

# **Please Say That Again: Virtual Pronunciation Instruction for Adult ESL Learners**

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# Webinar Objectives

- Establish guiding principles for pronunciation instruction
- Understand three different pronunciation features and how they impact intelligibility:
  - Voice Quality Settings
  - Word Stress
  - Intonation
- Learn different activities to integrate pronunciation instruction into virtual teaching



# Why are we here?

There is a "threshold level" that NNSs of English have to obtain, and that if their pronunciation abilities stay below this level, they will have verbal communication problems, no matter how much grammar and vocabulary they master (Celce-Murcia, et. al.,2010).

For many lower level learners, the classroom is their only source for developing the L2, and may also be the only place that they feel safe enough to practice speaking their new language out loud (Strube, 2009).





# Guiding Principles

- Pronunciation should be embedded within the curriculum
- Teach pronunciation explicitly
- Don't wait to start teaching pronunciation – teach it from the beginning levels
- Prioritize pronunciation needs and focus features that will have the greatest impact on intelligibility
- Focus on intelligibility, not accent reduction

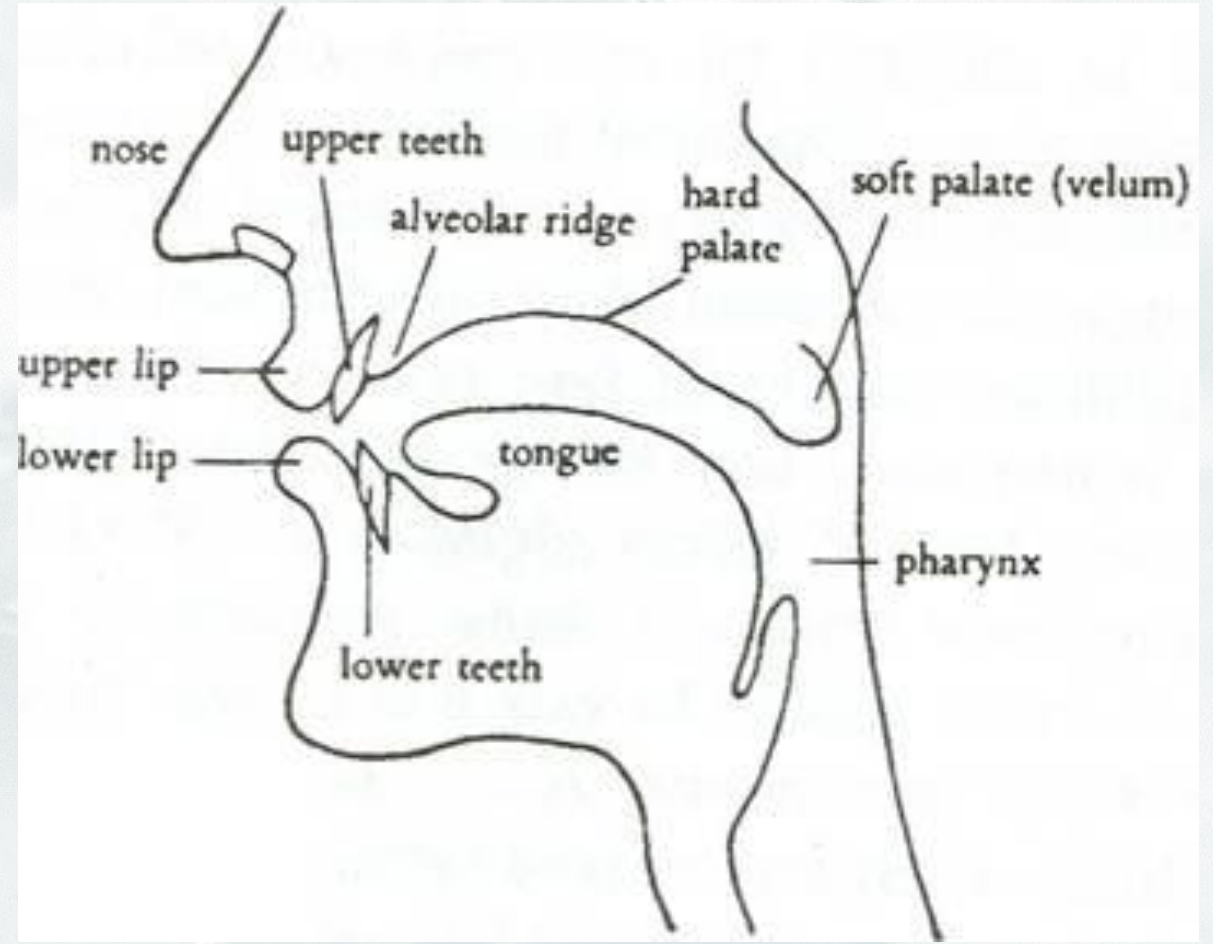


A faded, light blue background image showing a hand holding a camera lens. The lens is the central focus, with its various rings and elements visible. The hand is positioned around the lens, and the overall image has a soft, ethereal quality.

# Segmentals

# Voice Quality Settings

The long-term postures of the larynx, pharynx, tongue, velopharyngeal system and lips, as well as long-term laryngeal configurations (Esling & Wong, 1983)

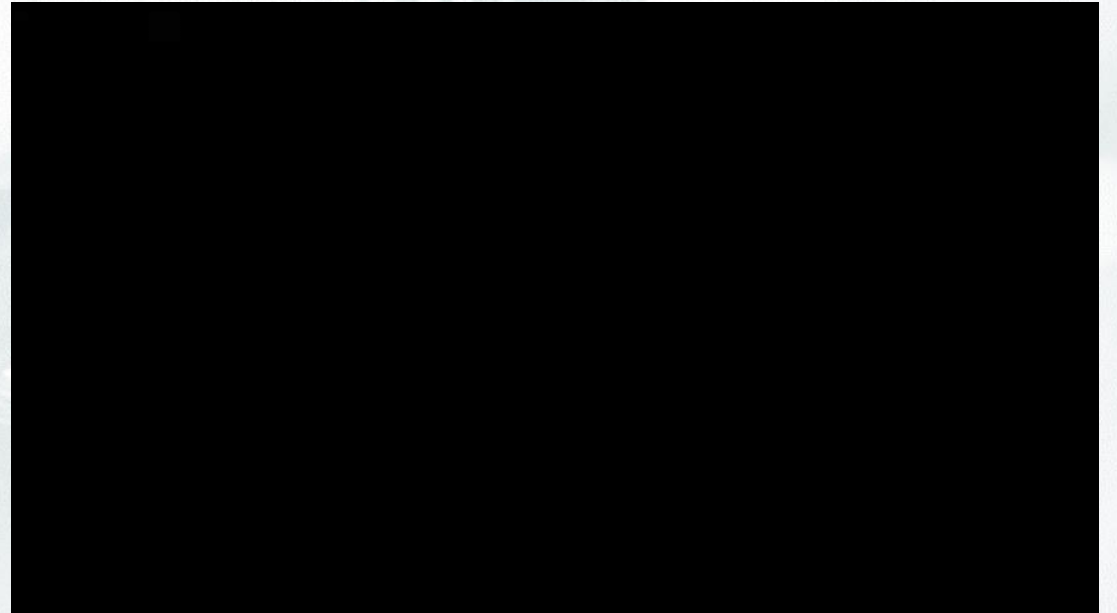




# Why are Voice Quality Settings Important?

- If an adult EL learner can be taught the features of English that characterize its voice quality settings, their pronunciation of segmentals should noticeably improve as a result (Esling & Wong, 1983; Jenkins, 2000; Kerr, 2000; Thornberry, 1993).
- The kinesthetic feedback that happens with voice quality settings instruction may be more accessible to literacy level learners than auditory feedback (Kerr, 2000).

