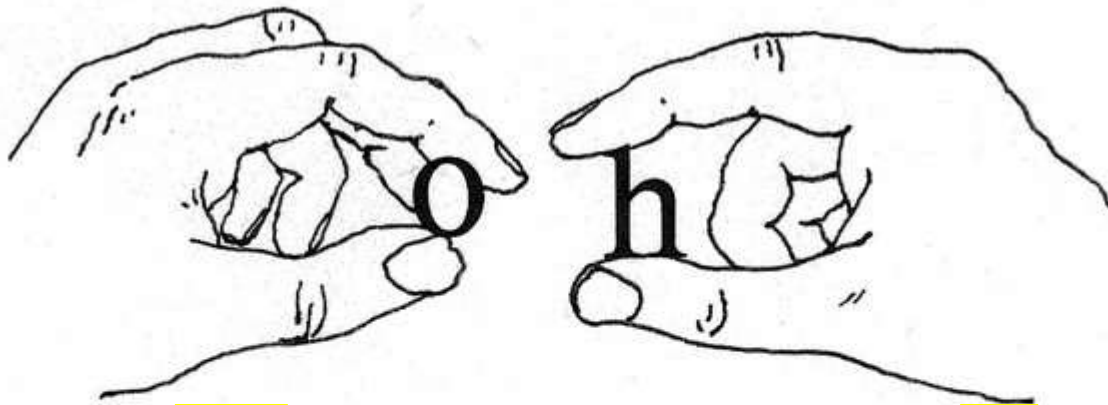


# Applying synthetic phonics in adult ELT



/uh-p-ligh<sup>y</sup>-i-n s-i-n-th-e-t-i' f-o<sup>n</sup>-i/

/s-i-n-a-d-u-l t-ee<sup>y</sup>-e-l t-ee/



@teachAdam

1. Systematic Synthetic Phonics
2. adult ESL learners
3. core skills
4. spelling code
5. listening
6. prosody
7. concluding remarks

# Systematic Synthetic Phonics

# Systematic synthetic phonics

- Builds phonemic awareness
  - phonemes not syllables
- Synthetic
  - different sounds blend together
- Systematic
  - 150 main letter-sound correspondences

- L1 literacy teaching
  - statutory requirement
  - reduction in dyslexia
- Extendable to wider language learning
  - comfortable ELT-ish principles
  - systematic approach to phonology?

