

## PROBLEMS IN ASSIMILATION OF ENGLISH WORDS FOR UNDERGRADUATE LEVEL STUDENTS IN HAZARA UNIVERSITY

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### Abstract

*This study focused on the problems in assimilation of English words for those students who were undergraduates in Hazara University. The study analyzed how the students comprehended as well as produced the assimilated phonemes in English words. Fifty undergraduate students in Hazara University were selected for this research work by applying convenient-random sampling technique. The students were asked to comprehend the assimilation process in certain words in the selected clips from English movies. To measure the problems in assimilation for the students, the same speech was given to them to reproduce. It was found in the study that the undergraduate level students did not have any major issues in the comprehension of the assimilated sounds in English words as they identified the assimilated sounds from the available lexical items and the speech context itself. On the other hand, the same students (undergraduates) were not able to reproduce the same speech with the assimilated phonemes in those words the way native speakers did. The findings and results of the study show that the undergraduate level students had fewer issues regarding the comprehension of the assimilated speech by native speakers than the issues they had while reproducing the same speech in spoken form themselves. The students reproduced their speech devoid of assimilation of English sounds in those words. It was because of the slower and more careful speech of undergraduate students (as non-native speakers). The conclusion of the study is to give more attention to speaking skills in order to eliminate issues of assimilation in connected speech.*

**Keywords:** Assimilation, English phonemes/words, undergraduate students, comprehension, production.

### Introduction

Learning any language as a target language is a skill. It is very difficult for a non-native speaker to get command over all the basic skills of a target language at a time. Some learners may have mastery in writing skills or reading skills; while, others may have command over speaking skills or listening skills of the target language. Some of these skills can be picked up and learned by the target learners easily and quickly; whereas, there are some skills which need painstaking efforts to learn them. Getting mastery over all the skills simultaneously is almost impossible. The same situations are observed while learning English language as a

target language. There are a lot of problems which are being faced by the non-native speakers of English language while learning it. People have various attitudes and thoughts towards learning a foreign language. According to Roach (2020), some people believe that learning speaking and writing skills is actually the real learning of that whole language, others consider listening and reading skills necessary for learning a language as well. Being productive skills, speaking and writing skills were considered very important for learning a language for a long time. On the other hand, listening and reading skills had been neglected owing to their passive and secondary nature (Nunan, 2019). Besides, out of the four basic skills, speaking skill is the most difficult one to be mastered for the target learners (Zhang, 2009). This research study has tried to identify and find the problems which the non-native speakers of English language confront when they comprehend and produce English language. The problems are limited only to the problems of assimilation of undergraduate students.

### **Assimilation**

Assimilation is one of the several problems for the target learners of English language to correctly perceive and produce any speech in English language. Assimilation is the process of changing the final sound of a word due to the effect of the first sound of the following word in a speech. It is a phonological phenomenon across languages. Assimilation can either be intra words or inter words. The assimilation is a common phenomenon in normal speech, and it becomes more general in a natural and fluent speech. There are voicing, manner of articulation and place of articulation involved in the assimilation process (Roach, 2000: 139). It depends on the type of feature that goes from one segment to another segment. This process makes many hurdles for the non-native speakers of English language to correctly perceive and speak English words.

Being native speakers of English language, they (native speakers) have no problems during perceiving and comprehending the utterances in English. Related to the first problem mentioned above, the learners of English language must keep the idea in minds that native English speakers' talking is rapid, quick, fluid, continuous, and complicated due to connected speech features like assimilation, weak forms, intrusion, contractions and elision (Cauldwell, 2003; Field, 2003; Brown, 1990; Ur, 1984).

Assimilation can either be in sounds within words or outside across the word boundaries. In case, it occurs in sounds within the word, the only possible standard will be its resultant pronunciation as the pronunciation of /penz/ for the word *pens* (Burleigh, 2011, p.89). The present research tries to analyze the problems for undergraduates in words in terms of assimilation.

### **Phonology**

The field phonology is often studied differently as compared to other fields of linguistics. Phonology is different from other fields because its relation is only limited to study the sounds of a language either in isolation or clusters. In linguistics, other fields are phonetics, syntax, morphology, historical linguistics and so on. According to Yule (2014), phonetics is the study of overall and general characteristics of the speech sounds. It explains that how these sounds are produced or articulated, how the speech sounds travel through the air, and how are they perceived through the ear. Ashby and Maidment (2005) give a lengthy description about the field phonetics. They discuss various properties of those sounds and their transcription of International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA).

