragraph of this article, the /d/ is likely to be elided in the binomial 'fish and chips' when connecting the phrase together fluidly. Indeed, at the phoneme level, it is the voiced alveolar plosive /d/ and its unvoiced equivalent /t/ that are most commonly elided. This is because when they are sandwiched between two consonant sounds, forming consonant clusters, it requires a lot of work for the mouth to untangle them: resultantly, it is far easier to cut corners and omit one of the sounds, much in the same way we cut corners in anticipatory assimilation. Luckily, it has been pointed out that native speaker elision is an overwhelmingly rule-based process, so it is worth mentioning what these rules actually are (Jenkins 2000).

The first would be, as we have seen, the instance of alveolar plosives /t/ and /d/ when appearing between other consonants. This could be in individual words, such as 'handbag', or when appearing between two words, often in superlatives, as in 'Don't You Want Me is one of the greatest disco tracks of the 1980s' (here the /t/ is elided between the /s/ in 'greatest' and /d/ in 'disco'), or when using regular past simple forms, as in 'when it reached the chorus, we all went crazy' (here the /t/ in 'reached', continuing the unvoiced nature of the preceding consonant as we saw in progressive assimilation, is elided due to being between /ʃ/ and /ð/). If you think about how often superlatives and past simple forms are used in everyday speech, then it follows naturally that such high frequency items ought to be pointed out to your students (Sanderson 2014). Another prominently-occurring item subject to constant elision is the marker of negation in auxiliary verbs, as in the consonant cluster contained within 'my friend told me he hadn't heard it before' (here, we would actually expect elision of the /d/ in 'friend' and 'told' due to their neighbouring consonants as well as the elision of /t/ in the negative auxiliary part of the past perfect simple 'hadn't'), which can sometimes cause confusion between the meaning of the phrase itself, as students can interpret it as carrying a positive meaning as opposed to a negative one (Field 2008b).

Catenation and Intrusion

The recognition of word boundaries in connected speech can be complicated for learners due to the third phenomena associated with it, which is the combination of catenation and intrusion. Catenation, also known as liaison, most typically happens when a word ending with a consonant sound carries itself onto a word

initiating with a vowel sound (Selkirk 2015). Thus, if we take some of our previous examples, such as ‘he looked good in his green parka’ or ‘when it reached the chorus’, a native speaker may carry the /d/ in ‘good’ onto the following vowel /ɪ/ in ‘in’, so that it is realised as /dɪn/, or might carry the /n/ in ‘when’ onto the following vowel /ɪ/ in ‘in’, and so on. There is also the linking /r/ to consider, although there is a distinction to be made between the linking /r/ and the intrusive /r/ (Kortmann 2020). The former occurs when there is already the letter ‘r’ present within a word, and functions much the same way as regular consonant-vowel linking, although it is worth remembering that this linking /r/ is characteristic of non-rhotic varieties of English, since rhotic equivalents such as Scottish or Irish pronounce the letter ‘r’ wherever it occurs anyway (Giegerich 1992). So, for instance, in an utterance like ‘I was shocked, since there are few disco songs as well-known as that one’, the linking /r/ would occur to join ‘there’ and ‘are’ together.

The latter, the intrusive /r/, occurs in non-rhotic English varieties when linking two vowel sounds together, the first of which is a centralised vowel sound such as the schwa or the longer /ɔ:/, an example being the linkage in ‘I saw a great documentary about them’, as we have the sound /ɔ:/ in ‘saw’ followed by the schwa in the subsequent indefinite article. The letter ‘r’ is not physically present within the word ‘saw’, and therefore it is considered not to be a linking /r/, but rather its intrusive equivalent.

Intrusion can be thus quantified as the „addition of sounds in connected speech which have no basis in the pronunciation of the syllables or words heard in isolation” (Crystal 2008, p. 253). We have already seen the less common intrusive /r/ in connected speech, but there are two other consonants which are more frequently added to link vowel sounds. While it has been pointed out that these two are not always distinctly heard, they are nonetheless so noticeable in recorded materials that their learning value to students is high (Underhill 1994). The first of these consonants added is /w/ – in order to link words ending with the vowels /ʊ/ or /u:/ and words beginning with another vowel sound. If you were to say ‘it’s my second favourite Human League song, behind Do or Die’, for instance, this would include an intrusive /w/, since ‘do’ finishes with a vowel and ‘or’ initiates with one. Effectively, intrusive /w/ occurs since the vowel sounds which trigger it, both /ʊ/ and /u:/, are the starting point for the bilabial approximant /w/, so it is a natural continuation of the mouth movement, with the lips becoming rounded (Kelly 2000). The second of these consonants added is /j/ so as to provide a link between words ending with the vowels /i:/ and /ɪ/, as well as the diphthong /eɪ/, and words starting with any other vowel sound. Taking for example the utterance ‘they (The Human League) are still making music today’, we would expect an intrusive /j/ to be inserted between the subject pronoun, due to its diphthong /eɪ/, and the auxiliary verb, since these vowel sounds provide the starting point for the palatal approximant /j/ with their inherent lip slackening (ibid).

