

Lessons from Spontaneous Speech for the Teaching of Listening and Pronunciation

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1. Aims

- [1] Teacher talk
- [2] Hi-tech and low-tech ways of teaching listening
- [3] More fluent speakers of English

2. Session Outline

10.00-10.15	Setting the Agenda
10.15-11.30	Definitions, Principles, Evidence
11.30-11.50	Coffee-break
11.50-13.00	From Conceptual Framework to Teacher Talk
13.00-14.00	Lunch
14.00-15.15	Teaching Listening
15.15-15.30	Tea
15.30-17.00	Pronunciation and Fluency

3. Preliminaries

- Introductions
- House-keeping

4. Definitions - Principles - Evidence

4.1 Definition

- Spontaneous Speech -
- unscripted speech -
- 'unguarded' - not 'telephone voice'
- context referenced, and context creating

4.2 Principles

- Listening and Speaking - two sides of same coin
- Consistency between pronunciation and listening
- Unhook from grammatical categories
- Take the stance of the listener
- Always connected
- Tolerate uncertainty - let go any addiction to rules
- Native speakers are deaf, in a very special way.
- Start where the learners are.

4.3 Evidence

- Not 'How things ought to be' - but how things are.
- Favour evidence over textbook rules, and the opinions of famous men
- The focus is on the stream of speech - an auditory (experienced by the ear) prosodic (rhythmic) - continuity of speech. Not individual words. Not grammatical categories. Not syntactic categories.
- The focus is on how meanings are communicated in real time.

5. Conceptual Framework - A Window on Speech

Speech units not sentences

- short, less than two-seconds long,
- rhythmic sections of speech
- one, two, or three prominences and only one tone

Prominence not word accent

Plight of listener - if in doubt, opt for non-prominence - or rather - if there is any excuse to do so, opt for non-prominence

Table 1 - The window on speech

A		and	WELL	er					
B	he's	EIGH	ty	TWO	and				
C	he can	TURN	his	HAND	to	AN	ything		
D	he's	CU	rrently	THINK	ing of	MO	ving a	GAIN	now

**Table 2 Exercise 1 Recognising sizes of speech units
(Streaming Speech Chapter 2, 3.5)**

046	// so he yes //	240
047	// he certainly //	180
048	// makes a small profit //	280
049	// he doesn't //	140
050	// do it erm //	180
051	// for the money he's going to make //	320
052	// but he doesn't lose //	310
053	// when he sells his house //	300

Table 3 - Variants of type B speech units

5	4	3	2	1
	THAT		TIME	
	THAT	there were	TWO	
and	THOSE	would be the	WIN	ter colours
a	COUN	cil called the student	FA	shion council
	CER	tain aspects of the english	LAN	guage
they have	LARGE		CE	llars in new zealand

Table 4 - Exercise 2 - Identifying prominences in type B speech units

Listen to these three type B speech units, and write them in the table below.

5	4	3	2	1

Table 5 Variants of type A speech units

A	3	2	1
A		ERM	
A	so i	DID	
A		HU	man
A	a	LIVE	ly social life
A	a whole	RANGE	of subjects
A	once the	MAR	ket for that has been established

Table 6 Variants of type C speech units

C	he can	TURN	his	HAND	to	AN	othing
C	per	HAPS		FIVE		DAYS	
C	and	CON	centrate	MORE	on the	OTH	er teaching
C	i	AL	ways	LOVED	the	WA	ter
C	a	CLO	thing	RE	tail	OUT	let

Table 7 Variants of type D speech units

D	he's	CU	rrently	THINK	ing of	MO	ving a	GAIN	
D		PA	rent	IN	fant	WA	ter a	WARE	ness classes
D	who is the	AU	thor of the	GREAT		FRENCH		DIC	tionary

Sizes of speech units exemplified

Streaming Speech Chapter 5, 3.1. Student's Book p. 47, p. 106

Transcription Practice

It was around then that of a mate of mine from Bradford, erm a guy called Jay er sent me a postcard. I got a postcard from a place called Obeid.

Student Book p. 128

This is a manual, a manual for both reading and writing effectively it's a manual well well it's more of a manual for writing in fact even though it is for reading.

Student Book p. 128

6. Teaching Listening - high-tech and low-tech

- Grasping the nettle - methodological issues
- Modelling using the Window on speech.
- Different patterns, different speeds.
- Dictations

7. Pronunciation

- What can we learn from observing the fate of 'where'

Table 8

5	4	3	2	1
but i	WAS	n't sure	WHERE	
	WHERE		MAR	ket street was
where there were	STREET		LIGHTS	ter colours
		where she'd	SAID	

- Use prominences
- Loosen up!
- Different speeds
- Mumble
- Chapters 1-8 Section 4 & 5 - Chapter 9.

8. Fluency

Be non-predictably variable
Use 'keep-going' strategies
Erm/Um
Repetitions - Mohamed

References

Software

Audacity® is free, open source software for recording and editing sounds. It is available for Mac OS X, Microsoft Windows, GNU/Linux, and other operating systems.
<http://audacity.sourceforge.net/>

University College London, Phonetics Department, Tools and Resources <http://www.phon.ucl.ac.uk/resource/>

WASP is a free program for the recording, display and analysis of speech. With WASP you can record and replay speech signals, save them and reload them from disk, edit annotations, and display spectrograms and a fundamental frequency track. <http://www.phon.ucl.ac.uk/resource/sfs/wasp.htm>

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ANSWER KEY

Exercise 1 - Answer

5	4	3	2	1
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A		so he	YES	
---	--	-------	-----	--

A		he	CER	tainly
---	--	----	-----	--------

B		MAKES	a small	PRO	fit
---	--	-------	---------	-----	-----

A		he	DOES	n't
---	--	----	------	-----

B		DO	it	ERM	
---	--	----	----	-----	--

B	for the	MO	ney he's going to	MAKE	
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B	but he	DOES	n't	LOSE	
---	--------	------	-----	------	--

A		when he	SELLS	his house
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Notes

[1] some optional cells are empty

[2] prominent syllables are in columns 2 and 4

[3] non-prominent syllables are in columns 5, 3, and 1

[4] Tones start in column 2 and continue over column 1

Proportions of Speech Units of different sizes in SSBI

