

The Effect of Using Dictionary in Teaching Pronunciation

اثر استعمال القاموس في تدريس مادة التلفظ

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ملخص البحث

يُدرّس مدرّسو اللغة الانجليزية مادة التلفظ تقليديا ببيان اللفظ و قراءة الاصوات بصوت عال في الوقت الذي يستمع الطلبة فيه بعناية للمدرس و يرددون من بعده و من ثم قد يستمعون لبعض التسجيلات و لو ان ذلك ليس دائما. و هذا يعني ضمنا ان عملية التدريس برمتها تقوم على الاستماع و الكلام و أن القراءة و الكتابة طارئتين فقط لأغراض الامتحان.

ويعتقد ان تعليم الطلبة كيفية استعمال القاموس لغرض التلفظ امتداد لتطوير المهارات لتضم كلا من القراءة و الكتابة بنوعيهما في الاملاء العادي و الكتابة الصوتية. وبناءا على ذلك تفترض الدراسة الحالية ان استعمال القاموس يساعد الطلبة على اظهار سيطرة أفضل على التلفظ بالانجليزية. ولاثبات هذه الفرضية سارت الدراسة الحالية في اتجاهين اثنين احدهما نظري والآخر تطبيقي. تضمن الجانب التطبيقي تصميم تجربة و تنفيذها على طلبة الصف الأول في قسم اللغة الانجليزية بكلية الآداب في جامعة الكوفة خلال العام الدراسي ٢٠٠٦/٢٠٠٧. توصلت الدراسة إلى العديد من النتائج التي أثبتت صحة الفرض فيها وأوصت بعد ذلك ببعض التوصيات

Abstract

Conventionally, pronunciation is taught by teachers who explain the articulation, read sounds aloud while students listen carefully to the teacher, repeat after him, and then may, though not always,

listen to some recordings. This implies that the whole process is based on listening and speaking; writing and reading is just accidental for the sake of exams.

Teaching students how to use dictionary for pronunciation is believed to be an extension in developing skills to include reading and writing in both ordinary spelling and transcription. Accordingly, it is hypothesized that the use of dictionary helps students master a better English pronunciation. To prove this hypothesis, the present study has developed a theoretical and a practical part. In the practical one, an experiment has been designed and implemented on first year students/ Department of English Language/ College of Arts/ University of Kufa during the academic year 2006-۲۰۰7. The study then has reached at several conclusions that validate the hypothesis and then suggested some recommendation

1. Introduction

It is generally agreed nowadays that it is the language teacher's task to teach the spoken form of the language as well as the written form. The teacher must teach production of the spoken form, pronunciation, as well as the ability to understand what a native speaker of the target language is saying. However, the ability to understand the slow formal speech of the classroom where a foreign language is being taught does not entail an ability to understand the language as spoken to and by native speakers.

If the foreign student is to understand the English used in speeches, public lectures, and radio and television broadcasts, s/he must be exposed to the spoken language used in these situations and s/he must be systematically taught how to extract the message from the indistinct acoustic signal. In this regard, it is believed that teaching pronunciation facilitates, and in fact should intend, the recognition, imitation, and production of the foreign language.

Conventionally, pronunciation is taught by teachers who explain the articulation, read sounds aloud while students listen carefully to the teacher, repeat after him, and then may, though not always, listen to some recordings. This implies that the whole process is

based on listening and speaking; writing and reading is just accidental for the sake of exams.

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2. Sounds and Symbols

2.1 Speech and Writing

The relationship between speech and writing is so debatable. De Saussure (1960: 32) closely relates these two forms to one another saying "taking away the written form [from sounds] is like depriving a beginning swimmer of his life belt". Besides, "apart from their graphic symbols, sounds are only vague notions" (ibid.). Yet, the relationship between speech and writing is not so simple or easy, for they are by no means identical.

Linguistics, moreover, is commonly defined as the systematic study of language. In one of its approaches, it studies language as a system, basically of sounds and their symbols, giving priority to speech over writing. Man learns to speak but not necessarily to write; the child learns to speak but is taught to write. As a result, the present study proposes that students need to learn the spoken form of language and have to be taught how to write.

Most linguisticians now prefer to study the spoken form of language. They argue that the oral approach is justified, firstly, by the fact that historically it is evident that speech must have preceded writing. While the earliest form of writing dates from about 3300 B.C., archaeological and other evidence suggest much earlier civilisations that would be inconceivable without a

sophisticated form of language to establish and maintain them (Wallwork, 1969: 14).

A linguist needs a means of transcribing articulated sounds that rules out all ambiguity. Actually, many graphic systems of language have been proposed. Saussure (ibid.: 33) believes that a truly phonological system of writing requires, though not always considered, that there should be one symbol for each element of the 'spoken chain'. This chain is what Saussure (ibid.) calls "the perceptible image of the written word". In fact, normal spelling writing does not propose this one-to-one correspondence between a letter and its spoken 'perceptible image'. Yet, although "phonetics is often called the physiology of sounds ... the prop provided by writing, though deceptive, is still preferable (italic is of the researchers) (ibid.: 33). Further, it is believed that earlier writings seem "to have been attained first with the invention of syllabaries ... [where] characters stood for phonetic forms rather than meaningful stretches" (Dinneen, 1967: 278).

