Using Haptic Techniques to Teach English Rhythm

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Overview

• Some background
• Haptic pronunciation teaching
• Warm-up
• 3 haptic rhythm techniques
• Q & A
Haptic Team

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“Our sense of self and community are bound up in the *speech-rhythms* of our first language (L1). These rhythms were learned in the first year of life and are **deeply rooted** in the minds of students” (Gilbert, 2008)
Some Background

- Pronunciation plays a crucial role in communication (Celce-Murcia et al, 2010)
- NS and NNS lack confidence & find pronunciation challenging to teach (e.g., Baker 2011; Couper, 2016; Foote, Holtby, & Derwing, 2011; Macdonald, 2002)
- Teaching/learning of English rhythm is problematic (Setter, 2006)
- Suprasegmentals are perceived as being difficult to teach, too time-consuming, and/or too expensive
- Few resources/textbooks move beyond canonical rhythm
- Excessive, de-contextualized instruction (Darcy, Ewert, & Lidster, 2012; Sicola & Darcy, 2015) – lack of integration into other skill areas
- Lack of (or unsystematic) use of kinesthetic intelligence (i.e., body) in teaching
Canonical Rhythm

- Set patterns, regular timing
- One stressed syllable per thought group
- Based on grammatical boundaries

Conversational Rhythm

- Irregular timing, pauses, hesitations, bursts
- Secondary stress often apparent
- Based on communicative intention
Essential Haptic-integrated English Pronunciation (EHIEP)

- Haptic: movement + touch (Acton, Baker, Burri, & Teaman, 2013)
- Systematic use of gesture, using movement + touch
- Integrated senses: sight, sounds, movement, touch
- Experiential learning (by doing)
- Captures attention (3-seconds)
- Allows for spontaneous, in-class correction/feedback
- Integration of pronunciation with other skills
Thought Group & Focus Word

Thought Groups:

- Groups of words that are “semantically and grammatically” coherent (Celce-Murcia et al., 2010)
- Noun phrases, verb phrases, and preposition phrases often go together with thought groups
- There may be several thought groups in a single sentence or clause (often learner proficiency dependent)

Examples:
The book is on the table
The book / is on the table
The book / is / on the table
Thought Group Guidelines (Acton©2017)

Thought Groups:
- are (usually) separated by pauses
- are (usually) separated by phrasal groups or clauses
- (usually) have a grammatically coherent structure
- (ALWAYS) contain a prominent (focal stress) word
- Are (in read speech, ALWAYS) separated by punctuation
- For lower level learners: (Usually) maximum 7 syllables in one bunch

Example:
In this presentation, / I’m gonna *talk about / haptic techniques / that teachers can use / in their classrooms.
Focus Word Guidelines (Acton©2017)

A Focus Word:
- (often) changes for emphasis
- (usually) located on new or key information
- (usually) on content words
- (usually) on words expressing negation
- (usually) to the right, near the end of sentence, clause or focal group
- (always) located on a stressed word or phrase
- (always) controlled by the story

Example:
In this presentation, / I’m gonna *talk about / teaching techniques / that teachers can use / in their class rooms.
Three Haptic Techniques

- Syllable Butterfly
- Rhythm Fight Club
- Tai Chi Fluency

CANONICAL RHYTHM → CONVERSATIONAL RHYTHM
Warm-up

/a/

/o/
Thank you Tennis Club Old Boys for the tennis balls!
Experiencing short and long syllables

- **Ball in left hand** and on the **right shoulder** deltoid muscle
- **Fingers of right hand** on the **outside of the left forearm** muscle


- See Burri & Baker (2016) in *English Australia Journal* and Acton, Baker, Burri, & Teaman (2013) – see last slide (References)
Key Words

Tough (or Nice) (1 tap)
That’s tough (or nice) (2 taps)
Really tough (or nice) (3 taps)
That’s really tough (or nice) (4 taps)

1. Two-syllable word “tricky” (or easy)
2. Three-syllable word “puzzling” (or beautiful)
3. Four-syllable word “complicated” (or fascinating)
1A: I think / we've got it / figured out.

B: Oh. // Well. // What is it?

2A: Your muffler / has a small hole in it.

B: Oh, gosh. // Does it need to be / replaced right now?

3A: Yeah, / pretty soon. // It isn't going to / last much longer.

B: Huh. // What'll it cost?
Free Practice

A: What do you like to do / in your free time?

B: I like to party / and I like to sleep.

Steps:
• Make 1 question
• Parse it into thought groups
• Identify focus word (or syllable) in each thought group
• Ask 3-4 people using the Butterfly
• Answer using the Butterfly
Rhythm Fight Club (RFC) (Acton©2017)

➢ Compressing syllables, foregrounding focus words

P  Punch, with arm extended out almost as far as possible

<  Short jab that goes back toward the body

>  Short jab that goes out away from the body

• See Burri, Baker & Acton (2016)
The Rhythmic “Feet” of English 1-2

P  Cool
< P  That’s cool
> < P  Really cool
< > < P  That’s really cool

P <  Funky
< P <  That’s funky
> < P <  Really funky
< > < P <  That’s really funky
The Rhythmic “Feet” of English 3-4

P <> Super cool
< P <> That’s super cool
> < P <> Really super cool
< > < P <> That’s really super cool

P <<< Super funky
< P <<< That’s super funky
> < P <<< Really super funky
< > < P <<< That’s really super funky
1A: Hey! // Can I help you?
   P > < P <
B: We got a disaster at the house!
   > < > < P < > < >

2A: What’ya got?
   > < P
B: Water coming out / of the furnace!
   P < > < > > < P <

3A: Any idea / where it is coming from?
   < > < P < > < > < P < >
B: Ooooh! // I didn’t’ look behind it.
   P < > < > < P <
4A: What’s right above it?
        <> < P < 
    B: The jacuzzi . . .
        > < P <
5A: Go home and call me / if shutting off / the jacuzzi doesn’t help.
        <> < P <  < P <>  > < P <<<>
    B: I’ll bet that’s it!!!
        <> < P 
6A: You never know. // Good luck on that one!
        <> < P  <> <<< P <
    B: Thanks! // You’re the greatest!
        P  > < P <
A: What do you like to do / in your free time?

B: I like to party / and I like to sleep.

Steps:
• Use your (Butterfly) question and ask 3–4 people with the Fight Club
• Answer using the Fight Club
Tai Chi Fluency (Acton©2017)

- Driver of fluency and flow
- Creates natural linking and reduction of vowel quality
- Ball in right hand
- Catch on stressed syllable
Key Words

Movement goes from the left to the right

tough / nice

tricky / easy

dangerous / beautiful

complicated / fascinating
A: How about your family tree?

B: I'm basically Greek / and Swiss-Irish.

A: That's quite a combination, / isn't it?

B: At home / we often had great food / and dancing!
Free Practice

A: What do you like to **do** / in your **free** time?

B: I like to **party** / and I like to **sleep**.

**Steps:**
• Use your question again and ask 3-4 people with the Tai Chi
• Answer using the Tai Chi

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More on Pronunciation Teaching?

- Practical tips for integrating pronunciation into your lessons (free TESOL webinar): http://eventcenter.commpartners.com/se/Meetings/Playback.aspx?meeting.id=290652
- Pronunciation for Teachers: http://www.pronunciationforteachers.com/
- www.michaelburri.weebly.com or follow me on twitter @michaelburri
Keep in touch!
References