Vowel reduction (weak forms)

In keeping with the idea that the mouth likes to cut as many corners as possible, when connecting speech fluidly native speakers reduce the quality and length of their vowels, and this is the fourth and final of the phenomena I shall discuss. Vowel reduction, or centralisation, then, is „used to refer to cases where a vowel normally articulated in the periphery of the vowel area comes to be produced nearer the centre of the mouth” (Crystal 2008, p. 71). Therefore, the long vowels /i:/ and /u:/ are reduced to their shortened equivalents /ɪ/ and /ʊ/ respectively, and all other monophthongs are reduced towards the schwa due to its central mouth position (Underhill 1994). What makes this so important and crucial to a stream of speech is the fact that this occurs principally in unstressed syllables, and involves the small and unimportant words (the function words) as opposed to the lexical words in an utterance (Thornbury 2006). This includes the likes of primary and modal auxiliaries, different varieties of pronouns, determiners, conjunctions and prepositions, as all of these typically have both a strong form and a weak form, where their vowel sounds are centralised. There are around fifty of these high frequency items; it follows naturally then that they play an essential role in connected speech. To exemplify, bearing in mind one of our previous examples of an utterance like ‘Do you want to dance?’, we would expect three instances of vowel reduction, as in the dummy auxiliary verb, the subject pronoun, and the preposition, within just one interrogative. This goes to show that students should be taught to recognise their existence so as to „receive insight into the speech of native speaker”, as well as to improve their ability to decode what is being said at a word level in a stream of speech (Underhill 1994, p. 64).

Learner issues associated with connected speech

As outlined in the beginning paragraphs, students often feel overwhelmed when subjected to streams of speech while trying to hone their listening skills, particularly at lower levels. Why is it the case that if you give them the transcript and ask them to read it, they have no issues with comprehension? One reason is naturally that they can go at their own pace; let us consider the second reason.

If you take into consideration the fact that course books are graded to meet the level of the students studying from them, in theory, there ought not to be too many unfamiliar lexical items. In any case, any unfamiliar items tend to be pre-taught by instructors or explicitly referenced in pre-listening exercises, through matching meanings with definitions and so on. Thus, it follows that the reason students understand so little is due to their own expectations of the words they will hear and the actual reality of what they will hear. Often, „the result is sufficiently removed from the original expected sound of the words in question” that they end up stumbling and failing to understand the wider meaning of what is being said (Ur

1984, p. 18). Known items of lexis can resultantly become unknown to them. Such uncertainties in how spoken language is presented can demotivate students to the point where they become almost unwilling to partake in listening (Hedge 2000). It has been noted that many instructors mistakenly „make the assumption that, once a word has been presented... the learner will have no trouble in recognising the very different shape that the word might take when occurring in a natural utterance” (Field 2008b, p. 141). Of course, given what has just been said about the likes of assimilation, elision, catenation/intrusion and weak forms, this could not be further from the truth.

Moreover, many of the concepts in English connected speech may not be applicable to students' L1s. Those originating from syllable-timed languages as opposed to stress-timed languages can have conceptual difficulties engendered by the notion of weak forms, since no such rhythmic base is shared between their own language and English (Field 2008a). More detail on specific phonological differences for specific nationalities is readily available (see for instance Swan, Smith 2001).

Methods of implementing connected speech

Fortunately, there are a number of tried-and-tested activities which can be used in the EFL classroom to raise awareness of and to target specific phenomena of connected speech. While all of these following activities work, it is naturally up to the individual instructor to pick and choose which ones they believe will be most useful for their students, considering their current stages of awareness of connected speech and also their strengths and weaknesses.

