

Teaching English Connected Speech Items at Secondary Schools

Roland Giscard ONDZÉ OTOUBA,

rolandondze@gmail.com,

Yvon-Pierre NDONGO IBARA

yvon.ndongo-ibara@umng.cg

Université Marien N'GOUABI, Congo.

Abstract

This research work deals with the teaching of English connected speech items in general and progressive assimilation in particular. In addition, it aims at scrutinizing the difficulties the secondary school learners encounter in encoding and decoding the English oral messages when communicating orally. In fact, our investigation instruments such as pre-investigation, classroom observation and questionnaire confirm that the selected item is inserted in the official syllabus of English course however, it is not taught, learnt and assessed in classes. Therefore, this work suggests the didactic guideline that covers a sample of a lesson plan with regards to teaching strategies and testing exercises in order to facilitate the implementation of assimilated groups of words in English.

Key words: *Teaching-learning, pronunciation, connected speech, assimilation*

Résumé

Ce travail de recherche traite des items d'enseignement du discours connectés en général et celui de l'assimilation en particulier. Ensuite, il vise à examiner les difficultés rencontrées par les apprenants du secondaire dans l'encodage et le décodage des messages oraux en anglais. En effet, nos instruments de recherche à savoir la pré-enquête, l'observation et le questionnaire confirment que l'item sélectionné du discours connecté est inséré dans le programme officiel du cours d'anglais cependant, il n'est pas enseigné, appris et évalué dans les salles de classes au secondaire. Par conséquent, ce travail de recherche suggère un processus didactique qui comprend les stratégies d'enseignement, les activités d'apprentissage et les exercices de test pour faciliter l'implémentation des groupes mots assimilés en anglais.

Mots-clés : *enseignement-apprentissage, prononciation, discours connecté, assimilation*

Introduction

The unfamiliarity with reduced forms or connected speech in oral production is one of the difficulties encountered by the secondary school learners in Congo. As matter of fact, this work aims at raising the relevance of teaching, learning and assessing the connected speech items in general and assimilation in particular at secondary school. This means, referring to what hampers the implementation of assimilation items, this research work emphasizes on the way sounds are connected or changed in a word or group of words when communicating orally. Besides, it tries to enable and equip teachers of English with suitable and appropriate teaching strategies and testing activities related to the selected item of English in classes. Actually, this teaching item is requested by INRAP (2016: 18) syllabus of English (**G.O1: Understanding oral messages**, **S.O1-3: Decoding a specific message: assimilation in connected speech**). In fact, connected speech includes many features namely “*elision, linking, assimilation and contractions*”. Concerning this research work, much attention is put on the English “assimilation” which concerns the change of a sound according to what comes before and after it. For the sake of this work, “progressive assimilation” in a group of words is considered as the selected item. Therefore, the following main questions aim at achieving this research work properly: (1) How to teach, learn and assess English progressive assimilation in a group of words? (2) What hampers the teaching of English progressive assimilation in classes at secondary school? As a matter of fact, the above questions will be clarified through the relevance of teaching English connected speech items, the data collection method and analysis, the major findings and the teaching of English progressive assimilation.

1. Relevance of teaching English connected speech items

The teaching and learning process of any foreign language relies first on the oral communication. Thus, this section aims at dealing with the relevance of teaching English connected speech items at secondary schools in order to encourage learners communicating with teachers in classes and native speakers outside the classroom environment. As a matter of fact, the term “connected speech” is also known as connected discourse. It is a continuous sequence of sounds forming utterances or conversations in spoken language. In other words, connected speech means that when we speak a language, words have some effect on each other. In this perspective, we do not always pronounce words separately with a neat pause in between. Besides, connected speech refers to a reduced speech which means the articulatory process whereby the pronunciation of a word or morpheme changes when it is followed immediately by another in fluent speech. Thus, Hieke (1987: 41) defines connected speech processes as “*the changes which conventional word forms undergo due to the temporal and articulatory constraints upon spontaneous, casual speech*”. That is, they are processes that words undergo when their border

sounds are blended with neighbouring sounds. In the same way, Aminah (2012: 104) argues:

In English, as in all languages, sounds are influenced by other sounds in their environment. There are two main reasons for most of the adjustments, they are: 1) to facilitate the transition between sounds when people pronounce English. 2) English has particular rhythm; syllables are squeezed between stressed elements so that regular time can be maintained. The things that happen in connected speech also facilitate the natural English rhythm.

