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Model-free, guided discovery phonology: supporting learners' identities, goals and plurilingual futures

Adam Scott, Brighton Language Teachers

The Future of English Language Teaching Conference ONLINE

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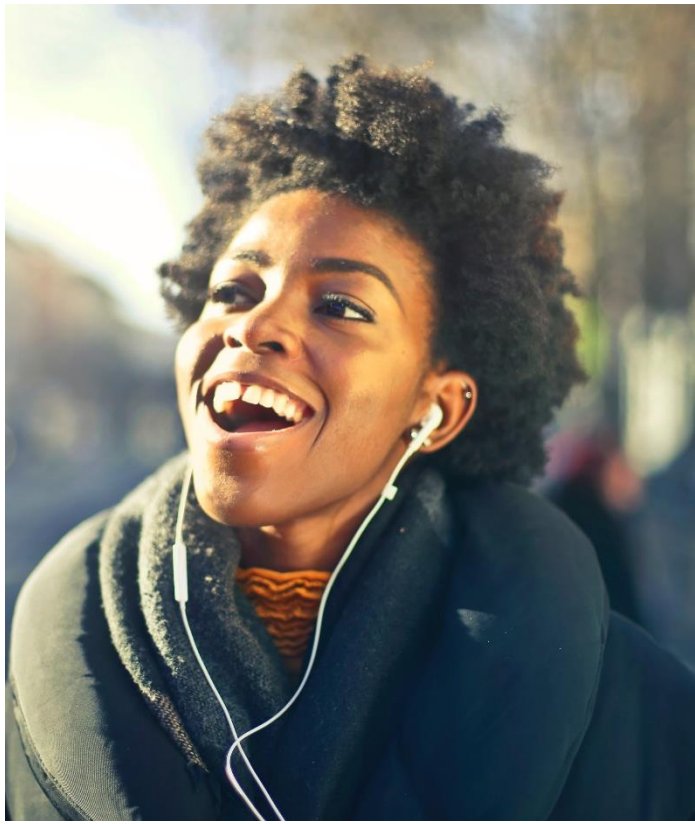

Overview

1. Communicative focus
2. Learners as a resource
3. Exploration
    a) Features
    b) Goals
4. Phonological resources
    a) Processing
    b) Awareness
    c) Memory

Communicative focus

It's everywhere!

Speech sound is an inescapable and abundant resource!

Key tools and key phrases

➢ Key tools

- Raise awareness
- Nurture independence
- Normalise/ explore problems
- Encourage repair strategies
- Developing criticality
- Exploring why things happen
- Phonic knowledge

➢ Key statements

- 'What did you notice?'
- 'Don't ask me, ask them.'
- 'What was difficult?'
- 'Sorry?', 'You mean … ?'
- 'Which was easier for you?'
- 'How can they *understand* ?'
- 'What's the spelling pattern?'

Teachers make bad models

The nonsense of form

Learners as a resource (AKA near peers)

➢ Learners to do the learning

- Noticing ability when monitoring
  - And watching it disappear on the spot!
- 'How do you say this … ?'
  - word
  - phrase
  - when you're confident/in a hurry?
  - when the place is noisy/silent?
- Asking 2 – 3 learners
- Not just asking stronger students
- Eliciting differences from learners

➢ Key statements

- 'What did you notice?'
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Learners as models

- when you're confident/in a hurry?
- when the place is noisy/silent?

➢ How do you say …

- No tomato.
- I'm going to have lunch now.
- Can I get a coffee and a donut.
- We should've got here earlier.

