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FACULDADE DE LETRAS
PROGRAMA DE PÓS-GRADUAÇÃO EM LETRAS E LINGUÍSTICA
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ADRIANA LOPES LISBOA TIBANA

THE ROLE OF PHRASAL PHONOLOGY IN LISTENING COMPREHENSION FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING SUPPORTED BY THE LEXICAL APPROACH

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Dissertação de Mestrado apresentada ao
Programa de Pós-Graduação em Letras e Linguística
da Universidade Federal de Alagoas.
.
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Co-orientadora: Prof^a. Dr^a. Januacele Francisca da Costa

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TERMO DE APROVAÇÃO

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Dissertação aprovada como requisito para obtenção do grau de Mestre em Linguística, pelo Programa de Pós-Graduação em Letras e Linguística, da Universidade Federal de Alagoas, pela seguinte banca examinadora:

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Maceió, 15 de junho de 2009.

To my mom Dilma, my husband Tibana and my children Luísa and Pedro.

You are all my reasons.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ABSTRACT

Assuming that post-lexical processes significantly affect the English spoken language when in connected speech, and that this is one of the main reasons why students of English as a foreign language find listening comprehension so difficult to cope with, 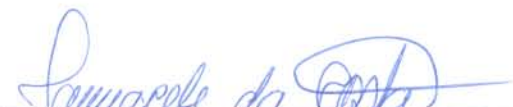this study aims to find out the main processes concerning phrasal phonology that render spoken language so different from the written one. Drawing on these findings, it investigates the connection between listening comprehension and the teaching of pronunciation using a top-down approach, that is to say, starting from the whole picture, and based on the organization of the language in chunks in the fluidity of speech. This is an action-research, conducted with two groups of upper-intermediate students during one semester. It is based on the assumption that by raising students' awareness of post-lexical processes, with the support of the Lexical Approach which encourages teaching language in chunks, teachers can enable students to be better listeners. One of the groups did pronunciation awareness raising exercises whereas the other one only followed the coursebook. Students' listening abilities were tested using the Cambridge FCE Listening test, at the beginning and at the end of the experiment. At the end of the semester, the comparison of both groups' performance in the FCE listening test showed that the group who had been explicitly taught phrasal phonology developed their listening comprehension skills considerably, outperforming the other group. The results point to the importance of teaching pronunciation to develop listening comprehension.

KEY WORDS: English phonology, phrasal phonology, listening comprehension, Lexical Approach and explicit instruction.

RESUMO

Partindo do pressuposto de que processos pós-lexicais afetam significativamente o inglês oral na fala fluente, e que esta é uma das principais razões que fazem com que alunos de inglês como língua estrangeira considerem a compreensão oral tão difícil, esta pesquisa tem como objetivo identificar os principais processos que fazem a língua falada ser tão diferente da escrita. Partindo dessa diferença, foram investigadas as conexões entre compreensão oral e ensino de pronúncia, usando-se uma abordagem holística, ou seja, começando de uma visão geral, da organização da língua em blocos na fluidez da fala. Esta é uma pesquisa-ação efetuada com dois grupos de alunos de nível intermediário superior durante um semestre, e está baseada na tese que chamando a atenção dos alunos para processos pós-lexicais, com o suporte da abordagem lexical (o ensino da língua em blocos), poderemos ajudá-los a desenvolver sua compreensão oral. Um dos grupos trabalhou com exercícios de pronúncia enquanto o outro somente com o livro didático. A capacidade de compreensão oral destes alunos foi testada no começo e no final da pesquisa, através do teste de FCE da Universidade de Cambridge. No final do semestre, comparados os resultados de ambos os grupos nesse teste, verificamos que o grupo que recebeu instrução explícita de fonologia frasal apresentou uma melhora significativa na compreensão oral, superando o outro grupo. Os resultados apontam para a importância do ensino de pronúncia para desenvolvimento da compreensão oral.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Fonologia do inglês, fonologia frasal, compreensão oral, Abordagem Lexical e instrução explícita.

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"If we try to dismiss the written form from our mind, and do away with any visual image altogether, we run the risk of being left with an amorphous object which is difficult to grasp. It is as if someone learning to swim had suddenly had his cork float taken away.

What is needed is to provide a natural substitute for the artificial aid. But that is impossible unless we have studied the sounds of the language. For without its orthographic sign a sound is something very vague. We find ourselves at a loss without a system of writing, even if its assistance is misleading. That is why the first linguists, who knew nothing about the physiology of articulated sound, constantly fell into these pitfalls. For them, letting go of the letter meant losing their footing. For us, it means taking a first step towards the truth. For the study of sounds will provide us with the help we need."

Ferdinand de Saussure

INTRODUCTION

In my fifteen-year experience as a teacher of adults and adolescents in private schools of English, I have noticed that among the four skills – listening, writing, speaking and reading, listening tends to be rated by the majority of students as the most difficult to acquire. Most students struggle to deal with the idiosyncrasies of the spoken language as opposed to the written one: peculiarities which are produced by the linking devices that engender the interwoven units of connected speech.

This process of merging word boundaries, to produce the stream of speech, gives rise to the rupture of the English language into a spoken and written form[1]. The written language is the one where word boundaries dictate the norms, whereas the spoken language does not conform to those laws as its pace needs to be much faster.

This 'fluidity' in spoken language is produced by post-lexical processes[2] - such as elision, assimilation, devoicing, lenition, insertion, among others - as well as change in stress, rhythm, intonation, and a variety of factors which make words pronounced in isolation rather different from when they are in the 'stream of speech'. These factors are likely to be mostly responsible for students' inability to cope with some listening tasks. They are bound to be the reason for most oral comprehension breakdown.

Bearing these issues in mind and trying to find answers to some of my students' questions related to listening comprehension, I started doing some research that became the subject of a paper presented in 2003 at the Federal University of Alagoas (in the capital city of Maceió – Brazil) for my specialization course. During this investigation I attempted to single out some of the features that make listening dependent on pronunciation. I also devised some pronunciation awareness raising activities aiming to enable students to be better listeners.

Nevertheless, I felt that although I had found some answers to my students'

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[1] Written and spoken language also differ in other features such as grammar and lexis.

[2] According to Spencer (1996, p.201) "Post-lexical processes are phonological processes which are triggered solely by phonological structure, and which thus do not have lexical exceptions or morphological conditions. For this reason they are sometimes called automatic processes. Many of these processes operate across word boundaries or are affected by the phonological structure of a whole phrase, so they are often referred to as connected speech processes or phrasal phonology." See more about this process in chapter 3, section 3.3.

questions concerning listening comprehension, I had touched the subject only superficially. I was therefore left with a feeling of accomplishment mixed with wonder and curiosity. I realized that there is much more to pronunciation and listening than I had ever imagined and that further research would open the door to an amazing new world of possibilities. There seems to be a gap which must be bridged between the teaching of pronunciation for spoken purposes only, and the teaching of listening with more emphasis on pronunciation features.

These features affect not only students' ability to put his/her intended message across but also his/her ability to understand spoken English. That is the reason why "teaching pronunciation is about equipping students with tools to understand and be understood in the English language context in which they have to operate" (NEWTON, 1999, p. 35). That is to say, teaching pronunciation is much more about raising students' awareness of the idiosyncrasies of the spoken language, and enabling them to understand and produce intelligible language, than trying to make them sound like native-speakers.

During the last few years since I completed my specialization, I have been involved in teacher training and I have done an extensive research on the Lexical Approach[3]. This resulted in a workshop and the adoption of books[4] based on such an approach - by the school I work for. For the last four years we have been piloting the use of the Lexical Approach in class successfully. From this experience I have noticed that by raising students' awareness of language in chunks and working with their pronunciation they have become better listeners.

I believe that using some of the principles of the Lexical Approach, such as drawing attention to chunks and collocations as well as their connected pronunciation, teachers will be gradually assembling the building blocks that comprise spoken language. Besides, once students start recognizing some pronunciation features that make spoken English so different from written language, their ability to listen is bound to improve significantly.

Having said that, I believe that listening and pronunciation should always be taught in tandem, and research in this area could produce some important data to be used as a powerful aid to enable students to deal with listening comprehension,

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[3] See Chapter 5 for the theory about the Lexical Approach, devised by LEWIS (1994).
[4] Namely Innovations (DELLER, HOCKING and WALKLEY, 2004) and Framework (JEFFREY, LLOYD and GOLDSTEIN, 2004).

without the feeling of helplessness they sometimes experience. I then carried out some research in this field. Nevertheless, to my surprise, when trying to do this research, I found out how little had been written about this specific connection between listening and pronunciation. The issues that link pronunciation and listening are far deeper, demanding as such, extensive, in-depth research. An attempt to a more detailed research is the subject of this paper.

This study consists of seven chapters and a conclusion:

Chapter 1 (Getting Started), raises some hypotheses and defines the objective and its importance. It then presents the methodology used to carry out this study. Finally, it addresses the issue of explicit as opposed to implicit instruction, paving the way for the lessons reported in Chapter 6 (Working with the Groups).

Chapter 2 (Revisiting History), gives a very brief account of the history of foreign language teaching with special focus on the teaching of pronunciation. It provides an overview on how pronunciation in language teaching has been dealt with in the most important methods and approaches, since the first experience of foreign language teaching until present time. Finally, it goes back to the history of the English language searching deeper into the reasons why spelling and pronunciation in English are so disconnected, aiming to single out the events in history that are responsible for such discrepancies. It consists of some research done in the area looking for a better understanding of the English language.

Chapters 3 to 5, lay the theoretical groundwork on which this study is based: Chapter 3 (Bridging the Pronunciation Gap), gives an overview on the pronunciation features that make speaking and writing two distinct languages, giving special emphasis to the post-lexical processes in English, attempting to unveil the complexities of speech production. Chapter 4 (Analysing the Listening Skill), looks closely at listening comprehension to find out what it actually involves and why it is considered so difficult, as well as attempting to show the intrinsic relationship between this skill and pronunciation. It also tries to shed some light on the issues raised in the first chapter.

Following that, Chapter 5 (Working with the Lexical Approach), deals with the theoretical premises of such an approach, drawing attention to the importance of lexical knowledge, and the fact that the learning of lexical items in chunks enhances listening comprehension. It also shows the implications of following some of the premises of this approach for language teaching, and for pronunciation and listening.

Chapters 6 and 7, deal with the research itself, presenting results. Chapter 6, gives a detailed view of the groups, describing thoroughly the subjects, the activities and the lessons. It also reflects upon the effectiveness of such awareness raising activities and the students' reaction when facing the challenging task of decoding spoken language. It also reports the drawbacks involved when carrying out this research and the insights it has lead me to have.

Chapter 7 (Presenting Research Results) reports the results, draws some conclusions based on those results as well as presenting the students' feedback[5]. Students' views and perceptions of the learning process within this experiment are then discussed.

Finally, the Conclusion pulls together the results and the issues discussed in this study, draws some final considerations, and points to the importance and necessity for more teacher training, classroom practice and research in this area.

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[5] Students were informally interviewed about the experiment and their answers were filmed and transcribed. The feedback presented is based on those interviews. For their transcript see Appendix F.

CHAPTER 1:   GETTING STARTED

The assumption underlying this study is that traditional teaching of listening comprehension leaves some important gaps that could be bridged by the teaching of pronunciation. Explicit pronunciation instruction is an area which is either underexploited or not used productively by the majority of language teachers. Alongside this issue, this study searches within the teaching of the pronunciation of lexis in chunks, supported by the Lexical Approach, a more efficient way towards helping students with listening comprehension tasks.

This chapter establishes the aims of this study as well as presenting the methodology used to conduct it. Finally, it looks closer at explicit versus implicit instruction.

1.1   Defining aims

Students unconsciously tend to expect to listen the way they read, in spite of the fact that spoken and written language bear significant differences. The main aim of this research is to find out the most important features of pronunciation that cause so great a change in the transition from written to spoken language, as well as how much this affects listening comprehension causing communication breakdown. From that, some pronunciation awareness raising exercises[6], speaking tasks that highlight the differences between spoken and written English, and activities which help students see things from the speaker's point of view, were devised to attempt to foster better listening comprehension.

As a secondary aim, I tried to find out if following some of the premises of the Lexical Approach, focusing especially on the pronunciation of chunks, would promote better performance in listening tasks. Jonathan Marks[7], (apud LEWIS 1997, p.157) says that "as listeners, we rely on a certain amount of packaging of the message into

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[6] In this study the terms *tasks*, *activities* and *exercises* are used interchangeably.
[7] In Michael Lewis' book 'Implementing the Lexical Approach', there is a chapter that includes some reports written by teachers about their lessons following this approach, Jonathan Marks is one such teacher.

bits, and at least a minimal amount of time to process what we have just heard". In order to 'unpack' these bits we need to know the original chunk that rendered it.

Based on the principles of the Lexical Approach I would like to find out the advantages of teaching such chunks of language and their pronunciation, raising students' awareness of blocks of language which are recurrent and somehow disappear in the fluidity of the spoken language, being recognized only by those who have them in their knowledge data. This process would help students mentally disentangle the interwoven units of vocabulary, as they would be better able to understand, from an early stage, complex structures that they would otherwise learn only at advanced levels, thus making spoken language clearer.

This research consists of an investigation into the main aspects which make listening such a difficult activity and an attempt to find out how much this skill is connected with pronunciation in the light of the Lexical Approach. I am nevertheless aware that listening comprehension, pronunciation and the Lexical approach are such vast fields that cannot be entirely dealt with in one paper only. Therefore, this study aims to arrive at a better understanding of the role of pronunciation in listening comprehension for English language teaching using the principles of the Lexical Approach as support.

1.2 Methodology

This is a qualitative action-research of pedagogical intervention and experimental type. Qualitative, because in spite of the fact that the figures play an important role in the final analysis, it is inextricably interwoven with this researcher's experience and views of teaching and learning languages. As André puts it[8]:

> I can do research that uses basically quantitative data, but when analysing this data there will always be present my frame of reference, my values, and

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[8] Translated from Portuguese by this researcher : "Posso fazer uma pesquisa que utiliza basicamente dados quantitativos, mas na análise que faço desses dados estarão sempre presentes o meu quadro de referência, os meus valores e, portanto, a dimensão qualitativa. As perguntas que eu faço no meu instrumento estão marcadas por minha postura teórica, meus valores, minha visão de mundo. Ao reconhecer essas marcas da subjetividade na pesquisa, eu me distancio da postura positivista, muito embora esteja tratando com dados quantitativos."

> therefore, a qualitative dimension. The questions I ask in my instrument are marked by my theoretical posture, my values, my vision of the world. By recognizing these marks of subjectivity in the research, I stray away from the positivist posture, even though I am dealing with quantitative data. (ANDRÉ, 1995, p.24).

This is action-research, as it investigates the problems students have when doing listening comprehension in order to think of actions that lead to solutions of pedagogical intervention; to change attitudes, practices and therefore results. Barbier (2004, p.119) says that action-research is not chosen by the researcher, he/she takes it in, shelters it; this perfectly defines this research, as the necessity for doing it has gradually built up in my teaching practice over the last fifteen years.

1.2.1 The Corpus

The data for this study was collected from the tests, questionnaires, interviews, some exercises from the English File Upper-intermediate coursebook[9], and activities especially devised to raise students' awareness of the post-lexical processes in the English language. These activities were applied in lessons taught in one semester (February to June 2008) to one of the two chosen groups at upper-intermediate level at Casa de Cultura Britânica – CCB.

To establish the groups' level of proficiency in the listening skill the Cambridge First Certificate in English (FCE) listening test was used as a diagnostic test. This is one of the tests of the main suite of international exams devised by the University of Cambridge (ESOL) English for Speakers of Other languages Examinations. One such test was carried out at the beginning of the semester and two others at the end, to attempt to assess students' performance development.

The description of the groups and the informants came from the questionnaire[10], which students answered after taking the FCE listening test[11] on their second lesson. The information about the questions some of the students left

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[9] English File Upper-intermediate, (OXENDEN and LATHAN-KOENIG, 2001). From now onwards when students' coursebook is mentioned, that is the one.
[10] See Appendix A.
[11] See Attachments H and I, for the first FCE listening test that was used with both groups.

unanswered was collected on an individual basis in the subsequent lessons. At the end of the semester students from the experimental group gave a short filmed interview talking about what they gained from the experiment[12].

1.2.2 The School

Casa de Cultura Britânica – CCB is a school of English which is part of an extension programme of the Universidade Federal de Alagoas – UFAL. Founded in 1980, it was first conceived to cater for the undergraduate students of English Language at UFAL who are from various backgrounds and levels of proficiency in the language. It was also meant to teach English to people who could not afford to pay for private language schools. Over these 29 years it has changed considerably and at present (2009) it is considered one of the best and biggest schools of English in the city of Maceió catering for students from all social classes.

CCB offers to the community a four-year-and-a-half basic course in English followed by a three-year preparation for the main suite exams of the Cambridge University ESOL Examinations: First Certificate in English (FCE) and Certificate of Advanced English (CAE). The students who participated in this research were in the first semester of the upper-intermediate level, the eighth semester of the adult course.

1.2.3 The Groups

Two groups took part in this research: the Experimental Group, so called because this was the group with whom I tried the experiment in order to test my hypothesis, using pronunciation awareness activities related to listening tasks, and took notes of all their lessons. The Control Group was a group of the same level with which I worked, following the book, without applying any activity related to

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[12] See Appendix F for the transcript of the interview.

pronunciation awareness connected to listening skills.

I, nevertheless, tested both groups listening abilities using the FCE listening test at the beginning and at the end of the semester. The results of the first test determined the choice of the group I was going to apply the experiment to, I chose the one which was weakest at listening. It also helped to measure the groups' listening abilities (diagnostic test), data to be used at the end of research when comparing students' improvement in listening comprehension.

The Experimental Group (19 students) attended lessons every Friday morning for two hours and ten minutes. In this group there were mostly women (79%) and the average age was higher than the Control Group, the majority of students (63.15%) being adults ranging from 22 to 37 years old. The Control Group (20 students) had lessons on Monday and Wednesday afternoon for one hour and fifteen minutes each. This group was younger, mostly teenagers, ages ranging from 15 to 20 years old (80%), with a slightly higher number of men (55%) than women (45%) (see table 1.1). This is just descriptive data, some extra information about the groups.

	EXPERIMENTAL GROUP (19 students)	CONTROL GROUP (20 students)	TOTAL (39 students)
15-20 years old	6 (31.6%)	16 (80%)	22 (56.4%)
22-37 years old	12 (63.15%)	4 (20%)	16 (41%)
50 years old	1 (5.3%)		1 (2.6%)
Female	15 (79%)	9 (45%)	24 (61.5%)
Male	4 (21%)	11 (55%)	15 (38.5%)

Table 1.1: Students' age and gender.

1.2.4 The Subjects

For most of the students, English was their first and only foreign language, there were only two students (10.6%) in the Experimental Group who said they spoke Spanish (see table 1.2). In the Control Group nobody spoke any other language apart from English and Portuguese. There was only one student studying another foreign language (French) and at a pre-intermediate level. There were only three

English teachers[13]: two in the Experimental Group and one in the Control one. They were not experienced teachers and none of them worked with phonology in their classes. Hence we can say that in none of the groups students had recourse to knowledge of another language to perform better when doing listening tasks.

	EXPERIMENTAL GROUP (19 students)	CONTROL GROUP (20 students)	TOTAL (39 students)
Speak no other languages	17 (89.5%)	20 (100%)	37 (94.8%)
Speak Spanish	2 (10.6%)		2 (5.2%)
Study French (2 years)		1 (5%)	1 (2.6%)
Just study English	19 (100%)	19 (95%)	38 (97.4%)

Table 1.2: Languages students speak and/or study other than English or Portuguese.

1.2.5 The Cambridge First Certificate in English (FCE) Test

University of Cambridge ESOL Examinations (Cambridge ESOL) is a part of the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate (UCLES). It is an educational assessment agency that offers an extensive range of examinations for learners of English. Every year, millions of students from all over the world sit for their examinations at centres in over 140 countries, and FCE is one of their most popular tests. These tests cover all four language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing.

FCE assesses the candidate's overall communicative language ability at level B2 of the Council of Europe Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. According to the FCE Handbook for Teachers issued by Cambridge ESOL:

> At this level, a learner should be able to handle the main structures of the language with some confidence, demonstrate knowledge of a wide range of vocabulary, and use appropriate communicative strategies in a variety of social situations. Their understanding of spoken language and written texts should go beyond being able to pick out items of factual information, and they should be able to distinguish between main and subsidiary points and between the gist of a text and specific detail. They should be able to produce

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[13] I am considering teachers who taught English either at primary or secondary state or private schools, as well as teachers who gave private lessons.

written texts of various types, showing the ability to develop an argument as well as describe or recount events. (CAMBRIDGE ESOL, 2008, p. 4)

This description matches the upper-intermediate course in England. In Brazil, however, our students need more time to be able to produce such language as they are not exposed to the target language outside the classroom. It usually takes the average student an extra three-semester-course to be able to succeed in such test. The informants to this research as aforementioned, were in their first year of the upper-intermediate course, which means at least two years too short in the course to be able to produce the language required.

Notwithstanding the fact that students' level was below the one required to do the FCE, this test was chosen to establish their level of proficiency in the listening skill. Undoubtedly, the students' performance was expected to be poor, as scoring low at the beginning, would make room for improvement at the end. If they had been given the Cambridge test they were ready to take (Preliminary English Test – PET) the chances of them getting high grades would have been enormous, leaving not much to work on to measure their improvement.

Cambridge ESOL produces past examination papers to be used for practice when preparing students for the test. The listening tests to which students were submitted at the beginning and at the end of this action-research were taken from such papers. The choice of an FCE listening test was based on the assumption that they follow certain standards, hence the first and the last tests would have exactly the same level. As stated by Cambridge ESOL (2003, p. 18): "As with all other FCE papers, rigorous checks are built into the question paper production process to ensure that all versions of the test are of comparable content and difficulty."

1.2.5.1 The FCE Listening Test[14]

This paper, according to Cambridge ESOL in The FCE Handbook for Teachers (2008), contains four parts, each with a recorded text or texts which are

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[14] See Attachments H and I for one of the tests used in this research, together with tapescript.

heard twice in order to complete the corresponding comprehension task. The whole test lasts approximately forty minutes and it has a total of thirty questions. Candidates are provided with short extracts and longer monologues, announcements, extract from radio programmes, news, features, etc. There are multiple-choice, sentence completion and multiple matching tasks.

- The first part consists of a series of short unrelated extracts, of approximately 30 seconds, from monologues or exchanges between speakers. The focus is on understanding the general idea or main points of what they hear.
- The second part comprises a monologue or text involving interacting speakers and lasting approximately 3 minutes. Candidates have to complete the sentences with information heard on the recording. The task consists of 10 gaps in either a set of notes or a set of sentences, involving selecting detailed, specific information. Candidates are not expected to rephrase what they have heard, but to fill in the gaps with the exact words as heard in the text.
- The third part is a multiple-matching series of five questions to select the correct option from a list of six. Candidates hear five short related monologues, of approximately 30 seconds each. The main focus is on gist, main points, detail, function, location, roles and relationships, mood, attitude, intention, feeling or opinion. Students need to concentrate on the identifying aspects of each piece.
- The fourth part consists of either a true or false task or a three-option multiple choice from a monologue or text involving two or more speakers and lasting approximately three minutes. Candidates are supposed to get the main points of the conversation.

1.2.6 The Lessons

The lessons I taught at the Experimental Group are thoroughly described on Chapter 6, section 6.2.1 – *Describing the Meetings*. Those 36 lessons took place within the semester which started on 8th February and finished on 13th June 2008. Each Friday morning we would have two lessons in a row which made 18 meetings. Among those there were two days of mid and final tests following two revisions which

included the written task to be assessed for the mid and final grades. Moreover, I had to administer two FCE listening tests of thirty minutes each, one at the beginning of the semester and another one at the end.

I then was left with 12 meetings of two hours and ten minutes to cover a very tight syllabus and incorporate a variety of pronunciation exercises which had not been officially included in the Class Fit.

As for the Control Group, as aforementioned, they had the course's standard lessons, with the occasional pronunciation activities which are part of their coursebook. They were however assessed with the FCE listening test for comparison with the other group.

1.3 Implicit x Explicit Instruction

The main difference between the lessons conducted with the groups is the fact that the Experimental Group was given explicit instruction on pronunciation matters to aid listening comprehension, whereas the Control Group was just exposed to the language without thinking much about how pronunciation works.

There are a variety of theories about language learning concerning this issue of implicit versus explicit instruction. Among those, there is Krashen's model (1983) which is based on the acquisition-learning dichotomy. According to it, language acquisition occurs when one learns the second language subconsciously, similar to the way we learn our mother language, whereas learning occurs when we are explicitly instructed, thus becoming aware of the rules that governs the language.

Pronunciation teaching has traditionally tended to concentrate at the segmental level. It was only recently that phrasal phonology has been included in course books and discussed more thoroughly. This interest in the supra-segmental features of pronunciation has developed in tandem with the idea of achieving intelligibility as the aim for the second language learner.

The native speaker accent is being challenged and replaced by the idea of intelligibility. That is to say, the focus is on being able to make oneself understood effectively, no matter what one's accent is. This focus on intelligibility has lead researchers to think about what is really important in language teaching, as far as

pronunciation is concerned, and it has been acknowledged that an understanding of tone units, stress and prominence is much more important when trying to put the message across than the ability to pronounce sounds in isolation or understand minimal pairs.

By teaching those features explicitly, teachers are raising students' awareness of how language works on the phonological level, and the implications of this is that not only are students better able to produce language themselves, but also to understand it. It has also been recognized that errors in pronunciation are the major source of communication breakdown. Therefore, by concentrating on some important features of connected speech, the chances of being misunderstood are diminished.

When leaving pronunciation to take care of itself, as in implicit instruction, teachers are preventing students from understanding certain idiosyncrasies of the language, which they might never grasp, even after attaining an advanced level. Students could be missing out important features of oral production and understanding, which could help them putting their message across more effectively, as well as being able to understand the language at a deeper level, thus developing linguistic awareness.

The term 'explicit' may give a false impression that the rules should be given to the students mechanically, without much thinking. However, this can be done either deductively or inductively. The former, and most traditional[15] way is when teachers present the rules before looking at the language itself, and in the latter, students are induced to formulate those rules by themselves, and only at the end of the process do they see what the rules are in order to compare with their production. This can be done through discovery activities with the aim of developing an awareness that will help students improve their understanding of how the language works by using their reasoning processes. This makes students understand that language is analyzable, as they can look for regularities themselves, and that they can benefit from their attempt to make sense of how it works.

The lessons taught to the Experimental Group took both a deductive and an inductive approach depending on the complexity of the phonological process involved. It is one of the aims of this study to find out to what extent this explicit

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[15] Although I used the term 'traditional' here, it is important to point out the fact I do not mean the memorization of rules disconnected from context, but the fact that those rules are made explicit to the students.

instruction of some of the phonological features of connected speech, be it deductive or inductive, enabled learners to be better listeners. It is also under investigation here to see if by helping students' understanding of the differences between the rules that govern the English language, and the ones of their mother tongue (Portuguese in this case), teachers are helping to hinder L1 interference in the process of oral decoding.

It should be noted however that this study does not try to find out if this explicit instruction, or as Krashen[16] (1983) calls it, this 'learning', turns into 'acquisition'; that is to say, if it becomes automatic, explicit knowledge, being somehow instrumental in the acquisition of implicit one.

For the subject of this study, this is not relevant because those phonological rules are explicitly explored with the sole aim of making students aware of them, and therefore able to recognize them in connected speech. Whether by doing pronunciation awareness raising exercises they start producing them in their speech or not, is not under discussion here.

What is aimed here is to find out to what extent this explicit instruction influences positively students' abilities to deal with listening comprehension. It can be assumed as a fact that teachers' knowledge of the underlying phonological rules that govern the language can help them predict students' problems concerning understanding of the spoken language. Such knowledge can be of great assistance for the students' to build their understanding of how language works. This scaffolding process may aid students to achieve better performance at listening comprehension earlier than it is expected.

Considering Vygotsky's theory of the zone of proximal development, defined as:

> The distance between the actual developmental level which is determined through independent problem solving, and the level of potential development, determined through problem solving under adult guidance, or in collaboration with more capable peers.[17] (VYGOTSKY,1988, p.97)

and   transfering its premise to second language learning, we can assume that

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[16] Krashen does not believe it is possible to turn learning into acquisition, he defends the non-interface position where learning and acquisition belong to separate areas of the brain.

[17] Translated from Portuguese by this researcher: "Ela [a zona de desenvolvimento proximal] é a distância entre o nível de desenvolvimento real, que se costuma determinar através da solução independente de problemas, e o nível de desenvolvimento potencial, determinado através da solução de problemas sob a orientação de um adulto ou em colaboração com companheiros mais capazes."

students' capacity for coping with spoken language can be extended by explicit instruction.

Vygotsky (1988, p. 101) says that the learning process, when consistently organized, results in mental development that triggers some developmental processes that otherwise would not occur. It can then be assumed that by explicitly teaching the pronunciation features that contribute to hinder comprehensibility, teachers may be helping students build this mental development which will help them decode language more effectively from an early stage.

By letting pronunciation take care of itself without much explicit instruction from the teacher, we may be preventing students from benefiting from developing this mental process.

CHAPTER 2:   REVISITING HISTORY

Having established the aims and presented the way this research was conducted in the previous chapter, the focus is turned now to history. This chapter tracks back the teaching of pronunciation, focusing on historical viewpoints, in order to understand how different methods and approaches regarded pronunciation instruction. It also goes back to find in the history of the English language some answers to the so frequent students' questions about the discrepancy of the written system as opposed to spoken language.

It is easier for the average student to understand that language is a living thing, subject to changes, if the teacher can show him/her how language has been altered throughout history. By doing so, teachers are raising students' awareness of how political and social events affecting the life of the people over the centuries have a significant effect on language.

2.1 The Teaching of Pronunciation throughout Time

The teaching of foreign languages has played an important role in Human History. Its influence is extended over political, social, economical, scientific, cultural and nearly each and every area of human society. Throughout time it has taken different shapes, focusing more on a certain skill depending on what proficiency in the foreign language learners aimed to achieve, as well as on the theories of language learning of each period.

According to Silveira (1999, p.15-18), the first experience of foreign language teaching was the Sumerian written language being taught to the Arcadians more than fifty centuries ago. As language teaching was based entirely on lexis, that was when the first 'dictionaries' were written: a column of Sumerian words alongside its Arcadian translation as well as phonetic symbols. Those symbols are probably the first tool for 'pronunciation teaching' that we can account for.

It is noteworthy however, to point out the fact that the Sumerian written language was taught to the Arcadians mostly because the latter did not have one.

After conquering the Sumerians, the Arcadians suppressed their spoken language, but having no written one themselves, they had to keep the Sumerian cuneiform writing for the purpose of education.

What is not clear is the presence of phonetic transcription in the early dictionaries, if the language spoken by that community was Arcadian, the Sumerian spoken language having been extinguished. What was then the purpose of knowing how to pronounce words of a language that was no longer spoken and was meant to be read only? Why did the Arcadians want to maintain the phonetic transcription of a language whose people they had conquered, and in which they were 'slaves' to its written form? The answer could be in the fact that the first scribes[18] being Sumerians, wanted to somehow keep their spoken language, even if only in written phonetic form or simply that the phonetic symbols helped when they needed to do some reading aloud.

Following that, there were the Egyptians studying the hieratic written language, and the Greeks their own classical language as it had become almost foreign to its everyday spoken one. In both cases, as with the Sumerians', the written language was the principal focus, and that was so for a long time. First the Latin language, usually studied in its written form, mostly for literary appreciation. Then French, Italian, and English, each gaining prestige as the countries that spoke those languages gained power. Those languages were taught following the same way Latin had been taught, that is, very little if any oral practice, a great amount of rules of syntax and morphology, and a list of vocabulary to memorize.

This so-called Grammar-Translation method dominated the foreign language teaching scenario until the end of the nineteenth century, when it began to be questioned and sometimes rejected. This started mostly due to a greater demand of spoken proficiency in foreign languages because of communication improvements among European countries. It was then that The International Phonetic Association was founded (in 1886), designing its International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA), a powerful tool, enabling accurate transcription of sounds in each and every known language.

According to Richards and Rogers (1996, p.7), "One of the earliest goals of the association was to improve the teaching of modern languages". These authors

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[18] Educated people who knew how to write and decodify the written language, thus being the ones who wrote and made copies of manuals, documents, books, etc before printing was invented.

state that this association advocated the study of the spoken language, phonetic training, the introduction of conversational phrases and idioms, teaching grammar inductively, and teaching by establishing associations within the target language rather than using the mother tongue as support.

The International Phonetic Association brought some reforms as it influenced some scholars like Wilhelm Viëtor who, "argued that training in phonetics would enable teachers to pronounce the language accurately. (And that) speech patterns, rather than grammar, were the fundamental elements of language." (RICHARD and ROGERS 1996, p.8).

Together with other reformers, Viëtor believed in the primacy of spoken language, thus assigning an important role to phonology in language teaching. They also gave more importance to the listening skill, advocating that it should come before writing. Moreover, paving the way for some of the beliefs that rendered the Communicative Approach, more than seventy years later, they considered the importance of meaningful context. This new theoretical view, brought about support for the discipline of Applied Linguistics.

However, it was in the 20th century, supported by the development of Educational Technology and the Linguistic Sciences that the main concepts of language were defined, rendering a variety of approaches, techniques and methods. Among those methods and approaches some of the most important, and still currently practised, are:

The Direct Method, built upon the concepts of child first language acquisition, "receives its name from the fact that meaning is to be connected *directly* with the target language" (LARSEN-FREEMAN, 1986, p.18), accepting no translation. Since language is conceived as primarily speech, pronunciation plays an important role right from the beginning. Pronunciation, however, is worked mostly at a segmental level.

The Audio-Lingual Method, developed during World War II in the USA, for military purposes, aimed to enable students to communicate orally in the foreign language as quickly as possible. Deeply influenced by Behaviorism[19], learning is believed to happen through repetition and the emphasis is placed on the structural patterns of the language, vocabulary being worked with at later stages. Pronunciation

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[19] Psychology - theory that advocates that learning is not influenced by thoughts or feelings but that the learning process is part of some sort of conditioning, habit formation.

is dealt with mainly through choral drills (back drills, substitution drills, chain drills, etc) and minimal pairs in classroom or in language laboratories. The teacher is the model, and when there is a recorded listening, it is of simplified dialogues.

