Linking vs. Juncturing Makes all the Difference in Conveying and Understanding the Meaning of an Utterance

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Abstract

An ability for a speaker to unite (link) words or to separate (break, juncture) them with a pause in his utterance gives him a special advantage to convey his intended meaning to his audience. If he knows where to unite his words and where to pause between them in speech he is better able to communicate with his listeners, and his words are carried through more clearly, accurately and intelligibility. As part of the study of speech melody (suprasegmental phonology) such elements as “linkers” and “junctures” function both as uniting and separating words in sentences in expressing the intended meaning within controlled-thought groups and understanding the messages of others. “Linking” is a process of connected speech to join words to each other. When words are connected to one another they are so united that they no longer sound the same as they are said individually. Then they have their own unique, distinct characteristic meanings which they are recognizable as such by the native users of that language. When two related words are linked to one another naturally, two things occur: first the listener understands the speaker more easily, secondly, the speaker makes himself better understood by the listener. There are basically three types of linking occurring in oral communication: consonant-to-vowel or vowel-to-consonant combinations and consonant-to-consonant, also called assimilation. Juncturing, on the other hand has the opposite function of linking. It is the pausing for a while between words in which the listener is allowed to digest meanwhile the meaning of one he has heard. Junctures which occur between the two
consecutive words or meaning groups affect the listener’s ability to identify shades of nuances in the message uttered. Thus an ability to distinguish the difference between linking and juncturing enables a speaker to convey the intended meaning to the audience more clearly, accurately and intelligibility; and an awareness of such a distinction, on the part of the listener, is a great asset to be able to conceive the given message more accurately.

**Key words**: linking, juncturing, utterance, pause, break

The Distinctive Functions of Linking vs. Juncturing

One of the reasons non-native speakers have problems understanding and speaking English could well be because they don’t see the difference between “linking” and “juncturing” in oral communication (Kuriakose, 2013). Linking is the process of joining the final sound with the initial vowel of the following word (BBC, 2016). The consecutive two words linked together thus are no longer uttered separately. Many ELT students wanting to sound like natives when they speak the target language miss this very important point and are disappointed with their oral performance. Once they observe carefully and analyze the English speech features and its melody, they hopefully learn what is in fact most needed for them.

One of the most important aspects of speaking clearly and trying to understand what is said is to distinguish the speech styles. Most native speakers do not just speak fast -- as many students believe they do--- but they rather connect their words and change the sounds of their words accordingly (gonaturalenglish, 2016). For example, when they mean to say “What # are # you # going # to # do?” [ˈwɒt → əvə → ɨˈjʊ → ˈgouŋə → ʊtʊ → ˈduː ↘], they usually say: “Whaddya / Whatcha gonna do?” [ˌwɒt jə / ˌwɒtʃə ˈgənə ˈduː ↘] (Relaxed pronunciation, 2016). Most natives opt for such a relaxed or condensed pronunciation where they slur or consense their pronunciation. Thus the knowledge and awareness of such “connected speech” allows learners to understand and speak English more efficiently (i.e. say the most in the shortest amount of time) through flow and sentence rhythm.

Here are some other examples of relaxed pronunciation (ibid) of American English:

**Examples with “of, have, and to”**

The words “of”, “to”, and “have” all tend to elide to nothing more than a “schwa” [ə] in many common situations. This sometimes leads to spelling confusion, such as writing “I could of ...” instead of “I could have ...” or “I could’ve”, “could have” [ˈkʊdəv], “coulda” [ˈkʊdə]
or [ˈkʊdəv], “could uhv”, “must have” [ˈmʌstə] “musta” or [ˈmʌstəv], “must uhv”, “should have” [ʃʊdə], “shoulda” or [ʃʊdəv], “should uhv”, “would have” [wʊdə], “woulda” or [wʊdəv] “would uhv”; “it would” when contracted, it’s pronounced [ɪdrəd], “iduhd”, but this often collapses to [ɪd], “ihd”; “it would” / “it would have”: [ɪdrə], “itta”. “a lot of”: [əˈlətə], “a lotta”. “kind of”: [ˈkaɪndə], “kinda”; “out of” [ˈaʊə], “outta”; “sort of” [ˈsɔrə], “sorta”; “going to”: [ˈgoʊə], “gonna” “got to” [ˈɡɒtə], “gotta” “have to” [ˈhæftə], “hafta” “want to” [ˈwʊdə], “wanna”. “ought to” [ˈɔdə], “oughta”; “would” can also get contracted as in “I'd have done things differently”, which usually yields [də] and “I would
have..." can be pronounced as [əɪdə]. The [v] in "have" and "of" is usually retained before a vowel sound (e.g. in "I could have asked..."). (Relaxed Pronunciation)

**Examples with “you”**

"You" tends to elide to [jə] (often written "ya"). Softening of the preceding consonant also may occur:

/ʃ/ + /jə/ = [tʃə], /d/ + /jə/ = /tʃ/ + /jə/ = [dʒə], /s/+ /jə/ = [ʃə], and /z/ + /jə/ = [ʒə]).

This can also happen with other words that begin with [j] (e.g. "your", "yet", "year"). In some dialects, such as Australian English, this is not a relaxed pronunciation but compulsory: "got you" [ˈɡɔʧə] but never [ˈɡɔʧˌjuː]; "did you" [ˈdɪʤə], "didja" "did you", "do you" [dja], "d'yə", "don't you" [dounʃə], "doncha", "got you" [ɡɔʧə], "gotcha"; "get you", "get your" [ˈɡɛʧɚ], "getcha", "would you" [ˈwʊʤə], "wouldja".

