DEVELOPING SPEAKING AND PRONUNCIATION SKILLS THROUGH STORYTELLING ON THE APP iTEO

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RODUCTION

> They are confident children but they are not confident at speaking. They are happy to have a go but they are quite self-conscious. Pronunciation is a weakness.
>
> (Ms Smith, teacher, interview 2015)
>
> We want to pronounce correctly but it is hard.
>
> (Mike, 10)
>
> Pronunciation is important because you could be saying a completely different word in French if you don't pronounce it right.
>
> (Lucy, 10)
>
> Sometimes I go on my mom's phone and do translator.
>
> (Sarah, 10)
>
> When we use iTEO, I pronounce something and then they (peers) pronounce it. We listen and see where we can improve.
>
> (Tom, 10)

This short vignette, with quotes from a Year 6 teacher in London and some of her 10-year-old pupils, raises several questions. Why is pronunciation important? What is its place in the curriculum? What problems do English-speaking pupils encounter when learning French? How can pronunciation be taught and what role might technology play?

The quotes indicate that this teacher and these children relate pronunciation to communication and perceive it as important though challenging to learn. The children wish to pronounce accurately and use digital technologies to assist them. In school, the app iTEO, an oral text recorder and editor, enables them to listen to their recorded text and encourages them to give each other feedback. This chapter attempts to find answers to some of the above-mentioned questions by discussing what we know about the teaching of pronunciation and linking this to the findings of a case study on the use of iTEO in this Year 6 class in London.

THE TEACHING OF PRONUNCIATION: FROM AUDIOLINGUAL PROGRAMMES TO THE AFFORDANCES OF NEW TECHNOLOGIES

Teachers and learners feel that *correct* pronunciation is important. Students have consistently asked for instruction, guidance and feedback on pronunciation (Gilakjani and Ahmadi 2011). Teachers are aware that pronunciation is crucial for communication, but they do not give the same importance to pronunciation as to other aspects of language learning (Wahid and Sulong 2013). According to Munro and Derwing (2011) and Nilsson (2011), *correct* pronunciation is not an issue addressed in the majority of language classrooms. Furthermore, explicit guidance on how to teach pronunciation is rare in textbooks and there is little training in initial teacher education. These factors may explain the teachers' lack of confidence (Derwing and Munro 2005).

In his review of methods of language teaching, Morley (1991) observed that pronunciation has not always been marginalised. From the 1940s to the 1960s, audiolingual programmes drew on articulatory phonetics to teach about sounds and their articulation, stress, intonation and rhythm. Periods of explicit instruction preceded drills where learners practised and memorised pronunciation. The aim was to achieve native-like pronunciation, understood as an aspect of linguistic competence (Lewis 2005). This practice was soon at odds with research findings that showed that the isolated drilling of phonemes and lessons in phonology and phonemic transcriptions did not improve pronunciation. With the rise of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in the 1970s came a change in the approach to the teaching of pronunciation. Articulatory phonetics was abandoned in favour of a comprehensive framework that focused on functional language. One of the aims of CLT is the development of communicative competence. Researchers, teachers and students alike found it unrealistic and difficult to achieve native-like pronunciation (Derwing and Munro 2005, Foote, Holtby and Derwing 2011, Saito 2011). Their aim was to develop 'intelligible' and 'comprehensible' speech. *Intelligibility* is often defined in relation to how well particular words can be understood. In order for an utterance to be intelligible, or clear, the listeners need to pay attention to the articulation of sounds, stress and intonation. They may then be able to transcribe this oral message and yet be unable to understand it. *Comprehensibility* is related to the meaning attached to the words. In order to render an utterance comprehensible, speakers need to focus, among others, on socio-linguistic, socio-cultural and pragmatic aspects (Smith and Nelson 1985). With CLT, pronunciation came to be taught alongside vocabulary, grammar and communication strategies. Teachers addressed *segmental* features (i.e. the production of sounds) and *suprasegmental* ones (i.e. stress, rhythm, intonation). Studies of the effectiveness of CLT reported, among

others, that beginners acquired basic communicative skills but were unable to develop these to an advanced level (Lightbown and Spada 2013). Most could fluently produce high-frequency words such as greetings but not necessarily accurately. Researchers explained that many teaching programmes had neglected to focus on pronunciation.