This idea of language learning primarily based on habit formation was challenged by the Silent Way devised by Caleb Gattegno. As the name says, silence is a tool to make students more independent and to foster initiative. Pronunciation work is done using the English Sound/ Colour (Rectangle) Chart (see Figure 1). The sounds in the language are represented by those colour rectangles, the ones in the upper part of the chart (above the white horizontal line) represent the vowel sounds whereas the others, the consonant sounds. The two-colour rectangles represent the diphthongs and below the white horizontal line, two consonants together or the schwa followed by a consonant.

Figure 1: Calleb Gattegno's Sound Colour Chart

From <http://pagesperso-orange.fr/une.education.pour.demain/materiels_pedago /sw/swengcharts/swenrect.htm>, accessed on 20th December 2008 at 9.10 a.m.

According to Cherry:

> The Sound/Color Chart is part of a larger system, which includes the Fidel and the word charts. The Fidel for English is a series of eight wall charts, each the same size as the Sound/Color Chart. On these charts are columns of possible spellings for each rectangle. […]The Fidel indicates at a glance that a given sound in English can be realized by more than one grapheme, and a particular grapheme can be the realization of more than one sound. (CHERRY, 2002, p.220)

Figure 2: Fidel Chart
From <http://pagesperso-orange.fr/une.education.pour.demain/materiels_pedago
/sw/swengcharts/swengfid.htm>, accessed on 20th December 2008 at 9.10 a.m.

Looking closer at the Fidel Chart (see Figure 2 – above) and examining a key to the chart using the International Phonetic Alphabet (see Figure 3), one can clearly see that the original idea was to show the relationship between spelling and pronunciation. It is open to question however why this Color Chart was adapted for pronunciation teaching, other than the original use for teaching literacy, when using the phonemes in the IPA chart (which had been invented way back then) is much simpler and accurately describes the distinctions between the phonemes.

It is certainly a much more complicated code to deal with than the IPA chart. The overwhelming number of colours and its different shades are far too confusing to tackle. Moreover, considering the fact that some of the colours are but only shade difference in contrast to others, the phonemes, which are represented by two colours, can be utterly misunderstood. It is a fact that when two colours are put together, just like two phonemes when spoken together, one interferes with the other, changing it slightly. Thus the surrounding colour can make the accurate identification of the

phoneme even more difficult. Another important fact to point out is that /eə/ is represented as a single phoneme when it is in fact a diphthong. Moreover, the glides /w/ and /j/ are placed together with the diphthongs.

Figure 3: Modified version of Calleb Gattegno's Sound Colour Chart – (KEY)[20]

A pronunciation lesson using this colour chart would follow the teacher pointing to those coloured rectangles, each representing a sound and students trying to produce them first individually then as words and then as full sentences. Word boundaries are marked by the teacher pausing the pointer and stress by harder tapping the rectangles. Teacher uses his/her fingers to indicate a merge of word boundaries as well as pauses between them.

Pronunciation is thus worked through accurate repetition using the Colour Chart and also cuisinaire rods. Although Gattegno claims that students grasp the rhythm of the language by doing so, it is a fact that when producing utterances that do not have much communicative aim, we tend to give it just the accent which is basically word stress. Such utterances will only precariously resemble the rhythm of

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[20] This key was based on Cherry (2002, p. 220). However, the symbols used were substituted by Gimson's (see chapter 3, table 3.1), as I am using it throughout this paper. I also overlaid the original chart with the phonemes from the International Phonetic Alphabet in order to make the relationship clearer.

the language, for it is somehow lacking prominence, which is produced by the speaker and carries the principal changes in intonation.

Having said that, it is important to acknowledge the fact that the Silent Way places great emphasis on pronunciation, even if this might be so because the teacher's voice, being mostly silent, needs to echo in the student's spoken skills, rendering an essential need for pronunciation work. Nevertheless, in spite of this work on spoken language, this method does not focus much on communication.

Among the communicative approaches to teaching, developed to foster students' ability to communicate efficiently in the target language we find Suggestopedia, developed by Georgi Lozanov, Community Language Teaching, by Charles A. Curran, and The Total Physical Response, by James Asher. Suggestopedia considers that students' bad feelings are the major obstacles to learning, thus breaking them through 'desuggestion' enables students to use their full mental powers. Pronunciation is not worked explicitaly, but the constant use of dramatization through role plays fosters some speaking practice.

Taking into account people's feelings as well as intellect, Community Language Teaching advocates that the primary aim of language is communication, so a good relationship between the students is crucial to the learning process. Work on pronunciation is done incidentally based on the language students have produced.

Total Physical Response is mainly based on listening. It claims that by focusing on listening skills we are somehow copying the pattern we process when learning our mother tongue. Following the same conception is the Natural Approach, devised by Tracy Terrel and Steven Krashen, who believe that we should learn the second language similar to how we learned our first one. As those authors put it: "The first principle of the Natural Approach is that comprehension precedes production [...]. Thus the starting point in language instruction is to help acquirers understand what is being said to them." (TERREL and KRASHEN, 1983, p.20)

Among those approaches that claim to focus on communication, the Communicative Approach is the most widely used and the one that somehow revolutionized language teaching. It was conceived in the early 1970s and it has been used ever since, all over the world in a great number of places, although none of the other approaches and methods have totally died out.

The main focus of the Communicative Approach is on the negotiation of meaning through contextualized tasks, designed to foster real communication. It aims to enable students to achieve communicative competence in the target language. Comprehensible pronunciation is the objective, and work on it is done both on a segmental and a supra-segmental level. Nevertheless, this work is done mostly incidentally, whenever pronunciation mistakes break down the process of negotiation of meaning.

In the 1990s, Michael Lewis devised the Lexical Approach, which does not go against the Communicative Approach but adds to it. The most important difference is that lexis is placed as the main focus of language teaching, and the language used is descriptive (real language that the average man in the street uses) rather than prescriptive (ideal language that abide to all grammar rules), and taught in chunks. Special attention is given to those pre-fabricated blocks of language and to the use of collocations and formulaic expressions. Those, when learned as a whole, encompass their pronunciation idiosyncrasies enabling students to understand spoken language better. This study turns to some principles of such an approach for support, which are explored in chapter 5.

From this historical overview, we can see that pronunciation has played a role throughout the history of language teaching. Its importance increased or decreased, depending on the focus given to spoken language. It is a fact that more recently there has been an increasing interest in the spoken language. The publishing of *A Grammar of Speech* (BRAZIL, 1995) and the *Longman Grammar of the Spoken and Written English*[21] in 1999, among others, shed some light on the differences of spoken and written language, somehow drawing attention to the importance of pronunciation teaching, especially supra-segmental.

It has been acknowledged that in the transition between spoken and written, the English language somewhat turns into another one: grammar and lexis change, and pronunciation make the 'two languages' very different. Apart from the phonological processes that merge word boundaries, there is the inconsistency of the spelling system. It seems as if pronunciation and spelling are fighting a long-lost battle to dictate the norms upon which the words should conform to.

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[21] By Douglas Biber, Stig Johansson, Geoffrey Leech, Susan Conrad, and Edward Finegan (Northern Arizona University, University of Oslo, University of Lancaster, Iowa State University, and University of Southern California).

Teachers of English ever so often come across questions from the students about such inconsistencies. We are sometimes unable to answer a great number of those enquiries, due to the lack of rules or grammar explanations to justify such occurrences. Nevertheless, some authors like Crystal, claim that English spelling is not as inconsistent as we tend to think:

> There are only about 400 everyday words in English whose spelling is wholly irregular. [...] The trouble is that many of these words are among the most frequently used words in the language; they are constantly before our eyes as word tokens. As a result, English spelling gives the impression of being more irregular than it really is. (CRYSTAL, 2002, p.72)

However, as a teacher of English as a foreign language, I think that those words, being so constantly used, are essential for a basic command of the language. Therefore, this 'impression' that English is more irregular than it really is, is in fact a reality for the EFL learner, especially the less advanced ones. Moreover, to make matters worse, our written-oriented culture puts a lot of strain on being able to spell correctly.

Believing that those infamous inconsistencies of the English language, as far as pronunciation and spelling are concerned, are deeply rooted in its history, we now search back the history of the English language. This historical framework is as an attempt to explain some idiosyncrasies of the spoken language as opposed to the written one.

2.2   The History of the English Language

Using, as a starting point, the assumption that language is subject to constant change, and that its history shapes its grammar as well as its vocabulary and pronunciation, I would like to trace the evolution of the English language and the differences this prompted to its vocabulary, spelling and pronunciation; the main languages that lent the English vocabulary a vast number of words and the influences that are constantly at work, triggering alterations and adding words to the language.

Linguistic change is a continuous process that shapes up the language throughout time. This constant metamorphosis, according to Faraco (2005) is due to the heterogeneity of languages in geographical spaces, social structure and time.

Owing to diachronic research on sound change it is possible to chart changes which have taken place in earlier historical periods and find out when and why spoken and written English strayed so far apart. According to Saussure (1972, p. 27), when talking about the causes of inconsistency between spelling and pronunciation, the most important facts are: a language is in constant process of evolution, whereas writing tends to remain fixed; the borrowing of an alphabet by one people from another; spelling may be introduced through mistaken etymologizing. Which is true for the English language is what we are going to find out in the next section.

2.2.1   The Languages in England before English

The English language is so intrinsically connected with the English people that it seems that there never existed another language in England. Nevertheless, long before this language appeared in the island in the shape of the Germanic languages of the Jutes, Saxons and Angles, the island spoke other languages diverse from English. As Baugh and Cable (1994, p.41) put it: "Since its introduction into the island, about the middle of the fifth century it has had a career extending through only 1,500 years. Yet this part of the world had been inhabited by humans for thousands of years."

Little was discovered of the early languages of England, the Celts being the first people whose language we can trace back. Yet there are some controversies as to when they first arrived: the period varying from 1180 to 650 BC. The Celts were tribes which came to Britain from central Europe and set up home in the South of England around Surrey and Kent. Their language, a branch of the Indo-European family of languages, replaced all others in England and at the beginning of the Christian era covered the greater part of Western Europe. Gaul, the largest of these tribes, confronted the Romans when they invaded Britain around 55 BC.

 The Romans had already conquered France and, unlike the Celts, whose tribes fought against each other, were a single nation led by Julius Caesar. In spite of

that, their successive attempts to take over Britain were disastrous and only in A.D. 43, almost a hundred years later, the actual conquest was accomplished by the Emperor Claudius.

Following the Roman invasion, Gallic, the language of the Celts in Gaul, was replaced by Latin. However, it was not so with the other Celtic tribes who kept their own language. Among the tribes that were in Britain, some surrendered to the Romans and some were driven to more remote places – Ireland, Cornwall, Brittany and the Isle of Man. Their language remained in certain areas but only few survived to this day: some in the far corners of France and the British Isles, and Gaelic in the Highlands. As for Welsh and Irish, although they are still spoken by a large number of people, especially the latter, the number of speakers has been decreasing greatly over the years.

The Romans ruled for more than three hundred years never penetrating far into the mountains of Wales and Scotland. The Northern boundary was protected by Hadrian's Wall which stretched across England keeping the unconquered population away. In spite of the fact that the Romans stayed for that long in the island and the Celts around one thousand years, little was left behind of their language. Apart from many English places which are Celtic in origin (Avon and Thames, for instance) or Romans (the –chester in Manchester and the –caster in Lancaster, both meaning camp in Latin) only few Latin words were left in everyday vocabulary. Baugh & Cable (1994, p. 79), state that the contact with the Roman civilization hardly influenced the English language: "It is probable that the use of Latin as a spoken language did not survive the end of the Roman rule on the island and that such vestiges as remained for a time were lost in the disorders that accompanied the Germanic invasions." Latin only came into play significantly after the conversion of Britain to Roman Christianity beginning in 597.

2.2.2   The Dawn of the English Language

Succeeding the withdrawal of the Roman legions from Britain, Germanic tribes – the Jutes, Saxons and Angles – coming from the regions comprising present-day southern Denmark and northern Germany, began the invasion of Britain.

> It was not so much an invasion as a series of opportunistic encroachments taking place over several generations. The tribes settled in different parts of Britain, each bringing its own variations of speech, some of which persist in Britain to this day, and they variously merged and subdivided until they had established seven small kingdoms and dominated most of the island, except for Wales, Scotland and Cornwall, which remained Celtic strongholds. (BRYSON, 1991, p. 39).

These kingdoms were: Northumbria, Mercia, East Anglia, Kent, Essex, Sussex, and Wessex. The English language of today evolved from the dialects spoken by those Germanic tribes, it belongs to the Low West Germanic branch of the Indo-European family, hence sharing certain features which are common to all the Germanic languages:

▪ It possesses weak or regular verbs which form the past tense and past participle by adding *–ed* to the present form;

▪ It shows the adoption of a strong stress accent on the first or the root syllable of most words;

▪ It has undergone the shift that occurred between some consonants in the Germanic language from those found in Sanskrit, Greek, and Latin; the so-called Grimm's Law, devised by the German philologist, Jacob Grimm:

The original voiceless stops were changed to fricatives:

E. g. Latin → *tres* - English → *three*;

The *p* in indo-European, preserved as such in Latin and Greek, was changed to an *f* in Germanic languages.

 E.g. Latin → *piscis* – English → *fish*;

According to Faraco (2005, p.142), although Grimm had singled out those changes concerning the original Indo-European family: the original /p/, /t/, /k/ turning into /f/, /θ/, /h/; there was an array of unexplainable exceptions to this law. However, in 1875, a Danish linguist called Karl Verner proved that the exceptions to Grimm's Law, that had been pestering linguists for fifty years, were not so. Verner proved that Grimm's Law did not apply when those consonants followed weak syllables in the original Indo-European languages. This resulted in the Phonetic Laws which postulated that change in sounds abide to rules that admit no exceptions.

What is relevant here is that whenever a phonetic change seems to have an exception, this is only apparent and the reason for this is either interference from the

grammatical domain (the so-called analogy change) or for some historical reasons (e.g. borrowings from another language). Saussure (2000, p. 143) says that sound changes affect not words, but sounds. "A given speech sound alters, and this is an isolated occurrence, like all diachronic events. But the consequence is that all the words in which the sound in question occurs alter in an identical way. In this sense phonetic changes are absolutely regular."

In fact, it is noticeable within the evolution of the English language, that whenever a word which contains specific sounds seems not to have undergone the phonetic changes that those sounds went through, it was either borrowed later on from another language or it suffered interference from the grammatical domain.

2.2.3   The Evolution of the English Language

Within the evolution of the English language throughout the centuries, three main periods can be identified: Old English – from 450 to 1150, Middle English – from 1150 to 1500 and Modern English – since 1500. This division is only a matter of convenience due to the impossibility of recognizing the dividing lines between those periods. It is based on certain broad characteristics and certain special developments that occurred.

According to Faraco (2005, p. 50) a time division allows the placement of the facts under research on a time dimension, which makes it easier to retrace the age of some events as well as its social, historical and cultural relations, aiding mainly comparative research, which is the base of the studies of historical linguistics. Moreover, as Faraco (2005) states, there is certain regularity within a linguistic change; that is to say, given the same linguistic context, in the same period of time and within the same language, the process of changing is general and regular, applying systematically to the same element, given the same conditions, in all its use.

There is no question that a language is inextricably linked with the social and political nature of the society it represents. Hence, it reflects the changes that this community goes through; it is part of its identity, involving far more than a system of rules of grammar and vocabulary. It represents the self-image of its people, the adoption of social and cultural behaviours and ways of being, developing in tandem

with the society it epitomizes. By looking at the history of these three periods of the English Language we shall find not only some answers to questions concerning the inconsistencies of the English language as far as pronunciation and spelling is concerned, but also the political and social events that gave rise to such discrepancies.

2.2.4 Old English or Anglo-Saxon (450-1150)

Uniformity was not a feature of Old English, since it differed not only between the language of the earliest written records (about AD 700) and that of the later literary texts, but also between regional dialects. The four major dialects recognized in Old English are Kentish, spoken by the Jutes; West Saxon, the dialect spoken by some of the Saxons; and Northumbrian and Mercian, both spoken by the Angles (see Figure 4).

Old English spelling was much more phonetic, it was not so disconnected to its pronunciation as it is the case in Modern English. There are a great number of words which, if pronounced, would not be alien to the Modern speaker but would otherwise be unrecognizable if written. Moreover, Old English made use of some characters that we no longer employ, which makes it look unfamiliar to a modern reader. Strange as it may look, it is not very difficult once one learns that the differences in representation follow certain laws as far as pronunciation is concerned.

Figure 4: Old English dialects.
From Baugh & Cable, (1994, p. 52[22]).

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[22] The drawing is black and white in the original. It was coloured by this researcher.

As Baugh and Cable state:

> Old English made use of two characters to represent the *th*: þ and ð, *thorn* and *eth*, respectively, as in the word wiþ (with) or ðã (then), which we no longer employ. It also expressed the sound of *a* in *hat* by a digraph æ (ash), and since the sound is of very frequent occurrence, the character contributes not a little to the unfamiliar appearance of the page. Likewise Old English represented the sound of *sh* by *sc*, as in *scẽap* (sheep) or *scẽotan* (shoot), and the sound of *k* by *c*, as in *cynn* (kin) or *nacod* (naked), *c* was also used for the affricate now spelled *ch*, as in *spræc* (speech). Consequently a number of words that were in all probability pronounced by King Alfred almost as they are by us present a strange appearance in the written or printed text. Such words as *ecg* (edge), scip (ship), *bœc* (back), *benc* (bench), *þorn* (thorn), *þœt* (that) are examples. (BAUGH and CABLE, 1994, p. 53)

Having said that, it is important to take into account that some Old English words have undergone such changes so that they sound very different from their modern counterparts. According to Baugh and Cable (1994, p. 53) the long vowels have suffered considerable modification:

e.g. *bãn* → bone; *rãp* → rope; *stãn* → stone; *hãlig* → holy; *gan* → go.

Other vowels changed:

e.g. *fot* → foot; *cene* → keen; *fyr* → fire; *riht* → right.

Some forms were contracted in later English:

e.g. *heafod* → head; *fœger* → fair; *sawol* → soul;

As far as the lexicon is concerned, it is noticeable the great number of Germanic words, as well as the lack of French words in Old English as the latter were only introduced to the English language towards the end of this period with the Norman invasion. According to Baugh and Cable (1994, p.53) about 85 per cent of the Germanic words have disappeared from the language. Nevertheless, the ones that remained are basic elements of the English vocabulary, therefore frequently used, making up a large part of any English sentence.

As for Latin and Celtic words, they were very rare. Despite the fact that the English people had close contact with the Romans and the Celtic tribes, little was added to the Old English language from these groups. Most words derived from Latin were introduced to Old English by the conversion of Britain to Roman Christianity in 597. The majority of the Latin words we use today were added to the English language with the Norman invasion. In spite of the fact that the Roman

occupation in places like Spain and Gaul, resulted in new languages: Spanish and French, in Britain such an invasion did not influence their language much.

Near the end of the Old English period the Danes conquered England but their influence upon the language is hard to estimate, the language of the Scandinavian invaders being so similar to Old English. Among the Scandinavian terms adopted were *freckle, leg, skull, meek, rotten, clasp, crawl, dazzle, scream, trust, sky*.

> Sometimes these replaced Old English words, but often they took up residence alongside them, adding a useful synonym to the language, so that today in England we have both *craft* and *skill*, *wish* and *want*, *raise* and *rear*, and many other doublets. Sometimes the words came from the same source but had grown slightly different in pronunciation, as with *shriek* and *screech*, *no* and *nay*, or *ditch* and *dike*, and sometimes they went a further step and acquired slightly different meanings, as with *scatter* and *shatter*, *skirt* and *shirt* (…) But most remarkably of all, the English adopted certain grammatical forms. The pronouns *they*, *them*, and *their* are Scandinavian. (BRYSON, 1991, p. 45)

Old English was almost purely Germanic and a great part of it has disappeared from the language. According to Baugh & Cable (1994), eighty-five percent of the Old English vocabulary is no longer in use. As for grammar, it was an inflected synthetic language, like modern German, indicating the relation of words in a sentence largely by means of inflection: nominative, genitive, accusative, dative, etc. Utterly different from Modern English which is analytic, making extensive use of prepositions and auxiliary verbs and being dependent upon word order. What remained from Old English inflections were the possessive case, pronouns, degrees of comparison in monosyllabic and bisyllabic adjectives and plural number. There were also distinctions of grammar gender: words could be masculine, feminine or neuter. It had a dual number for pronouns: a form for *we two → wit* as well as *we*.

The division of verbs into two great classes, the weak and the strong, the former the so-called regular verbs and the latter the irregular ones, is a feature that remains from Old English.

There are some differences in Old English which we are not going to discuss here as it is not of prime importance to the purpose of this chapter. Moreover, as one can clearly see, the Old English period does not aid much our search to make sense of the inconsistencies of the Modern English as far as pronunciation and spelling is concerned.

2.2.5   The Norman Conquest

The Norman invasion in 1066 is probably the most important event in the history of the English language, changing its course entirely. It enriched the English language in such a way that today, as far as vocabulary is concerned, we may consider it as much a Germanic as a Romance language. They did to the English language what the early Romans failed to do in more than 300 years of invasion. Had William the Conqueror, who was the Duke of Normandy and claimed the English throne on the grounds of being a second cousin to the late king Edward, not succeeded in taking over the British Isles, the history of English would have taken a totally different way. This research would probably be much closer to German, retaining perhaps most of its inflections and preserving most of its vocabulary.

The Normans, Vikings who had settled in northern France 200 years before, had totally given up their language (Norse) and spoke a variety of French which differed from the one spoken in Paris. When they settled in Britain, knowing no English and making no effort to do so, they carried on speaking their French dialect. For 200 years their language continued to be spoken by the ruling class, at first by the ones who had arrived from Normandy and later through intermarriage and association French became the language of the ruling class. Even the ones who were of English origin started teaching their children the French language as it became a symbol of social status, being the language of the upper-class while the masses spoke English.

Considering the fact that from the beginning of the Norman invasion in 1066 until 1399 when Henry IV, whose mother tongue was English, became king, no king of England spoke English; it is not surprising that the English royalty used only French at the English court and that the English language was considered uncultivated and socially inferior. "It is interesting to find a considerable body of French literature being produced in England from the beginning of the twelfth century, addressed to English patrons and directed toward meeting their special tastes and interests". (BAUGH and CABLE, 1994, p. 114/115).

English and French coexisted together in England at this time, French being the language of prestige, spoken by the dominant class and English, the language of the greater part of the population. In-between there were the churchmen whose

ability to speak both French and English was apparently fairly common as they had to deal with both classes. There were also some people whose position brought them into contact with both the upper and lower classes, those people were bilingual.

> Norman society had two tiers: the French-speaking aristocracy and the English-speaking peasantry. Not surprisingly, the linguistic influence of the Normans tended to focus on matters of court, government, fashion and high living. Meanwhile, the English peasant continued to eat, drink, work, sleep and play in English. The breakdown can be illustrated in two ways. First, the more humble trades tended to have Anglo-Saxon names (baker, miller, shoemaker), while the more skilled trades adopted French names (mason, painter, tailor) […] Norman French like the Germanic tongues before it, made a lasting impact on English vocabulary. Of the 10,000 words adopted from Norman French, some three-quarters are still in use. (BRYSON, 1991, p. 46/47)

French would be the language of English people if history had not changed its course once again. In 1204 the English crown lost Normandy, which forced the nobility to separate entirely. What once had been intrinsically connected was now utterly separated, and most of the nobles who had estates on both sides of the Channel had to give up one and remain in the other. By losing their connections with the continent, the Norman nobility started to think of themselves as English. This stimulated a kind of patriotism which united the English people and established some knowledge of English as a proper mark of the Englishman.

Just when the English language was starting to gain some prestige, there was a considerable immigration to the country, mostly from the south of France. This was followed suit by another foreign invasion, and during the reign of Henry III, the country is said to have been eaten up by immigrants. This foreign invasion in the thirteenth century hindered the natural spread of the English among the upper-class as the foreigners used mostly French. Moreover, the French language enjoyed enormous popularity in this century, being considered a symbol of culture all over civilized Europe.

In spite of that, the sense of patriotism, generated by the separation of the nobility from the continent, among other factors, spread the use of English in the upper-class. The fact that these two languages coexisted together so closely, triggered the transference of a great number of French words into the English language. Apart from some collocations, where the English adopted the French word

order (e.g. *court martial, attorney general*), the influence on the English syntax was not as dramatic as in its lexicon.

Such a phenomenon is understandable as syntax does not change so easily because it is part of the grammar. While grammar comprises of a set of internalized rules that generates an infinite array of sentences, enabling the user to deal with language efficiently, the lexicon is manipulated on a more conscious level thus easily modified, and influenced by the contact with other languages.

2.2.6 Middle English (1150-1500)

As much of Old English lacked uniformity, Middle English was made from a variety of dialects. The four main ones were: Northern, East Midland, West Midland, and Southern. Within Middle English, Kentish preserved individual features becoming a variety of the Southern dialect. So diverse were such dialects, that people in one part of England often could not understand one another (see Figure 5).

Following the Norman conquest, the written language went through a thorough change as Norman scribes' spelling followed French conventions.

Some of those changes, such as *qu* for *cw* (*queen* for *cwen*), are exemplified by Crystal (2003, p.41):

Figure 5: The dialects
of Middle English
From Baugh & Cable (1994, p.186[23])

- *gh* (instead of *h*) in such words as *night* and *enough.*
- *ch* (instead of *c*) in such words as *church*
- *ou* for *u* (as in *house*)

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[23] The drawing is black and white in the original. It was coloured by this researcher.

- *c* before *e* (instead of *s*) in such words as *cercle* ('circle') and *cell*
- because the letter *u* was written in a very similar way to *v, n*, and *m*, words containing a sequence of these letters were difficult to read; they therefore often replaced the *u* with an *o*, in such cases as *come, love, one*, and *son*.

By the beginning of the 15th century, it was a mixture of old English and French spelling. As Crystal (2003, p.274) says, this gave rise to a variety of spelling exceptions "once the motivation for the change had passed".

To make matters worse, with the introduction of printing in 1476 some printers moved to England from the Continent. Those early printers had their own spelling norms which influenced deeply the spelling of the printed word. Nevertheless, a certain uniformity, mostly in the written language, was reached in the sixteenth century, when the use of London English, London being the centre of book publishing in England, became the standard. That was when the idea of 'correct' spelling began to emerge. In spite of that, as far as the spoken language was concerned, regional dialects remained and survived until modern times. That proves that standardizing spoken language is a hopeless task.

Middle English is the period of the greatest achievements in English literature, culminating in the writings of Geoffrey Chaucer. It is also the period of the greatest changes in the English language, according to Baugh and Cable (1994, p. 154): its highly inflected grammar turned into analytic and its vocabulary incorporated a great number of loan words from French and Latin. As those authors say: "At the beginning of the period English is a language that must be learned as a foreign tongue; at the end it is Modern English."

Talking about this loss of Old English words, Lincoln Barnet (1964, apud Bryson, 1991, p.50), states that about 85 percent of the Anglo-Saxon words died out, which means that only 4,500 Old English survived. In spite of that, those surviving words are among the most fundamental words in English: *man, wife, child, brother, sister, live, fight, love, drink, sleep, eat, hous*e, etc. As it was aforementioned, when referring to the percentage of Germanic words which have disappeared from the English language, at least half the words in almost any sample of modern English will be of Anglo-Saxon origin.

French words poured into English: governmental and administrative; ecclesiastical; law; army and navy; fashion; meals and social life; art, learning,

medicine. They were very quickly assimilated and promptly became the basis of derivates: e.g. the adjective *gentle* is recorded in 1225 and within five years we have it compounded with an English noun to make *gentlewoman* and later *gentleman*. Some native words were dropped in favour of French words, some survived alongside and were generally differentiated in meaning: *doom* and *judgement*; *hearty* and *cordial*; *motherhood* and *maternity*; *fatherhood* and *fraternity*. Some of the most significant changes in pronunciation concerned words borrowed from French – e.g. the words *police* and *ravine* would be pronounced as *nice* and *vine* had they been borrowed earlier.

As for grammar, more than a hundred of the Old English strong verbs, the so-called irregular verbs, which do not form the past tense by adding –*ed* to the infinitive, changed at the beginning of the Middle English period. Today more than half of them have disappeared as a great number of strong verbs (irregular) became weak (regular).

> At a time when English was the language chiefly of the lower classes and largely removed from the restraining influences of education and literary standard, it was natural that many speakers should apply the pattern of weak verbs to some which were historically strong.(…) The impulse seems to have been checked, possibly by the steady rise of English in the social scale and later by the stabilizing effect of printing (BAUGH and CABLE, 1994, p. 160);

This phenomenon, called by Faraco (2005) the progressive scale of change implementation, starting with the informal speech of the lower working class, moving to the middle class and to the printed word where it gets established, helped those changes get into print, and therefore into standard English. Another decisive factor in history that speeded up this process was the effect of the Black Death, which by killing a great number of people of lower classes, provoked an incredible shortage of labour. This, on the other hand, resulted in an immediate rise in wages and therefore an increase of importance of the labouring class.

It is certainly true that the importance of a language is intrinsically connected with the importance of the people who speak it. Moreover, if we consider this shift in importance of the lower classes who spoke English, one can only expect that the language followed suit. Better living conditions led to better education which led, on

the one hand, to a standardization of the language, and on the other hand to changes in the language brought about by the way those people spoke the language.

One of the most important changes concerning grammar, was that the language which was inflectional – where word ending determines grammatical function rendering little importance to word order - became analytic - word order plays an essential role in the sentence. Masculine, nominative and accusative plural endings *–as* was neutralized to *–s* and *–es* from strong declension and *–en* from the weak, and by 1250 –s was the standard plural ending all over England; some words like *oxen*, became exceptional and still are in Modern English. Another exception which survived is the Old English modification of the root vowel in the plural of some words: *man → men; foot → feet*; Distinctions of grammatical gender were replaced by those of natural gender.

The dual number disappeared and the dative and accusative of pronouns were reduced to a common form. Scandinavian *they, them* substituted the original *hie, hem* of the third person plural. Conjugation of verbs was simplified by the omission of endings and by the use of a common form for the singular and plural of the past tense of strong verbs.

Taking all those changes into account, one must acknowledge the driving forces that promoted such an alteration in the English language. Among other factors, the gradual increase of importance of the English language throughout this period is the most significant one. As it was aforementioned, there was a growing feeling of patriotism in England at that time; a feeling that turned into animosity towards the French during the Hundred Years' War. According to Baugh & Cable (1994, p.138), this, together with the improvement in the conditions of the mass of the people and the rise of a substantial middle class, is probably one of the causes of the disuse of French.

Not unexpectedly, this period brings some clarity to our questions on the inconsistencies of the English language. The changes that the language went through, going from highly inflectional to analytic left indelible marks. Some of them according to Bryson (1991, p.55) are that:

▪ Even though the *–s* has become a standard form for plurals, some from the complex Old English system survived: *women, feet, geese, men, and teeth*;

▪ A great number of strong verbs were simplified becoming weak, but sometimes it worked the other way round: today we have *torn* instead of *teared*; *knew*, instead of

knowed. Sometimes both forms survived, making it even more confusing, leaving us not sure of whether to use *dived* or *dove*; *wove* or *weaved*; *swelled* or *swollen*;

▪ Sometimes words were modified in one grammatical circumstance but left untouched in another.

  E.g. *knife – knives; grass – graze; grief – grieve*; to name but a few.

▪ Sometimes the pronunciation changed: *bath – bathe;*

▪ Sometimes, to the eternal confusion of non-English speakers, these things happened all together, so that you have not only life-lives, but also the different pronunciation live = / *laiv* / and live = / *lɪv* / ;

▪ Sometimes conflicting regional usages left us with two forms of the word: *fox – vixen*; or two spellings: *phial – vial*;

▪ And sometimes, as we shall see in the next section, it made English have some of the most wildly unphonetic spellings of any language in the world.

2.2.7 The Great Vowel Shift (1500-1650)

This was another turning point in the history of the English language which happened at the very end of the Middle English period: a major change in the way vowels were pronounced. The so-called Great Vowel Shift changed the English pronunciation system so much, without changing the spelling much, that the spoken and the written language strayed away from each other.

> No one knows why this vowel shift happened. […]For whatever reasons, in a relatively short period of time the long vowels of English […] changed their values in a fundamental and seemingly systematic way, each of them moving forward and upward in the mouth. There was evidently a chain reaction in which each shifting vowel pushed the next one forward: the 'o' sound of *spot* became the 'a' sound of *spat*, while *spat* became *speet*, *speet* became *spate*, and so on. […] Chaucer's *lyf*, pronounced '*leef*', became Shakespeare's *life*, pronounced '*lafe*', became our *life*. (BRYSON, 1991, p. 86)

This change affected mainly English long vowels and the vowel system of the language was deeply transformed. Its overall effect, according to Lass (1984, p.126) (see table 2.1), was:

Middle English	16th century	20th century	As in

Middle English	16th century	20th century	As in
iː →	ei →	ai	bite
eː →	iː →	iː	beet
ɛː →	eː →		beat
aː →	aː → ɛː → eː →	ei	mate
uː →	ou →	au	mouth
oː →	uː →	uː	boot
ɔː →	oː →	əu	boat

Table 2.1: Overall effect of the Great Vowel Shift. *From Lass (1984, p.126).*

Crystal (2003, p.55) states that the fact that there was this major vowel change in pronunciation at the very end of the Middle English period, which affected the language as a whole, including all its dialects, was an uncontroversial issue. However this assumption survived until the 80s, when some new textual evidence shed light on the fact that it could have been possible that instead of a major change, there had been two separate chain-like movements coming from different parts of the country. This is still a matter that needs some reanalysis and there is some research being done in this area.

Moreover, there are other controversies regarding the sequence in which this shift happened. According to Crystal (2003, p.55): "The traditional view is that the series of changes was connected, a move in one of the vowels causing a move in another, and so on throughout the system, with each vowel 'keeping its distance' from its neighbour". He calls the two different views: *Push-me* and *Pull-you*. The former claims that the */iː/* vowel was the first to change 'pulling' other vowels upwards in a chain reaction (see C on Figure 6), the latter, that the */aː/* vowel triggered the effect 'pushing' the other vowels upwards (see D on Figure 6).

