

**THE USE OF PHONEMIC TRANSCRIPTIONS AS A TEACHING METHOD AND ITS
EFFECTS ON LANGUAGE LEARNING OUTCOMES**

**Candidate thesis by
Niina Kuutti**

**Jyväskylän yliopisto
Kielten laitos
20.5.2009**

HUMANISTINEN TIEDEKUNTA
KIELTEN LAITOS

Niina Kuutti

**THE USE OF PHONEMIC TRANSCRIPTIONS AS A TEACHING METHOD AND ITS
EFFECTS ON LANGUAGE LEARNING OUTCOMES**

Kandidaatintutkielma
Englannin kieli
Toukokuu 2009

15 sivua + 2 liitettä

Kirjaimet ainoastaan kuvaavat kieltä. Äänneet ovat se, mitä todella kuulemme. Virheelliset ääntämistottumukset jättävät aivoihin harhaanjohtavia muistijälkiä ja edistävät näin väärinymmärrysten syntymistä. Tämä puolestaan voi johtaa siihen, että henkilö pidättäytyy puhumasta vierasta kieltä, minkä seurauksena on edistymisen hidastuminen.

Oheisen tutkimuksen tarkoituksena on selvittää, voisiko foneettisen tarkekirjoituksen käytöllä opetusmenetelmänä olla myönteisiä vaikutuksia oppimistuloksiin. Tutkielmassa tarkastellaan oikeiden ääntämistottumusten roolia kielenopiskelussa. Siinä luodaan myös katsaus aikaisempiin kokemuksiin foneettisen tarkekirjoituksen pedagogisesta käytöstä. Lopuksi esitellään pienimuotoinen, foneettisten merkkien pedagogista arvoa tutkiva empiirinen tutkimus..

Tutkimuksessa vertailtiin jyväsyläläisen koulun kahta neljännen luokan rinnakkaisryhmää, joista toiselle pidettiin 45 minuutin mittainen, foneettisten merkkien tulkintaa ja käyttöä koskeva oppitunti. Kokelaita myös kehoitettiin seuraavien viikkojen ajan käyttämään hyödyksi oppimaansa tietoa uusien sanojen opiskelussa tulevaa tutkimusryhmän järjestämää sanakoetta varten. Verrokkiryhmälle vastaavaa opetusta ja ohjeistusta ei annettu. Kahden viikon kuluttua molemmat ryhmät osallistuivat suulliseen sanakokeeseen, jossa heidän oli määrä tunnistaa ääninauhalta koetta varten räätälöidystä keskustelusta sanoja, jotka kuuluivat oppilaille etukäteen ilmoitetun sanakokeen sanastoon. Verrokkiryhmälle ei ollut annettu ennakkotietoa kokeen suullisesta luonteesta kuten opetusta saaneelle ryhmälle. Hypoteesina oli, että opetusta saanut ryhmä suoriutuisi kokeesta opetuksen ansiosta keskimäärin paremmin tuloksin kuin verrokkiryhmä

Saadut tulokset eivät t-testin mukaan ole tilastollisesti merkittäviä. Tulokset viittaavat kuitenkin siihen, että suomalaisilla lapsilla on usein vaikeuksia havaita ja tuottaa soinnillinen s-äänne, /z/, kuten aikaisempi tutkimus on jo aiemmin osoittanut. Tilastollisesti merkittäviä tuloslukuja voitaisiin kenties odottaa, mikäli vastaavanlainen tutkimus järjestettäisiin suuremmalle koeryhmälle ja mikäli opetusohjelma olisi pitkäkestoisempi.

Asiasanat: Phonemic transcriptions, teaching method, phonemic awareness, spoken word recognition

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION.....4

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND.....5

3. METHODS.....8

4. RESULTS.....11

5. CONCLUSION.....14

Bibliography

Appendices

1. INTRODUCTION

In various aspects of learning we rely a great deal on our visual capacity. Indeed, written texts provide us with a useful memory aid. However, in language learning the role played by our auditory capacity is essential, but it can easily be overshadowed by overuse of visual aids. As Taft (2008: 371) points out, there is increasing evidence that orthographic information has an impact on spoken word processing. Indeed, what one sees definitely has an impact on the formation of memories and speech recognition. Therefore, the more systematic and orderly the orthography of a language as regards the grapheme-phoneme relation is, the more unambiguous visual aid it provides.