Today, teachers and researchers call for the explicit teaching of pronunciation but still within a meaning-based approach. Teachers focus on form when and if necessary. In the last decades, advances in technology have facilitated the teaching and development of pronunciation skills. Some computer programmes visualise the way sounds are articulated by showing the correct position and shape of the tongue. Speech analysis applications transform speech into sound waves and help learners assess how their pronunciation differs from a model. Many online dictionaries come with audio files that model correct pronunciation. Some translators are based on automatic speech recognition programmes and offer audio files of the translations. Sarah, the 10-year-old girl introduced in the vignette, used a translator on her mother's mobile phone to record words in French. When the utterance was unintelligible or wrong, the device could not translate it into English. Sarah noticed she had made a mistake. To correct her pronunciation of the French word, she entered the English word and listened to the translation. In general, these digital tools are helpful to develop and improve pronunciation skills as learners receive both opportunities for imitation and practice, and feedback.

While applications specialised in developing pronunciation (and oral skills) may be beneficial, still other affordances of new technologies have been reported; they increase learner autonomy, allow for personalised and contextualised learning, connect formal and informal learning contexts, and widen opportunities for interaction (Lee 2014, Thompson and Derwing 2014). Pearson (2006) illustrated how students used digital speech recorders and editors in their Spanish dialectology classes. They interviewed native speakers, compiled sound files of people speaking different dialects, recorded their own speech and analysed the recordings. Applications that allow for the creation and sharing of audio files and podcasts are generally perceived to be promising for the development of speaking and pronunciation skills. Sze (2006) observed that students who created podcasts tended to rehearse a text before recording it. He concluded that this practice contributed to their improved pronunciation. Ducate and Lomicka (2009), however, warned that podcasts by themselves do not improve pronunciation. An explicit focus on pronunciation is necessary for this to happen.

In sum, this section has shown that the attention paid to pronunciation changed with the teaching methods: important in audiolingual programmes, less so in CLT and important again today. The goals shifted from native-like pronunciation to the production of intelligible and comprehensible speech. The methods moved from transmitting knowledge on phonics and practising sounds in isolation to developing communicative competence with minimum or no attention paid to pronunciation. While 40 years ago there was little material or advice on how to teach pronunciation, today new technology is a real asset, particularly so because it helps design authentic, social, meaningful and interactive learning environments. As such, learners have opportunities for additional practice and can receive individualised feedback from programmes, teachers, peers or native speakers.

In the following sections I will present the content-free app iTEO developed in Luxembourg to encourage nursery and primary school children to collaboratively produce stories in a range of languages (Kirsch 2017, Kirsch and Bes 2017). Next, I will show how storytelling can promote language learning. Storytelling with iTEO addresses the

methodological issues raised above and offers learners opportunities to focus on form within a Task-Based Approach. The children's desire to be understood by an audience makes them pay attention to the way they record text on iTEO.

