



HOW TO TEACH LINKING

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Miss Ruth's English Podcast



AGENDA



- Reasons & Challenges
- Types & Examples
- Ideas for Activities

The background is a vibrant, abstract composition. It features several large, organic shapes in teal, magenta, and mustard yellow. These shapes are decorated with various patterns: some have white wavy lines, others have white dots, and one has a grid of white plus signs. The background is a deep navy blue, which is also filled with small white dots. Scattered throughout are small, wavy lines in white and yellow. The word "Reasons" is centered in a white, sans-serif font.

Reasons

Their speech sounds **choppy**, like a car stopping and starting.

Students who don't do linking or reductions pronounce words separately.

Example: "I didn't think about that."

We save time, breath and effort when we speak by **squishing** words and sentences together.

Spoken English is very different from written English. Linking and reductions are key to understanding fast speech.

Example: “What do you mean?” > “Wuhduhya mean?”

Learners are used to segmenting speech in class, but that's often **not possible** in the real world.

TESL methods (reading aloud or over-articulating), while necessary, can get them accustomed to listening for each word.

We need to counteract this with practice listening to more authentic speech.

we need to disabuse
students of the idea that
native speakers
pronounce things
perfectly.

We don't, and on purpose.

Discovering this can boost ESL learners' confidence levels. If they can stop equating pronunciation with just "accuracy" and "clarity" and more with "relaxed speech," it might seem less intimidating.

Linking and reductions happen at **all** levels of formality.

These aspects are not just present in slang or casual speech;
they can be heard in the lecture hall or the boardroom

So it's important to incorporate them in academic and
business English.

The background is a vibrant, abstract composition. It features several large, organic shapes in teal, magenta, and mustard yellow. These shapes are layered and filled with various patterns: some have a fine dot pattern, others have larger white dots, and one has a wavy line pattern. The background itself is a deep navy blue, peppered with small white dots and scattered with thin, wavy lines in white and yellow. The word "Challenges" is centered in a clean, white, sans-serif font.

Challenges

Students have trouble noticing linking.

Exaggerating the connection between words helps.

Some students might
speak too fast or unclearly
on purpose to hide their
mistakes.

Try to get these students to slow down or speak up, but help them discover that it's okay to speak “unclearly” in accepted ways.

Students might be accustomed to learning with **less** authentic materials.

By less authentic materials, I mean textbooks with robotic speech or presentations where speakers articulate more than usual. 100% authenticity all the time is not the goal, but they need “bridging” material.



Types & Examples

Same Sound:

“phone number” > pho...**n**umber
(longer, or late release for stop)

Words Ending in “s” or “r”:

“makes more” > make...**s**more

LINKING: CONSONANT TO CONSONANT

*different categorizations, “s” easy start, silent letters

Stop Consonants:

“stop talking” > sto...ptalking

(first unreleased, same breath for second)

Continuants (f, l, m, n, s, r, v):

“more rice” > mo...rice

LINKING: CONSONANT TO CONSONANT

*different categories, “s” easy start

“stop it” > sto...pit

“run out” > ru...nout

(perhaps most obvious example of linking)

LINKING: CONSONANT TO VOWEL

Vowels: /iy, ey, ay, oy/:

We say /y/ between the words.

“very old” > veri...Yold

Vowels: /uw, ow, aw/:

We say /w/ between the words.

“Don’t do it again” > Don’t do...Wit again

LINKING: VOWEL TO VOWEL

Consonant to Consonant:

“hotcake” > ho...**t**cake (unreleased)

Consonant to Vowel:

“stakeout” > sta...**k**out

Vowel to Vowel:

“create” (iy + ey) > cre**e...Y**ate (add /y, w/)

LINKING IN WORDS

*between syllables, compound words

Explain as “the first sound changes the second, or the second the first.”

“grandpa” – the /p/ makes the /nd/ become /m/: gram**m**pa

“bad boy” – the /b/ makes the /d/ become /b/: bab**b** boy

“have to” – the /t/ makes the /v/ become /f/: haf**f**ta

ASSIMILATION

*more in future lessons, seems complex but lazy mouth

Explain as “when two sounds become a new, third one.”

“would you” – /d/ + /y/ become /dʒ/: wouja

“place your” - /s/ + /y/ become /ʃ/: plashour

“here’s yours” - /z/ + /y/ become /ʒ/: herezhours

“weren’t you” - /t/ + /y/ become /tʃ/: werenchou

PALATALIZATION

*type of assimilation



Ideas for Activities

LESSON PLANNI NG

Elicitation &
Description
Listening
Discrimination
Controlled Practice

Guided Practice

Communicative
Activity



Listen to the lines from the conversation and click on the words where linking happens.