This brings to mind what is nowadays called notation. Thus, in order to describe sounds, it is customary to use a form of notation that can represent these sounds both more accurately and economically than ordinary alphabetical resources can do. To a foreigner learning English, the way one could use letters to pronounce words, or to read loudly depending on alphabetic writing, would not only be clumsy, but also misleading. "There are, however, various notations where a symbol represents a sound rather than a spelling" (Wallwork, 1969: 27).

The linguist's data are the sounds uttered by native speakers of a language. They use the data for making general statements about the structure of this data. For Herriot (1970: 11), linguists carefully distinguish these general statements from the data itself. Phonetic descriptions of data deal with the sounds as sounds, linguists simply encode the sounds the informants utter into phonetic script, i.e., they give an account of the sounds

without the informants' or linguisticians' own linguistic habits affecting the transcript (ibid.).

Wilkins (1974: 4) thinks, "Knowledge of spoken language is more easily transferred to the written medium than the converse". At a subjective level, this reflects the difficulties in speaking the language that have been experienced by learners taught by largely traditional writing-based methods. This seems, to some extent, similar to the situation of teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFLT) in Iraq. The researchers believe that EFLT at some of the Iraqi schools is largely based on the written form of language; therefore, students would face a difficulty at earlier stages to cope with learning spoken language unless a reference is made to the use of the writing-based methods. Besides, the rather simplistic views held by some linguisticians that writing is no more than a graphic representation of spoken language might give rise to the belief that reading is easy and enough to teach speaking. In fact, it is not always the case that knowing how to read means knowing how to speak, i.e., to pronounce the written words properly. Hence, Wilkins (1974: 4) believes that a far larger proportion of the teaching time in recent years has been devoted to speech, in the belief that the learner himself with some assistance could make the transfer to writing. The teaching situation in most Iraqi schools, according to the best knowledge of the researchers, at least the schools they were teaching at, is mostly the opposite as students are taught how to write in order to pass exams.

The writing system of a particular language might be highly based on its phonological system; thus learning to write is largely a matter of mastering the orthographic conventions of that language. Although, speech is transmitted as a continuum of sound with occasional pauses, it is perceived by the hearer as a succession of individual sounds (Wilkins, 1974: 22-3). Accordingly, it is important not to think of pronunciation as sounds produced adequately in isolation; pronunciation should provide for the phonological contexts in which sounds occur in a language. For

Wilkins (ibid.), particular combinations of sounds found in a language may give rise to some phonological problems. Such problems, like initial and final consonant clusters that can be especially difficult for learners whose mother tongues do not have, for instance, might be explained as sequences of the mere individual sounds that might be mastered by much practice.

2.2 Teaching Pronunciation

It is nowadays believed that language cannot be taught; it must be learned. Therefore, students need help to learn English rather than to be taught English. This could be done by many means. One of them is to give them a good model to copy. Mostly, teachers are needed as models for the spoken language. A teacher may point out the students' mistakes repeatedly very patiently (Stevick, 1972: 3). Yet, the question here is: "Do teachers really help their students by being constant models for the spoken language?"

Gimson (1980: 399) describes teaching pronunciation as a source of certain difficulties in comparison with grammatical structures and vocabulary. He (ibid.) thinks, "...all phonetic / phonological features are potentially present from the very first lesson". Thus, teachers are required to answer a question like "what form of pronunciation is to be taken as model? (ibid.: 300)". The kind of difficulties facing students could be divided into four parts, put into order: pronunciation, grammar vocabulary, and culture (Stevick, 1972: 5).

Language learning should include acquiring new-habits or ways of using the speech organs and of learning the forms and the arrangements of forms the system requires. It means acquiring the habits of the language through the intensive and extensive practice of numerous examples. Sounds, thus, may be practiced one at a time in isolation and/or by contrasting them in what is called 'minimal pairs'. It is important, however, that a sound, which may have been practiced in isolation, could be inserted immediately in words, phrases, or sentences, which have, in addition, the stress,

rhythm, junctures, and intonation that are characteristic of English (Finocchiaro, 1986: 18).

Through listening to, repeating, and studying many examples, students should be helped to acquire a repertoire of items they may come to expect in an utterance. The ability to "anticipate" language appears to be an important factor in developing students' communicative competence (ibid.: 19). Yet, at the absence of competent teachers, anticipating students are not always danger-free as many of them may, at least, overgeneralise. Furthermore, the teaching/learning process tends to be more complicated with the absence of competent teachers in situations where English is taught as a foreign rather than second language. Ellis (1994: 12) believes that one of the differences between foreign and second language is that the former is used in classroom only. This, in fact, narrows the serious possibility of the students to have a model. That is why a foreign learner always feels the need for practice in language.

It is believed that the type of pronunciation teachers may decide to teach and the way they decide to teach it depends on a number of variables. Some such variables may be quite outside their own control. One variable is the degree of expertise students may have, i.e. whether they are teaching beginners or trying to correct ingrained habits by remedial teaching. Though apparently challenging, this variable could be so useful. Another variable is the standard the teacher decides to teach to, and the number of hours allotted to English pronunciation as distinct from the rest of the English syllabus

In some situations of teaching and learning English as a foreign language in most of Iraqi universities, it is significant to think of making use of the previous experience of the newly coming students to the departments of English. As graduates of high schools, most of those newcomers should have been exposed to some English drills, especially pronunciation. Taking into consideration those variables, there seems a critical significance for 'ruminate' this old experience. In addition, where English is taught as a foreign language, care must be taken to provide a current English model rather than the sort of English spoken by the

grandparents of the present generation (Corder, 1974: 55). In such critical situations, dictionaries might help make sure the student's pronunciation in such anticipations.