According to Odden (2005), syntax studies sentence structure or arrangement of lexical items in a sentence; while, morphology studies word structure or word formation. He defines historical linguistics as the study of how do languages change with the passage of time. So, phonology is different from the other fields of linguistics mentioned above. But, it is true that phonology is closely related to broader field linguistics.

It is difficult to differentiate phonetics and phonology for they both have concern with the speech sounds. The relationship between them is like the relationship between chemistry and physics. It is a difficult task to have a principled separation between the two disciplines. Though they both deal with the speech sounds but they address various aspects of those sounds. Phonetics deals with the study of how actually are sounds produced and manifested in human speech while phonology is the abstract cognitive design which deals with the rules in the grammar of mind (Odden, 2005).

To cut the long story short, phonology is the abstract description of speech sound in people's minds which makes them able to know and explain the words meaning due to the actual concrete sounds the users produce and perceive (Yule, 2014). The initial concept which is studied in phonology is the smallest unit phoneme.

### Research Objective

To examine the issues of the undergraduate level students in perceiving or comprehending English native speakers' real connected speech in terms of assimilation.

### Research Question

What are the problems for the learners in perceiving or comprehending English native speakers' real connected speech in term of assimilation at undergraduate level?

### Literature Review

#### Phoneme: The smallest Syntactic Unit

There is a natural hierarchal relationship in languages. The smallest sounds which are technically known as phonemes build language(s). The phonemes make morph or morphemes in English. In phonology, morph and morphemes are used to mean words. Those words make different phrases. After that, phrases make clauses or sentences and so on. Phoneme is the smallest meaning-distinguishing sound in a language (Yule, 20140). It means that it is a speech unit which is very small and segmental which distinguishes meaningful lexical items (Handbook of IPA, 1999). For example, in British English the words *right* /raɪt/ and *sight* /saɪt/ are only different due to their initial sounds /r/ and /s/ respectively. The rest sounds following /r/ or /s/ are same. So, /r/ and /s/ are two different phonemes (the smallest syntactic unit). Besides, *right* and *sight* are minimal pairs because there is one phoneme difference in them. They can be used as a test for phonemic distinction.

Other examples of minimal pairs in English language are bat-cat, sight-side, try-fry, boy-toy, and so on. It is to be noted that phonemes are language specific. Every language has its own fixed number of phonemes.

Their number varies from language to language. They are enclosed in slashes (/). According to Wang (2011) linguists are of the view that phonemes have further distinctive features. Distinctive feature is a new concept which followed the traditional concept i.e. phonological feature.

Traditionally, voice, nasal and stop were being studied under the old term phonological features. These properties are being studied in articulatory and acoustic phonetics. The smallest units (phonemes) are studied in isolation for good understanding. But, phonemes are not in isolation.

#### Forms of Assimilation

In the previous section, the study covered different manners of assimilation which were

progressive, regressive, and coalescent assimilation. In this section, different forms of assimilation are discussed. We have two main forms of assimilation i.e. full or complete form of assimilation and partial or contact form of assimilation (Ofulue, 2010).

### Full Assimilation

Full assimilation is the first form of assimilation which is also known as complete assimilation. It is conspicuous from its name. In this form of assimilation, one sound completely changes into another sound because of the sound following it. By complete assimilation we mean that the latter sound completely affects the former sound and makes it a sound like itself or identical sound. For example, in the phrase (**that place**) the /t/ in **that** becomes /p/ due to the influence of the following /p/ in **place** (Ladefoged, 2006).

(That place) /ðæt pleɪs/ → / ðæp pleɪs/

### Partial Assimilation

According to Ali (2012), in most of the situations, assimilation is a partial one where the influenced sound becomes nearer or similar in some qualities with its neighbouring sound but it is not identical to it. Partial assimilation can sometimes be referred to as contact assimilation where the two sounds involved are adjacent. For example, in the phrase **ten bananas** the /n/ in **ten** is pronounced as /m/ which is bilabial sound due to the influence of the following /b/ in **bananas** which is also a bilabial sound like, (Ten bananas) /ten bəna:nəz/ → / tem bəna:nəz/.

