
Using Phonetic Transcription for Pronunciation Learning

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine how phonetic transcriptions aid students in learning pronunciation. One effective strategy for helping students with their pronunciation is to use phonetic transcription. This can demonstrate the exact articulation and production of sounds in words or sentences. In this classroom research, the researcher provides pronunciation instruction and provides a phonetic transcription. The study was conducted during the odd semester of the 2023–2024 academic year. The P1 class from the first semester was selected to participate in the study. The findings indicated that, when pronunciation lessons first started, some students had trouble differentiating certain English language sounds and knowing how to use them in their pronunciation. They improve their learning after going through a learning cycle and are able to use dictionaries to independently check their pronunciation. Alternatively, they could continue their study habits until the test. The test's outcomes were far superior to those of the earlier exercises because the majority of the participants performed well on the oral exam. The students' ability to apply phonetic symbols to their pronunciation and their growing familiarity with them demonstrate a notable improvement in their pronunciation skills. In summary, phonetic transcription has the potential to improve students' pronunciation.

Keywords: *phonetic transcription, pronunciation*

Introduction

These days, it is crucial for us to learn English as an additional language. We need to master four language skills to learn the language. The four main language skills that one must acquire in English learning are speaking, listening, writing, and reading (Sharma, 2021). Reading and listening are included in the category of receptive skills in English. Conversely, writing and speaking are considered productive skills. Speaking is one of the hardest skills to get proficient at. The secret to correctly pronouncing a language is its pronunciation. Pronunciation is necessary in this situation to help with communication. The four English language skills are also integrated with it (Kenworthy, 2005). Being proficient in pronouncing words correctly allows us to articulate language sounds with competence.

Aji and Tsojon (2014) assert that pronunciation is essential to learning a second language. The reason for this is that mispronounced words taint or damage the process of communicating. Because they don't know enough about phonetics and phonology, teachers of English as a second language occasionally ignore pronunciation. In English learning, pronunciation helps to connect the phonetics, phonology, and pronunciation by providing the reader with a research-based strategy for English language teaching (Low, 2014). Every English speaker needs to have accurate pronunciation. Proper pronunciation is essential for successful speaking, particularly when interacting with individuals from different linguistic backgrounds or speech communities (Sitanggang, Ismayati, Bahari, & Lubis, 2023).

Teaching pronunciation can be done in a few different ways. Drilling is the method that is typically used for pronunciation. According to Ziyodullayevich (2024), drilling is the process of repeating words and phrases in a way that is coordinated between the teacher and the students. This allows the students to concentrate on pronunciation to improve memorization. Students must pronounce the words correctly when using the drilling method, which takes

more time (Litunen & Mompen, 2015). Additional options include providing pronunciation examples through audios and videos.

For certain students, learning pronunciation can be difficult. First, because they learn the language they were taught primarily through listening to or repeating what others have said, they are not very familiar with the course materials. When students find and pronounce a word on their own, they simply say what is written without considering how the word sounds. One way to get around this issue is to use phonetic transcription. One option for improving the pupils' pronunciation is phonetic transcription. Compared to other methods that require students to read, watch, and listen, this approach is far superior. The main cause of this is that IPA (International Phonetic Alphabet) is the foundation for phonetic transcription. This can demonstrate the exact way that the words are pronounced. Students can quickly determine the proper pronunciation by using phonetic transcription, which allows for direct pronunciation (Litunen & Mompen, 2015). Additionally, students can identify words on their own by using the phonetic transcription in a dictionary when they are having trouble pronouncing them because they are familiar with the symbols for the sounds that the words represent.

