Towards the Use of Phonetic Transcription in Teaching Pronunciation

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نحو استخدام طريقة الكتابة الصوتية (طلبة الفصل الثاني بقسم اللغة الإنكليزية بجامعة بنغازي أنموذجًا)

المستخلص:

الهدف الرئيس من البحث هو تقويم محتوى نظري لأساتذة اللغة الإنكليزية؛ لتوسيع معارفهم وترسيخها في مجال تعليم مادة النطق للطلبة غير الناطقين بها.

يقدم هذا البحث مجموعة من الطرائق والتقنيات في تدريس مادة النطق بشكل صحيح ومعاصر لطلبة الفصل الثاني بقسم اللغة الانكليزية بجامعة بنغازي.

أهداف هذا البحث العلمي: أولا:التعريف على خصائص النطق، وشرح بعض العوامل والأسباب التي تؤثرعلى تعليم النطق، وطرح بعض الاستراتيجيات لتعليم النطق، التي قد تساعد الطلبة غير الناطقين باللغة الإنكليزية في القدرة على النطق بشكل صحيح.

ثانياً: تبنى هذا البحث طريقة فعلية لتدريس النطق، وهي طريقة "Phonetic Transcription method" طريقة استخدام الرموز بوصفها بديلاً عن الحروف في التعرف على النطق الصحيح.

قام الباحثون باختيار مجموعة من طلبة الفصل الثاني بشكل عشوائي، وقاموا بتدريسهم، وإجراء اختبار لهم؛ لتحديد مستواهم، ومدى معرفتهم بالرموز واستخدامها في عملية النطق، وبالفعل تم التمست نتائج جيدة بعد مدة التدريس، وكانت ستة أسابيع، وقد أُجرِي امتحان في نهاية المدة المحددة، وكانت النتائج جيدة .

Abstract

In the past, teaching pronunciation had little attention from language teachers and linguists. Recently a great deal of research was conducted in teaching pronunciation and many methods and techniques were tested. The current research was conducted to investigate the effectiveness of using Phonetic Transcription in teaching pronunciation to the second semester English Department students during the fall semester of the academic year (2019-2020). The study was an attempt to answer the

following research question: will using phonetic symbols in teaching pronunciation help students pronounce words correctly? The participants in this study were second semester students in the department of English at university of Benghazi. The data was collected via a pre-test and a post-test. The results show that using this method of teaching pronunciation effectively improved students` ability in pronunciation.

This research aims to help teachers gain theoretical knowledge and to confirm and extend what they already know. The goals of this research are to identify the features of pronunciation, and introduce the IPA (the international phonetic alphabets) as a tool for pronunciation teaching.

Keywords: Pronunciation- super-segmental- supra-segmental- intonation- stress.

Introduction:

According to Elliot (1995), teachers tend to view pronunciation as the least useful of the basic language skills and therefore they generally sacrifice teaching pronunciation in order to spend valuable class time on other areas of language. Or maybe, teachers feel justified neglecting pronunciation believing that for adult foreign language learners, it is more difficult to attain target language pronunciation skills than other facets of second language acquisition. Teachers just do not have the background or tools to properly teach pronunciation and therefore it is disregarded.

If students learn a second language when they are young, they will learn to speak it fluently and without a "foreign accent"; if they learn it when they are old, it is very doubtful that they will gain a native accent.

Harmer (2007) claims that teachers all over the world get students to study grammar and vocabulary practice functional, dialogues, take part in production skill activities and try to become competent in listening and reading. Yet some of them attempt to teach pronunciation and other almost neglects teaching pronunciation. However, the fact is that pronunciation teaching will make students aware of sounds and sound features, can also improve their speaking immeasurably as well as their reading ability comprehension and intelligibility will be improved by concentrating on sounds, showing where are they made in the mouth, and where words should be stressed.

Literature review:

Winiewska (nd.) assumes that the position of language teaching changed many times with respect to pronunciation teaching, it also has changes in methods and techniques used to teach the skill. One of this technique is the Phonetic transcription is a long tested technique consisting of phonetic symbols. Each symbol describes a single sound, which is in fact different from a letter of the alphabet. True as it is, in order to use phonetic transcription one must learn the code and it takes time and effort. Although it is possible to learn the pronunciation without the code, many linguists believe it to be a valuable tool in learning the foreign sound system. One obvious advantage of learning the code is the ability to find the pronunciation of unfamiliar words in a dictionary. All good modern learners'

dictionaries use phonetic symbols to indicate pronunciation, and learners must therefore be familiar with them'. Winiewska (nd.)