# Why are Voice Quality Settings Important?

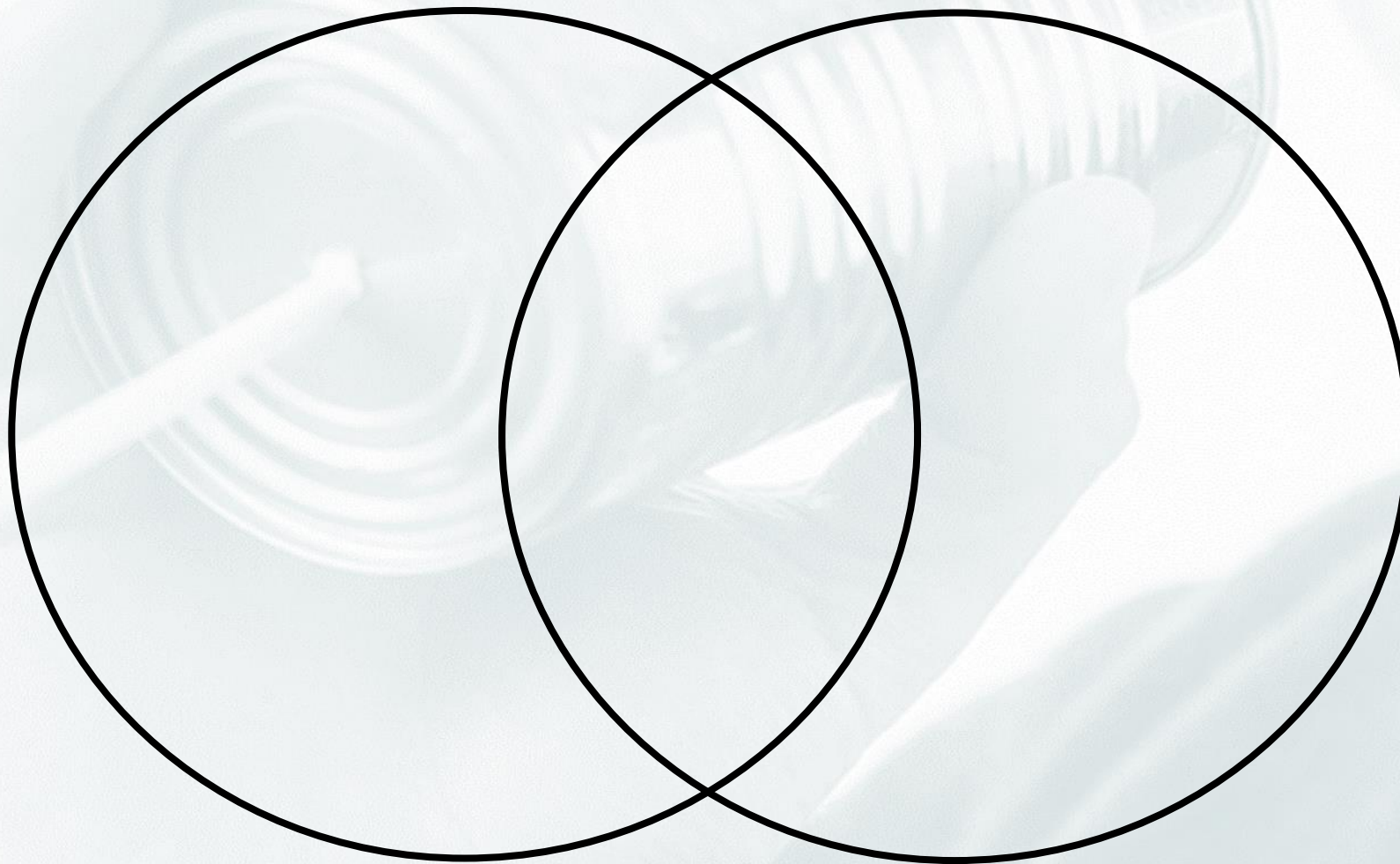




**English**

**Both**

**Korean**





# How can we teach VQS to English learners?





- **Use a fluent English speaker to model mouth movements**
- **Have learners imitate the movements watching themselves on their video**
- **Lip read words and phrases**

**Let's see what this looks like!**



# Minimal Pairs: Mirroring





# Read My Lips



**Right  
Light  
Fry  
Fly  
Rental  
Lentil  
Grass  
Glass**



# **What's Your Number?**

**0 – pack**

**1 – back**

**2 – rope**

**3 – robe**

**4 – big**

**5 – pig**

**6 – rip**

**7 – rib**

**8 - beach**

**9 – peach**

# Show Me the Sound





A faded, light blue background image. On the right side, there is a close-up of a person's face, showing their eyes and mouth. On the left side, there is a hand holding a glass, with a straw visible. The overall image is very light and serves as a backdrop for the text.

**How would you help this learner?**

**A Somali learner says “I cook bees in a  
ban. I never eat big.”**

# Your Turn!

**What are other ways you could practice voice quality settings or minimal pairs?**



**Voice Quality Setting Video**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7vz7zXYecpY&list=PL-NrZkT8VAsbRqATwsx5TL1THogjiq3m5&index=8>



A faded, light blue background image featuring a hand holding a camera lens in the center and a person's face in the upper right corner.

