Unit Description

Purpose of the activity: Raise the English language learners’ awareness of the importance of linking in listening and speaking, and provide them with contextualized activities that will reinforce the aspect.

The target audience: Intermediate ESL/EFL students aged. Students should have some prior training in pronunciation and basic knowledge of grammar and morphology. They should also have basic experience in handling computer applications and internet.

Unit description: This unit is complete in itself; it takes the learner step by step into the aspect of linking following a linear progression that starts from introducing Old Damascus City then moving indirectly towards the pronunciation goals of the unit. The pictures would help the learner visualize the context of the city before listening to the audio. A glossary and some comprehension questions are provided for better and easier understanding, and learners are not supposed to be evaluated on this part because the aim of the unit is teaching pronunciation aspects not listening for meaning. The cloze exercise introduces the aspect of linking between two words indirectly by asking the learner to fill in the gaps with the two missing words. It focuses on incidents of linking that contain a function word. An audio is provided to listen to the cloze text while filling the gaps. A following exercise helps the students notice the linking between words when the first one ends with a grammatical ending (-ed, -ing, etc.). The rule is then introduced in a top frame in the next page. It will remain there till the end of the unit to provide instant guidance and audio examples for the types of linking the unit deals with. The transcript is introduced for the first time without the audio so that the learners have to read and apply the rules they have just learned. The next exercise is a direct application of the linking rules with no audio provided. The learners have to figure the linking places on their own. The last activity is a final practice on both listening and speaking with the right linking assignment. A different color is used to highlight each type of linking. The learners are expected to focus on each type at a time first before they can read the whole thing altogether. The also have the choice to read the text without any highlights once they are done practicing.

Evaluation and feedback: The learners will get an instant feedback for their exercises. The feedback feature includes giving them a hint for the answer, reporting a correct/wrong answer, and providing a total grade for each exercise. They can always listen to the attached audio to verify their answer. For in-class use, the students can report the grades for each activity to the teacher, who, in turn, can assess their performance and progress.

Theoretical rationale: This unit focuses on form by providing activities and contextualized examples on the linking aspect of pronunciation it deals with. This contextualized implementation is important because it provides the learners with real-life examples, not the separate-sentence examples that they usually encounter in pronunciation books. The unit adopted few of the Chapell's (1998) suggested criteria for development of multimedia CALL. Places of linking where made 'salient' by providing the learners with the option of highlighting the type of linking they choose. To make some aspects more salient, I provided short audio extracts of the monologue just above the intended activity, so that learners' attention will be focused on this particular part. The cloze activity provides the learners with the opportunity for "comprehensible output"; they have to fill in the gaps with the appropriate words.