The analysis of this passage shows that, in connected speech, it is necessary to join sounds from one word to another in order to facilitate the pronunciation of English sentences. Also, when a sentence is uttered in connected speech, some words link together and form new sounds as in “he should stop it he should sta pit”, “I will read a book I will ree da book”. This gives the sentence a rhythm, or what some refer to as a beat and facilitate the natural English rhythm. In addition, English connected speech is a continuous stream of sounds, without clear-cut borderlines between them, and the different aspects of connected speech help to explain why written English is so different from spoken English. In fact, Alameen (2014:1) pinpoints, “*words spoken in context (in connected speech) often sound quite different from those same words when they are spoken in isolation (in their citation forms, or dictionary pronunciations)*”. In this situation, words pronounced from the citation forms, are words that are alphabetized in a dictionary providing the primary or main meaning in terms of pronunciation. This is known as the main entry word in the dictionary expressing denotation. Whilst, connected speech is the pronunciation of the same words in the context expressing connotation. It signifies that, words connected to provide new sounds that have different interpretations or meaning when speaking. In detail, connected speech is a combinatory articulatory phenomenon in which words are not pronounced in isolation but run together (Murcia: 2010, 163). In other words, connected speech is considered as the fact of adding, omitting or changing sounds in a word or group of words (sentence) in order to simplify the articulation by speech-producing organs. Brown (2006: 284) defines connected speech as “*the continuous chains in normal conversation, which includes such phenomena as reduction, elision, assimilation, intrusion, juncture, linking, and contraction*”. The author thinks that in connected speech, words are pronounced in a certain combination for the respect of English rhythm in oral communication. These sounds can be omitted, reduced, assimilated or changed, linked and words can be contracted when speaking. Consequently, L2 learners of English often find some words and sounds missing where they expect to hear and they try their best, often in vain, to figure out where the word boundaries are in stream of sounds. For that, the teaching and learning of English connected speech becomes interesting when dealing with English lessons in classes so that learners

can develop their oral communicative competence. In this perspective, Dauer and Brown (1992: 3) assert:

The model of English we must teach learners is the fluent language as it is actually spoken in conversation, that is “connected speech”, and not an artificially slow, word-by-word variety, nor an artificially precise, overcorrect form of speech.

The author thinks that connected speech is a natural process which happens in every language that needs to be taught, learnt and assessed. In fact, learning to recognize common sound change will improve both the secondary school teachers and learners’ ability to understand conversational English, and learning to make a smooth connection from the end of one word to the beginning of the next in order to improve their fluency when communicating. In addition, the relevance of teaching and learning English connected speech helps the secondary school learners to differentiate the way words of English are pronounced in isolation from the same words pronounced in communication context when they meet in words or morpheme boundaries in English language. This may become a significant challenge to intelligibility in listening comprehension where the secondary school learners can understand and communicate with teachers of English without any fear during the didactic contract in different pedagogical classes.

As a matter of fact, this research work raises the teachers’ attention on the teaching of English assimilation items because the secondary school learners are still facing serious problems in encoding and decoding English messages when communicating. Otherwise, our research instruments confirm that the Congolese learners have got problems when dealing with some oral activities from dialogues, reading comprehension, listening comprehension and the pronunciation of the suffix “s” and “ed”. It can be mentioned that, when dealing with these activities, learners recover troubles to assimilate some words containing in words or sentences. The case of the suffix “s” and “ed” where they can be pronounced as [s], [z], [iz] and “ed” like [d], [t] and [id] based on progressive assimilation. It is in this regard that Demirezen (2016: 501) argues, “*Assimilation is learnable, and when it is learned, it promotes accurate articulation, leading the abilities to at least near native-like speech*”. Evidently, assimilation should be taught, learnt and assessed because some words are difficult to pronounce when they are in isolated way. Thanks to the teaching and learning of English assimilation, the secondary school learners could change sounds in avoiding these difficult words in connected speech. Therefore, the selected item in this work tackles manners of assimilation based on the contrast between progressive, regressive and coalescent assimilations since learners are incapable of identifying them in isolated words and in sentences. For the implementation of assimilation, the secondary teachers should first provide the English sounds as argued by Aminah (2012: 112), “*Before our learners practice*

assimilation in classes, they should be introduced to different sounds that can help them deal with sound changes”. From this quotation, the teaching of assimilation requires the introduction of sounds that influence each other within a word or sentence.