**Other Examples**

-ing forms of verbs and sometimes gerunds tend to be pronounced with an [ɪ̈n] at the end instead of the expected [iŋ] or [ɪŋ]. E.g. “talking” [ˈtɔːkən], “tahkin”. If followed by a [t], this can in turn blend with it to form [ŋ]. E.g. “talking to Bob” [ˈtɔːkəˌbɔb], “tahkinna Bob”; “I will” gets contracted to “I'll” [aɪˈlə], “all do it” [ˈɔː IRC aɪˈdʊ tɹ], “he” tends to elide to just [i] after consonants, sometimes after vowel sounds as well. E.g. is he: [ˈɪZɪ], “izee”; “all he” [ˈaɪli], “ahlee”; “his”, “him”, and “her” tend to elide in most environments to [ɪ], [ɪm], and [ɚ], respectively. E.g. “meet his” [ˈmiːdɪz], “meetiz”, “tell him” [ˈtelˌɪm], “tellim”; “show her” [ˈʃoʊr], “show-er”; “them” tends to elide to [əm] after consonants. E.g. “ask them” [ˈæskəm], “ask’em”. (Historically, this is a remnant of the Middle English pronoun “hem”; “about” [ˈbaʊt], “bout” “already” [ˈbɛrdə], “ahready”, “all right” [ˈɒrət], “ahright” “all right” [ɒət], “aight”; “come here” [ˈkʌmərə], “cuhmeer”, “don’t know” [daˈnəʊə]; if not preceded by a vowel sound, “dunno” fixing to “give me” [ˈɡɪmi], “gimme”; “I’m going to”: [ˈɛmə], “I’mm” or [ˈɛmənə], “Ah–muhnuh” “is it” [ɪt], “iz” “isn’t it” [ɪmɪt], “innit”; “let me” [ˈlɛmi], “lemme”; “let’s” [ɛt], E.g. “let’s go”: [liˈtɛsˈɡuː]; “probably”: [ˈprəli], [ˈprəblɪ], “proly”, “problly”; “suppose”: [ˈspouz] “s’pose”. E.g. “I suppose so”: [ət ˈspouz ˈsəʊ], “trying to”: [ˈtraiŋda] “trynna”; “want a” [ˈwʌnə], “wanna”; “what is that”: [ˈwʊtʃə], “wussat”; “what is up”: [ˈwɔsəˌpr], “wassup”, “what is up”: [ˈsʌp], ’sup; “what are you”: [ˈwʊtʃə], “whatcha” “what is up”: [ˈwʌtʃə], “whatcha”. E.g. “What have you been up to?”: [ˈwʌtʃə ˈbɛnt ˌʌp təˈr], “what do you”, “what are you”: [ˈwʌtʃə], “whatcha”; “what have you”: [ˈwʌtʃə], “whatcha”. E.g. “What have you been up to?”: [ˈwʌtʃə ˈbɛnt ˌʌp təˈr], “what do you”, “what are you”: [ˈwʌtʃə], “whaddaya”, “you all”: [jəl], “y’all”
Foreign students learning English must always keep in mind that understanding the rules of connected speech will not only help them speak better, but also understand how to become better English speakers (Foulkes, 2016). Linking, in brief, involves the distinction between the natural way articulation of the two consecutive words rather than pronouncing them individually (Brinton, D. M. (2016)). Linking between two consecutive words occur between words starting with a vowel and the final sounds of the preceding words irrespective of whether they are consonants or vowels. Here are three examples: “stop+it!” [stɒpˌɪt] and “a cup of coffee” [əˈkʌpˌəvˈkɒfi] and “some+of+us” [ˈsʌmˌəvˌʌs].

Juncturing on the other hand means allowing intentional pauses in between words to break the flow of speech to enable the hearer understand us better while digesting the words (Early Years, 2016). This usually occurs between two consonants. The simplest juncture forms are distinguishing a split between the same or similar consonants that would otherwise stick together and assimilate two phonemes (Parker, 2016) as in “Stop # pushing.” “She hit # two balls.” A little more complicated form of juncture would be separating the two words i.e. “that # school” [ˈðæt → ˌskuːl] and “that’s # cool” [ˌðæts → ˈkuːl] which would otherwise be confused if pronounced together. Junctures are especially very effective when they are used in sentences as they are shown in writing with punctuations (commas, colons, semicolons, periods etc.) (Grammarbook, 2016) as in these examples: That’s # elementary” [ðætsˌɛləˈmɛntɪri] vs. “That’s a # lemon tree.” [ðætsˌəˈlemənˌtriː] or “You are # under+arrest.” [juːˌaːər → ˌʌndərˌər] vs. “You are # under+a # rest.” [juːˌaːər → ˌʌndərərˌər].

Gyles Brandreth (Brandreth, 2016) suggested in his book “The Joy of Lex” (1980) a term “oronym” (“oro” whole; “nym” name) or “slice-o-nym” for a pair of phrases which are homophonic, a contribution to the field of “recreational linguistics”. Oronyms are composed of consonants and vowels cut at different points in the phonetic strings. That is why he referred to them as “slice-o-nyms.” When such phrases are pronounced without a pause between them (internal open juncture), they differ in meaning and spelling and have a similar pronunciation. An oronym is a word or phrase that sounds very much the same as another word or phrase, often as a result of sounds running together. Oronyms are spelt differently and they have different meanings. Manik Joshi later produced an extensive research on oronyms (Joshua, 2014) in which he classifies important points on the field:

1. An oronym is also called a continunym or a sliceonym.
2. An oronym generally originates when it is difficult to tell where one word ends and the next begins (e.g. a name — an aim).
3. An oronym also originates when a particular word may be divided into two or more meaningful words (e.g. affection — a faction).
4. Effectiveness of oronyms may depend on what somebody is saying in context with the rest of the conversation.
5. Oronyms may completely alter the meaning of what somebody is saying. Example: They wanted the allocation of house. They wanted the location of house.
6. Oronyms may also make conversation very funny. Example: Teacher asked the student to give an example. Teacher asked the student to give an egg sample.
7. Oronyms may also make conversation completely senseless. Example: They will appoint a new manager at the earliest. They will appoint a new manager at the earliest.
8. Oronyms may also include abbreviations (shortened form of a word or group of words)

Examples: ICT -- I see tea; VC -- we see.