Figure 6: The Great Vowel Shift. *From Crystal (2003, p. 55).*

This shift is responsible for most of the inconsistencies between spelling and pronunciation in the English language. It happened at a time when spelling had become standardized, coinciding with the invention of printing. Thus, the English language was left with such an unorthodox use of the vowel symbols in spelling: they no longer correspond to the sounds once represented in Old and Middle English. In this Great Vowel Shift we find some of the answers to a great number of questions we have been asked about the English spelling system.

2.2.8   Modern English (Since 1500)

There are still substantial differences between late Middle English and Modern English. Hence, in order to bridge this gap, we need to acknowledge the existence of the Early Modern English period. The beginning of this period is a matter of controversy, as some historians opt for the start of the pronunciation shift (around 1400) whereas others prefer a later date: the invention of printing (1476) or even after the effects of the printing revolution had become established (around 1500). Whether we chose one or the other as a starting point, what we need to take into account is the fact that from this time until the 18th century, the English language went through great changes. Comparing Modern Standard English with the English of Shakespeare (1564-1616) we still find substantial differences.

William Shakespeare undoubtedly influenced vastly the English language, especially when using some more sophisticated words within his plays, thus fostering popular awareness of such words and hence their circulation. His impact on the language was mainly in the lexicon, however for the matter of research into the English language, his work have shed some light on language change in all aspects: the lexicon, grammar and pronunciation.

Another work also played an important role helping to shape up language because of its popularity: The King James Bible. It was published just when Shakespeare was retiring from writing for the stage in 1611. Unlike Shakespeare's work, it did not have a popular style and was very conservative in the use of old language which was falling into disuse. This renewed some vocabulary which would

otherwise have died out, as well as some grammatical structures which were falling out of use.

The Early Modern period is still characterized by a lack of standardization of the spelling system with a great number of variations. The English writing system was in such a terrible state that there was lots of criticism, especially against the printers. This fostered, during the 17th century, the appearance of innumerous spelling guides, and the beginning of standardization followed suit.

> By the middle of the century, printing conventions had become highly regularized, and the gulf established between the forms of speech and their written representation. (…) The period of social tolerance of variant spellings came to an end; and as the 18th-century notions of correctness emerged, poor spelling became increasingly stigmatized." (CRYSTAL, 2003, p. 67)

Modern English, starting at the end of the 18th century, is much closer to the language we currently use. Reading some work from this period does not put much strain on the reader, as, in spite of some old-fashioned vocabulary, spelling, punctuation and grammar are very similar to what we have today. As for vocabulary, it incorporated a great number of words, especially through inventions and scientific discoveries which created the need for thousands of new terms. As well as being generated, words acquired new meanings and started being employed in a new sense. E.g. *mouse, bug, virus* – acquired new meanings related to technology.

Modern English is responsible for the various attempts to fix, refine and standardize the English language. This came with several plans for an authoritative academy to regulate the language, resulting in the appearance of the first grammars, together with the publication of the first dictionaries. Later on, the publication of the Oxford English Dictionary in 1928 was a significant achievement for the English language, as Baugh & Cable state:

> By exhibiting the history of words and idioms, their forms and various spellings, their changes of meaning, the way words rise and fall in the levels of usage, and many other phenomena, it has increased our linguistic perspective and taught us to view many questions in a more scientific and less dogmatic way. (BAUGH and CABLE, 1994, p.339)

This was the period of grammars, which brought about uncountable disputes to decide if grammar should be prescriptive or descriptive, some of which are still

controversial to this day. Grammars were however, very prescriptive, as it would be expected from a period when standardization of the language was one of the biggest issues. Surprisingly, most of our modern grammars are still prescriptive, even though we started to acknowledge the fact that spoken and written languages are diverse and that the increasing number of non-native speakers speaking the language are gradually influencing it.

It was also then, namely after the Second World War, that the British strategy for expanding English Language Teaching (ELT) was devised. According to Phillipson (1992, p.145), the *Report of the Independent Committee of Enquiry* into the Overseas Information Services, chaired by Lord Drogheda, the so-called *Drogheda Report*, is the first step to promote the English language to an international status. That was when the British government realized the importance of turning its language into a Lingua Franca, as there would be an increasing interest in English literature, politics, history, and British institutions, strengthening their power as a nation.

The British government gave financial support for the expansion of ELT at universities, abroad, with publishing and each and every area related to it, to ensure the success of such an enterprise. The role of the British Council overseas was of crucial importance. Phillipson (1992, p.151) claims that there is "very clear evidence of the integration of the British Council into the government machine, and of the interdependence of cultural diplomacy with economic, political and, by implication, also military diplomacy." This has certainly been the greatest revolution of modern English: it turning into a Lingua Franca.

However, looking at a more pedagogical point of view, the greatest revolution was the creation of the first computer corpus, in the 1960s by W. Nelson Francis and Henry Kučera. It was called the Brown Corpus and it paved the way for the development of the Corpora enterprise. Corpora, which is made of samples taken from texts from books, TV and radio programmes, films, newspapers, lectures, meetings and casual conversation transcribed and fed into a computer; forms a descriptive compilation representing language usage. Unlike simple descriptions in a dictionary, corpora incorporates all possible kinds of usage giving accurate information about the frequency the words are used as well as collocations[24],

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[24] The Lexical Approach uses Corpora as bases for lexical analysis. See Chapter 5 for more about it.

spellings, pronunciations and grammatical constructions.

Together with the idea of descriptive rather than prescriptive grammar, Corpora shows how complex the English language is when one looks at it from the point of view of pure usage. It shows that language used in everyday life does not always conform to grammatical rules, and that it is so blended with so many other people's languages with whom it had contact that there is no such a thing as pure English language.

That is the point where, according to Meyer (2004, p.3) there is a clash between corpus linguists and generative grammarians, especially the ones who follow the most recent theory of generative grammar: minimalist theory. The latter believe that taking from the language the marked exceptions from "historical accident, dialect mixture, personal idiosyncracies, and the like" (CHOMSKY, 1995, apud MEYER 2004, p.20) one gets to the core from where linguistic theory should be constructed. Corpora, being a display of how language is used, shows all those marked exceptions which are irrelevant to minimalist generative theory. As Meyer says:

> Unlike generative grammarians, corpus linguists see complexity and variation as inherent in language, and in their discussions of language, they place a very high priority on descriptive adequacy, not explanatory adequacy. Consequently, corpus linguists are very skeptical of the highly abstract and decontextualized discussions of language promoted by generative grammarians, largely because such discussions are too far removed from actual language usage. (MEYER, 2004, p.3)

It seems that this tension, between descriptive and prescriptive, language core and language usage Modern English brings about, has given and will give rise to a number of interesting theories and models of the learning process.

Moreover, English seems to have been taken from a position of foreign language to basic skill. English as an international language belongs to the world. In fact, the English language is currently going through a major shift as it becomes one of the most important standard languages in the world. It seems as if non-native speakers are increasingly playing an important role in language change, influencing and sometimes 'dictating' what happens to the English language. It is already noticeable that a number of simplifications are being 'imposed' by these users of the English language, such as:

She just finished   for   *She has just finished* - In British English

We are waiting   for   *We have been waiting*

Your name is Jenny, no?/ right?   for   *Your name is Jenny, isn't it?*

English is changing as an international language, it is getting simpler. Probably, in another generation, these constructions are going to become acceptable. Probably, as Crystal (2002, p.294) says, native speakers will speak two varieties of their own language: "So maybe in a century or so we shall be bilingual in our own language, with our home variety of English co-existing with an English international lingua franca."

This view, however, simplifies what is a highly complex process involving an intricate interplay between language change itself, social, economical and political power, native and non-native speakers' influence and a host of other variables. What those nations that speak English as their mother tongue cannot do is to think that their 'language primacy' makes it unnecessary for them to learn a real foreign language. Otherwise they will end up monolinguals (or bilingual in their own language only) when the whole world, who has to speak this English lingua franca, will be bilingual.

Moreover, it is a fact that by becoming a lingua franca English no longer belong to the native-speaker, as Widdowson (1994, p.385, apud JENKINS, 2000, p.7) says: "The very fact that English is an international language means that no nation can have custody over it. To grant such custody of the language is necessarily to arrest its development and so undermine its international status." Interestingly enough, the *Graddol Report* (Graddol, 2006*)*, commissioned by The British Council, reflects the increasing preoccupation of this institution concerning the future of English. It somehow reminds us of the *Drogheda Report* where everything started.

The implication of this Lingua Franca phenomenon is that English is already being influenced by non-native speakers' pronunciations. In turning into this international language, this process is bound to intensify, rendering considerable changes to this language phonological system.

2.3 - Summary

Throughout this chapter the influences of historical events on the development of the English language were discussed. The main objective was to find the principal languages which provided most of the English vocabulary and the reasons why there is such a discrepancy between English spelling and pronunciation. The major turning points in the development of English were identified: the invasion of the Germanic tribes, the Norman occupation – bringing French words and spelling, the Great Vowel Shift – a major change in pronunciation not followed by spelling, followed by the invention of printing, and the turning of English into an international language.

During the research done it was found out how important for teachers it is to have some knowledge of the history of the English language, to be able to have a deeper understanding of the idiosyncrasies of the language. It is relevant then to point out the need, when doing teacher training courses, to add this subject to the syllabus.

Finally, it would be very important to develop research in this area as it certainly changes our view of the language, and consequently our students'. Not only do we need to be aware that "there is no such a thing as an homogeneous language as each and every language is a heterogeneous set of varieties" (FARACO[25], 2005, p.31) but also that we should regard changes as part of the linguistic process and learn to respect that. By doing so we will be able to have deeper understanding of the linguistic diversity even within our mother language and avoid being prejudiced. Moreover, as in the last quotation of Baugh and Cable (1994, p. 339), when talking about the influence of the Oxford English Dictionary, it will increase our linguistic perspective and teach us to view many questions in a more scientific and less dogmatic way.

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[25] Translated from Portuguese by this researcher: "[…] não existe língua homogênea, toda e qualquer língua é um conjunto heterogêneo de variedades." FARACO (2005, p.31)

CHAPTER 3:   BRIDGING THE PRONUNCIATION GAP

Most pronunciation teaching traditionally tends to be mainly at the segmental level, that is to say, teachers focus on phonemes and their articulation. For a long time pronunciation activities were limited to the teaching of contrast using minimal pairs (e.g. the contrast between *ship* /ʃɪp/ and *sheep* /ʃiːp/) and word stress; as if being able to pronounce words in isolation accurately was all a foreign learner needed to know as far as pronunciation is concerned.

More recently this focus has shifted to some more work at a supra-segmental level, including sentence stress and intonation. Such activities are easily found in modern course books and together with work on phonemes and word stress, comprise the stock-in-trade of English as a Foreign language (EFL) pronunciation teaching. It is the 'whole picture' however, that has been left aside, as little work on the features of connected speech has been done.

To be able to understand the interwoven units of spoken language we need to view the whole picture, understand the relationship between the pieces and then break it down into manageable units. This chapter deals with pronunciation from a 'top-down' approach, starting with the big picture: connected speech and voice setting, going through rhythm, understanding tone units and intonation, followed by weak forms and post-lexical processes, the syllable, and finally phonemes. Going from an overview of the sentence to the phonemes, it points out the most important features of pronunciation that make listening so challenging a task to the foreign learner.

As I will be using phonemic transcription throughout this study, it is important to acknowledge the fact that there are several sets of symbols for identifying English vowels devised by different authors such as A. C. Gimson, Daniel Jones, Victoria Fromkin & Robert Rodman – F&R, John S. Kenyon & Thomas A. Knott, as well as some variations. In my teaching practice and therefore for the subject of this research, I follow the one introduced by the British phonetician A. C. Gimson in *An Introduction to the Pronunciation of English* (1st edition 1962), as seen in table 3.1. This is the one which has been used by most dictionaries, coursebooks, EFL magazines, EFL classroom material, and, as Crystal (2003, p.237) points out: "has been particularly influential in the field of teaching English as a foreign language".

The vowels in	Gimson	Jones	F&R	Variants
sea, feet, me, field	iː	iː	i	
him, big, village, women	ɪ	i	ɪ	ι
get, fetch, head, Thames	e	e	ɛ	
sat, hand, ban, plait	æ	æ	æ	a
sun, son, blood, does	ʌ	ʌ	ʌ	
calm, are, father, car	ɑː	ɑː	a	
dog, lock, swan, cough	ɒ	ɔ	a	
all, saw, cord, more	ɔː	ɔː	ɔ	
put, wolf, good, look	ʊ	u	U	ʊ
soon, do, soup, shoe	uː	uː	u	
bird, her, turn, learn	ɜː	ɜː	ʌ (+r)	ɝ (+r)
the, butter, sofa, about	ə	ə	ə	ɚ (+r)
ape, waist, they, say	eɪ	ei	e	
time, cry, die, high	aɪ	ai	ay	
boy, toy, noise, voice	ɔɪ	ɔi	ɔy	
so, road, toe, know	əʊ	ou	o	
out, how, house, found	aʊ,ɑʊ	au	aw, æw	
deer, here, fierce, near	ɪə	iə	(i + r)	
care, air, bare, bear	eə	ɛə	(ɛ + r)	
poor, sure, tour, lure	ʊə	uə	(u + r)	

Table 3.1: Vowel symbols. *From Crystal (2003, p. 237).*

Another important point to consider is that, for the subject of this study, I worked with phonemic not phonetic transcription. Transcribing phonetically, in spite of the fact that it is much more detailed and thus accurate, is far too complicated for the students to deal with, as it comprises a larger number of symbols as well as diacritic marks[26]. By using a simplified phonemic transcription I am making sure that "the emphasis is on those properties of sounds that are functionally significant in the formation of words and utterances". (KATAMBA, 1989, p.69) Therefore, allophones of phonemes were not taken into consideration, nor were subtle nuances on pronunciation that did not affect the main focus of this study, which is on pronunciation to aid EFL students' listening comprehension.

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[26] Diacritic marks as defined by Roach (2002): "A problem in the use of phonetic symbols is to know how to limit their number: it is always tempting to invent a new symbol for a sound that one encounters. However, since it is undesirable to allow the number of symbols to grow without limit, it is often better to add some modifying mark to an existing symbol, and these marks are called diacritics."

3.1 Connected Speech and Voice Setting

Connected speech is defined here as naturally occurring speech, language that is constructed as it is gradually delivered, "the inescapable fact of the real-time, step-by-step assembly of a spoken utterance" (BRAZIL, 1995, p.17). It is real language in action, it happens when the words run together in a string of spoken language, breaking their boundaries by assimilating, eliding, letting alien sounds intrude, etc; only to turn into the amorphous mass of speaking. This 'blurring' of word frontiers establishes the major differences between spoken and written language.

Taking the following utterance '*I saw him last night at ten past nine*' as an example we can clearly see this distinction:

- Being read aloud (in citation form[27]): aɪ ˈsɔː hɪm lɑːst ˈnaɪt ət ten pɑːst ˈnaɪn.
- Occurring in natural colloquial speech: əˈsɔːwɪm lɑːsˈnaɪ ətempɑːsˈnaɪn.

It is this considerable contrast that most EFL teachers fail to point out. As a result of such neglect, students' view of language tends to be focused on its written form only. As Crystal states:

> […] this is the result of being brainwashed by years of thinking of language as *written* language. […] Changes in pronunciation are inevitable when we start to speed up our speech, and run words together. As we begin to speak a word, we use our vocal organs to make the first sound, but already our brain is planning how to make the second sound, and the third. This planning may be so advanced, in fact, that the brain may already have sent signals to the vocal organs telling them to get ready for these later sounds. (CRYSTAL, 2002, p.56)

The phonological processes that are the result of such rapid changes of the vocal organs are: assimilation – when a sound changes because of the proximity of another sound; elision – the disappearance of sounds; vowel shortening; liaison, linking and intrusive sounds; and juncture, among others. These post-lexical processes are bound to occur in both formal and informal unscripted speech. The main difference between those two spoken registers are the lexical choice and the 'intensity', because informal speech tends to be less careful thus rendering more

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[27] The closest we have to the written form of language.

simplifications. This is so, because such processes are automatic, working on a subconscious level[28].

The rate of delivery of the utterance, as one may expect, surely affects this fluidity of speech. Nevertheless, according to Shockey (2003) other factors influence casual speech reduction, namely:

- Frequency - the more frequent a word is the less it is needed to be clarified phonetically, to achieve communication status;

- Discourse – first mentions or focal mentions of a lexical item tend to be given a more complete articulation than its following repetitions;

- Syntactic functions – pronouns often show more reductions than nouns; short, frequent function words (of, and) are more likely to be shortened than longer ones (moreover, nevertheless) ;

- Morphological classes – in some dialects the morphological class of a word affects its realization;

It should be added to this, the pronunciation of chunks, which are lexical items, "socially sanctioned independent units" (LEWIS, 1994, p.90), that could be made of one or lots of words together – thus belong to discourse. Such expressions are used so often that their individual parts sometimes have got absolutely lost in its pronunciation form, having turned into an 'unintelligible' amorphous amount of phonemes.

Taking for instance the set phrase: *Do you know what I mean?* /dəʊ ju ˈnəʊ wɒt aɪ ˈmiːn/ ?*, which in rapid colloquial speech would be something like: /dʒə ˈnəʊ wɒə ˈmiːn/?. It is possible, and it happens so often, that due to its formulaic familiar nature, and sometimes due to the high level of frequency particular speakers use it, that such an expression turns into this: /ˈnəʊəˈmɪn/?. Leaving the non-native speaker completely at a loss, unless he/she has this expression in their repertoire, and knows its pronunciation as a chunk. Certainly, by using some of the principles of the Lexical Approach[29], teachers will be helping students to unveil many obscurities in the language.

In spite of the fact that a more thorough investigation into those factors aforementioned is called for, this study concentrates only on the phonological

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[28] For Spencer's definition of post-lexical processes (1996, p.201), see page 1, footnote 1.
[29] See Chapter 5 for that.

processes, the so-called automatic ones. Such processes, together with the influence of contractions, word and sentence stress, and intonation contours is dealt with in more detail later on in this chapter.

Raising students' awareness of these processes should be one of the aims of the teacher when teaching pronunciation. What students need, is to be able to communicate using fairly understandable pronunciation, their active production should be at a level where they are able to make themselves understood even if they can only utter careful colloquial speech. As for passive production, their standards need to be higher as they should be able to understand rapid colloquial speech.

Together with the idea of connected speech it is important to acknowledge the significance of voice setting[30]. By showing students that, unlike English, Portuguese is a language that happens more in the head than in the chest and that English do not have our nasals and it is more open-throated, chest resonant, we are somehow helping them to set their voicing at the correct place.

McCarthy (1996, p.90), emphasizes the importance of students' awareness of such features saying that they "are largely ignored in present-day teaching materials, but advice to learners on the typical settings of the speech organs that give each language its unique character when heard can help to improve the overall sound of the learner's performance."

Certainly, teachers should not get so technical as to try to make students attempt to find the native speaker's placement of voice with much accuracy, or to behave as if it was possible to be so mathematical about it. What really matters here is that students notice that languages are different, and that trying to find where the English accents come from in their own vocal tracts, will help them understand those features better.

3.2 Rhythm and intonation

The English language overall rhythm is dictated by the placement of the

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[30] For some exercises on voice-setting, see chapter 6, section 6.2.1., Meeting 5.

nuclear stress, which holds the principal change of pitch[31], and an alternation of stressed and unstressed syllables. Stressed being louder, longer, and with a higher pitch (thus more prominent) than the unstressed. The result is that stressed syllables tend to be clearer and are realized in their full phonetic value, that is to say, they are pronounced more comprehensibly, whereas unstressed ones are shortened and tend to have a more obscure overall quality. This characteristic is common to each and every variety of L1 English.

Because of that, English tends to be called a stress-timed language as opposed to syllable-timed Portuguese. This division is a rather controversial issue that creates different opinions among experts. The idea of a stress–timed language comes from the belief that those languages follow some patterns that reoccur in established intervals of time. To understand it better, we need to divide the utterance into syllables and from them, group in blocks of a stressed one together with the following unstressed one. Each block, called a tone unit, contains one complete pitch pattern, which defines the musicality of the language, dictating its rhythm.

E.g. – [*This* is the] [*girl* that] [*John*] [*kissed* this] [*morning*]

            1   *2*   *3*   *4*

No matter how many beats a tone unit has, when the utterance is spoken they are squeezed in or stretched out so that they occur in the same time span, rendering a homogeneous rhythm. As for syllable-timed languages, the syllables dictate the rhythm as they have regular length in spite of being stressed or unstressed. Nevertheless, according to McCarthy (1996, p.91): "While this distinction may correspond to some strongly felt perception of the different characteristic rhythms of languages, there is little hard instrumental evidence for it. In fact, in recent years, quite a lot of convincing counter-evidence has been presented."

As a matter of fact, research in the area shows that the so-called stress-timed languages are not more rhythmical than the syllable-stressed ones. This feeling of 'rhythmicality' that the English language evokes may be due to the fact that one of its distinctive features is the contrast between stressed and unstressed syllables.

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[31] Underhill explains pitch (1994, p.76) as such: "The vocal chords vibrate during speech. This vibration is heard, and the pitch of this sound varies according to the frequency of the vibration of the cords: the higher the frequency of vibration the higher the pitch that you hear. When you sing a pitch or note you usually hold it for a time before jumping or sliding to the next note. But in speech the pitch of your voice varies continuously so that your speech is not heard as a tune. This pitch variation extends over single phonemes, sequences of phonemes, and whole utterances."

As for language teaching, the teaching of rhythm has dominated some methods and approaches, and in spite of the fact that English has been proved not to be as stress-timed as one would like it to be, this idea of rhythm does help learners understand better the musicality of this language. This is particularly helpful when trying to make students understand the ups and downs of stressed and unstressed syllables contrasting to the more linear rhythm of Portuguese.

Having said that, it is necessary to point out the fact that, classroom exercises that make students repeat patterns in order to maintain the same beat through tone units, can neither help the production nor the understanding of naturally connected speech. This practice may have evolved from reading aloud texts or uncontextualised stretches of speech so common in the majority of methods and approaches of language teaching. Once again, there is the use of the written language trying to reflect the spoken one.

When 'natural' language takes over[32], English does not sound as rhythmical as it is when read aloud or in those carefully chosen stretches of language. McCarthy (1996, p.94), says that "forcing learners to indulge in artificially 'cramming' stressed and unstressed syllables into a regular rhythm may take their attention away from the genuinely interactive aspect of stress, not least the *speakers' choice* as to what is to be stressed and what not."

Such exercises give the false idea that tone units can contain only one stressed item. If we go back to the previous example and compare it to how this utterance would be chunked in spoken language:

E.g. – [*This is the] [girl that] [John] [kissed this] [morning]*

      1   *2*   *3*   *4*   *5*

     [*This is the girl] [that John kissed] [this morning]*

         1   *2*   *3*

We can see that it has three tone units only. As Brazil (2001, p.8) says "The basic building block of speech is the **tone unit**. Each tone unit of ordinary speech has either **one** or **two prominent syllables**. The last prominent syllable in each tone is also a **tonic syllable**." This idea of tone units by chunking language is of utmost importance to enable students to begin to notice the rhythm of the language.

Grasping the rhythm of a language is one of the most difficult tasks one is

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[32] See the Lexical Approach – Chapter 5, for some references towards natural produced language (descriptive), and book language (prescriptive).

faced with when trying to learn a foreign language. Interestingly enough, it is the first feature we, as babies, even before being able to utter whole words, acquire in our mother tongue. The intonation patterns of our L1 work on such a subconscious level that it is very difficult to explain it. That is perhaps the reason why there is a great tendency among language learners to transfer L1 rhythmic patterns to the target language. According to Cruz-Ferreira (1989, p.24, apud Jenkins 2000, p.43) intonation is 'the last stronghold' of a foreign accent.

A baby knows nothing about language, understands nothing about the semantic value of words, but responds to it as if he/she could understand it somehow. It is how we say it, not what we say that really matters; how we change the pitch of our voice to better convey our message. As we grow up and start getting to grips with the idiosyncrasies of our mother tongue, we realize that word meaning depends on the way we say it, that is intonation.

3.2.1 Word and Sentence Stress

When we talk about intonation two things arise: word stress and sentence stress, together they dictate the rhythm of the language. Word stress or accent is defined by the language and therefore is totally out of the control of the speaker. Changing word stress will only make his/her words incomprehensible and break the communicative flow. In fact that is one of the main sources of comprehensibility break down. Cognates can sometimes be the cause of misunderstandings, especially when the placement of stress in L1 differs from the one in L2. The result is a word which is highly comprehensible in written form but an otherwise total mystery when heard by a non-native speaker produced by a native one or vice-versa.

The importance of the placement of correct word stress for L1 English receivers cannot be overstated. In fact, according to Jenkins (2000, p.40) recent research suggests that "these speakers from childhood onwards identify words in the first place through their stress patterns, and are therefore thrown badly off course in interpreting messages with misplaced stress."

As for sentence stress, it is defined by the speaker's choice depending on what message he/she wants to convey, this is called prominence and it is

responsible for the major part of the rhythm as it holds the main intonation change. This pitch change happens in the nuclear stressed syllable. This syllable is the one which holds the most important information for the message of the utterance, the main focus of the tone unit. Shockey (2003, p.16) describes English as a 'topic-comment' language, that is "the old information comes first, followed by the new." Thus, the nuclear stress tends to fall towards the end of the utterance. This triggers another phenomenon which affects connected speech: the beginning of the utterance, not carrying the nuclear stress, tends to be spoken more quickly and less clearly than the end.

3.2.2   Weak Forms

One cannot talk about stress without mentioning weak forms. They are the most unstressed part of the utterance: function words such as articles, auxiliary verbs, prepositions, etc. They are words which do not carry content information, they might as well be left out like the ones excluded in old-fashioned telegrams. In spite of that, the majority of students tend to give full value to those words, producing some spoken language that sounds formal and sometimes stilted. Moreover, they expect spoken language to do the same and end up lost when familiar words sound alien as they lose their strength.

Students need to be made aware of them and thus train their brains not to expect much of them in the fluidity of connected speech. They also need to know that they can get back their strength in certain situations. Roach (1998, p.103) mentions a set of simple rules to account for those special occasions when the strong form is used:

1. Most prepositions when they occur at the end of a sentence.

    E.g. WEAK - I'm looking <u>for</u> the book. /fə/

    STRONG - What are you looking <u>for</u>?   /fɔː/ as opposed to, for instance, what are you looking at? – We can clearly see, in this case, that the preposition's role changed, instead of being just a linking element within the

sentence it became a content one, because changing prepositions would change the meaning of the utterance.

This does not happen with pronouns, unless it carries important information.

E.g. WEAK – I saw <u>him</u> yesterday. /ɪm/

WEAK - Where did you see <u>him</u>?   /ɪm/

STRONG - I didn't mean <u>him</u>, I meant <u>her</u>?   /hɪm/

2. When a weak-form word is being contrasted with another word.

E.g. The present is <u>from</u> him, not <u>to</u> him. /frɒm/ and /tuː/

This case is similar to the first one, as the prepositions carry content.

3. When a weak-form word is emphasized.

That is the case of pronouns in example 1 above.

4. When a weak-form word is being 'cited' or 'quoted'.

E.g. You should write '<u>to</u>' here. /tuː/

5. Weak-form words which begin with 'h' (e.g. 'her', 'have'), do not lose the /h/ when at the beginning of a sentence, as it happens so often in other contexts.

E.g. <u>Her</u> house is near here. /hə/

I saw <u>her </u>last night. /ə/

This process triggers vowel as well as diphthong reduction, they tend to be shortened if they are unstressed in the sentence. As a diphthong is made up of two vowels, they also suffer some changes, and in some cases their vowels lose so much in quality that they turn into a monophthong.

Much more than including this feature in their own speech, students need to recognize weak forms, as failure to acknowledge them in connected speech is bound to cause communication breakdown. In fact it is one of the main sources that lead to incomprehensibility in spoken language.

3.3 Post-Lexical Processes[33]

There is a close relationship between words in a string of speech: they influence each other, conjoin to become almost one single word, let intrusive sounds come between them, reduce length, get stressed, elide the last sound of others, interacting to form the fluid mass of spoken language. This relationship is somehow dictated by post-lexical processes which are automatic, entirely triggered by phonological structure. Such processes are: assimilation, elision, vowel reduction, liaison, linking and intrusive sounds, and juncture. They are mostly responsible for the problems students face when trying to understand spoken language, especially when two or three of them happen at the same time, something that is bound to occur very frequently.

Teachers do not need to get too technical so as to make students memorize each and every one, but it is part of the teacher's role to raise students' awareness of those phenomena in the spoken language. By doing so, they are able to recognize those processes in the fluidity of speech, thus improving their listening skills.

3.3.1 Assimilation

This happens when sounds modify the quality of a neighboring phoneme transforming it in their similar. It affects principally consonants and happens at word boundaries. Assimilation can be regressive, when the sound that suffers the modification comes first, and progressive, when it comes after. This post-lexical process occurs because, in order to produce the fluidity of colloquial speech, to keep up with the pace of word production, the speech organs change place and/or manner of articulation so fast, that not having finished one sound completely it is already moving to the following one. Thus the changes it triggers are of place and manner of articulation, and devoicing (a voiced sound becomes voiceless).

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[33] I did not mention some of these processes such as aspiration, clear/dark /l/, retroflection, among others, because they do not influence much intelligibility as far as listening comprehension is concerned.

Some examples of assimilation taken from Underhill (1994 p. 60-61):

1. Changes in the place of articulation:
   - /t/, /d/, /n/ (alveolar) at the end of a word assimilate the place of articulation of the consonant at the beginning of the following word:

     * Before /p/, /b/ and /m/ they can become bilabial:

     In bed - /ɪn bed/ ⟶ /ɪmbed/

     * /d/ (alveolar) can change to /g/ (velar):

     good girl - /gʊd gɜːl/ ⟶ /gʊggɜːl/
   - /s/ (alveolar) can change to /ʃ/ (postalveolar) and /z/ (alveolar) can change to /ʒ/ (postalveolar) when /ʃ/ begins the next syllable.

     this shop - /ðɪs ʃɒp/ ⟶ /ðɪʃʃɒp/

     these shops - /ði:z ʃɒps/ ⟶ /ði:ʒʃɒps/

2. Changes in the manner of articulation:
   - /d/ and /j/ can coalesce to make a less plosive sound, the affricate /dʒ/:

     how d'you do - /haʊ djʊ du:/ ⟶ /haʊdʒʊdu:/

3. Devoicing:
   - /t/ and /j/ can coalesce to make the voiceless affricate /tʃ/:

   don't you know - /dəʊnt jʊ nəʊ/ ⟶ /dəʊntʃə nəʊ/

   Such phenomena (/d/ and /j/, and /t/ and /j/ turning to the affricates /dʒ/ and /tʃ/) often occur "when a verb, an auxiliary, a question word, or a negative particle are followed by 'you' or 'yet' (for example, 'can't you', 'should you', 'where did you', […], etc). Phrases such as these are extremely common in everyday, colloquial speech." DALTON and SEIDLHOFER (1994, p.117).
   - /v/ becomes a voiceless /f/ influenced by the voiceless /t/:

     have to go - /hæv tə gəʊ/ ⟶ /hæftəgəʊ/

   Assimilation happens automatically in the connected speech of native speakers. Failure to assimilate, because of stress misplacement as well as too many speaker's pauses, produces a rather artificial speech and, as Underhill (1994, p.61)

says, "…can inhibit the use of English rhythm and intonation patterns, leading to a loss of both fluency and clarity of meaning". This is bound to happen when there is misplacement of stress in the utterance. Messing with stress changes phonological boundaries, where the process is blocked.

3.3.2 Elision

This process occurs when sounds are deleted or *elided*. It is more common with consonant cluster. However, it also happens with vowels in weak syllables in informal speech. This is the result of the speech organs finding shortcuts not to block the flow of speech. The implication in listening comprehension, because of the strain it puts on the listener, is enormous. It is the sound that should be but it is not there that confuses the students. Taking, for instance, wanna (want to), and gonna (going to), they are examples of elision that were acknowledged in the written form.
Some of the most common cases, in informal connected speech, are:

1. Vowels

    Words like *c'rrect*, t'night, t'day, *p'lice*, p'haps, *t'mato*, p'tato, tend to lose their first vowels when in fast c'nnected speech.

2. Consonant clusters:

    According to Underhill (1994, p.61) "It is mainly /t/ and /d/ that are elided in English, particularly when they are between two other consonants."

    next week - /ne**kst** ˈwiːk/ ⟶ /ne**ks**ˈwiːk/

    I don't know - /ai dəʊ**nt** ˈnəʊ/ ⟶ /aidəʊˈnəʊ/

    I can't go - /ai kaː**nt** ˈgəʊ/ ⟶ /aikaːˈ**n**ˈgəʊ/

    In this specific case the negative sounds like the positive utterance, students need to know that /ai kaːn ˈgəʊ/ in fast connected speech is negative, in the positive form the auxiliary verb suffers vowel reduction turning into a weak form /ai kən ˈgəʊ/.

    bed and breakfast - /bed **end** ˈbrekfəst/ ⟶ /ˈbedənˈbrekfəst/

    banned for life - /bænd **fɔː** ˈlaɪf/ ⟶ /ˈbæmfəˈlaɪf/

From the last three examples it is noticeable that those post-lexical features most of the time occur concomitantly. In the last example there are assimilation (/n/ turns into /m/), elision (/d/ disappears), and vowel shortening (/ɔː/ becomes /ə/). These phenomena certainly add to the listener feeling of helplessness if he/she is not aware of them.

3. Syllables
Sometimes whole syllables are deleted, especially when there is a repeated consonant in the word. This is quite common in some words in the British variety of English.

E.g. secretary - /sekrəterɪ/ ⟶ /sekrətrɪ/

3.3.3 Liaison

Liaison is when, as the name suggests, we link words or when an alien sound is introduced to smooth the connection between words in connected speech. The most common are the intrusive or linking /r/ and intrusive /w/ or /j/. The implication when one fails to produce such feature in connected speech, is that he/she may sound rather 'bumpy', as words pile up without running in conjunction. This affects considerably the placement of sentence stress which may cause communication breakdown and unnecessary strain at the part of the listener.