Learning words and expressions of a language whose spelling system is not orderly can be somewhat misleading. For example, Finnish students get easily confused, because they wrongly apply the patterns of their native language, whose orthographic system is more systematic and orderly as regards the grapheme-phoneme relation, to other languages. In the Finnish language symbol-to-sound relationships are almost perfectly logical: In general terms, each letter corresponds to just one sound and each letter is pronounced. Consequently, a Finnish L2 learner may find it somewhat confusing to discover that in the English word *baby* *a* is pronounced [ei], while in the word *cat* the same letter is pronounced [æ]. Moreover, the concept of mute sounds or weakened forms can be nearly incomprehensible and impossible to percept in speech. Sticking to the symbol-to-sound relations of one's first language often results in collecting inauthentic language memories and developing incorrect pronunciation habits, which are hard to unlearn later on. Mistakes in pronunciation may result in not getting one's message through, which in turn, discourages one from speaking and using the new language. Indeed, the role played by proper pronunciation is of great importance.

A feature of special interest in the present paper will be phonemic transcriptions as a teaching method. At first, there will be a discussion of the significance of the teaching of proper pronunciation. Next, there will be a review to some previous experiments concerning the use of phonemic transcriptions as a teaching method. It will be followed by a discussion about the pedagogical value of phonemic transcriptions. In the end, a small-scale study investigating the pedagogical value of phonemic transcriptions will be introduced. It will be followed by conclusion discussing phonemic transcriptions as a future research subject. In the present paper the following research questions will be

answered: How important is proper pronunciation in language learning? How can phonemic transcriptions help develop proper pronunciation, and thus have positive learning outcomes? How much previous experience in using phonemic transcriptions as a teaching method is there? In addition, to what extent should teachers use phonemic transcriptions as a teaching method?

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

A large number of those who have studied a foreign language for years still find it challenging to speak the language or to be understood, particularly by native speakers. Issakainen (2006:30) reports on an experiment conducted by Halonen and Peltoniemi, two language teachers for immigrants, who faced the challenge of teaching pronunciation for their students. They realized that the essential element in language learning is a sound rather than a letter. Peltoniemi emphasizes that if little time and consideration is given to perception of sounds, a learner's progress may be hindered. Indeed, students need dedication to phonetics, such as minimal pairs, phonemic transcription and comparative analysis. If phonemic instruction is neglected, a student does not learn to percept sounds correctly and cannot be understood by the listeners either. Students need to focus on what they hear, not what they see on paper.

The Phonetic Symposium 2006 reports on a Finnish research group, Iivonen et al., developing a new educational program. It explains the process of acquiring a foreign language pronunciation and why teaching pronunciation plays an important role in language learning. The Phonetic Symposium 2006 reports that learning the sounds of a foreign language requires the formation of a memory model. A speaker strives to produce a phonemic entity according to the memory model, and monitors oneself by hearing. If the memory model is not accurate, which is the case at the beginning of FL learning, or if the memory model is confused by one's native language, the result is a foreign accent. Indeed, learning proper pronunciation is not possible without developing auditory memory models. Iivonen et al. (2006) discuss an experiment conducted by Lindholm, Lubker and Gay (1975), where the normal movement of the lower jaw was blocked by a bite block, and yet the speaker was able to produce the compensating sounds. The result indicates that auditory objectives guide articulation.

