Using Recordings & Brainstorming Board Race for Promoting Students' Aural Phonological Awareness

Anwar Jawad Kadhim
Department of English, Al-Yarmouk College University, Iraq

Abstract

Pronunciation is important in all spoken communication in English because if we mispronounce a word, people will likely to misunderstand us. This paper is about teaching diphthongs by using recordings and brainstorming board race in Iraqi private colleges as well as how audio-visual media and games are used in learning. The integration of games in the classroom is important as it creates a fun and relaxing situation to students during the learning process, therefore engaging students to answer teacher's questions and to promptly provide suggestions during the class.

Keywords: Teaching Pronunciation, Diphthongs, Brainstorming Board, Recordings

1- Introduction

Pronunciation is no longer a neglected part of language learning courses and all who work in this field realize "it's essential roles in oral communication, listener's perception and speaker's identity" (Liu, 2008). Maybe it seems too strange, but if we have a precise look at the roles of pronunciation, we see the large effects of it on many aspects of our life. It has many central roles both in our personal and social life. The roles such as promoting our social status and rhetoric, power of words, covering of our lacks and weaknesses. As individuals, we create our personality via our speaking and show our dependence to a social group in a society. Pronunciation as an important aspect of speaking ability can influence social status of speakers, especially non-natives, in ESL context. Good pronunciation creates a strong sense of identity for learner in the community of target language, but poor pronunciation leads to the loss of identity.

As Arslan (2013) concluded "in non-native EFL settings, poor pronunciation skills may result in failure in spoken communication".

Objectives of the Study:
The aims of the present study were to see: (a) what techniques do language teachers prefer most in teaching diphthong vowel sounds to their students;(b) To find if brainstorming board race technique has positive impact in teaching diphthong vowel sounds or not); and (c)How to use brainstorming to find out what students know about pronunciation of English diphthong sounds ?

Pedagogical Impact of the Study:
This study is one of the few studies which deals with important issues in development of strategies for promoting aural phonological awareness. The purpose of this research is to engage language teachers in a process of continual professional development. It provides the means for teachers to take the initiative themselves in pedagogic planning. An ability to speak well, persuasively is something that most of learners would hope to achieve in their first language. It is also an objective for many learners of a foreign language, especially those who wish to study or travel to English speaking countries.

Hypotheses of the study:
It is hypothesized that:
1- Using recordings & brainstorming race for teaching diphthongs can promote students' aural phonological awareness.
2- There is a significant difference between the mean scores of the students who are taught by using brainstorming race sounds and recordings, and the mean scores of the students who are taught by traditional method.

2. Review of Literature

In many English language classrooms, teaching pronunciation diphthong sounds are granted the least attention, because there are many students who have not been able to pronounce English vowels properly. There are many definitions of pronunciation: Celce-Murcia as cited by Goodwin (2006) states that pronunciation is the language feature that most readily identifies speakers as non- native. Since it can identify us as non-native, we do not need to pronounce like the way native speaker do. However, we need to be minimally intelligible while speaking. She added that when we find students that find difficulty in speaking, we as teachers need to assist them through improving their pronunciation (Celce Murcia et. al. 2010).

Seidlhofer (1995 cited in Celce-Murcia 2010, p. 117) says "Pronunciation is never an end in itself but a mean so fnegotiating meaning in discourse, embedded in a specific socio cultural and interpersonal context." Producing sentences will have different meaning related to the way people pronounce sentences. Indeed, pronunciation needs to be taught to students. Here, pronunciation is merely treated as the act that happens in speaking and listening. Pronunciation is the act or manner of pronouncing words, utterance of speech. In other words, it can also be said that it is a way of speaking a word, especially a way that is accepted or generally understood.

English pronunciation has problems as well, for example with non-native learners of English the predominant problem is usually how to pronounce an unknown word in a written text. According to Ken Worthy Joanne et.al. (2002) that "The English spelling system is rich in both regularities and irregularities which present problems to non-native learners (and to English– speaking children learning to write their language)". General observation suggests that it is those who start to learn English after their school years are most likely to have serious difficulties in acquiring intelligible pronunciation, with the degree of difficulty increasing markedly with age.

