Creative Techniques for Teaching Conversational Rhythm

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Warm-you-up!

/a/

/o/

Video links to various haptic warm-ups done before speaking/pronunciation classes:
http://bit.ly/1GY8s5d
http://bit.ly/1zR9oet
Working on rhythm is key for helping L2 learners improve their pronunciation, yet rhythm tends to be challenging to teach:

“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)
Rhythm

• Teaching/learning of English rhythm is problematic (Setter, 2006)

• Few resources/textbooks move beyond canonical rhythm with limited effect on learner intelligibility

• This workshop demonstrates 3 haptic techniques that L2 instructors can use in their classrooms to help L2 learners move from move canonical rhythm to conversational rhythm
**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
What is Haptic Pronunciation Teaching?  
(Essential Haptic-integrated English Pronunciation- EHIEP)

• Systematic use of gesture: using *movement plus touch*
• Integration pronunciation with other skills
• In class, spontaneous correction and feedback
• Persistent homework practice

For more information on haptic pronunciation teaching:
• [http://hipoeces.blogspot.ca](http://hipoeces.blogspot.ca)
• [www.actonhaptic.com](http://www.actonhaptic.com)
Why Haptic?

• Exploratory (and temporary) sense
• Integrates sight, sound, movement, with touch
• Captures attention (3-seconds!) of learners
• Examples: haptics, surgery, gaming, prosthetics, haptic cinema, iPhones

➢ Touch is exploratory – like picking up a sweater to feel what is like. Once that happens, sight and tactile memory takes over. Likewise, in haptic-based teaching, touch functions to set up the learning process and unite/bond the other senses. In other words, haptic at the beginning often facilitates learning and then fades out or recedes to a large extent
The Process

Syllable Butterfly

Rhythm Fight Club

Tai Chi Fluency

CANONICAL RHYTHM ➔ CONVERSATIONAL RHYTHM

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Syllable Butterfly

Demo video available at:
http://www.actonhaptic.com/#!demos/c1yws
Syllable Butterfly groups usually:
- Are maximum 5-7 syllables in length
- Are more frequent if there is more excitement or emotion

There is one (main/anchored/focal) syllable in each focus group which is:
- More prominent than the other syllables in the group
- Related to the information structure of the discourse
The Stressed Syllable in each Focus Group is Usually Located:

- On new or key information
- On content words
- To the right, near the end of a sentence, clause or focal group

Some useful guidelines can be also found in Gilbert (2008) at http://www.cambridge.org/other_files/downloads/esl/booklets/Gilbert-Teaching-Pronunciation.pdf
Butterfly Positions

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

Note: Photo used with the permission of Lesley Cioccarelli who took it at the 2nd Pronunciation Symposium at the University of New South Wales Canberra (December, 5, 2014)
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)
Once students have been trained in the Butterfly, they can proceed to dialogue work:

1A: I think / we've got it / figured out.

   . o . o . o o

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

   o o o o o

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

   . o . . o . o . o o .

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

   . o . o o . o o . o .

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

   o . o o o o . o o . o .

B: Huh. / What'll it cost?

   o . . o . o . o
Rhythm Fight Club

Demo video available at:
http://www.actonhaptic.com/#!demos/c1yws
Symbols Explained

Ball in right hand

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
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

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Training can, of course, also include a speaker’s negative/bad attitude:

P    Bad!
< P   That’s bad!
>> P   Very bad!
< >> P   That’s very bad!

P <    Nasty!
< P <   That’s nasty!
>>> P <   Very nasty!
< >>> P <   That’s very nasty!
Rhythm Fight Club! 3-4

P < > Dangerous!
<P < > That’s dangerous!
>> < P < > Very dangerous!
<<< < P < > That’s very dangerous!

P <<< Devastating!
<P << > That’s devastating!
<<<< < P < >> Very devastating!
<<<< < P < >> That’s very devastating!
Individual syllables do not get attended to anymore. Just pull your right arm back, *punch* with arm extended out almost as far as possible on the stressed/strong syllable, and then move back again:

\[< < < < P < < < \]

Oh that’s very *devastating*!

\[< < < < < P < < < \]

You know that’s very *devastating*!

\[< < < < < < P < < < \]

Oh you know that’s very *devastating*!
Disaster at the House!

After training is completed, proceed to dialogue work:

1A: Hey! Can I help you?
   
   P

   B: We got a disaster at the house!
      
      P

2A: What’ya got?
   
   P

   B: Water coming out / of the furnace!
      
      P

3A: Any idea / where it is coming from?

      P

   B: Ooooh! I didn’t’ look behind it.
      
      P
4A: What’s right above it?

B: The jacuzzi . . .

5A: Go home and call me / if shutting off / the jacuzzi doesn’t help.

B: I’ll bet that’s it!!!

6A: You never know. / Good luck on that one!

B: Thanks! You’re the greatest!
Tai Chi Fluency

Demo video will be available soon at:
http://www.actonhaptic.com/#!demos/c1yws
Tai Chi

• Driver of fluency and flow
• Creates natural linking and reduction of vowel quality
• Ball in right hand
• Catch on stressed syllable
Tai Chi PMP

- Movement goes from the **left to the right**
- Use same key words and phrases as in Butterfly and Flight Club

**Potential Key Words:**

- Tough/Nice
- Tricky/Easy
- Dangerous/Beautiful
- Complicated/Fascinating
Tai Chi Practice (Family History)

After training is completed, proceed to dialogue work:

1A: How about your family tree?

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

2A: That's quite a combination, / isn't it?

B: At home / we often had great food / and dancing!
3A: I believe that! / What about your grand parents?

   B: Dad's parents / both came from Greece as children.

4A: Uh-huh. /And your mother's parents background?

   B: I know her father was Irish / but I'm not as sure / about her mother. / Swiss, I think.
Keep in touch & email me if you have any questions!


Appendix A - Short History of Haptic-Integrated Pronunciation Teaching

• Lessac (1997) “Train the body first!”
• Accent reduction (Acton, 1984)
• Tactile/kinesthetic techniques (2005)
• Classroom use - EHIEP v1.0 (2006)
• AHEPS v2.0 (2012) – (Video system)
• AHEPS v3.0 (2014) - (Multi-purpose)
• AHEPS v4.0 (2015) – (Cloud-based)
Appendix B - Acton Haptic-integrated English Pronunciation System (AHEPS, v3.0) “Bees and Butterflies: Serious Fun!”

• Student Guide (11 modules)
• Student Practice videos (DVDs or streaming)
• Instructor Notes
• Instructor Teaching videos (DVDs or streaming)
• www.actonhaptic.com