Atkielski (2005) argues that Phonetic transcription is nothing more than a written record of the sounds of a spoken language. The relationship between phonetic transcription and spoken language is very similar to that between a printed musical score and a musical performance. Transcription separates pronunciation from actual audio recording, and while this might at first seem to be counterproductive, in reality it has many advantages for teaching spoken language and pronunciation. One might well ask what purpose phonetic transcription serves in English when the written form of English already represents the way the language is spoken (more or less). The advantages of phonetic transcription are several:

• As any student of English can attest, written English is only an approximate representation of the spoken language. Phonetic transcription, in contrast, is an exact representation, without any ambiguity, redundancy, or omission. In a phonetic transcription, every symbol stands for one sound and one sound only. There are no "silent letters," nor are there any spoken sounds that are not represented in the transcription.

• A phonetic transcription can be used prescriptively, to show students how a given word or phrase should be pronounced. The transcription can represent a precise, standard pronunciation, independent of the individual or regional accent of any teacher or audio-recording. It thus allows students to see the correct pronunciation of an English word of phrase without the confusing influence of any anomalies in an instructor's speech, and provides a reliable, ideal model towards which students can work in their pronunciation, independently of the speech of any human instructor. Dictionaries use phonetic transcription in this way to indicate the "standard" pronunciation of words.

• A phonetic transcription can be used diagnostically, to record and analyze the speech of students. A student can often better understand his errors in pronunciation if he sees them laid out in static visual form. One might say that a picture is worth a thousand words, with transcription being the picture, and words being the spoken language. Students can compare transcriptions of their own speech to that of "model" speech and see and correct their mistakes.

• Phonetic transcription is useful for showing the significant differences between the pronunciation of isolated words in a dictionary and the actual pronunciation of those same words when they are grouped together in connected speech. Students can see why connected speech is more difficult to understand when they are shown the modifications in pronunciation that occur in such speech, and they can learn what modifications to expect and how to recognize them. They can also adopt a more natural-sounding speech themselves by noting the "standard" changes that occur in connected speech and emulating these themselves.

The International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) is a code made up of phonetic symbols that has been used for a long time and is familiar to all teachers. Each symbol represents a single sound, which is distinct from an alphabet letter. Learning the code is required to use phonetic transcription, and this takes time and effort. While learning the pronunciation is possible, Many linguists claim the code would be useless without it when studying a foreign sound system.

The opportunity to look up the pronunciation of foreign words in a dictionary is an obvious benefit of knowing the code. Phonetic symbols are used in all good modern learners' dictionaries to mean pronunciation, so learners must be familiar with them.

Stanton (2019:3) claims that, *"There is no end to our study of grammar and vocabulary but phonemic symbols are limited, visual and physical. They may seem challenging at first but it is like learning to swim or ride a bicycle. Once you can do it, it is easy and you never forget"*.

Phonology is the study of sound systems in different languages. Different units of sounds, phonemes, are most commonly transcribed in English using the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA), that consists of alphabetic symbols (such as /a/ and /ŋ/) and non-alphabetic symbols (such as /ː/ and /ˈ/) that are used to describe sounds and other aspects of sounds such as length and intonation. The reason why the use of phonetic alphabet is very important in the study of pronunciation is the fact that graphemes use in writing are not sufficient or versatile enough to cover all required aspects of speech. The IPA was founded as early as in 1886 by English and French language teachers, and as the study of speech and phonetics has progressed, the amount of symbols required to express speech and sounds of different languages has also increased.

Alphabets are arbitrary. They are not a good indication of how to properly pronounce words in a language. Unless you are a native speaker of that language and are familiar with the writing system, reading these symbols will likely mean nothing to you in the sense of sounding out the speech sounds. IPA, or the International Phonetic Alphabet, was a system created to sound out these speech sounds. Once you learn IPA you can transcribe speech sounds in a way that you are able to pronounce them. IPA is universal and can be applied to all natural speech sounds. Pelttari (2015).