Foer (2011) also gives an extensive listing of such oronyms with explanations, among which some are below in pairs:

This phenomenon is taken from the famous children’s tongue twister chant “I scream; you scream; we all scream for ice cream” [aɪˈskrɪːm → jʊˈskrɪːm → ˌwɪəˌbɔːtˌskrɪːm → əfərˌaɪsˌkrɪːm]. Here are some other examples:
“air-to-air” vs. “year-to-year” (The jets had air-to-air weapons. The jets had year-to-year weapons.)
“aggregate” vs. “a green gate” (aggregate – total)
“aggregator” vs. “a grass eater” (aggregator -- a kind of Internet company)
“agree to differ” vs. “a great offer” (agree to differ -- of two people -- to not discuss their different views about something)
“angry response” vs. “a grey sponge”
“accede” vs. “a seat” (accede -- to agree)
“accent” vs. “a cent” (accent – pronunciation) (cent -- a coin)
“accord” vs. “a cord” (accord -- agreement vs. cord -- string or rope)
“accounting” vs. “a counting” (accounting – bookkeeping)
“accrue” vs. “a crew” (accrue -- amass vs. crew – team)

Let us proceed to reviewing the linking and juncturing processes individually more in detail with their features and many examples in minimal pairs to distinguish the two.

**Linking**

“Linking” or “liaison” means the uniting of sounds or words. When we say a sentence in English, we join or “link” words to each other. (Roach, 1983). Because of this linking, the words in a sentence do not always sound the same as when we say them individually. Linking is extremely important in English in that if we recognize and use it properly two things will happen: 1. We will understand other people more easily. 2. Other people will understand us more easily (linking phonetics, 2012).

In spoken discourse the boundaries between words are very often not clear-cut. Words and sounds are lost and linked together in different ways to enable us to articulate with minimal movement. This is one of the reasons learners find spoken discourse more difficult to
understand than written discourse. At higher levels it is often not a lack of vocabulary which prevents understanding, but lack of ability to deal with these features of connected speech (eslbase, 2016).

Native speakers do not separate words beginning with vowels from preceding ones, they unite them instead forming new entities unless the two must intentionally be disunited for belonging to another meaning group (LinguisticGlossary, 2016). It is an ordinary instinct that a native distinguishes between “red dye” [ˈredˌdai] vs “red eye” [redˌaɪ] (myDipphonology, 2016). In the statement “That’s # enough!” [ðæts # ɪˈnʌf] the “s” in “that’s” is linked to the “e” in enough, sounding the phrase like “That # s ◊ enough” [ˌðæts # ɪˈnʌf].

Again, instead of breaking the words in a sentence “I need # it” [ˌaːɪ # ˈniːd # ˌit] they quickly and naturally say: “I need + it” [ˌaːɪ ˈniːd ◊ it]. Instead of saying “Play # a song!” [ˌpleɪ # ˈsoŋ] they rather say: “Play+a song!” [ˌpleɪ ◊ a ˈsoŋ]. Finally they never say: Read # a book!” [ˌriːd # ə ˈbʊk ↘], but they would rather say in a natural tone, “Read+a book!” [ˌriːd ◊ ə ˈbʊk ↘].

Such examples clearly illustrate the difference between the linked and non-linked pairs in the usually accepted and unaccepted norms. In longer sentence settings below, the former articulations are always more preferred to the latter (linkingphonetics, 2012):

“Sit+on+an+orange crate.” [ˈsɪˌt ◊ ən ◊ ˈɔrɪnʤˌkreɪ ↘] vs. “Sit # on # an # orange crate.” [ˈsɪt → ɒn → ən → ˈɔrɪnʤ→ ˈkreɪ ↘];

“Bring+an+apple and+a book.” [briŋ ənˌæpl ◊ ə ˈbʊk ↘] vs. “Bring # an # apple # and # a book.” [briŋ → ən → ˈæpl → ,and → a ˈbʊk];

“Now+is+a time # for+all+of+us to pack+it+in.” [ˈnaːʊɪz ◊ ə ˈtɪm ◊ fər ◊ ɔːlv ◊ ˌʌs → təˈpæk ◊ ɪt ◊ ɪn ↘] vs. “Now is a time for all of us to pack it in.” [ˈnaːʊɪz ◊ e ◊ ˈtɪm ◊ fər ◊ ɔːlv ◊ ˌʌv ◊ ˌʌs ◊ təˈpæk ◊ ɪt ◊ ɪn ↘].

Consonant-to-Vowel Linking Combination

In this combination where the final sound of the former word is combined with the initial sound of the succeeding word there is an automatic fusion which ties the two elements into one, inseparable part. When one hears them one hardly recognizes them as two distinct words (linkingconsonant, 2016). Study these examples (Martin, 2016):

“made+it+up” [ˈmeɪd ◊ ɪt ◊ ʌp]; “slept+an hour” [ˈslept ◊ ən ◊ ə ˈhəʊr];
“an+orange” [ən ˈɒrɪnʤ]; “in+a minute” [ɪn əˈmɪnɪt]; “turn+off” [ˈtɜrən əˈfɒ]; “keep+it up” [kiːp ət əp]; “broke+a leg” [ˈbroukə əˈleg];

“a bag+of apples” [ə bæɡ əvˌæpəlz]; “Read a book for me, mommy.” [rɪ:də buk fəˌmiːmi]; “I need+it more than you do.” [juː ˌniːd təˈstɒp əˈraɪt ˌnaːv]: “Play+a song for+us on your guitar!” [ˌpleɪə ˈsɒŋ fəˌʌs ən jəˈɡɪtəɹ]

Vowel-to-Vowel Linking Combination

In this combination where two vowels are involved such connectors as [j] and [w] are often employed to form special glides. Study first the functioning of the [j] connector in these examples (English Club, 2016):

“Be+a gentleman.” [bi(j) əˈdʒentʃmæn]; “three apples” [ˈθriː(j)ˌæpəl];

“Tie-it up!” [ˈtaɪ(j)ɪtˌʌp]; “Play+a game!” [ˌpleɪ(j)ə ˈɡeɪm];

“Employ+a professional!” [ɪmˈplɔɪ(j)əˈprəʊfəˈʃen];

“try+it” [ˈtraɪ(j) ˌɪt]; “see us” [ˈsiː(j)ˌʌs]; “my own book” [ma(j)ˈʌnˌbʊk]; “with a cry of joy” [wɪðə ˈkraɪ(j)əˌdʒɔɪ] “every actor” [ˈevri(j)əˈektər],

More examples:

“At least he(j)asked for permission.” “Rachel’s interview is the day(j)after tomorrow.” “Mary really(j)appreciates that you’re staying late to help!” “Let’s take a break, then try(j)again after lunch.” “They’re going to buy(j)energy(j)efficient appliances.”