As for listening comprehension implications, failure to acknowledge this feature, may result in misunderstanding of words when they link together forming a different sound:

1. Intrusive and linking /r/
In non-rhotic[34] varieties of the English language /r/ is not pronounced when followed by a consonant – far from here - /faː frəmhɪə/ but the opposite happens when it precedes a vowel – far away - /faːrəweɪ/.

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[34] Unlike American English, which is rhotic , thus pronouncing all /r/ sounds that appear in written form.

2. Intrusive /w/ or /j/.

According to Underhill:

> Intrusive /w/ follows a final /uː/ or a diphthong ending in /ʊ/, where the next word begins with a vowel sound. This is because /uː/ and /ʊ/ have lip rounding and form the starting point for the bilabial semi-vowel /w/.
> E. g. you are - /juː w aː/
>   Go off - /gəʊ w ɒf/
> Intrusive /j/ follows a final /iː/ or a diphthong ending in /ɪ/, where the next word begins with a vowel sound. This is because /iː/ and /ɪ/ form the starting point for the semi-vowel /j/.
> E. g. he is - /hiː j ɪz/   they are - /ðeɪ j aː/
> UNDERHILL (1994, p.67)

3.4 Syllables

Unlike the syllables in Portuguese, English syllables are not as easy to identify. Firstly, we cannot split words without knowing its phonemic transcription. Secondly, even if we do know, sometimes there is more than one possibility. Trying to teach students to identify accurately the syllables in a word, is counterproductive and of no immediate benefit. However, they need to know that this process is different in Portuguese and they cannot use their L1 assumptions when trying to do so.

Taking as an instance the word *life*, a Brazilian would certainly split it into two syllables *li-fe*, when in fact /laif/ has only one, as we can see in figure 7 below:

Figure 7: Syllable structure.

As we can see in Figure 7, syllables are divided in two parts: the onset and the rhyme. The latter contains the core of the syllable called nucleus, this is the only part that is obligatory in the syllable. It works as the peak and "is usually a vowel but it can be a syllabic consonant as in bottle [bɔtl] or [bʌtn]." (SPENCER, 1996, p.38) The nucleus is the head of the syllable which exists because of it. The consonants that come before the nucleus are part of the onset, and after the nucleus they belong to the coda. A syllable without coda is called open as opposed to closed syllables, the ones which have coda.

Some post-lexical processes are syllable-based such as aspiration, approximant devoicing, clear/dark /l/, retroflection, among others. As aforementioned, they were not dealt with in this study because they do not influence the stream of speech as much as the ones worked with in this study, namely assimilation elision and liaison.

What students need to know concerning syllables, is that their structure is deeply linked to its phonemes and that looking at graphemes in order to find out how many syllables a word has can be rather misleading.

3.5 Sounds

This overview of English phonology, going from the big picture towards its bits and pieces, leads us to this final stop: the sounds. Unfortunately, this is where most pronunciation teaching takes place, only occasionally venturing to more 'complex' issues such as word stress and sometimes intonation. Segmental phonology, that is to say, the teaching of vowel and consonant phonemes should be restricted to clarifying some of the differences and similarities the target language has with the students' mother tongue. Enabling students to recognize those symbols and understand the differences between the target language phonological system and their L1.

Besides that, it should function as a means to help students understand connected speech through phonemic transcription, thus being able to 'see' spoken language. Lingering on exercises that concentrate on identifying single phonemes or

the contrast of minimal pairs, takes up too much of precious classroom time that should be used to focus on more relevant issues like phrasal phonology.

Therefore, the next section neither describes the details of the articulation of consonants or vowels (such information is easily found) nor does any work on minimal pairs or individual phonemes. It focuses on the similarities between the sounds of the Portuguese and the English language, singling out the main problems Brazilian students might have when dealing with them.

3.5.1 Vowels

When trying to present the vowel phonemes, the first barrier to break is to make students understand that although we normally work with five vowels in written language, when we move to the spoken one, this number grows considerably as it reaches twelve in the English language, not taking into account the differences in regional accent. Crystal (2003, p.237) states that "A good example of the speech-writing difference is the way we have to re-think the idea that 'there are five vowels' when we begin to discuss speech."

The twelve English vowel phonemes, together with the eight diphthongs, are represented, in phonemic transcription, by the following IPA symbols:

iː	ɪ	ʊ	uː	ɪə	eɪ	
e	ə	ɜː	ɔː	ʊə	ɔɪ	əʊ
æ	ʌ	ɑː	ɒ	eə	aɪ	aʊ

Table 3.2 – English vowel phonemes. *From Underhill (1994, p.viii)*

Taking advantage of the culture of the written language dominating the spoken one, as well as the help of the students' L1, one can compare the English vowel phonemes with the Portuguese vowel graphemes (see table 3.3). By doing so, teachers are giving some ground to the students to fall back on for support, which will help them have a fairly quick understanding of those sounds.

VOWEL GRAPHEMES	ENGLISH VOWEL PHONEMES (12)		
a	ʌ (short)	ɑː (long)	
	æ (a mixture between A and E) (open your mouth as if you are going to say A and say E instead)		
e	e (short) (similar to the **e** in caf**é**)	ə (short) (similar to the **e** in beb**ê**)	ɜː (long)
i	ɪ (short)	iː (long)	
o	ɒ (short)	ɔː (long)	
u	ʊ (short)	uː (long)	

Table 3.3: Vowel graphemes x English vowel phonemes[35]

The twelve English vowel phonemes (see Figure 8) differ in quality depending on the position of the tongue – front, central or back (horizontally), and high, mid or low (vertically), and the position of the lips – rounded neutral or spread. They also differ in length – the vowels can be short or long.

In spite of being aware that, apart from /ə/ and /ɜː/[36], long and short vowels differ not only in length but also slightly in quality (Figure 8), for the sake of simplification, I considered length the only distinctive feature between each set of vowels that resemble the same sounds of the vowel graphemes: a, e, i, o and u.

Figure 8: English vowel phonemes position.

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[35] This table together with 3.3 and a more complete Table 3.4 were handed out to the students for reference during the course. For this students' version and the coloured version to be fixed on the board for reference during the lessons, see Appendix B.
[36] /ə/ and /ɜː/ have the same vowel quality differing only in length.

Figure 8 (continuation): English vowel phonemes position.

As this contrast of short and long vowels does not exist in Brazilian Portuguese, there is a great tendency among Brazilian students to mispronounce words when the most important distinctive feature is vowel length. This may cause problems in an array of words, hence this fact should be teachers' main concern when teaching vowels.

E.g. Brazilians are bound to substitute them for a longer one.

- /liːv/ - leave for /lɪv/ - live;
- /kɒt/ - cot for /kɔːt/ - caught;   /fʊl/ - full for /fuːl/ - fool;

By showing students that the process of shortening a vowel, naturally changes the tongue position slightly, teachers can help them to get closer to the correct sound. If we look at the vowel boxes on Figure 8, we can clearly see that from front to back tongue position, starting for instance with the phoneme /iː/ and going straight without stopping the air flow to the phoneme /uː/, we are certain to produce the short sounds /ɪ/ and /ʊ/ which are in between.

The same happens to the other vowels:

- from /e/ to /ɔ:/ we go past /ə/ and /ɜ:/,
- from /æ/ to /ɒ/ we go past /ʌ/ and /ɑ:/.

If students are made to feel the difference in position in their own vocal tract, they are bound to understand better the distinction between vowel phonemes in English.

3.5.2 Consonants

The English consonant phonemes, unlike the vowels, are closer in number (24) to the consonants in the written alphabet (21). Although, at first glance they seem too many to memorize, once we look at them closer we realize that when comparing to Portuguese consonants, less than ten are alien to us (Figure 9).

b	d	f	g		k	l	m	n	p		s	t	v		z
			h						r						
			j										w		
	ð					ŋ		θ		tʃ	ʃ	ʒ	dʒ		

Figure 9: English consonant phonemes (24)

▢ Phonemes which are identical to Portuguese.

The only problem for Brazilian speakers of the dialect of the South of Brazil, is the realization of the phonemes /t/ and /d/ when they are followed by /ɪ/. In this variety of Brazilian Portuguese these phonemes are realized as /tʃ/ and /dʒ/ which may cause some difficulty as it produces minimal pairs.

E.g. /tʃɪn/ *chin* for / tɪn/- *tin*; /dʒɪm/ - *Jim* for /dɪm/ - *dim*;

I did not acknowledge this problem in the table above because most of my students speak the Northern dialect, which produces the plosives /t/ and /d/ similarly to English (not considering the aspiration allophone /tʰ/).

■ Phonemes which are often confused by Portuguese speakers.

/h/ x /r/ - In English the glottal fricative /h/ is equivalent to the sound of the words that start with the grapheme r in Portuguese.

E.g. The word rock - /rɔːk/ in English is usually mispronounced by Brazilian Portuguese speakers as hawk - /hɔːk/; red - /red/ as head - /hed/; rose - /rəʊz/ as hose - /həʊz/; rat - /ræt/ as hat - /hæt/ and many others.

Asking students to say the Portuguese tongue-twister 'O rato roeu a roupa do rei de Roma' and 'Rio de Janeiro' trying to put on an English accent, helps them understand that the way different languages realize the same alphabetic letter do play an important role.

/hatʊ/ = *rato* pronounced by a Brazilian speaker.

/ratʊ/ = *rato* pronounced by an English native speaker, trying to speak Portuguese.

■ Phonemes which may cause some confusion because they do not correspond to those graphemes.

In Portuguese, the grapheme j is realized as the voiced palatal fricative /ʒ/, so in phonemic transcription students tend to mispronounce it. For instance, Brazilian students have no problem in pronouncing the word *yellow* when they read it in a text, however when it appears in phonemic transcription: /jeləʊ/ tends to be pronounced /ʒeləʊ/.

As for the bilabial glide /w/, although it is mostly pronounced in Portuguese as a voiced labiodental fricative /v/, it does not cause too much trouble. One reason why Brazilians do not have problems with it, in spite of first language interference, is that we are familiar with a great number of English loan words in Portuguese, especially names such as William, Wellington, Washington among others.

■ Phonemes whose phonetic symbols are new to learn but not all of the sounds are alien to Portuguese.

In spite of the fact that neither the voiced palatal fricative /ʒ/ nor the voiceless /ʃ/ correspond to any letter of our alphabet, these phonemes are part of

our phonological repertoire. Therefore they are only new symbols of familiar sounds. The affricates /dʒ/ and /tʃ/ do not represent any problem once students have grasped the palatal fricatives aforementioned.

As far as phonemic transcription is concerned, they are trouble-free, however when appearing at the beginning of words in written form they are mispronounced. That is to say, in English, when the letter j occurs at the beginning of words it is realized as the affricate /dʒ/; whereas in Portuguese as the voiced palatal fricative /ʒ/ so students tend to mispronounce such words.

E.g. /ʒɔb/ for /dʒɔb/ - *job*;   /ʒʌst/ for /dʒʌst/- *just*.

Nevertheless, as there is not a word in English starting with the grapheme j that is realized as the voiced palatal fricative /ʒ/ contrasting with the affricate /dʒ/, this Brazilian tendency to mispronounce such words does not produce any kind of misunderstanding.

As for the affricate /tʃ/ which is realized in words that bear the consonant cluster ch, the Brazilian tendency to pronounce it as the voiceless palatal fricative /ʃ/, is a source of communication breakdown because this realization in English is typical of the consonant cluster sh. This two realizations produce minimal pairs which could cause misunderstandings.

E.g. /ʃeə/ *share* for /tʃeə/- *chair*; /ʃuːz/ - *shoes* for /tʃuːz/ - choose;

In these cases the influence of the native language when producing sounds whose alphabetical correspondence is not identical to the target language (as it is also in the case of the glottal fricative /h/) is clear. Students need to be constantly reminded that any word starting with *j* and *ch* in written form should be pronounced /dʒ/ and /tʃ/ respectively.

The velar nasal /ŋ/ is considered difficult by Brazilian students, difficulty that is soon overcome when they realize that this is pronounced as an /n/ bringing the tongue a bit backwards as if we are going to swallow it. That automatically changes the tongue from the alveolar position to the velar one.

As Portuguese speakers have neither /θ/ nor /ð/ in their repertoire, these phonemes are, very frequently, a source of problems, as they are substituted by their closest sound in Portuguese (hence their position in the table: just below those sounds).

- The voiced interdental fricative /ð/ becomes the voiced alveolar stop /d/ which is closest in position to this sound. In both cases the soft palate is raised, but when pronouncing /ð/ the tongue tip protrudes between upper and lower teeth whereas when pronouncing /d/, closure is made by the tongue blade against the alveolar ridge.

    E.g. day /deɪ/ for they /ðeɪ/.

- The voiceless interdental fricative /θ/ tends to be realized by Portuguese speakers in three different ways depending on the speakers' perception:

/θ/ becomes the voiceless alveolar stop /t/ when the speaker's attention is directed to the way the word is spelt, as most words in English that bear this sound are spelt *th.* E.g. tree /trɪː/ for three /θrɪː/, tent /tent/ for tenth /tenθ/

/θ/ becomes the voiceless labiodental fricative /f/ or the voiceless alveolar fricative /s/ when the speaker's attention is directed to the way the word sounds, as these are the closest sounds we have in our repertoire.

    E.g. free /frɪː/ or /srɪː/ for three /θrɪː/;

        sought /sɔːt/ or fought /fɔːt/ for thought /θɔːt/.

    One way to help students pronounce this phoneme more accurately is to show them that it is a kind of 'official lisp'. People who have this speech fault substitute the /s/ for /θ/, and it is very easy to imitate that.

3.6 Summary

    Throughout this chapter we have been looking at some processes that render written language so different from the spoken one. We have seen how language is simplified in connected speech, and the importance of stress, intonation and rhythm to understanding and to be made understood orally. We also made it clear that words may be different when its pronunciation as an isolated word is compared to the one in connected speech.

    We have also singled out the most important phonological processes that transform spoken language into the amorphous mass of connected speech, finding

out what makes listening comprehension so difficult as far as pronunciation features are concerned.

We now point out to the necessity, from the very beginning of the language course, to teach students those idiosyncrasies of the spoken language. As Brazil (1995, p.21) says: 'Since speakers do put their speech together piecemeal and in real time, we might expect to get closer to an understanding of what language is like for the user (as opposed to the sentence grammarian) if we take this into account from the outset".

The teaching of phrasal phonology should be included in the syllabus, and given the same status as the teaching of grammar and lexis. For, being aware of those processes enables learners to reach a better understanding of how language really works. Moreover, such processes are, in general, regular and predictable.

CHAPTER 4:   ANALYSING THE LISTENING SKILL

In this chapter the importance of aspects such as pre and post-listening activities or the integration of skills, or the need for raising students' interest to give them a reason to listen, or the elaboration of listening exercises, are not discussed. Although I acknowledge the significance of such aspects towards successful listening, the aim of this chapter is to focus on what listening comprehension is, and what makes it difficult.

This chapter concentrates mainly on the first stage of listening, which is the auditory perception of the tone units in the string of speech. The listener's ability to somehow disentangle those units and make sense of them, filling the gaps that are left out by the speaker who gives more prominence to certain elements of the utterance, leaving a trace of amorphous speech for the listener to decode.

That is the fundamental basis of comprehension, because if one is not able to cope with simplifications and the ups and downs of weak and strong syllables in the fluidity of connected speech, even if only to understand the gist, one will not manage to move on to decoding meaning, thus communicating successfully. This is very well illustrated by Brown:

> Three people were on a train to England. As they approached what appeared to be Wemberly Station, one of the travellers said, "Is this Wemberly?" "No", replied a second passenger, "it's Thursday". Whereupon the third person remarked, "Oh, I am too, let's have a drink! (BROWN, 1994, p.233)

Having said that, it is important to point out that I believe in the teaching of pronunciation from a top-down approach, that is to say, starting with the big picture of connected speech to understand spoken language as a whole, and then going down until we get to sounds. The priority here is to enable students to cope with the fluidity of spoken language by analyzing it as blocks, not as individual phonemes or isolated words.

4.1 What listening comprehension is

In real life there are basically two kinds of listening as Doff (1993, p. 198) points out: 'casual' or 'focussed' listening. In the former, we do not listen very closely and do not have any specific reason to do so. Thus, our attention span varies depending on what is being said. If it interests us, we concentrate more, otherwise we just skim through what is being said for the gist. This is the kind of comprehension we get when we are chatting to a friend or listening to the radio, or the television while doing something else. As for the latter, we listen with a purpose and therefore concentrate on the important information we want to get from it. We scan through what is being said to suit our purposes, be it for communication or to retain some important information.

In both cases we go through two stages in our way to understanding the message: the physical aspect, or auditory perception and the cognitive aspect or linguistic processing[37]. Those stages happen almost simultaneously, because in the process of listening, there is not much time to process information as the flow of new speech acts keeps coming.

Such stages require as much of the listener's active performance as the speakers. Thus, we cannot call the listening skill a receptive skill only. It is the listener's active processing of information that makes him/her understand the spoken language.

4.1.1 Auditory Perception

Although the act of listening takes place fairly quickly, it goes through some stages: first the utterance is taken in by the listener and organized into chunks which remain in the 'echoic' memory for no more than a second. Following that, this raw material which has been roughly 'processed', is stored in the short-term memory. At this point, if the listener had not been able to segment the speech into meaningful

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[37] 'Auditory perception' and 'linguistic processing' are terms used by Rost (1990, p.33)

chunks, he/she may not manage to take in the next piece of information that comes right after that.

This segmentation of chunks is aided by the listener's knowledge of the structure of the language, lexical range, and familiarity with the ways these chunks are pronounced in spoken language. As Rost explains:

> Listeners who anticipate hearing ideal pronunciations of words will have considerable difficulty in decoding connected speech since **all phonemes change their perceptual features in different phonetic environments**. As such, any ideal phoneme is an unrealistic standard against which to match heard forms. (ROST, 1999, p.38)

This is one of the major sources of oral communication breakdown, when students are expecting to hear the words as if read aloud from a written text. As students' expectations do not match what is actually uttered, there is a battle between their knowledge of the language, which is based on the written form, and the spoken language that is being produced. This continual battle prevents students from understanding, rendering frustration and demotivation. The listening comprehension process is thus blocked before it can be analyzed for the gist or specific information and transferred to the long-term memory.

This process of analyzing information when it is only raw material in the short term memory is aided or hindered by the listener's ability to recognize chunks of language. As Underwood (1993, p.2) says: "As the learner gets more used to listening, and has at the same time learned more of the language, he/she can process some often-heard chunks more or less automatically, thus leaving 'space' and energy to deal with the more difficult or less familiar input."

That is when the main principle of the Lexical Approach comes into play: language is not produced from scratch, we are not as creative as we tend to think. We use a wide range of formulaic set expressions to communicate. By raising students' awareness of those expressions, as well as the way they are pronounced in connected speech, we are equipping students with powerful tools to be better listeners.

Another essential factor to take into account is that throughout the process of listening comprehension, we 'hear' much more than it is actually there, specially those formulaic expressions, some of which, being so often uttered, have become an

amorphous mass that we successfully make out only because we understand the context and know in advance that they would be appropriate there. Therefore, after hearing /ˈnəʊəˈmɪn/, we are able to fill in the pronunciation gaps and believe that we actually heard /dəʊ ju ˈnəʊ wɒt aɪ ˈmiːn/. As Lass says:

> […] the listener applies, in a CS [casual speech] situation, all his knowledge of linguistic structure: syntax and morphology, semantics and lexis – as well as pragmatic cues – and finally, of course phonology. And he approaches the task of interpretation, under normal conditions, with the expectation that messages make sense, and he does his best to ensure it. […] So the speaker listens not to what it is - strictly – being said, but to what his knowledge of the basic structure of the language tells him ought to be being said. (LASS,1984, p.296/297)

Taking this into consideration, we can somehow understand some advanced learners, whose command of the language is very good but have trouble with listening comprehension. It may be that, in spite of the fact that their syntactic and morphological, semantic and lexical, as well as pragmatic knowledge of the target language is considerable, their phonological understanding of the spoken language needs improvement.

4.1.2 Linguistic Processing

In the previous section, the intelligibility of what is heard was discussed, that is to say, our ability to understand at a sentence level what is said. Now I turn to the actual interpretation. As Rost (1999, p. 33) says: "the intelligibility of what is heard is reciprocally linked with the interpretability of what is heard through cognitive effects as the listener attends to speech." Thus, we cannot separate the two stages - the auditory perception and the linguistic processing - as one merges into the other throughout the whole process of understanding. Like in connected speech, there are no boundaries: one cannot identify where the physical process ends or the cognitive starts.

As previously mentioned, we understand much more than what we hear. Therefore to compensate for this shortcoming we have to make use of our

knowledge of the language as well as the context. The context is highly dependent on the situation - formal or informal, the speaker's age and education, our knowledge of the culture and background of the speaker, our relationship with the speaker and a series of variables that influences the entire listening process.

Another significant fact to point out is the co-text, as Underwood says:

> One important part of this overall situational context in which the listener places what he/she hears is, in Brown and Yule's terms, the 'co-text', which they define as 'whatever has already been said in a particular event'. It is by placing what follows in relation to what has already been said (either by the current speaker or by other speakers) that the listener establishes the speaker's meaning. (UNDERWOOD,1993, p.3)

In our mother language, when involved in the process of oral communication we subconsciously analyze all those variables and somehow predict what kind of language we are going to encounter. This ability to contextualize by activating our knowledge of the world in which the speech act is inserted, makes us successful listeners.

Anderson and Lynch identify three main skills from the discourse analyses studies as being essential for the non-native listener when interacting with a native speaker:

> 1. The ability to recognize the topic of conversation from the native speaker's initial remarks
> 2. The ability to make predictions about likely developments of the topic to which we will have to respond
> 3. The ability to recognize and signal when he has not understood enough of the input to make a prediction or a response. These explicit signals are crucial, as they usually elicit a repetition or reformulation by the native speaker, and so give the listener another chance to make a relevant response. (ANDERSON and LYNCH, p. 42, 1988)

In fact, this ability to signal non-comprehension when interacting orally, especially with native speakers, should not be underrated. It is students' fear of loosing face, as they tend to blame themselves when failing to understand spoken language, that sometimes prevent them from signaling when there is communication breakdown. Teachers should work on formulaic expressions to help students with specific language to ask for clarification, as well as reassuring them by pointing out

that a lot of times the phonological features of spoken language are the obstacles that make it difficult to understand.

4.2   What makes listening difficult

If asked what makes listening difficult, most students are bound to say that people speak too fast so they cannot understand each and every word as they would like to. In fact this was what a great number of students from the experimental and control groups said when asked this question (See Table 6.10 in chapter 6). They also mentioned their inability to cope with familiar words in connected speech, problems with lexis (especially idioms and slang), and difficulty to concentrate and remember what had been said. Only 5.2% of the students mentioned pronunciation and 2.6% accent.

What students do not realize is that most of the problems they mention have an intrinsic relationship with pronunciation: the impression that native speakers speak too fast is due to pronunciation features, such as assimilation, liaison, weak forms, elision, etc[38]. Looking back to chapter 3, we can understand that those simplifications of the spoken language give the idea that connected speech goes at an incredibly fast pace.

As for their inability to cope with familiar words in connected speech, this is also explained with the help of phonology, especially as there is a tendency for words to appear in spoken language in chunks. Formulaic expressions that have been turned into a block of spoken language sound very different from when their components are spoken as isolated words.

When not aware of the fact that language is produced in chunks, students tend to try to hear each and every word. This can lead to loss of concentration and tiredness. Talking about this problem, Underwood (p.19, 1993) says that "sometimes, even when the topic is interesting, students simply find listening work very tiring, because they make an enormous effort (often greater than is useful) to follow what they hear word by word."

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[38] I am not going to show how each of these features influence intelligibility here because this was thoroughly discussed in the previous chapter.

Another factor that plays an important role in listening comprehension is the co-text. As explained beforehand, this is the relationship between the successive pieces of information. The speaker is bound to play down shared compared to new information. This, added to the tendency in English to give new information at the end of the utterance, produces connected speech which is not as intelligible at the beginning as it is at the end.

This fact contributes to increasing student's anxiety as they panic because they cannot cope with the beginning of the utterance, therefore losing concentration and missing the whole thing. Hence, it is important to make students aware of this fact, so that they know that the message tends to be clearer towards the end, and that the somehow obscure beginning is related to some information he/she already holds.

Moreover, in spoken language there is great amount of repetition and reformulation. Therefore, if students learn not to be put off by some passages he/she did not quite understand, he may be able to cope with the whole thing better and at least get the gist. As Stern (1975, apud Underwood, 1993, p. 18) says, the good language learner "can tolerate vagueness and incompleteness of knowledge".

Intonation is another factor, which is intrinsically linked with pronunciation, that may cause problems for the listener, especially as changes in prominence can completely change the meaning of the utterance. As Ur (1992, p.13) puts it: "[…] such things as certainty, doubt, irony, inquiry, seriousness, humour, are implied by characteristic intonation patterns as much as by choice of words."

Apart from these factors mentioned above, there are certainly others that can hinder listening comprehension, such as accent, register, regional idioms, jargons, lack of cultural knowledge, the amount of information as opposed of the amount of time one needs to process such data, the fact that spoken language is not always well organized, concentration, and so on. However, as this research focusses mainly on pronunciation, they are not discussed here.

4.3 Summary

The previous chapter provided a close look at the most important features of pronunciation that makes spoken language so diverse from the written one. This chapter explored listening comprehension by focusing on what makes it difficult and what it involves. The intrinsic connection between listening and pronunciation features is noticeable, as one chapter draws from the other, complementing and supporting one another.

It is undoubtedly true that pronunciation awareness raising exercises, when presented within a top-down approach, can greatly help students cope with the idiosyncrasies of the spoken language. By helping students to understand that most comprehensibility problems they have when facing a listening task is due to the way words are gathered in chunks, teachers are helping them to become better listeners. The whole idea of chunks is now discussed in the following chapter which presents the basic premises of the Lexical approach.

CHAPTER 5:   UNDERSTANDING THE LEXICAL APPROACH

Second language teaching has gone through many changes. It has become much more focussed on communication, and meaning plays an important role in it. The Communicative Approach brought about some of these transformations, concentrating on the negotiation of meaning and functional language. In spite of this, written language tended to dominate, its grammar and lexis playing a central role in the production of EFL material. Only recently, with the creation of a computerized corpus, encompassing written and spoken language, second language teaching has started to acknowledge the fact that written and spoken language are very distinct, and that this should be taken into account.

Such acknowledgement has made a significant impact on the way language is viewed, especially the teaching of grammar and vocabulary. As Read (2004, p.156) says, "One impact of corpus analysis on vocabulary study is to highlight the significance of multiword lexical units and indeed to challenge the validity of the traditional division between vocabulary and grammar". The Lexical Approach, devised by Michael Lewis in 1994, is a product of such an impact.

5.1 Main Principles

The basic principle of the Lexical Approach is that "Language consists of grammaticalised lexis, not lexicalised grammar" (LEWIS, 1994, p.vi). It challenges the traditional view that we should learn grammar first and then build our vocabulary around it, maintaining an atomistic grammatical core. This is very evident in most coursebooks whose dialogues are tailor-made to fit some grammatical structure they want to clarify. It is lexis subordinating to grammar, whereas in the Lexical Approach "grammar as structure is subordinate to lexis." (LEWIS, 1994, p.vii) Lexis plays a central role in second language teaching.

Language should be viewed as holistic, an organism, and therefore should be taught using a top-down approach. Teaching holistically means looking at language as a whole. Thus, formulaic expressions and chunks are seen as essential to the

teaching process. Such expressions are: polywords – *by the way, on the other hand*; collocations – *make a noise, miss a lesson, have dinner*; fixed expressions – *I look forward to hearing from you*; sentence frames – *sorry to butt in, but can I just say...*; idioms – *have butterflies in one's stomach, see red*.

This prefabricated language is frequently used and should be taught from an early stage. According to Lewis (1997, p.11): "Modern analyses of real data suggest that we are much less original in using language than we like to believe. Much of what we say, and a significant proportion of what we write, consists of prefabricated multiword items."

One example of a structure that students only learn at intermediate level, and that could be taught as a chunk in their first semester of the course, is *I've been working, studying, living, etc.* This so-called Present Perfect Continuous is considered too complicated for elementary students to learn, because of that there is a tendency, at least among Brazilian advanced students, to say *I'm living there for ten years* instead of *I've been living there for ten years.* This happens because they were exposed to this chunk far too late, probably in their seventh or eighth semester of the course, after having used it wrongly for too long. If they had been exposed to this language as a chunk, without too much grammatical explanation from the very beginning of the course, they would be less likely to commit such a mistake.

Coursebook syllabi are still dictated by grammar structures. This results in students being exposed to some chunks of language far too late, after its wrong substitute has been fossilized. The Communicative Approach, brought in some, but unfortunately not many, of those chunks to the early stages, such as *Would you like…* This never appears to confuse students, even before its grammatical structure is taught. Students learn this as a chunk and use it effectively. Why not adding much more of this to prevent students from having to relearn things they thought they were producing correctly? And what exactly is 'difficult' language?

It is the role of the teacher to raise students' awareness of such chunks and formulaic expressions, and develop students' ability to produce chunks successfully. The focus is on students being able to communicate effectively, not on accuracy. Thus grammatical errors are more tolerated and considered as part and parcel of the learning process. "Socio-linguistic competence – communicative power – precedes and is the basis, not the product, of grammatical competence." (LEWIS, 1994, p.vii)

The traditional primacy of writing over speech is questioned and spoken language is given a privileged status. It is very clear that functions in the Communicative Approach fail to break up with the focus on the written language, hence its grammar, which is much more elaborated than the one in the spoken language. In the Lexical Approach the focus is on spoken rather than written language, and on descriptive, not artificial, prescriptive language.

In order to simplify things coursebook writers tend to simplify language to such an extent that they have created a kind of book language which is taught to the students in the classroom. Comparing two dialogues[39] of 'natural' and 'book' language (see table 5.1) as an example, we can clearly see that by exposing students to this simplified book language, teachers are preventing them from learning some formulaic expressions that could be very useful when having to face the real world, both when using the spoken language and when trying to understand it.

NATURAL LANGUAGE	BOOK LANGUAGE PRE-INTERMEDIATE LEVEL
Sacha: Are we going for a walk, then?	Sacha: Let's take a walk?
Mom: Hang on a minute. Are you ready, then?	Mom: Wait a moment. Are you ready?
Sacha: Of course, I am.	Sacha: Yes, I am.
Mom: You say you are but you haven't got your shoes on yet.	Mom: You haven't put on your shoes. Do you need help?
Do you need a hand with those?	Sacha: No, it's ok, thanks.
Sacha: No, no. I can manage, I can manage.	

Table 5.1: Comparison between 'natural' and 'book' language.

Analysing the 'natural' language from the table above we can see the use of redundancy (the use of *then*, or the repetition of *I can manage*), so common in spoken language and also a variety of formulaic expressions (go for a walk, hang on a minute, of course I am, etc). Some of them we would only see in upper-intermediate to advanced course books (*do you need a hand* and *I can manage*). This descriptive language, as opposed to the prescriptive one we still find in

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[39] This example was given by Ben Goldstein in a lecture about the Lexical Approach, at the VII ABCI Conference which took place in Brasília – DF, Brazil, in November 2004. The piece of real language is the transcript of a recording he made of his mother talking with his five-year-old nephew.

coursebooks, is the closest we can get to the real world in which the student will have to operate. In the Lexical Approach, "language is considered a personal resource, not an abstract idealisation." (LEWIS, 1994, p.vi)

As verbal expression is significantly influenced by the phonological idiosyncrasies of the language, listening plays a fundamental role in providing input that enables students to grasp the grammatical system of the language. Thus, oral comprehension is given enhanced status. More elementary teaching should focus on oral production only. The written form should be dealt with later on in the course, and reading should be dealt with extensively rather than intensively, that is to say, students need to learn to cope with unknown vocabulary in a text without having to stop at each and every word to clarify its meaning.

Another important aspect related to lexis is that the less you know of those formulaic expressions, the more grammar you need to express yourself, and thus, the more mistakes you are bound to make. Moreover, the chance of being misunderstood is much higher. For instance, if you do not know the expression *to make ends meet*, you will need to produce something like *to earn enough money to support oneself*, which is not as straight to the point as the expression. As Dellar (2004, p.30) puts it: "We thus need to accept that many grammatical errors are actually the result of lexical deficiencies and that what is thus needed is NOT more grammar correction and study, but rather more lexical input."

The most important difference between the Communicative Approach and the Lexical Approach is that in the former, the use of prescriptive language is accepted as the focus is much more on function than lexis; whereas in the latter, lexis in naturally occurring language plays a central role in language teaching, and the aim of which is an increased understanding of the nature of lexis. Within this understanding there is the generative power of a great number of set phrases which, being semi-fixed expressions, are made of frames. Those frames can produce an incredible number of new utterances, for instance, *that's not as (difficult, hard, worrying, etc) as you think*; *what really (surprised, shocked, frightened) me was that (she was lying, he couldn't come, he had the guts to do it, etc).*

This idea of generating structures based on lexical items has been challenged on the grounds that lexis is non-generative, also implying that the Lexical Approach is based on a behaviourist view of the language. Lewis (1997, p.33) defends it by saying that: "Semi-fixed Expressions reveal previously unsuspected patterns which

help organize what McCarthy once called 'the chaos of the lexicon'." Moreover, these expressions are used pragmatically, not with the idea of producing language for its own sake. The Lexical Approach, based on corpus linguistics, concentrates on language that is produced by native-speakers in their everyday lives, not on the production of possible sentences within a frame, which has never occurred.

The main focus of the Lexical Approach is on the process, rather than the product. It is the cognitive involvement by observing, hypothesizing and experimenting that produces learning, thus the paradigm of Present-Practice-Produce is rejected.

5.2   Implications for Language Teaching

To incorporate a more lexical approach to learning, teachers need to change their mindset and acknowledge the primacy of vocabulary over grammatical structures. It is essential to understand that the dichotomy grammar-vocabulary cannot exist, as language cannot be considered either grammar or vocabulary, but a combination of both.

There is a break in the boundaries that traditionally separate grammar and vocabulary. Together they mean language that is pragmatic, and serves a variety of purposes. As Dellar (2004, p.30) says, "We've got to start focussing more on grammar as part-and-parcel of such lexical bundles and move away from simple form manipulation into fully grammaticalised lexicon building." This shifting of focus to lexis means a shift to fluency rather than accuracy, to usage rather than use.

