

# **Top-down, and bottom-up:**

## Success with Reading and Listening texts

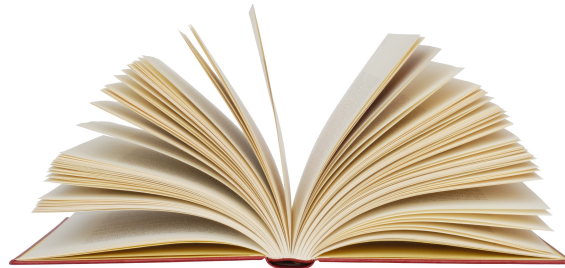
Rachel Appleby

IATEFL-HU Budapest, October 2015

# Overview

## Reading & Listening

- Traditional approaches
- What makes R / L difficult for students
- Analysis
- Strategies to try out
- Classroom ideas



# Top-down R/L strategies

Traditionally, Top down → Bottom up

- Drawing on knowledge
- Understanding literal meaning
- Connecting ideas

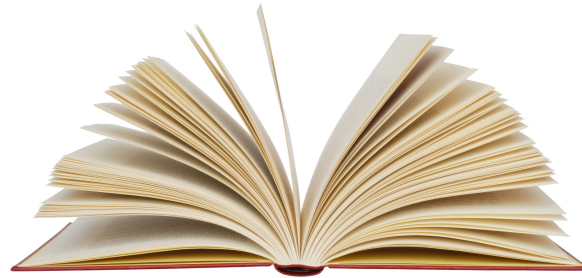
= **product approach** → **process approach**



# Reading

## Reading in another language

I can understand most of the words but I still don't understand the text!



It's really slow, so it's not really reading for pleasure!

I have to use dictionary to look up a lot of words.

I can read and understand the text, but then I can't remember any of it.

## Reading: What makes it difficult?

*Q: Where is she [the writer] ?*

As the door to the street opens and closes, the shoes move slightly in the breeze. They hang from the ceiling on bright orange ribbons; the walls around them are white. One pair, steel-blue and frilled with a row of tiny leather oak leaves, has a curved heel, tapering like an animal's claw. Another has the slightly worn shagginess of a much-loved teddy bear. I could be in an art gallery, but in fact I'm in a shop in central London. It's one of two belonging to Tracey Neuls, a footwear designer garlanded by the fashion industry.