2. Data collection Method and analysis

This section aims at providing different ways of collecting data such as pre-investigation observation and questionnaire in different pedagogical classes at secondary schools.

2.1. Pre-investigation

This sub section aims at examining the existed documents that can help to check if the English connected speech items are mentioned in the syllabus and how they are taught, learnt and assessed through the learners’ copybooks at secondary school. As a matter of fact, the analysis of the official syllabus of English demonstrates that the English connected speech items exist and they are requested to be taught, learnt and assessed as other teaching items such as grammar, vocabulary and language functions to quote only a few. This is evidenced when INRAP (2016: 18) suggests: **General objective 1: Understanding oral messages, Specific objective 1-3: Decoding a specific message: assimilation in connected speech.** These illustrations show that English connected speech items exist in the official syllabus of English course and they are considered as an autonomous lessons that teachers of English should take into account when dealing with English in classes. This means, the teaching strategies and learning activities should be provided in order to help both teachers and learners face these language items during the English teaching and learning process in classes. Apart from the official English syllabus, other documents such as the previous teachers’ teaching cards and the learners’ copybooks have been checked in order to see whether some English connected speech items are taught, learnt and assessed since they are requested in the English syllabus. As a matter of fact, the obtained results reveal that none of these English connected speech items have been taken into account in the teachers’ previous “teaching cards” and the learners’ “copybooks” because no lesson in connection to the selected topic has been found.

2.2. Classroom observation

The objective of this method is to check if teachers implement English connected speech items during the English teaching and learning process. As a matter of fact, Sinclair (1990: 991) thinks that, “*if somebody observes someone or something, they watch him or it carefully in order to learn or understand the positive or the negative sides of what is done*”, The following chart is made of English connected speech items which are requested by the official syllabus of the English course to be taught, learnt and tested in classes.

Table n°1: Observation card of English teaching items

Connected Speech Items	Contents	Observation
Assimilation	<i>Progressive, regressive, coalescent, partial, complete, voiced assimilation.</i>	Not taught, learnt and assessed in classes accordingly.
Elision	<i>Elision of vowels, elision of consonants.</i>	
Linking	<i>Consonant to consonant linking, vowel to vowel linking, consonant to vowel, consonant clusters.</i>	
Intrusion	<i>Intrusive [j], intrusive [w], intrusive [r].</i>	
Juncture	<i>Consonant to consonant, vowel to consonant, consonant to vowel.</i>	
Reduction	<i>Content words (strong forms), function words (weak forms).</i>	
Contractions	<i>Auxiliaries (auxiliary verbs “to be, to have, to do”, modal auxiliaries “can, will, should, would...”)</i>	

The results from these classroom observations prove that, no pronunciation items, including connected speech, have been taught, learnt and assessed in different pedagogical classes at secondary school. Whereas, the secondary school learners are still encountering serious difficulties in assimilating the suffix letters “s”, “ed” and to connect sounds in sentences when learning tenses and asking or answering questions orally. Otherwise, the analysis of the data taken from the classroom observation enlighten that the above items of English connected speech are not taught, learnt and assessed in the class of Première. This means that the secondary school teachers are not aware and confident to deal with connected speech items. This justifies the reasons why the learners of Première at Lycée Thomas Sankara find the spoken discourse more difficult than the written discourse during the English learning process. As a result, some questions are asked to the teachers of English in order to collect more information about what hampers the teaching of the selected item at secondary schools.

2.3. Questionnaire addressed to teachers

This section aims at examining and interpreting the questionnaire addressed to ten (10) teachers of English at *Lycée Thomas Sankara “A” in Brazzaville*. Indeed, this questionnaire covers six (06) questions which are treated separately and accordingly in the following lines.

Question 1: Which English item do you teach to increase the learners’ oral skills?

The objective of this question is to check the component of English course teachers often teach in order to ameliorate the secondary school learners’ oral communicative competence during the learning process in English.

Table n°2: English components

Responses	Respondents	Percentages
Grammar	04	40

Vocabulary	04	40
Pronunciation	01	10
Reading comprehension	00	00
Language functions	01	10
Total	10	100

From this visual display of information, the majority of teachers emphasize on the teaching of grammar and vocabulary components. In grammar and vocabulary, teachers aim at training the secondary school learners about English tenses, sentence structures, English words related to the selected topics such as; social problems, food and health, music and sport to quote only a few in order to prepare them face the writing activities during the formative or summative evaluations. However, English pronunciation is less noticeable at secondary schools.