THE APP iTEO AND DIGITAL STORYTELLING

The app iTEO

In the 1990s Gretsch drew on social-constructivist language learning theories to design the computer application TEO, an oral text recorder and editor. Twenty years on, Gretsch and Kirsch, researchers at the University of Luxembourg, drew on TEO to produce the app iTEO. The aim was to promote innovative and mobile language teaching. The app is easy to use. Learners record a word, phrase, sentence or a longer stretch of text that appears as a numbered icon on the user interface. This item is automatically replayed but users can also choose to listen to selected items or the entire text. The replay materialises the language used and provides learners with opportunities for revision, analysis, negotiation of meanings and interpretations of discourse. Learners can insert pictures with the iPad camera and edit their text by rearranging and/or deleting the icons on the screen. Kirsch and Gretsch researched the use of the app among others in language lessons in primary schools in Luxembourg and showed how children developed language and metalinguistic skills (Kirsch and Gretsch 2015). Of particular relevance for this chapter is Gretsch's (2014) analysis of the way in which a 7-year-old boy helped a girl pronounce 'de rien' (you're welcome). The boy began by repeating the phrase and asking her to copy it. When he noticed that she was unable to correct herself, he segmented the phrase into syllables 'de', 'ri' and 'en' and wrote it on the board. He listened to her pronounce the phrase and realised that she pronounced 'en' incorrectly. He said 'un' and raised his thumb (alluding to counting) to make her think of the number 1 in French. She understood. She put the syllables together and pronounced the word correctly. Thanks to the imaginative and lengthy tutoring, she remembered the word, recorded it and recalled it weeks later.

Language learning through digital storytelling

Kirsch and Gretsch encourage the use of iTEO within the framework of storytelling. Stories appeal to our emotion and imagination, harness our creativity, and transport us beyond the limits of time and space (Wajnryb 2003). Their content, repetitive structure and rhythm invite learners to participate (Sneddon 2008). The nature of the stories and the listeners' engagement together facilitate memorisation and language learning. Researchers showed that storytelling has the potential to increase the learners' confidence in speaking a foreign language and contribute to the development of oral skills (Tsou, Wang and Tzeng 2006, Kirsch and Bes 2017). Kirsch (2012), for instance, demonstrated that English primary school children consolidated vocabulary and acquired new words and phrases through listening to a story with repetitive structures. The children were tested after 6weeks and were shown to have retained the new vocabulary.

Using stories in language learning classes can be daunting because beginners may lack the vocabulary to follow the plot. It is important, therefore, that teachers choose appropriate stories and scaffold the learners' comprehension using mime, gestures and actions, modulating the tone of voice, pointing to pictures and repeating key phrases (Heathfield 2014). Teachers

promote comprehension by asking learners to retell stories with or without props. Morrow (2001) found that the practice of retelling stories encouraged language use, furthered comprehension and increased the syntactic complexity of the learners' productions. Looking at studies on digital storytelling, Di Blas and Paolini (2013), Flewitt, Messer and Kucirkova (2014) and Pellerin (2014) reported that the storytelling apps investigated involved the children in playful and collaborative activities that motivated them to record and edit text. The learners improved their listening and speaking skills. Kirsch and Bes (2017) showed that the joint construction of stories on the app iTEO and the discussions of these oral texts enabled primary school children in Luxembourg to develop oral skills in the target languages German and French, learned from Year 1 and Year 2 respectively. For instance, Lina, Aaron and Lee pointed out wrong agreements and mistakes in pronunciation both during the recording of a French text and after its replay.

Would primary school pupils learning foreign languages in other countries use iTEO as productively? Kirsch asked a primary school teacher in London to use the tool in the classroom. Unlike the teachers in Luxembourg, Ms Smith, who decided to take part in this brief study, did not attend a professional development course on the implementation of the tool.

THE USE OF iTEO IN FRENCH LESSONS IN LONDON

The following section describes how the English teacher in the vignette and her class used iTEO in four French lessons. The section will raise questions about the teaching of pronunciation that will be addressed in the final section.

A brief investigation of iTEO in England

In September 2015, Ms Smith, a young and enthusiastic teacher of a Year 6 class in London, implemented iTEO in her weekly half-hour French lessons. Her class was attended by 25 children of which 16 were bilingual with 2 who spoke French at home. Ms Smith, who had taken a degree in French and spent a year in France, aimed at developing positive attitudes and some basic skills in French. Her syllabus was based on stories and songs. She also liked project work as it helped her embed French in the wider curriculum. The children in Year 6 were beginners but had learned some French with Ms Smith in Year 5. They had, for example, covered topics such as food, sports and clothes. During the project on clothes they learned some basic vocabulary, made some clothes and organised a catwalk where they presented their collection in French. The written notes helped them remember what to say. Ms Smith hoped that iTEO would encourage the pupils to speak, make them aware of pronunciation and improve their skills. As explained in the vignette, the pupils had good listening skills and were eager to write but hesitated as soon as it came to speaking. She feared that pronunciation was holding them back.