### Historical Assimilation

In the above sections, the discussion was about contextual assimilation. This type of assimilation covers many areas in English language. In this kind of assimilation, consonant sounds are assimilated owing to their adjacent and neighbouring sounds for which they are depended. However, with the development of a language, the historical assimilation happens. As languages develop, there are sounds which change their forms and pronunciation into other sounds which have same manner of articulation, place of articulation or their voicing. Many instances of this type of assimilation can be found in English language. A linguist, Jones, talked that how the modern word ant came into use after adopting several changes in its spelling and morphology. The whole process of changing the sounds within this word took place during the course of time especially in 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries (Jones 1972).

### The Review of the Related Literature

For a successful communication and good speaking one needs to listen carefully for the first place. So, it has become a fact that listening skill is more important and essential for a better, successful and effective communication. People are unable to communicate well if they have not comprehended or understood what they have heard. There are two reasons to make this claim. Firstly, it is important to have the listening skills before having speaking skills (Taylor, 1981, p. 44). Secondly, the listeners must adapt themselves to the vocabulary and tempo of the speakers (Vandergrift, 1999, p. 169). These reasons show the importance of listening skill for effective communication. In addition, speaking a language involves many processes. Listening skill plays an essential role in making a person a better speaker in any language. Listening is very important for it is the basic input which most of the learners are exposed to while learning language. If extensive heed is given to listening skill then the learners can attain native-like and intelligible speaking proficiency. Rost (1994) opines that listening is very important skill because it serves as a basic input in a classroom. If the learners are not able to get the major sense from what is being said or taught to them then the

process of learning will not even begin. Owing to poor ability in listening skill(s), target users of English language face many problems in comprehending and digesting native speakers' speech.

It is very difficult to understand English speech. English words are not spoken in isolation but they run together in a continuous speech. One needs a deep attention to comprehend that connected speech. Connected speech is a phenomenon which is commonly known as a reduced form of speech. It is due to elision, contraction form, and reduction etc. According to (Brown & Kondo-Brown, 2006, p. 2) there are almost nine features which are involved in connected speech including elision, word and sentence stress, assimilation, intrusion, juncture and so on. The nine connected speech features are briefly discussed later under this topic. People do have problems regarding understanding the speech of English language whose reason is discussed below.

The reason behind these problems is the lack of knowledge of the learners regarding assimilation and other co-articulatory features. Ito (2001) and Rosa (2002) have reported that there is not as much written on connected speech as compare to other issues in applied linguistics. The former linguist further argues that it is really difficult to find actual research on connected speech. Anyway, some other scholars have also contributions in this area. Other contributors in this area are (Brown & Hilferty, 1989, 1995, 1998; Celce-Murcia, Brinton, & Goodwin, 2004; Dauer, 1993; Gilbert, 1984, 1993; Gimson, 1962, 1970, 1989, 2001; Grant 1993; Morley, 1987; Pennington, 1996; Sheeler & Markley, 1991).

The present research is carried out to point out different problems when the learners of English language use this language both in written and spoken forms. So, the assimilation process which is a phenomenon in connected speech is focused in this study. In the following sections, more detail is given regarding this phenomenon.

### **Research Methodology**

As this study focused on the problems for the non-native speakers of English language when they comprehend the connected speech of native speakers; so, both quantitative and qualitative approaches were applied for conducting the present study. By applying the quantitative approach, numerical data was analyzed; whereas, theoretical materials were analyzed by applying qualitative approach.

### **Research Design**

As the present study was related to investigate certain problems; so, descriptive design was used for this study. This research design was best suited for conducting the present study. The reason of using this research design in the present study was, it perfectly helped the researcher in describing and identifying the problems. There was a proficiency test used in the present study as a research tool.

### **Population and Sampling Procedure**

In current research work, undergraduate learners of Hazara University were selected as population. A representative sample of 50 students, aged 18-22, were selected for conducting this study. Convenient sampling technique was used for the selection of those fifty undergraduate students

### **Research Instrument**

For conducting the present study, a proficiency test was used as a research tool and instrument. As the current study was mostly descriptive in manner which demanded enough quantitative data, so, the proficiency test was the most appropriate and suitable research instrument for conducting this study.

### Data Collection Procedure

The data, for this research, was collected from those students who were undergraduates at Hazara University, Mansehra. There was the use of proficiency test for collecting the data. The test was used as a research tool. The test included words, phrases and sentences in which the process of assimilation was found. This whole process of administering the test was carried out by the researcher himself. The focus of the test was on the assimilated sounds in the words in rapid speeches in the selected movies' clips.