Phonetic transcriptions are divided into two categories. There are two types of transcription: broad and narrow. Each representation is either general or specific, as their names imply (Ebrahimi, 2010). The term "broad transcription" refers to the assignment of extremely basic symbols to represent a word's phonetic pronunciation. It illustrates the proper way to pronounce the sound. Narrow transcription, on the other hand, refers to more phonetic details in showing the pronunciation of words (Ladefoged, 2006); it is transcription that attempts to record every single phonological feature (sound) of an utterance. Since this study's transcription clearly depicts the sounds' symbols, the researcher used a broad transcription technique (Winiewska, 2000). The fundamental pronunciation was introduced using the symbols found in the pronunciation learning materials. In it, vowel and consonant sounds are introduced.

In pronunciation classes, there are a few benefits to employing phonetic transcription (Hasselwood, 2013). First, phonetic transcription shows the distinct English word sounds that we heard. By doing this, the listeners won't become distracted by similar sounds. Secondly, phonetic transcription indicates the correct pronunciation of the word or phrase. Students who struggle with pronouncing certain words can locate or recognize them on their own, unaffected by the accents or speech patterns of others. Third, by simply examining the transcription, phonetic transcription can also be used to identify pronunciation mistakes made by students. Finally, it saves time—particularly when teaching. Since the students are already familiar with the transcription, there will not be any more drilling sessions. They will be able to use the phonetic transcription to correct their own mistakes and understand how to pronounce the exercise. Students can practice both oral and written learning activities by learning phonetic transcription (Sitanggang, Ismayati, Bahari, & Lubis, 2023).

Methodology

This research was classroom action research. The aim of using this method is to determine the effectiveness of using phonetic transcription in the introduction to pronunciation class. The research was conducted in the English Language and Culture Study Program of Widya Dharma Pontianak. The population of the research was the first-semester class. The researcher chose the P1 class as the sample for the research, which consists of 44 students.

The tests and audio documentation that are used in this study serve as the research instruments. These tools were used to collect pronunciation data from the students. The study was conducted during a few pronunciation class meetings. There were written and audio practice exams. The first practice, which served as the introduction to the phonetic transcription, was given to the students during the third meeting. Written and practiced reading aloud were the tests administered during the sixth meeting. In this exam, the students

were instructed to read aloud the test results and record their voices as they read their responses. For the last test, the students will have the oral test that was conducted for the midterm test. Those tests will show the results of the students' ability to learn pronunciation using phonetic transcription.

Findings and Discussion

Findings

The researcher assigned the students to study basic pronunciation as the first topic for learning pronunciation from the first to the third meeting. In this instance, the researcher presented the phonetics and IPA. These comprised the vowels and consonants. Students were introduced to the IPA symbols for consonants as well as a few instances of consonants in words during the first meeting. Additionally, the students can look up additional instances of consonants in other English words. Additionally, the researcher provided examples of words with phonetic transcriptions. The following table displays the 24 consonants:

Table 1. Consonant Sounds

/p/	Pen, Attempt, Top	/s/	Sit, Basic, Hexagon, Across, Dance
/b/	But, Abstract, Cab	/z/	Zebra, Crazy, Cousin, Watches
/t/	Ten, Realistic, Walked	/ʃ/	Should, Pressure, Nation, Ocean wish
/d/	Dog, Under, Bed	/ʒ/	Genre, Casual, Leisure, Vision, Beige
/tʃ/	Chicken, Kitchen, Speech	/m/	Make, Common, Home
/dʒ/	June, Budget, Change	/n/	Nice, Dinner, Fine
/k/	Can, Kite, Quite, Technical, Rock	/ŋ/	Singer, Younger, Bang, Uncle
/g/	Go, Finger, Example, Bug	/h/	Hat, Who, Behave
/f/	Photo, Coffee, Laugh	/l/	Like, Help, Travel
/v/	Vote, Convince, Give, of	/r/	Right, Wrong, Parent
/θ/	Think, Athlete, Month	/w/	Wait, One, Swim, Quit
/ð/	That, Brother	/j/	Yes, Cute, Few

Vowel sounds were then introduced to the students in the second meeting. The students participated in the same class activities as the previous meeting, which included introducing them to the IPA symbols for vowels and providing examples of how they appear in English words. Vowel sounds come in two varieties: diphthongs and monophthongs. There are 12 monophthongs. Vowels classified as monophthongs have the tongue remaining in the same position. There are five long monophthongs and seven short monophthongs. Then the students were asked to explore more examples of monophthongs in English words for further discussion of this topic.