# Suprasegmentals

# What is Word Stress?

For words with two or more syllables...

- one syllable will receive more importance than the others
- this syllable receives the **primary word stress**
- compared to the other ones, the vowel sound of that syllable will be slightly:
  - **louder**
  - **longer**
  - **at a higher pitch**

com**P**Uter

**G**Overnment

en**V**ironment

partic**P**Ation

be**H**A**V**ior

re**S**U**M**E



# **Why is Word Stress important?**

- **“The most convenient focal point for pronunciation instruction; an area of maximum overlap of communicative importance and teachability” (Dalton & Seidlhoffer, 1994)**
- **English speakers tend to store words according to stress patterns; if the stress pattern is wrong the listener will search for stored words in the wrong category (Gilbert, 2014)**
- **Lexical-stress identity often overrides segmental information and can cause false word recognition (Benrabah, 1997)**

# Why is Word Stress important?

**Intended Word**

**Speaker Pronunciation**

**Listener Heard**

suitable

suiTAbLe

the level

written

wriTTEN

retain

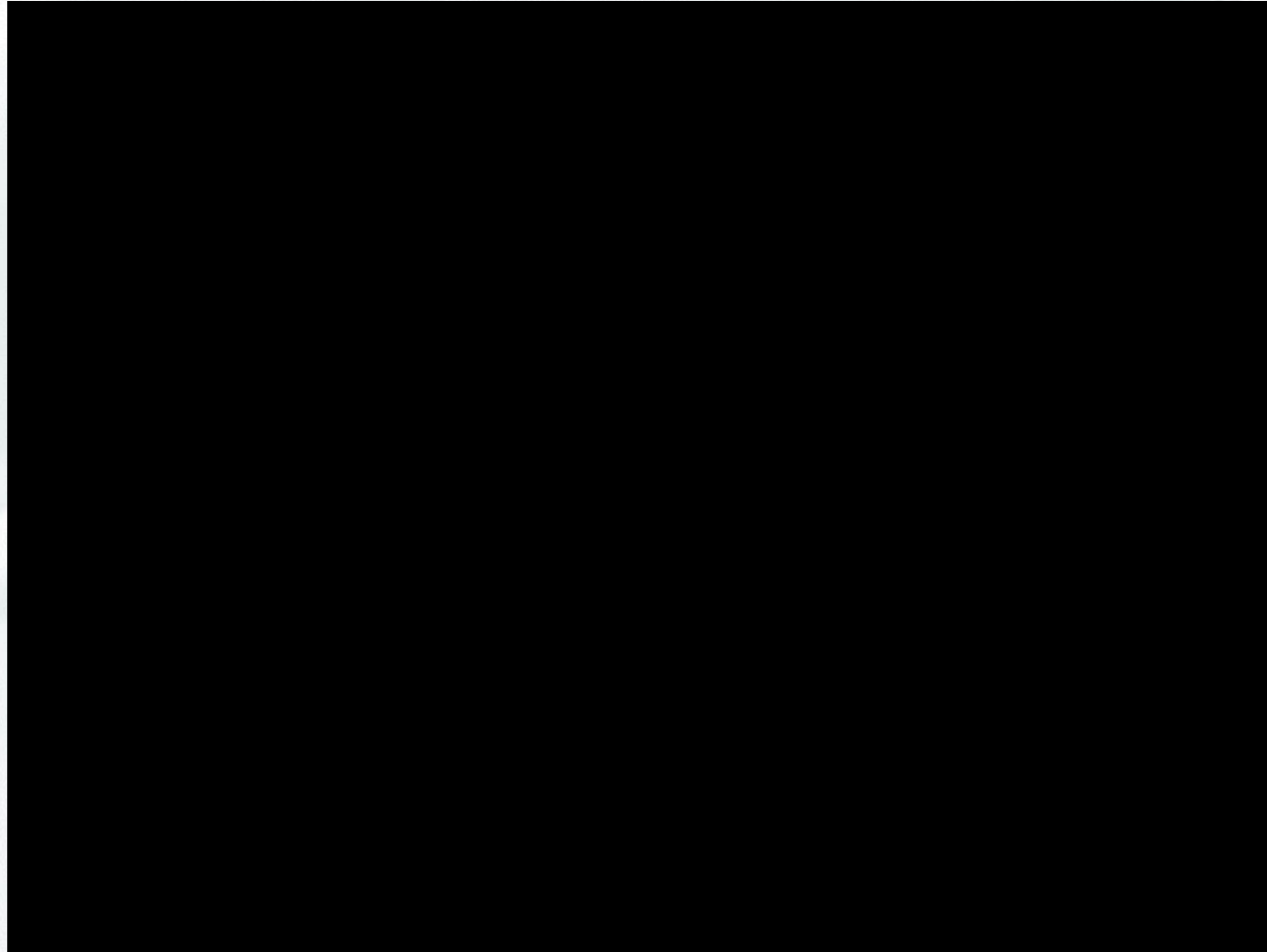
normally

norMALly

no money



# Why is Word Stress important?



# How do we teach word stress to English learners?

## 1. Listen for and count syllables

- tapping
- clapping
- finger counting







**For breakfast I eat fruit.**

**I eat dates and pineapple.**

**For lunch, I eat vegetables.**

**I eat broccoli, peppers, and tomatoes.**

**For dinner, I eat many foods.**

**I eat spaghetti, sambuusa, onions, and bread.**

**I drink milk and water.**

# How do we teach word stress to English learners?

## 1. Listen for and count syllables

- tapping
- clapping
- finger counting

## 2. Identify the stressed syllable





# Bubble the Stress



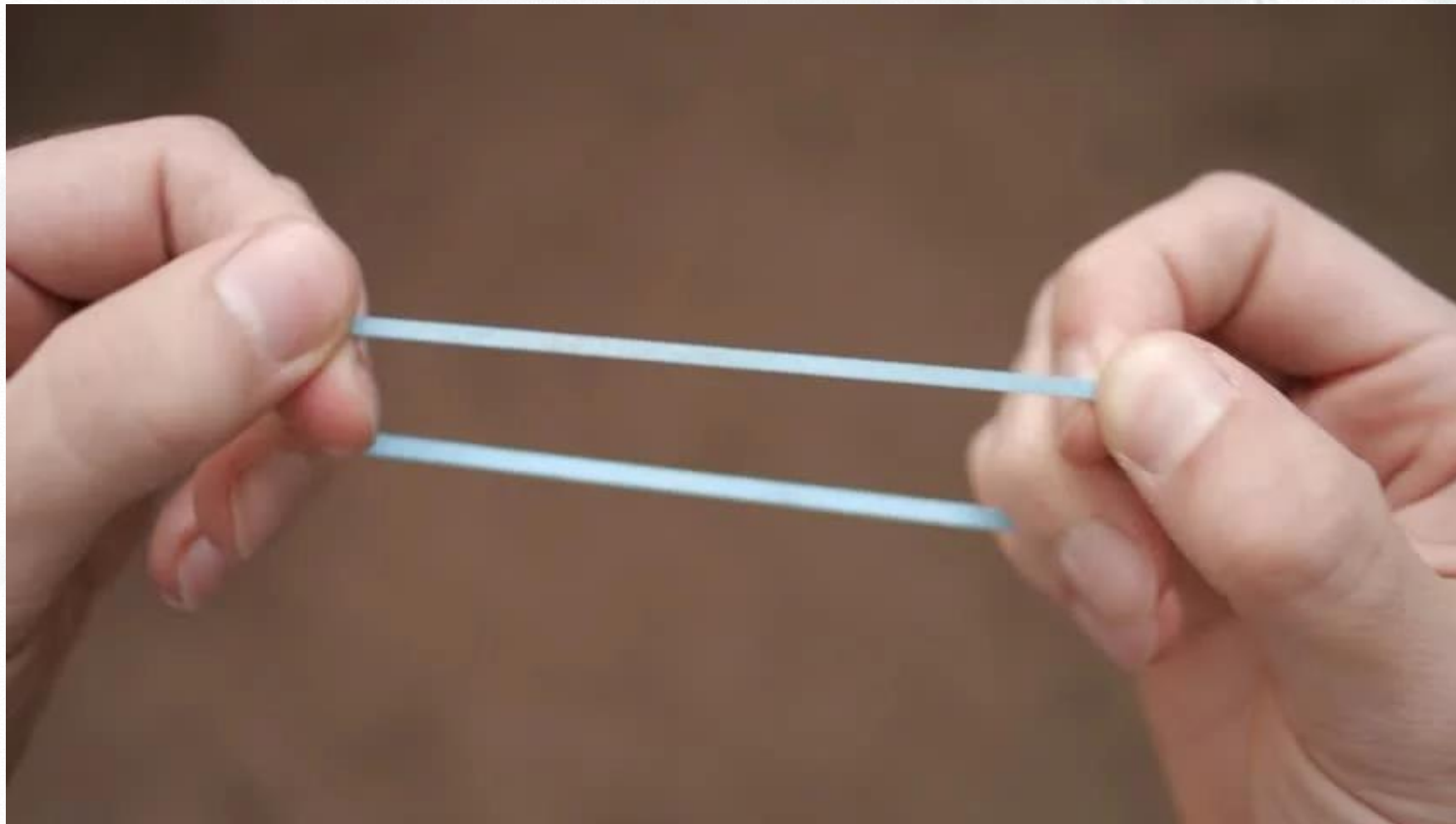
# How do we teach word stress to English learners?