1. She says she's tired of the handcuffs.
2. She's got a countdown on her phone calendar.
3. If you want to be free, why don't you try sleeping outdoors in the cold?
4. He's got this notebook full of business ideas, but I doubt any of them are going to work out.
5. They don't necessarily need to job hunt and deal with cutthroat competition, like you and I did.

✓ Check

ANSWERS

01. She says she's tired of the handcuffs.
02. She's got a countdown on her phone calendar.
03. If you want to be free, why don't you try sleeping outdoors in the cold?
04. He's got this notebook full of business ideas, but I doubt any of them are going to work out.
05. They don't necessarily need to job hunt and deal with cutthroat competition, like you and I did.

LINKING

LINKING BETWEEN WORDS: CONSONANT TO VOWEL

Elicitation,
Description,
Listening
Discrimination

Be Impatient!:

To make students aware of linking, elicit the difference between linked and unlinked words with examples.

Then exaggerate the sounds and have student do the same for expressions we use for

“Co...**mmmm(e)**on!”

“Sto..**pppppp**it!”

“Ge..**ttttttt**out!” (flap /t/)



GENERAL

Listening Discrimination, Controlled Practice

Marking Up Transcripts:

Give students the transcript to a spoken English text **before** they listen. Let them find examples of the linking rules you're teaching before they listen to the audio. That way, they are primed to hear any linking that happens.

Practice the linking phrases as a class afterwards.



LINKING BETWEEN WORDS: SAME SOUND

Controlled/
Guided Practice

The Longest Chain:

In groups, students have to come up with sentence chains with as many words linking with the same sound as possible.

The group who can create the most “links” and whose sentence makes logical sense is the winner.

“She...has...some...mor...reasons....”

LINKING IN WORDS: VOWELS

Controlled/
Guided Practice

Hobbies:

Give students a list of “-ing” words that end in w-glide vowels /uw, ow, aw/.

With a partner, students discuss their hobbies or activities using the words, providing details about their past experiences.

“do**W**ing”

“go**W**ing”

“canoe**W**ing”

“barbecu**W**ing”

“sew**W**ing”



GENERAL

Guided Practice, Communicative Activity

Idioms, Proverbs & Phrasal Verbs:

Give students a list of idioms about a topic. The students have to find linking between the words following the rule you've covering. In discussion with a partner or group, they use the expressions, linking the sounds.

Expressions About Money:

“at all costs” > a...**ta**ll costs

“cost an arm and a leg” >
cos...**ta**...**na**r...**ma**n...**da** leg

PALATALIZATION

Guided Practice, Communicative Activity

Interrogation Roleplay:

Pair students up, and one plays the cop and the other plays the suspect.

The cop can ask questions like the ones below and the students can switch roles.

“Weren’**ch**ou there?”

“Who’**sh**our friend?”

“Where’**zh**our bag now?”

“What time did**j**ou get home?”



Thank You!

Subscribe, review 😊



RESOURCES

- [English with Jennifer \(linking, pausing, reductions\)](#)
- “[Vowels, Consonant Clusters, Word Endings, Reductions](#)” playlist
- [English Pronunciation Guide \(Weebly Site\)](#)

QUESTIONS

3 for reasons and challenges:

Pronunciation for spoken English is all about making sounds accurately and clearly. False, Spoken English squishes together sounds, making them less clear but recognizable

Linking (and reductions) happen in formal and slow speech. True

Using only less authentic materials and artificially slow speech can make it harder for students to notice linking. True.

QUESTIONS

For palatalization, /d/ + /y/ = /ɟ/ or “zh”. False, the /dʒ/ or “j”

When we link two different stop consonants, we say the first one, stop and then say the next OR we don't say the first at all OR neither? Third, we say but don't release the first one and use that breath for the second.

What glide do we use to link the two adjacent vowels in “beautiful”? W or Y? Y

Is this example of linking correct, “dumb and dumber” > dum...ban...dumber? No because the “b” in dumb is silent, so the last sound in “dumb” is actually /m/, so the linking should be du...man...dumber.

If a student is having trouble hearing linking, which type should you start with because it's easier to hear? (Essay) With words ending in “s” or consonant to vowel

SUMMARY FOR LESSON PLAN

Be Impatient! (Linking Between Words: Consonant to Vowel)

Marking Up Transcripts (General)

The Longest Chain (Linking Between Words: The Same Sound)

Hobbies (Linking in Words: Vowels with /w/-glide)

Idioms, Proverbs & Phrasal Verbs (General)

Interrogation Roleplay (Palatalization)

ASSIMILATION

Column Sounds + Row Sounds Become...	/p/, /b/	/k/, /g/	/t/
/t/	/p/ that piece > thapiece	/k/ that kite > thakite	
/d/	/b/ bad boy > bab boy	/g/ did good > dig good	
/n/	/m/ grandpa > grampa (dropped /d/)	/ŋ/ ten kids > teng kids	

/l/			/ʃ/
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