➢ Key statements

- 'What did you notice?'
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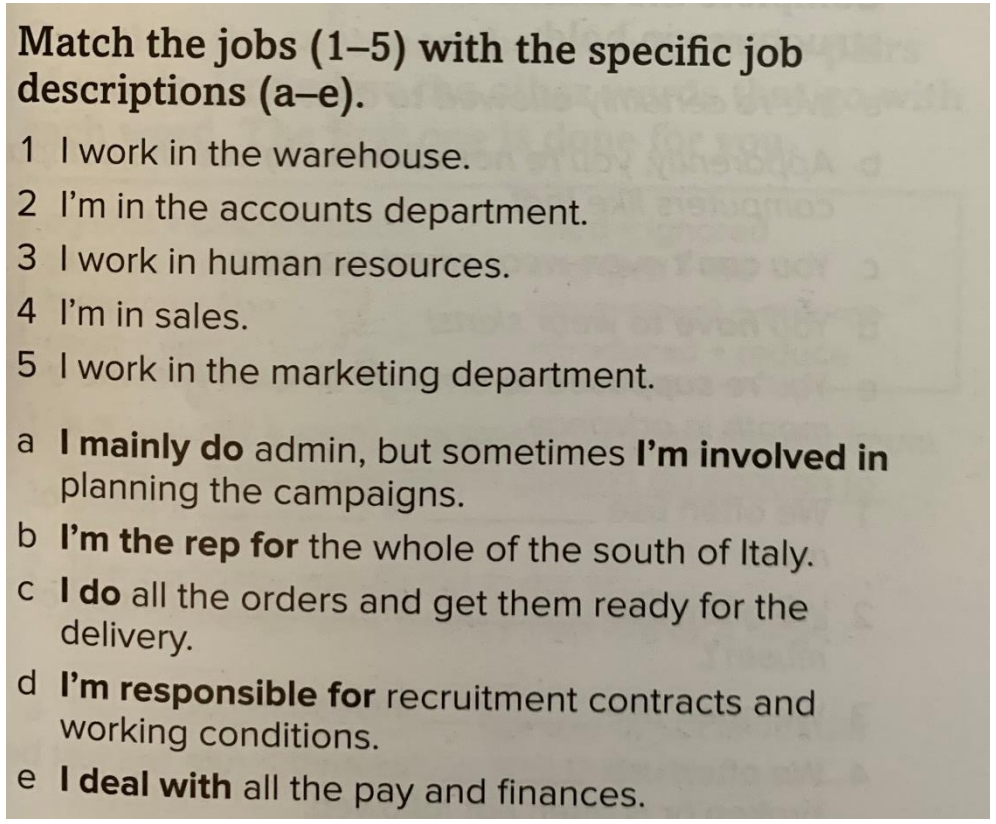
Learners as models

- when you're confident/in a hurry?
- when the place is noisy/silent?

➢ Try this activity:

Q1. **So, what do you do?** (Answer 1-5)
Q2. **Oh yeah, doing what?** (Answer a-e)



Match the jobs (1–5) with the specific job descriptions (a–e).

1 I work in the warehouse.
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Dellar & Walkley. 2016. 2ed. Outcomes intermediate student's book. Andover: NatGeo. p45

Exploring phonological awareness

Learners discovering the features of speech sound

Exploring phonological awareness

- **Build on the ability to notice**
  - Ability to rate intelligibility
  - Ability to generate connections
  - Learners explore linguistic features
    - stress and crush zones
    - spelling patterns
    - grammar patterns
    - pitch / intonation
  - Learners explore their own pronunciation goals

You have to do it **through** learners, **not** to, or even with them.

Exploring through learners' experience

➢ Key tools

- Rate intelligibility
- Generate connections
- Explore linguistic features
- Use a variety of real-life e.g.s
- Nurture affective discussion
- Praise intelligibility

➢ Key statements

- 'Who was … '
  - … easier for you to understand?
  - What made them easier for you?
  - … harder for you to understand?
  - What made them more difficult?
- Why do you think they were …'
  - clearer?
  - less clear?

Exploring through learners' experience

➢ Watch these two speakers

They are discussing a crash.

➢ Key statements

- 'Who was … '
  - … easier for you to understand?
  - What made them easier for you?
  - … harder for you to understand?
  - What made them more difficult?
- Why do you think they were …'
  - clearer?
  - less clear?

Clip retrieved from: https://sensationsenglish.com/video/YhnBee/5

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Richly contextualise the speakers

Watch these rugby fans

How many words?

How much can you understand

What is the man saying?

Japan's unique rugby fan zones, Retrieved from: https://sensationsenglish.com/video/MpUaGM/3 © Sensations English 2020 www.sensationsenglish.com

Exploring through learners' experience

➢ Watch this news report

How clear are the speakers?

➢ Key statements

- 'Who was … '
  - … easier/harder to understand?
  - What made easier/harder?
- Why do you think they were …'
  - clearer?
  - less clear?
- 'What did you notice about …?'
  - the teacher, the mother, the girl?