# The alphabetic code

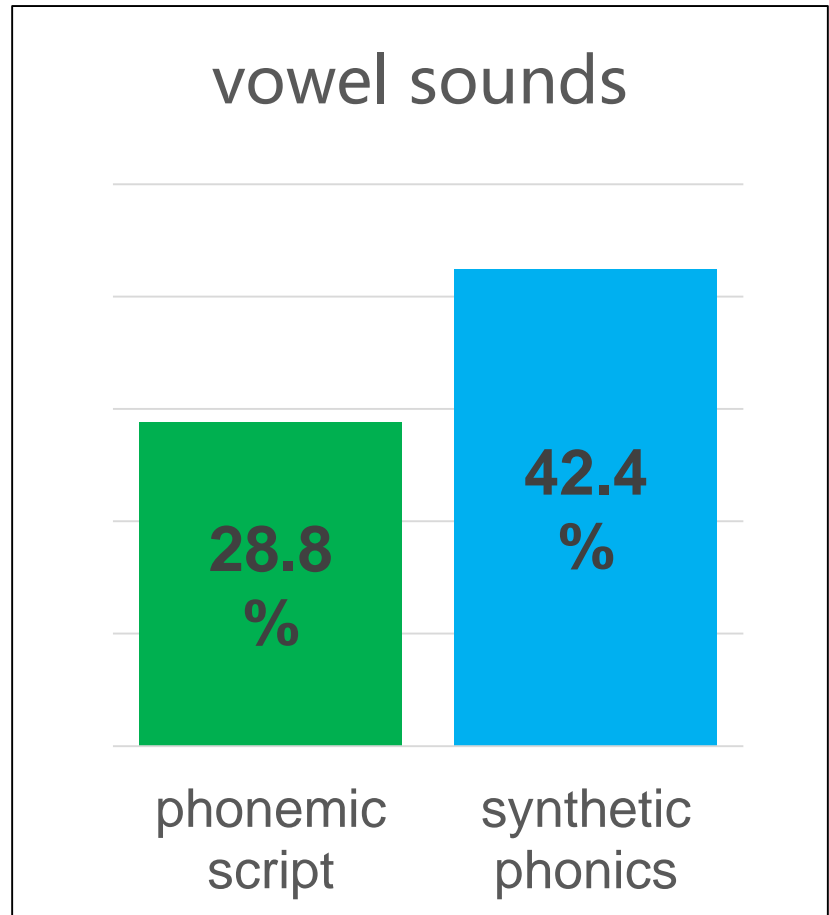
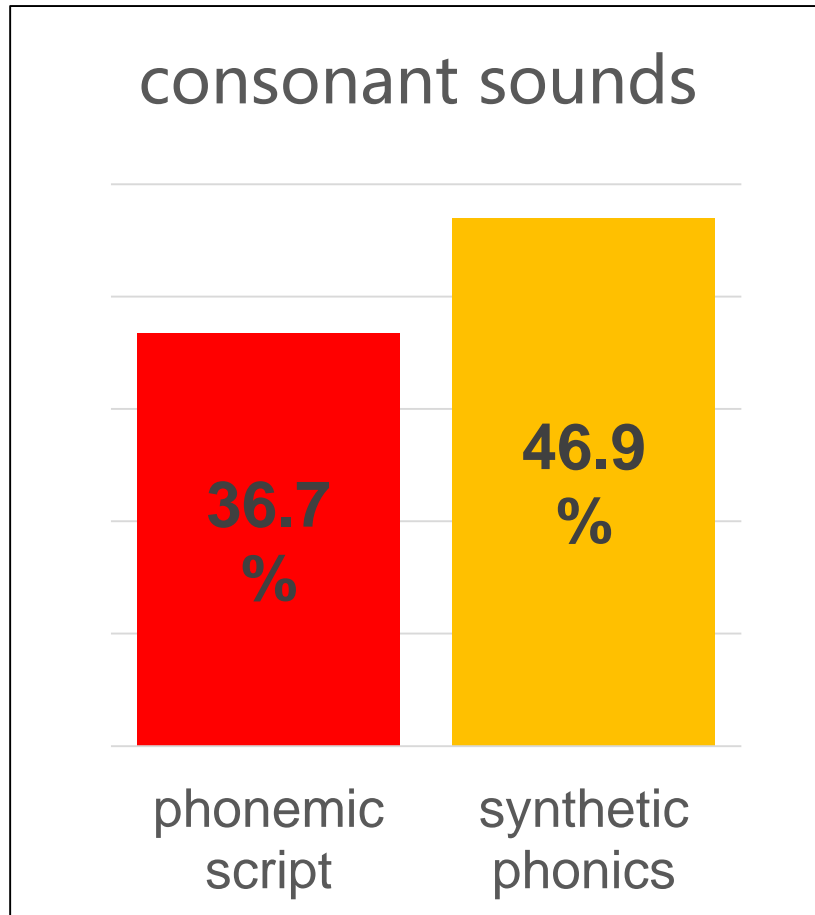
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- phonemic notation system
- uses common spellings
- helps learners decode spellings

