PHONETICS AND AUDIO-VISUAL HELP TO IMPROVE AND STRENGTHEN THE PRONUNCIATION OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

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Abstract

College English language learners mislearn the pronunciation of some basic words, and the fossilization of these mispronounced words includes the unlearning process to relearn the new correct pronunciation, an avenue for solution is technology. The Internet is regarded as a pedagogical device to develop language teaching and the learning process. This study will use the help of seven internet tools and phonetics as an audio-visual help to improve and strengthen pronunciation. The aim is that students detect incorrectly pronounced words, get students to know seven internet tools, get them to know the differences in pronunciation between American and British English, get them to know and use the methodology of the spaced effect, strengthen memory, retain correct pronunciation, and defeat fossilization, that students learn to learn the correct pronunciation by themselves. This study is quantitative and qualitative, with pre-and post-tests aimed at measuring 42 college learners' pronunciation before and after training which aims to de-fossilized wrongly pronounced sound elements with the help of a doble methodology; Spacing Effect, a memory strategy of reviewing the material multiple times at different intervals to retain the correct pronunciation, and Action Research, aimed at problem-solving that seeks to engender positive change and a participatory process that requires the equal and collaborative involvement. The results show an improvement in learners' pronunciation, a cyclical correction, a more careful awareness of pronunciation, and a recognition between American and British English.

Keywords: Phonetics, language internet tool, spacing effect, action research, English language pronunciation.

1. Introduction

Most of the students majoring in English Language Teaching Departments have difficulties pronouncing the words correctly. Learners mispronounce some basic words and they keep producing the mispronounced patterns (Cakir, 2012; Sadaqui, 2015).

It is a long process to deal with fossilized words during the language teaching process (Cakir, 2012).

There are a lot of difficulties that affect pronunciation acquisition and the limited opportunities to practice that learners have, an avenue for solution is technology (Fouz-González, 2015).

The Internet is regarded as a pedagogical device to develop language teaching and the learning process (Hismanoglu & Hismanoglu, 2011).

This study will use the help of seven internet tools and phonetics as an audio-visual help to improve and strengthen pronunciation.

College English language learners mislearn the pronunciation of some basic words, and the fossilization of these mispronounced words includes the unlearning process to relearn the new correct pronunciation.

The problem to be solved with this research is to determine: How to improve and strengthen the pronunciation of college learners from the Language Department of the UMSNH, overcoming fossilization?

The present work describes a quantitative study of the English pronunciation of 42 College English language learners from the Language Department at the Universidad Michoacana de San Nicolás de Hidalgo. Our aim in the study was that English language learners:

1. Detect incorrect pronounced words.

2. Get students to know the internet tools Linguee, Google Translate, YouGlish, Reverso Conjugation, Reverso Context, Cambridge's Phonemic Chart and Antimoon Phonetic Alphabet to have an audio-visual support of the correct pronunciation in English.

3. Get them to Know the differences in pronunciation between American English and British English.

4. Get them to Know and use the methodology of the spaced effect.

5. Strengthen memory, retain correct pronunciation, and defeat fossilization.

6. That they learn to learn how to learn the correct pronunciation by themselves.

The research question of this work was:

How to improve and strengthen the pronunciation of the English language in the apprentices of the Language Department of the UMSNH?

2. Theoretical foundation

How technology can assist learners in their productive practice is closely linked to the techniques employed for perceptual enhancement. It is only after learners perceive divergences between their output and that of the model that they make further attempts to improve production (Fouz-González, 2015).

The use of technology can increase student engagement, students' confidence in their abilities as independent learners and their motivation, as well as the opportunity of listening to native speakers of the language they are learning with different accents as well as learning the word in context, where users can find the definition of the word, the audio of the pronunciation, the phonemic with symbols from the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) symbols. This can be a good way to provide learners with short tips to help them focus on these words and remember them longer. Internet tools can be accessed on a variety of devices (computers, smartphones, tablets, etc.) (Fouz-González, 2017).

Table 1. Pronunciation and fossilization meanings.