1. Listen for and count syllables
  - tapping
  - clapping
  - finger counting
2. Identify the stressed syllable
3. Controlled practice producing the stressed syllable





# Rubber Bands





For breakfast I eat fruit.

I eat dates and pineapple.

For lunch, I eat vegetables.

I eat broccoli, peppers, and tomatoes.

For dinner, I eat many foods.

I eat spaghetti, sambuusa, onions, and bread.

I drink milk and water.



# How do we teach word stress to English learners?

1. Listen for and count syllables
  - tapping
  - clapping
  - finger counting
2. Identify the stressed syllable
3. Controlled practice producing the stressed syllable
4. Group words by word stress patterns





|       |       |
|-------|-------|
| 0     | 0 0   |
| 1     | 2     |
| 0 0 0 | 0 0 0 |
| 3     | 4     |



# How do we teach word stress to English learners?

1. Listen for and count syllables
  - tapping
  - clapping
  - finger counting
2. Identify the stressed syllable
3. Controlled practice producing the stressed syllable
4. Group words by word stress patterns
5. Put the words back into context







**For breakfast I eat fruit.**

**I eat dates and pineapple.**

**For lunch, I eat vegetables.**

**I eat broccoli, peppers, and tomatoes.**

**For dinner, I eat many foods.**

**I eat spaghetti, sambuusa, onions, and bread.**

**I drink milk and water.**





**How would you help this learner?**

**Your Spanish learner says “I went to the capitAL yesterDAY.”**

# Your Turn!

**What are other ways you could practice word stress?**



## Word Stress Videos

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q5PtGQCJAWs&list=PL-NrZkT8VAsbRqATwsx5TL1THogjiq3m5&index=5>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pakQhAmBf3U&list=PL-NrZkT8VAsbRqATwsx5TL1THogjiq3m5&index=5&t=324s>



# What is intonation?

Intonation is...

- The pattern or melody of pitch changes in connected speech
- About how we say things, rather than what we say
- The music of speech



# What does intonation do?

Intonation can be used to...

- emphasize or draw attention to certain words.

Is my order ready?  
Sorry, only **half** of  
your order is ready.

Do you want to talk on  
the **phone** or on **Zoom**?

I told you to call me.  
I **told** you to call me.  
I told **you** to call me.  
I told you to **call** me.  
I told you to call **me**.



# What does intonation do?

Intonation can be used to...

- to signal thought groups, or how break speech into smaller, more digestible chunks.

I'll get you / my  
pretty / and your  
little dog too!

# What does intonation do?

Intonation can be used to...

- signal the difference between a statement and a question, or distinguish between an information question or a yes/no question



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v= JmA2CIUvUY>



# What does intonation do?

Intonation can be used to...

- convey additional information about the speaker's mood, feelings, emotions, or attitude.