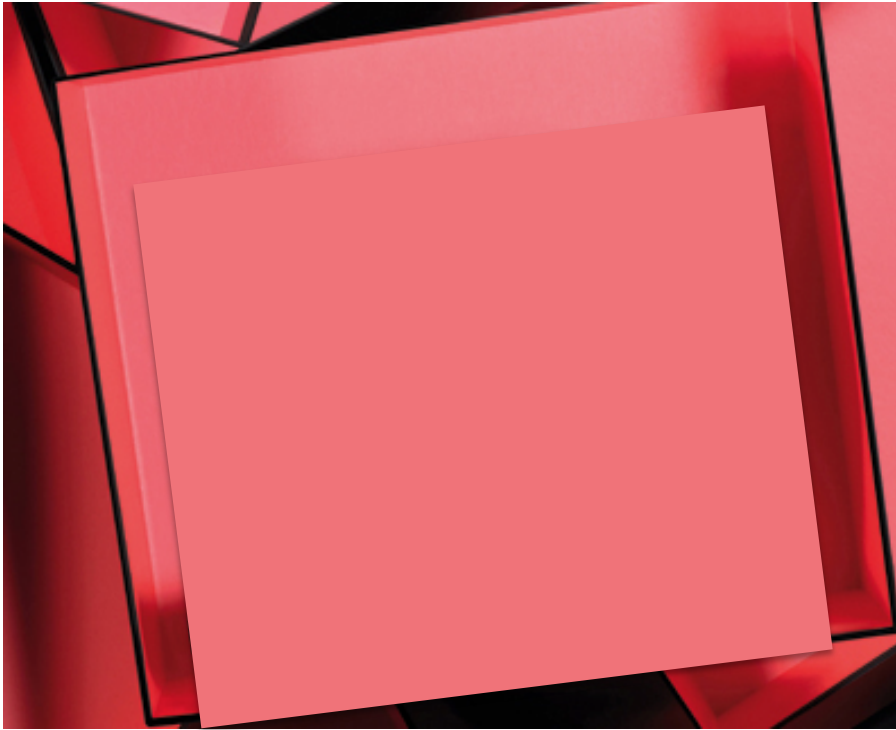
*to taper* – to narrow, gradually

[http:// more intelligent life.com](http://moreintelligentlife.com)

## Reading: Top-down activities

### IF THE BOOT FITS – Pictures; Discussion Qs

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#### Questions

What shoes are you wearing?

Are they comfortable?

» Read the article:

*Are your ideas mentioned?*

[http:// more intelligent life.com](http://moreintelligentlife.com)

[illegible]

# Reading: Top-down activities

## IF THE BOOT FITS – Questioning a text



### UNLOCK THE CODE

questioning a text

If you ask questions about a text before and while you read it, you will be more likely to understand it.

Sometimes the questions will be quite general:

*Do I want to read this text?*

*What is the text about?*

*Is the text going to give me useful information for my job/  
study/research?*

At other times, they will be more specific:

*Where is the author writing about?*

*What is the main point he/she is making?*

*Where is the museum/gallery/city ...?*

Navigate B1+, U9.3



# Reading: analysis

The problems: start 'at the bottom'

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- **Understanding references** (*he, it, they, one*)
- Understanding paraphrasing (*near synonyms, phrases*)
- Understanding complex sentences (*subjects, signposting*)

## Reading: Understanding references

Find how these words are referred to later:

As the door to the street opens and closes, the shoes move slightly in the breeze. They hang from the ceiling on bright orange ribbons; the walls around them are white. One pair, steel-blue and frilled with a row of tiny leather oak leaves, has a curved heel, tapering like an animal's claw. Another has the slightly worn shagginess of a much-loved teddy bear. I could be in an art gallery, but in fact I'm in a shop in central London. It's one of two belonging to Tracey Neuls, a footwear designer garlanded by the fashion industry.

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## Reading: Understanding references

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[http:// more intelligent life.com](http://moreintelligentlife.com)

# Reading: Bottom-up strategies

Starting at the bottom

- Understanding references (*he, it, they, one*)
- **Understanding paraphrasing** (*near synonyms, phrases*)
- Understanding complex sentences (*subjects, signposting*)

# Reading: Understanding paraphrasing

Words/Phrases with similar meanings

I have not failed. I have simply found 10,000 ways that won't work.

Thomas Edison

← Which word in the first sentence is expressed differently in the second?

People who do well in their jobs get promoted.

My colleagues are pretty ambitious.

Most people who work here want to get to the top.

Navigate B1+, U7.3

# Reading: Understanding paraphrasing

## IF THE BOOT FITS – and why Tracey?



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# Reading: Understanding paraphrasing

## Why Tracey? Why this shop?

We approached her not just because it is her stated mission to make footwear that is “individual, timeless and comfortable”—a promising trio of adjectives—but because she cares about feet themselves as much as what we put on them. “I design from the inside out,” she tells me. “I always start with the foot.” One reason that she suspends her wares from the ceiling is so that you can see them from all angles. “Sometimes the best view is from the back,” she explains. But also she wants them to move, to remind us what footwear is for: boots are made for walking.

# Reading: Understanding paraphrasing

Find words with similar meanings

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# Reading: Understanding paraphrasing

## Words with similar meanings

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# Reading: Bottom-up strategies

Starting at the bottom

---

- Understanding references (*he, it, they, one*)
- Understanding paraphrasing (*near synonyms, phrases*)
- **Understanding complex sentences** (*subjects, signposting*)

## Reading: Complex sentences

Find the main verb in sentences 1, 2 and 3

[1] As the door to the street opens and closes, the shoes move slightly in the breeze. [2] They hang from the ceiling on bright orange ribbons; the walls around them are white. [3] One pair, steel-blue and frilled with a row of tiny leather oak leaves, has a curved heel, tapering like an animal's claw. Another has the slightly worn shagginess of a much-loved teddy bear.