Pronunciation errors	Errors are systematic, **likely to occur repeatedly, and not recognized by the learner**. Hence, only the teacher or researcher can locate them (Ababneh, 2018).
Pronunciation fossilization	Fossilized pronunciation errors consist of **making a faulty** in one of the three elements: **accuracy, intelligibility or fluency** (Demirezen, 2010).
Fossilization	Fossilization is known as the **long-term persistence** of the non-target-like structures in the interlanguage of non-native-speakers (Rudneva, Valeeva, Nigmatzyanova, Guslyakova, & Pavlova, 2019). **Repeated errors** are often the demonstrations of competence fossilization and also represent the incorrect structures that are been considered as corrected errors but they keep emerging (Sadaqui, 2015).
Phonological fossilization	Repetition of phonological errors which result from the incorrect acquisition of pronunciation of L2. When such phonological errors are **repeatedly made and eventually stay stable in the incorrect manner**, phonological fossilization occurs (Sadaqui, 2015).

Fount: Audio Articulation Method and educational phonetics as rehabilitators of fossilized pronunciation error (Demirezen, 2005; Bartolí Rigol, 2005).

Rudneva, Valeeva, Nigmatzyanova, Guslyakova, and Pavlova (2019) categorized grammatical, lexical, and pronunciation fossilized errors, detecting that the most frequent fossilized errors in advanced learners are pronunciational ones. Mispronounced words were treated throughout 8 weeks. The study focussed on the validity of self-assessment as an approach to address fossilized errors.

Mompean and Fouz-González (2016) used Twitter as a language teaching/learning tool, it had a positive effect on the pronunciation of some words commonly mispronounced by English foreign language students. Instructions had a beneficial effect on the students' pronunciation of the target words and participants were actively engaged during the study.

3. Method

It is a quantitative and qualitative study; the sample was 42 College English language learners from the Language Department at the Universidad Michoacana de San Nicolás de Hidalgo.

As part of the procedures and instruments, there were a Pre and Post Test, Task 1 Perception is a multiple-choice identification Google form of 13 questions with pictures. It focuses on 1) vowels,

2) consonants, 3) word stress, 4) intonation (sentence-final), and 5) sentence stress, through grouping sounds, sound patterns, rhyming pairs, distinguishing between sounds (Reyes Morente, 2019; Grupo Vaughan, 2021; RealLife English, 2021). Task 2 Production is a reading aloud, recorded, to provide natural language in a much broader context than is found in sentence items.

Two methodologies were employed; Spacing Effect Methodology, which consists of reviewing the material multiple times and at different intervals which will help to retain the new information for much longer. There were 8 interventions or reviews as Figure 1 shows. Action research addresses four main themes: participant empowerment, collaboration through participation, knowledge acquisition, and social change. Action research is essentially applied research, it is a spiral of action research cycles consisting of four main phases: planning, acting, observing, and reflecting.

Figure 1. The Forgetting curve.
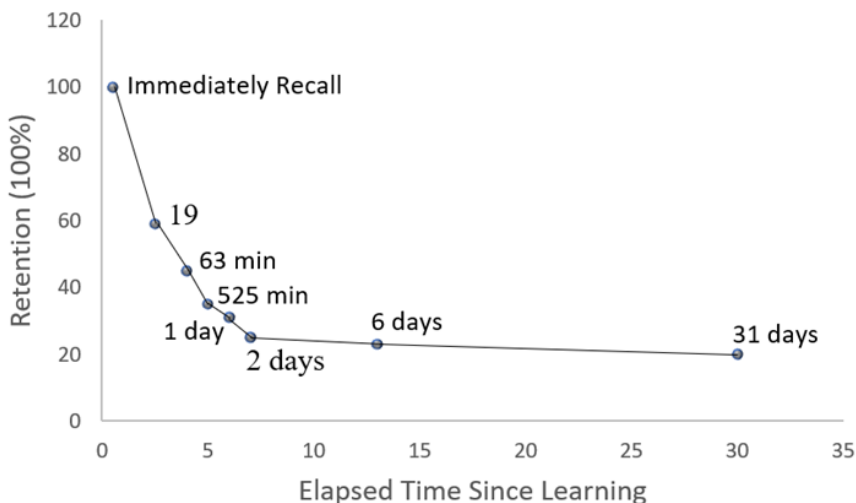
Fount: Based on Weimer-Stuckman, G. (2009). Second Language Vocabulary Acquisition: Spacing Frequency of Rehearsals. University of Victoria.