[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k29ogXL\\_S2U](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k29ogXL_S2U)

# Why is intonation important?

- Carries a high communicative load in terms of structuring information, providing listeners with prosaic cues, and rapport building between speakers (Kang & Pickering, 2011; Pickering, 2001)
- Acts as a “grammar of cohesion” (Wennerstrom, 1998)
- People assume that the basic signals of rhythm and melody are a natural part of all human speech, but they are language specific (Gilbert, 2014)



# How can we teach intonation to English learners?





# Activities for all levels: Theater Games





# Activities for all levels: Statement or Question

**You like chicken.**

**You like chicken?**

**He is fine.**

**He is fine?**

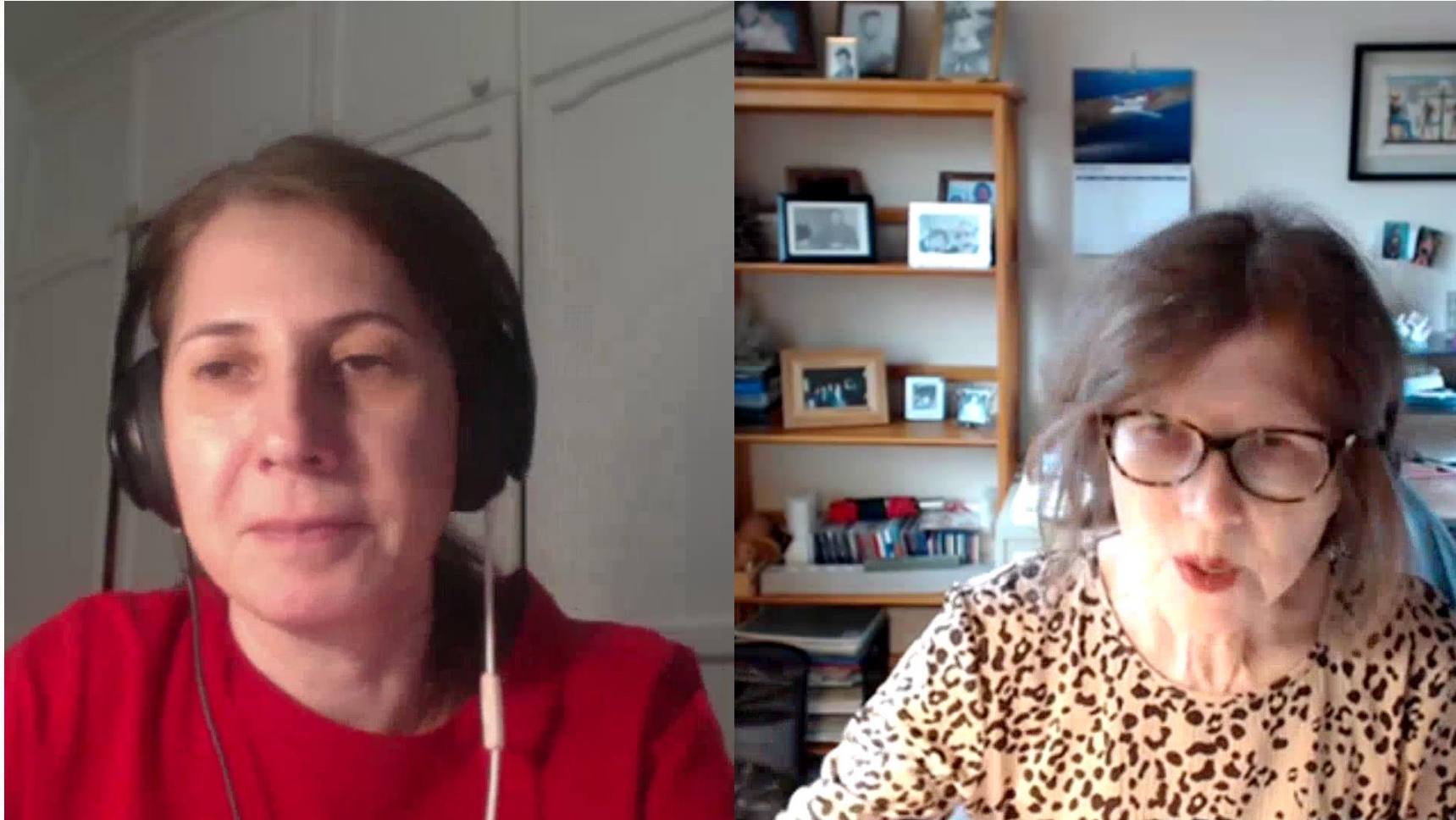
**She has 3 children.**

**She has 3 children?**

**It is correct.**

**It is correct?**

# Activities for all levels: Hum or Kazoos





# Activity for Higher Levels: Transcript

- Take script (or transcript) and turn it into a “poem” with one thought group per line.
- Write emphasized word(s) in **CAPITAL LETTERS**.
- Have student read each phrase, then look up and say it to you.
  - First: rubber band
  - Second: pitch movement
- Caveats:
  - Students shouldn’t read!
  - They should use rubber band **ONLY** for emphasized word.