### Data Analysis Procedure

Various suitable statistical techniques were used to examine the data which was collected. The highlighted errors were related only to the incorrect or wrong identification of assimilation of phonemes in English words by undergraduates. The reason why participants gave incorrect responses was that the participants were not able to identify assimilation in words in those clips. But, when the participants were told to reproduce or pronounce those written responses, there was nothing ungrammatical. Only the participants' rate of speech was slower as there was no assimilation in their speech. Whenever there was assimilation possible, it was deemed as incorrect. After listening to the audio tape recording, the participants' responses were noted down with care. The proficiency test used the incorrect and correct responds for the coming analysis. The researcher identified the problems with the help of simple percentage. The percentages of correct and incorrect responses made it easy for the researcher to either accept or reject the conceptions related to various uses of assimilation English sounds in English words. When the data was received, it was calculated and tabulated. In the light of the research questions, the results were analyzed and discussed. **Results and Analyses**

### Results of Assimilation of /t/ Sound in Comprehension of English Words

The clips were played for the students and they were told to listen to those clips carefully and write down what they actually heard. The purpose of this activity was to gauge students' comprehension of the connected speech for the assimilated /t/ sound of English words. From the table below, it is obvious that there were no significant issues and problems for the students to comprehend the /t/ sound in connected speech as a lot of students comprehended the message in those clips correctly. The results are shown in the following table.

Table 4.1: Results of assimilation of /t/ sound in comprehension of English words

Correct Responses	Incorrect Responses
85%	15%

The above table shows the results of the responses which the students gave after they heard those clips. It is seen that the undergraduate students did not have major issues and difficulties in perceiving the connected speech in those clips in which an assimilated /t/ sound was found. In other words, it was easy for the students to recognize the speech, and the assimilation of /t/ was not making any difficulty for them to comprehend that connected speech. Eighty five percent (85%) students gave correct written responses while only fifteen percent (15%) students gave incorrect written responses. It indicates that the students did not have major problems in knowing the assimilation of /t/ sound in those words and they were able to easily understand the sentences and words having assimilation of this phoneme. The responses which were incorrect could also be associated with factors rather than the assimilation of the sound /t/. After that, the written sentences and phrases of those clips were given to



the students to produce them in spoken form.

### Results of Assimilation of /v/ Sound in Comprehension in English Words

The participants were asked to listen to the clips first. After listening to those clips, they were told to comprehend and write their responses. The participants were supposed to write those things which they had heard in those clips. The purpose of this task in the test was to gauge participants' level of comprehension of the speech which is continuous and connected for the assimilation of /v/ sound. Generally, the students having little knowledge of phonetics and phonology have significant difficulty and problem in comprehending any assimilated sound in the connected speech of native speakers. As far as the assimilation of /v/ sound by native speakers was concerned, there were no notable problems for non-native speakers of English to comprehend the assimilated /v/. It can be seen from the following table. The table given below shows the results of comprehension of sound /v/ when it was assimilated by native speakers.

Table 4.2: Results of assimilation of sound /v/ in comprehension

Correct responses	Incorrect responses
90.5%	9.5%

From the table, it can be seen that the undergraduates had no notable issues in the comprehension of assimilated /v/ sound in the connected speech. The students' correct responses were 90.5 % whereas the incorrect responses of the students were only 9.5%. This data indicates that most of the undergraduate students got succeeded in recognizing the assimilation of /v/ sound and they were able to comprehend the utterance having the assimilation of this sound especially when it was followed by unvoiced /t/ sound. Though 9.5% incorrect responses were related to the problems in the comprehension of assimilated/v/ sound ; but, they could be related to other factors other than assimilation of /v/ as well. Overall, it can be concluded that only few undergraduate students whose level of understanding was quite low had the difficulty in recognizing this sound when it was assimilated.

### Results of Assimilation of Sound /d/ in Comprehension in English Words

The selected movies' clips were played for the students and they were asked to listen to them carefully on their first try. Then, they were told to note down what they actually heard in those clips. They were encouraged to write whatever they had heard in those clips of native speakers. The purpose of this activity in the test was to gauge students' ability to comprehend the connected speech by native speakers. Their responses were collected and it was found that they had no notable problems in comprehending the /d/ sound as most of the students easily comprehended the message in those clips despite there was assimilation in the speech. The results of this activity are shown in the following table.

