



## **Hit Parade Listening as a Useful Material for Teaching Taiwanese EFL Learners Connected Speech Modifications** Feng-lan Kuo, Heien-kun Chiang, Wen-ying Ting

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### **Abstract**

Comparing between the written form and the spoken form, language in the latter is more challenging in that ears have to discern sounds that have crossed the word boundaries for fluency. To fully comprehend a naturally pronounced sentence, EFL/ESL learners need a basic knowledge of connected speech, including elision, C-V linking, /h/ deletion, contraction, palatalization, and flapping. This study thus first replicates and extends Henrichsen's 1984 and Ito's 2006 study to determine whether connected speech modifications influence Taiwanese EFL learners' spoken word recognition and to further categorize their difficulties with the various components of connected speech modifications before appropriate materials can be developed and proper instructions can be implemented. The participants are 60 Sophomore English majors from three intact classes of a university in Central Taiwan. Since Field (2003) considered dictation as the most effective remedial listening activity, therefore, weekly gap-fill conversation dictation and song dictation practices using the Hit Parade Listening materials (Kumai & Timson, 2010.) were integrated into the 6-week lesson plan for the explicit instruction group. A dictation test of 24 digitally recorded sentences, containing the aforementioned connected speech patterns, was developed. The results showed that the presence of connected speech modification significantly affected the subjects' performance in English spoken word recognition. Additionally, the subjects made overall significant improvement in recognizing spoken words after receiving the explicit connected speech instruction using the Hit Parade Listening Class CD and Song CD. Regarding the error types, in the pre-instructional phase, the subjects were found to have major difficulties in dictating sentences containing contraction and C-V linking, nevertheless, they made significant progress with these two patterns in the post-instructional phase. In contrast, the subjects didn't make progress regarding /h/ deletion and flapping. It's likely that the subjects have previously not been exposed enough to these two connected speech patterns.