From September to December 2015 a student assistant and I collected data. We video-recorded three lessons where the teacher and the pupils used iTEO, interviewed Ms Smith once, and interviewed Alice, Sarah, Lucy, Mary, Mike, Tom, the six focus children, on four occasions. In total, we collected 4 hours of audio- and video-recordings. These data offer a glimpse into the use of iTEO and the affordances of the tool for developing speaking and pronunciation skills. At this point it is important to note that iTEO was not developed specifically to improve pronunciation.

Using iTEO in the French lessons

During the first two sessions Ms Smith introduced phrases enabling the pupils to introduce themselves, that is, give their name, mention their age and the name of their home town, and indicate their likes and dislikes. They also learned to describe locations. Excerpts of model texts on the whiteboard read *Bonjour. Je m'appelle Marie. J'ai 10 ans. J'habite à Paris. J'aime lire. Je n'aime pas le foot. Il y a des fleurs, des arbres, des forêts, des montagnes.* In each lesson, Ms Smith read the text aloud to model pronunciation, gestured and mimed, actioned, and pointed to pictures to aid comprehension. She then asked for translations. Once the pupils understood the meaning, she asked them to produce a written text based on the model seen in her lesson. The pupils made use of a word bank and supported each other. They worked enthusiastically and drafted up to five sentences in a few minutes. Alice, for example, wrote *Bonjour Je m'appelle Alice. J'habite à London. J'ai onze ans. J'adore les croissants. J'aime le foot.* Sarah composed *Je aussi habite dans une village. Il y a des maisons et des arbres.* Next, the children read the text aloud to a peer or the class. Having noticed some mistakes, Ms Smith drilled some of the mispronounced words. She had the class repeat these in chorus after her. In the third lesson, the pupils wrote a French story. Many began to write a text in English that they intended to translate later into French. Others worked on their text at home using the internet to find translations. Three of the focal children explained in an interview that they used their parents' mobile phones and computer websites to learn new words. They depicted these as helpful learning devices.

Ms Smith used iTEO in two lessons. She recorded herself twice reading a text. She then asked the pupils to listen carefully to the replay, thereby providing more input. She had the text displayed on the whiteboard so that the pupils could listen to her and read at the same time. Once, she asked the pupils how they could improve their pronunciation skills with the help of iTEO. Mike suggested listening carefully to himself and Sarah explained she could record the native French-speakers in the class and listen to them. The focus children offered further ideas during the interviews. Five of them declared that iTEO was helpful because it encourages feedback and allows repeated listening which enabled them to notice mistakes. Ms Smith commented similarly:

> For them to hear their text back helps with pronunciation, with accuracy. And they can hear themselves back and correct their work. I think it helped their pronunciation and it will continue to.

> (Ms Smith, interview 2015)

Ms Smith had many ideas of how to implement iTEO in her class and within the school. She thought of recording the beginning of a text and have the pupils continue it. She also intended to put audio files with the recordings of her class on the school blog in order to provide pupils with additional opportunities to listen to texts and practise at home. She planned to play some iTEO stories to younger learners in assemblies and have the Year 6 pupils create visual props to help the audience understand. Furthermore, she envisaged recording model texts in French and giving these to colleagues less confident in teaching French.