And in the second case where a word ending in [uː], [ɔː], or [aʊ] is followed by another word beginning with a vowel, the two words are connected by a [w] glide as in these examples (ibid):

“you are” [juː(w)əˈær]; “through+it+all” [ˈθruː(w)ɪtˌɔːl];

“slow+and steady” [ˈsloʊ(w)ənˌstɛdi] “How+are you?” [ˈhaʊ(w)əˈjuː]; “do+it” [ˈduː(w)ɪt];

“know+it” [ˈnoʊ(w)ɪt]; “flew away” [fliː(w)əˌweɪ]

More examples:

“Do you know(w)anyone that can help translate this?” “The value(w)of their house fell drastically.” “Kids grow(w)up so quickly!” “Karen wanted to(w)ask if you’d come along.” “Let’s go(w)over the documents tomorrow(w) afternoon.” (ibid)

Consonant-to-Consonant Linking (Assimilation) Combination (Lillet, 2016)

A less known and controversial type “consonant-to-consonant” combination (assimilation) is also considered by some linguists to fall within this category because they involve linking through a fusion or assimilation instead of enunciation of relevant consecutive consonants
separately. In those cases, instead of repeating individual sounds, the initial sound is lengthened or held and its presence is felt strongly. A typical example occurs when the phrase “best+time” [ˈbɛst,ˌtaɪm] is fused into [ˈbɛst,ˌtaɪm] (ibid). This phenomenon becomes more obvious when it is used in a sentence: “Yesterday, I had the best time of my life at your party.”

Linking [r]

This special linking phenomenon (sandhi) involving the appearance of the rhotic consonant between two consecutive morphemes. The sound incident occurs when the syllable-end [r] occurs at the end of word neighbouring with an initial vowel of the next word. However the usual RP speaker does not pronounce the hidden [r] when the word is alone. For instance “where” [weːɚ] but “where and when” [weːɚ rˌənˌwɛn]; “the car” [ðə ˈkærə] but “the car is” [ðə ˈkærə rˌənˌɪz], “here” [hɪərə] but “here are” [hɪərə rˌənˌær]; “four” [fɔː] but “four eggs” [fɔː rˌənˌɛɡz]. In first of those examples we can observe how an isolated word ending in [r] is not pronounced with a final [r], however in the latter, when that word ending in [r] is followed by another word starting with a vowel then the hidden “r” reappears in full functioning as connector between the two words. The connecting linking [r] then acts as if it were the initial consonants of the next word (ibid).

Here are some common examples of the “linking [r]” phenomenon:


Intrusive [r]

Another peculiar occurrence called “sandhi” (morphophonemic alteration) identifying with Londoners often heard in BBC English is “intrusive [r]”. This unique phenomenon of Estuary English occurs very frequently when linking the two separate vowels both ending and beginning with vowels. It is produced when an [r] sound surprisingly enters between the final and initial vowels of two consecutive words. Although no etymologically reason exists for such an insertion, the only explanation is that it is used as connector to prevent the assimilation or a hiatus between the two successive vowels.

Here are some very common examples of such intrusive [r] cases:

“bacteria in it” [bækˈtɪəriə rˌɪnˌɪt]; “I saw a film today” [aɪˌsɔː rˌənˌ ˈfɪlm təˈdeɪ]; “Formula A” [ˈfɔːrmələ ˌfɔːmələ]; “Australia all out” [ɒsˈtreɪlə ˌrʊnˌaʊt]; Draw all the flowers; [drɔː ˈfɔːmələ ˌfɔːmələ]; There’s a comma after that; [deːər rˌɪzərˌkɒmər rˌənˌˈɑːftərˌdeɪ]; Australia or New Zealand; [ɒsˈtreɪlə ˌrʊnˌaʊtˌjuːˌzɪələend]; law and order [lɔːrˌənˌˈɔːdə].
“media event” [ˈmiːdiə riːvent]; “law and order” [ˈlɔːrənəd]; “aroma” [əˈroʊma] but “aroma of” [əˈroʊmə rəˈav]; “tuna” [ˈtuːnə], but “tuna oil” [ˈtuːnə rəˈav]; “idea” [əˈidə] but “idea on” [əˈidə rəˈon]; “spa” [ˈspə:] but “spa in” [spə rəˈin]; “the emptiness”, “The albatross is flying in the air.” “lullaby of stars” “now and then” “the cow of my grandmother” “on te internet” “The video and book are not on sale.” “My eyes see clearly.” “I didn’t know anyone at the party.” “Your idea is wonderful.” (linking phonetics, 2016).

