

Using tactile feedback to improve
linking of English words during
semi-controlled practice.



Linking

‘An aim’ or ‘a name’?

Suprasegmentals

“...nonnative production of suprasegmentals appears to be **more detrimental than segmental errors** in L2 comprehensibility and intelligibility perception.” (Gordon et al., 2012)

Semi-controlled & free practice

“Whereas FonFS tends to lead to improvement only at a controlled level, FonF enables learners to achieve improvement **both at a controlled and spontaneous levels.**” (Saito, 2012)

Aim

To develop practical techniques that can help English as a Second Language (ESL) students to improve their linking.

Literature review

“Embodied cognition is a research program...held together by the key assumption that **the body functions as a constituent of the mind** rather than a passive perceiver and actor serving the mind.” (Leitan & Chaffey, 2014)



Research questions

- Can tactile feedback improve linking in ESL students?
- Can semi-controlled exercises be integrated into linking practice?

Methodology

- **Experimental design:** pre-test/intervention/post-test
- **Stimulus:** English phoneme /t/
- **Questionnaires:** background & satisfaction
- **Participants:** 10 current & former students

Pre/post test

Phrases (test 1)

1. Bright idea
2. Last option
3. Hot air
4. Great opportunity
5. Bright afternoon
6. Short answer
7. Sweet orange
8. Quiet evening
9. Best attempt
10. West end
11. First exit
12. Sunset avenue

Sentences (test 2)

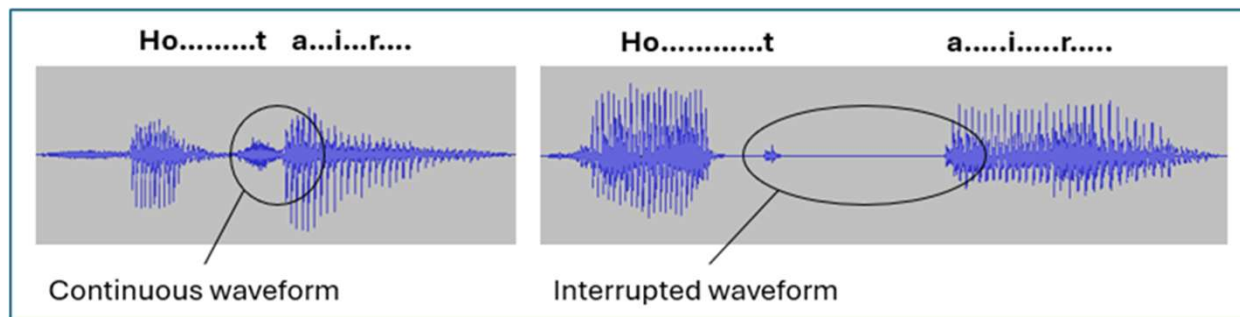
1. She forgot about the meeting.
2. You left early yesterday.
3. Let's eat in a restaurant.
4. He met interesting people.
5. I want everyone informed.
6. She received an urgent email.
7. They built enormous temples.
8. We caught everything on camera.
9. They fought endless battles.
10. He planted eight oak trees.
11. They discovered a desert oasis.
12. Take the left entrance.

Pre/post test

Text (tests 3 & 4)

An urgent message arrived just after sunset. Scott felt anxious but curious. He looked out the window, lost in thought. Then, he got up, grabbed his coat and left the house. Outside, the air was cool and quiet. He walked through the street until he reached an empty park. Under the tall trees, he met an old friend named Arthur. They hadn't seen each other in years. Their conversation was short and sincere. Arthur gave Scott important information and asked him to keep it secret. Scott agreed. As he walked along the street, he felt a mix of fear and excitement.