Pronunciation as one of the sub skills is very important in EFL classes and different teachers try to help their learners in the best way. Knowing the way of pronouncing a sample word is useful to transfer the information because mispronouncing a word may mislead the learners to transfer and obtain the information. It is believed that pronunciation is a manner the individuals pronounce a sample word, especially in a manner that is understood or accepted. It is also emphasized that pronunciation involves attending to the especial sounds of a language and also different aspects of speech like stress, intonation, vowel, consonants, rhythm and voice, and voiceless of different sounds. It is stated that the context of pronunciation teaching and also the importance of teaching the pronunciation in different EFL and ESL classes have seen important changes over the 50 years (Farm and & Pourgharib, 2013).

Pronunciation and its Role in EFL Classes
(Pourhosein Gilakjani and Ahmadi, 2011) considered the importance of listening as one of the most important main skills in EFL classes. They claimed that listening is now considered as much more essential in both SLA papers and EFL classes that includes different process of creating meaning and also deciphering from the messages of verbal and also non – verbal ones. They believed that listening skill instruction is not paid attention in the process of English language instruction. EFL students have important problems to comprehend English listening. Speaking and listening are not necessary parts of different curricula and course books and also the instructors do not seem to have taken care of the mentioned skills while they are designing their lessons. EFL learners have short information to understand and comprehend the listening.

Approaches for Teaching Pronunciation:
It is stated that there are three significant approaches to teach pronunciation namely analytic-linguistic approach, intuitive-imitative approach and integrative approach. The mentioned approaches are associated with different methods of language teaching. They are discussed as follows.
1-The intuitive-imitative approach
In the intuitive-imitative approach, it is supposed that a learner skill to imitate and listen to the sounds

and rhythms of the foreign language will give rise to the expanding of an agreeable frame of pronunciation without the intervening of each explicit data. Especial tools, like videos, websites, videotapes, computer-based programs, videos are enjoyed today for the present approach (Hismanoglu & Hismanoglu, 2010).

2- The analytic-linguistic approach

This approach considers explicit intervening of pedagogy related to pronunciation is in focus. The students are delivered with explicit data on pronunciation enjoying articulatory descriptions, phonetic alphabet, and vocal charts (Adibpour & Jam, 2014). The explicit data can be stated in various interactive speech websites and software. The analytic-linguistic approach was developed to concentrate on imitation and listening; however, it added using different aids like the phonetic alphabet (Terminsuppsats, 2008).

3-The integrative approach

Pronunciation is considered as an integral part of communication, rather than a separate drill. Pronunciation is studied within meaningful task-based exercise. Students enjoy pronunciation concentrated listening actions to facilitate the pronunciation learning. There is more concentration on the suprasegmentals of rhythm, stress, and intonation as studied in extended discourse over the phoneme and word level. Pronunciation is worked to satisfy the students' special needs. There is a dual-focus oral program of communication where the micro level teaching is concentrated on linguistic (i.e. phonetic phonological) competence by the use of segmental practices and the suprasegmentals, and the macro level attends to more universal elements of communicability, with the aim of developing sociolinguistics, discourse, and strategic competence by enjoying language for communicative goals.

Brainstorm Relay

The teacher can divide his class into teams of five to six students. Have each team stand in a line, and designate part of his front board for each team. Then tell his class the target sound they will be looking to include in the words they brainstorm. It might be a certain vowel sound, a consonant blend, or any other sound he wants them to be aware of. On go, one person from each team runs up to the board and writes down a word with that sound before returning to the back of his team's line. Then the next person goes. Continue for two to three minutes. The team which has the most correct words on its list at the end of the time wins the round (Alex Case, 2008).

Value Added Benefits of Games

Not only do games motivate students in a fun way offering interactive competitive learning environments, they also provide many other positive features. Games lighten the mood and this facilitates greater creativity and boost student's morale and interest (Shatz & Loschiavo, 2005). (Wyckoff and Pryor, 2003) say that a lightened mood can negate communication apprehension. Another key spin off from using games as a teaching methodology is the formative assessment element. Students are in a position to monitor their own progress and understanding of the subject material in a non-invasive manner (Wyckoff & Pryor, 2003). Games provide instant feedback for students and guidance in terms where to focus their learning effort and time. Shanahan et.al. (2006) note that 'Games [also] provide immediate feedback on student learning sufficiency prior to, rather than after, an exam'. In addition to students receiving instant feedback on their learning, teachers are also able to see clearly where learning gaps exist and allow this to inform their next class or revision sessions (Shanahan et.al. 2006).