2.3 Towards a Skilled Behaviour of Language

2.3.1 Features of Skilled Behaviour

Features of skilled behaviour are either phonetic or phonemic. Considering phonemes as perceptual constants, it is believed that native speakers perceive 'sounds' realising phoneme as being the same despite the various physical differences in the 'uttered sounds' i.e., phones. Phones in free variation might not represent any 'perceptual' problem as they may differ in several ways; only a few of these differences are criterial for the perception of phonemes. Distinctive feature analysis suggests that the phonemes of a particular language differ according to certain articulatory features such as phonation, the organs that produce a phone, or the manner of its production (Herriot, 1970: 24), or according to what Gimson (1980: 322) calls "the contrastive features of English".

While in articulatory phonetics the mouth is visible and open for study, the study of speech perception is necessarily indirect. Concerning perception of consonant pieces, Clark and Clark (1977: 200) suggest that people perceive the separate features of the sixteen consonants of English, for instance, relatively independently of each other. They take in each segment as a collection of separate pieces of a pattern not as a unitary whole. If they had perceived each segment as a unitary whole, they should be, then, as likely to guess one segment as any other. Perception would be "all or none." Nevertheless, this does not happen. They sometimes get partial information about the segment, identifying it as voiced and non-nasal, for example, without identifying it as bilabial. On the basis of such partial identifications, the errors that they make are systematic ones. They select only segments that are voiced and non-nasal.

2.3.1.1 Phonetic and Phonological Skills

Brown (1978: 98) thinks that when a child goes to school and begins to learn a foreign language the articulatory movements and

perceptual strategies that he needs for communicating in his own language are well established. That child could have learned to produce and interpret a wide range of phonetically different sounds spoken by adults and children in different situations and at different speeds. If he happens to hear a foreign word, he will recognize the sounds of the word in terms of the categories of his native language, unless the word contains a sound that will not fit into any of the linguistic categories of his native language. Most sounds in his own speech or in that of his peers in most foreign languages will occur as phonetic sounds that he assigns each of which to the most reasonable of his established phonological categories, of his native tongue. Accordingly, he both hears and pronounces a foreign word in terms of such categories.

At the phonemic level, perception has been assumed to exist psychologically on the basis of experiments which deal with phonemes in isolation or in a small phonological context. Within hierarchies and sub-hierarchies of behavioural elements of language, it is argued that analysis into segmental phonemes is unnecessary in situations where adequate syntactic and semantic cues are available. Yet, language perceivers may not have any syntactic or semantic cues at all at the beginning of a sentence. They may depend on phonemic cues for perception until the grammatical structure and semantic selection have had time to develop. This means that perception of language begins with lower levels towards higher ones, i.e. from pronunciation to semantics.

As for the conflict between Production and reception in language acquisition, there are two reservations about the role given to productive language activities in current language teaching. First, all language knowledge is tied to the classroom time devoted to language production. Production should come, then, at the expense of language knowledge. The second reservation is that limiting the learning experience to production guarantees a very slow and thin exposure to language at the time that language acquisition has been proved to be based on a rich, varied, and intensive contact with language. In language learning, the time available for contact is already considerably reduced. Thus, too

much insistence on language production requires a maximal repetition of specific linguistic forms and offers a still weaker exposure to language even within the learning time available. Meanwhile, giving a larger place to receptive activities does not only ensure that the receptive abilities themselves are better learned, but it also gives the learner the opportunity to learn what is not taught. One, then, may conclude that receptive learning activities are more beneficial than is commonly allowed.

Out of the two receptive activities, reading can be easier to plan than listening as the latter presents a rather greater problem. Any productive class activity almost inevitably demands some listening activity too. However, what the student hears is scarcely language in use for communication. One would not easily take classroom language for natural language use. Furthermore, much of it is produced either by the teacher or by other students. Students who are rarely used to the sounds of the language spoken by native models consequently have problems with language understanding when they hear native speakers.

Anyway, what the teacher says is usually controlled by the classroom situation in a way that would prevent listening from providing rich linguistic exposure to the naturally used language a student could seek. Where language resources are available, the teacher can provide what is needed through films, tapes, radio, or some other recorded materials. Yet, this is probably better kept limited in the classroom to later stages of learning. However, "few courses do plan listening experience that goes beyond what is being taught productively, and perhaps more thought should be given to this" (Wilkins, 1974: 69).

2.3.2 Articulatory Level in the Hierarchical Structure

In the light of generative linguistics, Herriot (1970) develops a psycholinguistic approach to language. This approach is based on the connection between three different approaches to language: language as a system, language as a personal behaviour, and language as interpersonal behaviour. Out of the mixture of these concepts, Herriot suggests that language is a type of a hierarchically

skilled behaviour. He (ibid.: 21-55) argues for the idea that there are certain respects in which language behaviour might resemble skilled behaviour.