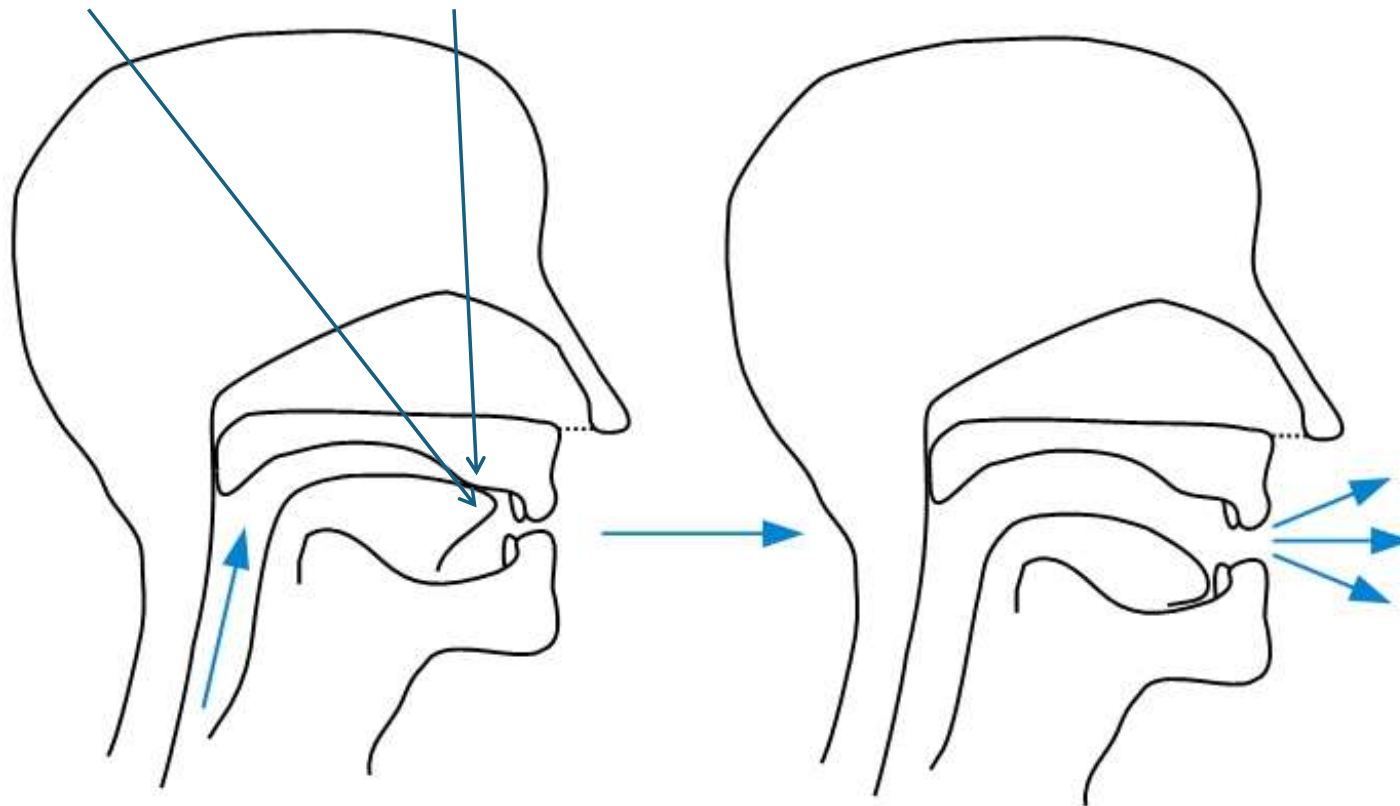
Analysis



Intervention

Tip of tongue

Alveolar ridge

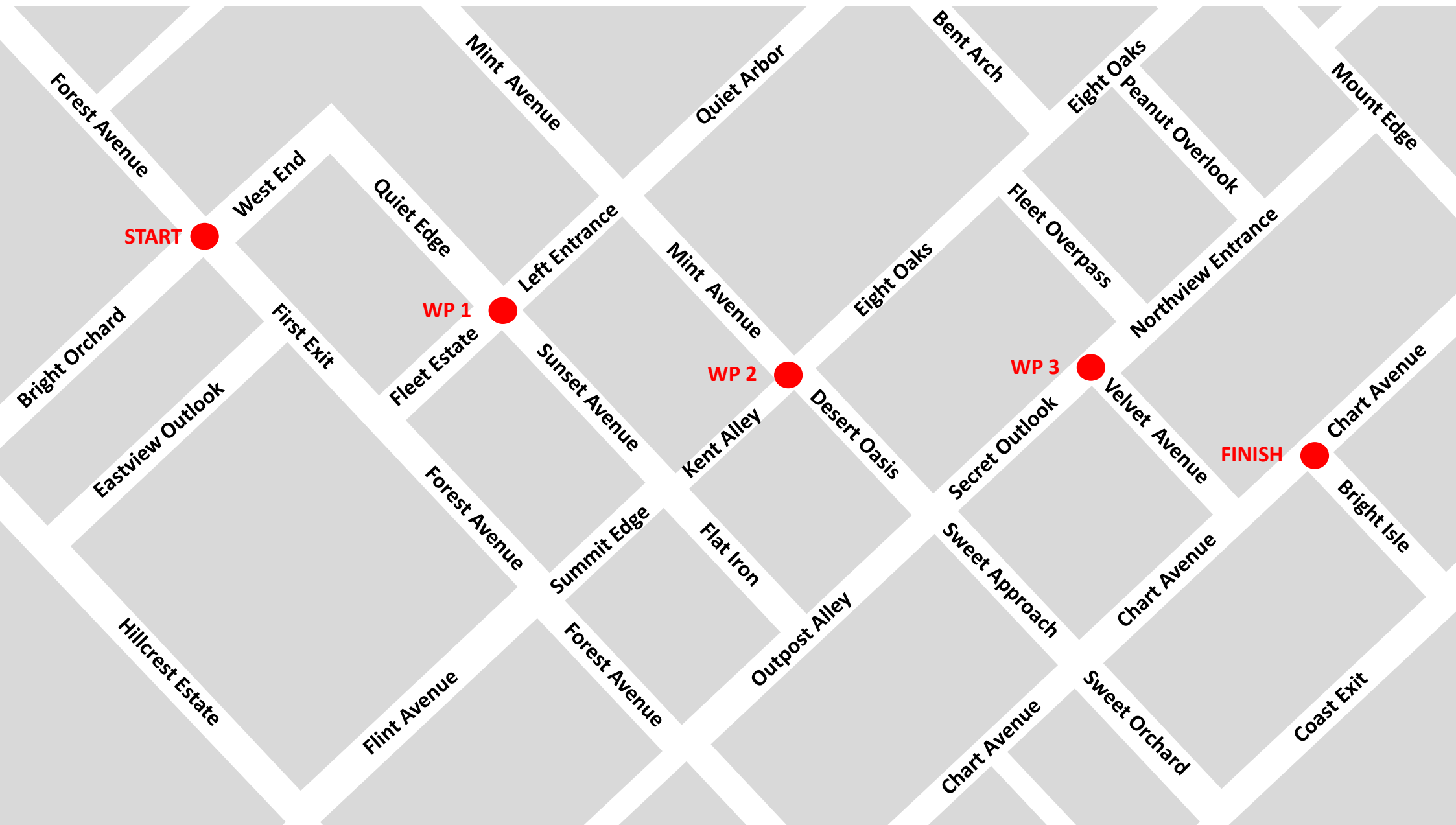


/t/

Intervention

1. Sweet orange
2. Quiet evening
3. Best attempt
4. West end
5. First exit
6. Sunset avenue
7. Excellent example
8. Heart attack
9. Intelligent animal
10. Exact opposite
11. Recent event
12. Get out

1. They **built enormous** temples.
2. We **caught everything** on camera.
3. They **fought endless** battles.
4. He planted **eight oak** trees.
5. They discovered a **desert oasis**.
6. Take the **left entrance**.
7. She **bought a** beautiful dress.
8. They **lost important** documents.
9. We **spent every** day outside.
10. She **kept ignoring** me.
11. His **art inspires** me.
12. The traffic is **quite annoying**.