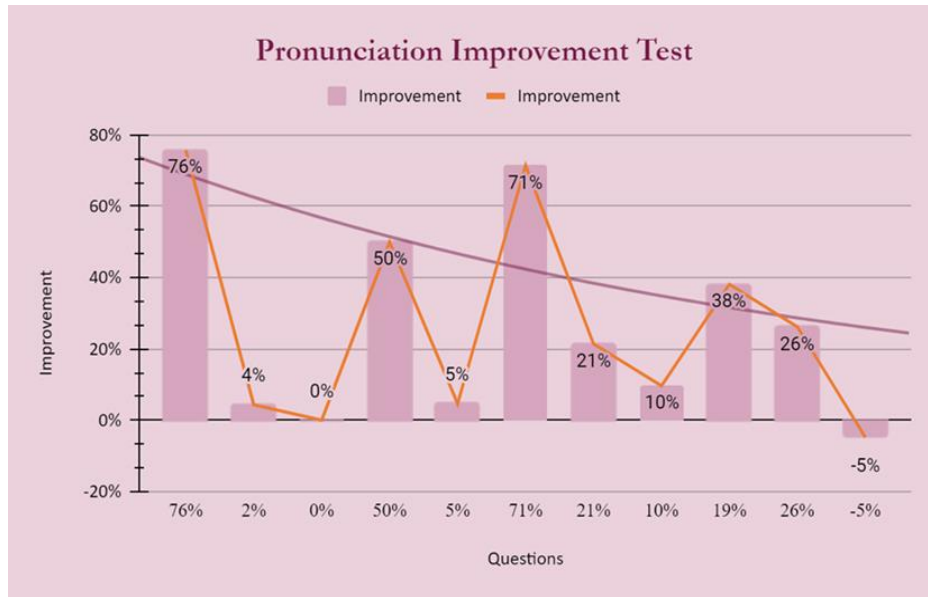Three software were used: Speech Analyzer, Meet, Excel.

4. Results

Table 2.

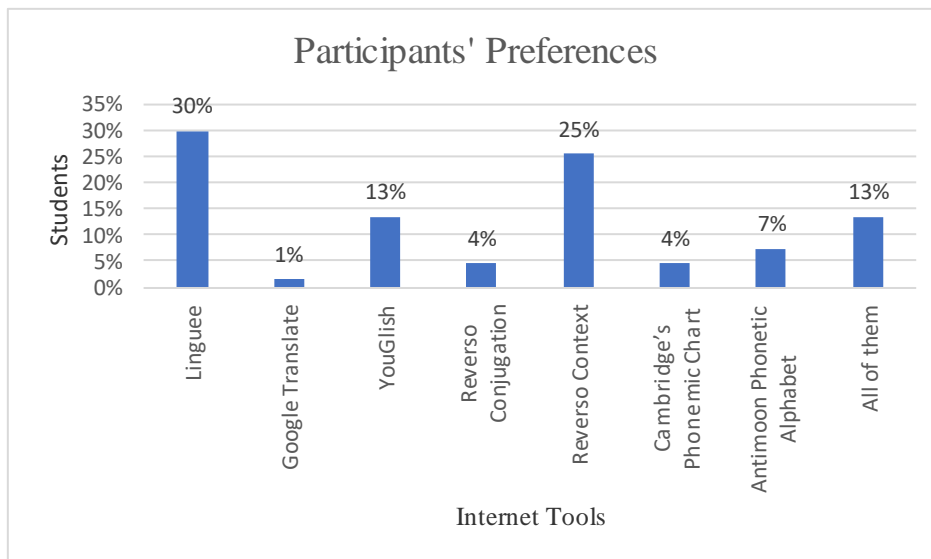| Questions	Pre-test	Post-test	Improvement
1	14%	90%	76%
2	69%	71%	2%
3	31%	31%	0%
4	19%	69%	50%
5	83%	88%	5%
6	10%	81%	71%
7	71%	93%	21%
8	78%	88%	10%
9	7%	26%	19%
10	29%	48%	19%
11	52%	79%	26%
12	62%	57%	-5%
13	67%	69%	2%
Improvement	46%	69%	23%

Fount: Own elaboration.

Figure 2. Pronunciation improvement test.

Fount: Own elaboration.

Figure 3. Participant's preferences on internet tools.

5. Conclusions

The results show an improvement in learners' pronunciation, a cyclical correction, and a more careful awareness of pronunciation due to the help of phonetics and the audio of these seven internet tools. Limitations were found in the research like limited number of participants, Online sessions, and distance approach. Limited to just one semester.

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