The objective of a speech motor performance is to produce a sound similar to the model in the speaker's auditory memory. Producing sounds and words is impossible without the trace in one's

auditory memory. As Peltoniemi expresses the role auditory input plays, a sound is the key to language learning. Indeed, too much emphasis is put on visual aspects of language. Letters only describe language, sounds are what we really hear. Seeing a word in its written form does not leave a trace in one's auditory memory. Moreover, if the general principles of pronunciation are not clear or are confused by one's native language or if a person has developed incorrect habits in pronunciation, the written word may only give misleading information. Consequently, there is a good reason to think of what could be done to stop the orthographic form of words from misleading Finnish FL learners, who are used to the systematic and orderly symbol-to-sound relations of the Finnish language.

Indeed, the main conduit of gaining information about a language is the oral one, since natural language unfolds orally. Nevertheless, as human beings have developed a writing system, we do not have to overwhelm our memory capacity by trying to memorize all the information about a language we hear. Literacy eases the burden of memorizing things, since it enables us to get back to the source of information and revise it. Written language can help us to revise things learned about oral language. However, the problems discussed above concerning the confusion related to symbol-to-sound relations arise a question of how written information about a language could be made as unambiguous as possible. This brings us to the feature of special interest of the present study, phonemic transcriptions. Aro (2004) suggests that the more logical or predictable the orthographic system of a language is, the sooner literacy will be acquired. Indeed, when learning a new written language, one also learns new literacy, which happens at a relatively early stage. In several languages, such as in English, the pronunciation clues given by orthography are often somewhat unpredictable. However, phonemic transcriptions provide useful help for such ambiguity describing the oral form of the words as authentically as possible.

Phonemic transcriptions are a teaching method that several modern FL school books use. As early as in the 1960s, Gimson (1964), as quoted by Morris-Wilson 2003, has suggested that phonemic transcription is a good method to reinforce analytically the information which the learner may have received imperfectly by ear. Indeed, the transcriptions might provide a good aid to correct misperceptions. Even though school books do use phonemic transcriptions in their vocabulary lists, it was interesting to find out if their use as a teaching method could be even more extended, for instance to include whole texts or be even used as an alternative writing system. It was surprising to find out how little research has been done on such questions.

A booklet making good use of phonemic transcriptions was found. It was English By The

Nature Method (Jensen , 1975) containing language course material making comprehensive use of phonemic transcriptions. All the texts are written not only in orthographic form but also in phonemic transcription on alternate lines. The transcriptions of the texts are comparatively authentic. For instance, the weakened forms of words such as *and* or *of* have been taken into account (e.g. See page 10). Compared to today's English school books, in English By The Nature Method the transcription method is comprehensive, whereas in modern school books it is limited to vocabulary lists only. The limited use of phonemic transcriptions might be justified by the fact that students would find it hard to learn some new symbols, but after all, learning the new symbols of phonemic transcriptions would not be anything extraordinary in language learning. In fact, learning new alphabets is the first thing to do when starting to study a foreign language such as Russian, Arabic, or Persian, for instance.

Another method related to the use of phonemic transcriptions was carried out by Peltoniemi mentioned above. Peltoniemi had been contemplating, how to make her students understand what they sound like. She had the idea of making them dictate to her. As they dictated, she wrote down a transcription of their speech. Students were very often surprised when they realized the errors they had made. The students' auditory monitoring was affected by their L1, and they did not notice the errors they had made before they saw them on paper. The visual aid helped them recognize what kinds of words their articulation produced. This indicates that it is important for students to identify the inaccuracies or wrong tendencies they might have developed in the past and start working to unlearn them and replace them by proper pronunciation. In Peltoniemi's project the exercises focus on listening to the symbol-to-sound relations, orthography and pronunciation. (Issakainen, 2006).

Pons-Ridler (1984: 87) discusses an approach for oral communication applied for English-speaking students learning French as a second language. The method builds on what the students already know, for example, the similarities in vocabulary. The purpose of the technique is to improve oral comprehension, hence pronunciation is stressed, and the phonetic link between two cognates are demonstrated, not identical spellings. Word groups are classified according to their phonetic ending. Each word appears with its phonemic description, and if a word has homophones, the examples of all the meanings are given. The method allows students to recognize many words aurally at a very early stage. It allows them also to use those words freely with the correct pronunciation. The technique uses cognates as a positive tool in acquiring vocabulary and still improves students' auditory sensitivity to L2 sounds.