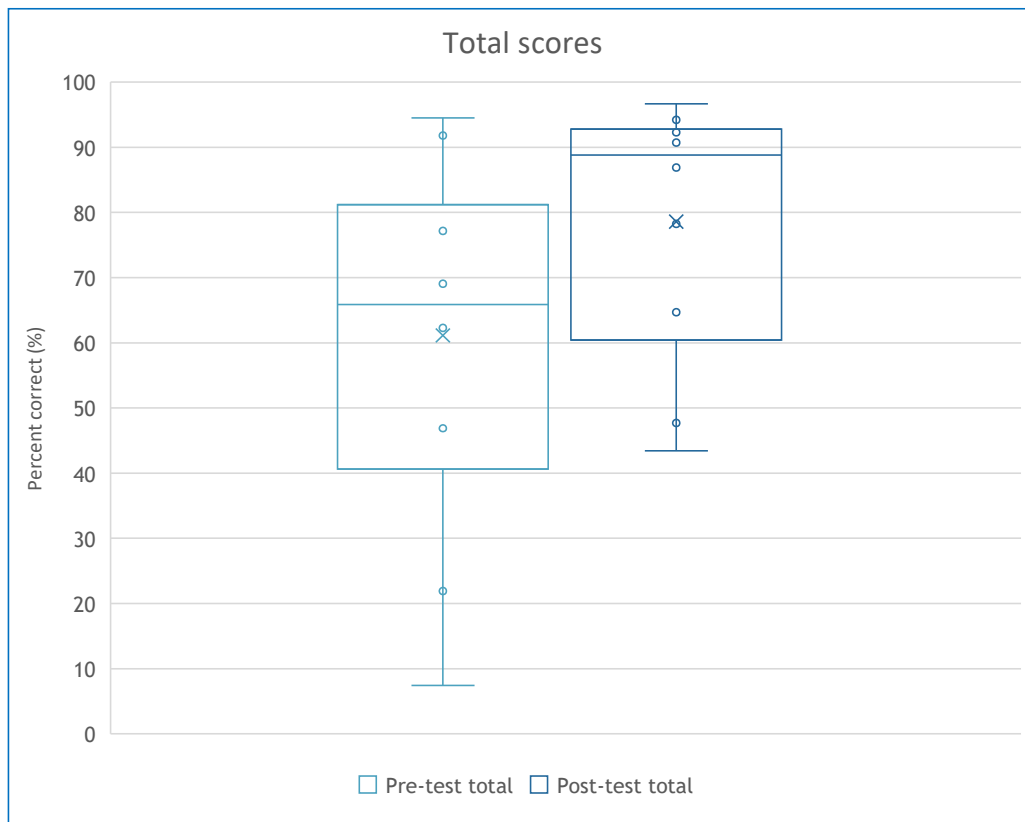


Results

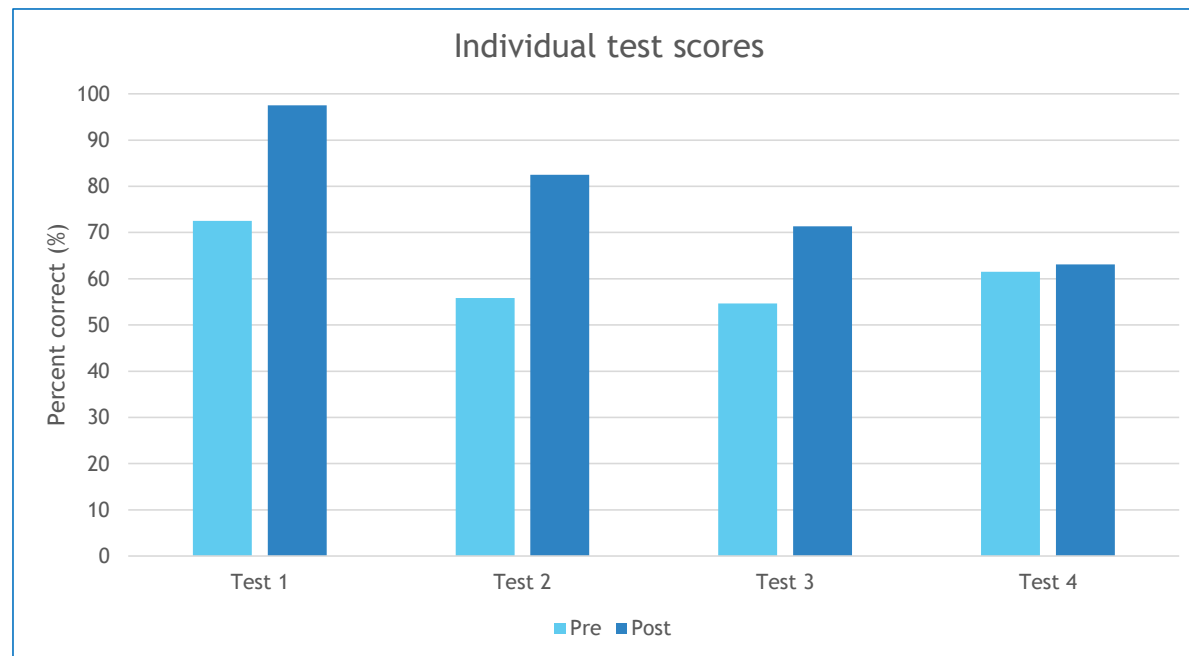
Background questionnaire

	Mean	Median	Mode	SD	Minimum	Maximum
Age	42.000	41.50	42.00	8.589	31	58
Gender	0.600	1.00	1.00	0.516	0	1
No. of languages spoken	2.800	2.50	2.00	1.033	2	5
English proficiency	5.000	5.00	5.00	0.943	3	6
Years of musical training	3.800	0.00	0.00	8.351	0	27