Question 2: Which English pronunciation item do you teach in the class of Première?

This interrogation deals with the English pronunciation items that teachers often teach in Première at Thomas Sankara high school “A”. Then, the detail is provided in the following table.

Table n°3: The pronunciation teaching item

Responses	Respondents	Percentages
Sounds	02	20
Stress	06	60
Connected speech	02	20
Total	10	100

The above chart shows that many teachers of English prefer dealing with stress whereas, the minority of them are concerned with sounds and connected speech. In fact, it resorts from the classroom observation data that both English sounds and connected speech items are not visible in lessons when teachers deal with English because they are only familiar with stress teaching in different pedagogical classes. Here, when talking about “stress” teachers only refer to the pronunciation of “wh-questions” and “yes/no questions” in terms of rising and falling intonation in English grammar lessons.

Question 3: Is the teaching of connected speech mentioned in INRAP syllabus?

The purpose of this question is to check whether the English connected speech items are mentioned in the official English syllabus at secondary schools. The chart below evidences.

Table n°4: Connected speech items in English syllabus

Responses	Respondents	Percentages
Yes	09	90
No	00	00
Don't know	01	10
Total	10	100

The obtained data demonstrate that a lot of teachers agree with the existence of English connected speech items in the official syllabus of English course at secondary schools. They illustrate from the inspectors' allotment that the General objective 2" (GO2) deals with "expressing orally" and the "specific objective 2-3" (SO2-3) is concerned with "respecting the intonation where the content is made of "sentence stress, intonation in connected speech, liaisons (linking), assimilations" in the second class and première at Lycée level. According to the syllabus, the teaching of connected speech items aims at boosting and contributing to the process or growth of the learners' oral communication skills. Besides, the implementation of these items help learners to make the difference between the way words are pronounced in context of connected speech and the way they are pronounced in isolation.

Question 4: In which context do you often teach assimilation in classes?

The purpose of this question is to identify the context teachers of English often implement the teaching of English assimilation in classes. The illustration is provided hereafter.

Table n°5: The context of teaching assimilation

Responses	Respondents	Percentages
A word	09	90
A group of words	01	10
Total	10	100

The content of the above chart proves that, a great number of teachers at Lycée Thomas Sankara "A" often deal with assimilation in a word when dealing with the suffix "s" and "ed" in the present and past simple. These suffixes are only referred to the explanation of the third person singular, the plural nouns, the possessive mark "s" (she speakss, schoolss, Chevlay'ss) and the past regular verbs' suffix "ed" (cookeded). However, they do not teach them as an autonomous lessons which require a lesson plan following the teaching method of 3Ps (Production, Practice and Production).

Question 5: Have you been trained to teach English connected speech items?

The objective of this question is to see whether the selected teachers of English from Lycée Thomas Sankara "A" have received the appropriate training in teaching English connected speech items at secondary schools. The following chart enlightens.

Table n°6: Teachers' pronunciation teaching training

Responses	Respondents	Percentages
Yes	03	30
No	07	70
Total	10	100

The analysis of this table unveils that the majority of teachers have not been trained to teach English connected speech items during their training period at University whereas, the minority of them opines that they have been trained on how to teach these items. That is, the course of phonetics and phonology they have learnt at Ecole Normale Supérieure has not tackled the didactic process. This course has enabled them to gain information in describing and transcribing sounds, words and sentences in English language. In other words, the selected teachers of English confess that, what they have learnt about the course of phonetics and phonology during the training period has helped them to develop their oral skills or to utter English sounds, words and sentence stress accordingly but, not to provide teaching strategies from a teaching card on these items.