Stringer (1998) uses a method called Everyday Life Performance (ELP) for performing

naturally occurring conversation, in which on-stage actors recreate scenes from everyday life. Actors rehearse these scenes by imitating tape recordings, using transcription as memory aid. The goal of this experiment is empirical adequacy, making students aware of minute details of language and how conversations unfold naturally. In addition to performance studies ELP also relies on conversation analysis, which means analyzing tape recordings and transcriptions of naturally occurring speech. Pronunciation is a central component of ELP exercise. Stinger believes that one way for a non-native teacher to help students with pronunciation is “detailed understanding of the principles of transcription and of the precise nature of relationship between transcription and pronunciation“. Thus, detailed study of the recording and the transcription of a conversation can be effective in teaching pronunciation. Moreover, ELP introduces a student to foreign language as it naturally occurs, as spontaneous dialogue between native speakers, with overlaps, interruptions, pauses, false starts to mention some features that a great deal tailor-made school book dialogues are lacking.

The practical value of phonemic transcriptions has also drawn criticism by some scholars. Some have questioned any effort to try to describe speech adequately (Bohn& Munro, 2007:349). Nevertheless, being positive about the pedagogical value of phonemic transcriptions, I decided to give my personal contribution to the scarce amount of research done on the subject.

3. METHODS

The research method used in the present study was comparative analysis. Two parallel groups of a primary school in Jyväskylä were selected for the empirical study. Both groups consisted of 15 fourth-graders ranging in age from 10 to 11. They were all second-year learners of English and were using *Wow!* series as their study material in the class. The two parallel groups were selected for their fairly equal level in the knowledge of English and because of their not having been instructed in the use and interpretation of phonemic transcriptions before. Thus, the distinction between the presence and total absence of instruction about phonemic transcriptions would be seen more clearly.

Consequently, the 15 test subjects were given a 45-minute lesson about the interpretation and use of phonemic transcriptions, while the control group received no instruction at all. After a period, there would be an oral word test that would indicate the value of phonemic transcriptions as a teaching method by indicating the conceivable difference between the performance of the two groups. The hypothesis was that the group receiving instruction about the interpretation and use of phonemic transcriptions would fare better than those not receiving any instruction. Those instructed about

phonemic transcriptions were encouraged to make good direct use of their newly gained knowledge and practice for the upcoming word test with the help of phonemic transcriptions giving less attention to the orthographic form of the words. Similarly, the control group was told that there would be a word test in two weeks. However, to ensure that they would practice for the test as they usually did those in the control group were not told about the oral nature of the upcoming test.

The 45-minute instruction was given by the author of the study. The lesson took place in ordinary classroom settings in the morning. The materials used during the session were phonetic charts printed out from the ESL galaxy website that provides both English teachers and learners with a range of material. The phonetic charts were adapted from IPA, the International Phonetic Alphabets. The actual teacher of the two groups was present during the teaching session to be able to control the groups during the two weeks period before the test. The phonemes were divided into four phonetic charts. The first two depicted minimal pairs of consonant sounds and the last two vowel sounds, one of them monophthongs or 'single vowel sounds' and the other one diphthongs or 'double vowel sounds'. Each phoneme was represented by a phonetic graph accompanied by a picture of a familiar word that contained the particular phoneme. The instructor asked the students to think of some other words that contain the same speech sound. The students were eager to give examples, many of which were correct. However, as Lintunen (2004) points out in the case of Finnish learners, there is a great deal of confusion between /s/ and /z/ sounds. Furthermore, the other sibilants as well some affricates caused confusion.