Using authentic materials

It has been appropriately pointed out that „only by working on the problems that arise in trying to understand a sample of L2 input that learners become aware of gaps in their L2 systems” (Anderson, Lynch 1988, p. 35). And what better way is there of examining connected speech than by trying to understand a sample of authentic language? Since connected speech arises most commonly in spoken contexts, it makes complete sense to look to authentic materials as a springboard to examine characteristics of it. While you may be able to find some scripted recordings in your course books that come with some activities targeting the likes of catenation and intrusion, the potential of such texts is often outshone by real life English recordings. What I suggest here then, that if you find something, or, indeed, create something with a friend and colleague, either spontaneously or planned, since both are counted in the definition of authentic discourse, in that the former is „language [...] originally written or spoken for a non-pedagogical purpose, and which was, in its original form, a genuine act of communication”, or in that the latter is „language produced for a pedagogical purpose but exhibiting features which have a high

probability of occurrence in genuine acts of communication” (Geddes, White, in Hedge 2000, p. 246), and bring it into your classroom. Set up the activity much in the same way you would traditionally set up any listening exercise: something to pique the group’s interest, one or two questions targeting the listeners’ global comprehension of the text (for if they are not provided with a reason for listening they may not want to listen at all) (Ur 1984), and a few more if desired requiring more detailed listening (such as true/false activities or information questions). Provided you do not overload your students with complicated lexis in the text you choose or create, you can then use it to explore features of connected speech in context, raising their awareness of the what and the why. I recommend that you introduce one aspect per lesson, although you can also get away with introducing more; the most important thing is to recognise where your students’ limits are and not to surpass them and run the risk of overwhelming them with too much analysis at once.

If going down the route of material creation does not appeal to you, you can take authentic materials from elsewhere. Song has traditionally been used in the classroom to explore aspects of grammar and, less traditionally, lexis. But why not use song as a means of exploring connected speech? Select any song you like, look through the lyrics, and you ought to be able to pick out any number of connected speech phenomena in naturally-occurring contexts. It only takes a few minutes to create a gap-fill worksheet aimed at homing in on whichever aspects you decide to raise awareness of. If you are teaching during the festivities, you can go with Christmas classics like Mariah Carey’s ‘All I Want for Christmas is You’, and use it to introduce or review concepts like elision and catenation; if you are teaching a lesson about working life, you can opt for something like Dolly Parton’s ‘9 to 5’ given its use of weak forms and elision, and so on. Give students more than one attempt to fill in the gaps, and have them discuss in pairs what they heard for each gap. There can be some divergences here, with one student hearing something completely or partially different to their peer, so this can be a goldmine of opportunity for instructors to explore why a certain expression may have been heard (assimilation, catenation, vowel reduction, etc., causing a misinterpretation), as you can easily segue into minute teaching of certain points that come up (Underwood 1989). As aforementioned, these are low-prep teaching supplements that you can bring in, and you can obviously use them to teach the more traditional systems taught when using song like grammar and lexis. If you have a group of musically-inclined learners, after you have dealt with the answers to the gap-fill exercise, you might even ask them to sing together as a productive activity so as to get to grips with forming connected speech in an authentic, enjoyable way.

Another fantastic opportunity to practise aspects of connected speech in semi-authentic contexts is through utilising dubbing. Dubbing used to be something that could be carried out only in the event that your language centre had access to relevant facilities with microphones and recording equipment, but this is rapidly

changing due to technological advances. For instance, nowadays it is possible to dub on ubiquitous social media platforms like TikTok. Recently there has been a filter introduced whereby users are able to synchronise their mouths with audio from a large selection of film clips or scenes from television shows. This can be done with more than one person, so long as both faces are visible on the device's screen. What this means is that you can choose a famous scene and work on its inherent phonology, and have your students rehearse in pairs until they are sufficiently prepared to mimic the original actors. In such a way they will learn a lot about connected speech and also take something home with them that they can watch again and again. Similarly, you might want to take on a more ambitious project with a group and write and rehearse a short play. Here, the students can be involved in the creation process too, and once the script has been finalised, you can spend some time marking aspects of connected speech you would like to focus on in class, bring it to their attention, practise drilling the target language, and having your students practise it while rehearsing. Such a project can be highly motivating provided you have the right group for it, and if it can be performed in front of their parents and families, if you are working on a summer school programme for instance, so much the better.