3. Major findings

This section is devoted to the summary of the major findings related to the relevance of teaching and learning English connected speech items in general and assimilation in particular at secondary school. Indeed, these major findings are resulted from the data collected from the pre-investigation, the classroom observation and the questionnaire addressed to teachers. As a matter of fact, the collected results show that teachers are still facing difficulties in increasing the learners' oral competences related to English connected speech items. The first major finding is linked to the teachers' training on English connected speech items during the training period at University. Here, the selected teachers of English complain that they do not receive enough training in methodology of teaching connected speech items (Gilbert, 2008). That is, these teachers have not received an appropriate training on how to transpose didactically English pronunciation items comprising connected speech items where they can proceed the same when tackling grammar, vocabulary, reading comprehension and language functions in different pedagogical classes. Otherwise, they have dealt with the scientific description of English sounds, stress, intonation and some aspects of connected speech different from the way these items could be taught, learnt and assessed at secondary schools. Therefore, the secondary school teachers of English are incompetent in creating, inventing and adopting new strategies and techniques in order to boost the learners' oral skills from the teaching and implementing of English pronunciation in general and the connected speech items in particular during the English learning process at school. This observation is attested by Griffiths (2011: 33) when he argues:

Experienced teachers are not keen to teach pronunciation including connected speech and they claim that there is not clear guidance in textbooks and that the isolated exercises do not bring the wanted effect.

This means, the secondary school teachers only rely on lessons elaborated or provided by inspectors during some workshops. They are limited on the inspectors' allotment which does not take into account the teaching of English pronunciation items because these school inspectors lack good capacities in transposing what is written in books or documents related to English pronunciation items. This factor unveils the incapacity of teachers to create and innovate oral activities that could help learners speak without fear. In fact, they lose confidence, awareness and certainty to improve their oral production during the learning process in classes. As a result, the secondary school learners' level in pronunciation or oral skills is still weaker when dealing with English.

4. Progressive Assimilation in teaching and learning English

This section deals with the didactic process which aims at promoting the teaching and learning of English assimilation in classes. It is mainly concerned with the implementation of the teaching method of 3Ps (Presentation, Practice and Production) coupled with the explanatory method in order to operationalize the teaching, learning and testing of English connected items in general and assimilation in particular in classes.

Presentation: The purpose of this stage is to show the illustrations and explanation justifying the pronunciation of progressive assimilation in a group of words in English language. Actually, the teacher's first task is to provide the following explanation: *"Progressive assimilation occurs in a group of words when the consonant of the second word is modified by the consonant of the first word immediately before it. This change follows the three (3) aspects of connected speech (linking, elision and assimilation)".* Additionally, some illustrations are selected to support this explanation: [z] changes into [s] after [t, p, k, f, θ] in a group of words.

a. What is your name?

b. Jack has been here.

Finally, the changing process covers the three (3) aspects of connected speech:

1. *Linking:*

a) What iz your name?

b) Jack haz been here.

2. *Elision:*

a) What z your name?

b) Jack z been here.

3. *Assimilation:*

a) What s your name?

b) Jack s been here.

Practice: This stage aims at giving learners the opportunity to implement the selected item under the teacher's control or guidance. In this work, they are

requested to pronounce the written group of words justifying the pronunciation of progressive assimilation. And then, they are instructed to provide their own examples in pairs orally by respecting the same didactic process above.

Production: This stage deals with both “*implementing skill*” and “*writing skill*”. That is, the teacher’s first task is to request learners write their own oral illustrations or group of words justifying the selected item (progressive assimilation) on the board and then pronounce them accordingly.

Illustration 1:

L1: The coat has been well suited. (Isolation)

L2: The coats been well suited. (Assimilated)

Illustration 2:

L1: My life is over now. (Isolation)

L2: My lifes over now. (Assimilated)

Illustration 3:

L1: Kiba’s duck is in the water. (Isolation)

L2: Kiba’s ducks in the water. (Assimilated)

Illustration 4:

L1: This soap has been cut by me. (Isolation)

L2: This soaps been cut by me. (Assimilated)

It is worth mentioning that, the learners’ illustrations including the explanation provided by the teacher, constitute the summary of the day’s lesson that learners write down in their notebooks.

Exercise: Say true (T) or false (F) if the pronunciation derived from the underlined consonants are attested in a group of words. The first example has been corrected. 1---F, “s” preceded by “k” gives [s], now continue.

1. Jacks been here.
2. Pea has got a hugescreen at home.
3. Whats your first name?
4. The deaths an obligated way.
5. My knife is well made.
6. Hip hops an American invention.

Answer: Learners say true (T) or false (F) if the pronunciation derived from the underlined consonants are attested and justify. 1. ----- Corrected

2. ----- F, “s” does not precede [p, t, k, f, θ].
3. ----- F, not assimilated sound.
4. ----- T, “s” sounds [s] after “th”.
5. ----- F, not assimilated sounds.
6. ----- T, “s” becomes [s] after “p”.

