

**PHONEMIC CHART MEDIA: TO IMPROVE THE STUDENTS'
PRONUNCIATION ON THE SECOND SEMESTER
STKIP PGRI BANGKALAN
(A CLASSROOM ACTION RESEARCH)**

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Abstract

The purpose of this article is to examine the pronunciation of the students in speaking class through phonemic chart media. The findings from this report measure that most of students had difficulties in the correct sound symbol, stress, rhythm, and intonation. More specifically, the results showed that the difficulties affected by many factors such as lack of practicing, listening, imitating, and teaching learning process by the lecturer causes the students felt bored because the teaching learning process seemed to be monotonous. These findings suggest that phonemic chart is one of solution in solving the problem of students' pronunciation. The researcher believes this chart became a good media for students in enhancing their pronunciation ability and also to make the enjoyable situation in teaching learning process. In this research, the researcher used a classroom action research in which the setting was conducted in STKIP PGRI Bangkalan which involves one class of second semester students.

Key words: pronunciation, phonemic chart, speaking class.

Introduction

McMahon states that there are two sub disciplines in linguistics which deal with sound, namely phonetics and phonology. Phonetics provides objective ways of describing and analyzing the range of sounds humans use in their languages. More specifically, articulatory phonetics identifies precisely which speech organs and muscles are involved in producing the different sounds of the world's languages. Those sounds are then transmitted from the speaker to the hearer, and acoustic and auditory phonetics focus on the physics of speech as it travels through the air in the form of sound waves,

and the effect those waves have on a hearer's ears and brain. It follows that phonetics has strong associations with anatomy, physiology, physics and neurology (2002: 01). Related the statement was cited by Kelly (2000: 09) that the study of pronunciation consists of two fields, namely phonetics and phonology. Phonetics refers to the study of speech sounds. A phonetician usually works in one or more of the following areas: physiological, articulatory, acoustic, auditory, and perceptual phonetics. Then, phonology is primarily concerned with how we interpret and systematize sounds. Phonology deals with the system and the

pattern which exist within the particular languages. He also state that the study of phonology of English looks at the vowels, consonants, and suprasegmental features of language.

Pronunciation refers to the ability to use the correct stress, rhythm, and intonation of a word in a spoken language. Harmer writes that there are three areas we need to know about in the pronunciation of English – apart from speed and volume – which are intimately connected with meaning. Those are sound, stress, pitch and intonation (1998: 50). A word can be spoken in different ways by various individuals or groups, depending on many factors, such as: the area in which they grew up, the area in which they now live, if they have a speech or voice disorder, their ethnic group, their social class, or their education. According to Brown, the goal as teachers of English pronunciation should therefore be more realistically focused on clear, comprehensible pronunciation (2007: 284). In teaching learning process the students must be able to use the correct sounds, stress, rhythm, and intonation. But the fact, the students' mastery in pronunciation is still in low level. It can be seen from the way they speak English in the class and they do not use the correct sounds, stress, rhythm, and intonation. From the previous study showed that the problem above may be

affected by many factors such as lack of practicing, listening, imitating, and teaching learning process by the teacher causes the students felt bored because the teaching learning process seems to be monotonous.

Based on the problem above, this paper tries to analyze the problem had been arisen from the students proficiency in pronunciation. The researcher wanted to make a different media in teaching pronunciation by using phonemic chart. It was listened to the sounds of English by clicking on the symbols and clicking on the top right hand corner of each symbol to hear sample words including the sounds. After that the students repeat the sounds of phonemic chart and the lecturer tried to correct the incorrect pronunciation which produced by the students. The researcher believed this chart can be a good media for students to improve their pronunciation ability and also to make the enjoyable situation in teaching learning process. So, the researcher conducted a research about the students' pronunciation using phonemic chart media on the second semester of STKIP PGRI Bangkalan.

METHOD

Preliminary study has been conducted to identify the problems, the researcher held a Classroom Action Research in class A second semester

English Education Department of STKIP PGRI Bangkalan which has 37 students. The researcher collaborated with the lecturer of the class in designing the lesson plan, determining the criteria of success, observing the teaching and learning process, and applying the reflection. The researcher administered phonemic chart media in the teaching pronunciation, while lecturer conducted the classroom observation during the implementation of the action (observer).

Cycle 1

Planning the Action

Here, the researcher prepared lesson plans, instruments, handouts, and worksheet dealing with the teaching strategy in using phonemic chart. The phonemic chart was given to the students in order they know properly about pronunciation. Because it was never used in the students' English classes, the students would be able to obtain new information from it. Thus, this became another consideration in choosing a proper media in pronunciation material.