Table 2. Monophthongs

Shorts Monophthongs		Long Monophthongs	
/ɪ/	Sit, Bit	/i:/	Seat, Sheet
/ʊ/	Good, Should	/u:/	Food, Through
/e/	Pen, Said	/ɜ:/	Girl, Word
/ə/	Teacher, Polite	/ɔ:/	Four, Walk
/æ/	Ant, Cat	/ɑ:/	Ask, Fart
/ʌ/	Duck, Some		
/ɒ/	Hot, What		

Students were introduced to diphthongs after finishing their study of monophthongs. The opening exercise was the same as the one before it. Eight diphthongs exist for vowel

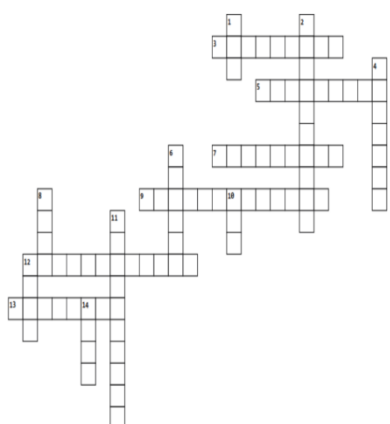
sounds. Diphthongs are vowels where the tongue is positioned differently. Diphthongs are essentially two vowels combined.

Table 3. Diphthongs

/ɪə/	Near, Here
/eɪ/	Day, Rain
/ʊə/	Pure, Mature
/ɔɪ/	Toy, Coin
/əʊ/	Go, Boat
/eə/	Hair, Where
/aɪ/	Buy, Like
/aʊ/	Cow, House

The researcher asked the students to review all IPA symbols for vowel and consonant sounds during their third meeting. Next, some phonetic transcriptions were given to the students to identify the word. Students were instructed to use the word from the phonetic transcription to complete the crossword puzzle. The first step in learning phonetic transcription is to practice it. Students could quickly locate the words in the crossword puzzle by looking up the IPA symbol.

Figure 1. Phonetic Transcription 1st exercise



Across

3. /kɒnsənənt/

5. /ɪk'spensɪv/

7. /hæləʊ'i:n/

9. /prə'nansi'eɪʃən/

12. /pɒ'tɪsəpeɪtəd/

13. /'stɪləbəl/

Down

1. /zu:/

2. /wɒ'teɪ'melən/

4. /meɪʒə/

6. /'nu:dl/

8. /aɪ'diə/

10. /kæt/

11. /ju:nə'vɜ:səti/

12. /peɪz/

14. /bʊk/

Based on the observation, the student appeared excited to solve the crossword puzzle. They were permitted to open their course materials during this exercise, but not the dictionary. This could help the students to be able to identify the phonetic transcription based on the phonetic symbols they have learned.

The students learn how to use a dictionary for pronunciation during their fifth meeting. Students were first taught about the components of the English dictionary and how to use it for pronunciation. The activity's example was provided by the researcher. Next, the students had to locate the phonetic transcription of the practice's initial section. In the second portion of the exercise, students were required to use the phonetic transcriptions to identify the phrases and sentences.