**/ch-air/**      **/tʃeə/**

- connects spelling & phonology
- depicts complex spellings and phonology

# Code intelligibility test

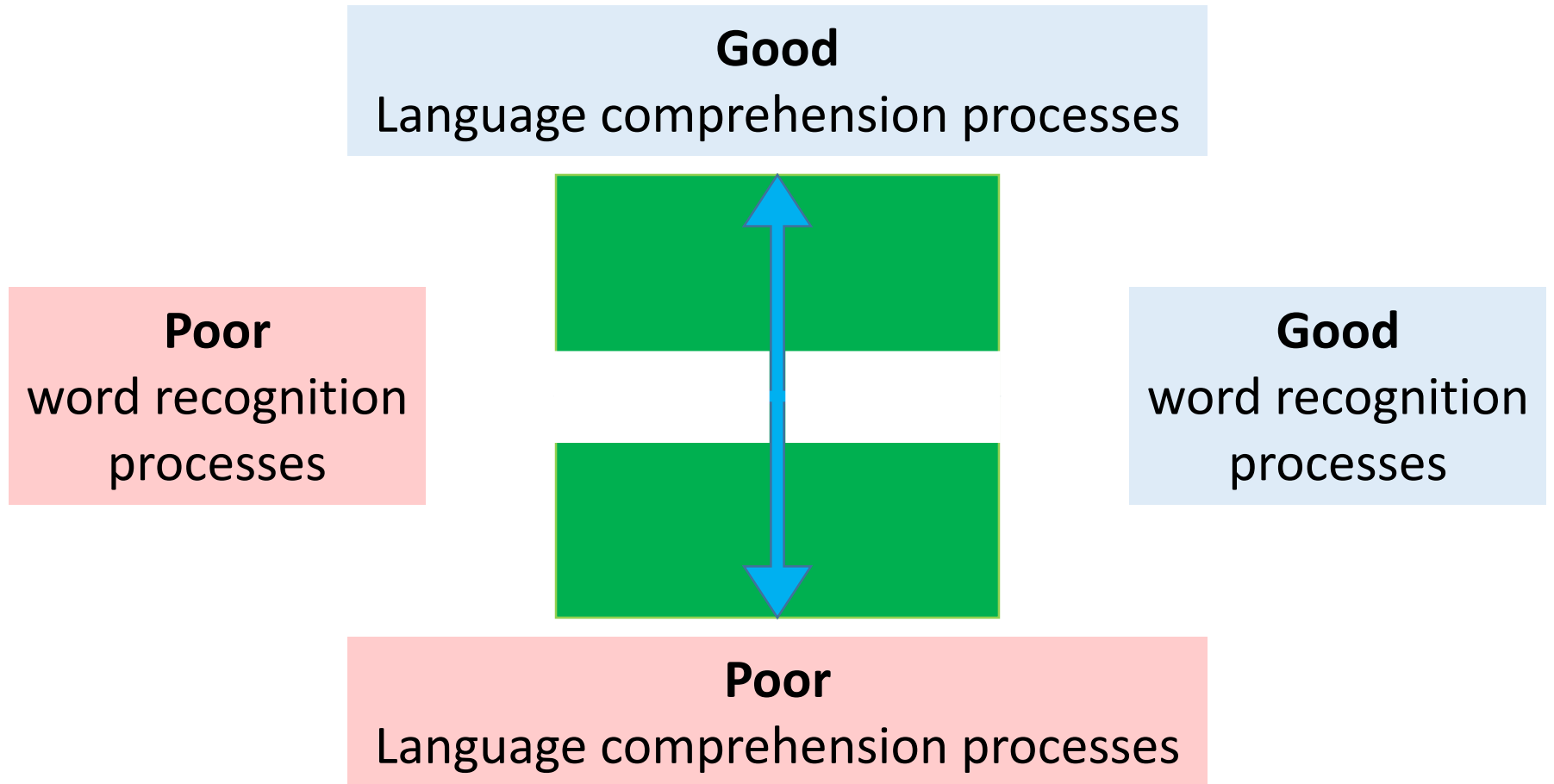


n=19

L1: Korean=9, Arabic=5, Chinese=2, Portuguese=2, Turkish=1

Class level: upper int=10, intermediate=5, pre-int=4

# Simple view of reading





# Four key elements

**blending from sounds**

**segmenting into sounds**

**handwriting**

**alphabetic code**

# Adult ESL learners' needs

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- metacognition
- use of simple code
- reliance on text not sound
- incidental vs systematic phonics teaching

# Core skills

# Blending to read

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- decoding text
- blending sounds together



- easy to integrate into ELT lessons

# Teaching blending: activity



How many sounds are there in each word?  
Which letters are code for each sound in each word?

1. verse

2. singer

3. listen

4. soundtrack

1. **v**erse  
● — —

2. **s**inger  
● ● — —

3. **l**isten  
● ● — ● ●

4. **s**ound**t**rack  
● — ● — ● — ● —

# Segmenting to spell

- reversible
- encoding sound
- segmenting word into phonemes

**/s-p-e-l-i-ng/**  
**spelling**

- easy to integrate into ELT lessons

# Teaching segmenting



How many sounds are there in each word?  
Which letters are code for each sound in each word?

1.1.  "versee"

2.2.  "singer"

3.3.  "listen"

4.4.  "soundtack"

1.1. versee

2.2. singer

3.3. listen

4.4. soundtack

# Teaching segmenting: **Activity**



## A-B pairs

**A:** Look away. Decide **how many sounds** there are.

**B:** **Say** this word in a **quick, natural voice**.

**/n-igh-m-air/**

**(nightmare)**



# Teaching segmenting: **activity**



Now change roles

**A: Say** this word in a **quick, natural voice**.

**B: Look away.** Decide **how many sounds** there are.

/f-a-(g)-ch-r-ee/

(factory)  
● ● ● — ●  
●

# Teaching spelling code

- letter-sound correspondences
- each sound taught systematically
  - from simple code: **/t-a-p/** → tap
  - to complex code: **/s-kw-air/** → square
- staged activities develop code knowledge/awareness

# Multi-skill activity sheets

/j/

g

ge

gi

gy

gy

bulgy  
dingy  
allergy  
gymnastics  
spongy  
apology  
ecology  
energy  
stingy  
strategy

Draw the main characters in action and label:

gems ginger gentle  
energy giraffe genius  
gymnastics allergic

Gillian Gilbert generally genuine  
giant steps give energetic diligent  
gyrating foggy gigantic germs  
danger dangerous strange range  
generous getting gorgeous gifts

Alert the reader to consider  
'g', 'girl' and 'foggy'.