More examples (ibid):

“It’s near enough.” [ɪts nɪər tə ˈrɪən]; “It’s made of fur and leather.” [ɪts ‘mɛidə rəˈan ,ˈleə]; “It’s quite far away.” [ɪts kwaɪt ˈfɜːɚ rəˈeɪn]; “The doctor agrees.” [ðə ˈdɒktərəˈɡriːz]; “There are three places.” [ðeə təˈərəθiˌpleɪs]; “There’s a tour along the river.” [ðeə rəˈzəʊər ˈtʊərˌərəˌˌrɪvr]; “I can’t hear anything.” [ɑt klaɪnt, hɪər əˈrɪəˌθɪŋ]

Turkish Linking Examples

The universal rule applying for the joining of the initial vowel with the final phoneme of the preceding word within the same meaning-group is valid for Turkish as well (ulama) with the same linking features as in English. Linking naturally does not apply if the relevant phonemes belong to different meaning groups and separated by a juncture. Here are some Turkish examples with their literal translations in English:


Juncturing

Apart from linking, another important speech connection function of suprasegmental phonemes that change the meaning of an utterance is juncturing, namely “pausing” (Redford, 2012). Junctures serve an important function to determine and express the intended meaning of the utterer from a contrastive perspectives by either uniting or separating consecutive words (Butler, 1984). When “an # aim” [ənˈeɪm] is contrasted with “a # name” [ə → ‘nəm], the [n] of “an aim” [ənˈeɪm] moves to the beginning of the word “aim” [eɪm] converting it into “an aim” [ənˈeɪm], thus making the articulation in as “an aim” [ənˈeɪm] not the intended meaning of the utterance. As another example, the word “nitrate” [ˈnaɪˌtreɪt] and the phrase “night # rate” [ˈnaɪt ˌreɪt] although both having the same stress pattern, the first item is a noun and the
second is a phrase, they fall into two different grammatical categories. The heart of the matter is that the juncture, a suprasegmental phoneme, is present in the utterance of “night # rate” ['næt ,ræt], whereas it is not the case in “nitrate” ['næt,ret]. A close juncture refers to no perceived space between the sounds by taking place within an unbroken segmental phoneme (English Language and Usage (2016)).

In English there are various forms of junctures namely “sustained” (close/open, i.e. short/long), and terminal (falling/ rising) juncture phonemes. These elements determine the specific factors for accuracy, comprehensibility, and intelligibility of the speech conforming to the fluency of the speaker (Demirezen, 2013). Junctures can be matched with relevant punctuation marks. For instance, the falling juncture sign (¡) is the oral representation of full stop (.) or exclamation mark (!); the rising juncture sign →(→), that of a question mark (?). As for the sustained junctures the close sustained juncture mark (→) represents a comma, the open, longer one (→→) semicolon (;) and full colon (:) (Demirezen, 2009). In connected speech, due to the pressures coming from stress, pitch, rhythm, and tempo, consonants and vowels blend together at word or phrasal junctions, which give distinction to the meaning of an utterance. Such pauses or slight delays in a continuous flow of speech provide intervals of silence between or within words, phrases or sentences. This silence is an effective communicative tool if used sparingly (German, 2016). For better effect, pausing to breathe must be done at natural breaks in the sentences where commas and full stops would be in written prose. Apart from allowing the listener to digest the message and consider its content, such pauses provide for the speaker opportunity of relaxed breathing that regulates his oxygen supply to his brain thus aids clear thinking (Roach, 2002). Here are classified and detailed data and examples on various forms of junctures:

**Sustained Junctures**

Sustained junctures are perceptual pauses and they point out to the existence of some types of pauses both short or long (sustained) (Demirezen, 2013). Shorter pauses usually indicate a continuing topic, either immediately following or after an interrupting clause, usually coinciding with a comma, longer ones representing orally semi–colons to break the flow of a sentence in speech (ibid). As for the closed and open junctures they are very short or slightly longer breaks between individual phonemes not relating to words (open&closed syllables, 2016).

**Closed Junctures**

They express a continuity in the articulation of two successive sounds, as in the normal transition between sounds within a word; here we experience an absence of juncture or pause. Here we have a movement from sound to sound which has no intervening pauses or delay (Sarandi, M. (2014). They are of three sorts “plosive to plosive” and “plosive to continuant” (ibid) 3.1.1.1 Plosive to Plosive
a good+team, the black+table, on a dark+day, blood+bank, the sick+baby, hard+times.
Right+there, about that+time, tasted+the pie, third+theme.
3.1.1.2 Plosive to Continuant
With a big+smile, to keep late+hours, old land+lord, picnic+supper, next+month.

Open Junctures

They are transitions between successive sounds marked by a break in articulatory continuity, as by a pause or the modification of a preceding or following sound, and often indicating a division between words; they are also called “plus junctures” (Monteron, L. (2011)). Open junctures express a movement which are not continuous (ibid). There is a slight stoppage of the last sound till it blends with the next. For example, “an aim” can be heard both as [ənˌaɪm] or as [ə → ‘aɪm], and can be confused with “a name”.
Likewise “that’s cool” can be heard both as [ˌðæts ˈkuːl] or [ˌðæt → skuːl] which can easily be confused with “that # school” [ˈðæt ˌskuːl] according to the speaker’s intent or his articulation. Another example is “not at all” [ˈnɔtətɔːl] but “not # a tall” [ˈnɔtə,tɔːl]

Short Junctures (→)

They are found between short thought-groups within a sentence indicating brief level of pause (Juncture, 2016). Examples (Demirezen, 2013):

“This is Mary # who plays tennis # at the high school.” [ðɪsˌɪz meəri → hə pleɪz ˈtenis → æt daɪˈhɪskuːf]"

“My aunt who lives in Leeds is coming for Christmas.” [maɪənt → hə lɪvz ɪn liːdz → iz ˈlæmɪŋ fə ˈkrɪzməs]

“I’m going to see Uncle Ken.” [aɪəm ˈgəʊətə tə ˈsiː → ˈenkl]"

“Ignore him; he's just trying to be cute.” [aɪɡər ˈhɪm → haɪz ˈdʒæst ,træɪətə tə ˈbi ,kjuːt]"

“We’re not rich, but we are comfortable.” [weə ˈnɔt ,rɪtʃ → ət ˈkwət,waɪə ˈkæmfətəb]"

“He was wrong, but he won’t admit it.” [hi ˈwɔz ˈrɔnt → ət ˈhauntəd ,miːtət → əʊt]"

“I knocked, but there was no answer.” [aɪ ˈnɔkt → ət ədə ˈwɔz ˌnəʊəˌaɪnsə]"

Long Junctures (→→)

They are found between clauses in compound sentences separated by commas, colons or semicolons in writing (Semicolon, 2016). Long junctures divide the sentence more than short junctures do but less than terminal junctures (indicated by periods or question marks in writing). The words on either side of the long juncture sign (→→) should be able to stand on their own (Punctuation, 2016). Study these examples:

“The young think that the old are fools; but the old know the young to be so.” [ðaɪŋ]
“I'm not surprised he left her, after the way she treated him.”