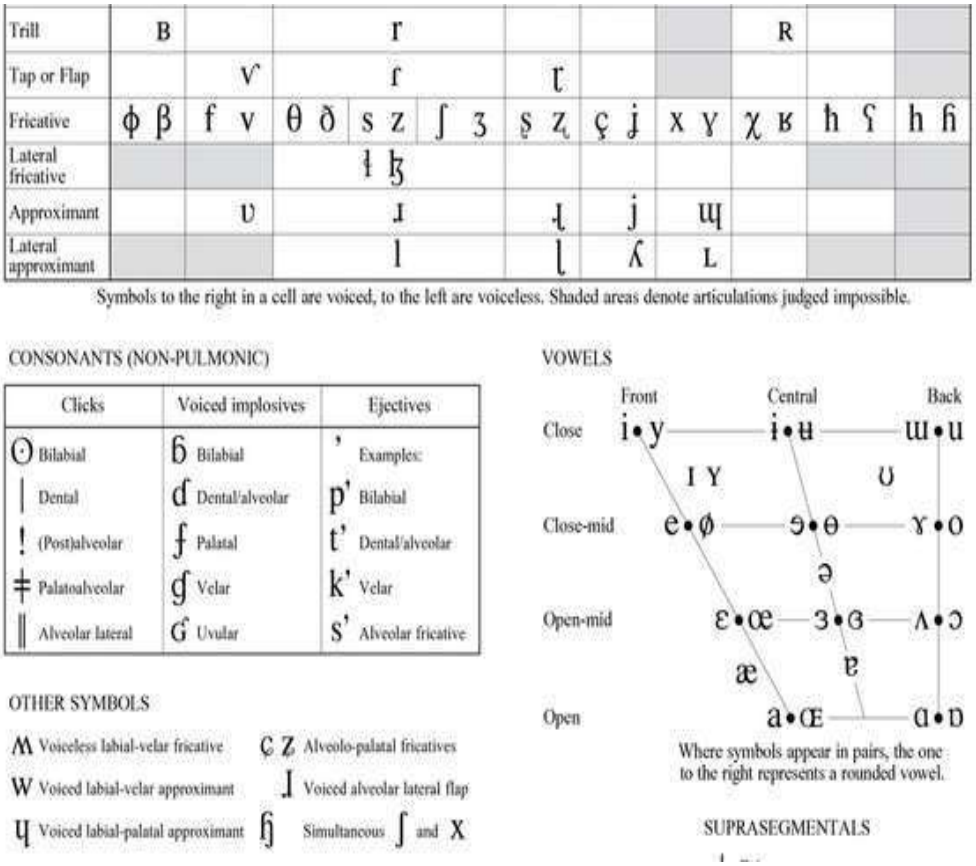
Stanton (2019) claims that phonetic symbols reflect the English language's sounds. They can be a useful tool for helping your students improve their pronunciation. The alphabet's letters may be a bad guide to pronunciation. Phonetic symbols, on the other hand, are a completely trustworthy reference. Each symbol reliably reflects a single tone. Here are five good reasons why students should know phonetic symbols. First, students can use dictionaries effectively. Second, students can become independent learners. They can find out the pronunciation of a word by themselves without asking the teacher. Also, they can write down the correct pronunciation of a word that they hear. Third, Phonetic symbols are a visual aid. Students can see that two words differ, or are the same, in pronunciation. Finally, Phonetic symbols, arranged in a chart, are part of every student's armory of learning resources. Just as they have a dictionary for vocabulary and a grammar book for grammar, so they need reference materials for pronunciation: key words that show the sound of each symbol.

Phonetically trancribing spoken language is simple: you simply write the phonetic symbols that correspond to the sounds you hear. It isn't even necessary to understand what you hear as long as you can identify and transcribe sounds (though it is easier to recognize important sounds if you also understand the language).

The International Phonetic Alphabet has hundreds of symbols, but only about fifty are needed for transcription of English, which corresponds to the number of sounds used in the language.

The International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) was created in the nineteenth century to accurately reflect language pronunciation.

The International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) was created with the goal of providing a unique symbol for each distinct sound in a language—that is, every sound, or phoneme, that distinguishes one word from another.



Trill	B							r										R						
Tap or Flap			ⱱ					ɾ					ɽ											
Fricative	ɸ	β	f	v	θ	ð	s	z	ʃ	ʒ	ʂ	ʐ	ç	ʝ	x	ɣ	χ	ʁ	ħ	ʕ	h	ɦ
Lateral fricative							ɬ	ɮ														
Approximant				ʋ				ɹ					ɻ		j		ɰ					
Lateral approximant								l					ɭ		ʎ		ʟ					

Symbols to the right in a cell are voiced, to the left are voiceless. Shaded areas denote articulations judged impossible.