As the present paper confines itself to the study of phonetic and phonological aspects, it has been found necessary to refer to Herriot (ibid. : 24-32) where he discusses the psychology of phonological skills according to theories of speech perception, the effect of context, and articulation. For the purpose of the present study, the comparison between language behaviour and language as a skilled behaviour seems not only relevant but necessary to be taken into consideration

The first point in the comparison is that their hierarchical structure. Skills have been shown to consist of hierarchies and sub-hierarchies of some behavioural elements. Language behaviour might consist of a hierarchy of skills rising from phonological, grammatical, through semantic skills; each level of skill might, in its turn, form a sub-hierarchy, e.g. syntactical skill might itself involve a sub-hierarchy of units rising from morpheme to sentence.

It is worth asking about what precisely is meant by using a model of a hierarchy of language behaviour. Different levels imply different types of unit governed by their own rules. At each level, units are comparable, but they are also related to other units at some other levels. Thus, the syntactic level of the proposed language skill hierarchy, for example, consists of units related by certain rules. These rules differ from those that refer to other levels; the rules of combination are different from the rules of articulation. Nevertheless, the syntactic level is related to the articulatory level in the sense that an articulatory skill is a necessary condition for syntactic skill to be exercised in language behaviour; and the syntactic and semantic structure determines which articulatory elements are used and in which order they are used. The degree to which the lower levels of a skill are automated determines the size of unit possible at its higher levels.

The second feature of skills is their dependence on feedback. Feedback information is derived from the individuals' performance

as perceived by them. The received information enables learners to correct their performance in order to coincide with a criterion of success. This process of feedback is known as negative feedback. In the case of the tracking task, the criterion of success is to follow the path without touching its sides. In the case of language behaviour, the criterion is a matter of intention on the speaker's part and the listener's response match.

The importance of feedback is clear at all levels of language skill. If one cannot hear oneself speak until one-fifth of a second after one has spoken, the articulatory level of skill is disrupted. If the teachers do not receive any vocal or expressive feedback from their audience, communication skills may be affected. At all levels of language production, self-corrections of one's own behaviour are indications of the feedback process at work.

The term automatisisation has been used to describe yet a third feature of successful skilled performance. It refers to the running off of sequences of behaviour without the need for conscious control. The typist can type words or phrases without paying attention to the sequence of letters. Such automatisisation is involved in both articulatory and in grammatical behaviour, although it is obviously hard to say whether control is 'conscious' or 'unconscious'. Causal phenomena give indications when planning is taking place; therefore, a rapid and smooth sequence of behaviour may be an indication of automatisisation. In language behaviour, production is sometimes smooth and relatively continuous within phrase or sentence units; while between them pauses may occur (Herriot, 1970: 22).

In the case of phonological performance, then, using the term skill is justified. Hierarchical organisation, automatisisation, feedback, and anticipation are criterial features of skill and are, all, present at the phonological level. As it has been seen, the perception of phonemes by distinctive features usually involves a series of binary decisions. Perceptual and articulatory performance is automatised, as there is no apparent difficulty in planning or perception at the phonological level, firstly, and the units such as syllable allow smooth transition because of their size, secondly.

Feedback is involved as an internal nature in perception and an external auditory as well as internal nature in articulation. In the use of succeeding phonetic context, anticipation is required in both perceiving and in articulating. Most important, the influence of semantic and syntactic variables on the perception of speech is evidence for the hierarchical nature of language behaviour as a whole, since it was stated to be one of the features of a hierarchy that levels interacted (Herriot, 1970: 31-2).

2.3.3 The Teacher

The other important variable in the learning situation is the teacher himself. His skill is dependent on two factors, his own proficiency in the language and his knowledge and expertise in methods and techniques of language teaching.

The teacher's language proficiency cannot always be taken for granted. There are countries where the teachers themselves have been relatively ill-taught, due to lack of resources and relatively undeveloped education system. Some teachers would never have the opportunity to visit the country where the language they teach is spoken. They consequently are hardly able themselves to use the language for real communication. A teacher who himself has difficulty in speaking the language he teaches is not going to succeed in giving his students a command of that spoken language.

Even with modern aids available, it is the teacher's language that remains the principal model for the student. The best that can be expected is that the students' achievement will fall somewhat short of the target set by the teacher in the form of his own skill in the language. It would be unrealistic to expect a teacher to set objectives that he himself is not capable of reaching at. Objectives, therefore, have to be set realistically in the light of the teacher's own skill in the language. In short, the qualities of language teachers define the potential limits of achievement of their students (Wilkins, 1974: 53-5).

A teacher of English must know phonetics. Brown (1978: 99) believes that the difficulty for teachers who know no phonetics is that there is no intermediate point between the 'right' sound and the

'wrong' sound. They have no way of detecting or of encouraging progress. When a student changes one 'wrong' pronunciation for another, they would have no way of deciding whether the change constitutes a step in the right direction or the student has quite arbitrarily shifted a position that was in fact reasonably correct to begin with.

Furthermore, a foreign language teacher must appreciate that in teaching a new sound he is very likely to be teaching a range of phonetic sounds that students have heard before, i.e., what he is teaching is not a new sound but a new phonological category. What he has to do, then, is to teach students to adapt and change their phonological categories in the foreign language situation. Teaching sounds this way, accordingly, is not simply the addition of a category that did not exist before, but the creation of a new system of categories. The perceptual space available to vowels in English, for instance, is divided up into a new and different way (Brown, 1978: 100-1).