# Ayten's Transcript

- It also worked the same in her **RESEARCH**. //
- When she asks people about **LOVE**,
- they tell her about **HEARTBREAK**. //
- When she asks people about **BELONGING**,
- they tell her their most **excruciating** experiences of being **EXCLUDED**. //
- And when she asks people about **CONNECTION**,
- they tell her stories about **DISconnection**..//
- She didn't **UNDERSTAND** it.//



# Video Example



A faint, light blue background image showing a person's face in profile, smiling. In the foreground, there is a clear plastic water bottle and a pen, both slightly out of focus.

**How would you help this learner?**

**Your Ethiopian learner says “I HAVE  
GONE TO SCHOOL FOR THE LAST FIVE  
YEARS.”**



# Your Turn!

**What are other ways you could practice intonation?**



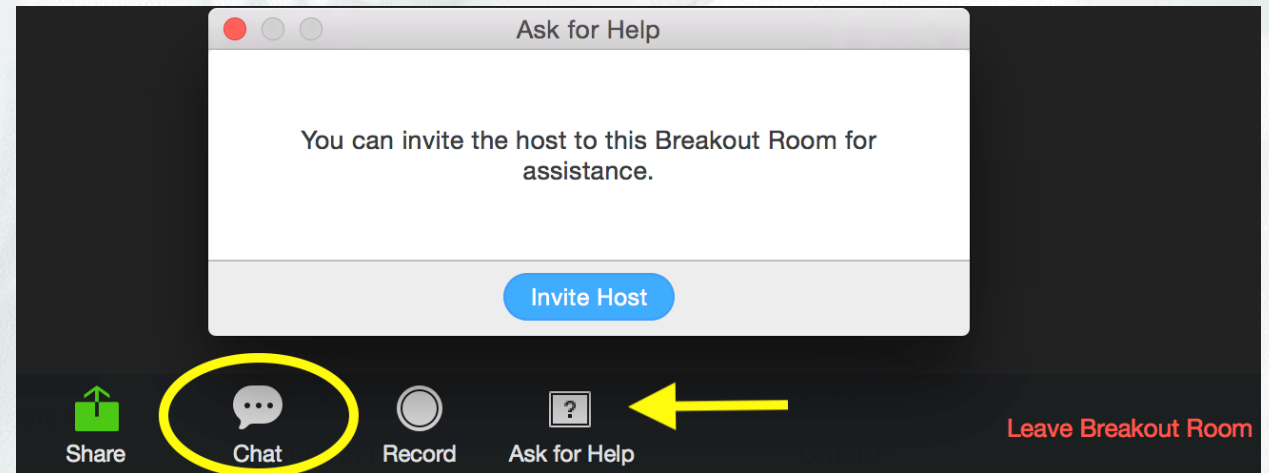
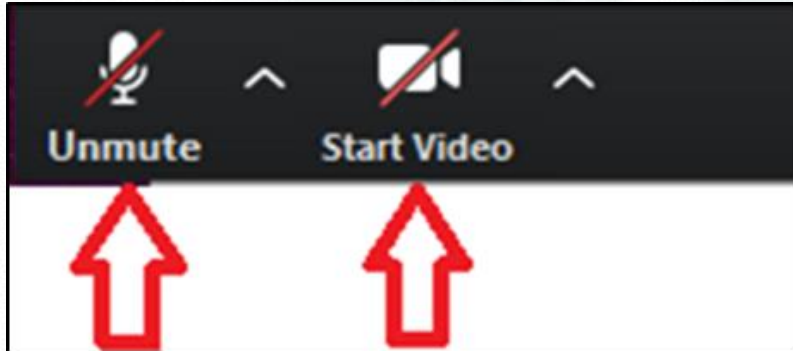
## Intonation Videos

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3HZ2c5G3SaQ&t=5s>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X9VaN113Vsw&list=PL-NrZkT8VAsbRqATwsx5TL1THogjiq3m5&index=9>

# Let's Talk!

What pronunciation activity are you going to try out?





Questions?  
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