Implementing

The teaching procedure was implemented in class A second semester English Education Department of STKIP PGRI Bangkalan in four meetings on May 3th, 10th, 17th, 24th 2017. The strategy

involved four things, those were: (1) sounds in isolation, (2) words in isolation, (3) connected speech, and (4) pronunciation test.

This level of sounds in isolation aims to develop in teachers and learners a deep and internally experienced awareness of how they produce sounds by manipulating their vocal musculature, and how the internal sensation of using the muscles relates to what is heard through the ears. The development of this awareness enhances learners' ability to change and modify how they use their musculature to produce new or different sounds. While, words spoken in isolation consist of a 'flow of sound' which is different from the sum of the individual phonemes. Neighboring sounds modify each other as the vocal muscles join them together and take short cuts. Also, in multi-syllable words, distribution of energy across the syllables creates an energy profile, called *word stress*, which is typical and generally characteristic of a particular word when spoken on its own. And the last is connected speech in which words flow together to make a stream of speech that is different from the sum of the individual words. Sounds are simplified and reduced, and the energy profile is extended from individual words to groups of words, those are from word stress that is relatively fixed to prominence (emphasis) and intonation

(pitch) that is chosen by the speaker. This energy package, held together by the pattern of pitch and prominence, is called a *tone unit*. Each of the three levels invites a different focus of attention and each can be called on separately or in combination to meet the needs that arise at any moment in a lesson.

Observing

This section, the researcher was accompanied by a collaborator to observe the results of the implementation of phonemic chart media. There were two kinds of data which collected; those are numerical and verbal data. The numerical data were obtained from the students' pronunciation scores. Then, the verbal data interpreted information of the students' attitude during the implementation of phonemic chart were collected through students' questionnaires, observation checklists and field notes.

The instruments in this study were questionnaire, observation checklist, field notes, and a test. The questionnaires were distributed to find out the students' responses in the implementation of media. It was used to know the students' opinion during the process of teaching learning using phonemic chart media. In the other, an observation checklist was used to monitor the students' performance and participation during the teaching and

learning process using phonemic chart media. The collaborator used the observation checklist in doing the observations. The data obtained from the observation checklists was analyzed using the following formula and the categorization in Table 1.

The percentage of students' involvement: $\frac{\text{The score obtained}}{\text{Total score}} \times 100\%$
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Table 2. The Description of the Students' Involvement from the Observation Checklist

No	Categories	Description
1	Very poor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • less than 20% of the students do the activity
2	Poor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20%-40% of the students do the activity
3	Fair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 41%-60% of the students do the activity
4	Good	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 61%-80% of the students do the activity
5	Very good	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 81%-100% of the students do the activity

Field notes were used to record what the observer heard, saw, and thought of at the stage of collecting and reflecting on the data. They covered the strengths, weaknesses, and suggestions related to the setting of the class, the classroom atmosphere, the interaction between the teacher and students, and other things that happened in the class. The field notes were analyzed descriptively.

The other instrument used in the research was a test conducted in pronunciation test. It was required to know the proficiency of the students in pronunciation by using phonemic chart.

Reflecting on the Action

The reflection part involves an analysis of the results of the action implementation during the first cycle. The data taken in the observation stage were compared to the indicators of the criteria of success. The criteria of success concern two aspects: the teaching and learning process of pronunciation and the product of the students' pronunciation.

Cycle 2

Planning the Action

In this stage, the writer prepared revised lesson plans, instruments, handouts, and worksheets dealing with the teaching strategy of phonemic chart.

Implementing

Cycle II of the research was conducted on June 5rd, 8th, 12th, 19th 2017. In the first meeting, the students recognized about the chart that has applications in many kinds of lessons and at any language level such as individual sounds. The second meeting, the students were introduced the words in isolation stage in which the aim is to know the

consisting of a 'flow of sound' which is different from the sum of the individual phonemes in words. The third meeting, the students applied the connected speech level. Finally, the writer conducted the test to measure the proficiency of the students' pronunciation in the last meeting.

Observing

The writer collected the data of what happened during the implementation of the action using observation checklists, questionnaires, and field notes. Meanwhile, the students' pronunciation products were assessed using the scoring rubric. The criteria of success, research instruments, and pattern to compute the data were the same as those of Cycle I.