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## Reading: Complex sentences

The main verbs in sentences 1, 2 and 3

As the door to the street opens and closes, the shoes move slightly in the breeze. They hang from the ceiling on bright orange ribbons; the walls around them are white. One pair, steel-blue and frilled with a row of tiny leather oak leaves, has a curved heel, tapering like an animal's claw. Another has the slightly worn shagginess of a much-loved teddy bear.

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## Reading: Complex sentences

Find the **subjects** of those verbs.

As the door to the street opens and closes, the shoes move slightly in the breeze. They hang from the ceiling on bright orange ribbons; the walls around them are white. One pair, steel-blue and frilled with a row of tiny leather oak leaves, has a curved heel, tapering like an animal's claw. Another has the slightly worn shaginess of a much-loved teddy bear.

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# Reading: Complex sentences

## The subjects

As the door to the street opens and closes, **the shoes** move slightly in the breeze. **They** hang from the ceiling on bright orange ribbons; the walls around them are white. **One pair, steel-blue and frilled with a row of tiny leather oak leaves,** has a curved heel, tapering like an animal's claw. Another has the slightly worn shagginess of a much-loved teddy bear.

# Reading: Complex sentences

## “Roger’s breakdown sentence”

“I have come to meet her in the hope that she will be able to make, for once and for all, so that I never have to shop for them again, the perfect pair of boots.”

- *I have come (to the shop)*
- *I want to meet (the owner)*
- 
-

# Reading: Complex sentences

## “Roger’s breakdown sentence”

“I have come to meet her in the hope that she will be able to make, for once and for all, so that I never have to shop for them again, the perfect pair of boots.”

- *I have come (to the shop)*
- *I want to meet (the owner)*
- *I have (high) hopes / a plan*
- *I want perfect boots*
- *I think she can make them for me*
- *I don't want to shop for boots again*
- *(The perfect pair of boots exists!)*



## Reading: Complex sentences

“Roger’s breakdown sentence” – rewrite!

- *I have come (to the shop)*
- *I want to meet (the owner)*
- *I have (high) hopes / a plan*
- *I want perfect boots*
- *I think she can make them for me*
- *I don't want to shop for boots again*
- *(The perfect pair of boots exists!)*

“I have come to meet her in the hope that she will be able to make, for once and for all, **so that** I never have to shop for them again, the perfect pair of boots.”

# Hungarian parallels?

Magyarul: Molnár Ferenc *A Pál Utcai Fiúk*

OXFORD  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Háromnegyed egykor, épp abban a pillanatban, amikor a természetráji terem katedraasztalán hosszú és sikertelen kísérletek után végre-valahára, nagy nehezen, izgatott várakozás jutalmául a Bunsen-lámpa színtelen lángjában fellobbant egy gyönyörű, smaragdzöld csík, annak jeléül, hogy az a vegyület, melyről a tanár úr be akarta bizonyítani, hogy zöldre festi a lángot, a lángot csakugyan zöldre festette, mondom: pont háromnegyed egykor, épp ebben a diadalmas minutumban megpendült a szomszéd ház udvarán egy zongora-verkli, s ezzel minden komolyságnak egyszeribe vége szakadt. ...



## Reading: Linking words

Signposting (reason / result, add info, etc. )

“... to make the perfect pair of boots **so that** \_\_\_\_\_.”

### Choose the best option:

I can't close my suitcase \_\_\_\_\_ I put too many things in it.

*as a result / therefore / because*

### Finish the sentence:

Basia and Romek are coming for supper.

What's more \_\_\_\_\_ .