“Although the car's old, it runs well.”

“No, I'll do it; although I appreciate your offer.”

“If you break the rules, you will be punished accordingly.”

“She says she's thirty, but then again she might be lying.”

“As soon as we suspected it was a bomb, we alerted the police.”

“I'm not surprised she left her, after the way she treated him.”

“She says she's thirty, but then again she might be lying.”

“Although the car's old, it runs well.”

“Her book dedication read: To my parents Sophie and Andrew.”

“The Position and the Form of the Sustained Juncture Determining the Meaning:

Where a sustained juncture, i.e. proper pause between words should be placed in a sentence becomes so important at times even to change the meaning of the whole message to be given. This could only be assured in writing through punctuation marks, mainly commas, semi-colons and colons. Here are some such comparative examples in English:

1. “I don't know John.” [ai 'doun,t no:u ədʒən] vs. “I don't know, John.” [ai 'doun,t no:u →- ədʒən] In the first sentence the speaker does not know John. In the second he talks to John himself about something else.

2. “The president, said the secretary, is busy.” vs. “The president said, the secretary is busy.”

3. “Joe,’ said the boss, ‘is stupid.”’ [dʒə: →,sed ə bɔs →- əz 'stju:pɪd] vs. “Joe said, 'the boss is stupid.”’ In the first sentence Joe is stupid according to the boss, but in the second it is just the opposite, the boss himself is stupid according to Joe. (Demirezen, 2013)

4. “A woman without her man, is nothing.” vs. “A woman: without her, man is nothing.” (In the first sentence a woman’s importance is being questioned, in the second it is the man’s).

5. “Her book dedication read: To my parents Sophie and Andrew.” [hə 'bʊk dɛdɪ,keɪfæn əred →- tə əmæt ˌpeərənts 'soʊfi, ənˌendrʊz] vs. “Her book dedication read: To my parents, Sophie, and Andrew.” [hə 'bʊk dɛdɪ,keɪfæn əred →- tə əmæt ˌpeərənts →- ˌsoʊfiˌændˌɪndrʊz] (In the first sentence Sophie and Andrew are the names of parents, in the second all are separate individuals.) (Grammarbook, 2016)

6. “They took in Maddie a student, and a puppy.” vs. “They took in Maddie, a student, and a puppy.” [dɛi ətukˌɪnˌmædiˌə ˌstju:dənt →- ˌændˌə 'pʌpi] vs [dɛi ˌtukˌɪn əˌmædi → ə
6. “All of the books, which had pictures in them, were sent to the little girl.” [ɔːlˌbʊks → ˌwɪʧ həd 'pɪktʃəzˌɪn ,dɛm → wɜə ˈsɛnt tə ʤə 'lɪtlˌɡæʃə] vs. “All of the books which had pictures in them, were sent to the little girl.” [ɔːlˌbʊks → ,dɛm → wɜə ˈsɛnt tə ʤə 'lɪtlˌɡæʃə] In the first sentence all of the books sent to the girl had pictures in them; however in the second only those book with pictures were sent. (Demirezen 2013).

7. “Parents who are indifferent to their own kids’ success, are very bad parents.” [ˌPɛərənts → ˌhʊərˌrɪ skə ˈsɛks → ˌvɛriˌbædˌpeərənts] vs. “Parents, who are indifferent to their own kids’ success, are very bad parents.” [ˌPɛərənts → tə ˌhʊərˌrɪ skə ˈsɛks → ˌvɛriˌbædˌpeərənts] In the first sentence all parents are considered indifferent therefore they are blamed to be bad (because they are separated only with a short juncture); however in the second sentence “parents” are separated from the rest of sentence with a long juncture therefore only those special parents are considered bad. (Demirezen 1993).

Terminal Junctures

Terminal junctures consist of a change in pitch before a pause, marking the end of an utterance or a break between utterances, as between clauses. They are of two sorts, falling junctures (statements) and rising junctures (questions): (yourdictionary, 2016)

Falling Junctures (↘)

They are found at the end of sentences, to show that the positive statement is terminated (Siegman, 1987). Examples (Enomar, 2016):

“He is my father.” [ˌhiˌɪz ˌɔmət fa:ˈdɑːr]

“The distance between India and Japan is 8000 kms.” [ʤə ˈdistəns biˌtwi:n → ˈɪndiəˌæn dʒəˌpɛnˌɪt ˌθauzəndnotatedˈkɪləˌmiːtəz]

“They have come to buy a car.” [ˌðeːi həvˈkæm → təˈbɑːiˌɑː,ˈkɑːə]

“You are not in this team.” [ˌɔjʊˈɑːˌnɔtˌɪnˌdɪsˌtɪm]

“She is the captain of this team.” [ˌɔʃIˌɪz ʤəˌkæptənˌævˌdɪsˌtɪm]

“We have been friends for twenty years.” [wi həv bin frendz fɔˌtwɛnti ʃi:ˈɛz]

“She didn’t do it on purpose, it was an accident.” [ʃi ˈdɪdntˌdjuːˌɪt → ˌɒnˈprɛəˌpəz, ˌɪtˌwɔzˌənˌəksɪdənt]

“He doesn’t care, Laura; it’s just an act. [hiˈdɑzəntˌkɑː.zə → lɔːrə→ itzˌdʒæstˌænˌækt]

“It’s all right, Mommy's here. [ɪtsˌdʒɔːˈrænt → ˈmʌmɪzˌhɪər]

“His coat was wrinkled, and his hat was askew. [hɪzˈkɒut wɔzˌrɪŋkəd → ənd hɪzˈhæt wɔzˌɔ,skjuː]
"I thought he was really hurt but he was just faking it." [ət əθɔːt hi wəz ˈriːali ,hət → əbat hi əwəz ʼdʒæst ,fɛrkɪŋ ɔt\]