Teaching English Connected Speech Items at Secondary Schools

Level: Première

Matter: English

Subject: Pronunciation

Title: Progressive assimilation in a group of words.

GO 2: Expressing orally

SO 2-3: Decoding specific messages

Date: Friday, October 28th 2022

Duration: 1 hour

References:

- *Pronunciation with ease*

- *Haraps English dictionary*

- *Cours de phonétique, phonologie et laboratoire Master II EA, ENS.*

Performance objective	Teaching strategies	Learning activities	Evaluation	Timing	Obs
By the end of the lesson, learners should be able to pronounce assimilated group of words through its different forms thanks to the teacher's explanation	I. Warming up - Greetings - Date writing - Attendance checking 1. Pre – requisites checking The teacher asks learners to provide English consonant sounds. The teacher asks learners to provide some English connected speech items with examples. The teacher takes assimilation and requests learners to give its different aspects with examples	Good morning, sir! We are quite well, thanks. Today is Friday, October 29th 2021 No one is missing sir. Answer Learners provide English consonant sounds.[p, t, k, b, d, g, v, f, ð, θ, s, z, ʃ, ʒ, tʃ, dʒ, m, n, ŋ, r, h, w, j, l] Answer Learners provide some English connected speech items and illustrate. 1. Linking: that <u>is</u> my book. 2. Elision: that <u>z</u> my book. 3. Assimilation: that <u>s</u> my book. 4. Contraction: that <u>'s</u> my book. Answer learners give the different manners of assimilation with examples 1. Progressive assimilation e.g.: - My <u>bags</u> are heavier. (connected) ➤ My <u>bagz</u> (assimilation) 2. Regressive assimilation e.g.: - That <u>person</u> is my friend. (connected) ➤ Th<u>aperson</u> (assimilation)	Good morning, class! How are you today? What is date today? Who is missing today? Task: Provide the English consonant sounds. Task: Provide some English connected speech items and illustrate. Task: Give the different aspects of assimilation with its examples	5mn	

By the end of the lesson, learners should be able to explain the pronunciation of progressive assimilation in a group of words thanks to the teacher's explanation	The teacher chooses progressive and requests learners to provide some contexts to realize it The teacher selects assimilation in a group of words and asks learners to quote the three (3) ways to explain it. The teacher takes the first explanation for the day's lesson II. Day's lesson: <i>Progressive assimilation in a group of words.</i> 1. Presentation Progressive assimilation	3. Coalescent assimilation e.g.: - would<u>d</u> you like to come? (connected) ➤ Would<u>d</u>you (assimilation) Answer Learners provide some contexts to realize progressive assimilation 1. In a word e.g.: - Cat<u>s</u> - guid<u>es</u> (connected) ➤ Cat<u>s</u> – guid<u>es</u> (assimilation) 2. In a group of words e.g.: What <u>is</u> the time? (connected) ➤ What <u>s</u> the time? Answer Learners quote the three (3) ways to explain progressive assimilation. 1. [z] changes into [s] after [p, t, k, f, θ] 2. [ð] becomes [n, d, t, g] when preceding them. 3. [s] sounds [ʃ] after [tʃ, dʒ]. Learners listen carefully to the teacher's explanation and pronunciation	Task: Provide some contexts to realize progressive assimilation Task: Quote the three (3) ways to explain progressive assimilation in a group of words.	10mn	
---	--	---	---	-------------	--

Teaching English Connected Speech Items at Secondary Schools

	occurs in a group of words when the consonant of the second word [z] is modified by the consonant of the first word [p, t, k, f, θ] immediately before it. This change follows the three (3) aspects of connected speech: <i>linking, elision and assimilation</i> Illustrations justifying the explanation a. What<u>i</u>s your name? b. Jack <u>h</u>as been here. Changing process based on 3 aspects of connected speech 1. <i>Linking</i>: a. What<u>iz</u> your name? b. Jack <u>haz</u> been here. 2. <i>Elision</i>: a. What<u>z</u> your name? b. Jack <u>z</u> been here. 3. <i>Assimilation</i>: a. What<u>s</u> your name? b. Jack <u>s</u> been here. 2. Practice	Answer Learners pronounce the written group of words on the board and provide their own in pairs orally. Answer Learners provide their own sentences and pronounce before writing them on the board <i>Illustration 1:</i> L1: The coat has been well suited. (in isolation) L2: The coat<u>s</u> been well suited. <i>Illustration 2:</i> L1: My life is over now. (in isolation) L2: My life<u>s</u> over now. <i>Illustration 3:</i> L1: Kiba's duck is in the water. (in isolation) L2: Kiba's duck<u>s</u> in the water. <i>Illustration 4:</i> L1: This soap has been cut by me. (in isolation) L2: This soap<u>s</u> been cut by me. <i>Illustration 5:</i> L1: My faith is not high. (in isolation)	Task: Pronounce the written group of words on the board and provide yours in pairs orally. Task: Write your own group of words on the board and pronounce them accordingly.	10mn 15mn 10mn	
--	--	--	--	-------------------------------------	--