Table 4.3: Results of assimilation of sound /d/ in comprehension

Correct responses	Incorrect responses
81%	19%

It can be seen in the above table that most of the undergraduate students correctly comprehended the connected speech by native speakers for the assimilation of /d/ sound. It shows that

they did not have much difficulty in comprehending the native speakers' connected speech where the assimilation of /d/ was found. The correct responses which the students gave after comprehending the connected speech were 81% while the incorrect responses they had were 19% only. It means the students easily understood what the native speakers produced in those clips. In incorrect responses, there could be other factors involved which were other than the problems of assimilation. For this reason, the students were asked to reproduce those clips again.

### Results of Assimilation of Sound /n/ in Comprehension in English Words

For data collection, the same procedure was followed by asking the students to listen to the selected movies' clips once and note down whatever they heard. The purpose of carrying out this activity was to measure their comprehension of native speakers' connected speech. There were few students who were unable to comprehend the /n/ sound correctly in those clips by native speakers. Most of the students did well by correctly comprehending the connected speech for /n/ assimilation. The following table shows their results in percentage.

Table 4.4: Results of assimilation of sound /n/ in comprehension

Correct responses	Incorrect responses
73%	27%

In the table above, it can be concluded that the undergraduate students did not have many problems in comprehending the connected speech in those clips. They easily understood what the native speakers were speaking in those clips. Seventy three percent (73%) students could easily comprehend the assimilation of /n/ sound in the native speakers' speech. These responses were taken as the correct responses in the above table. On the other hand, twenty seven percent (27%) students were not able to comprehend the connected speech correctly for the assimilation of /n/ sound in those clips by native speakers. These responses were considered as the incorrect responses in the table above.

It means the students were able to easily understand what the native speakers spoke in those movies' clips. In 27% incorrect responses, there could be factors other than the problems of assimilation involved. So, for this reason, the students were asked to produce those clips again.

### Results of Assimilation of /z/ Sound in Comprehension in English Words

The undergraduate participants were told to listen to those clips carefully. After listening to those clips, the students were directed to comprehend and write their responses on a page. It was also told to the students to write only those things which they actually heard in those clips. The reason of doing this activity in the test was to figure out participants' comprehension ability of the connected speech for the assimilation of /z/ sound. Commonly, the students who have little or no strong background in phonetics and phonology have difficulty and problem in comprehending any assimilated sound in the connected speech of native speakers. As far as the assimilation of sound /z/ in the connected speech was concerned, the undergraduate students (as non-native speakers) faced no major problems to comprehend the assimilated /z/. The results can be seen from the table below. In the following table, there are results of comprehension of /z/ sound when it was assimilated by native speakers.

Table 4.5: Results of assimilation of sound /z/ in comprehension



Correct responses	Incorrect responses
93.94%	6.06%

From the table above, it can be said that the undergraduate students faced no difficulty in the comprehension of assimilated /z/ sound in the connected speech by native speakers. The responses in which the students comprehended the assimilation of /z/ sound were taken as correct responses. The correct responses were 93.94%. Whereas the responses of the students in which they could not comprehend the assimilated /z/ were considered as incorrect responses. The incorrect responses were merely 6.06%. The data in the above table indicates that almost all of the students, when they listened to the clips, were successful in identifying the assimilation of /z/ sound and they could comprehend the clips having the assimilation of this sound especially when it was followed by /j/ sound. The 6.06% incorrect responses were not only related to the problems in the comprehension of assimilated /z/ sound; they could be related to factors other than the assimilation of /z/. To conclude, it can be said that only few undergraduate students whose level of understanding was quite low had the difficulty in recognizing this sound when it was assimilated.

#### Results of Assimilation of /s/ Sound in Comprehension in English Words

For data collection, same procedure was used as used in previous sections. The participants (undergraduate students) were instructed to listen to those movies' clips carefully. After listening to those clips, the students were asked to comprehend and write what they heard in those clips on a page. The students were encouraged to write whatever they heard in those clips. The purpose of doing this task in the test was to identify participants' ability to understand the connected speech for the assimilation of /s/ sound. In most of the cases, learners who have little or no strong background in phonetics and phonology have problem in comprehending any assimilated sound in the connected speech of native speakers. As far as the assimilation of sound /s/ in the connected speech was concerned, the undergraduate students (as non-native speakers) confronted significant issues in comprehending the assimilation of /s/ sound. The results can be seen in the following table. The following table shows the results of comprehension of undergraduate students of /s/ sound when it was assimilated by phone native speakers.