Nigerian ballet school. Retrieved from: https://sensationsenglish.com/video/g2ROxf

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Exploring pron through global speakers

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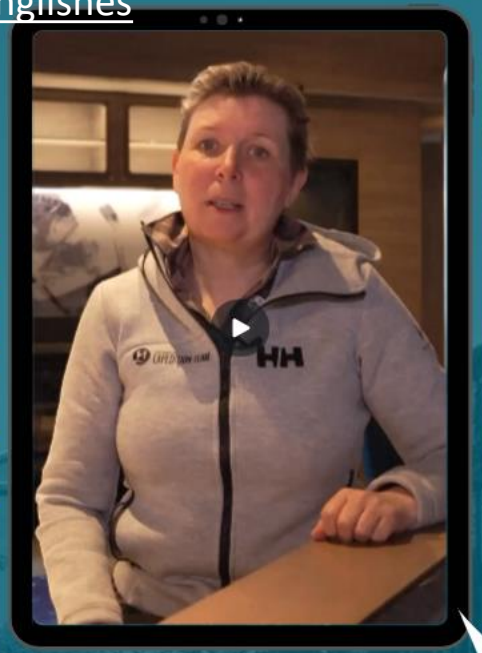
Adam Scott Learning pronunciation with World English speakers



The 'blur gap':

The difference between what is **actually** said and what we **think** we say and hear. In **the stream of speech**, words take many different sound shapes, for **all** speakers

This goes to the heart of intelligibility. Communication is jointly constructed by speaker and listener. These activities help learners explore intelligibility, variety in pronunciation and develop confidence.

Identify keywords

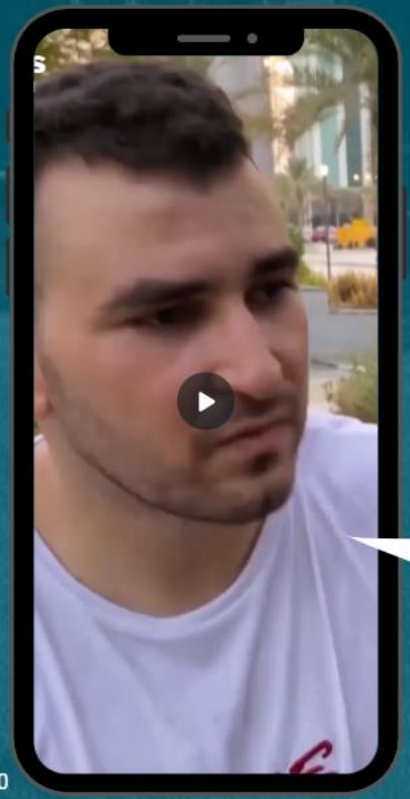
Listen and find the keywords in their speech.
How many are there? What are they? Use fingers!
How did you identify/understand the keywords?
What is different about their pitch/volume/length?
Were these words faster/slower? More/less clear?
Which sound/syllable of each keyword is clearest?
How much did you understand? How do **you** say it?
What happened between the keywords?
Which words were unclear? Why was that?

How many sounds?

Listen and count the sounds you hear.
Use your fingers! What does it sound like?
What can you hear? What was said?
What was the phrase? What happened to it?
Which vowels/consonants have changed?
How do **you** say this phrase?
Hear it again in context. Can you decode it?

What did you notice?

Discuss, reflect and explore ...
Which person was easier/more difficult **for you** to understand?
What made them easier/more difficult **for you** to understand?
Why do you think they were clearer/ less clear **for you**?
Share your ideas with a partner/open class. Do you have the same ideas?
What did you each notice about each speaker's pronunciation/ emotions/ character/speaking skills?



How many words?

Listen and count the words you hear. Use your fingers!
What does it sound like? Fast? Slow? Clear? Unclear?
How much can you hear? What was the phrase?
How was it said? Was there any emotion? How can you tell?
Which vowels did you notice? Which ones were full/weak?
What happened to consonant sounds? Were they crushed?
What happened between the words? Did anything change?
How do **you** say this phrase? What's different from theirs?