Using dictation

There is a reason why the classics are the classics. While some (see for example, Stansfield 1985) have expressed concerns over what dictation actually measures, others (see for example, Weir 2005) have really advocated for it as a means of testing listening skills. Regardless of how you feel about it, the longest-standing bottom-up process activity undoubtedly proves to be an invaluable way of providing students with opportunities to demonstrate understanding or misunderstanding of disentangling natural speech (Underwood 1989). It can be achieved in a number of ways, from a simple repetition of short language units activity, in the vein of „How many words can you hear?“, which is highly beneficial when it comes to consideration of weak forms due to vowel centralisation, since results of a study indicate „function words are identified significantly less accurately by L2 listeners than are content words“ (Field 2008a, p. 426), to a more focussed exercise with 5 or 6 (short) sentences to be transcribed. These sentences can be taken from the text you choose to use as a springboard, such as one you create with a colleague, or even alone, and then read 2 or 3 times for your students who then compare answers, adopting more of a process approach to listening than an outcome-based approach, since we are more interested in the interpretation of the utterance than the correct answer. Such sentences taken and dictated can then be boarded and used to guide students' attention towards discovering connected speech phenomena rules.

There is also a more modern approach, termed 'partial dictation' (Buck 2001). Here, missing sections containing the likes of function words or segments

containing connected speech phenomena are filled out by students, with the text being played thrice. In the first instance, it is played at full speed, with no stoppages. In the second instance, it is played with short stoppages at teacher-determined intervals. In the third instance, it is played with at full speed once more as means of permitting students to check their answers. I personally am inclined to adopt the more traditional approach, with sentences given in isolation, but preferences can obviously differ according to the instructor.

Utilising scripting

Imagine you have just (fully) dictated 5-6 sentences as per the traditional approach to dictation, had your students discuss their interpretations together, and completed a teacher-led focus on rationalising changes in connected speech. Much in the same way that grammar is traditionally presented in the EFL classroom, namely the present-practice-produce (PPP) approach so omnipresent on teacher training courses, phonology and phonological awareness need to be practised and refined having been presented. Therefore, you can consider scripting exercises as a type of controlled practice. Give out sample sentences to pairs of students so that they can impose their own phonological interpretation upon them (Kenworthy 1987). For example, if you have just rationalised elision, give out sentences where elision would naturally occur and see if your students can accurately identify where specifically this would be the case. If, on the other hand, you have decided to be more ambitious and introduce more than one of the connected speech phenomena at once, ensure the sentences have occurrences of these. In an ideal scenario, take your sample sentences from your created text, but make sure they are different to the ones you dictated when presenting the rules. This will help your students because they may recall how it was originally said by the speaker(s) and make the task more achievable for them. Not only does such a task engage students cognitively, but it also reinforced rule-learning. Moreover, once they have finished giving their interpretation of their allocated sentence, you can rotate the sentences clockwise or counter-clockwise around the classroom. In such a way, your students can monitor their peers' suppositions and maybe even consolidate their own learning by recognising where their peers have gone wrong, and so on. After rotation, you can play the chosen recording once more so that your students can check their predictions against the authentic model, feeling either a great sense of achievement at accurately predicting L2 phonology or engaging in conversation about why they may have predicted unsuccessfully.

Working with Transcripts

Pre, during or post-listening, you can give your students the transcript of the text they will be listening to. Pre-listening tasks could involve something similar to the

suggestion in the above paragraph with marking of predicted connected speech phenomena. During listening activities could involve, technology permitting, a delayed text display, whereby the relevant part of the recording is projected a couple of seconds after its utterance in the text, so that students are subject to „deeper cognitive processing of the text before written segments are actually displayed for verification or visual representation of the acoustic signal” (Vandergrift, 2004, p. 14). They could moreover involve marking aspects of connected speech as and when they hear them while following the transcript alongside the recording, or alternatively this could be conducted post-listening with a final playthrough of the recording permitted so as to allow verification (Yeldman 2016). Provision of transcripts, especially pre-listening, is a fantastic way of mitigating the issue mentioned in the introductory paragraphs which concerned students’ inability to understand spoken texts while they are able to read the same text with minimal issues, as it shows them that spoken text comprehension is achievable once you know what you are likely to hear.