You might need to say /j/ when the letter 'g' is followed by letters e, i or y. Say the words whilst finger-tracking underneath. Make up a story.

# Teaching listening

# Teaching listening

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- extend SP decoding & encoding ideas
- train bottom-up processing
- demystify L1 English speech
- build a coherent view of phonology

# Teaching listening: Activity



Find the matching ending for each sentence

a) /b-i-k-uh-z-ee<sup>g</sup>-l-e-f t-i-z .../

...around the world by train.

b) /w-e-n-ee-w-uh-z l-ee-v-i-n .../

c) /ee-w-uh-z ch-r-a-v-l-i-n .../

# Teaching prosody

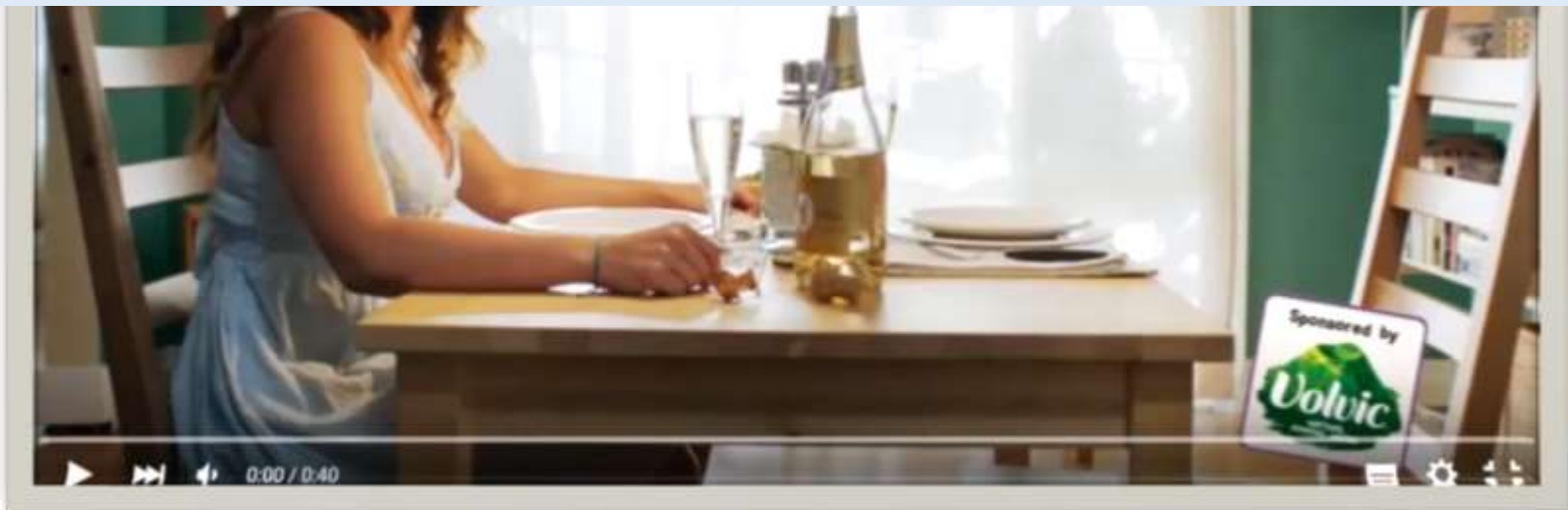
- irregular syllable length
- stress on key information
- other sounds weaken/change
- words link together
- Words vary wildly from citation forms



# Teaching stress

Watch this TV trailer, in which use of stress varies.

What listening difficulties occur due to stress (mis)use?



- thought units & peak vowels
- extending SP develops awareness
- relies on knowledge of word stress
- irregular syllable length

# Teaching stress: **Activity**

Look at and listen to the stressed sounds.  
Identify the word that each peak vowel is part of.



- the efficiency principle
- linking
- allophonic variation
- no simplification of genuine speech

# Teaching efficiency



# Teaching efficiency 1

/w-o-t h-a-d h-a-p-uh-n-d/

/w-o' h-uh-d h-a-p-uh-n-d/

↓  
/w-o-t-uh-d-a-p-uh-n-d/

## Teaching efficiency 2



Listen to and repeat the chunks of speech.  
Match one chunk to each part of the written form.

A B

2	/uh-b-aw t-e-n/
4	/m-igh-ul z-aw t-uh-v/
3	/i s-uh-b-aw/
1	/t-e-m-m-igh-ul-z/

It's about ten miles out of town.

# Conclusions



# Conclusions

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- Tried and tested in L1 classrooms
- Intuitive phonemic representation
- Explains spelling clearly
- Building phonological awareness
- Reduces cognitive load
- Differentiated aural development

Any questions?

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