NLINE

@teachAdam @BLTeachers

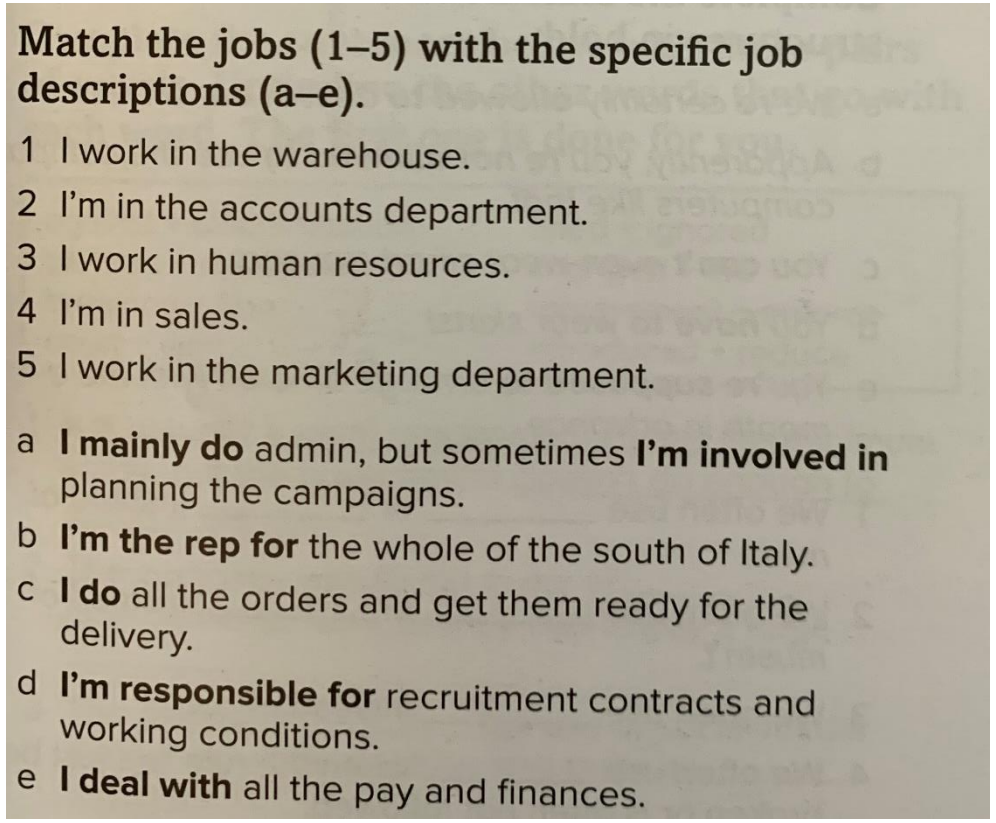
Videos (C) www.sensationsenglish.com 2020

References: Cauldwell, R. (2018). A syllabus for listening. Birmingham: Speech in Action. Sensations English. (2020). SensationsEnglish.com. https://sensationsenglish.com/

Exploring features

➢ Exploring speech

Remember this? Underline the stressed words.



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Can you find any patterns?

➢ Key statements

- 'Which words are bigger?'
- 'What does 'bigger' sound like?'
- 'Which words are smaller?'
- 'What happens to them?'
- 'Which sounds change … ?'

- when you're confident/in a hurry?
- when you speak loudly/whisper?