# Reading

## IF THE BOOT FITS – The perfect boot?

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# Reading: helping students for the next text

To recap

## Understanding

- **references** (*he, it, they, one pair*, etc.)
- **paraphrasing** (near synonyms/phrases)
- **complex sentences** (noun phrases, subjects, contents)



# Listening: help for the next text?

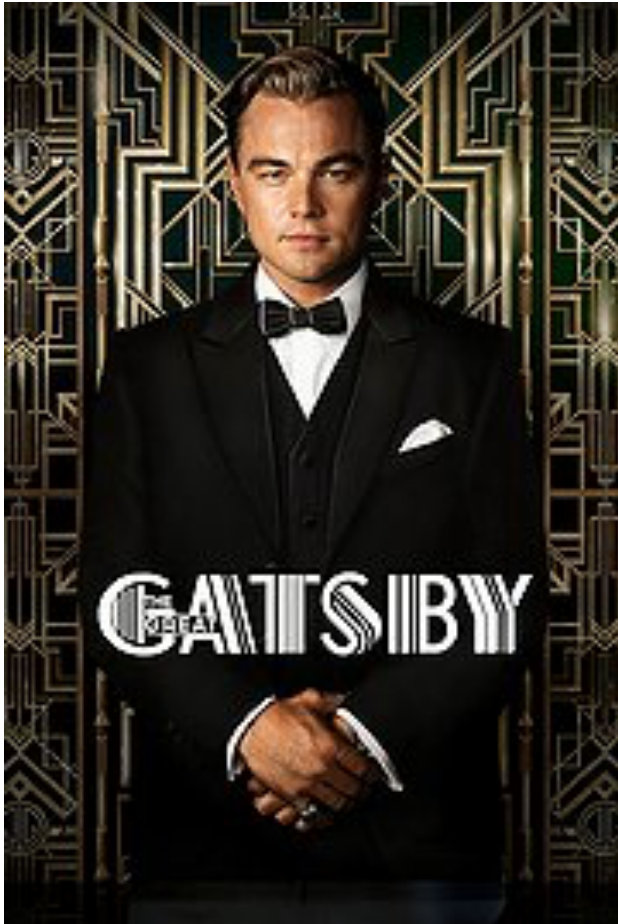
## Bottom-up strategies

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# Listening: out of the blue

## Two reviews



Did they like the film?  
Why / why not?

**The Great Gatsby** 02:14 to 03:00

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1jVU01zNikw&app=desktop>



# Listening: out of the blue

## Two reviews





# Listening

Listening: what makes it difficult?



I can't stop it –  
I get lost.  
It's too fast!

It's a jumble –  
I can't recognize  
the words.

It seems as if  
words are just  
swallowed up!

# Listening


## Features of audio texts

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- ‘Chunks’ of incomprehensible sound (*could’ve been*)
- Connected speech
  - Unclear word boundaries
  - Extra sounds between words
  - Confusing sounds (e.g. minimal pairs)
- Linkers (discourse markers) (*but; you know*)