The pupils' use of iTEO

In each of the lessons, the focus children recorded a text they had written. When unsure about the pronunciation of a word, they asked their peer or the latter assisted without being asked to do so. Sarah, for example, pronounced *arbres* in an unintelligible way and Mary modelled it correctly. Tom stumbled over the words *et* and *j'aime*. Alice offered a translation and modelled the pronunciation. Once the pupils had recorded their text, they listened attentively to its replay. At first, not being used to hearing their voice, they laughed. But they quickly stopped and turned their attention to the recorded text. While they listened, they sometimes pointed at the corresponding written word on the text in front of them. At other times, the children read their text silently, mouthing it, along with the audio file. On occasions, they seemed to be aware that there was an issue with pronunciation but no child knew how to correct it. When Tom was unsure about the pronunciation of a name, he and Alice listened several times to the replay before they agreed it was correct. Some pupils used the replay function to listen to the recordings of peers. They did not, however, choose to listen to the model texts recorded by Ms Smith.

Pronunciation difficulties

Before looking in greater detail at ways of teaching pronunciation, it is useful to examine some of the pupils' mistakes. The following are Alice and Sarah's sentences. The first column in the table is their written text, the second its transcription using the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA), and the third the oral text. Bold indicates that a syllable is stressed and the italics refer to grammatical mistakes. The incorrect words and the mispronounced sounds are underlined and represented in IPA in the fourth column.

Written text	IPA version	Alice's spoken text	Mistakes in IPA
Bonjour	[bɔ̃ʒuːʁ]	Bonjor	[vbɔ̃ʒɔː]
Je m'appelle Alice	[ʒə mapɛl alis]	Je m'appelle Alice	
J'habite à London	[ʒabit a lɔ̃dɔ]	Ji_ habite à London	[ʒi habit]
J'ai onze ans	[ʒe ɔ̃z ɑ̃]	J'a onze ans	[ʒeɪ ʌnz]
J'adore les croissants	[ʒadɔʁ le kʁwasɑ̃]	J'adore les croissants	[kʁwasɑ̃z]
J'aime le foot	[ʒɛm lə fut]	J'aime le foot	
Je suis un chat	[ʒə sɥiz-ɛ̃ ʃa]	Je suisse un chat	[sɥis ʃat]

Written text	IPA version	Sarah's spoken text	Mistakes in IPA
Je aussi habite dans une village. Il y a des maisons et des arbres	[ʒabit osi dɑ̃ ɛ̃ vilaʒ yn mɛzɔ̃ dɑ̃. il j amɛzɔ̃ e dez aʁbʁ]	Je aussi **hab**itat dans une **vill**age. Il y a des **ma**sson et des arb**res**	[ʒabitat dʌnz] [mazɔ̃n] [aʁbʁz]

These texts present some of the typical pronunciation mistakes the focus children made during the lessons. *At the segmental level*, they pronounced some vowels or

consonants incorrectly, at times because they were influenced by the English pronunciation. Many pupils, for example, pronounced the letter 'e' in the word *je* like they would in English, thus producing [ʒi] instead of [ʒə]. In the excerpt above, the diphthongs [uː] as in *bonjour* and [ε] as in *maison* were mispronounced. The six focus children also frequently pronounced letters that are 'silent' in French, in particular 's', 't' and 'e'. They would, for example, articulate the 's' in *Paris, les, ans* and *suis,* as well as the 't' in *chat* and *forêt.* Some pupils aspirated the 'h' like Alice in *habite.* When words were similar in English and French, pupils used the English word. Thus, they said London, habitat and rivers instead of *Londres, habite* and *rivières.* When pupils had heard words only a few times or never (e.g. *natation* and *maison*) they tended to mispronounce them. Apart from mistakes at the *segmental level,* they tended to stress the wrong syllables. In her first sentence Sarah stressed a wrong syllable twice and she emphasised two rather than one word. The syntax was also incorrect leaving the sentence incomprehensible.

Having a record of the pupils' text on iTEO allowed Ms Smith to analyse their oral productions. A detailed analysis can help teachers select appropriate exercises as well as reflect on the teaching approach. Ms Smith, for example, was able to notice that a large number of mistakes occurred because the pupils recorded words they had chosen from a vocabulary list but had not practised yet. Additionally, they were reading their text, and in doing so encountered letter combinations that were at times unfamiliar to them. Ms Smith was able to improve the children's pronunciation by focusing more on their speaking skills and less on writing. She could have chosen some of the exercises presented below.