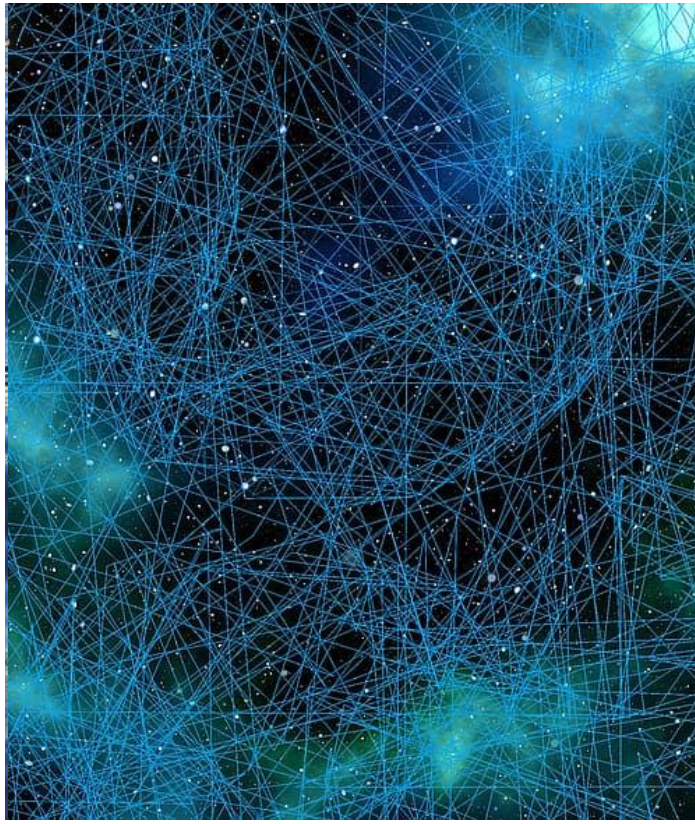
Exploring own pronunciation goals

Video presentations and peer feedback

- Ability to rate intelligibility
- Ability to generate connections
- Learners give personal feedback on …
  - content
  - confidence
  - pronunciation
  - suggestions
- Learners consider what they want as pronunciation goals

Phonological development

supporting perceptual and personal growth



It's meaning Jim but not as we know it!

➢ Developing sound networks

- Phonological …
  - **P**rocessing
  - **A**wareness
  - **M**emory

- Supporting learners' own production
  - taking a meaning-focused approach
  - connecting meaning to the pronunciation focus

Features of phonology learning

➢ Key tools

- Phonological Processing
  - Stress and vowel qualities
  - Consonant clusters and pace
- Phonological Awareness
  - Understanding the complexity
- Phonological Memory
  - Rhyming, vowel categorisation
  - Processing spontaneous speech

➢ Key statements

- 'What was said?'
- 'What can you hear?'
- 'How many sounds / words?'
- 'Use your fingers!'
- 'Which words / phrases have … ?'
  - the same vowel sounds?
  - the same stress pattern?
- 'Why are they speaking like this?'

Exploring through learners' experience

➢ Key tools

- Rate intelligibility
- Generate connections
- Explore linguistic features
- Use a variety of real-life e.g.s
- Nurture affective discussion
- Praise intelligibility

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  - clearer?
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Conclusions

➢ **Help your students …**

- Relate and relax
- Reduce affect
- Contextualise pronunciation features
- Study through inquiry-based tasks
- Take a meaning-focused approach
- Construct personalised understandings

… with guided discovery pronunciation!