# Listening

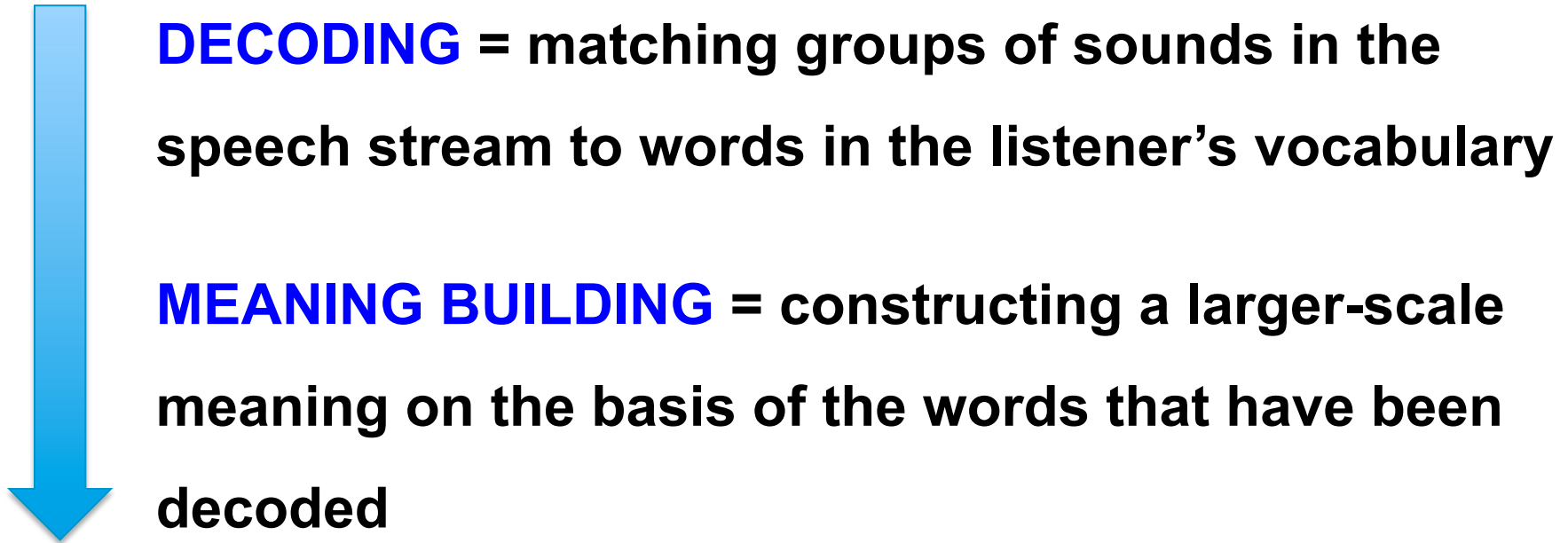
What native speakers / we do: 5 phases

- 
- **Input decoding** – recognising sounds of language
  - **Word search** – recognising word boundaries
  - **Parsing** – imposing a grammatical pattern on words
  - **Meaning construction** – relating what's heard to the context
  - **Discourse construction** – building a line of argument

John Field (2014), *Modern English Teacher*, Vol. 23/4

# Listening

What we need to help students with



John Field (2013), *Leuven, Conference talk*

# Listening: 'chunks' – common expressions

## Common Expressions: recognition

|   |                    |  |                      |   |
|---|--------------------|--|----------------------|---|
|   | As I said          |  | It should've         |   |
| 2 | but as I say ✓     |  | it's kind of ✓       | 5 |
|   | Have you ever been |  | It's like it         |   |
| 4 | I'm not sure ✓     |  | something like       |   |
| 1 | I've ever seen ✓   |  | you know what I mean |   |
| 3 | it could've been ✓ |  |                      |   |

# Listening: 'chunks' – common expressions

## Common Expressions: recognition

### Chunk

- 1 I've ever seen
- 2 but as I say
- 3 it could've been
- 4 I'm not sure
- 5 it's kind of

### Phonetics

- a its'kaɪndəv
- b bətəzaɪ'seɪ
- c aɪmnoʊt'ʃu:(r)
- d aɪvevə'si:n
- e ɪt'kʊdəvbɪn



# In Hungarian...? (or Spanish...)

Magyarul:

*vaszleg!*

= valószínűleg

*Ta log!*

= hasta luego

*... tá sentao /  
na-a*

= está sentado / nada

# Listening: out of the blue

The Great Gatsby, 1<sup>st</sup> reviewer – Vocabulary?

## Irish

“one of the most vulgar films I’ve ever seen”

“it’s not the unmitigated disaster that some might have said”

*vulgar* – in bad taste

*unmitigated* – complete (*to mitigate* – to make less harmful)



# Listening: 'chunks' – common expressions

## Common Expressions: Practice (in pairs)

### 11.3 Student A Exercise 4

- a** Read out the sentences and phrases below in a natural way.
- 1 Why did you do it?
  - 2 He's been a sculptor for a long time ...
  - 3 ... tell us a bit about the place you visited
  - 4 You mean, ...
  - 5 There's quite a lot of them.