In order to make students aware of the fact that language works in chunks we need to make them notice language, notice expressions and collocations in texts and in spoken language. It is important to explore familiar words and their collocations, the changes they suffer within set expressions, thus teaching new meanings to familiar words. The word *hand*, for instance, is a very elementary word which is part of so many set expressions, most of which students only learn at advanced stages: *live from hand to mouth, give a hand, hand-me-downs, get out of hand, handy, walk hand in hand, go hand in hand, hand to hand combat, on the one hand…on the other hand,* among others.

By concentrating on the process, rather than the product, teachers are helping students to observe, hypothesize and experiment with the language, thus activating their mental process of understanding, and developing their awareness of how language works.

Finally, teachers need to help students break from the written language and acknowledge the fact that there is such a thing as spoken language, which behaves very differently from the written one: phonologically, grammatically, lexically and sometimes semantically, depending on intonation patterns.

5.3 Implications for Pronunciation and Listening

As it was indicated above, the Lexical Approach focusses on chunks, on those multi-word units that comprise language. Those chunks are found in both spoken and written language and pronunciation plays an important role in distinguishing those 'languages'. In connected speech those chunks function as solid blocks as the boundaries between words become difficult to identify. It is a fact that those blocks of words behave rather differently when broken into single words. Thus, learning their pronunciation helps students understand some expressions that would otherwise get lost in the fluidity of speech.

In the Lexical Approach, process is emphasized more than product; this makes all the difference in listening comprehension. By making students concentrate on what made the utterance difficult to grasp, rather than on correct answers, teachers are enabling students to notice language and understand how it works. As Campbell et al (2007, p.8) say when talking about the post-listening phase: "this is perhaps the most important phase of a listening lesson, as learners should be able to work with the recording in order to access the acoustic blur of natural streamed speech, enabling them to adequately recognize and process native English speech."

Another important fact to consider is that "informal speech usually consists of strings of unprocessed lexical items, not grammatically complex sentences." LEWIS (1997, p.213). Therefore, by increasing students' lexical knowledge teachers are helping them to be better equipped to deal with spoken language.

5.4 Summary

In this chapter the most important principles of the Lexical Approach were presented. Following that, some implications of adopting such an approach for language teaching and for pronunciation and listening were discussed. The advantages of focussing on chunks and formulaic expressions, and the need to expose students to descriptive language rather than prescriptive book language were pointed out. The importance of doing tasks that promote noticing was emphasized, on the assumption that by doing so teachers are helping students to develop language awareness.

Spoken and written languages were acknowledged as two different forms, each having its own lexis and grammar. The dichotomy between lexis and grammar was challenged on the grounds that they cannot be separated, and that grammar is submitted to lexis in course book based teaching. Finally, the Lexical Approach was considered to provide a sound theoretical basis to support the teaching of listening comprehension.

In the next chapter we move on to a more hands-on approach, where the groups who took part in this experiment are presented, as well as the lessons given to the Experimental Group. We now move from the theoretical part of this study to the more practical one.

CHAPTER 6: WORKING WITH THE GROUPS

This chapter gives a thorough description of the groups involved in this research, drawing some conclusions about what may influence the group's level.   It shows how the students felt about listening comprehension and pronunciation exercises at the beginning of the semester, as well as their beliefs concerning how to improve listening skills.

Following this, there is a detailed account of the pronunciation activities used in the lessons given to the experimental group. Finally, it draws some conclusions about those activities and their outcome.

6.1 – Analysing the Groups

Although the groups were at the same stage, the level of the experimental group was lower than that of the control one. This could have been because in the control group the students were younger and a great number of them (55%) had been studying English one to three years longer than the ones in the experimental group (see table 6.1). This happens because students who start studying from an earlier age spend more time to get to upper-intermediate levels as the children's course lasts at least three years longer. Hence their vocabulary is far more extensive than the ones who entered the regular adult course.

	EXPERIMENTAL GROUP (19 students)	CONTROL GROUP (20 students)	TOTAL (39 students)
6 – 8 years	2 (10.6%)	11 (55%)	13 (33.3%)
3 – 5 years	17 (89.4%)	9 (45%)	26 (66.7%)

Table 6.1: How long students had been studying English.

There is also a feeling among the teachers at this school that the groups which attend lessons twice a week, in general, have better overall performance than the ones who have lessons only once. It is a fact that the groups attending school twice a

week are exposed to 150 minutes of the target language weekly, whereas the ones who have lessons only once have contact with the language for 120 minutes. These groups end up with five hours less per semester, which makes more than one semester at the end of the basic course. Considering the fact that these two groups were one semester short of finishing their course, the experimental group had had almost one semester less of tuition.

Another factor that may influence students' level is that the majority of the twice-a-week group only studies, whereas the others also work. This evidence was confirmed within the groups: in the experimental group there were only two students who didn't work (10.6%), the others were professionals or under-graduates with regular jobs (89.5%). The control group, whose members studied twice a week, was mostly formed of high school and under-graduate students (80%), and only 4 members (20%) worked (see table 6.2).

	EXPERIMENTAL GROUP (19 students)	CONTROL GROUP (20 students)	TOTAL (39 students)
High school Student	1 (5.3%)	7 (35%)	8 (20.5%)
Undergraduate student	1 (5.3%)	9 (45%)	10 (25.6%)
TOTAL of students who only study	2 (10.6%)	16 (80%)	18 (46.1%)
Undergraduate student who has a regular job	8 (42%)	3 (15%)	11 (28.2%)
Post-graduate student	2 (10.6%)		2 (5.2%)
English teacher	1 (5.3%)	1 (5%)	2 (5.2%)
Other professions	6 (31.6%)		6 (15.4%)
TOTAL of students who work	17 (89.5%)	4 (20%)	21 (53.8%)

Table 6.2: Students' occupation

There were only three English teachers[40]: two in the experimental group and one in the control one (see table 6.3). They were not experienced teachers and none of them worked with phonology in their classes. In fact one of them said that although he considered the phonemic chart important he had never found a way of incorporating it to her lessons, as there was so much in the syllabus to cover. The others stated that they found it too difficult and could not use it in their lessons as they worked in government schools where the focus is on reading and translating.

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[40] English teachers who teach English in any kind of school or even private lessons.

None of them had ever done a course which included pronunciation and they had only a rudimentary knowledge of it.

	EXPERIMENTAL GROUP (19 students)	CONTROL GROUP (20 students)	TOTAL (39 students)
6 hours/week	1 (5.25%)	1 (5%)	2 (5.2%)
10 hours/week	1 (5.25%)		1 (2.6%)

Table 6.3: Number of hours taught by the students who were English teachers.

This somehow illustrates the lack of pronunciation teaching in general: in private language schools, teachers are either intimidated by the phonemic chart or too busy covering the syllabus, with the effect that pronunciation is left aside as an incidental issue, coming up only when a student mispronounces a word; in private or government schools, the subject is not even tackled as the major focus is on reading skills. Moreover, being a topic considered difficult by a vast majority of teachers, it is, most of the time, deliberately avoided.

Students in both groups did not have much contact with the English language outside the classroom, only 5.2% stated that they had someone in their immediate family with whom they spoke in English regularly. A total of four students (10.4%) did not answer this question (see table 6.4).

	EXPERIMENTAL GROUP (19 students)	CONTROL GROUP (20 students)	TOTAL (39 students)
NO	17 (84.1%)	17 (75%)	34 (87.6%)
YES	1 (5.3%) (stepbrother)	1 (5%) (uncle)	2 (5.2%)
Didn't answer	1 (5.3%)	2 (10%)	3 (7.2%)

Table 6.4: If students spoke in English regularly with someone in their immediate family.

As for contact with native speakers, an overwhelming majority (94.8%) said that they never or hardly ever had face-to-face conversations (see table 6.5) or talked on the phone with them (100%). Apart from films, which they all watched with subtitles in Portuguese, songs and the occasional chat on the internet, mostly through writing, these students were in touch with the spoken language only when at

the language school. Hence they had to rely a lot on classroom time for exposure of the target spoken language, which made the development of their listening skills a challenging task.

	EXPERIMENTAL GROUP (19 students)	CONTROL GROUP (20 students)	TOTAL (39 students)
Engaging in face to face conversation			
Always		1 (5%)	1 (2.6%)
Sometimes	1 (5.3%)		1 (2.6%)
Hardly ever or never	18 (94.7%)	19 (95%)	37 (94.8%)

Table 6.5: How often students engage in face-to-face conversations with native speakers of English.

Besides the minimum contact the students had with native speakers outside the classroom, their experience with an English environment was almost non-existent; only 7.2% had ever been to an English-speaking country and even these ones stayed for a short time. The majority (87.6%) had never experienced being immersed in the target language culture or interacted with a native speaker in their environment (see table 6.6); their input came almost only from films and songs, playing the passive role of an outside observer. Therefore they could not have relied on such experience to improve their listening abilities.

	EXPERIMENTAL GROUP (19 students)	CONTROL GROUP (20 students)	TOTAL (39 students)
NO	16 (84.3%)	18 (90%)	34 (87.6%)
YES (less than a month)	2 (10.6%)	1 (5%)	3 (7.2%)
Didn't answer	1 (5.3%)	1 (5%)	2 (5.2%)

Table 6.6: If students had been to an English-speaking country and how long they stayed there.

Confirming the assumption that, in general, students find the listening skill the most difficult, 69.2% of all students stated that of the four skills listening was the hardest to master. Among these students, there were 50% in the control group, and a huge majority of 89.5% in the experimental group (see table 6.7). As far as their listening competence was concerned, 74.4% of all the students did not consider their listening skills in the target language satisfactory, the figures being 94.7% for the experimental group as opposed to only 30% for the control group (see table 6.8).

This fact, together with the first FCE listening test result, determined the choice of groups when deciding with which of them the experiment would be carried out. The necessity of the students in the experimental group of working to improve their listening skills was noticeable.

	EXPERIMENTAL GROUP (19 students)	CONTROL GROUP (20 students)	TOTAL (39 students)
SPEAKING	2 (10.6%)	7 (35%)	9 (23%)
LISTENING	17 (89.5%)	10 (50%)	27 (69.2%)
READING	1 (5.3%)		1 (2.6%)
WRITING	1 (5.3%)	3 (15%)	4 (10.3%)

Table 6.7: Among the four skills, the one students found the most difficult to master.

Although students were asked to name only one skill two students from the experimental group mentioned two: listening and speaking, and listening and reading.

	EXPERIMENTAL GROUP (19 students)	CONTROL GROUP (20 students)	TOTAL (39 students)
NO	18 (94.7%)	6 (30%)	24 (61.6%)
YES		8 (40%)	8 (20.5%)
YES, but it needs improvement	1 (5.3%)	6 (30%)	7 (17.9%)

Table 6.8: If students considered their listening skills in English satisfactory.

A substantial majority of the students (76.9%), when asked what they could do to improve their listening skills, mentioned watching films or listening to songs – 68.4% of the experimental group and 85% of the control group (see table 6.9). Nevertheless, all of them confessed that they never watched films without subtitles, and almost always these are written in their mother language. By doing so, students are not really training listening but concentrating on the subtitles, which is much more of a reading practice. Thus, this kind of activity does not help significantly the development of listening abilities.

Surprisingly, nobody in the experimental group referred to doing listening exercises in class as a way of improving their abilities in this skill and only 15% of the control group did so, which accounts for only 7.7% of all the students (see table 6.9). It seems as if the listening practice done in class, mostly through exercises, is not

acknowledged as important, or at least does not seem to play a significant role, as far as the students are concerned. That is thought-provoking data, as teachers, in general, seem to rely mostly on those classroom exercises to help students' develop their listening skills.

As for pronunciation exercises as a way to improve listening, none of the students mentioned them, not even the English teachers (see table 6.9). In general, the students in the experimental group were amazed when told that they were going to do pronunciation exercises in order to develop their listening skills. They had never heard about or realized how much connection there is between listening and pronunciation.

STUDENTS WERE FREE TO MENTION MORE THAN ONE ACTIVITY	EXPERIMENTAL GROUP (Number of students out of 19 who mentioned this activity)	CONTROL GROUP (Number of students out of 20 who mentioned this activity)	TOTAL (Number of students out of 39 who mentioned this activity)
Watch films	7 (36.8%)	9 (45%)	16 (41%)
Listen to music	6 (31.6%)	8 (40%)	14 (35.9%)
Watch TV	1 (5.3%)	3 (15%)	4 (10.3%)
Talk	1 (5.3%)	2 (10%)	3 (7.7%)
Do listening exercises		3 (15%)	3 (7.7%)
Keep in touch with native speakers	1 (5.3%)		1 (2.6%)
Listen while reading	1 (5.3%)		1 (2.6%)
Travel abroad	1 (5.3%)		1 (2.6%)
Do tests	1 (5.3%)		1 (2.6%)
Do activities in class	1 (5.3%)		1 (2.6%)
Read and study vocabulary		1 (5%)	1 (2.6%)
Listen to dialogues	1 (5.3%)		1 (2.6%)
No idea	1 (5.3%)		1 (2.6%)

Table 6.9: In students' opinion, what can students do in order to improve their listening skills.

Not unexpectedly, this reaction reflects the lack of importance given by teachers in general to this feature of the language. As Marks states in his classroom report, in Lewis:

> Pronunciation has often been seen as an add-on element of the syllabuses, appearing as a 5-minute pronunciation slot in lessons or brief pronunciation exercises in coursebooks. Most typically, the focus has been on the accurate use of 40-odd phonemes – the ability to make sit/seat, or hard/heart sound different – or on accurate word stress – the ability to say COMfortable, rather than conFORTable. (MARKS apud LEWIS,1997, p.157)

The fast delivery of connected speech was rated as the most difficult feature of spoken language that rendered it so difficult to understand by 36.8% of the experimental group as opposed to only 10% of the control group - 23.1% of all the students. Secondly came the ability to understand every single word, together with lexis (idioms and slang) rated by 17.9% of the students in general (see table 6.10). It is noticeable the need for the students in the experimental group to hear each word. Perhaps that is due to the fact that they are very weak at listening not having developed any strategy to cope with the idiosyncrasies of the spoken language.

SOME STUDENTS MENTIONED MORE THAN ONE REASON	EXPERIMENTAL GROUP (Number of students out of 19 who mentioned this reason)	CONTROL GROUP (Number of students out of 20 who mentioned this reason)	TOTAL (Number of students out of 39 who mentioned this reason)
It's too fast	7 (36.8%)	2 (10%)	9 (23.1%)
Understand each word	6 (31.6%)	1 (5%)	7 (17.9%)
Idioms and slang		7 (35%)	7 (17.9%)
Concentrate	2 (10.6%)	2 (10%)	4 (10.3%)
Understand connected speech	1 (5.3%)	1 (5%)	2 (5.2%)
Words with similar sounds		2 (10%)	2 (5.2%)
Pronunciation	2 (10.6%)		2 (5.2%)
Different accents		1 (5%)	1 (2.6%)
Think in English	1 (5.3%)		1 (2.6%)
Remember what I listened		1 (5%)	1 (2.6%)
Don't know		3 (15%)	3 (2.6%)

Table 6.10: What students find most difficult when listening to English.

None of the students had ever done any pronunciation course, which would be expected as no such courses are offered by language schools in Maceió. Pronunciation issues are only dealt more extensively at University within some subjects that tackle the topic in a more general way. However none of the undergraduate or post-graduate students were doing a language course. In general, students' contact with pronunciation was restricted to the incidental explanation in class and some rudimentary overview of the phonemic chart from exercises on individual phonemes done in class throughout the course.

Having said that, it came as a surprise how little students knew about the English phonemic chart itself. I was expecting them to be acquainted with phonemic transcription as they had been exposed to all English phonemes throughout their

seven-semester-course. In spite of the fact that 38.5% of the students stated that they were familiar with the phonemic chart (see table 6.11), their inability to handle it was apparent. They just knew it existed but did not understand it very much.

	EXPERIMENTAL GROUP (19 students)	CONTROL GROUP (20 students)	TOTAL (39 students)
NO	5 (26.3%)	6 (30%)	11(28.2%)
Not so much	8 (42.1%)	5 (25%)	13 (33.3%)
YES	6 (31.6%)	9 (45%)	15 (38.5%)

Table 6.11: If students were familiar with the phonemic chart.

It seemed as if their previous teachers had explained the phonemes whenever they came up in exercises in the book but did not use them on a daily basis when dealing with new words or any pronunciation problem. They were like students who had an idea of most of the letters in the alphabet but did not know what they could do with them, let alone have the ability to put them together to form words or connect them into sentences.

There was a general feeling of insecurity towards the phonemic chart (69.2% of all students) but not much animosity as only 5.2% of them said they disliked it (see table 6.12). Besides trying to help them learn about the idiosyncrasies of the English language as far as pronunciation was concerned, I had to assist them in overcoming the fear of dealing with a different code.

	EXPERIMENTAL GROUP (19 students)	CONTROL GROUP (20 students)	TOTAL (39 students)
Like	6 (31.6%)	4 (20%)	10 (25.6%)
Dislike	1 (5.3%)	1 (5%)	2 (5.2%)
Insecure	12 (63.1%)	15 (75%)	27 (69.2%)

Table 6.12: Students' feelings towards the phonemic chart.

6.2 – Working with the Experimental Group

In the following account of those meetings I only registered the activities done

related to other skills if they were relevant to the subject matter of this research. Therefore, what is described here is only the part of the lesson when I focused on pronunciation and listening skills. Moreover, although most activities are in the annexes or attachments, there are some which I just mentioned but did not include there. Those activities either played their role in the lesson but were not directly linked with connected speech and listening or were too straightforward for a thorough explanation needing to be included here.

When the activity was taken from the coursebook I was using with the group, I only put it in the annex if I found it was relevant to the reader's comprehension of the way it worked, otherwise I just named it: multiple matching, multiple-choice, or gap-filling and so forth indicating the page where it is found.

As for the use of the Lexical Approach, it is not possible to describe specifically what happened in those lessons, as most work done on lexis was on drawing students attention to collocations and formulaic expressions found either in their coursebook or in incidental language that came up in the classroom. Whenever we encountered such chunks, which happened many times throughout a lesson, I drew students' attention to the way they were pronounced in connected speech.

6.2.1 – Describing the meetings

Meeting 1: 8th Feb. 2008 – Number of students in the group = 20

Students in class =13

As I had never worked with this group, this was our very first lesson. After the usual getting-to-know-you and breaking-the-ice activities, I decided to check how much of the phonemic chart they remembered from previous semesters with different teachers. I had assumed that they were very familiar with it as they had studied it all the way through the basic course they were to finish at the end of the year. Surprisingly, they did not know much and in fact 63.1% of the students (see table 6.12) felt insecure about it and only 31.6% (see table 6.11) were familiar with it but, as I soon found out, on a very superficial basis.

I had decided to do this research at this school because pronunciation was part of the lesson, and students were assessed on some pronunciation features such as word stress and the ability to read individual words in phonemic transcription, in their mid-term and final tests. From my previous experience as a coordinator, I knew that the only way to make sure teachers do some work they are unwilling or reluctant to do is to include it in the test. If the students are tested on a specific subject, the teachers cannot avoid it. Hence I knew that there had been some pronunciation exercises going on in their lessons. That is why I expected I would have no problems with phonemic transcription as they were bound to have had a lot of input concerning pronunciation.

What I had not realized was that the huge majority of the teachers who had previously taught that group, had limited their pronunciation practice in class to the exercises in the book, or sometimes strictly to the ones students were going to be tested on. I found out that the phonemic chart had not been used on a daily basis, neither as a tool to help students record new vocabulary nor to show some features of connected speech. In fact, exercises in connected speech had hardly ever been done and never, according to the students, using phonemic transcription.

Pronunciation exercises in those students' classroom experience had been restricted to recognition of certain phonemes within words, word stress and little work on intonation. It was once again the primacy of written language over the spoken one, as if pronunciation teaching was only related to enabling students to pronounce individual words. This 'superficial' pronunciation practice does not help much, only making students lose track of the way connected speech works.

Not only had this group lost touch with connected speech or even worse, had never had much contact with explicit explanations of how connected speech works, but they had also been so little exposed to the phonemic chart itself. Apart from the odd exercise in their coursebook, their knowledge of such a chart or of any phonology for that matter, was nearly non-existent. I therefore had to start things almost from scratch and ended up spending far longer than I had planned explaining the phonemic chart. I did want to start straight away with connected speech, but the students' understanding of the phonemic chart was vital as a tool to show them what happens when words get together in the fluidity of speech.

I then started off by showing students the similarities and differences between Portuguese sounds and the phonemes in English. As regional differences, as far as

pronunciation is concerned, are more related to allophones, I chose the 12 phonemes together with the 8 diphthongs proposed by Gimson[41].

Firstly, I asked students how many vowels we have in the Portuguese language, which they promptly answered based on the written language. I then asked about the vowel *A* in Portuguese, and if it was always pronounced the same way. Students began discussing how many vowels we actually have in spoken Brazilian Portuguese and were amazed to find out that they far outnumbered five. Following this discussion I began comparing the English vowel phonemes with the Portuguese vowels as they are realized in some dialects of Brazilian Portuguese. To do so I showed students table 6.13, trying to elicit words in English that bore those sounds.

Although the students in this group found a great number of examples easily, they had problems with a few of them. However, when discussing the different words that would have the phonemes, students gradually realized that length was an important feature of the vowel phonemes in the English language.

VOWEL GRAPHEMES	ENGLISH VOWEL PHONEMES (12)		
a	ʌ (short)	ɑː (long)	
	æ (a mixture between A and E) (open your mouth as if you are going to say A and say E instead)		
e	e (short) (similar to the *e* in caf**é**)	ə (short) (similar to the *e* in beb**ê**)	ɜː (long)
i	ɪ (short)	iː (long)	
o	ɒ (short)	ɔː (long)	
u	ʊ (short)	uː (long)	

Table 6.13: Portuguese vowel graphemes x English vowel phonemes.

Having shown some of the differences as well as similarities between the Brazilian vowel system and the English one, I had students look closer at the English

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[41] For a table contrasting some of the different ways of representing the phonemes in English by different authors such as A. C. Gimson, Daniel Jones, Victoria Fromkin & Robert Rodman – F&R, John S. Kenyon & Thomas A. Knott, as well as some variations, see Chapter 3, table 3.1.

diphthongs, and check the spelling of some words which bear the same sounds (see table 6.14). This helped them realize how inconsistent English spelling is, as well as do some practice on vowel recognition, as we can only understand a diphthong if we know the pair of vowels they are made of.

DIPHTHONGS	EXAMPLES
aɪ	d<u>ie</u>, h<u>eig</u>ht, n<u>ig</u>ht, m<u>y</u>, b<u>uy</u>
eɪ	d<u>ay</u>, d<u>a</u>t<u>e</u>, gr<u>ea</u>t
aʊ	n<u>ow</u>, f<u>ou</u>nd
ɔɪ	b<u>oy</u>, av<u>oi</u>d
eə	th<u>ere</u>, h<u>air</u>, sh<u>are</u>, b<u>ear</u>
ɪə	h<u>ear</u>, h<u>ere</u>, front<u>ier</u>, car<u>eer</u>
ʊə	c<u>ure</u>, t<u>our</u>
əʊ	n<u>o</u>, kn<u>ow</u>, d<u>ough</u>, f<u>oe</u>

Table 6.14: English diphthongs (8)

We carried on to the consonant phonemes which, unlike the vowels, are closer in number (24) to the consonants in the written alphabet (21). I started by asking students how many consonants there were in the word *three* - /θrɪː/. They immediately came up with *three* for the answer, so I showed them how focused in the written language they were because there are two correct answers to this question: *three in written language* and *two in spoken one*. I then asked about the word *tree* - /trɪː/, and they gave me two correct answers: one related to the spoken, the other to the written language. I tried to elicit from them the two words *three* and *tree* in phonemic transcription, which just one of them was able to come up with correct answers.

Then I presented the consonant phonemes by contrasting with the Brazilian Portuguese ones as well as the alphabet letters when necessary, using the three/tree example as the starting point. I showed students table 6.15 and explained the phonemes as such[42]:

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[42] For a thorough explanation of those phonemes, the one I gave to the students, see Chapter 3, part 3.5.3. See also Appendix B for the students' handout and the coloured version of the chart to be fixed on the board for reference during the lessons.

Phonemes which are identical to Portuguese.														
b	d	f	g		k	l	m	n	p		s	t	v		z
bed	door	fan	goat		key	lamb	me	navy	pork		son	tin	vase		zoo

Phonemes which are often confused by Portuguese speakers. (/h/ is equivalent to the sound of the words that start with the letter r in Portuguese)				
	h		r	Try to say 'Rio de Janeiro' or 'O rato roeu a roupa do rei de Roma' putting on an English accent
	head		red	

Phonemes which may cause some confusion because they do not correspond to those letters.			
	j		w	Say William, Wellington, Washington
	yellow		what	

Phonemes whose symbols are new to learn but not all of the sounds are alien to Portuguese.						
ð		ŋ		θ	tʃ ʃ	ʒ dʒ
mother		sing		three	chair fish	vision job

This is pronounced as an /n/ bringing the tongue a bit backwards as if we are going to swallow it.

This is the 'official lisp'.

Table 6.15: English consonant phonemes (24)

Following this explanation, and after eliciting from them some examples to illustrate all phonemes, I used some pictures from Trim[43] (1992) for them to try to read the sentences in phonemic transcription. They enjoyed the activity and were surprised to realize how easier phonemic transcription in English becomes, when we try to read it as if we are reading in Portuguese[44]. We also did an exercise on recognizing phonetic symbols from their coursebook (p.6) and a listening activity focusing on specific information.

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[43] See Attachment A. This transcription does not show elisions, assimilations or other post-lexical processes The only distinctive feature of written language it acknowledges are weak forms. Nevertheless, I chose them because at this stage it would be far too demanding to make them try to read phonemic transcription as well as understand some processes they had not been exposed to yet.
[44] I am aware that there are so many differences between English and Portuguese phonemes as shown beforehand. However, to start decodifying this new phonemic code, students need to have something familiar to fall back for support. Trying to read phonemic transcription as if reading in Portuguese, helps overcome this fear they sometimes have when facing a new code. Adjustments are gradually made as they become more confident.

Undeniably this is an oversimplification of the English phonemes, but it would have taken me many more lessons to try to work on them properly, and considering the time constraint, this would not have been possible. Besides, for students who are not really interested in understanding phonology, but to be able to recognize and produce the sounds fairly intelligibly, this simplistic approach does not scare them away from the topic. Moreover, when comparing the English phonemes to familiar sounds in the students' mother tongue, we are providing some safe ground for the students to fall back on for support. This helps them understand in a less threatening way, how English phonemes differ from their mother language and that although there are 44 phonemes in English[45] (12 vowels, 8 diphthongs and 24 consonants), less than ten are alien to them.

Furthermore, I needed to make sure they were familiar with the symbols in the chart mainly as a means to teach connected speech using phonemic transcription. Hence I did not want to linger on them as I wanted to focus on suprasegmental phonology, using a holistic, 'top-down' approach. That is to say, concentrating on the whole rather than on the bits and pieces.

Meeting 2: 15th Feb. 2008 – Number of students in the group = 20
                                 Students in class =16

Among the 16 students in class, six had not been to the previous meeting, so I had to talk about phonemic transcription again. We then had a competition: playing noughts and crosses, where students had to read words in phonemic transcription. As they worked in two groups, the ones who had come to the previous lesson helped the others who had not.

I administered the FCE listening test (diagnostic test) at the last sixty minutes of the meeting, leaving twenty minutes for a brief discussion about the test and for the students to answer a questionnaire[46] about themselves and the FCE test they had just done. Students found the listening test extremely difficult because, according to them, people spoke too fast and they did not have time to read and answer the questions. This was expected, as mentioned before, because their level was lower

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[45] Not considering regional accents.
[46] See Appendix A.

than the expected level to be able to successfully take this Cambridge test. They considered the quality of the recording and the acoustics of the room up to standard.

Meeting 3: 22nd Feb. 2008 – Number of students in the group = 20

Students in class =20

Students had done lots of work on segmental phonology, such as working with individual phonemes, but not much suprasegmental phonology namely word stress and occasionally sentence stress and intonation. I then started showing how different written language was from the spoken one because of connected speech. I wanted them to closely analyse speech sounds in connected speech to try to identify word boundaries in order to understand that most of the time in the fluidity of speech, 'written' words are merged together or separated to create 'different' spoken words. This can be compared at the sentence level to what Roach says, when explaining the meaning of *segment*:

> When we examine speech sounds in connected speech closely, we find many cases where it is difficult to identify separate sound units (segments) that correspond to phonemes, since many of the articulatory movements that create the sounds tend to be continuous rather than sharply switched. (ROACH, 2002, p. 69)

To illustrate the point I used some sentences on word division[47], cut out on small cards for the students to match. I also prepared an exercise with phonemic transcription and the ending of regular verbs in the past[48]. This time students had to find the connection between words. We then had some practice in the regular past tense which most of them mispronounced: we played some card games and they tried to put a story together depending on the ending of the regular verb in the past. Following that we talked about how important it is for listening comprehension to know the correct pronunciation of the regular *ed* as it makes all the difference in connected speech.

To wrap things up I played a listening from their coursebook (p.6). They had to do the task assigned in the book (note-taking) and after that we analysed the wrong

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[47] See Attachment B.
[48] See Appendix C.

answers to find out where communication had broken down. Students were surprised to discover how much spoken language differs from the written one.

Meeting 4: 29th Feb. 2008 – Number of students in the group = 20

Students in class =13

In order to emphasize the fact that the difference between spoken and written language is due to connected speech, I started this lesson with an activity[49] based on Vaughan-Rees (2002, p. 74). Students were given cards of some common phrases in phonemic script to read and match with their normally written equivalents. Then they received some questions and their responses only in phonemic transcription to match. Students found this last part of this activity quite difficult as they had nothing to rely on for help, however after struggling for some time, most of them succeeded.

There was a feeling of amazement when they finished the activity. They were both surprised and intrigued with the idea of so many reductions as well as linkings in the spoken language. It was as if they were "seeing" spoken language for the very first time. Not only did they begin to understand some of the idiosyncrasies of the language as far as pronunciation is concerned, but they also had some visual idea of it. I then realized that the most effective combination in teaching listening comprehension is to make students see the spoken language as well as hear it.

This visual need for most students, when catered for as in seeing spoken language in phonemic transcription, heightened their awareness. They seemed to have begun to comprehend the general shape of the spoken form which they had not mastered and most of the time were unable to understand. As Crystal says when introducing spoken and written English:

> We begin with spoken English, the more natural and widespread mode of transmission, though ironically the one which most people find much less familiar – presumably because it is so much more difficult to 'see' what is happening in speech than in writing.[…] The origins of the written language lie in the spoken language, not the other way round. It is therefore one of life's ironies that traditionally in present-day education we do not learn about spoken language until well after we have learned the basic properties of the written language. As a result, it is inevitable that we think of speech using the frame of reference which belongs to writing. We even use some of the terms, and it can come as something of a shock to realize that these terms do not always have the same meaning. (CRYSTAL, 2003, p.235/236)

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[49] See Attachment C.

The fact that students could "see" spoken language rendered a new perspective, it was as if for the very first time they shifted this frame of reference and looked at spoken language dissociated from traditional writing. Not only could they see that instead of the five traditional vowels there are many more in spoken language, but also the fact that those vowels as well as the consonants somehow change, merge, disappear and sometimes turn into completely different forms in connected speech.

As a follow up activity I divided the class in pairs to interview each other. Each pair sat in front of each other but separated on either side of the room. They had to shout questions across the room for their partners to answer. Each one had a different set of questions (related to the topic they were studying) in phonemic transcription. This time they had to try to ask their questions exactly the way it was pronounced in spoken English, using the transcription as a reference. This boisterous activity gave room for the timid ones to speak up as they had to put their meaning across the room literally, speaking loudly in order to be heard. It was both an exercise in pronunciation and listening.

Afterwards we did a listening activity from their coursebook (p.10) and following the assigned task (skimming for gist), they looked at the tape scripts trying to find where word boundaries would disappear in spoken language. I also asked them to pay particular attention to the regular verbs in the past, of which in fact there were several examples that modified the following word. After much discussion, we checked by listening to the recording again.

Meeting 5: 7th March 2008 – Number of students in the group = 20

Students in class =17

I had made my point about connected speech in the previous meetings. However, I had only presented it in a general way. But before starting to show some of the features in English that render spoken language so different from the written one, we practised some voice-setting in order to make students aware of the differences between English and Portuguese as far as the placement of the voice is concerned. As Thornbury (1992, p. 128) says: "Consistent with the current holistic,

top-down paradigm, the implications of such descriptions[50] are, of course, that by teaching the 'whole' the bits might take care of themselves."

I started by asking students to try to speak Portuguese with an English accent[51], we then discussed what differences it made to do this. In order to try and place the voice in the chest, I asked the students to yawn and count to ten with a yawning voice. According to Wingate (1998, p.31) "The yawning voice is very English: open-throated, relaxed, chest-resonant." Following that, students counted to ten using a nasal voice and then trying to find out in which part: chest, nose or head, they felt the most vibration when speaking Portuguese. It was a difficult task but they somehow realized that when speaking Portuguese we do not place the voice as much in the chest as when speaking English.

As a final activity I asked students to say a sentence interspersed with *'er…'* and *'um…'* which are sounds that English native speakers use when they do not know what to say next. As Wingate (1998, p.31) says "The relaxed position of the mouth when saying *'er…'* and *'um…'* is the shape of the English-speaking mouth". To illustrate that we did a listening from the coursebook (p.12) where students listened to an interview and wrote down the questions, then scanned for specific information.

All the way throughout the lesson students carried on playing with the positioning of the voice when doing all sorts of exercises that followed these voice-setting ones. They certainly became more aware that the differences between Portuguese and English go far beyond lexis and grammar.

Meeting 6: 14th March 2008 – Number of students in the group = 20

Students in class =16

Having somehow established the voice-setting in the previous lesson, I decided to do some work on the rhythm of the language. As mentioned in chapter 3, section 3.3, trying to make students repeat patterns so as to maintain the same beat through tone units do not help them understand the rhythm of the English language. Therefore, I decided to work on weak forms, as it is probably the most important feature that imposes certain rhythm on the language. However, before doing so I

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[50] Meaning descriptions of features of voice-setting in the language
[51] The activities described in this meeting were taken from Wingate (1998, p.31).

started with chunking and pausing, and then prominence which is the placement of sentence stress.