References

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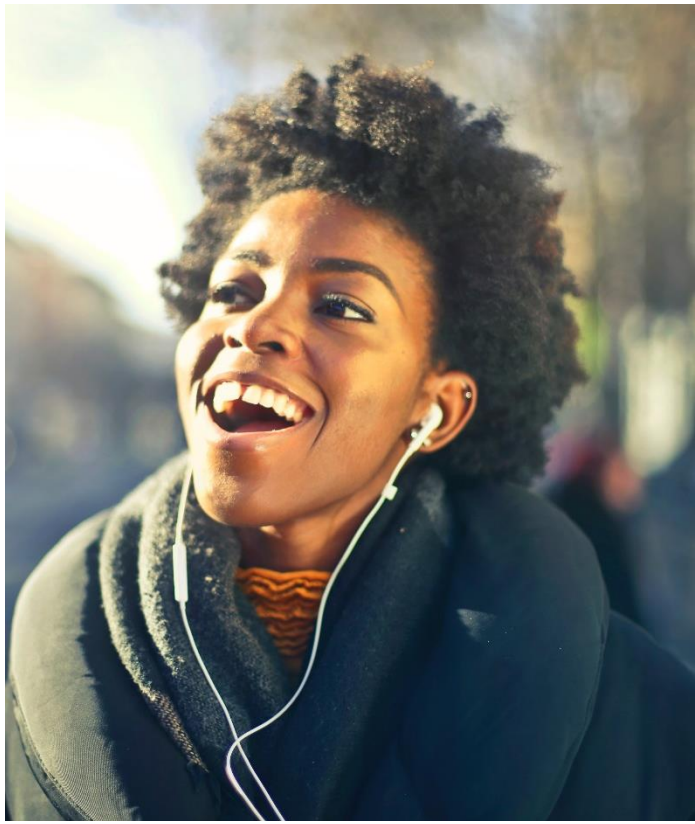
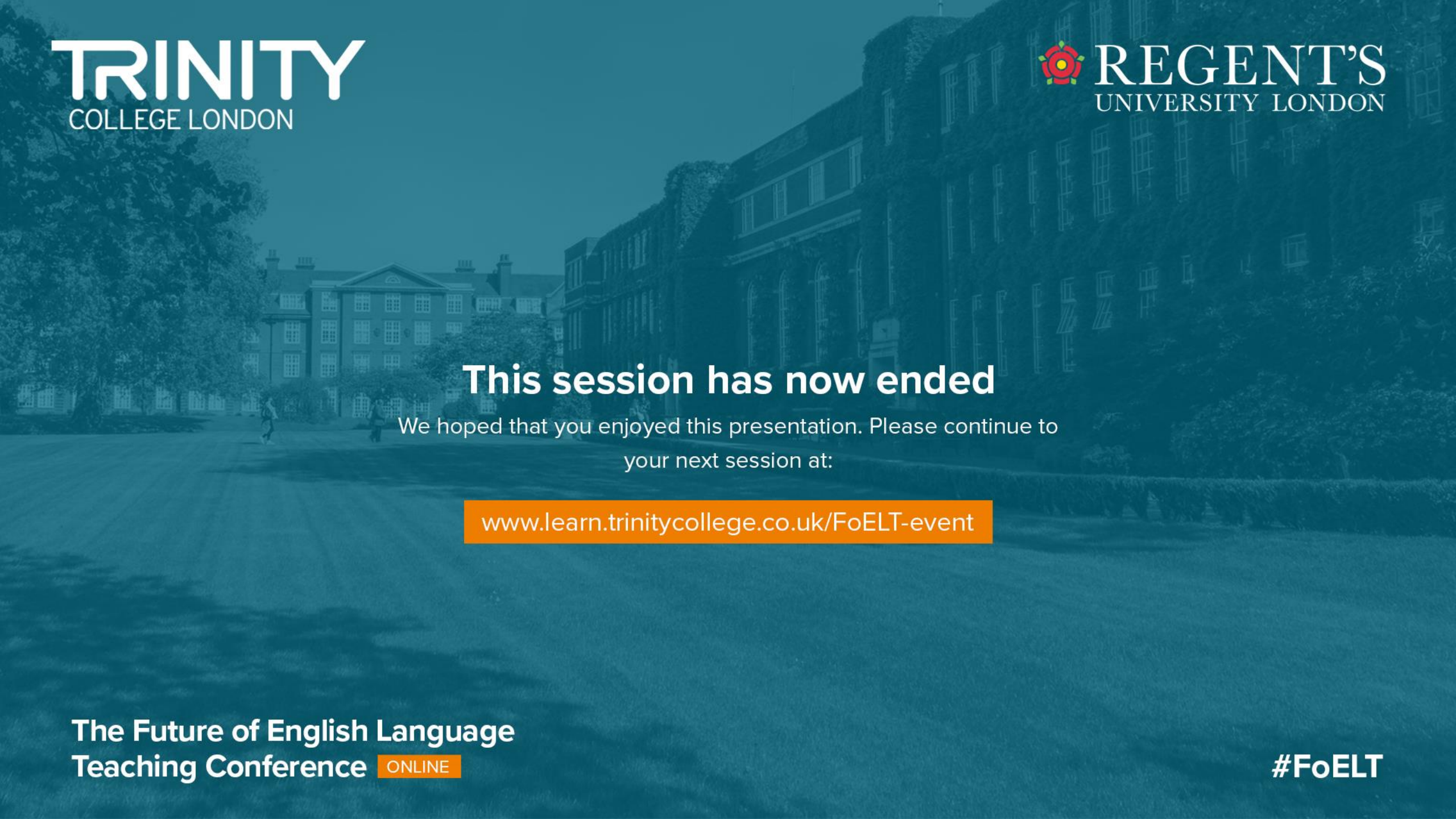
Use this link: **bit.ly/3k7lrNj**

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