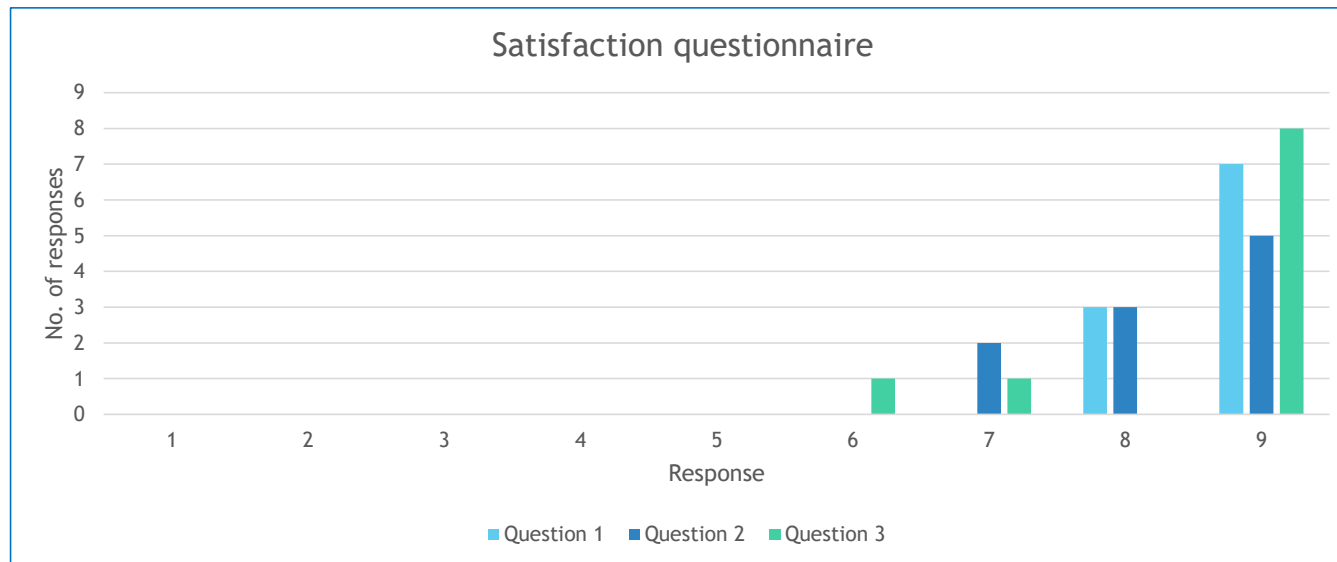
Total test scores



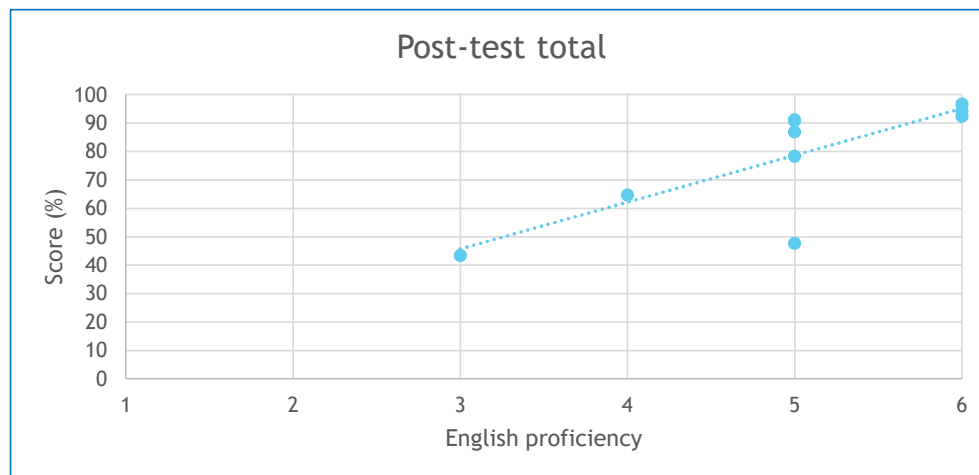
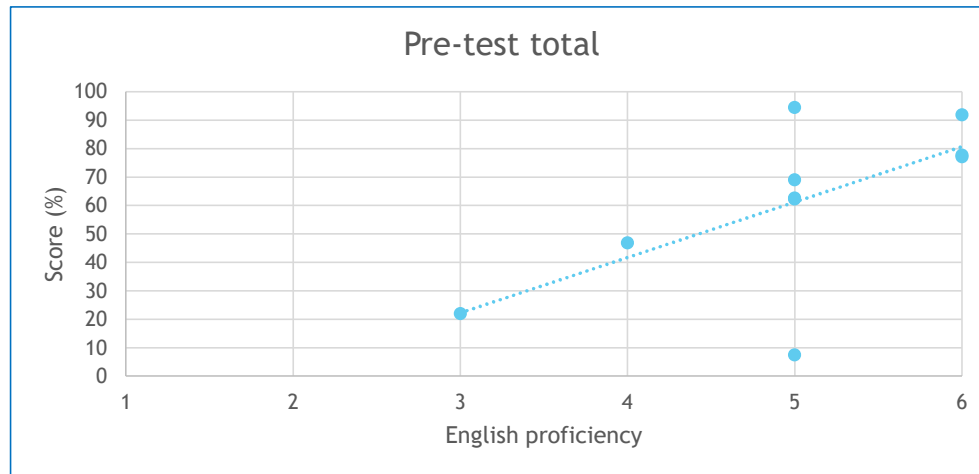
Individual test scores



Satisfaction questionnaire



Correlations



Cognitive load theory

“Basically, cognitive load theory asserts that learning is hampered when working memory capacity is exceeded in a learning task.” (de Jong 2010)

Recommendations:

“The three main recommendations that come from cognitive load theory are:

- present material that aligns with the prior knowledge of the learner (intrinsic load)
- avoid non-essential and confusing information (extraneous load),
- and stimulate processes that lead to conceptually rich and deep knowledge (germane load).”

(de Jong 2010)

Conclusions

- Tactile feedback can be used to improve linking of English words.
- Semi-controlled exercises can be integrated into linking practice.

Example lesson plan:

1. **Revision:** practise the /t/ phoneme.
2. **Instruction:** linking the /t/ phoneme using tactile feedback.
3. **Controlled practise:** imitate phrases & sentences.
4. **Semi-controlled practise:** map navigation task.
5. **Free practise:** discussion (linking is negotiated like in the map navigation task).

Ethics:

“...while insiders...were believed to hold **a biased position** that complicated their ability to observe and interpret.” (Chavez, 2015)

“...these designs have the most safeguards against sources of bias and therefore **the greatest degree of overall scientific validity.**”
(Thompson & Panacek, 2006)

Individual learning outcomes:

- Learn how to conduct credible and ethical work-based research.
- Learn how to present my findings using descriptive statistics.
- Learn how to work efficiently and organise my time effectively.

References

Chavez, C. (2015). Conceptualizing from the Inside: Advantages, Complications, and Demands on Insider Positionality. *The Qualitative Report*, 13(3), 474-494.
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