CONSONANTS (NON-PULMONIC)

Clicks	Voiced implosives	Ejectives
ʘ Bilabial	ɓ Bilabial	' Examples:
| Dental	ɗ Dental/alveolar	pʼ Bilabial
! (Post)alveolar	ʄ Palatal	tʼ Dental/alveolar
ǂ Palatoalveolar	ɠ Velar	kʼ Velar
‖ Alveolar lateral	ʛ Uvular	sʼ Alveolar fricative

OTHER SYMBOLS

ʍ Voiceless labial-velar fricative
ɕ ʑ Alveolo-palatal fricatives
w Voiced labial-velar approximant
ɺ Voiced alveolar lateral flap
ɥ Voiced labial-palatal approximant
ʡ Simultaneous ʃ and x

VOWELS

Where symbols appear in pairs, the one to the right represents a rounded vowel.

SUPRASEGMENTALS

The International Phonetic Alphabet chart.

International Phonetic Association, Department of Linguistics, University of Victoria, Victoria, British Columbia, Canada

Methodology:

There are different approaches dominating the field of applied linguistics: quantitative versus qualitative research. Quantitative research is characterized by collecting numerical data which then are analyzed by statistical methods. On the other hand, qualitative research involves data collection procedures which results in non-numerical data which then are analyzed by non-numerical methods, often by using content analysis. According to the nature of this study, the researchers used quantitative method.

This study was conducted during the Fall semester in the academic year 2019-2020. The students participating in the study attended two-hour classes every week for a period of six weeks. First of all, to ensure the highest degree of reliability, students were selected randomly from second semester students at the department of English at the University of Benghazi. Then a pre-test was administered in order establish their level. Students were randomly allocated to two groups: the experimental group and the control group. The experimental group was taught using the phonetic transcription, as a tool to teach pronunciation, while the control group was taught according to the traditional syllabus employed in the English department. At the end of the six week period a post-test was administered to both experimental and control groups in order to assess any difference in students' level.

In the following section the researchers will introduce the background of the participants in this study, as well as the tools of data collection and analysis.

Selection of Participants

As mentioned previously, the participants in this study were chosen randomly and from the second semester students at the English Department- Faculty of languages at the University of Benghazi. They were new students who have come from the same educational background in the city of Benghazi. Fortunately, the participants were at the same age and have the same cultural background since they are from the same city and nationality. In addition, the experimental group consisted of fifteen students (ten females and five males), whereas the controll group consisted of fifteen students (nine females and six males). It is important to note that the participants in the experimental group were punctual and regular.

Tools of Data Collection

For the purpose of this study, data was collected via pre-test, and post-test. The pre-test constitutes the first phase of data collection which was conducted before the researchers started teaching. Students were divided into experimental and control group after the pre-test. The post-test and was conducted after the lessons were completed to evaluate the improvement of the students; pronunciation as well as to reflect their own ability to transcribe words easily.

Pre-test

The pre-test provided the researchers with a full picture about the students. Besides, pre-test can be very helpful for the students; Pretests can give students a preview of what will be expected of them. This helps students begin to focus on the key topics that will be covered. To do so, the same pre-test was given to both groups to measure their present level of learning and previous knowledge.

The pre-test consists of three questions. In the first question the students were given a list of transcribed word and they were asked to write the full words in letters. In the second question, the students were given a list of words and they were asked to write the phonetic transcription for them. Finally, in the third question students were asked to guess how many syllables as a list of words had.

Lesson Plan

After conducting the pre-test, the controlled group was taught by one of the researchers by the traditional way. The experimental group was taught by the other one of the researchers by the phonetic transcription technique. Keeping in mind the results of the pre-test, the lesson plans were prepared according to the students' needs. Students were taught a list of vowel and consonant sounds. The vowel sounds were divided into monophthongs, diphthongs, and triphthongs. While the consonant sounds were divided according to the three criteria for consonants (voicing, place of articulation, manner of articulation). Students were also given lessons about intonation, stress, and syllables.

The researches have selected some words, sentences, and short passages according to the students' level and needs. The words and sentences were easy for them to be memorized and transcribed. Jonathan Marks' English pronunciation for use: Elementary, a self-study and classroom use, was used for this project.