Phonetics then is a tool that is particularly useful for the teacher of pronunciation as it enables him to diagnose what is the matter with the pronunciation of a given sound and to teach the student to correct his pronunciation in a controlled and explicit way. It enables him to say 'that's better' when a student is moving his articulators in the right direction but has not yet achieved the right sound.

Chomsky and Halle (1968) develop one of the theories that are most relevant to the needs of the language teacher who wants to teach a slow clear style of pronunciation. The attractive feature of this theory is that it is based on a distinction drawn between the linguistic competence shared by members of a speech community and the variable nature of the performance of a given utterance by a particular speaker in a particular situation.

Brown (1978: 103) states that the rapid conversational speech intelligibly depending on a shared background of experience seems unlikely to prove a reasonable model. Teachers, consequently, can use the slow maximally clear style of the pronunciation model. In this regard, it is significant for the learner to know that what he is taught in the course of practical pronunciation is the basic material

for a better understanding of any other combination of such materials, i. e., sounds. These sounds are actually standardised models for any other linguistic variety in pronunciation; they are just different realizations of the same abstract phonological categories of English. For those who claim that sounds in isolation are of lesser value, it is critical to say that these individual phonetic units represent the cornerstone of the internalization of the whole phonological system of the foreign language. Teaching distinct individual sounds is believed to develop students' linguistic knowledge of the foreign language, i. e. their competence, then learners would be able to enhance performances of their own.

2.3.4 The Dictionary as a Model

Ideas about authority in language have not been restricted to the classroom and the teacher as a model. It is common now to see that certain dictionaries call themselves as "supreme authority" of language (Bolinger, 1972: 280). This assumption directs the way dictionary users think of language.

A standard dictionary gives four items of information: spelling, pronunciation, derivation, and meaning, usually in that order. Besides, in some dictionaries, part of speech is a fifth item. If a user needs to write a word but has forgotten how to spell it, or sees a word and is unsure of its pronunciation, the dictionary meets his needs. Some dictionaries provide for word origin, etymology, or for the new words, they will define or illustrate.

In the light of Herriot's (1970) psychological model of language as a skilled behaviour, dictionary is believed to represent a criterion of success that students of English as a foreign language might coincide with in developing the linguistic elements of the hierarchical structure of language behaviour. Besides, it is a criterion of success to which a student recurs when s/he depends on feedback as a means of self-correction in performance, i.e. the use of feedback information derived from the individual performance perceived by students themselves. Students then could correct themselves by recourse to a standardized authoritative

model that they can confidently consult and personally rely on at any time.

Exposure to dictionaries and some other language resources could then enhance the student's automatised skilled performance. It seems to help students move from conscious to subconscious mastery of reading words for pronunciation and, consequently, of rapid and smooth sequences of language behaviour. With the ability to "anticipate", language learners appear to achieve some significant steps in developing their linguistic competence. In terms of generative linguistics, using dictionary in teaching pronunciation is believed to help learners make their own phonological rules via internalisation as a result of exposure to transcribed primary linguistic data, consider Figure 1 below (Crystal,1976/1985:36):

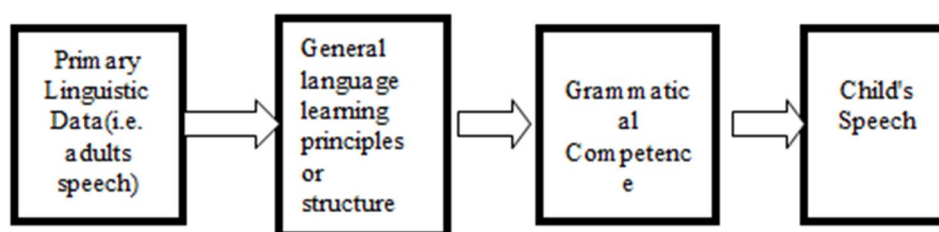


Figure 1. Generative Model of Language Acquisition

3. Procedures

3.1 Sample Selection Procedure

3.1.1 Population and Sample

The population of the present study is the first-year undergraduate students who are major in EFL at the Iraqi universities and who have been enrolled in the departments of English in the Colleges of Arts for the academic year 2006-2007.

The sample that has been selected is the first-year student of morning classes at the Department of English/ College of Arts/ University of Kufa. This sample has been chosen among other colleges for administrative and practical considerations such as the experiment time which should last for twelve weeks.

The initial size of the sample is (70) male and female students divided into two sections, (A) and (B). Section (A), originally consisting

of (35) students, has been chosen to represent the control group;
Section

(B) consisting of (35) students, has been chosen to represent the experimental group. This sort of sampling is educationally called of 'incidental' or 'accidental' in which the researcher deals with intact classes where the students in a class constitute the entire sample (Downie and Heath, 1983: 134).

3.2 The Experimental Design

In a simple conventional experiment, reference is usually made to an experimental group and to a control group. These groups are equated as nearly as possible. The experimental group is exposed to the influence of the factor under consideration; the control group is not (Best, 1981: 57-9).

Accordingly, (and in order to fulfill the aim of the present study, an experiment has been conducted). The experimental group is the group that is taught pronunciation by using the dictionary while the control group is the group that is taught by adopting the traditional type of instruction i.e. without using the dictionary.