To make my point, I started by pairing up students and asking them to analyze which of the following errors committed by a foreign visitor in England when talking to his/her host about dinner, would lead to the worst form of misunderstanding[52].

1. At what hour will dinner be ready?
2. When has dinner ready?
3. When will be dinner ready?
4. When WILL dinner be ready?

Students came up with all sorts of ideas of what the errors were, especially on the second one, which some of them felt would leave the host at a loss. The ones who chose the fourth error could not explain why they felt it was wrong. They said that it just did not feel right. We then went through the examples one by one deciding what the mistake was, and if it would cause any kind of misunderstanding. The lexical error in 1 was considered easily comprehended; the grammatical error in 2 created some uncertainty as mentioned above; the syntactic error in 3 was considered acceptable, and the pronunciation error in 4 was acknowledged as giving a 'strange format' (they could not find the exact word to describe it) to the utterance.

I then started showing the difference between Portuguese and English, the syllables in the former playing a more important role in the rhythm of the sentence than in the latter. I pointed out to students that information is chunked in English. As Marks (2007, p.44) says "Developing fluency and 'speed' in articulation is actually a question of producing continuous chunks, or 'speech units', and pausing in appropriate places". And those pauses depend on which meaning the speaker wants to convey to the utterance.

E.g.[53] [Excuse me] [is this seat free?] - a longer pause between the two chunks indicate that the speaker wants to draw the listener's attention before carrying on. A shorter pause may indicate that eye contact has already been made and the speaker does not need to draw the listener's attention. However, even if the pause is almost non-existent, we can recognize two chunks. It is this packaging of words in chunks within the sentence that renders fluent speech, not the ability to run words

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[52] This activity was taken from Bowen and Marks (1994, p.61).
[53] From Marks (2007, p 45).

together as if dictating a list, which is what a great majority of students, especially at lower levels, do.

We did a listening from their coursebooks (p.17) where students listened to three jokes to match to the pictures. Students were asked to listen to the rhythm of the language, thinking about the way these jokes would be told if in Portuguese.

After getting in touch with this idea of speech units, students need to know the difference between word stress, which is dictated by the language and sentence stress or prominence which is mostly a decision made by the speaker. This placement of prominence at the same time establishes where weak forms occur in the sentence. In order to illustrate the idea of prominence, I told students that they had gone to the airport to catch their flight home, but there was a strike and all flights had been postponed for forty-eight hours. They had to send a telegram with as few words as possible as they did not have much money to do so[54].

In order to accomplish the task, students had to think about the most important information they needed to convey. They ended up choosing the words which would be stressed in a spoken utterance, somehow grasping the idea of stress.

To wrap things up we did a listening from the coursebook. I played it turning the volume down gradually, for them to try to hear only the prominent words. They seemed to have started to catch a glimpse of the importance of stress in spoken language.

21st March 2008 – Easter holiday

Meeting 7: 28th March 2008 – Number of students in the group = 20

Students in class =14

Having presented stress the previous lesson, it was time to compare with the unstressed words that end up carrying weak forms. This idea of weak form is one that is often overlooked by the majority of teachers, in spite of the fact that it is not difficult to find in coursebook activities which deal with such a feature.

I then played a listening from their coursebook (p.25), which coincidentally dealt with word stress, and asked them to mark tone unit boundaries while listening. I

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[54] Idea from Kenworthy (1987, p.33)

then asked students what they had noticed about the words that hadn't been stressed. I explained that weak forms did not carry any content message in the utterance.

We did another listening from their coursebook (p.26), and afterwards I wrote three sentences from this listening on the board for the students to pay close attention to specifically, when listening to the whole text again. I wrote the dictionary transcription of some of the weak forms on the board, and played the tape again for them to check if those words were pronounced like these transcriptions. Students were surprised to find that those words could have two distinguishing pronunciations. E.g. What are you looking <u>for</u>? /fɔː/

    I'm looking <u>for</u> my book? /fə/

I then gave students a handout[55] to decide if the underlined word was strong or weak, which they did in pairs. From then on throughout the lesson, students were pointing out weak forms in everything they said or heard from their peers.

Meeting 8: 4th April 2008 – Written activity and revision for the mid-term test.

Meeting 9: 11th April 2008 – Oral and Written tests.

Meeting 10: 18th April 2008 – Number of students in the group = 19

                               Students in class =17

As it had been three weeks since we had tackled the idea of weak forms and stress, I decided to revise it and at the same time showing students that a change of the tonic also changed the meaning we want to convey with the utterance. Students played a card game in groups where they had to read sentences aloud for their peers[56]. The first listener to provide a reply correcting the mistake and using contrastive stress won the card. It was a very good listening as well as pronunciation exercise, as the student holding the card had to try to speak as naturally as possible by trying to copy the rhythm of the language, while his/her peers tried to identify the mistakes.

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[55] See Appendix D.
[56] See Attachment D for the activity which was taken from Hancock (1995, p. 94-95).

We also checked the listening from their mid-term oral tests in trying to find out why students had made mistakes and when pronunciation features were to be blamed for misunderstandings.

Meeting 11: 25th April 2008 – Number of students in the group = 19

Students in class =16

Although I felt that students needed to do some more specific work on weak forms and stress, due to time constraints I decided to move on to some post-lexical processes in English. I then started with word linking, giving students a set of 20 incomplete sentences, all of which contained linking, to fill in the gaps as they listened to the recording[57]. Students had a really hard time trying to complete the sentences, finding it very difficult. After they had listened for the second time I played the sentences again, this time stopping at each one, writing them on the board and explaining what made them so difficult to understand.

As a follow up we did a listening from their coursebook (p.36), where students first had to understand the gist and then complete the sentence with a colloquial word or phrase. We then did some work on pronunciation of those expressions as chunks.

Meeting 12: 2nd May 2008 – Number of students in the group = 19

Students in class =15

Having presented linking the previous lesson, it was time to have a look at intrusion which is also a kind of linking. I then wrote some sentences on the board and asked students to read them aloud over and over again to see if they could hear any kind of linking when in fast speech.

E.g. grey and blue, every year, law and order, you and me.

To my disappointment, they could not hear anything, so I had to read for them somehow exaggerating the intrusion so that they could see what happens between the vowel sounds.

I then showed students the following rules on how intrusion takes place in between vowels. According to Hancock:

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[57] See Attachment E for the activity which was taken from Vaughan-Rees (220, p.57)

> The sounds /j/ and /w/ can also be pronounced to separate vowel sounds.
> - If the first word ends in a vowel sound like /i/ and the next word starts with any vowel sound, we add the sound /j/.
> - If the first word ends in a vowel sound like /uː/ or /ʊ/ and the next word starts with any vowel sound, we add the sound /w/. (Hancock, 2004, p.86)

Following this explanation, students played a game in pairs, where they had to find the end of a maze by following directions according to the linking sound[58]. Using the above rules as support, they managed to do so. Nevertheless, when I played a listening from their coursebook (p.42) they did not find examples of intrusion as easily as they had found of the other features.

Meeting 13: 9th May 2008 – Number of students in the group = 19

Students in class =12

I started this lesson by asking students the time this way: /wɔstaɪm/?[59]. Students looked at me as if I had gone utterly mad, as this was the first thing I said to them after entering the classroom. As I had no reply, I asked them what I had just said. I had some replies like: *What is I'm?* and *What design?.* I then said it again, but this time in a fuller version: /wɔsətaɪm/? Then, perhaps because I also had their fuller attention, I had some correct guesses. I then wrote the two versions of this question on the board together with another three fuller versions:

1. /wɔstaɪm/
2. /wɔsətaɪm/
3. /wɔtsətaɪm/
4. /wɔtsðətaɪm/
5. /wɔtɪzðətaɪm/

We then had a close look at those versions, and I asked students if they knew what had happened, what had made version 5 'shrink' into version 1. I also noticed, as Underhill points out:

> It is interesting to observe the ways in which learners respond to step 3. They often 'hear into the utterance' more that I actually said. That is, they recognize /wɔstaɪm/ as meaning *What is the time?* but it is not until they hear the less simplified versions that they realize that they have been hearing more than was there. (UNDERHILL, 1994, p. 176)

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[58] See Attachment F.
[59] Idea based on Underhill (1994, p.175).

In fact students did feel surprised when they realized how much we hear what is not there. To illustrate my point, I asked them to write down the list of chunks I was going to dictate to them: /hɪsedguːbbaɪ/, /ðɪʃʃɔp/, /hɪzəfæpbɔɪ/, /ðɪʒʃɔps/, /wʌzəgreippartɪ/, /ðekkætɪsɪk/, /guːgɜːl/, /əvbiːŋɡəʊɪŋautwɪθɪm/, /dʒulɪvwɪθɪm/, /wʌzəguːgkənsət/, /tempaːsnain/ and /laːstʃɪə/. Although I had the students' undivided attention, they did have problems with some of those chunks. When they finished I wrote on the board the phonemic transcription of what I had just dictated.

Following that, I paired them up and gave them the list of questions[60] below to answer using the phonemic transcription we had just analyzed from the board.

1.   When is a /n/ a /m/?
2.   When is a /t/ a /p/?
3.   When is a /d/ a /b/?
4.   When is a /s/ a /ʃ/?
5.   When is a /z/ a /ʒ/?
6.   When is a /n/ a /ŋ/?
7.   When is a /d/ a /g/?
8.   When is a /t/ a /k/?]

As students had the phonemic transcription on the board, it was not so difficult for them to identify such assimilations. Having done that, I showed students some examples of assimilation and some rules not for them to memorize, but to be aware that there is a pattern that regulates those changes in spoken language. I wanted them to know that these processes always occur in fast speech.

I showed the following rules based on Kelly (2007, p. 109/110):

1. /t/, /d/ and /n/ become respectively /p/, /b/ and /m/ before /p/, /b/ and /m/.

E.g. /hɪzəfæ**p**bɔɪ/, /hɪsedguː**b**baɪ/ and /te**m**paːsnain/.

2. /t/, /d/ and /n/ become respectively /k/, /g/ and /ŋ/ before /k/ or /g/.

E.g. /ðe**k**kætɪsɪk/, /wʌzəguː**g**kənsət/ and /əvbiː**ŋ**ɡəʊɪŋautwɪθɪm/.

3. /s/ and /ʃ/ become respectively /ʃ/ and /ʒ/ before /ʃ/.

E.g. /ðɪ**ʃ**ʃɔp/ and /ðɪ**ʒ**ʃɔps/.

4. /t/ and /d/ coalesce with /j/ to become respectively /tʃ/ and /dʒ/.

E.g. /laːs**tʃ**ɪə/ and /**dʒ**ulɪvwɪθɪm/.

After giving this explanation, we did a listening from their book (p.44). However, after having played it twice, I asked them to look at the tapescript at the end of their books (p.155) and, in pairs, try to find assimilations and linkings. We then did the listening again, checking their predictions.

Meeting 14: 16th May 2008 – Number of students in the group = 17

Students in class =15

We had looked at assimilation and linking in the previous lessons. I started this time with a game where, in pairs, students had to match cards[61] with nonsense sentences to their replies. Those sentences were the result of listening misunderstandings, due to features of connected speech, such as linking, assimilation and elision.

E.g.

Alaska if she wants to come with us.	You'll ask who?

After checking the matches, I asked students to try and identify the source of those misunderstandings without worrying about technical names such as assimilation, etc. What I wanted is that by reconstructing the full form, students were thinking about those simplifications that render spoken language sometimes so difficult to understand. Looking at the example above, I wanted students to produce the following: Alaska = I will ask her, and try to explain that '*I*' got together with '*will*' becoming '*I'll*' in a contracted form, the '*I*' ,was linked to '*ask*' producing '*alask*', and because '*I*' and '*her*' are weak forms the schwa /ə/ took over, producing the /ə/ at the beginning and at the end, therefore misleading the listener to understand Alaska.

Some students were a bit confused with the disappearance of the */h/* in '*her*'. Thus, I talked about elision and asked them to find examples where phonemes or whole syllables elided. It was not an easy task, and I felt that some students had not grasped the whole idea yet. However, when I went through the examples with them,

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[61] For the activity, see Attachment G, adapted from Vaughan-Rees (2004, p.19) and Hancock (1995, p.80/81).

they seemed to have understood what had happened, in spite of still feeling rather insecure about those features. I tried to reassure those students, by telling them that they did not need to be able to point out each and every feature that produced those simplified forms, they only needed to be aware that they occur in fast connected speech.

When I played the listening which was part of the story in the lesson (p. 47), I asked students to be very attentive to those features of connected speech. When checking their answers, we looked at the incorrect ones, trying to find on the tape the point where communication had broken down and why.

Meeting 15: 23rd May 2008 – Number of students in the group = 17

Students in class =13

As we had already covered the most important features of connected speech, to wrap things up, I did some knock knock jokes[62], where we can find a variety of those features. In fact those children's jokes are nothing but a play with the phonetic idiosyncrasies of the English language.

Eg. Elision and linking - Knock knock
        Who's there?
        Didi.
        Didi who?
        <u>Didi</u> come here?   Didi /dɪdiː/ = Did he

    Assimilation - Knock knock
        Who's there?
        Juno.
        Juno who?
        <u>Juno</u> how long I've been waiting for you to open this door?

        Juno /dʒʊnəʊ/ = Do you know

Students had to identify the full form of the utterance as well as try to explain what had happened. Once again, I did not expect students to be so technical so as to explain accurately which feature was at work there. They only needed to try to point out what had happened to word boundaries as connected speech took over.

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[62] See Appendix E for the handout given to the students.

That was an activity that students had lots of fun doing, and it certainly left students with a positive feeling towards the teaching of pronunciation.

Meeting 16: 30th May 2008 – Number of students in the group = 16

<div align="center">Students in class =14</div>

This was the last meeting before revision and the tests. I then decided to show students a thirty-minute episode of the sitcom 'Friends' to relax before doing the FCE final test. While they were watching the episode I pointed out, once again, to some of the features of connected speech. They watched the film enthusiastically. However when I started the FCE listening test they said they were too tired to do it, I persuaded them to do it anyway.

Meeting 17: 6th June 2008 – Number of students in the group = 16

<div align="center">Students in class =16</div>

This lesson was supposed to include the written activity and revision for the tests only. However, as students had complained of tiredness after having watched the 'Friends' episode before the actual test, I administered a second FCE final listening test.

Meeting 18: 13th June 2008 – Oral and Written tests

6.3 – Summary

Whenever I look back at those lessons, I am bound to find things that could have been improved, extended, and better explored. I would certainly have done more activities on intonation, as I feel I did not explore it as much I should have. I also feel that I have not given students much time to consider each feature I presented, although I was always drawing their attention to those features even when I was not concentrating on pronunciation only. But then I know that I had just one semester, and that if those kinds of activities are extended to the whole course, at the

end students will really have understood the nature of spoken language, hence they will have become better speakers and as a consequence, even better listeners.

The students in this group did enjoy those pronunciation activities; it was like opening a new door of possibilities to get a good grip on the spoken language. They even acknowledged this fact when I interviewed them at the end of the semester[63]. For them it was like getting in touch with spoken language for the very first time, in spite of the fact that they were finishing the basic course.

When I finished this semester I felt that no matter what the results were in the final listening test, I had made them see language from an entirely different point of view and that would justify the use of pronunciation in class. Nevertheless, results were even more encouraging as we can see in the next chapter.

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[63] See Appendix F, for the whole transcript of the interview, and section 7.3 in the next chapter for more considerations on students feedback.

CHAPTER 7   PRESENTING RESEARCH RESULTS

All the way throughout one semester students did pronunciation awareness raising exercises trying to understand what happens to spoken language when it is in the stream of speech, in order to improve their listening skills. Those exercises, which were produced, bearing in mind the theory explored in chapters 3 to 5, were thoroughly described in the previous chapter. Students' performance in the listening skill was assessed at the end of the semester using the Cambridge FCE Listening test. The results were then compared with their diagnostic test which had been administered at the beginning of this period.

This chapter indicates the results of those tests, as well as the students' feedback on the whole process. It shows how the tests were administered, the problems I had when doing them and compares the results, drawing some conclusions.

Before showing those results, however, I turn to the FCE Listening Test, in order to explain the choice of part 2 of this test as the main means of assessment.

7.1   Looking closer at the FCE listening assessment test

In spite of the fact that students did the whole listening test, for the subject of this research the focus is on part two only, and the grades were given considering their performance in that part. This is because part two tests candidates' abilities to listen for specific information, whereas the other parts focus on gist and also assesses students' interpretative abilities: they listen to a number of clues that lead them to specific answers. Getting the correct information is not dependent on an exact moment on the recording when the student finds the answer; but there are some indications, repetitions or reformulations all the way through the recording that lead to the correct answer. Looking closer at the tests we can clearly see this happening.

Excerpts from the first FCE listening test they did[64]:

- PART 1

Part 1 – Multiple choice - Question 3

You overhear a woman talking to a man about something that happened to her.
Who was she?
A *a pedestrian*
B *a driver*
C *a passenger*

Transcript

Woman: I tell you, we were dead lucky! He could have done some serious damage if we hadn't reacted so quickly.
Man: What did he do – just shoot straight out without looking?
Woman: Yeah. Clare yelled something at me and I just slammed on the brakes.
Man: Did he stop?
Woman: You're joking! Just blasted his horn at us and carried on.
Man: And there was nobody behind?
Woman: No, fortunately, otherwise who knows what might have happened.
Man: You were lucky. That road's always busy.

Examining part 1, we can see that throughout the recording there are three strong indications of the correct answer: *'slammed on the brakes', 'blasted his horn'* and *'That road's always busy'.* Thus, as the recording is played twice, listeners have six chances to get the correct answer.

- PART 3

Part 3 - Multiple matching

You will hear five different people talking about their work on a cruise ship. From questions 19-23, choose from the list (A-F) what each speaker says about their work. Use the letters only once. There is an extra letter which you do not need to use.

A   One aspect of my job is less interesting than others.
B   My job involves planning for the unexpected.
C   You have to be sociable to do my job.   Speaker 1
D   I don't like routine in my working life.
E   There's not much work to do during the day.
F   I provide passengers with a souvenir of their trip.

Transcript

Speaker 1

Man: *I deal with anything to do with entertainment on board, and that covers guest lecturers, cabaret artists, the show company and any special nights. I have to plan each cruise with all the performers and then introduce them at the beginning of the show. There's never a dull moment and if I want time to*

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[64] For the complete test as well as transcript, see Attachments H and I.

myself, I have to escape to my cabin because ==a huge part of my job is to mix with people. There are often parties to attend…and then, sometimes, dance nights to organize. So, if I'm not in the shows, I'll be out there dancing with the passengers, because that's part of my job too.==

Having a closer look at part 3, it is clear all through the recording that the person 'needs to be sociable'. The recording repeats the same idea over and over again, giving listeners the chance to miss some parts, misunderstand some words but, as the clues are all over the place, still get it in the end. What is demanded from the listener is their ability to understand the gist, not specific information.

- PART 4 -

As for Part Four, it tests the listener's interpretative abilities as the following question shows:

Part 4 –

You will hear a radio discussion in which four people are talking about the advertising of children's toys on television. For questions 24 to 30, ==decide which views are expressed by any of the speakers and which are not.== Write YES for those views which are expressed and NO for those which are not expressed.[65]

In parts 1, 3 and 4 there are a number of clues such as repetition, reformulation that point to the correct answer. What is involved is beyond breaking connected speech into pieces, it focuses on interpreting things like moods, attitudes, relationships, intention, opinion, etc. This requires some training, which students get in their three-semester preparation course. It is in part two that candidates need to have the ability to break up the fluidity of connected speech into chunks to find specific information. As such information is precise, if they do not manage to understand it the very moment it is uttered, they will not have another chance. We can see that in the following excerpt:

- PART 2

Part 2 – Sentence completion

You´ll hear a radio interview with Mike Reynolds, whose hobby is exploring underground places such as caves. For questions 9 to 18, complete the sentences.

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[65] In this part I have not added the transcript as the question is self-explanatory, however, this is found in Attachment I.

[…] Cavers explore underground places such as mines and ……………………….. (9) as well as caves.
When cavers camp underground, they choose places which have………………..and……………. (10) available.
In the UK, the place Mike likes best for caving is……………………… (11).
As a physical activity, Mike compares caving to……………............. (12).

Transcript

Interviewer: *In the studio with me today, I have Mike Reynolds who's what is known as a caver. In other words, he spends long periods of time exploring underground caves for pleasure. And Mike's here to tell us all about this fascinating hobby and how to get started on it. So Mike, why caves?*
Mike: *Well, cavers actually explore any space that's underground whether it's caves, old mines or* tunnels *(9).*
Interviewer: *Oh right. So how big are these underground spaces?*
Mike: *Oh – anything up to 80 kilometres long…which means that, in some cases, in order to reach the end you've got to sleep, to set up camp, inside the cave at some point – usually where both* space *and* fresh air *(10) are available.*
Interviewer: *No good if you are afraid of the dark.*
Mike: *No.*
Interviewer: *So, where do you find the best caves?*
Mike: *In terms of countries, the best places are, for example, Ireland, Australia and the Philippines. Here in the UK, various areas have the right sort of geology. My favourite is* Wales*(11), but you can find plenty of caves in northern England and in Scotland too.*
Interviewer: *Caving involves a lot of physical exercise, doesn't it?*
Mike: *That's right…in terms of physical activity, it's very similar to* climbing *(12) except that they go up and we go down.*

Apparently, Part Two is the easiest part, because one does not have to interpret views or moods or understand the general idea in order to make inferences. Nevertheless, it is pure understanding of words embebbed in connected speech, and it is considered by the majority of the students who are preparing for the test, the most difficult part. Statistically, at least from my experience with this test[66], this part is the one which students score the lowest. However, the straightforward simplicity of filling gaps with information that comes in the same order of the text makes part two a very reliable assessment tool to measure students' abilities to understand connected speech. It is then that we assess their capacity of breaking up chunks of 'fluid' language into manageable pieces.

It is noteworthy to point out that listening comprehension is not only about being able to understand connected speech, understanding moods, intentions,

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[66] I have been teaching the FCE level for about ten years now. I also coordinated the advanced and the Cambridge exam groups at Cultura Inglesa, having given up this position to do this research.

context, etc. However, being able to make sense of the amorphous mass of connected speech is certainly a good start to grasp the overall content of the spoken utterance. This research aims to show how pronunciation awareness raising exercises can help students mentally reconstruct the building blocks that comprise connected speech. That is why it concentrates on part 2 of the FCE test.

7.2 – Research Results

As mentioned in chapter 1, the results of the diagnostic test directed the choice of the group I applied the experiment to. It was conducted in the group whose students had the lowest mark in the test. This group was henceforth called the *Experimental Group.* In fact, this group's overall performance in part 2 of the test was 5.6% as opposed to 27% of the other group - namely the *Control Group.* As for the Experimental Group's overall performance in the whole diagnostic test, it was very poor, only 19.4% as opposed to 42.5% of the Control Group. (See Tables 8.1 and 8.2)

STUDENTS (16 out of 19)	Part 1 (out of 8)	Part 2 (out of 10)	Part 3 (out of 5)	Part 4 (out of 7)	Total (out of 30)	Student's feedback
S1	1	0	1	1	3	Extremely difficult
S2	0	1	0	3	4	Extremely difficult
S3	1	0	1	3	5	Difficult
S4	1	1	3	4	9	Extremely difficult
S5	4	0	0	3	7	Extremely difficult
S6	1	0	1	0	2	Difficult
S7	2	1	0	3	6	Difficult
S8	1	0	2	3	6	Difficult
S9	4	1	0	1	6	Difficult
S10	-	-	-	-	-	-
S11	6	2	1	2	11	Extremely difficult
S12	3	0	2	3	8	Difficult
S13	-	-	-	-	-	-
S14	0	0	0	0	0	Difficult
S15	2	0	0	0	2	Extremely difficult
S16	-	-	-	-	-	-
S17	3	2	1	4	10	Difficult
S18	2	0	1	0	3	Extremely difficult
S19	4	1	1	5	11	Difficult
TOTAL	35	9 / 5.6%	14	35	AVERAGE / 19.4%	

Table 7.1 – Experimental group – FCE listening test 1 (Diagnostic test)

STUDENTS (17 out of 20)	Part 1 (out of 8)	Part 2 (out of 10)	Part 3 (out of 5)	Part 4 (out of 7)	Total (out of 30)	Student's feedback
S1	-	-	-	-	-	-
S2	4	5	0	4	13	Difficult
S3	5	1	4	3	13	-
S4	-	-	-	-	-	-
S5	4	2	2	5	13	Difficult
S6	7	3	0	3	13	Difficult
S7	6	0	2	2	10	Difficult
S8	2	1	0	2	5	Difficult
S9	2	2	0	5	9	-
S10	6	6	0	6	18	-
S11	-	-	-	-	-	-
S12	6	0	3	5	14	Difficult
S13	3	1	2	5	11	Difficult
S14	8	6	3	7	24	Not so difficult
S15	2	2	1	3	8	Difficult
S16	5	4	2	2	13	Difficult
S17	5	3	0	0	8	Difficult
S18	5	4	4	3	16	Difficult
S19	5	4	0	6	15	Not so difficult
S20	4	2	3	5	14	Extremely difficult
TOTAL	79	46	26	66	AVERAGE	
		27%			42.5%	

Table 7.2 - Control group – FCE listening test 1 (Diagnostic test)

Looking closer at both group's performance in part two, where students had to manage to single out 10 words in the string of speech[67], we can clearly see the difference in performance between them. The Control Group far outperformed the Experimental one (see Table 7.3). Considering that this test is way above their level – and that the average student should be ready to do it only after another two years of language lessons[68], the performance of some students (35.29%) in the Control Group was outstanding[69].

GROUPS	Number of correct words out of 10						
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6 (pass mark)
Experimental (Number of students out of 16)	9 (56.25%)	5 (31.25%)	2 (12.5%)	-	-	-	-
Control (Number of students out of 17)	2 (11.76%)	3 (17.64%)	4 (23.53%)	2 (11.76%)	3 (17.64%)	1 (5.88%)	(11.76%)

Table 7.3 – Comparison of groups' performance in part 2.

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[67] See section 7.1 for a thorough explanation of part 2 of the FCE listening test.
[68] Considering the fact that they are not in an English speaking environment. That is what happens to the average student at some language schools in the city of Maceió-AL, Brazil.
[69] The average grade to pass this exam is 60%, the students who obtained 4 to 6 correct answers, four semesters short of taking the exam, managing to keep those standards, are bound to perform brilliantly in the actual test.

As for students' feedback after the test, there was not much difference among the students in the two groups. Both groups considered the test either difficult or extremely difficult. Only two students in the Control Group found it not so difficult. (see Tables 7.1 and 7.2). Having said that, the difference between the two groups as to attitude towards listening was remarkable. The Experimental Group, in general, felt intimidated by it, whereas the Control Group, in general, did not feel much anxiety when having to face a listening task.

That was the first change that I noticed in the Experimental Group, as the semester went by, they were feeling more and more at ease with listening tasks. Maybe this was due to two different facts: firstly, I made them do more of those tasks than they had ever done before, and that forced familiarity with such tasks which helped diminish their anxiety towards them. Secondly, by attempting to understand spoken language through pronunciation awareness exercises, students started to get over the feeling of helplessness towards a listening task.

From my experience as a language teacher, I have noticed that when pressed by a time constraint, teachers tend to skip listening tasks in favour of grammatical points that will certainly be covered in the test. Worse still is formal[70] pronunciation activities, which are completely forgotten when one does not have much time to cover the entire syllabus. Moreover, as aforementioned, the time constraint is a big issue in those groups that meet only once a week[71].

That was my first feeling of accomplishment, when I realized that I had managed to slot in those extra listening and pronunciation exercises, in spite of being pressed for time. I then perceived that not only is it possible to include more listening activities in the lessons, but also some formal pronunciation teaching, without impairing the teaching of grammar and lexis. That was an issue that had worried me when I first thought about doing this experiment with this particular group.

In fact we managed time so well, due to students' cooperation as they became highly engaged in the project, that I had an entire lesson to administer the final FCE listening test in the Experimental Group. That was when I made my biggest mistake: I decided to award this group with an episode of the sitcom *Friends* before doing the actual test. To make matters worse, I did so without letting them have subtitles in

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[70] By formal I mean not incidental, as most pronunciation practice tends to happen because a student mispronounced a word or the teacher wants to focus on difficult words, etc.
[71] See Chapter 6, section 6.1 for more details about this group.

English. That was because I wanted them to feel that they were able to understand spoken English without the help of the written caption.

Students were quite happy to have understood a lot of the episode. However, after thirty minutes of undivided attention, as they made a great effort to try to understand everything, their attention span went down considerably, thus affecting their concentration when doing the actual listening test. This I realized when they started complaining about tiredness even at the beginning of the test. I should not have persuaded them to do it, but I wanted to do some revision for their final test the following lesson. As for the Control Group, I had done the test fifteen minutes after the lesson had begun, just to give some time for the late comers to arrive.

The result of this first final test, as far as the Experimental Group was concerned, was rather discouraging, as students' performance, albeit having improved, did not live up to my expectations. This group went from an overall performance of 19.4% (see table 7.1) to 28.3% (see table 7.4) in the whole test. In part 2 they obtained 17.8% (see table 7.4), as opposed to 5.6% (see table 8.1) they had had in their diagnostic test. After one regular semester, that is to say, working with the groups in a traditional way, without much emphasis in pronunciation exercises, such improvement is expected.

STUDENTS (14 out of 19)	Part 1 (out of 8)	Part 2 (out of 10)	Part 3 (out of 5)	Part 4 (out of 7)	Total (out of 30)	Student's feedback
S1	1	2	1	1	5	Extremely difficult
S2	2	3	3	1	9	Not so difficult
S3	-	-	-	-	-	-
S4	4	2	1	3	10	Not so difficult
S5	-	-	-	-	-	-
S6	-	-	-	-	-	-
S7	2	1	4	3	10	Difficult
S8	1	1	2	3	7	Extremely difficult
S9	-	-	-	-	-	Difficult
S10	4	1	3	2	10	Extremely difficult
S11	3	5	3	1	12	Difficult
S12	4	0	3	1	8	Difficult
S13	5	2	1	2	10	Difficult
S14	3	2	3	0	8	Extremely difficult
S15	1	0	3	2	6	Difficult
S16	2	2	1	3	7	Difficult
S17	-	-	-	-	-	-
S18	3	1	1	3	8	Difficult
S19	2	3	2	2	9	Difficult
TOTAL	37	25	31	27	AVERAGE	
		17.8%			28.3%	

Table 7.4 - Experimental group – FCE listening test (First Final test)

The only factor that draws attention is the students' feedback to the test, as not many of them found the test extremely difficult: 43.75% of the students in the diagnostic test went down to 28.57% in the first final test.

As for the Control Group (see table 7.5), their results were as expected, a slight increase in listening abilities after one semester's work. What is noticeable is that the students found the test less difficult than the previous one: 64.7% had rated the diagnostic test as difficult, contrasting to 21.47% in this first final test.

STUDENTS (14 out of 20)	Part 1 (out of 8)	Part 2 (out of 10)	Part 3 (out of 5)	Part 4 (out of 7)	Total (out of 30)	Student's feedback
S1	7	3	5	4	19	-
S2	-	-	-	-	-	-
S3	2	4	4	5	15	Not so difficult
S4	-	-	-	-	-	-
S5	6	3	4	5	18	Difficult
S6	6	5	5	6	22	Not so difficult
S7	-	-	-	-	-	-
S8	4	2	5	2	14	Difficult
S9	4	2	3	3	12	Not so difficult
S10	-	-	-	-	-	-
S11	2	3	1	4	10	Not so difficult
S12	-	-	-	-	-	-
S13	5	6	4	5	20	Difficult
S14	8	7	5	7	27	Easy
S15	-	-	-	-	-	-
S16	7	4	4	7	22	Not so difficult
S17	5	2	3	2	12	Not so difficult
S18	2	2	2	4	10	Extremely difficult
S19	6	8	5	5	24	Not so difficult
S20	5	2	3	3	13	Not so difficult
TOTAL	70	54	55	62	AVERAGE	
		38.6%			56.7%	

Table 7.5 - Control group – FCE listening test (First Final test)

Comparing the 12.2% improvement of the Experimental Group, in relation to part 2 (see table 7.6), with 11.6% of the Control Group, one may catch a glimpse of the importance of teaching pronunciation awareness exercises in order to improve listening skills, however this is not enough to validate the claim that such exercises did help those students improve their listening comprehension.

GROUPS	DIAGNOSTIC TEST		FIRST FINAL TEST		IMPROVEMENT	
	Part 2	overall	Part 2	overall	Part 2	overall
Experimental	5.6%	19.4%	17.8%	28.3%	12.2%	8.9%
Control	27%	42.5%	38.6%	56.7%	11.6%	14.2%

Table 7.6 – Comparing students' performance between the diagnostic and the first final test.

That was my first feeling when I calculated the results of this first final test. Nevertheless, from my experience as a teacher, I knew that one of the facts that hinder students' performance in listening comprehension is lack of concentration, which is something that is vital to the whole process. Motivated by this assumption, and the incident that had happened to the Experimental Group, namely the loss of concentration because of tiredness, I decided to do a second final test[72]. This time I gave the test, to both groups, fifteen minutes after the beginning of the class. Not so surprisingly, the results were significantly different. (See tables 7.7 and 7.9)

The Experimental Group's performance was outstanding, 45% in part two as opposed to 5.6% and 17.8% in the diagnostic and the first final test respectively. (See tables 7.7, 7.1 and 7.4).

STUDENTS (16 out of 19)	Part 1 (out of 8)	Part 2 (out of 10)	Part 3 (out of 5)	Part 4 (out of 7)	Total (out of 30)	Student's feedback
S1	1	5	0	3	9	Extremely difficult
S2	3	5	1	1	10	Not so difficult
S3	1	5	0	1	7	Difficult
S4	3	8	2	3	16	Not so difficult
S5	-	-	-	-	-	-
S6	-	-	-	-	-	-
S7	0	3	2	2	7	Difficult
S8	5	4	2	4	15	Extremely difficult
S9	1	5	2	1	9	Difficult
S10	3	4	2	5	14	Extremely difficult
S11	4	7	3	3	17	Difficult
S12	3	2	2	4	11	Difficult
S13	4	6	3	2	15	Difficult
S14	2	1	3	2	8	Extremely difficult
S15	3	3	1	2	9	Difficult
S16	3	5	2	0	10	Difficult
S17	-	-	-	-	-	-
S18	1	4	2	1	8	Difficult
S19	2	5	2	3	12	Difficult
TOTAL	39	72	29	37	AVERAGE	
		45%			37%	

Table 7.7 - Experimental group – FCE listening test (Second Final test)

Looking closer at the performance of the students in the Experimental Group in part 2 of the test (see table 7.8), one can see that those pronunciation awareness exercises did play an important role in developing those students' ability to

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[72] It is important to point out that the tests which were administered to the groups were exactly the same, that is to say, the same diagnostic test to both groups, the same first final and the same second final test. By doing so, I was making sure students from different groups had exactly the same level of difficulty in each test.

understand spoken language. In part 2 of the second final test 12 out of 16 students (an overwhelming 75%) performed satisfactorily – they got between 4 to 8 correct words out of ten (among those, three students got the pass mark or above), which, considering their level and the FCE listening test, is quite an accomplishment.