Related Studies:

Media Erisa Kurniati (2014) claimed that Teaching Pronunciation by Using Games and Audio Visual develop students' pronunciation, the researcher hopes to know how to used games and audio visual media then combine it in learning. While Kumis Iwasaki and Riesa Ikeda (2012) sought to introduce successful examples of games and activities for teaching pronunciation in an intermediate to advanced-level University setting. Also mgr. Hanna WiniewskaIn (2012) present an overview of the traditional

and time-tested techniques as well as the new directions in pronunciation teaching. Finally, Ahmed Alsuhaim (2017) present his research "Teaching Pronunciation via Computer Technology: Principles and Best Practices" the researcher sheds light on the case of integrating computer technology to teach pronunciation to EFL learners, precisely, Arab learners. It explores different computer programs that have been discussed in the literature and suggests best practices and principles for teaching pronunciation via computer software. While my study differs from studies above, it sheds the light on the combining of recordings and brainstorming board race technique in teaching pronunciation-diphthong sounds to develop students' performance.

3. Procedure and Design

Two section have been selected from the first year (35 students) of Al-Yarmouk College University one of them is experimental group and other is controlled. The instructional material has been selected for this study consists of diphthong vowel sounds in: Better English Pronunciation by: J.D. O'Connor, Cambridge University Press. The instructions of the two groups have started on 23/2/2018, and have lasted for two weeks. At these two weeks the researcher taught the controlled group by traditional method while the experimental group were taught by using audio visual media (recordings) and the most important technique of teaching pronunciation, "sounds brainstorming board race" The data of the present study was obtained by using written test for students, see appendix (1).

4. Result and Analysis

The study reached at the following results :

1-Distinction of the experimental group to the controlled in the use of recordings & Brainstorming Board Race as an average students achievement of experimental group is(78.828), it's higher than the collection of their peers in the controlled group who achievement is (71.285) only. This result confirms the first hypothesis adopted by the study which says that 'Using recordings & brainstorming race sounds for teaching diphthongs can promote students' aural phonological awareness. See table (1)

2-There is a significant difference in the scores of experimental and controlled group during their means achievement in the pre-posttest. As an average of experimental students mean achievement (56.971) in pre-test while in post-test is (78.828). While controlled group students means achievement are: (64.685) in pre-test while the post-test is (71.285). This result confirms the second hypothesis adopted by the study which says that 'There is a significant difference between the mean scores of the students who are taught by using brainstorming race sounds and recordings, and the mean scores of the students who are taught by traditional method'. See appendix (2)

Table (1)

The Mean, Standard Deviation and "T" Value of the post-test Scores

Group	*No. of subjects*	*X* *Mean*	*Standard* *Deviation*	*"T"* *Value*
Experimental	17	78.828	9.602	
Controlled	18	71.285	11.917	3.211
	35			

5. Conclusion

The conclusions below are drawn in the light of the study results and the researcher's own observations throughout her investigation

1- There is a significant difference in the scores of experimental and control group during their means achievement in the post-test. It can be concluded that teaching method play very important role in the class.

2- Recordings and Brainstorming board race techniques are more favorable for learning than the traditional techniques.

3-Using recordings & brainstorming board race can promote students' phonological awareness.

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Appendix (1)

<u>Test for Students</u>

Question (1): Watch the video and choose the correct sound

1- /aU/   /OU/

2-/eɔ/   /Iɔ/

3-/Uɔ/   /ɔI/

4-/ɔu/   /aU/

5-/aI/   /eI/

Question (2): Listen and choose the correct word

Oh   How

Three   Toy

Wait   Lied

Know   Now

Are   Hair

Beer   Bare

Question (3): Listen and choose the correct sound

/ɔU/ /aU/

/eI / /ɔI/

/aI/ /Uɔ/

Question (4): Write the phonetic transcription of the following words

Words	Phonetic Transcription
1-snow	
2-Fierce	
3-Hoist	
4-My own	
5-Coke	

Appendix (2)

Table (2)The Mean, Standard Deviation and "T" Value of the Pre-test and Post-Test Scores of the Experimental Group.

Group	No. of subjects	X Mean	Standard Deviation	"T" Value
Pre-test	17	56.971	12.688	
Post-test	17	78.828	9.602	8.680

Table (3) The Mean, Standard Deviation and "T" Value of the Pre-test and Post-Test Scores of the Controlled Group.

Group	No. of subjects	X Mean	Standard Deviation	"T" Value
Pre-test	18	64.685	10.576	
Post-test	18	71.828	11.917	5.611

About the Author

Anwar Jawad Kadhim completed a PhD in Curriculum and English teaching methods, her research interests in employing speech acts theory to promote students' EFL communicative competence. She worked as instructorin Iraqi Colleges. She's been teaching English language to Iraqi students since 2015.