

CONNECTED SPEECH PROCESSES IN DIFFERENT STYLES OF ENGLISH

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Annotation

This article will provide information about connected speech that differs between formal and informal styles. Casual, spontaneous conversations often show numerous reductions and elisions, whereas formal or prepared speech maintains clearer articulation and controlled rhythm. Research by Gillian Brown and Rodney Huddleston demonstrates that such phonetic differences are socially meaningful, signaling formality, emphasis, emotion, and interpersonal interaction. In addition, connected speech contributes to expressing social identity, regional affiliation, and group membership.

Key words: connected speech, assimilation, elision, linking, intrusion reduction, informal speech, formal speech, pronunciation variation, speech style, rhythm, intonation, fluency, social context, communicative purpose.

In spoken English, words are seldom pronounced separately; instead, they merge into a continuous stream where sounds affect one another. This phenomenon, called connected speech, includes processes like assimilation, elision, linking, intrusion, and reduction, which enhance naturalness, fluency, and efficiency in communication. Linguists such as Fiona Smith, Kenworthy Peter, and Allan Bell have studied how these processes influence pronunciation and reflect different speech styles. Bell points out that speech patterns can change depending on social context and audience, while Smith highlights the role of connected speech in improving intelligibility and listening comprehension.

Speech style is a systematic way of speaking chosen according to social context, audience, and communicative purpose. Connected speech is a phonetic process in which sounds in English are altered when words are spoken consecutively.

At the segmental level, connected speech can be observed in the way sounds are produced in different speaking situations. In formal speech, speakers usually pronounce consonants clearly and vowels tend to keep their full quality, while

reductions occur less frequently. In everyday informal conversation, however, different types of phonetic reduction are common. Vowels may become more centralized, some consonants may be omitted, and assimilation often takes place. For instance, words such as handbag may be pronounced as /hambag/, and the phrase did you can sound like /didzə/. These changes help speech flow more naturally and show how pronunciation adapts to communicative contexts [1].

Suprasegmental features also influence the overall style of speech. English is generally considered a stress-timed language, meaning that stressed syllables tend to occur at roughly regular intervals. In more formal situations, speakers often maintain a steady rhythm, make clearer pauses, and use more controlled intonation patterns. Informal speech, on the other hand, usually has a faster tempo, shorter pauses, and a more compressed rhythm [4].

Intonation plays an important role in expressing meaning beyond individual words. Changes in pitch and rhythm can signal emotions, highlight important information, and organize the structure of discourse. Researchers note that pitch movement and rhythm may also reflect the speaker's attitude, level of involvement, or authority in communication [3]. Studies of English accents and dialects also suggest that suprasegmental features such as linking and appropriate intonation patterns are essential for maintaining intelligibility, especially in international communication [2]. Connected speech can also reveal social and regional identity. Differences in vowel pronunciation, consonant patterns, and reduction strategies often allow listeners to recognize regional accents, sociolects, or group membership. Speakers may adjust their pronunciation depending on the situation, the audience, and the purpose of communication. Research on English accents emphasizes that accent variation should not be seen as incorrect speech but rather as a natural linguistic resource reflecting social and regional diversity [5].

Phonetics, the branch of linguistics examining the physical properties of speech sounds, provides the tools to analyze how speech styles are expressed through segmental features (vowels and consonants) and suprasegmental features (rhythm, stress, and intonation). These features vary across formal, casual, regional, and sociolectal speech affecting clarity and naturalness.

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