"One summer morning, which was particularly hot, I hung up my coat outside the door before I went to the classroom." [wən ˈslʌma ,məɛnɪŋ → wɪt wəz ˈpætɪkəli ,hət → ət ʼhʌŋ ,mər maɪ ,rəʊt → aut ˈsæɪd ə ,dəz → bi əfə:əz ai ʼwɛnt tə ə ,klærəm \]

"To my horror, when I looked in the inside pocket, I discovered that my pen, which I valued so much, was not there." [tə ˈmaɪ ,hɔrə → əʊvnə ai ʼhɔːkt ɪn ði → ɪnsaɪd ,pəkɪt → ət ɒskənəd dæt maɪ pən → wɪt ai vəˈʃjʊd səʊ maɪ → wəz ɒt ðə\]

"By the time he arrived, the room was already crowded." [əbaɪ ət ˈtɛm hi əˌrɛɪvd → ðə əˌrʊm wəz əˌhərədi ,kraʊdɪd\]

"As I mentioned in my letter → I plan to arrive on the 6th." [əz əˌmɛntɪnd in ə ˌlɛtə → ət ˈpʰæn tə əˌrɛɪv ən ðə əˌsɜːkθ \]

"Day after day we waited, hoping that she’d call." [dei əˌsɪfi əˌdəi → əˌwi ʻwɛrtɪd → ˌhəʊpiŋ ət əˌfɪd ˈkɑːf\]

“They walked past, balancing heavy loads on their head.” [dei ˈwɔːk tə ˈpɑːst → əˈbɛəʃənɪŋ ˌhɛvi ələʊdz → ən əˈdεər ,hɛd\]

“They walked past → balancing heavy loads on their head.” [dei ˈwɔːk tə ˈpɑːst → əˈbɛəʃənɪŋ ˌhɛvi ələʊdz → ən ,dεər ,hɛd\]

“Don’t move, you’re under arrest!” [dəʊnt ,muːv → jə rˌəndə rˌəˌrɛst\]

**Rising Junctures Examples (Demirezen, 2013)**

They are found after questions or statements with question marks. Examples (ibid):

“Is John in Austin now?” [ɪz ˈdʒɔːn / əˌɪn ˈəʊtɪn ,nəʊ /]

“How many English sentences do you know? [ˈhɑːu ,mɛni → ˈɪŋglɪʃ ,wəʊdz → ədu jʊ ˈnɔːu →]

“What’s the capital of Peru? [əˈwəts də ˈkæptɪəl əv ,pərə: /

“Shall we ask Simon or Jonesy? [ʃæl ˌwi əˈsk → ˌsæmən əˌkæ ,ˈdʒɔʊnzi /

“Can you tell me what material she likes? [kæn ˈjɛl mi → əˈwət məˌtɪʃən ʃi əˈlæks /

“What material does she like? [əˈwət məˌtiʃən → ˌdæz jɪ ˈlæk /

“When will the alarm beep? [wən əˈwɪt dɪˌəˈhɔːm ,biːps /

“Could you fetch me when the alarm beeps? [kəd ˌfɛtʃ mi → wən ˌdɪˌəˈhɔːm ,biːps /

“Has anyone seen my torch? [hæz əˈpɪnə ,siːn → ˌməi ˈtɔːʃ\]

“Did she ask whether I found my torch? [dɪd ˌfi əˈsk → əˌwɛdə rˌəˌfɔʊnd maɪ ,tɔːʃ\]

“Did I find my torch? [dɪd əˌfɔɪnd maɪ ,tɔːʃ\]

“Is it raining? [ɪz ˌrɪniŋ /

“Why are you bored? [wəri əˌrəʊd jə ,bəˌrəʊd /

“Do you want salsa dip or cheese dip? [də əˈwənt ˈsɑːsə ,dɪp → əˌkɛs ʻtʃiːz ,dɪp /]
Minimal Pair Examples for Linking vs. Juncturing Drills

Here are some striking examples of linking and juncture pairs:

“plain+ice” [ˈpleɪˌnɪs] vs. “play # nice” [ˌpleɪˈnaɪs]

“Did he see # Mill?” [dɪd ˈsɪ: ˈmil ↘] vs. “Did he seem ill?” [ˌdɪd ˈseɪm ↘]

“Did you listen to the peace talks?” [ˌdɪd ˈlɪsən ˈpeɪz ↘] vs. “Did you listen to the pea # stalks?” [ˌdɪd ˈlɪsən ˈpeɪ ˈstɔːlk ↘]

“Did you say # that stuff or “that’s tough?” [ˌdɪd ˈseɪ ˈðæt ˌstʌf ↘] vs. “Did you say that # sod.” [ˌdɪd ˈseɪ ˌsɒd ↘]

“Real eyes realize real lies.” [rɪəˈlaɪz „rɪəˈlaɪz ↘]

“That’s # elementary” [ˌðæts ˈɛlmənərɪ] vs. “That’s a # lemon tree.” [ˌðæts ˈleɪmən ˌtriː ↘]

“We will take the shortest exam.” [ˌwɪl ˈteɪk ˈʃɔɹt ˌɛxəm ↘] vs. “We will take this shore test exam.” [ˌwɪl ˈteɪk ˈʃɔɹt ˌtest ˌɛxəm ↘]

“We’re interested in history” [ˌwɜzərˈɪntəˌhɪstəri] vs. “We’re interested in his story.” [ˌwɜzərˈɪntəˌhɪzˈstɔɹɪ] vs. “We’re interested in this story.” [ˌwɜzərˈɪntəˌhɪzˈstɔɹɪ] vs. “We’re interested in his story.” [ˌwɜzərˈɪntəˌhɪzˈstɔɹɪ]


“You are+under+arrest.” [ˌjuː ˈərəˌʌnderˌərəst ↘] vs. “You are # under+a # rest (sign).” [ˌjuːˌərəˌʌnderˌərəst] vs. “You are # under+a # rest (sign).” [ˌjuːˌərəˌʌnderˌərəst]