	The teacher asks learners to pronounce the written group of words and requests them to provide their own in pairs orally. 3. Production The teacher asks learners to write their own group of words on the board and pronounce them accordingly. Then, he allows them to copy down the summary of the lesson. III. Evaluation 1. Applied exercise The teacher instructs learners to say true (T) or false (F) if the pronunciation derived from the	L2: My faith<u>s</u> not high. Answer Learners say true (T) or false (F) if the pronunciation derived from the underlined consonants are attested and justify. 1. ----- Corrected 2. ----- F, “s” does not precede [p – t – k – f – θ]. 3. ----- F, not assimilated sound. 4. ----- T, “s” sounds [s] after “th”. 5. ----- F, not assimilated sounds. 6. ----- T, “s” becomes [s] after “p”. Answer Learners fill in the blanks the conjugated verbs “has” and “is” and demonstrate the assimilation process of the following group of words. 1. The bus stop is near here. a) The bus stop <u>iz</u> near here. (linking) b) The bus stop <u>z</u> near here. (elision) c) The bus stop <u>s</u> near here. (assimilation) 2. It has rained the previous day. a) It <u>haz</u> rained the previous day. (linking) b) It <u>z</u> rained the previous day. (elision) c) It <u>s</u> rained the previous day. (assimilation) 3. Her wife is so beautiful. a) Her wife <u>iz</u> so beautiful. (linking) b) Her wife <u>z</u> so beautiful. (elision) c) Her wife <u>s</u> so beautiful. (assimilation)	Task: Say true (T) or false (F) if the pronunciation derived from the underlined consonants are attested in a group of words. The first example has been corrected. 1 --- ----- F, “s” preceded by “k” gives [s], now continue. 1. Jack <u>s</u> been here. 2. Pea has got a huge <u>f</u>screen at home. 3. What <u>z</u> your first name? 4. The death <u>s</u> an obligated way. 5. My knife <u>iz</u> well made. 6. Hip hop <u>s</u> an American invention. Task: Fill in the blanks the conjugated verbs “has” and “is” and demonstrate the		
--	--	---	--	--	--

Teaching English Connected Speech Items at Secondary Schools

	underlined consonants are attested and justify. 2. Follow up activity The teacher asks learners to fill in the blanks the conjugated verbs “has” and “is” and demonstrate the assimilation process.	4. The youth has great ambitions. a) The youth <u>haz</u> great ambitions. (<i>linking</i>) b) The youth <u>z</u> great ambitions. (<i>elision</i>) c) The youth <u>s</u> great ambitions. (<i>assimilation</i>)	assimilation process of the following group of words. 1. The bus stop near here. 2. It rained the previous day. 3. Her wife so beautiful. 4. The youth great ambitions.		
--	--	--	--	--	--

Conclusion

This work has been concerned with the didactic transposition of teaching English connected speech items at secondary schools. This selected topic aims to promote the English connected speech items in general and assimilation teaching items in particular so as to raise both teachers and learners’ awareness about sound changes in oral communication. Further to introduction which presents the aims and scope interest and questions, the selected topic has covered the term “teaching-teaching” considered as the pedagogical process aiming to ease and guide both teachers and learners from secondary school deal with the implementation of English assimilation through teaching strategies and learning activities, “Pronunciation” has been clarified and perceived as the key matter to mastering the English language when communicating orally by knowing how words are pronounced in particular contexts or ways including sounds (consonants and vowels) and stress features and “connected speech” has been defined as a reduced speech or the way words are uttered in the context including assimilation, elision, linking, reduction, juncture, intrusion and contractions. These features show the way a sound changes in a word or a group of words in order to facilitate the speaking transition from one sound to another. Similarly, the relevance of teaching and learning English assimilation in secondary school has been provided. It is confirmed and attested that thanks to it,