EXPERIMENTAL GROUP	Number of correct words out of 10						
					SATISFACTORY PERFORMANCE		
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6 or above (pass mark)
Diagnostic test (Number of students out of 16)	9 (56.25%)	5 (31.25%)	2 (12.5%)	-	-	-	-
1st Final test (Number of students out of 14)	2 (14.28%)	4 (28.57%)	5 (35.7%)	2 (14.28%)	-	1 (7.14%)	-
2nd Final test (Number of students out of 16)	-	1 (6.25%)	1 (6.25%)	2 (12.5%)	3 (18.75%)	6 (37.5%)	3 (18.75%)

Table 7.8 – Experimental group performance in part 2.

As for the Control Group, although they performed slightly worse than in the first final test, the overall differences in part two were not substantial: 33.8% as opposed to 27% and 38.6% in the diagnostic and the first final test respectively.(See tables 7.9, 7.2 and 7.5).

STUDENTS (14 out of 20)	Part 1 (out of 8)	Part 2 (out of 10)	Part 3 (out of 5)	Part 4 (out of 7)	Total (out of 30)	Student's feedback
S1	-	-	-	-	-	-
S2	-	-	-	-	-	-
S3	6	4	2	6	18	Difficult
S4	-	-	-	-	-	-
S5	5	3	1	5	14	Difficult
S6	7	1	0	5	13	Extremely difficult
S7	-	-	-	-	-	-
S8	4	2	0	5	11	Difficult
S9	5	2	0	5	12	Not so difficult
S10	-	-	-	-	-	-
S11	4	2	1	4	11	Not so difficult
S12	5	0	0	6	11	Difficult
S13	3	3	3	5	14	Difficult
S14	7	9	4	6	26	Difficult
S15	-	-	-	-	-	-
S16	3	3	2	7	15	Difficult
S17	3	2	0	4	9	Difficult
S18	6	6	2	4	18	Difficult
S19	6	7	2	4	19	Difficult
S20	6	3	0	2	11	Difficult
	70	47	17	68	AVERAGE	
TOTAL		33.6%			48%	

Table 7.9 - Control group – FCE listening test (Second Final test)

Looking closer at the performance of the students in the Control Group (see table 7.10), what stands out is the fact that there was not a considerable change in their ability to understand spoken language. They maintained their level throughout the semester improving only what is traditionally expected, that is to say, not so dramatically.

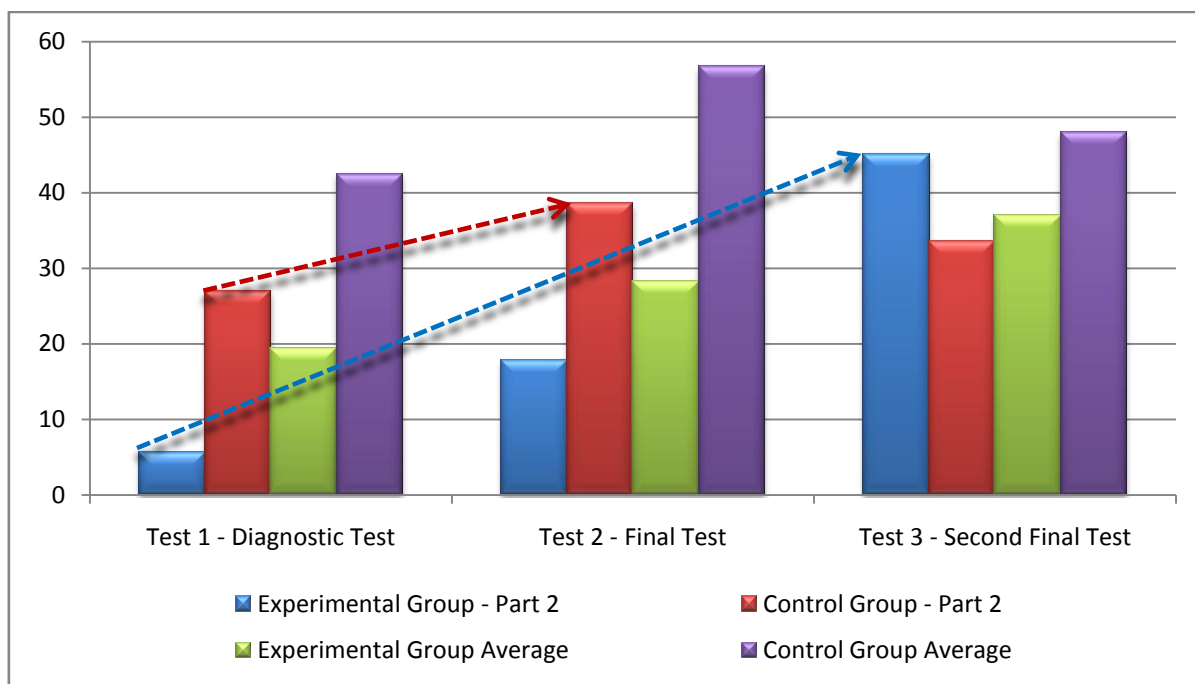| CONTROL GROUP	Number of correct words out of 10						
					SATISFACTORY PERFORMANCE		
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6 or above (pass mark)
Diagnostic test (Number of students out of 17)	2 (11.76%)	3 (17.64%)	4 (23.53%)	2 (11.76%)	3 (17.64%)	1 (5.88%)	2 (11.76%)
1st Final test (Number of students out of 14)	-	-	5 (35.7%)	3 (21.42%)	2 (14.28%)	1 (7.14%)	3 (21.42%)
2nd Final test (Number of students out of 14)	1 (7.14%)	1 (7.14%)	4 (28.57%)	4 (28.57%)	1 (7.14%)	-	3 (21.42%)

Table 7.10 – Control group performance in part 2

This is even more evident when we compare both groups' performance[73] (see table 7.11), and their diagnostic test results to their best performance (see graphics 1 and 2). The difference between the two groups' improvement is noticeable, especially concerning part 2, which is the one that better reflects students' ability to pick up words within the fluidity of connected speech.

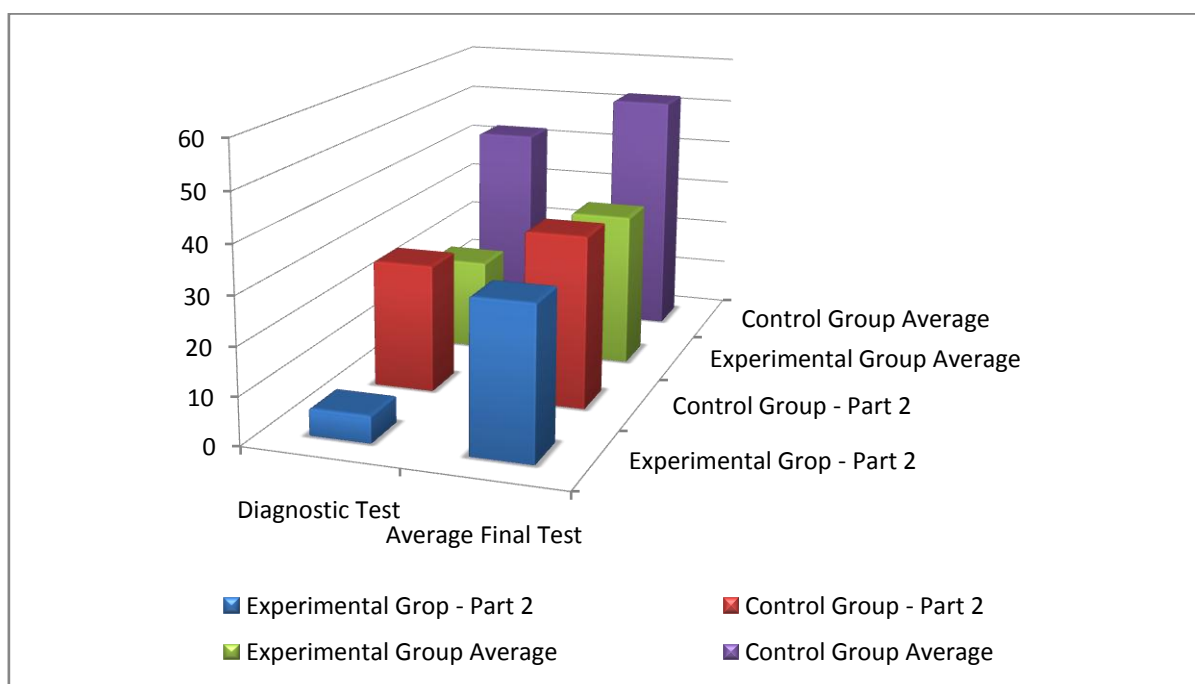| GROUPS	DIAGNOSTIC TEST		FIRST and SECOND FINAL TEST AVERAGE		IMPROVEMENT	
	Part 2	overall	Part 2	overall	Part 2	overall
Experimental	5.6%	19.4%	31.4%	32.65%	25.8%	13.25%
Control	27%	42.5%	36.1%	52.35%	9.1%	9.85%

Table 7.11 – Comparing students' performance between the diagnostic test and the average of the first and second final test.

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[73] In order to be more accurate, I decided, to use the average grade of the first and the second test as a basis for comparison with the diagnostic test. In spite of the fact that the results of the students in the Experimental Group may have been impaired by students' lack of concentration.

Graphic 1 - Comparing students' performance between the diagnostic test and their best performance in the final tests.

Looking at a three-dimensional graphic (see Graphic 2) one has a better idea of how differently the two groups improved, and how much the Experimental Group benefited from the pronunciation awareness raising exercises.

Graphic 2 – Groups' development in listening skills.

7.3 - The Students' Feedback

Students enjoyed doing the pronunciation exercises throughout the semester. It was like opening a window to a whole new world for them, seeing the spoken language so explicitly 'for the very first time', helped them unveil some of the mysteries of connected speech, they seemed to have started getting a glimpse of what made listening so difficult a task. The result was that they started feeling they were no longer treading in such foreign ground, and the process of 'deforeignization' was triggered. According to Almeida Filho (2002, p.11-12)[74] such a process happens when the learners are able to communicate in the language, not only 'dominate' its form and function as a system.

It seemed that this new 'intimacy' with the spoken language bridged the gap that made them still regard the English language as foreign, in spite of being able to communicate fairly well in it. This process was helped by the constant reference to their mother tongue, be it in the design of the chart, which was based on similarities with Portuguese[75], or the comparisons, as far as pronunciation is concerned, to their own phonological system.

Looking at their recorded statements[76], it is evident that nearly all the students considered that this experience helped them develop their listening as well as speaking skills. It was also mentioned that those exercises helped reduce anxiety when facing a listening task.

Another important point, touched on by a lot of students, is the fact that they were listening to 'real language' for the very first time, because all the way through their course they had been looking at the book which is disconnected from real life. They said that this experience finally linked them to the way real language is spoken. Interestingly enough, their coursebooks are full of native-speakers conversations, and the listening tasks from the book are supposed to be based on real language.

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[74] The original in Portuguese: Língua estrangeira "Pode significar língua dos outros ou de outros, ou língua de antepassados, de estranhos, de bárbaros, de dominadores, ou língua exótica. A compreensão do termo se aperfeiçoa se o tomarmos como língua que só a princípio é de fato estrangeira mas que se *desestrangeiriza* ao longo do tempo de que se dispõe para aprendê-la. [...] A nova língua para se *desestrangeirizar* vai ser aprendida *para* e *na* comunicação sem se restringir apenas ao 'domínio' de suas formas e do seu funcionamento enquanto sistema."
[75] For the students' chart see Appendix B.
[76] See Appendix F for the original transcription of the students' statements. Their ideas and comments which are mentioned here are highlighted.

Two different things may be drawn from this information: firstly, students somehow subconsciously understand that written and spoken language are two different languages, so by becoming more aware of how spoken language works, they had the feeling of getting in touch with it for the very first time. Secondly, as Michael Lewis' Lexical Approach claims, we are not teaching real language to our students, but some prescriptive language disguised in so-called communicative tasks. It is about time we started facing up to language the way it happens in real life, and stopped simplifying it unnecessarily.

The students also stated that it had been a new experience, that they had never done it before, and that they had never had the opportunity to do this kind of activity in spite of being near the end of the course. That is significant data to take into account, especially because at this school teachers claim to do pronunciation exercises on a regular basis. Maybe the kind of exercises teachers do, are not helping students much, maybe we have to rethink the way we teach pronunciation.

CONCLUSION

The main aim of this study was to investigate the connection between listening comprehension and pronunciation. Based on the assumption that spoken and written English are very different, and that most of the problems students have with listening comprehension is due to this difference, this study searched within phrasal phonology, the main features that make word boundaries unrecognizable, thereby resulting in the blur of connected speech.

It was assumed that this gap between spoken and written language, as far as listening comprehension is concerned, could be bridged by the explicit instruction of some pronunciation features of connected speech. Therefore, activities specially made to develop students' awareness of the underlying rules that govern streamed speech, were applied to a group of upper-intermediate students in order to find out if they could benefit from such activities to become better listeners.

When doing such pronunciation tasks, some comparisons were made between English and Portuguese, which is the students' mother tongue, concerning voice-setting, rhythm, intonation, syllables, and vowel and consonant sounds. By doing so, I wanted to find out if with the help of students' L1 providing some familiar ground to fall back on for support, students would understand the phonological features of the target language better, thus turning mother tongue from hindrance to support.

Although not using specific exercises but following the main premise of the Lexical Approach[77], the teaching of language in chunks in tandem with their pronunciation was also investigated to see if it would help students deal more efficiently with the interwoven units of connected speech. Finally, I wanted to find out why, in the history of the English language, spelling strayed away from pronunciation and which elements or happenings triggered this discrepancy.

The results, in general terms, point to the teaching of pronunciation awareness raising exercises as a powerful tool to aid listening comprehension. The students from the Experimental Group, who were explicitly instructed on pronunciation matters, outperformed the ones in the Control Group, even though they had been the

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[77] See chapter 5 for its main principles.

weakest ones at the listening skill at the beginning of the semester. Their results in the final Cambridge FCE listening test, especially part two, which deals with students' ability to understand words embedded in connected speech, were outstanding.

Having said that, when looking back at the exercises I did with the students throughout the semester, I realize that although such activities helped students develop a greater awareness of the phonological system of the language, it was my attitude as a teacher that made all the difference. It helped students view the language from an entirely different perspective.

By attitude, I mean the way I always incorporated a 'pinch' of pronunciation into every activity, be it lexical or grammatical. This may have helped students understand that language is holistic, and that pronunciation plays an important role in it. It was those short moments of explicit instruction together with the pronunciation exercise done in the lessons that promoted better understanding of the language.

I consider this I consider this, the fact that it is the teachers' attitude towards pronunciation that needs to be changed, as one of the most important findings from this study. This may sound rather simplistic or obvious, but what I mean here, is that no matter how many pronunciation exercises the teacher incorporates in his/her lessons, if he/she does not understand that the scope of pronunciation should encompass the whole language lesson - drawing students attention to stress, prominence, writing the spoken version of a new lexical item on the board, making pronunciation a living presence throughout the lesson - he/she will not be fostering students' understanding of the spoken language and its idiosyncrasies.

It is certainly the respect that the learners have for the written form that somehow prevents them from understanding that the spoken form takes a rather different shape. The use of the IPA symbols helped students visualize language and thus look at it from a new perspective. I noticed that when my students were able to 'see' spoken language, and understand the processes such spoken language had gone through because of connected speech, they stepped forward to overcoming the fear of helplessness towards a listening comprehension task.

It was as if they had finally realized that it was not entirely their fault the fact that they sometimes could not understand what was being said, but the problem was the intricacies of connected speech which made words so diverse from their citation form. This understanding helped boost their confidence, and may help students feel more at ease to ask for clarification when interacting with a native speaker.

In fact, I realized that students' tend to put down their failure to understand spoken language to their own inability as learners, when it could be the failure of teacher training courses which do not instruct teachers on helping students 'see' and understand the regularities of some pronunciation features of spoken language. By concentrating on what really causes communication breakdown, teachers can reduce learners' workload as well as the level of anxiety which is so often connected with speaking and listening skills.

Teachers' negative attitude towards pronunciation reflects the lack of formal training on the subject. It is about time we considered the teaching of pronunciation as important as grammar and lexis in teacher training courses, for it is a fundamental part of the language, influencing deeply its communicative scope.

As for listening itself, the importance of the post-listening phase should be emphasized. It is when all the problems concerning communication breakdown can be dealt with, and to prevent it from happening again for the same reason. Those sections were a constant in the group I applied the pronunciation exercises to, and the students' feedback on what made them not understand or misunderstand specific utterances, made them process the language more carefully, thus getting more familiar with the features of connected speech.

Another important fact to point out about listening is that this skill is not what we tend to think it is, that is to say, we do not understand every single word of what people tell us. In reality, what is actually said is sometimes far different from what is being understood. We reconstruct the incomplete oral information using our knowledge of phonetics, syntax, grammar and lexis. What we think we listen to is not always exactly what was uttered.

This is even more evident when we have a closer look at formulaic expressions which somehow get lost in the fluidity of speech. Teachers should draw students' attention to the fact that language works in chunks and that the pronunciation of those chunks in spoken language can be simplified so much that it turns into an amorphous mass, extremely different from its written form, students start to get a grip on tone units, which is the starting of understanding the rhythm of the language.

Moreover, an awareness of those formulaic expressions, together with knowledge of collocations facilitates the learner's task of processing spoken language. The process of listening comprehension for native speakers is boosted by

their ability to predict what piece of language comes next. Such an ability is also based on their knowledge of those chunks and collocations. I experienced this when I had to transcribe my students' recorded feedback on the experiment. As they spoke in Portuguese, which is my mother tongue, I should not have had any problem understanding what was being said. However, sometimes I had to listen to it over and over again, and it was my knowledge of the way Portuguese works that helped me make out those unintelligible instances.

As for explicit instruction, the results in this study suggest that in attempting to unveil the complexities of speech production, the explicit teaching of pronunciation features of connected speech do help students cope more efficiently with spoken language. It also helps students notice some differences between their mother tongue and the target language, diminishing the former's interference over the latter.

Moreover, explicit instruction draws students' attention to some features of the language that would otherwise be overlooked. By preventing students from understanding those underlying regularities within the language, teachers are undervaluing a powerful tool of language teaching.

Finally, this study has shown that the principle that spoken language is different from the written one should be acknowledged in the classroom. It is a fact that more recently there has been an increasing interest in the spoken language. The publishing of some books on the subject, has drawn ELT attention to this difference as well as left some doors ajar to further research in this area.

Together with this intensified inquisitiveness about spoken language, pronunciation features, if looked into with a more holistic view, may start to get their own deserved place in language teaching. This study just tries to shed some light on this issue, to make teachers aware of its importance. Further studies on phrasal phonology will certainly open an array of possibilities for the teaching of a foreign language, and as Saussure (1972, p.32) says when talking about phonology, "it means taking a first step towards the truth. For the study of sounds will provide us with the help we need".

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A _____

ABOUT YOU...

1. Name - ....
2. Age - .... Profession - ....

   (if you are a student what do you study?)

Please answer the questions below:

1. Do you speak any other languages apart from Portuguese and English? Which ones?

   ……………………………………………………………………………………

2. Are you studying any other languages? Which ones? How long?

   ……………………………………………………………………………………

3. How long have you been studying English? …………………………………….

4. Do you teach English? If so, how many hours per week?

   .... …………….

5. Do you have someone in your immediate family with whom you speak in English regularly? ....

6. How often do you engage in face-to-face conversations with native speakers of English?…………………………………………………………

7. How often do you talk on the phone with native speakers of English?

   ………………………………………………………………

8. Have you ever been to an English speaking country? If so, how long did you stay there?..

9. Among the four skills – speaking, listening, reading and writing - which one is the most difficult for you to master? ....

10. Do you consider your listening skills in English satisfactory?

    ………………………………………………………………

11. In your opinion what can someone do in order to improve his/her listening skills?…………………………………………………………………………………

12. When listening to English, what do you find most difficult?

13. Have you ever done any pronunciation course? If so, which one?

    ……………………………………………………………………………………

14. Are you familiar with the phonemic chart? How do you feel about it?

………………………………………………………………………………………………

ABOUT THE FCE LISTENING . . .

1. How did you find the listening test?

(   ) extremely difficult

(   ) difficult

(   ) not so difficult

(   ) easy

(   ) very easy

2. Which part did you find the most difficult?

(   ) Part 1 – Multiple choice

(   ) Part 2 – Gap filling

(   ) Part 3 – Multiple matching

(   ) Part 4 – True or false

Why did you find it difficult?

………………………………………………………………………………………………

3. In your opinion what could make listening difficult? Choose one or add to the list:

(   ) people talk too fast

(   ) the language produced is too difficult

(   ) it's hard to understand even familiar words when they are spoken

(   ) background noises

(   ) hesitations, reformulation and redundancies

(   ) clarity of articulation, pauses, regional accent

(   ) we cannot understand every single word that is being said

(   ) we need to hear things many times in order to make them out

(   ) ………………………………………………………………………………………

Thank you very much for your collaboration.

APPENDIX B_____

ENGLISH VOWEL PHONEMES (12) X PORTUGUESE VOWEL GRAPHEMES

PORTUGUESE VOWEL GRAPHEMES	ENGLISH VOWEL PHONEMES (12)		
a	ʌ - sun, son, blood, does (short)	ɑː - calm, are, father, car (long)	
	æ - bad, sat, hand, ban (a mixture between A and E) (open your mouth as if you are going to say A and say E instead)		
e	e - get, fetch, head (short) (similar to the **e** in caf**é**)[78]	ə - the, butter, sofa (short)	ɜː - bird, her, turn (long)
		(similar to the **e** in beb**ê**) [79]	
i	ɪ - him, big, village, women (short)	iː - sea, feet, me, field (long)	
o	ɒ - dog, lock, swan, cough (short) (say ɑ: and move your tongue backwards)	ɔː - all, saw, cord, more (long)	
u	ʊ - put, wolf, good, look (short)	uː - soon, do, soup, shoe (long)	

ENGLISH DIPHTHONGS (8)

DIPHTHONGS	EXAMPLES
aɪ	d<u>ie</u>, h<u>ei</u>ght, n<u>i</u>ght, m<u>y</u>, b<u>uy</u>
eɪ	d<u>ay</u>, d<u>a</u>te, gr<u>ea</u>t
aʊ	n<u>ow</u>, f<u>ou</u>nd
ɔɪ	b<u>oy</u>, av<u>oi</u>d
eə	th<u>ere</u>, h<u>air</u>, sh<u>are</u>, b<u>ear</u>
ɪə	h<u>ear</u>, h<u>ere</u>, front<u>ier</u>, car<u>eer</u>
ʊə	c<u>ure</u>, t<u>our</u>
əʊ	n<u>o</u>, kn<u>ow</u>, d<u>ough</u>, f<u>oe</u>

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[78] This example is not in the original chart I gave to the students, it was added here as suggested by Professor Aldir Santos de Paula. The original chart made reference to the way the phoneme /e/ is realized in non-stressed words by the variety spoken in the North of Brazil as opposed to the one spoken in the South. I do agree that this way it is made clearer to the students.

[79] See footnote 78.

ENGLISH CONSONANT PHONEMES (24)

Phonemes which are identical to Portuguese.														
b	d	f	g		k	l	m	n	p		s	t	v		z
bed	door	fan	goat		key	lamb	me	navy	pork		son	tin	vase		zoo

Phonemes which are often confused by Portuguese speakers.
(/h/ is equivalent to the sound of the words that start with the letter r in Portuguese)

	h			r	Try to say 'Rio de Janeiro' or 'O rato roeu a roupa do rei de Roma' putting on an English accent
	head			red	

Phonemes which may cause some confusion because they do not correspond to those letters.

	j		w	Say William, Wellington, Washington
	yellow		what	

Phonemes whose symbols are new to learn but not all of the sounds are alien to Portuguese.

ð		ŋ		θ	tʃ	ʃ	ʒ	dʒ
mother		sing		three	chair	fish	vision	job

This is pronounced as an /n/ bringing the tongue a bit backwards as if we are going to swallow it.

This is the 'official lisp'

PORTUGUESE VOWEL GRAPHEMES	ENGLISH VOWEL PHONEMES	
a	ʌ does	ɑː car
a+e	æ bad	A mixture between a and e: open your mouth as if you are going to say a and say e instead.
e	e egg	Open e as in CAFÉ
e	ə the	ɜː bird — Closed e as in BEBÊ
i	ɪ big	iː sea
o	ɒ dog	ɔː door
u	ʊ put	uː soon

ENGLISH CONSONANT PHONEMES

PHONEMES WHICH ARE IDENTICAL TO PORTUGUESE

b bed	d door	f fan	g get		k key	l love	m me	n no	p pork		s sun	t tan	v vet		z zoo

PHONEMES WHICH ARE OFTEN CONFUSED BY PORTUGUESE SPEAKERS

/h/ is equivalent to the sounds that start with the letter r in Portuguese	h ham	Say 'Rio de Janeiro' or 'O rato roeu a roupa do rei de Roma' putting on an English accent	r red

PHONEMES WHICH MAY CAUSE SOME CONFUSION BECAUSE THEY DO NOT CORRESPOND TO THOSE LETTERS

	j yes		Say 'William', 'Wellington', Washington'.	w was

PHONEMES WHOSE SYMBOLS ARE NEW TO LEARN BUT NOT ALL THE SOUNDS ARE ALIEN TO PORTUGUESE

ð the	/ŋ/ is pronounced as an /n/ bringing the tongue a bit backwards as if you are going to swallow it.	ŋ sing	/θ/ is the 'oficial lisp'	θ thin	ʃ she	tʃ chair	ʒ vision	dʒ job

APPENDIX C_____

CONNECTED SPEECH

1. Transform spoken into written language: (Source – 1B and 1C: Almond -2007)

A. /aɪdə wiːkɒf lɑːs mʌnθ/

....

B. A farmer has /twentɪsɪkʃiːp/. One of them dies. How many are left?

....

C. Van Gogh is in the pub with a friend.

His friend says: "Do you want a drink?"

Van Gogh answers: "No thanks, I've got /wʌnɪə/.

....

2. Read aloud the sentences below to find hidden words (as in the example) or verbs in the past which sound as if they are in the Present.

E.g.   It rained all day

doll

1. I worked all night. ………….……
2. We rented a car. …………………
3. I smoked ten cigarettes…………………
4. I screamed in pain…………………
5. He worked till midnight………………………
6. I liked all of them……………………
7. He closed the window..............................
8. They washed in the bath………………..

APPENDIX D_____

Are they weak or **strong**?

	Weak Forms (ə)	Strong Forms (full value)
<u>An</u> owl ate <u>a</u> mouse.		
You say <u>a</u> mouse, <u>a</u> dog, but <u>an</u> orange, <u>an</u> owl.		
<u>Am</u> I angry with her? Yes, I'm afraid I <u>am</u>!		
What <u>am</u> I doing? I'm singing a song.		
Bread or cake? Bread <u>and</u> cake, please?		
Over <u>and</u> over <u>and</u> over again.		
Well as far <u>as</u> I can see...		
<u>As</u> I was saying before you interrupted.		
What are you staring <u>at</u> ?		
We're here <u>at</u> last!		
<u>Can</u> I play too?		
I <u>can</u> see a red car.		
<u>Do</u> you understand?		
<u>Do</u> look at that billboard!		
He praised her <u>for</u> reacting quickly, saving the girl.		
What are they blaming you <u>for</u>?		
Guess where I got it <u>from</u>?		
He was suffering <u>from</u> depression.		
She says she isn't, but she <u>is</u>.		
She <u>is</u> my mother.		
<u>Must</u> you make so much noise?		
I <u>must</u> go and buy a paper.		
I did<u>n't</u> believe a word of it.		
No, I did <u>not</u>!		
Lots <u>of</u> people came to the party.		
What are you thinking <u>of</u>?		
We bought <u>some</u> cake.		
<u>Some</u> people are nasty.		
My sister is prettier <u>than</u> yours.		
It was more interesting <u>than</u> I expected.		
<u>That</u>'s the man who came here yesterday.		
Tell her <u>that</u> I can't come.		
<u>The</u> tiger ate <u>the</u> hunter.		
This is <u>the</u> animal I told you about.		

APPENDIX E_____

Can you work out what happened to the underlined words in connected speech?

Knock Knock Jokes

Knock knock Who's there? Orange. Orange who? Orange going to open the door?	Knock knock Who's there? Olive. Olive who? Olive next door.	Knock knock Who's there? Gladys. Gladys who? Gladys not raining outside.
Orange =	Olive =	Gladys =
Knock knock Who's there? Archer. Archer who? Archer glad to see me again?	Knock knock Who's there? Lettuce. Lettuce who? Lettuce in, please	Knock knock Who's there? Summmer. Summer who? Summer good, some are bad.
Archer =	Lettuce =	Summmer =
Knock knock Who's there? Eskimo. Eskimo who? Eskimo questions, I'll tell you no lies!	Knock knock Who's there? Isabel. Isabel who? Isabel necessary on this door?	Knock knock Who's there? Justin. Justin who? Justin case you need some help.
Eskimo =	Isabel =	Justin =
Knock knock Who's there? Canoe. Canoe who? Canoe open the door, please?	Knock knock Who's there? Thistle. Thistle who? Thistle be the last time I come and visit you, then.	Knock knock Who's there? Didi. Didi who? Didi come here?
Canoe =	Thistle =	Didi =
Knock knock Who's there? Juno. Juno who? Juno how long I've been waiting for you to open this door?	Knock knock Who's there? Jezebel. Jezebel who? Jezebel on the door but it won't ring.	Knock knock Who's there? Scott. Scott who? Scott nothing to do with you.
Juno =	Jezebel =	Scott =

Knock knock Who's there? Wencelas. Wencelas who? <u>Wencelas</u> bus? I want to go home.	Knock knock Who's there? Donatella. Donatella who? <u>Donatella</u> I'm here.	Knock knock Who's there? Joanna. Joanna who? <u>Joanna</u> kiss?
Wencelas =	Donatella =	Joanna =
Knock knock Who's there? Danielle. Danielle who? <u>Danielle</u> so loud, I heard you the first time.	Knock knock Who's there? Adam. Adam who? <u>Adam</u> up and you'll get the answer.	Knock knock Who's there? Aida. Aida who? <u>Aida</u> car but it was stolen.
Danielle =	Adam =	Aida =

CONNECTED SPEECH JOKES

My girlfriend went on holiday to the West Indies.

Jamaica?

No, she went because she wanted to.

Where is your mother from?

Alaska.

Don't bother, I'll ask her myself.

APPENDIX F_____

VIDEOS TRANSCRIPT

STUDENT 1

"Eu acho que ajudou bastante, principalmente porque quando você trabalha o listening você consegue também falar melhor e assim muita coisa, uma coisa que eu achei bem legal que a professora Adriana falou na sala, foi da da questão de que quando você vai escutar você vai na expectativa de escutar o, a, a, a frase completa, completinha "what's your name?" quando você vai escutar é uma coisa completamente diferente "what's your name?" uma coisa bem rápida e isso ajudou bastante porque <mark>não criou aquela expectativa, e a gente ficava sabe naquela preocupação</mark> de escutar um sei lá uma preposição uma coisa assim bem insignificante, <mark>a gente sempre pegava a coisa mais importante</mark>. Então eu acho que ajudou muito, muito, muito. <mark>Uma coisa que não foi trabalhada nos períodos anteriores</mark>."

STUDENT 2

"Foi <mark>uma experiência nova</mark> esse projeto de pronúncia que a professora trouxe para a sala de aula, eu não conhecia, e particularmente me ajudou muito porque é uma parte que eu tenho muita dificuldade é no listening e no speaking também. Então quando a gente conseguiu trabalhar isso, ela deu ênfase que a gente não precisava prestar atenção à frase toda, não é? e sim às pronúncias principais, às palavras principais e <mark>me ajudou bastante na parte do listening</mark> consequentemente. É... foi uma experiência nova como eu disse porque <mark>nenhum professor havia trabalhado</mark> e assim, eu gostei muito. Achei a professora muita didática, durante todo o semestre que ela trabalhou e assim que ela continue fazendo mais e mais para acrescentar à vida dos alunos."

STUDENT 3

"Bom eu, eu estudo aqui esse é o último ano que eu estudo aqui, eu <mark>nunca tive essa oportunidade</mark> e sinceramente eu acho que <mark>melhorou bastante meu listening</mark> tanto que refletiu na primeira prova, primeiro teste deste semestre. Com certeza melhorou muito."

STUDENT 4

"Meu nome é Audecir e eu estudo aqui no upper...one, esse é o último ano que eu estudo aqui e o ==listening assim melhorou muito== eu acho assim com essa coisa de ter estudado os CDs eu achei que melhorei a enten..., ==comecei a entender melhor== até porque a pronúncia, os vocabulários que eu tinha muita dificuldade de compreensão."

STUDENT 5

"Oi, sou Larissa, eu tô no último ano e assim, ==com relação ao listening melhorou bastante porque é o tipo de pronúncia que a gente nem sempre tem acesso aqui no local no Brasil, então a gente teve acesso a uma pronúncia de pessoas que realmente falam essa língua== então melhora bastante, ela ajuda a gente a entender totalmente como é que é a pronúncia melhor."

STUDENT 6

"Meu nome é Amanda e eu acho que esse novo método que a professora Adriana adotou ==ajudou muito a gente a... a entender melhor as palavras==, e ==nenhum professor tinha feito isso antes== e eu tenho certeza que esse método vai ajudar muito as pessoas a entender melhor o inglês, falado".