TEACHING PRONUNCIATION

Reviewing classroom-based studies on pronunciation, Thompson and Derwing (2014) found that 52 per cent of the teachers focused on segmentals, 30 per cent on supra-segmentals, and 30 per cent on both. The authors reported that teaching about pronunciation can be successful. Studies investigating the efficiency of phonological instruction showed that learners improved their pronunciation (Derwing and Munro 2005, Saito 2011). Thompson and Derwing (2014), however, warned that these studies are often based on a limited set of pronunciation features and, therefore, questioned the extent to which the learners' speech became more intelligible and comprehensible. By contrast, this does appear to be the case in studies focusing on suprasegmental features or both segmental and suprasegmental ones (Derwing, Munro and Wiebe 1997, Derwing, Munro and Wiebe 1998).

The teaching approaches reviewed in the literature differ widely but whatever the approach, researchers and practitioners would agree on a number of principles for teaching pronunciation. The latter are not language-specific. In my examples, however, I will only refer to French because this was the language taught in the case study. The readers will need to apply their subject knowledge in the language they will teach and find similar examples.

Guiding principles

1   The teaching of pronunciation needs to take place in a supportive learning environment where pupils have opportunities to engage in meaningful interactions.

The focus can shift from meaning to form, here pronunciation, when needed. Celce-Murcia (1983) suggested that teachers identify frequent pronunciation mistakes of their students, find words or phrases including the problematic words, design communicative tasks that encourage the use of these words and develop drills to practise and consolidate.

2   Learners should have access to models, including native speakers. Listening to these provides them with opportunities to imitate, practise the language and get feedback.

3   Feedback is a driving force in improving pronunciation (Saito and Lyster 2012). Therefore, teachers as well as peers should give constructive feedback thereby focusing both on positive aspects as well as those requiring modifications.

4   Teachers should raise the learners' awareness of phonetic rules but this should not happen in isolation. Pronouncing sounds in a new language is not only a physical phenomenon: pupils must also learn to conceptualise sounds differently. They may, for example, erroneously believe that they need to pronounce every single word in a sentence, and, therefore, do so. In reality, a speaker produces one stream of sounds that the listener subsequently segments into isolated words to make sense of the message. Pronouncing every single word in French is a mistake. Some sounds, like in Sarah's utterance *il y a*, need to be contracted. Pupils must also learn which syllables to stress. Unless they know, they may adopt the same pattern as in their home language and create unintelligible phrases in the target language. In the English language, for example, there is no rule that explains which syllable of a word needs to be stressed. In French, the final syllable of a word or group of words is stressed. In English, one can stress any word in a sentence, depending on what one wishes to emphasise. By contrast, a French speaker stresses the final syllable of a word or word group in a sentence if these are connected and if there is no pause. These examples show that teachers need to have a good understanding of the phonetic system of the target language.

5   Learners need to learn how to monitor their speech. Listening to one's own utterances while speaking is difficult but this skill can be learned in activities of 'critical listening' which Gilakjani and Ahmadi (2011) consider key to improving pronunciation. As seen above, computer programmes and apps such as iTEO that allow users to record speech and listen to it can play an important role. The language is materialised, projected into distance, and learners can discuss and analyse it. Studies on digital storytelling demonstrated that pupils rehearsed oral text, monitored speech and corrected themselves. With practice, the pupils learn to notice particular aspects of pronunciation and monitor speech.

