Abstract

The aim of this thesis was to investigate linking in spontaneous speech in native English speakers. The main questions that we focused on were: what are the general and individual tendencies of speakers of English for linking, and what are the differences in these tendencies in speakers of British English compared to speakers of American English. We examined 16 native speakers; 8 of them were speakers of American English, and 8 of them were speakers of British English. Both of these groups were further divided into 4 male speakers and 4 female speakers. We analyzed these recordings using the computer program Praat. Firstly, we adjusted the boundaries of beginnings and endings of words. Then, we focused on the analysis of vowel sounds, looking closely at whether they are linked or glottalized. We extracted data from the analyzed recordings and put them into graphs so the results could be seen clearly. We found out that American and British English speakers favored consonant-to-vowel linking more than vowel-to-vowel linking. We also learned how vital speech rate is when influencing linking. British speakers tended to have a faster speech rate, resulting in frequent linking. On the other hand, American speakers had a slower speech rate, resulting in fewer instances of linking.

Key words: English, American, British, linking, connected speech, speech rate, spontaneous speech