In accordance with the requirements of the present study, the researcher has chosen "the posttest only, equivalent groups design" in which the experimental group only receives the independent variable for a specific period. Then, both groups are subjected to a posttest to measure their achievement, i.e. the dependent variable and their scores are compared and tested statistically. In fact, this design is one of the most effective in minimizing the threats to experimental validity. At the end of the experimental period, the difference between the mean test scores of the experimental and that of the control group is subjected to a test of statistical significance, a z-test or an analysis of variance.

The researcher has tried to control some of the extraneous variables and ensure that they do not have effects on the independent variable. Maturation is one of these variables which refers to "biological and psychological processes within the subjects that may change during the experiment" (Dalen, 1962:

267). The period of the experiment is not long enough that the subjects' responses may be attributed to the changes that occurred within the passage of time.

No specific or unusual events had happened during the period of the experiment; therefore, the effect of retroactive history is controlled (cf. Christensen, 1980: 94).

3.3 The Instructional Material and Experiment

The instruction of both groups has started during the second semester of the academic year 2006-2007. The experiment (through which a pronunciation course is introduced (three) lectures per week) has begun exactly on Thursday the 1st of March. It lasted for (twelve) weeks and the researcher herself taught the two groups in order to control the instructor variable in the experiment. The lessons have been arranged for both groups on Sunday and Thursday every week. The control group has been taught by using the conventional type of instruction while the experimental group has been taught with the dictionary –based instruction.

The instructional material that has been taught to both types of groups is O'Connor's (1980) *Better English Pronunciation* as a textbook designed for teaching pronunciation of the first year/department of English/Colleges of Arts.

Both groups have been taught according to a model lesson plan prepared for each lesson (see appendices, 1 and 2). Having lasted for (twelve) weeks, the experiment came to end on Thursday the twenty-fourth of May, 2007.

3.5 The Test

3.5.1 Design

A written achievement posttest has been constructed to attain the aim of the study. At the end of the formal instruction which was entirely controlled by the researcher, both groups of students are subjected to the same achievement test in order to evaluate the effectiveness of this instruction. Furthermore, and as for Harris (1969:3), the posttest measures the present level of mastery in the subject that the students of the sample have attained as a result of instruction.

3.5.2 The Scoring Scheme

The researcher has developed scoring scheme for the whole test to ensure its objectivity as possible as she can. Hence, the distribution of marks is clearly specified and most of the test items are highly organized to cover the main aspects of pronunciation course. The total mark of the test is (100) distributed among the five questions which should be answered within two hours (see appendix 3).

3.6 Statistical Procedures

The following formula is used to find the mean of both groups i.e. the experimental and the control groups.

$$X-1 = \sum x1 \times f1 / \sum f1$$

$$X-2 = \sum x2 \times f2 / \sum f2$$

where:

X-1 = the mean of the experimental group

X-2 = the mean of the control group.

x1, x 2 = center category

f1 = frequency of the subjects in the experimental group

f2 = frequency of the subjects in the control group.

The variance has been calculated by applying this formula:

$$S12 = \sum (x1 - x-1)^2 \times f1 / \sum f1 - 1$$

$$S2\ 2 = \sum (x2 - x-2)^2 \times f2 / \sum f2 - 1$$

where:

S12 = the variance of the experimental group

S2 2 = the variance of the control group.

Z test formula is employed since the number of the subjects is more than 30. Thus:

$$Z = X-1 - X-2 / \sqrt{s12/n1 + s22/n2}$$

where:

Z = the counted value of z

n 1 = the number of the subjects of the experimental group

n2 = the number of the subjects of the control group

4. Results and Conclusions

4.1 Analysis of Results

To determine whether there is a significant difference between the two mean scores of the experimental and the control groups in the total scores of the achievement test, the results obtained from the written posttest have been analysed.

4.1.1 Presentation of Results

According to the scores gained by the study sample in the posttest, the researcher has first compared the mean scores of the two groups: the mean of the experimental group is (37.4) and that of the control group is (28.3).

The z -test formula is employed to find whether there is any significant difference between the mean scores of the two groups. The counted z-value is (2.5622); it is compared to the table z-value which is (1.96). This indicates that there is a significant difference under (58) degree of freedom at 0.05 level of statistical significance between the two groups and this difference between the mean scores is found to favour the experimental group see Tables (1, 2, and 3).

Table (1) The Experimental Group

$(X1-x-1)2f1$	$(X1-x-1)2$	$X1 f1$	Frequency (f1)	Centre category(x1)	Marks class
1049.76	1049.76	5	1	5	1-10
2508.8	501.76	75	5	15	10-20
768.8	153.76	125	5	25	20-30
23.04	5.76	140	4	35	30-40
693.12	57.76	540	12	45	40-50
2168.32	309.76	385	7	55	50-60
7211.84		1270	34		Total

Table (2) The Control Group

$(X2-x-2)2f2$	$(X2-x-2)2$	$X2 f2$	Frequency(f2)	Centre category(x2)	Marks class
1085.78	542.89	10	2	5	1-10
1768.9	176.89	150	10	15	10-20
65.34	10.89	150	6	25	20-30
359.12	44.89	280	8	35	30-40
1115.56	278.89	180	4	45	40-50
2138.67	712.89	165	3	55	50-60
6533.37		935	33		Total

Table (3) The Z – value

Level of Significance	Table Z-Value	Counted Z-Value	DF	S ²	X ⁻	N	Group
0.05	1.96	2.5622	58	218.541	37.4	34	Experimental
				204.168	28.3	33	Control

Consequently, the experimental group is better than the control group; so the hypothesis, that the achievement of the experimental group which is taught according to the dictionary-based instruction is superior to that of the control group which is taught according to the traditional type of instruction i.e. without using the dictionary, in the written test is accepted.

