



**International Journal of
English Linguistics, Literature, and Education
(IJELLE)**

Vol. 1, No. 1, 2019

Universitas Veteran Bangun Nusantara

ISSN Print: 1566-102416 ISSN Online: 1566-105494

**USING INTERNATIONAL PHONETIC ALPHABET (IPA) IN TEACHING
PRONUNCIATION: LINGUISTICS IN PRESENT CENTURY**

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Abstract

The aims of this research are to describe the use of International Phonetic Transcription (IPA) in teaching pronunciation. IPA (International Phonetic Alphabet), which was established in 1886 by a group of European phoneticians, is used as the standard of doing phonemic transcript. The term 'Phonetic Transcription' in this research refers to the set of symbols used to characterize the set of distinctive sounds of English. The subjects of the research were one lecturer of pronunciation subject and 39 students of the first semester at English Department Veteran Bangun Nusantara University Sukoharjo in 2017/ 2018 academic year. The researcher collected data by using interview, observation, questionnaire, and documentation. All data of the research was taken during teaching and learning process in pronunciation class. The result of the study showed that the use of IPA by combining it using various teaching method can help the students in learning pronunciation. Lecturer and most of the students think that IPA is needed and very beneficial in learning pronunciation.

Keywords: teaching pronunciation, IPA (International Phonetic Association), linguistics in present century

1. Introduction

During linguistics in present century period, pronunciation is one of language components which got a lot of attention. It is believed that mistakes in pronouncing the English words can create a burden in understading conversation. Based on the development of language study, teaching pronunciation was important in 1940s because it was in line with the teaching methodologies applied at that time. Celce-Murcia (2010) explains some of these methods in her book *Teaching Pronunciation*. In the United States, one method which was famous to be implemented was Audiolingualism. In Audiolingualism, the teacher teaches using minimal-pair drill. The teacher gives modeling of the sounds and asks the students to repeat them. The teacher also uses IPA and visuals to demonstrate the sounds. The importance of teaching pronunciation has been questioned in the beginning of the 1960s. Teaching pronunciation became less important while it gave more importance to teaching grammar and vocabulary. Teaching pronunciation in this era became rare and many programs erased pronunciation practices along with textbooks. In the 1970's educators and researchers started to solve the problems resulting from the omission

of pronunciation training.

In 1980's, silent way approach was introduced by Dr. Caleb Gattegno. This method stressed on the accuracy of sounds. The learner did not learn the phonetic alphabet explicitly but rather through the discovery of the sounds through visual tools: sound-color charts, fidel charts, and Cuisenaire rods (Celce-Murcia et al., 2010). In silent way, students' talking time is longer than teachers talking time. After drilling some pronunciation using sound color charts, the teacher facilitate pronunciation practice by serving the students with Cuisenaire rods. The students participate actively by producing pronunciation facilitated by the teacher. They practice pronunciation by learning from their friends mistakes.

The goal of instruction became intelligibility in pronunciation to cultivate communicative competence and help students to be understood in a global language (Morley, 1991). Up to now, CLT is still used in many ESL and EFL settings. Teaching pronunciation becomes a problem in CLT because the method does not explicitly outline ways to teach pronunciation as a means to enhance communication. In Asia, including in Indonesia, teachers should consider that not all teaching methodologies which are implemented in western country suitable to be implemented here. The differences in culture and educational practices need to be taken into account. CLT which is very successful implemented in western countries is not gaining the same result when it is implemented in Asia. Wang & Hill (2011) state that successful language learning in one culture might not match success in another differ from predominant approaches to teaching language in Western (native English speaking) countries. McKay (2003) states that it is difficult to implement communicative teaching practices into extremely large classes. In speaking class, ideally teachers facilitate the students by giving them time to speak.

Phonemic transcript used here is based on IPA (International Phonemic Alphabet). According to IPA Handbook, the IPA Alphabet can be used as a way to: "show pronunciation in a dictionary, to record a language in linguistic fieldwork, to form the basis of a writing system for a language, or to annotate acoustic and other displays in the analysis of speech" (IPA Handbook, 1999, p. 3), and for these purposes a generally agreed set of symbols is required. The controversy of the needs of phonemic transcription leads the writer to conduct the research to know how is the process of teaching English pronunciation by using phonemic transcript at English Department of Veteran Bangun Nusantara University.

2. Literature Review

Even though it is still in controversy, but the use of phonemic transcription is very important in the study of pronunciation. Not like Indonesian words, sounds in English are different from what are written. What we write is different from what we speak.

The International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) is usually used as standard in transcribing different units of sounds and phonemes. 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 (Morris-Wilson 2004). It consists of alphabetic symbols (such as /a/ and /ŋ/) and non-

alphabetic symbols (such as /:/ and /'/). It is used to describe sounds and other aspects of sounds such as length and intonation. Transcription is the linear use of phonetic symbols. Knowing how the phonemic transcription of English is will enhance learners' phonemic awareness and the accuracy of their speech. Iivonen (1998, p. 19) states that without phonetic understanding the hearer might not be able to recognize all the phonetic features of foreign language speech. Learning of a sound by using phonemic transcription will repair incorrect perception and correct the mistakes produced by the learner. Phonemic transcription also allows minimize the use of traditional teacher-centered teaching. Teaching pronunciation becomes a more independent way of learning for the students.