Table 4. Second Exercise

Late	Earthquake
Comfortable	Neighbour
Perfume	Furniture
Toothpaste	Toothbrush
Chocolate	Tragedy
/ri:d ə bu:k/	/du: ju spi:k 'ɪŋɡlɪʃ/
/meɪk ðə bed/	/wi həv tu: dɒgz/
/brʌʃ jə ti:θ/	/maɪ neɪm ɪz 'pi:tə/
/aɪ lɪv ɪn speɪn/	/hi: ɪz 'sevn jɪz əʊld/
/haʊ əʊld ə ju/	/aɪ 'ɔ:lwəz get ʌp 'zɪli/
/ʃi: ɪz maɪ 'sɪstə/	/hi: 'sʌmtaɪmz kʊks lʌntʃ/

Once the exercise is completed, they should record their pronunciation response and submit it to Google Classroom. These are the results:

Figure 2. 2nd Test

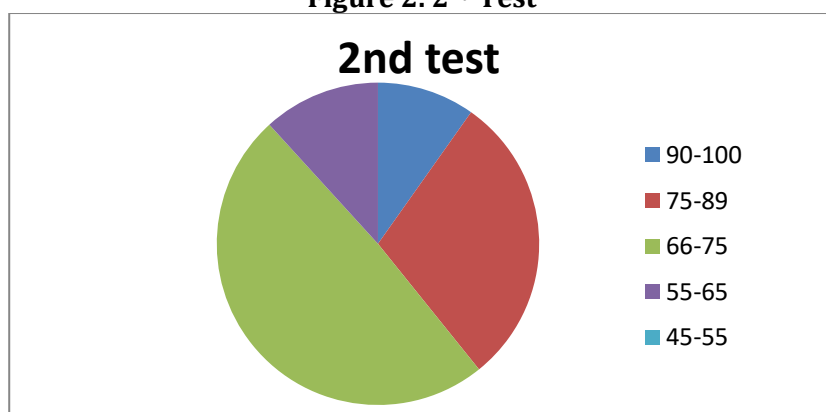


Table 5. Oral test

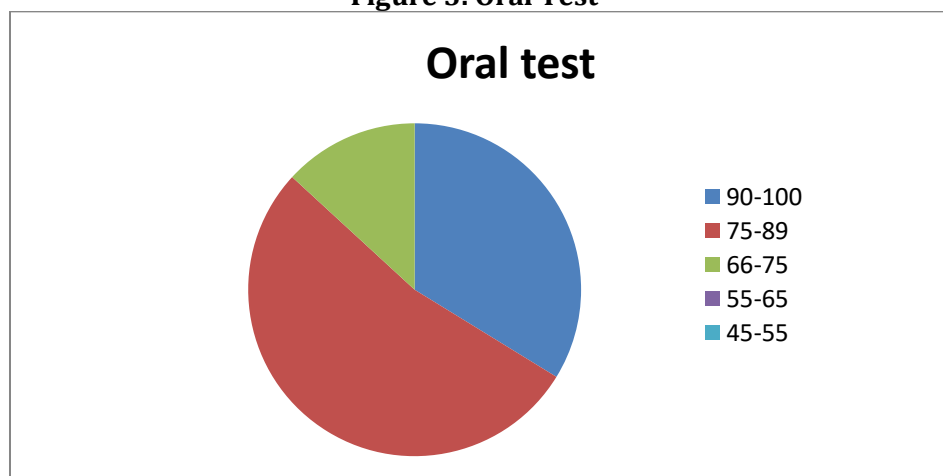
Word phonetic transcription	Short sentence
1. /'brɪndʒ/	1. /weə dʌz hi: lɪv/?
2. /steɪk/	2. /maɪ 'feɪvərɪt 'kʌlə ɪz jeləʊ/
3. /'dʒʌmpə(r)/	3. /aɪ 'ɔ:lwəz get ʌp 'zɪli/
4. /bæŋk/	4. /maɪ mʌm 'nevə 'dɑ:nsɪz/
5. /tʃɜ:tʃ/	5. /ʃi: ɪz frɒm'æfrɪkə/
6. /'mʌðə(r)/	6. /ʃi: həz braʊn 'aɪz/
7. /'eəpɔ:t/	7. /hi: 'sʌmtaɪmz kʊks lʌntʃ/
8. /'ʌŋkl/	8. /maɪ neɪm ɪz 'pi:tə/
9. /tʃi:z/	9. /weə ɪz jə 'pensl/?
10. /dʒi:nz/	10. /maɪ dæd 'wɔ:təd ðə plɑ:nts/
11. /'sɪməmə/	11. /maɪ neɪm ɪz 'pi:tə/
12. /ʃu:z/	12. /ðə 'beɪbɪ wəz stɪl 'i:tɪŋ/
13. /'eəpɔ:t/	13. /aɪ fəd ɪ:t mɔ: frʊt/
14. /'aɪs kri:m/	14. /ə ju 'hæpɪ tə'deɪ/?
15. /greɪps/	15. /ə ju 'hæpɪ tə'deɪ/?
16. /bæŋk/	16. /ʃi: ɪz frɒm'ə'merəkə/