Bringing in other games and activities

If you are feeling lazier, or are limited in the time available prior to your lessons, you can look to collections of games and activities aimed at phonology more broadly, and look to see whether any worksheets targeting connected speech recognition/production could be used in your own classroom. One that I frequently bring into my own classroom when examining intrusion is the ‘link maze’ (Hancock 1995, p. 76–77). Here, a birds-eye view of a maze is handed out to students. At each turning point in the maze, which can be left, right, or straight on, a short phrase is provided for students to analyse in terms of the possible intrusive consonants inserted to link the vowel sounds. For instance, students see the phrase ‘hello everybody’, and have to realise that the rounding of the lips provided by the vowel /əʊ/ means that the bilabial /w/ is expected here, and since /w/ corresponds to ‘go straight on’, they must not turn but instead persist in following the path to the next crossroads. Whichever pair is fastest to find the correct pathway out of the maze is the winner, and you can ask them to rationalise their decisions in front of their peers once you have verified that their route was in fact correct. I find the competitive race-like aspect to work very well with my own students, and recommend any number of the games contained in this collection.

If, on the other hand, you would like to focus more explicitly on connected speech in such a way that is unrelated to the other materials to be used in class, you can look to collections of activities which provide pre-prepared sentences or phrases to be dictated/listened to, such as those present in *The book of pronunciation* (Marks, Bowen 2012). These photocopyables can be particularly useful if you are in the process of gaining confidence in teaching phonology. Additionally, what is great about this resource is that productive activities are also included so that

students can physically wrap their mouths around assimilations, elisions and so on, which means they have both receptive recognition and productive use triggered by tackling the activities contained within.

Conclusion

To sum up, the phenomena inherent within connected speech play such an important part in spoken English that, although the concepts of elision, assimilation, etc., can seem obscure and perhaps overwhelming for students initially, they merit being taught in the EFL classroom. I recommend that instructors introduce and reinforce these phonological features gradually: with one section of a lesson dedicated to anything from the wealth of modifications, disappearances, combinations, additions, and linkages of English consonants, as well as vowel reductions and strong/weak forms, that the instructor wants to focus on. Start with any of the methods mentioned in the third section of this article, though I would definitely go with either use of authentic materials or dictation as the optimal approach, as a means of raising awareness. This receptive recognition, if practised consistently, can go a long way to building students' confidence towards the skill of listening, so long as you are happy as an instructor to dedicate extra class-time to determining and discussing the source of learners' divulgences in sound perception instead of merely moving onto the next question and corresponding answer. As well as receptive recognition, try to find ways for students to actively practise using these features of connected speech themselves, even in bitesize chunks of language. Dubbing, singing, and so on are only the tip of the iceberg. Not only is it immensely motivating for students when successfully mimicking native-like speech, but it can obviously be of huge benefit to them when taking English language exams like the Cambridge Main Suite and IELTS where pronunciation plays an important part in the marking criteria. Even if the students come up short of „productive competence in connected speech”, the fact that you at least tried would nonetheless have enhanced „students' understanding of fast and fluent connected speech” (Kelly 2000, p. 116). In other words, there is no drawback to implementing connected speech in the EFL classroom, as the benefits trickle down into all aspects of L2 language learning.

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MOWA POŁĄCZONA W PEDAGOGICE NAUCZANIA JĘZYKA ANGIELSKIEGO JAKO JĘZYKA OBCEGO (EFL)

Streszczenie: W poniższym artykule omówiono zmiany, które stanowią integralną część płynnej mowy w języku ojczystym, czyli mowy powiązanej, oraz jej rolę w nauczaniu języka angielskiego (ELT) i nauce języka angielskiego jako języka obcego (EFL).

W pierwszej przeanalizowano, co dokładnie się dzieje, gdy native speakerzy mówią w szybki i nieograniczony sposób. Analiza została odniesiona do czterech konkretnych zjawisk związanych z mową połączoną, odpowiednio: asymilacji, elizji, katenacji/intruzji i redukcji/centralizacji samogłosek.

W drugiej części artykułu szczegółowo opisano niektóre problemy związane z mową u uczniów języka angielskiego, jak brak podobieństw między ich językiem ojczystym a językiem docelowym.

W trzeciej części szczegółowo opisano metody, dzięki którym instruktorzy w klasach EFL mogą wprowadzić połączoną mowę do swojego arsenału nauczania języków. Uwzględniono tutaj zarówno receptywne, jak i produktywne działania, aby dopasować je do różnych stylów nauczania i preferencji uczniów.

Słowa kluczowe: nauczanie mowy połączonej, nauczanie fonologii, zajęcia związane z mową, nauczanie EFL/ELT.