The post-test was a repetition of the same questions all over again. Student had no idea that test was repeated in order to check their improvement and to see how well this method is effective.

After the data were collected the researcher used independent t—test because the two samples are not linked the Experimental group post -test taker is not the control group post-test taker. Therefore, the researchers adopted the SPSS software to analyze the scores between two groups:

Paired Samples Statistics					
		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Control Group Pre test	12.9000	30	6.34279	1.15803
	Control group Post test	22.3333	30	4.80182	87669.
Pair 2	Experimental Group Pre	15.8333	30	5.72402	1.04506
	Experimental Group post	28.4333	30	1.95965	35778.

(Table 1 (Control group and experimental group both pre and post-tests general statistics

Paired Samples Correlations				
		N	Correlation	.Sig
Pair 1	Control group Post test & Control Group Pre test	30	346.	061.
Pair 2	Experimental Group post & Experimental Group Pre	30	431.	017.

Table 2 (Correlation between the paired samples of both groups

The table above shows the strength of correlation between the pre and post-test of each group. Here the correlations of the control and experimental groups between the pre and post-test is 0.364 for the controlled and 0.431 for the experimental. which indicates that there is a relation between the pre and post-tests of the control and experimental groups.

Paired Samples Test										
		Paired Differences					T	df	Sig. (2-tailed	
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Confidence %95 Interval of the Difference					
					Lower	Upper				
Pair 1	Control Group Pretest - Control group Post test	-9.43333	6.49500	1.18582	11.85861-	7.00806-	7.955-	29	000.	
Pair 2	Experimental Group Pre - Experimental Group post	12.60000-	5.19018	94759.	14.53804-	10.66196-	13.297-	29	000.	

Table 3 (Paired samples T- Test Resluts

The table 3 demonstrates paired t-test scores for each group found at 0.000 level significance, which means that there was a significant change between the two tests for each group, thus, each post-test of each group showed significant change from each group's pre-test at 95% confidence.

Independent Samples Test									
	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	.Sig	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed (	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Confidence %95 Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper

PostTest	Equal variances assumed	12.823	00.1	-6.442	58	000.	6.10000-	94688.	-7.99540	-4.20460
	Equal variances not assumed			-6.442	38.399	000.	6.10000-	94688.	-8.01621	-4.18379

Table 4 (Independent sample t-test between two post-tests from the controlled group and the experimental group)

It is evident in table 4 from the results of the independent samples t-test that the average scores of the experimental group differed from the average scores of the control group, at a level of significant. Therefore, these results display 95% confidence that there was a significant difference in the mean scores based on the two teaching methods used. The researchers conclude that the experiment group was better than the control group teaching method.

Discussion

First, It should be mentioned that due the small number of students who participated in this study, the conclusions are tentative and not final absolute ones: therefore, more researchers are needed to investigate more aspects related to teaching pronunciation. However, pronunciation can be one of the most difficult parts of a language for EFL learners to master and one of the least favorite topics for teachers to address in the EFL classroom. All learners can do well in learning the pronunciation of a foreign language if the teacher and learner participate together in the total learning process. Success can be achieved if each has set individual teaching and learning goals. Pronunciation must be viewed as more than correct production of phonemes: it must be viewed in the same light as grammar, syntax, and discourse that is an important part of communication. This research has shown that during the process of date analysis the vast majority of the students have some problems in pronouncing sounds that are not found in their mother language, for example the consonant sound /p/ is not found in Arabic Language. In comparing and contrasting the results of the pre-test and the post test of the experimental group and the control group, the experimental group's results were higher than the control group and the students have improved. One can conclude that the phonetic transcription method is applicable and a useful method.

Based on what has been mentioned above, teachers must then set obtainable aims that are applicable and suitable for the communication needs of the learner. The learner must also become part of the learning process, actively involved in their own learning. The content of the course should be integrated into the communication class, with the content emphasizing the teaching of supra-segmentals, linking pronunciation with listening comprehension, and allowing for meaningful pronunciation practice. With the teacher acting as a 'speech coach', rather than as a mere checker of pronunciation, the feedback given to the student can encourage learners to improve their pronunciation. If these criteria are met, all learners, within their learner unique aims, can be expected to do well learning the pronunciation of a foreign language.

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