3. Research Method

The research method used in this study is descriptive qualitative research where the researcher can describe to describe the use of phonemic script in teaching pronunciation. This research is conducted in the first semester class of English Department Program. 1 lecturer and 39 students are involved as the participant of the research. The data collection for this research was conducted using observation, interview, and questionnaire. The data then analyzed using what Miles and Huberman (1994: 12) explained about three methods of data analysis, namely: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing or verification. In short, the steps in analyzing the data are: (1) the researcher collects the data through observation, questionnaire and interview. Then, the researcher selects, identify, and focuses on the data by referring to formulation of the research problem; (2) after selecting the data, the researcher displays those data into table form; (3) after displaying the data, the conclusion is drawn.

4. Findings and Discussion

4.1 Findings

The findings of this research were taken for four meetings of pronunciation class. The details of the findings are explained as follows:

1. First Meeting

In the first meeting of the observation, the lecturer reviewed the pronunciation of English letter and its sound. The lecturer gave pictures which could represent the sound and drilled the students how to pronounce the sound. After that, they followed an activity called IPA Bingo. This exercise required the learner to connect a sound that was heard with the correct IPA symbol and also drew his or her attention to the discrepancy between spelling and pronunciation. Based on the result of interviewing 3 students, the three of them said that this task combined by the use of phonemic transcript is quite challenging. It was supported by the result of the interview, stating that 67% students agreed that IPA Bingo combined by the use of phonemic transcript was challenging because it should only include symbols that have been taught and which they might want to quickly revise before starting the game.

2. Second Meeting

The lecturer used activity entitled "CHECK BOX". Based on the result of interviewing 3 students, the three of them said that this task is interesting. It was supported by the result

of the interview, stating that 89% students agreed that this activity combined by the use of phonemic transcript was interesting because it emphasized the difference that a single sound can make in terms of meaning, and they can be utilized in many ways in the classroom. It is important to ensure that learners can perceive it before they are asked to produce it. This can be done, for instance, by using minimal pairs, which are a traditional and old tool in pronunciation teaching and for a reason.

3. Third Meeting

The lecturer asked the learners to sit in a circle. He brought objects or pictures, in this example the topic are fruit and vegetables. He started teaching the words by picking up a fruit and saying its name by enunciating very carefully: *Banana. B-b-b-b-anaaah-na. Banana.* Then the lecturer asked the pupils to start repeating the word too, with plenty of repetition and practice. After he had gone through all words he can continue to focus on pronunciation by asking them to group the items so that, for example, words that begin with the same sound go in the same group: banana+bean, pear+peach+plum etc. Then they could group those that end in the same sound: onion+lemon, orange+cabbage, plum+mushroom etc. This type of exercise forces the pupils to *listen* very carefully and it also trains their memory.

4. Fourth Meeting

In the fourth meeting of observation, the lecturer used activity entitled “broken telephone” or *Chinese whispers* which was a game known all over the world. What the lecturer did was asking his pupils to stand in a line or a circle. Then the lecturer whispered a word or a phrase to one pupil who then whispered it to the person next to them and so on. The lecturer could show the phrase to the first pupil who then passed it on. Finally, the last one repeated what he or she had heard to everybody else.

4.2 Discussion

Pronunciation has become one problem that is usually appearing for students who learn English, especially for those who use English as a foreign language. Perception difficulty is one general reason why this problem occurred. The difficulty of English learners is not only on producing sounds but they are also unable to distinguish some sounds. It relates to the differences of Indonesian words sounds and English words sounds. Teaching pronunciation can be simply asking the students to open their books and look at the list of new words. After that, the teacher asks the students to repeat the pronunciation. This activity can be boring, but they are not the only way to teach pronunciation. Teaching pronunciation using IPA Phonemic Transcript can help the learner to memorize correct pronunciation. According to Hancock (1994) The IPA is best suited to learners capable of intellectualizing the learning process

5. Conclusion

The IPA (International Phonetic Alphabet) which were created at the era of linguistic in present century can be used to present speech sounds in a written form. In English language, this is particularly useful since the standard spelling is very misleading when compared to how words are pronounced. Most textbooks pay some attention to the teaching of the phonetic alphabet. The symbols appear in the vocabulary lists. According to the result of questionnaire, 96% students agree that the IPA symbols are very useful. There are different ways to introduce the IPA to learners, for example: Cex Box, Chinese whisper, get active, IPA Bingo, etc. Three students said that learning the IPA tedious and unnecessary. They enjoy using phonemic transcript combined with the other activities. Students can create their own way of writing down the pronunciation of a word. The main point is that they understand the difference between spelling and pronunciation in English.

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