*Navigate B1, U11.3*

# Listening: confusing sounds (1)

Minimal pairs, e.g. /ɔ:/ and /əʊ/

/ɔ:/

saw

raw

law

shore

more

bought

/əʊ/

sew

row

low

show

mow

boat

Which word  
did I say?

## Listening: confusing sounds (2)

Sounds and words, e.g. /ə/

- 1 Wait **a** /ə/ moment, please.
- 2 I should **have** /ə/ gone to the conference.
- 3 A box **of** /ə/ books.
- 4 The students **are** /ə/ late.

## In Polish ...

Po polsku ... **change to HUNGARIAN**

- Gdzie pan mieszka?
- To jest dość daleko.
- pod kanapą  
/t/

# Listening: connected speech: sounds (3)

Linking sounds: “vanilla ice cream”

**A**

*tomato and basil soup*  
*broccoli au gratin*  
*vanilla icecream*

**B**

*pate on toast*  
*tofu and courgette bake*  
*baked pear in a chocolate brownie*

/j/

/r/

/w/



mes.5m8rmevib


# Listening: connected speech: links (3)


Linking sounds /j/, /r/, /w/





**UNLOCK THE CODE** /w/ and /j/ sounds in connected speech

When a word ends with a vowel sound and the next word begins with a vowel sound, we sometimes add a /j/ sound or a /w/ sound to link the words.

/w/  
I go  out

/w/  
do  a challenge

/j/  
the  elevator

/j/  
I  agree

*Navigate B1, U4.3*

# Listening: connected speech: sounds (3)

Linking sounds /j/, /r/, /w/

## A

*tomato and basil soup*  
*broccoli au gratin*  
*vanilla icecream*

## B

*pate on toast*  
*tofu and courgette bake*  
*baked pear in a chocolate brownie*

/əʊ/, /u:/ \_\_\_\_\_

/w/

/i:/, /ei/, /ai/ \_\_\_\_\_

/j/

/ɔ:/, /ə/, /a:/, /ɜ:/ \_\_\_\_\_

/r/



# Listening: connected speech

## Linkers in fast speech



### UNLOCK THE CODE

#### linkers in fast speech

When we speak quickly, we sometimes don't pronounce parts of words. This is especially true with very common words, like the linkers *and*, *but*, *because*, *so* and *for example*.

|             |                    |                           |
|-------------|--------------------|---------------------------|
| but         | <i>sounds like</i> | 'bt' /bt/                 |
| because     | <i>sounds like</i> | 'cos' /kəz/               |
| for example | <i>sounds like</i> | 'frexample' /frɪg'zɑ:mpl/ |
| and         | <i>sounds like</i> | 'n' /n/                   |
| so          | <i>sounds like</i> | 's' /s/                   |

Navigate B1, U6.3



# Listening: connected speech

## Linkers in conversation



### UNLOCK THE CODE

#### linkers in conversation

We use linkers to show how ideas are connected and to help listeners to follow the conversation. For example:

- to get someone's attention we may say *actually, in fact*
- to paraphrase we may say *in other words, to put it another way, what I mean is,*
- to return to a previous topic we may say *as I was saying, anyway, anyhow*

Navigate B1+, U6.3

# Listening: connected speech

## Linkers – *Gatsby*

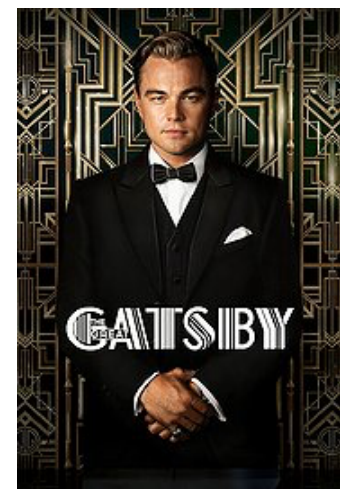
It was very overblown and very good-looking

\_\_\_\_\_ Baz Luhrmann \_\_\_\_\_.