Reflecting on the Action

The last stage was the reflection on the observation. The activities were the same with what the researcher had done in Cycle I. Because the indicators of success in terms of the expected pronunciation scores and the students' motivation and response were already shown, the writer decided to stop the action.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings of Cycle 1

The findings of the study consist of the students' participation, the students' test, and the students' responses in

applying of phonemic chart media. The findings in the first cycle had not match to the criterion of success; thus, the writer decided to conduct the second cycle in order to find the good result of phonemic chart implementation to the pronunciation's students. The findings from the first cycle interpreted below.

The students' Participation in the Teaching and Learning Process

The observer used an observation checklist and field notes to identify the students' involvement in the implementation of phonemic chart. The students' activities during the teaching and learning process using phonemic chart media during the first cycle had not been in a good expectation.

Besides reporting the findings that represent the students' involvement from the observation checklist, the observer also supported the findings by writing some points in the field notes. In meeting 1, four points were considered as the strengths of the implementation of phonemic chart. The strengths included that the students were very enthusiastic in paying attention to the phonemic chart. They could see the sounds symbol picture clearly. The other positive points in the first meeting were that most of the students actively participated in brainstorming and modeling activity. Meanwhile, the weakness found was related to the use of sounds and time management.

Based on such a situation, the observer had two suggestions made to the teacher-researcher. First, the teacher should have been more careful in using sounds because the voice was not clear for some students in the back row. Second, the researcher should have checked the time carefully so that the students did not need to work too long and could finish every task punctually.

The students' Responses to the Implementation of Phonemic Chart

In relation to the students' response toward the implementation of phonemic chart, the students expressed their opinion through questionnaire that showed that most of the students were interested in using phonemic chart. However, they still faced difficulties in transferring imitating and memorizing the sounds of each symbol.

The students' pronunciation achievement

The data on the students' final products were obtained from the pronunciation test. The data show that the achievement of the students improved, but the improvement had not met the criterion of success yet because only 51% (not 100%) achieved the target. This means that the teaching of pronunciation using phonemic chart in the first cycle had not made a significant improvement yet. Considering that the findings in Cycle

1 of the present study have not met all the criteria of success, the researcher and observer concluded that the action had to be continued to the next cycle.

Findings of Cycle 2

The students' Participation in the Teaching and Learning Process

Based on the information of observation checklists, it was found that the students were active and motivated during the teaching and learning process. The observer's report from observation checklists indicated that most of the students got involved well in each activity. From the field notes, the results were also in line with the observation checklist which showed that the implementation of phonemic chart media brought positive effects to the students' pronunciation as their response towards the teaching and learning process.

The students were active during the implementation of the phonemic chart media in Cycle II probably because of several reasons. First, the phonemic chart media gave knowledge of how sounds are made, and of how they merge into words and connected speech, is in being better able to perceive what learners done. This enables us to guide them in the most useful and engaging direction. When a learner produces a not-quite-right sound only one

of several variables may need attention. Without practical knowledge of phonology you may lack the criteria for deciding on the best procedure, or, when your learner tries again and produces a different not-quite-right sound, you may not know whether that is a step in the right direction or not. The second reason is that the students interact each other and try in many times about the correct pronunciation in every single step which given in teaching process.

The Students' Attitude toward the Implementation of Phonemic Chart

In relation to the students' attitude which was shown from their response in questionnaire, most of the students gave positive points in response to the effects they felt after experiencing phonemic chart media. Therefore, their answers in the questionnaire were dominated by item a and item b meaning that they strongly agreed and agreed that phonemic chart media brought positive influences in terms of raising their interest, confidence, and motivation. Related to the pronunciation aspect, most of the students also showed the same perception for the good effect of phonemic chart in assisting them in pronunciation.

The Students' Pronunciation Achievement

The data from the writing test conducted on June 24th2013 shows that from the second cycle, 32 students achieved a good score. The improvement of the students score had the criterion of the success. Thus, the writer and the observer concluded that the action could be terminated.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study showed that the use of phonemic chart media could improve the students' ability in pronunciation. The students' improvement came from some aspects. The first aspect is to make sure that the students had noticed in their own vocal tract the difference between consonants, monophthongs and diphthongs. It was gotten by distinguishing consonants from vowels and two kinds of vowels. It was supported by Cookin Howlader (2011) says that learners' of second language or foreign language in acquiring pronunciation was contributed by imitation, using phonetic transcript, discrimination of sounds, and communication.

Here the writer made a first exploration of how and where the sounds are produced, and at the same time distinguish vowels from consonants. As we can see, the phonemic chart has three main sections. The vowels are shown in

the upper half, monophthongs on the left, and diphthongs on the right. The consonants are shown in the lower half. The colon by five of the vowel symbols indicates length. The box in the top right-hand corner contains stress and intonation symbols. So, in this step the students knew about the pronunciation symbol or produced specific sounds.