According to the data above, their pronunciation assignment received the highest score of 75–89. It is clear from this that many students still struggle with word pronunciation. The students who were able to achieve the minimum score of 75 were considered successful and passed this test. The researcher therefore took the oral midterm exam on its second try.

The oral test result is the final pronunciation. Students will take a pronunciation test three times during the oral exam. In the initial sessions, the focus will be on identifying words that have the IPA symbol. They were required to read some phonetic transcriptions of words during the second session. They were then required to read some sentences that had been phonetically transcribed for the final session. The following is how the exercise was displayed.

This is the outcome. The majority of students received scores between 75 and 100, indicating that they passed the test. It demonstrates that the pupils' proficiency in pronouncing words correctly using phonetic transcriptions has improved. The majority of them had achieved the test's minimum score.

Figure 3. Oral Test



Discussion

Many of the students were able to read the phonetic transcription of the words in the first pronunciation practice cycle. They had a good understanding of how to pronounce the words correctly and could easily recognize the phonetic transcription. The pronunciation results show some variations when they were given a different type of exercise, which is the second exercise. A few students were experiencing trouble decoding the phonetic transcriptions of certain words or sentences. They mispronounced what they had read instead of how it should have sounded.

Take the word "chocolate," for instance. The phonetic transcription of chocolate is /'tʃɒklət/ or /tʃɑ:kələt/, but some of the students said tʃɑ:kalət or tʃɑ:tʃələt. Another mispronounced word is the word "usual." The phonetic transcription is /'ju:ʃəl/ but was pronounced as ʒ:θkwek, Furniture 'fɜ:nɪʃə mispronounced as 'fɜ:nɪtɜ:, Education edʒu'keɪʃən mispronounce as edu'keɪʃən. Tragedy 'trædʒədi mispronounce as 'trægədi, and lastly, the word Neighbor neɪbə was mispronounced as nebə. The most frequent error in the phonetic transcription of the sentence was /maɪ neɪm ɪz 'pi:tə/, which was mispronounced as "my name is pita." An additional instance of their error was their mispronunciation of /hi: 'sɑmtaɪmz kuks lɑntʃ/ as He occasionally cooks launch.

Since most of the students performed better on the previous test, they did well on the midterm oral exam. Compared to the previous review exercise, they made some mistakes that were better. During their oral exam, they were able to recognize the words and sentences without having to repeat themselves too much. They were acquainted with the test's symbols from the oral exam. A large number of them were adept at recognizing the phonetic

transcription. When they are unsure of how to pronounce a word or sentence, they immediately correct it. Based on the results of the pronunciation test, we can conclude that the students are already proficient in pronouncing words correctly because they understand how to use the IPA symbols. This can help students pronounce words more correctly.

Conclusion

The researcher comes to the conclusion that phonetic transcription can help students pronounce words more accurately after doing the study. We can see from this study that the students struggled to identify the words on the worksheet. Following the second exercise, students are more comfortable using IPA and are able to independently determine how to pronounce the words. For the majority of students in the P1 ELC class at the University of Widya Dharma Pontianak, pronunciation skills have improved and grown significantly.

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