STUDENTS 7 and 8

Student 7 - "Bom... nós... é, agora eu e a minha coleguinha aqui vamos falar sobre.. ==esse treino== que a Adriana fez com a gente, né? eu acho que foi muito importante, pelo seguinte porquê... no decorrer do curso a gente já vem com algumas falhas desde o início assim... é... básico,pré, pré-inter, inter. Então quando a gente chega aqui a gente ainda tem algumas falhas a serem corrigidas, e principalmente na questão do... de pronúncia, quando a gente faz, ah, ela fez com a gente uns exercícios de pronúncia e isso, isso foi bom prá gente porque, ah, nos ajudou a, a digamos assim... ajuda amiga...dê a sua opinião também não deixe que só eu fale, nos ajudou a"

Student 8 – "a aperfeiçoar a nossa pronúncia, melhorar muito a nossa pronúncia porque a gente começou a estudar o inglês ==não apenas é... a partir da, do livro, a partir dos exercícios do livro, mas a partir da própria língua como ela é realmente==

falada. Porque os exercícios que ela fazia conosco, a professora Adriana, esses exercícios nos faziam realmente entrar em contato com a língua realmente falada, com a língua em uso e alguns exercícios que nós vimos aqui eu pude relembrar, porque a gente fez curso de letras, né?, eu pude relembrar é... algumas questões de pronúncia que a gente já tinha visto no curso e aí a gente pôde aplicar ao inglês, as questões de pronúncia."

Researcher - "E você acha que melhorou no listening?"

Student 8 – "Muito, muito, muito porque listening é bastante difícil e esses exercícios nos ensinaram, nos ajudaram a estudar listening".

STUDENT 9

"Eu acho que melhorou assim no listening porque eu tinha muita dificuldade assim desde o começo. Mas é como a... a... esqueci o nome dela, tinha falado que... a gente às vezes fica aficcionado no livro e nas coisas que tem nele, só que esquece do dia-a-dia assim e como as pessoas falam: ah não pronúncia nem sempre é perfeita. E... melhorou prá caramba porque a gente criou convivência assim, como você aplica tanto o falar como o ouvir no dia-a-dia. E às vezes não é tão perfeito, às vezes a gente assiste seriados e outras coisas e vê que é uma confusão e a gente fazendo também, que eu achei legal, é analogia com o português assim: como a gente usa as palavras e como a gente interpreta, o cérebro tipo, a gente funde as palavras e nosso cérebro não é capaz de procurar e saber quem é quem, mesmo você com uma sílaba só, você consegue identificar qual palavra é, isso eu também achei legal. É... outra coisa também a questão dos Cds que força assim a gente a escutar um pouco, às vezes... que é realmente diferente, ah não mas eu escuto música todo dia, só que escutar música é muito diferente que ás vezes você fica aficcionado apenas na melodia da música e esquece de ficar prestando atenção às palavras".

STUDENT 10

"Ao final desse semestre eu acho que o meu listening mudou, está melhor. Mas ainda continuo sentindo dificuldade de escutar principalmente com aquelas pessoas que falam muito rápido. Eu acho que deveria ser implantada essa técnica que foi

usada nesse semestre em outros semestres. Eu e outros estudantes também achamos isso e já conversamos sobre isso mas cabe a direção decidir se quer ou não".

STUDENT 11

"Eu acho que estou vivendo um dos melhores momentos da minha vida em relação aos estudos aqui na Casa de Cultura. Porque talvez eu encontrei uma das pessoas assim que me ajudou completamente como estudar sozinho, me ajudou a sempre sair do livro porque a gente pensa que o livro é suficiente para a gente aprender a lidar com as situações do dia-a-dia, isso eu consegui ver que não era necessário".

Researcher – "E os exercícios de pronúncia?"

Student 11 – "Os exercícios de pronúncia melhoraram bastante. Hoje eu já converso melhor, já falo melhor e presto atenção nos sons que a palavra tem, principalmente no final das palavras, os *linkings* eu consigo falar, as frases completas, *expressions*."

Researcher – "E o seu *listening*, melhorou?"

Student 11 - "O *listening* melhorou bastante com os exercícios, com os Cds da revista Speak up, e...acho que isso é tudo, assim, foi... foi ótimo".

STUDENT 12

"As nossas aulas aqui no CCB melhoraram bastante após os exercícios que a professora Adriana aplicou aqui em sala de aula, por exemplo os exercícios de listening melhorou bastante porque a gente começou mais a se concentrar nas palavras chaves, ok? A gente começou... em relação também ao speaking melhoramos bastante por exemplo na finalização das palavras, ok? quando termina em t ou d ou id, ok?"

Researcher – "Você acha que melhorou o seu listening o trabalho com pronúncia?"

Student 12 – "Melhorou bastante porque a gente de uma forma ou de outra se concentrou mais e se esforçou mais pra aproximar da fala de um nativo. Acho que melhorou bastante".

STUDENT 13

"Eu acho que de fato tudo o que foi feito, os Cds, os exercícios realmente melhoraram tanto o listening como o speaking também porque você aprender

realmente como é que se fala é importante, porque a gente vem aprendendo desde o início a forma correta de se falar mas quando vai chegar na prática realmente, a gente vê que é totalmente diferente então acho que isso foi muito importante, esse, todos esses exercícios que foram passados também, treinar o listening com os Cds, que realmente ficava em casa ouvindo e voltando para ver se realmente conseguia, isso forçou realmente tentar pegar, escutar melhor as palavras, as flexões, isso realmente foi importante prá mim".

STUDENT 14

"Bem isso prá mim foi muito importante porque eu pude ver onde é que eu estava errando. Então foi muito importante isso prá mim né, que eu pude perceber quanto, onde estava errando e o meu listening eu acho que melhorou né porque eu pude ver e também..."

STUDENT 15

"Eu penso que, penso que eu tive uma excelente professora e que os testes e as aulas foram, me ajudaram muito a ter uma melhor compreensão de como falar melhor, ouvir melhor e ao mesmo tempo prestar bem atenção, porque os testes são realmente, os testes são bem difíceis, nós precisamos sempre nos aplicarmos e creio que a professora nos deu um excelente motivo pra estudar mais. Obrigado".

ATTACHMENTS

ATTACHMENT A ……………………………………………………………………………..

/ən ədˈventʃərəs prəˈfesə/

/ən ˈæŋgri bɛːd/ /ˈsevn kæts/

/əˈkreɪzɪ fəˈtɒgrəfə/

/ˈðɪs ˌkrɒsˈkʌntrɪ ˌrʌnər ɪz ˈlɑːst/

/əˈbɪg ˈpɪg/ /əˈlɪtl ˈkɪtn/

/ˈðɪs ˌkrɒsˈkʌntrɪ ˌrʌnər ɪz ˈlɒst/

/əˈgrei ˈdɒg ˈpʊʃɪŋ əˈlid/

/əˈwɔːm ˌhɒtˈwɔːtə ˌbɒtl/

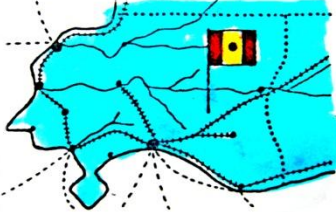/ˈfiʃ ənˈtʃɪps əˈtʃiːp əndˈizi: tʊˈiːt/

/ˈstiːvn ˈdriːmz əvˈiːv hiː ˈsiːz ɛː ˈrʌnɪŋ frəm ˈθriː ˈbiːsts/

/ɪˈlevn ˈhenz wɪð ˈtwelv ˈegz ɪn ˈten ˈnests/

ATTACHMENT B…………………………………………………………………………..

CONNECTED SPEECH

* Match the pictures to the phonemic transcription:

(Adapted from Trim (1992, p. 83))

		☐ ˈdʒɒn sed ðət ˈɔːl men kəd kʌm ☐ ˈdʒəun sed ðə ˈtɔːl men kəd ˈkʌm
		☐ ən ˈaɪs ˈhɑus ☐ ə ˈnaɪs ˈhɑus
		☐ ə ˈgriːks ˈpaɪ ☐ ə ˈgriːk ˈspaɪ
		☐ ə ˈneɪʃn ☐ ən ˈeɪʃn

aɪ ˈsɔː hɜː ˈreɪs

aɪ ˈsɔː hɜːr ˈeɪs

aɪ ˈskriːm

aɪs ˈkriːm

ˈdʒɔɪs ˈliːps

ˈdʒɔɪ ˈsliːps

ATTACHMENT C…………………………………………………………………………………..

1. Cards to cut out for the students to match phrase with their equivalents in phonemic script:

(Adapted from Vaughan-Rees (2004, p. 74)

DO YOU WANT A CUP OF TEA?	dʒə wʌnə kʌpə tiː
YOU MUST BE JOKING!	jə mʌs bi dʒəʊkɪŋ
COME OFF IT!	kʌ mɒfɪt
SHUT UP!	ʃʌ tʌp
I'M WORN OUT	aim wɔː naʊt
FANCY A BITE TO EAT?	fænsjə baɪ twiːt
I'M OFF TO BED.	aɪ mɒf tə bed
GOT ANY CHANGE?	gɒtəni tʃeɪndʒ
GOT TO GO TO WORK.	gɒtə gəʊ twɜːk

CAN YOU LEND ME A QUID?	kənjə lemijə kwɪd

2. Cards to match the questions to the responses:

? wɒtsjə neɪm ?	fəgɒtə nɔːredɪ ?
? wɒtʃə seɪ ?	nʌθɪŋ
? wedʒə kʌm frɒm ?	frə mɪtəlijə njuː ?
? fænsijə kɒfi ?	nɒt dʒʌ snaʊ, θæŋks
? jə wɒf naʊ ?	həul dɒnə sek
? gɒt ðə taɪm ?	tem pɑː stuː

ATTACHMENT D..

From Hancock (1995, p. 94-95)

C7 Contradict me Sheet 1

Rules
1 The aim of the game is to win as many cards as possible.

2 Place the pack of cards face down on the table.

3 Take turns to pick up a card and read the sentence at the top of the card to the player sitting on your right. (The sentence at the bottom shows the mistake.)

4 This player must reply by correcting the mistake and using contrastive stress. The reply should begin with a phrase such as *You mean ...?, I thought ...?, Don't you mean ...?*

5 The reader should say if the response was correct or not. The other players should also help to decide.

6 If the response is correct, the player who gave the response wins the card. Otherwise, the reader keeps the card.

Robert de Niro is a well known actress.	**The Atlantic is the world's biggest ocean.**	**The lion is in the dog family.**
... Robert de Niro is a well known <u>actor</u>!	... the <u>Pacific</u> is the world's biggest ocean!	... the lion is in the <u>cat</u> family / the <u>wolf</u> is in the dog family!
I had dinner at 8.30 this morning.	**My sister is a policeman.**	**I'd like a piece of cola please.**
... you had <u>breakfast</u> at 8.30 this morning / you had dinner at 8.30 this <u>evening</u>!	... your sister is a <u>policewoman</u> / your <u>brother</u> is a policeman!	... you'd like a <u>cup/glass</u> of cola!
The capital of France is London.	**The Greeks built the pyramids.**	**It was hot so I put my coat on.**
... the capital of <u>Britain</u> is London / the capital of France is <u>Paris</u>!	... the <u>Egyptians</u> built the pyramids!	... it was <u>cold</u> so you put your coat on / it was hot so you took your coat <u>off</u>!
My mother's name is John.	**Brazil is the biggest country in North America.**	**I saw the news on the radio.**
... your <u>father's</u> name is John!	... Brazil is the biggest country in South America / <u>Canada</u> is the biggest country in North America!	... You <u>heard</u> the news on the radio / you saw the news on the <u>TV</u>!

From **Pronunciation Games** by Mark Hancock © Cambridge University Press 1995 **PHOTOCOPIABLE**

Sheet 2 Contradict me **C7**

Prompt	Response
These gloves are too small; they hurt my feet.	… these socks/shoes are too small; they hurt your feet / these gloves are too small; they hurt your hands!
Gold is a very cheap metal.	… gold is a very expensive metal!
I fell upstairs and broke my leg.	… you fell downstairs and broke your leg!
The Nile is the world's shortest river.	… the Nile is the world's longest river!
New Delhi is the capital of Kenya.	… New Delhi is the capital of India / Nairobi is the capital of Kenya!
The formula for water is H₃O.	… the formula for water is H₂O!
Have you read the latest film?	… have I seen the latest film / read the latest book!
Pele was a great Argentinian footballer.	… Pele was a great Brazilian footballer!
Two plus two equals five.	… two plus two equals four / two plus three equals five!
The elephant is the biggest animal in the sea.	… the elephant is the biggest animal on the land / the whale is the biggest animal in the sea!
Cleopatra lived in Australia.	… Cleopatra lived in Africa!
There were five people in the Beatles.	… there were four people in the Beatles!
I like to smoke a gin and tonic in the evening.	… you like to drink a gin and tonic in the evening / you like to smoke a cigarette in the evening!
Beethoven became blind near the end of his life.	… Beethoven became deaf near the end of his life!
Carrots are my favourite fruit.	… carrots are your favourite vegetable!
The sun sets in the morning.	… the sun rises in the morning / the sun sets in the evening!
Everest is the lowest mountain in the world.	… Everest is the highest mountain in the world!
Kangaroos come from Austria.	… kangaroos come from Australia!

The formula for water is H_3O. / … the formula for water is H_2O!

ATTACHMENT E………………………………………………………………………………

WORD LINKING

Listen to the recording and see if you can fill the gaps, all of which contain various types of linking.

Example: - What would you like <u>to eat</u>?

        - <u>An ice cream</u> and some <u>apple pie</u>.

1. I'm staying with _____ of mine.

2. _____ coming to stay with us _____ .

3. I often eat _____ with a handful _____ in the evening.

4. We walked _____ to the _____ .

5. _____ will be travelling _____ .

6. They moved from _____ to _____ .

7. They wrote _____ but _____ their _____ .

8. Could you _____ if possible?

9. They got back from holiday _____and _____ again _____ .

10. I never expected such_____in the middle_____ .

11. When I go out on my boat _____ forget to _____ when I land.

12. He's much _____ to _____ with a young girl like that.

13. _____ about what's going on _____ .

14. _____ do you _____?

15. _____ like a bite _____ before I go to bed?

16. _____ go quite _____ to _____ their little boat.

17. I'll buy you _____.

18. _____ wanted to _____ the _____ just disappear.

19. – Is _____ somewhere?

    - Yes, _____. I've just _____ .

20. – Do you know where _____?

    - I've just _____ in the canteen.

ATTACHMENT F……………………………………………………………………………………………..

(From Hancock, 1995, p.77)

ATTACHMENT G……………………………………………………………………………

Cards to cut out for the students to find the errors and match the sentences with their reply:

(Adapted from Vaughan-Rees (2004, p.19) and Hancock (1995, p.80/81)

Alaska if she wants to come with us.	You'll ask who?
Did you see the way to go? He was at the next table a minute ago.	Yes, I saw him going into the kitchen.
Coke and Pepsi arrival companies.	Do you think so? I thought they worked together.
This map shows all the citizen railways in this country.	It doesn't show the smaller towns then?
I picture book off the floor.	Thanks, I didn't realize I'd dropped it.
I'm not allowed to have a party unless I warm my parents a week in advance.	My parents are more easy-going.
I don't light green.	Well, do you like blue?
Careful on that street. There are a lot of bag guys there.	Are they going to attack me?
The neck strain will be arriving at platform 2 in five minutes.	I thought it was going to be late.

There were sick students waiting for the teacher.	Really? I thought there were nine.
I wooden chews that one if I were you.	Why not? I like it.
No, I don't want a burger. I don't like farce food.	I know, it's not healthy.
I'm not really a cap person. I much prefer dogs.	I love cats, myself.
Sorry, this is a private party. If you're not on the guess list you can't get in.	But I was invited!
The defendant pleaded knock guilty.	Was he really innocent?
Of course, these things only happen in farce peach.	Yes, written language Is entirely different.

ATTACHMENT H…………………………………………………………………………………….

FCE Listening Test

(Source: Cambridge ESOL, 2005, p. 19-23 – Listening Test 1)

Part 1

You will hear people talking in eight different situations. For questions **1–8**, choose the best answer (**A**, **B** or **C**).

---

1   You overhear a young man talking about his first job.
    How did he feel in his first job?

    A   bored

    B   confused

    C   enthusiastic

	1

2   You hear a radio announcement about a dance company.
    What are listeners being invited to?

    A   a show

    B   a talk

    C   a party

	2

3   You overhear a woman talking to a man about something that happened to her.
    Who was she?

    A   a pedestrian

    B   a driver

    C   a passenger

	3

4   You hear a woman talking on the radio about her work making wildlife films.
    What is her main point?

    A   Being in the right place at the right time is a matter of luck.

    B   More time is spent planning than actually filming.

    C   It is worthwhile spending time preparing.

	4

5   You hear part of a travel programme on the radio.
    Where is the speaker?

    A   outside a café

    B   by the sea

    C   on a lake

	5

6   You overhear a woman talking about a table-tennis table in a sports shop.
    What does she want the shop assistant to do about her table-tennis table?

    A   provide her with a new one

    B   have it put together for her

    C   give her the money back

	6

7 You hear part of an interview with a businesswoman.
What is her business?

    A hiring out boats

    B hiring out caravans

    C building boats

            7

8 You hear a man talking on the radio.
Who is talking?

    A an actor

    B a journalist

    C a theatre-goer

            8

Part 2

You will hear a radio interview with Mike Reynolds, whose hobby is exploring underground places such as caves. For questions **9–18**, complete the sentences.

Cavers explore underground places such as mines and

[**9**] as well as caves.

When cavers camp underground, they choose places which have

[*and*   **10**] available.

In the UK, the place Mike likes best for caving is [**11**]

As a physical activity, Mike compares caving to [**12**]

Cavers can pay as much as £20 for a suitable [**13**]

Cavers can pay as much as £50 for the right kind of

[**14**], which is worn on the head.

Mike recommends buying expensive

[**15**] to avoid having accidents.

Caving is a sport for people of [**16**] and backgrounds.

Some caves in Britain are called 'places of [' **17**]

The need for safety explains why people don't organise caving

[**18**]

Part 3

You will hear five different people talking about their work on a cruise ship. For questions **19–23**, choose from the list (**A–F**) what each speaker says about their work. Use the letters only once. There is one extra letter which you do not need to use.

A	One aspect of my job is less interesting than others.		
		Speaker 1	19
B	My job involves planning for the unexpected.		
		Speaker 2	20
C	You have to be sociable to do my job.		
		Speaker 3	21
D	I don't like routine in my working life.		
		Speaker 4	22
E	There's not much work to do during the day.		
		Speaker 5	23
F	I provide passengers with a souvenir of their trip.		

Part 4

You will hear a radio discussion in which four people are talking about the advertising of children's toys on television. For questions **24–30**, decide which views are expressed by any of the speakers and which are not. Write **YES** for those views which are expressed, and **NO** for those which are not expressed.

24	Most young children are aware when advertisements are being shown on television.	24
25	There are fewer toy advertisements on British television than there used to be.	25
26	Parents are spending increasing amounts of their money on traditional toys.	26
27	Advertisers have to indicate the actual size of toys advertised on television.	27
28	Children would be less influenced by toy advertisements if they were only shown after 8.00 pm.	28
29	Advertising encourages children to lose interest in their toys very quickly.	29
30	Evidence shows that most people are worried about toy advertising on television.	30

ATTACHMENT I..

FCE Listening Test – Transcript

(Source: Cambridge ESOL, 2005, p.117-126)

PART 1	*You'll hear people talking in eight different situations. For questions 1 to 8, choose the best answer, A, B or C.*
Question 1	*One.* *You overhear a young man talking about his first job.* *How did he feel in his first job?* *A bored* *B confused* *C enthusiastic* [pause] tone
Man:	I didn't want to go to university, so when I finished school, I went and got a job. My parents said if I was in full-time education, they'd give me an allowance, but if not, I'd have to work. So, I got a job in a big store in the menswear department ... Actually, I think I had to go out and find out what I could do because in school I wasn't particularly brilliant, so, when it came to doing work, I think I had to prove a lot of people wrong. So I really felt like doing it ... even though it was just selling socks in Harridges. [pause] tone [The recording is repeated.] [pause]
Question 2	*Two.* *You hear a radio announcement about a dance company.* *What are listeners being invited to?* *A a show* *B a talk* *C a party* [pause] tone
Man:	The Hilton Dance Company have been at the Camden Theatre for almost a month now, offering us a wonderful programme of mainly modern dances. The company have just celebrated their twentieth year of performances all over the world! But this week they'll be taking a break from dancing, to give us an idea of how a dance company works. Top dancer and company manager Lisa West will be in the theatre telling us about the company's work, but all the dancers will be there too, so it's also your opportunity for a get-together! And, of course, you don't need to have any experience of dance for this ... [pause] tone [The recording is repeated.] [pause]

Question 3

Three.
You overhear a woman talking to a man about something that happened to her.
Who was she?
A a pedestrian
B a driver
C a passenger

[pause]

tone

Woman:	I tell you, we were dead lucky! He could have done some serious damage if we hadn't reacted so quickly.
Man:	What did he do – just shoot straight out without looking?
Woman:	Yeah. Clare yelled something at me and I just slammed on the brakes.
Man:	Did he stop?
Woman:	You're joking! Just blasted his horn at us and carried on.
Man:	And there was nobody behind you?
Woman:	No, fortunately, otherwise who knows what might have happened.
Man:	You were lucky. That road's always busy.

[pause]

tone

[The recording is repeated.]

[pause]

Question 4

Four.
You hear a woman talking on the radio about her work making wildlife films.
What is her main point?
A Being in the right place at the right time is a matter of luck.
B More time is spent planning than actually filming.
C It's worthwhile spending time preparing.

[pause]

tone

Woman: The research for a major wildlife TV series can take up to a year, followed by about two years filming, with four or five camera teams around the world at any one time. Finding the right stories to film is only half the job. The other half is finding the right location and then going out to help the camera-person film it. This can be difficult – you have to make sure you're in the right place at the right time. So good planning is essential. We spend a lot of time on the phone beforehand, getting advice from local experts.

[pause]

tone

[The recording is repeated.]

[pause]

Question 5

Five.
You hear part of a travel programme on the radio.
Where is the speaker?
A outside a café
B by the sea
C on a lake

[pause]

tone

Man: This is the most beautiful place I've ever visited and believe me, in my career as a travel writer, I've seen some fabulous scenes. From the deck of this small sailing boat, I have a wonderful view out over a short expanse of sparkling blue water to the white houses of the village on the left, and then to the wooded hillsides behind, which climb up to the snow-covered mountain peaks surrounding this lovely valley. By the water's edge, people are sitting in the late evening sun enjoying a leisurely meal of fresh fish, caught in these waters only a few hours ago. It's heaven!

[pause]

tone

[The recording is repeated.]

[pause]

Question 6   *Six.*
You overhear a woman talking about a table-tennis table in a sports shop.
What does she want the shop assistant to do about her table-tennis table?
A provide her with a new one
B have it put together for her
C give her the money back

[pause]

tone

Woman: Giving me my money back isn't the point. My son needs to practise for an important match, but at the moment his table is lying in bits on the floor. When I bought it, I was assured that it would only take a matter of moments to screw the different parts in place, but the instructions don't make sense. Since I paid so much for it, I think it's only fair to ask for some hands-on help from you in getting it into a usable state. My son is impatient for a game on his new table!

[pause]

tone

[The recording is repeated.]

[pause]

Question 7   *Seven.*
You hear part of an interview with a businesswoman.
What is her business?

A hiring out boats
B hiring out caravans
C building boats

[pause]

tone

Interviewer: Helen, was this business always a dream of yours?
Woman: No, not really, it developed from what we used to do, build fishing boats.
Interviewer: How long have you been in business?
Woman: About eight years, first we built the marina, then we bought boats to rent out for cruising holidays! It's going well.
Interviewer: How many boats do you have? During the summer I bet you're pretty busy?
Woman: Yes, people use them like caravans really, they go up river for their holidays and then bring them back to the moorings here for us to prepare for the next client ...

[pause]

tone

[The recording is repeated.]

[pause]

Question 8
Eight.
You hear a man talking on the radio.
Who is talking?
A an actor
B a journalist
C a theatre-goer

[pause]

tone

Man: This is a really delicious part – plenty to get your teeth into, some very good speeches, a lot of change of mood. There's lots for the audience to identify with too, so it all goes to make my job more rewarding. The fact that this is a revival means I also have the challenge of putting my own stamp on a role. The original performance, by the man who created the part some twenty years ago, will still be in the mind of some members of the audience. I couldn't ask for more.

[pause]

tone

[The recording is repeated.]

[pause]

That's the end of Part One.

Now turn to Part Two.

[pause]

PART 2
You'll hear a radio interview with Mike Reynolds, whose hobby is exploring underground places such as caves. For questions 9 to 18, complete the sentences.

You now have forty-five seconds in which to look at Part Two.

[pause]

tone

Interviewer: In the studio with me today, I have Mike Reynolds who's what is known as a caver. In other words, he spends long periods of time exploring underground caves for pleasure. And Mike's here to tell us all about this fascinating hobby and how to get started on it. So Mike, why caves?

Mike: Well, cavers actually explore any space that's underground whether it's caves, old mines or tunnels.

Interviewer: Oh right. So how big are these underground spaces?

Mike: Oh – anything up to 80 kilometres long … which means that, in some cases, in order to reach the end you've got to sleep, to set up camp, inside the cave at some point – usually where both space and fresh air are available.

Interviewer: No good if you're afraid of the dark.

Mike: No.

Interviewer: So, where do you find the best caves?

Mike: In terms of countries, the best places are, for example, Ireland, Australia and the Philippines. Here in the UK, various areas have the right sort of geology. My favourite is Wales, but you can find plenty of caves in northern England and in Scotland too.

Interviewer: Caving involves a lot of physical exercise, doesn't it?

Mike: That's right … in terms of physical activity, it's very similar to climbing except they go up and we go down. The conditions can be very different though … we often find ourselves facing very small gaps in the rock which we have to crawl through on our hands and knees.

Interviewer: So the right equipment is obviously very important. If I wanted to start out on a hobby like this, what would I need?

Mike:	Well, you'd need a hard hat, and it's important to get one that fits properly, so that it doesn't keep falling over your eyes or feel too tight, and these can cost anything from five to twenty pounds.
Interviewer:	Umm … that doesn't sound too much for starters.
Mike:	Oh, but then there's the lamp. You wear that on your head because it's very important to keep your hands free at all times. But it doesn't come with the hat and it can cost anything up to fifty pounds to get a suitable one.
Interviewer:	I guess warm clothes are a must too?
Mike:	You'll need to spend thirty to forty pounds on a waterproof suit because the caves can be pretty wet and cold inside and you can get ill if you're not protected. Then, of course, the thing that you really need to spend money on is something for your feet that keeps the water out. Strong boots are essential for this, also because without them you could be slipping on wet surfaces and doing yourself an injury. Cheap ones are just not as safe, I'm afraid.
Interviewer:	It sounds pretty tough. I mean is it really only a sport for the young and fit?
Mike:	That's quite interesting because people tend to think that, but in fact cavers

	come from all ages and backgrounds – students and professionals alike. You even find eighty-year-olds who've been doing it for years.
Interviewer:	What exactly is it that people find so attractive?
Mike:	It's excitement … the pleasure you get in finding something new – a passage that nobody knew about before or a piece of rock that's just lovely to look at.
Interviewer:	And I understand that conservation has become a key issue as well?
Mike:	Yes. Forty-eight caves in Britain are now known as 'places of special interest' because of what they contain and this is the same in other countries too.
Interviewer:	So, do cavers enjoy competing, like in other sports?
Mike:	No. We want to enjoy a safe sport and, in order to ensure that, there are no competitions in caving. We try to organise a range of events, but the emphasis is on co-operation and the enjoyment of the sport for what it can offer the individual.
Interviewer:	Well, it sounds like something I'll have to try one day. Mike, thank you very much for coming in and sharing …

[pause]

Now you'll hear Part Two again.

tone

[The recording is repeated.]

[pause]

That's the end of Part Two.
Now turn to Part Three.

[pause]

PART 3
You will hear five different people talking about their work on a cruise ship. For questions 19 to 23, choose from the list, A to F, what each speaker says about their work. Use the letters only once. There is one extra letter which you do not need to use.

You now have thirty seconds in which to look at Part Three.

[pause]

tone

Speaker 1

[pause]

| Man: | I deal with anything to do with entertainment on board, and that covers guest lecturers, cabaret artists, the show company and any special nights. I have to |

plan each cruise with all the performers and then introduce them at the beginning of the show. There's never a dull moment and if I want time to myself, I have to escape to my cabin because a huge part of my job is to mix with people. There are often parties to attend … and then, sometimes, dance nights to organise. So, if I'm not in the shows, I'll be out there dancing with the passengers, because that's part of my job too.

[pause]

Speaker 2

[pause]

Woman: I'm in charge of reception at the Health and Fitness Centre, so I greet passengers and organise their individual fitness programmes and beauty treatments. I wouldn't say it was glamorous because it's very hard work, but the rewards for me are meeting really interesting people, and the system of working. We do eight-month contracts, and once you've finished, it's up to you how much time you have off. Then you renew your contract when you're ready. I like working on a contract basis; I don't like to feel as if I'm stuck somewhere. At home, everyone follows the same nine-to-five pattern. Here, time just has a different meaning.

[pause]

Speaker 3

[pause]

Man: I'm responsible for the safety of the passengers. That means that, apart from keeping an eye on things on a day-to-day basis, I have to make sure that passengers can be safely evacuated if there's an emergency. So, I do a lot of staff training, to make sure each member of staff knows exactly what to do if there's a problem … and, of course, we do emergency drills with the passengers. In theory, I'm on call for twenty-four hours a day, but, in fact, I'm generally on duty for about fifteen so I do get the chance to socialise a bit too. When we're in port, though, I get the whole time off.

[pause]

Speaker 4

[pause]

Woman: There are six photographers here, and we take photos of passengers in various locations on the ship. My main role, though, is to develop and print all the passenger film so I'm less in evidence socially. We don't have set hours because every cruise programme is different and, because I print the photos, I frequently carry on working until six in the morning – getting them ready for the next day. It's quite exciting. People like having their pictures taken with the captain, and we also do quite a few shots in the restaurant and on party nights, but – generally – people come to us with their own requests.

[pause]

Speaker 5

[pause]

Man: I'm in charge of all the restaurants on board. So, menus, costings and the quality of food, plus any staff issues – it's all down to me, I love all that even if the paperwork and accounts can be a bit dull sometimes. But I've worked for this company for nearly 24 years, and I haven't regretted it for one minute. Even though we can't choose where we go, we can put in requests for certain

cruises. So, normally, I do four months away and then two months' leave. Where else could you get a job like that and get paid for it? You miss your friends and family, but you don't get time to think about it.

[pause]

Now you'll hear Part Three again.

tone

[The recording is repeated.]

[pause]

That's the end of Part Three.

Now turn to Part Four.

[pause]

PART 4   *You will hear a radio discussion in which four people are talking about the advertising of children's toys on television. For questions 24 to 30, decide which views are expressed by any of the speakers and which are not. Write YES for those views which are expressed and NO for those which are not expressed.*

You now have forty-five seconds in which to look at Part Four.

[pause]

tone

Interviewer: Today we're talking about the advertising of toys. With me I have Anna Thompson, a member of an environmental group and mother of three, David Wheeler, father of two and manager of a marketing company, and Jim East here is an Advertising Standards Officer who makes the rules about television advertising in Britain. Anna, first, your group has been asking people to stop and think before they go out and buy more toys.

Anna: Yes, parents are under more and more pressure to buy the latest toy for their child and we feel that television advertising is at fault. A lot of it is targeted at children of maybe five or six. There's evidence that these children don't distinguish between the advertisements and the programmes so they enjoy the pictures and the stories and then of course they want the product.

Interviewer: Do you think though that today's children are any different from children ten, twenty, even thirty years ago?

Anna: If you look at the kind of top toys, you'll find that 20, 30 years ago the same toys would run over two, three or four years and now you'll find that there are lots of new ones each year. We're talking about the way new things are pushed at kids, every five minutes practically.

David: Can I just come in there and say that advertising on British television by toy manufacturers to kids is actually decreasing and it has been for the last six years.

Anna: But *spending* on advertising has increased – the advertisements which *do* appear are much more sophisticated and have had more money spent on them.

David: But for a toy manufacturer to keep its share of the market, it has to do just that. Traditional toys are having a hard time now from all the other things aimed at kids – competition from videos, computer games and the rest. What used to be spent on toys now has to be shared with all these newer and probably more exciting products.

Interviewer: Jim, what are the rules governing the advertising of toys to children in Britain?

Jim: OK, very briefly, advertisers are not allowed to say, "go and ask your parents for this product". What they show in terms of the product itself has to reflect what the product can actually do. It mustn't do magical things on television that it can't do in real life.

Interviewer: I'm a mother of four small children myself and what I wonder when I watch the advertisements is how they can show something which I know is tiny and plasticky but it's shot in such a way – the camerawork and the lighting and stuff – that it looks very attractive. Are they allowed, those sorts of advertisements?

Jim: Well, in toy advertisements, unlike for other products, advertisers are obliged to show some kind of familiar item that kids will recognise and put it next to the toy so that you can tell how big it really is. Advertisers can, though, show their products in the best light as long as it's not actually misleading.

Interviewer: How about if toy advertisements weren't allowed until after 8pm, when most children are in bed. What difference would that make? David?

David: Well, very little, I'd say. For a start 8pm isn't significant: a quarter of all children's viewing takes place after that time, even some of the young children, four to sevens, are watching then. But, really why shouldn't the kids see the adverts?

Anna: Because advertising is teaching kids that they can use something a few times and then throw it away. It doesn't do them any good and it certainly doesn't do the planet any good.

Jim: I have to say that we deal with all the complaints about toy advertising on television and we get a handful each year. The research we've done indicates that the majority of people find toy advertising acceptable.

Interviewer: Well, we have to leave it there, so thank you.

[pause]

Now you'll hear Part Four again.

tone

[The recording is repeated.]

[pause]

That's the end of Part Four.

There'll now be a pause of five minutes for you to copy your answers onto the separate answer sheet.

[Pause the recording here for five minutes. Remind your students when they have one minute left.]

That's the end of the test. Please stop now. Your supervisor will now collect all the question papers and answer sheets.

Goodbye.