“You have a gray tape over there.” [jə ˈheɪvˌeɪ ˈgreɪˌteɪpˌoʊvərˌðeər ↘] vs. “You have a great ape over there.” [jə ˈheɪvˌeɪ ˈgreɪˌıpˌoʊvərˌðeər]

Turkish Juncturing Examples

Turkish is rich in those “ambiguous sentences with linking / juncturing pairs” (iki anlamlı ulamalı / durakli sesteş çiftler) (Toplum düşmanı, 2016). The two consecutive words “terli # kali” vs “terlik+altı” are among such phenomenal pairs (Şahin, 2016). Words in these phrases each has a different meaning, the first being “he had sweat on his body” and the second “he put on slippers on his feet”. Their individual meanings could never be come out like this unless they are within such contexts. “Çok koştuduk için vücudu terli kaldı.” (He ran and ran and got hot and remained with sweat on his body.) and (Odasına girdi ayağına terlik aldı.) “As soon as he entered his room he put slippers on his feet.” (ibid) Another beautiful example from the Turkish poetry “Bülbül eder güle naz”. (The nightingale is acting coyly with his sweetheart, the rose.) Just for the sake of rhyming the poet provides us with this ambiguously sounding linking/juncturing pair to wonder in his next line: “İndim o dost bahçeşine; ağlayan çok, gülen+az.” (I went into the garden of friends only to see that there are more wailing than laughing.) So the contrast “güle # naz” (acting coyly to the rose) vs. “gülen+az” (there are very few people who laugh) making a complete change in meaning for the context (Manilerimiz, 2016). The importance of using proper juncturing in speech or punctuation in writing becomes goes to extreme farce and obscenity.

One Turkish newspaper article heading arises ambiguity: “Polis, şüpheli olarak 11 yıl yurtdışında yaşayan ve Fransız vatandaşı da olan C.G.’yi arıyor.” (The police are searching a
suspect named C.G. who has been living in France and meanwhile who became a French citizen) (Sabah, 2009)

One very common example taught at schools traditionally “Oku baban gibi, eşek olma” (Study like your father and don’t be donkey) vs. “Oku baban gibi, eşek olma.” (Study and don’t be a donkey like your father.) (Çelik, 2009). The most notorious one on that line however turning from innocence to mischief: “Babanı pazara gönderdim, ananas aldırdım.” (I sent your father to the market to get some pineapples.) vs. “Babanı pazara gönderdim, anana saldırdım” (I sent your father to the market to get pineapples so that I could bang your mother.) (Tekerlemeler, 2016) After seeing these strong examples you must now agree about the power and importance of the ability to distinguish the linking vs. juncturing and their proper location in communication.

Here are some more such tongue-twisters common in Turkish (ibid):


Using our Judgment as to Whether to Link or to Juncture

An ability to link or juncture as well as to determine the levels of stresses lies with the skill and intent of the speaker (Haugh, 2010). Natives know this instinctively, however learners of the
target learner must acquire it by much knowledge and practice (Yurtbaşı, 2016). For instance some natives would never say “best time” [ˈbɛstˌtaɪ̯m], but they rather say [ˈbɛstˌtaɪ̯m] instead, using it in a sentence “Yesterday, I had the best time of my life at your party.” [ˈjuəstˌde:i→əˌdə,ˌhaːd də ˈbɛstˌtaɪ̯mˌəʊvər →ɪn ˈmaːɪˌlaɪf →əˌpɔːtɪ̯]. Natives joining the two words together in “big grape” say [ˈbɪˌgrɛp] as in “That was a big grape you’ve just eaten.” [dætˌwɔzˌəˌbɪˌgrɛpˌjɔvˌdʒæstˌiːtən] (Elemental English, 2016). Again they say [ˈɡʊˌde:i] for “good day” [ˈɡʊdˌde:i] as in this example: “Thanks for coming.” [ˌθæŋks fə ˈkʌmɪŋ →ˌhævˌəˌɡʊˌde:i]. If we listen carefully enough we hear natives do not often say [ˈsɪˌdʊn] by blending the two words quickly as in “Please sit down until I call you.” [ˌpliːzˌsɪdaʊn→əntɪlˌkɔːlˌjuː] (Murdoch, 2015).

However some strict pronunciation teachers disagreeing with this practice (Lin, 2014) warn their students against uniting neighboring consonants in final+initial position and recommend them to watch those spelling patterns by holding the final consonant firmly and go right on to the following consonant sound after a short break (or juncture) (Mallory, 1998) as in these examples: “Stop # pushing.” “She hit # two balls.” “She has a black # cat.” “They had a tough # fight.” “I bought both # things.” “I miss # Sue.” “I wish # she were here.” “The cab # broke the telephone pole.” “What a nice old # dog!” “She takes five # vitamins a day.” “I want to breathe # the fresh air.” “Call # Laura right away.” “I need some # money.” “She has nine # nieces.” (Easton, 1997).

These contradictive view remind us that nativelike speech requires discretion where to unite and where to break with the neighboring sounds between the words (Alameen, 2007). The key issue should be understandability on the part of the listening when they address to. So we must remember the common sense rules of connected speech by adding some rhythm and musicality to our speech we can gradually speak like or be better understood by native English speakers.

**Conclusion**

The primary purpose of this article has been to draw the attention of non-native speakers of English to the interplays of linking and junctures in English utterances, which are mostly confusing to them. Linkers and junctures, like stress and pitch phonemes, are the two integral part of communicative competence. When a speaker links relevant words together his listener understands him more easily as ideas conveyed flow freely, and communication becomes more natural. Junctures also affect the determination of meaning but in the opposite way, by disrupting the flow of speech into chunks or thought groups, contributing to better intonation and fluency. Therefore these two elements of articulation go hand in hand in speech training focusing on connected speech production at natural speed. Fluency involves in speaking at a suitable speed without too much hesitation and false starts. Linkers and junctures are essential elements in in producing a native-like utterance to catch the flow of sentence rhythm allowing the non-native, if applied, greater confidence in their oral communication.
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