the secondary school learners could communicate accurately and fluently in English. Besides, the results from pre-investigation, observation and questionnaire methods show that features of assimilation are requested by the official English syllabus: **G.O1: Understanding oral messages**, **S.O1-3: Decoding a specific message: assimilation in connected speech**. However, its implementation is possible in the teaching process because of the teachers' lack of teaching strategies since the previous teachers' training period at university, the non-organization of workshops, seminars and conference by the school inspectors on the teaching and assessing of English connected speech items at secondary schools. Therefore, this work has suggested a guideline worthy for the teaching and assessing of English connected speech items based on progressive assimilation from the teaching method of 3Ps (Presentation, Practice and Production) coupled with the explanatory method in different pedagogical classes at secondary schools.

References

- Alameen, G. (2014) 'The Effectiveness of Linking Instruction on NNSs Speech Perception and Production'. Iowa State University, Ames, IA.
- Brown, J. D. (2006) 'Teacher Resources for Teaching Connected Speech', Perspectives on Teaching Connected Speech to Second Language Speakers, ed. By Brown, J. D and Kimi Kondo – Brown, 27-47, University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu.
- Cristal, D. (1991), *A dictionary of Linguistics and Phonetics*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.
- Dauer, R. M. (1983) 'Stress-timing and Syllable-timing reanalysed' *Journal of Phonetics*, Vol.50.pp.321-62.
- Dawood et al. (2015) 'Assimilation of Consonants in English and Assimilation of the Definite Article in Arabic'. *Hebron University*. Volume 1, Issue 4, 2015.
- Demirezen, M. (2016) '*Assimilation as a Co-articulation Producer in Words and Pronunciation Problems for Turkish English Teachers*'. Turkey: Hacettepe University.
- Eka and al. (2010) '*Introduction to Phonetics and Phonology of English*'. Lagos: Nigeria: National Open University of Nigeria.
- Gilbert, J. B. (2008). *Teaching pronunciation*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Gimson, A. C. (2001), *Pronunciation of English*. London: UK:
- Griffiths, B. (2011). 'Integrating pronunciation into classroom activities. British Council. Teaching English.
- Gut, U. (2009) 'Introduction to English Phonetics and Phonology'. Frankfurt: Peter Lang.
- Hancock, M. (2006) 'Pronunciation Materials as Language Play'. *Speak Out!* 36, 20-25.

- Harmer, J. (2001) "The Practice of English Language Teaching". Harlow: Longman.
- Hieke, A.E (1987: 41), "Spoken language phonotactics implications for the ESL/EFL classroom in speech production and perception", *Language Sciences*, n°2, Vol.11, p.p. 197 - 213
- Kelly, G. (2000), *How to Teach Pronunciation*, Harlow and UK: Pearson Edition, Oxford: Blackwell.
- Morley, J. (1992) *Rapid Review of Vowel and Prosodic Contents*. University of Michigan.
- Murcia, C et al (2010), *Teaching Pronunciation': A Course Book and Reference Guide*, 2nd ed., Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Ndongo Ibara, Y. P. (2015) 'Framing English Sound – Letter Parallelism Teaching' in Liens, Nouvelle Série, n°20 Décembre 2015, pp 38-42.
- Ndongo Ibara, Y. P. (2016) 'An Empirical Review of English Language Teaching in Congo', in *English Language Teaching*. n°4, Vol. 4. December 2016, pp 400-408.
- Olmedo, C. (2015) '*The Assimilation of Features of Connected Speech in ESL Students*'. Universidad de Valladolid.
- Ondze Otouba, G. (2015) 'Teaching English sounds in Secondary School' A case study of "Terminal A" at Emery Patrice Lumumba High School, Master thesis, ENS, Marien Ngouabi University.
- Reid, E. (2010). 'Internet Pronunciation Activities as an Attractive Way of Teaching Pronunciation. 'In: *e-TEFL. Nitra: UKF*. p. 47-51.
- Roach, P. J. (2009) *English Phonetics and Phonology: A Practical Course* 2nd edition, Cambridge University Press.
- Sinclair, J. (1990). *Collins Cobuild English Language Dictionary*, London and Glasgow: Collins Publishers.
- Yule, G. (2010), *The Study of Language*. New York: Cambridge University Press.