Practising segmental and suprasegmental elements

With regard to segmental elements, several textbooks suggest teaching phonetic transcriptions, the most common type being the IPA used in the transcripts of Alice and Sarah's sentences. Beginners learn this unfamiliar system as well as the meaning and spelling of a word and its use in sentences. However, the isolated practice of phonology and pronunciation rules does not improve pronunciation. It is more beneficial to teach pupils about sound articulation and discrimination. Some examples follow. Using simple diagrams or computer programmes, teachers can visualise the position of the tongue and lips when articulating particular sounds. English pupils learning French may benefit,

for example, from seeing the mouth position of the sound [u], a rarity in English. They will notice that the tongue is situated high and towards the front of the mouth as if they produced the sound [i] (as in 'to see'). They need to round their lips to produce [u] and stretch them to articulate the sound [i]. They can practise these sounds while observing their mouth position in a mirror. Learners may also find it useful to touch their vocal cords when producing particular sounds. The latter vibrate with voiced sounds (e.g. the English [g]) but not with unvoiced ones (e.g. [k].) Depending on the language learned, beginners may also like to work on aspiration. Aspiration refers to the gentle airstream produced with the articulation of a sound. Learners can feel the airstream by placing a hand in front of their mouth. In English, the voiceless sounds [p], [t] and [k] are aspirated when they come before a stressed vowel and are not preceded by an [s]. Examples are pot [pʰat], top [tʰap] and cot [kʰat]. The English language has more aspirated sounds than the French and this may explain why some pupils in the Year 6 class aspirated several words including those beginning with [h]. Among the most popular exercises are sound discrimination activities, especially those including minimal pairs (Mukhtar 2013). Minimal pairs help learners distinguish sounds and practise them. This is particularly useful for sounds found in one language but not another. Working on the phonemes [i] and [u], such pairs could include the words *dit – du* and *nid – nu*. As always, drills should be meaningful, brief and embedded in a meaningful context.

Websites, programmes and practitioners suggest a number of ways of developing the learners' awareness of stress, rhythm and intonation. Pupils can practise syllable stress by clapping the syllables of a word softly or loudly depending on the stress. The word *téléphone*, with three syllables and the stress on the last one, would sound soft-soft-loud. When clapping words in French, pupils will soon notice that the stress is always on the last syllable unlike in the English language where the stress can vary. Examples are *grand-mère, Paris, parisien, Méditerranée* and **grand**mother, **Paris**, **Paris**ian, Mediterranean. A similar exercise can be carried out with sentences. Teachers can progressively lengthen sentences in French and the pupils will notice that the stress remains on the last syllable. An example illustrates the case:

Je visite ma grand-**mère.**
Je visite ma grand-mère dans sa mai**son.**
Je visite ma grand-mère dans sa maison à **Paris.** (I'm visiting my grandmother. I'm visiting my grandmother in her house. I'm visiting my grandmother in her house in Paris.)

Once the pupils have recognised a pattern, the teacher may mention the rule.

Regarding intonation (the varying pitch levels of speech), a beginner in French needs to learn the 'melody' of declarative, exclamative, imperative and interrogative sentences. Imperatives, for instance, are pronounced with a sharp fall at the end (*Ouvrez le livre!*). Pupils can learn about intonation through tapping the rhythm of an utterance or humming its melody.

Songs and stories are ideal when focusing simultaneously on segmental and supra-segmental features. Both are characterised by repetitive speech, rhythm and, at times, rhymes, which make this text genre enjoyable and memorable. Songs and stories familiarise learners with sounds, rhythm and intonation patterns and help them notice that oral speech is connected. When working on pronunciation, teachers can ask pupils to discriminate between specific sounds, find rhyming words and clap the rhythm.

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s are *grand-*
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ast syllable.

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This chapter has shown that storytelling on iTEO can encourage pupils to collaboratively produce texts in foreign languages and contribute to the development of language skills. Pupils learn to monitor and analyse their speech owing to iTEO's replay that materialises the language used. They learn to modify their speech with the support of more knowledgeable peers and teachers. Teachers help pupils by setting meaningful tasks, giving them the space to explore and produce texts, and focusing their attention on form when productions are unintelligible or incomprehensible. They can improve pronunciation with specific exercises at the segmental or suprasegmental level following some key principles outlined in this chapter.

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