In general, the aim of activity is to experience the auditory, visual and physical aspects of sounds. To make this experience more vivid, there are three kinds of feedback which the writer can give in the activity. Those are (1) kinesthetic feedback: the internal physical sensation of touch and of muscle movement in our throat, mouth, tongue and lips, etc; (2) auditory feedback: what we hear, externally through the air, and internally through our head (we can enhance the latter by blocking our ears with our fingers when we speak); and (3) visual feedback: any physical movement connected with the production of the sound that we can see in our self. In line with Marianne, Donna and Janet (2000) propose that techniques like visual and auditory reinforcement, tactile reinforcement, kinesthetic enforcement, use of authentic materials (e.g. jokes, advertising copy, comic strips, passages from literature) can be effective in developing approaches of pronunciation in

a second language context. They also suggest using techniques from psychology, theatre arts and other disciplines. Their proposals and suggestions are certainly effective and worth following (see Howlader, 2011).

The second aspect of student improvement is the word in isolation in which the students put the phonemes together into sequences to form syllables and words. In this aspect, pronunciation focuses on words spoken carefully in isolation. This kind of pronunciation is recognized by native speakers of English as a slow, clear and deliberate pronunciation of words, and it corresponds to the pronunciation given for individual words in a learners' dictionary. It is sometimes also called the *citation form* of a word. During this stage, the students studied how the phonemes begin to flow, or melt, into one another, affecting and changing each other, and forming a seamless flow. They also noticed how the phonemes overlap, so that the second phoneme is forming before the first has finished.

Another thing in the second aspect is that the students explored about word stress. Word stress is the term used to describe the accent or emphasis given to a particular syllable of a word, and it is a more or less invariable attribute of that word when spoken in isolation. Words

of more than one syllable contain both stressed and unstressed syllables. Learners' dictionaries indicate the stressed syllable(s) for every multi-syllable word as if it were being spoken in isolation. The stress symbol used by most dictionaries is // just before the affected syllable. The location of this stress is as much a part of the pronunciation of a word as are the phonemes themselves. Sounds and stress both contribute to the acoustic identity of a word, so both of them need to be studied at the same time.

Both the sequence of sounds and the stress pattern are essential parts of the identity of a word spoken in isolation, and both affect the way a word will behave in the stream of speech. Stress only exists relative to unstressed, and so learning to unstress is as important as learning to stress. Vowel reduction is an important ingredient of unstressed and it contributes to the aural recognition of words. Pitch movement is an ingredient of primary stress. Sounds and stress should always be learned together as two inseparable parts of any one, whole pronunciation. It may be that a word spoken with not-quite-right sounds, but with correct stress pattern, is more easily understood than one with more or less correct sounds but incorrect stress pattern.

The next aspect deals with connected speech, just as at the second

aspect we found that a word is not just the sum of its individual sounds, so at the third aspect we find that connected speech is not just the sum of its individual words. Continuous connected speech consists of a flow of sounds which are modified by a system of simplifications through which phonemes are connected, grouped and modified. Stream of speech pronunciation brings together the three branches of practical phonology: sounds, stress and intonation. After the following overview, these three areas are examined to the degree of detail that the writer had found its benefit to practical classroom work.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

The implementation of phonemic chart media can improve the students' pronunciation. The procedures of conducting the present study to improve the students' pronunciation were generally divided into some tasks (taken from the result of Cycle II). Firstly, the students discuss about sounds in isolation in which they talked about the correct sound symbol, the way and the place its. Secondly, the students discussed about words in isolation in which the students put the phonemes together into sequences to form syllables and words. The last, the students conducted about connected speech which consisted of a flow of sounds which are modified by a system of

simplifications through which phonemes are connected, grouped and modified. The result of the use of phonemic chart media showed that students' pronunciation improved during the cycles did.

Based on the research findings, some suggestions are proposed in order to improve the quality of the English teaching and learning process in the future. For the lecturer of English department, the result of the study is one of the solutions for the teaching problem related to improving the students' pronunciation. It is also suggested that the lecturer must be selective in choosing the appropriate media or technique in teaching pronunciation to the students based on their educational and proficiency levels as well as their interests.

Meanwhile, for future researchers, the findings of the study can be used as valuable sources to conduct further research to improve the students' pronunciation. The findings can also be used as a reference to conduct further research using different strategies in the implementation media or a different research design, or language skill.

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