Erm, ... Leo DiCaprio is very good in it

\_\_\_\_\_ one of the most vulgar films

I've ever seen.



# Listening: connected speech

## Linkers – *Gatsby*

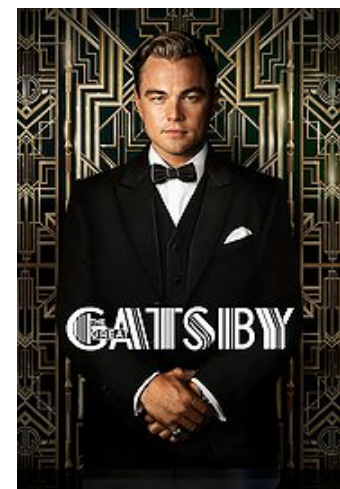
It was very overblown and very good-looking

**but this is** Baz Luhrmann **of course.**

Erm, ... Leo DiCaprio is very good in it

**but it's possibly** one of the most vulgar films

I've ever seen.



# Listening: connected speech

## Linkers in fast speech

1 It's nice \_\_\_\_\_ .

2 I was upset \_\_\_\_\_ .

3 Let's meet next week. \_\_\_\_\_ .



### Audio:

1 It's nice **but expensive**.

2 I was upset **because he forgot my birthday**.

3 Let's meet next week. **Tuesday, for example**.

*Navigate B1, U6.3*

# Listening: help for the next text

To recap

- Chunks of incomprehensible sound (*could've been*)
- Connected speech
  - Unclear word boundaries
  - Extra sounds between words
  - Confusing sounds (e.g. minimal pairs)
- Linkers (discourse markers) (*but; you know*)

# Success with Reading and Listening

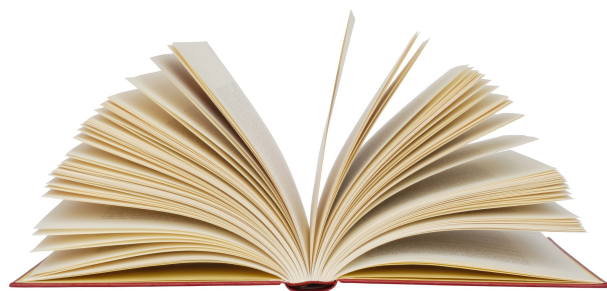
Reminders: difficulties

## Reading

- Referencing, paraphrasing, complex sentences

## Listening

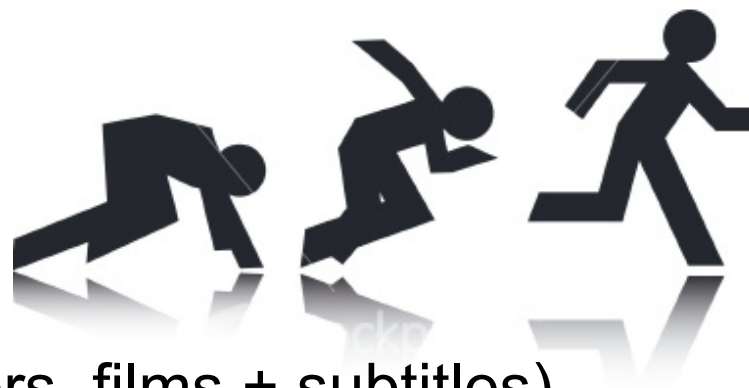
- Sounds, **chunks**, linking sounds, discourse markers



# Success with Reading and Listening

Ready for the next text, the next exam!

- ✓ Identify students' problems
- ✓ Focus on one strategy at a time
- ✓ Do little & often (5-10' / week)
- ✓ Include authentic R / L (newspapers, films + subtitles)
- ✓ Increase tolerance for unknown words / sounds
- ✓ Let students R / L again and again
- ✓ Use both TOP DOWN & BOTTOM UP strategies!



# Top-down & bottom-up:

## Success with Reading and Listening texts

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**THANK YOU!**

IATEFL-hu, Budapest October 2015