Table 4.6: Results of assimilation of sound /s/ in comprehension

Correct responses	Incorrect responses
62.5%	37.5%

If a close look is given to the above table, it is clear that the undergraduate students faced much difficulty in the comprehension of assimilated /s/ sound in the connected speech by native speakers. The responses in which the students comprehended the assimilation of /s/ sound were considered as correct responses. The correct responses were 62.5%. Whereas the responses of the students in which they were not able to comprehend the assimilated /s/ were considered as incorrect responses. The incorrect responses were 37.5%. The undergraduate students faced a lot of problems in comprehending the /s/ sound when the native speakers changed it to /ʃ/ sound. The data in the above table indicates that almost half of the students failed to identify the /s/ sound in those clips. The incorrect responses (37.5%) were not only related to the problems in the comprehension of assimilation of /z/ sound; but they could be related to factors other than the assimilation of /s/. To conclude, it can be said that almost two third (2/3) of the undergraduate students correctly recognized this sound when it was assimilated. But, the remaining one third students confronted significant problems in

comprehending this sound in words correctly.

### Discussion

Most of the results for various sounds in English words show that the learners (undergraduate students) have significant issues in the assimilation of English phonemes in their production of connected speech just like the natives did. It indicates that the undergraduate students did not have problems in the comprehension in assimilation and they were able to digest the native speakers' connected speech. The findings justify that the undergraduates faced fewer issues in understanding of assimilation but they faced more issues while producing the speech with assimilation of those selected phonemes which are discussed in chapter four.

The problem was when the second language learners (undergraduate students) tried to produce the same words/phrases; they were unable to assimilate those phonemes in their continuous speech. Assimilation of sounds is one of the reasons we often get differences in speech of first language speakers and second language speakers. Therefore, the learners, in this context the undergraduate students of Hazara University, did have issues in the assimilation of /v/ phoneme in their speech.

The findings show that the learners could understand what the native speakers were saying in those clips despite the assimilated phonemes, but when they started to speak the same words, they were unable to articulate the assimilated phonemes in those words since they uttered the strong and full forms of those words. This problem in comprehension and production of the speech can be dealt with if the learners of English language get some training of English phonology. It will help the learners get the quick speech of natives and they will be able to recognize the errors/mistakes in the connected speech of non-native speakers (Firdhani, Indrayani & Mahdi, 2018).

In short, the entire study suggests that the undergraduate students confronted no significant issues while comprehending the native speakers' speech but they could not produce those sentences and words the way native speakers did. It was because the non-native students were slower and more watchful in their speech and as a result few examples of co-articulation effects were recognized (Sierra, 2019).

On the contrary, though the connected speech of natives was fast and rapid but and the examples of assimilation were pointed out by students. As the problems were not that much significant so they did not create any confusion and the undergraduate students were successful in comprehending it (Ibrahim, 2016). Owing to the limited practice of speaking skills of undergraduate students, they did not assimilate those phonemes which needed to be assimilated during their speech.

### Conclusion

The current study was related to the problems in assimilation of phonemes in English words for undergraduate students. The process of assimilation occurs in a rapid talking or conversation of native speakers. The present study carefully examined the production of the assimilation of certain phonemes in words. First, the undergraduate students, who participated in this study, were told to comprehend the selected speeches. Then, they were asked to reproduce those speeches later on.

The results of the present study indicate that students had problems when they were asked to reproduce the speech sounds. They were unable to assimilate the English sounds just like native speakers when they produced their speech.

To sum up, the current study found that the students did not have any significant problems while comprehending the assimilation of the native speakers. They easily understood the speech of the native speakers despite the assimilated sounds by them. But, the students could not produce the speech as same as the

native speakers did. In other words, it is confirmed from the findings that the undergraduate learners have less problems in comprehending the assimilation than their own production of the assimilated sounds in their speech. The students identified the assimilated phonemes in comprehension from the context of the speech along with the available lexical clues in the speech. To cut a long story short, the current study concludes that for making the speech of non-native speakers just like the native speakers of English, the practice of connected speech for non-native speakers of English must be the part in teaching phonology contents and in classrooms. In these courses, high focus should be given on the assimilation of certain English phonemes where the non-native speakers face problems comparatively to native speakers' speech. The students should be trained in both listening comprehension skill and speaking production skill. The problem which the non-native speakers face in producing their speech just like native speakers is their lack of practice.

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