4.1.2 Discussion of Results

The statistical analysis of the results obtained by the experimental and the control groups indicates that the subjects' achievement of the experimental group is significantly higher than that of the control group. This case is due to the fact that the mean of the experimental group, which is (37.4), grades higher than of the control group (28.3).

4.2 Conclusions

The aim of the present study is to present a psychological model of perception of pronunciation as skilled language behaviour, whether phonetic or phonemic. It has reached at the following conclusions:

- (1) The adoption of dictionary-based instruction enables the students to practice the various skills that are involved in the mastery of the language, i.e. receptive skills (listening and reading), and productive skills (speaking and writing).
- (2) It provides the use of a variety of techniques that make the students indulged in the lesson material and thus the students will no longer suffer the one-way communication in which the teacher has all the advantages.
- (3) The different activities used inside the class build up the students' confidence and create an atmosphere of trust among them. This is because such activities give students opportunities

to practice the language they are learning, i.e. to be active participants instead of being passive recipients.

- (4) By speaking and writing the language, the students would have a master over various elements: the individual sounds arranged in words, the phonetic transcription of different words, and the different aspects of pronunciation, stress, and syllabification.
- (5) The motivation of the students is increased since they are given the chance to experience both writing and speaking of the language. Thus, they can check their ability to pronounce correctly and fluently.
- (6) The great focus on the students' participation and initiation enhance the students' linguistic achievement as students are expected to develop their own self-learning strategies that tend to increase students' linguistic knowledge of the foreign language, i. e. develop their competence, then learners would be able to enhance performances of their own. The teacher's task is directed towards promoting the productive side of his students by adopting the dictionary-based instruction.
- (7) The main difference between the conventional and the dictionary-based methods of teaching is that of modeling. Thus, while the former depends on the teacher as a model, the latter attempts to design a standardised authoritative model. This model is, at least, expected to overcome the problems of different pronunciations made by different teachers as teachers are rarely of the same speech qualifications of fluency and accuracy.

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The Effect of Using Dictionary in Teaching Pronunciation.....(73)

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APPENDIX 1

The Model Daily Lesson Plan of the Control Group

Class : First – Year undergraduates –A-

Date : March 10th , 2007

Material : Chapter Four : Consonant sequences

OBJECTIVES

Special Objectives

1. Improving the students' linguistics competence.
2. Developing the students' appreciation and better pronunciation of English.
3. Helping students recognize how English is pronounced and native speakers speak.
4. Showing the significance of pronunciation for foreign learners of English.
5. Increasing the students' storage of sounds and sound forms.
6. improving the students English pronunciation.
7. qualifying speech organs for better ways of pronunciation and training the ear to sharply distinguish the different speech sounds

II. Behavioral Objectives

At the end of this lecture, first - year college students will be able to:

1. be familiar with English pronunciation.
2. recognize and pronounce sounds and sounds sequences individually and chorally.
3. Pronounce consonant sequence by directly imitating their teacher as a model or some cassettes of native recorded drills
4. Practise pronunciation of consonant sequence aloud.

TECHNIQUES

1. The instructor begins the lesson by reminding his students of the previous lesson in which they saw how single consonants are made ,and how a sequence of two consonants should be said (e.g. /pr, kr , tr /).
2. Listing some example of the words they had pronounced in the previous lecture on the board.
3. Using introductory questions as a starting point to begin the new lesson such as:" Can you give an example in which two consonants fellow each other? Give examples for three or four consonants follow one after the other and so on".
4. The instructor helps students to provide examples such as scheme /ski:m/,cream /kri:m /,scream,/skri:m/, necks /neks /,next /nekst/,texts /teksts/. Thus, this lesson will be devoted to practise initial Consonant sequences.
5. The instructor reads the examples of the book referring to the sequence of two and three consonants initially and ask students to listen carefully. such as:

spy / spai / ,spure /sp3:/ ,spear /spiə/,spare /speə/

stay /stei/ ,star /sta:/ ,steer /stiə/ ,sky /skai /,scar /ska:/

spread /spred/,straight /streit/ ,square /skweə/ (O'Connor, 1980: 64-7)

6. The instructor asks the students to read the examples that he had read individually.

7. The instructor asks the students to read the examples that he had read chorally.

APPENDIX 2

The Model Daily Lesson Plan of the Experimental Group

Class : First – Year undergraduates –B-

Date : March 10th , 2007

Material : Chapter Four : Consonant sequences

OBJECTIVES

1.Special Objectives

1. Improving the students' linguistics competence.
2. Developing the students' appreciation and better pronunciation of English.
3. Helping students recognize how English is pronounced and native speakers speak.
4. Showing the significance of pronunciation for foreign learners of English
5. Increasing the students' storage of sounds and sound forms
6. Enabling the students to speak good English.
7. building new habits of speaking English as a foreign language.
8. qualifying speech organs for better ways of pronunciation and training the ear to sharply distinguish the different speech sounds
9. helping students be native- like speakers of English.
- 10.using a style of transcription that enabled the dictionary entries to be readily interpreted .Accordingly, students will be able to practice the transcription.

2. Behavioral Objectives

At the end of this lecture, first - year college students will be able to:

1. be familiar with English pronunciation as well as English transcription.
2. recognize sounds individually and pronounce these sounds in sequences with the help of the dictionary.
3. Pronounce consonant sequence by directly imitating their teacher as a model or some cassettes of native recorded drill and then independently from the teacher by reading these sequences in dictionaries.
4. Practise pronouncing sounds and sequences of sounds with the help of the key-words they have mastered.
5. use the dictionary inside the classroom or at least while reading or preparing the assignment at home.
6. Practise writing transcription of different words and reading that transcription aloud.

TECHNIQUES

1. The instructor begins the lesson by reminding his students of the previous lesson in which they saw how single consonants are made ,and how a sequence of two consonants should be said (e.g. /pr, kr , tr /).

The Effect of Using Dictionary in Teaching Pronunciation.....(76)

2. Listing some example of the words they had pronounced in the previous lecture on the board.
3. Using introductory questions as a starting point to begin the new lesson such as: "Can you give an example in which two consonants follow each other? give examples for three or four consonants follow one after the other, and so on".
4. The instructor helps students to provide examples such as scheme /ski:m/, cream /kri:m /, scream /skri:m/, necks /neks /, next /nekst/, texts /teksts/. Thus, this lesson will be devoted to practise initial Consonant sequences.
5. The instructor reads the examples of the book referring to the sequence of two and three consonants initially and ask students to listen carefully. such as:
spy / spai / ,spure /spɜ:/ ,spear /spiə/, spare /speə/
stay /stei/ ,star /sta:/ ,steer /stiə/ ,sky /skai /,scar /ska:/
spread /spred/, straight /streit/ ,square /skweə/ (O'Connor, 1980: 64-7)
6. The instructor asks the students to read the examples that he had read individually.
7. The instructor asks the students to read the examples that he had read chorally.
8. The instructor asks students to give extra examples from their dictionary inside the classroom(see appendix).
9. The instructor asks learners to identify the cluster from the words they have picked up from the dictionary by Identifying the first ,the second or the third sound in the cluster they have chosen
10. The instructor asks some questions such as: What is the first sound in the cluster you have chosen ? How can you pronounce it? What is the second sound in the cluster you have chosen ? How can you pronounce it? What is the third sound in the cluster you have chosen? How can you pronounce it?
11. The instructor reminds his students to pronounce the first ,second and the third sounds correctly depending on the key –words they had. Then, to combine the sounds altogether in its consonant sequence with the help of their dictionaries.
12. At the end of the lesson, students are asked to write down some of the words they have picked up from the dictionary with their transcriptions.

APPENDIX 3

► University of Kufa/ College of Arts/ Department of English ◀

Better English Pronunciation

Time:

2hrs.

First Year Classes

Practical Test 2006/2007

The Effect of Using Dictionary in Teaching Pronunciation.....(77)

Name.....

-----Note: Answer all the Questions avoiding grammatical & spelling mistakes

Q1. Complete the following words according to their pronunciation. (20 ms.)

- | | |
|------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. P____son / p3:sn / | 6. h____ / hIə / |
| 2. O____n / əkei3n / | 7. co____d / kauəd / |
| 3. Sin____r / sInə / | 8. fl____ / fləIə / |
| 4. C____d / kəUld / | 9. ____tch / rets / |
| 5. K____an / kər Iən / | 10. ____ck / tsek / |

Q2. Complete the transcription of the following words according to your prediction from their spelling: (20 ms.)

- | | |
|----------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Cheek / ts____k / | 6. rich / rI____ / |
| 2. Sacks / s____ks / | 7. ton / t____n / |
| 3. This / ____s / | 8. milked / m I____ / |
| 4. Bledge / bl____ / | 9. utmost / ____tm____st / |
| 5. Burden / b____ / | 10. interrupts / Int____ts / |

Q3. Write in transcription each of the following : (20 ms.)

- | | |
|------------------|----------------|
| 1. Stop / / | 6. ear / / |
| 2. Written / / | 7. tyres / / |
| 3. Shortened / / | 8. showery / / |
| 4. Tower / / | 9. contain / / |
| 5. Annoy / / | 10. purse / / |

Q4. change the following transcribed words into ordinary spelling: (20 ms.)

- | | |
|----------------------|--------------------|
| 1. /ətends / _____ | 6. / su:nə / _____ |
| 2. / terəbəl / _____ | 7. / raU / _____ |
| 3. / Ko:d / _____ | 8. / helpI / _____ |
| 4. / paIlət / _____ | 9. / selvz / _____ |
| 5. / g3 :l / _____ | 10. / he ə / _____ |

Q5. A. Give example for each of the following syllables written in both ordinary spelling and transcription: (20 ms.)

- | |
|--------------------|
| 1. VC _____ / / |
| 2. CV _____ / / |
| 3. CCV _____ / / |
| 4. CVCC _____ / / |
| 5. CCVCC _____ / / |

The Effect of Using Dictionary in Teaching Pronunciation.....(78)

*

Q5. B. Transcribe the following phrases and sentences in full. (20 ms.)

1. Would you / /
 2. Today is Sunday / /
 3. He thanked them / /
 4. Hinged screen / /
 5. Tomorrow morning / /
- GOOD LUCK ALWAYS