Moreover, the instructor set an example of proper pronunciation of each sound and the students repeated after her. She also produced some concrete examples of incorrect pronunciation. To illustrate the difference between a voiced and a voiceless vowel, the instructor encouraged the students to feel their larynx vibrate when they produced a voiced vowel and not vibrate when they produced a voiceless vowel. In the end, the instructor tested the students' phonemic awareness by articulating a word very slowly and asking the students to listen carefully how many 'letters' they 'heard' in it and indicate their number with their fingers. (Bohn & Munro, 2007 point out that we actually “hear letters — because we are skilled at thinking of speech sounds using the blended cognitive scaffolding provided by letters”) The exercise used in the class was derived from a book containing exercises for developing phonemic awareness in young children (Adams & al, 1997). Next, the instructor wrote the words on the blackboard in their orthographic form to demonstrate the fact that Finnish learners usually find difficult to understand: Not each letter is correlated to just one sound and not all the letters are

even pronounced. To emphasize the ambiguity of English orthography and to make the students realize the value of more predictable graphemes, phonemic transcriptions, the words been selected were homophones. Finally, the instructor used minimal pairs, words that differ in only one phonological element, to help the students hear the slight difference between phonemes such as /s/ and /z/, or /p/ and /b/, which are normally hard for Finns to differentiate. She articulated one of the two words and the students were asked to listen which one they heard. Then, the correct answer was written on the blackboard. Next, the students were asked to produce both words of the minimal pair in quick succession in order to perceive the distinction.

After the two week period, both groups had an oral word test about the vocabulary which had been announced well in advance. Those instructed in the use of phonemic transcriptions had been encouraged to practice the words paying special attention to the pronunciation of the words with the help of the phonemic transcriptions of the word list. The students would practice for the word test by reading the words aloud, which would help them form auditory memory models, the kind of models that they would need for the oral test. To ensure that the traces left in their auditory memory would be correct and not misleading, the students were told to learn the phonemic transcription of the words before starting to read them aloud. This way, they would not be misled by the confusion related to the different orthographic systems of the two languages. Meanwhile, the control group had prepared for the test as they usually did, having main concern on the accuracy of orthography and not paying very much attention to the auditory form of the words. As they assumed that the word test would be, as usual, about memorizing correct spellings of the words, the students in group B would give little if any attention to the oral layout of the words. Ignoring the oral processing of the words would hinder the formation of the auditory memory models, which according to the hypothesis, would result in poorer performance in the upcoming oral test.

To minimize all the factors of exceptional stress, which could distort the results, the groups were tested in ordinary exam settings, both of the groups during their own English class. The testing technique is what is called spoken word recognition. Word lists consisting of 16 words were handed out to the students (see Appendix B). The instructions were given both orally and in writing. The students would hear a recording of a conversation between two native speakers of English, a father and his son talking about school. The recording was conducted by native speakers in order to avoid any inaccuracies in pronunciation and it was tailor-made for the test. The two native speakers of English were asked to record a naturally occurring conversation by using some of the vocabulary students were

to practice for the test (see Appendix A). The students were not to understand all of the conversation. Instead, they would only have to spot the words and only the words of the given word list they would hear occurring in the conversation. They were to circle the words that they heard on tape. An answer would be either correct or not correct.

In the end, the number of errors in each paper was calculated. Additionally, the total number of errors in both groups was calculated together to find out which one of the two groups had been more successful, in other words had made fewer mistakes. The statistical significance of the results was evaluated by using an online t test calculator (<http://www.graphpad.com/quickcalcs/ttest1.cfm>). In the end, the total number of errors made in each of the 16 items of the word list was calculated together to find out which parts had been the most difficult. The results were evaluated in the light of previous research.

4. RESULTS

Those being taught in the use of phonemic transcriptions were more successful than the other tested group. Six students of the group having received instruction got all answers correct, whereas only two in the control group made no errors at all. The total number of errors in the group being taught was 20, while the corresponding number in the control group was 31. Nevertheless, the online t test calculator indicated that the difference between the performances of the two groups was considered to be not statistically significant ($p=0.2726$).

The mean (i.e. the average value or the number of errors) in group A was 1.40 while in group B the mean was 2.07 (see table 1). However, the standard deviation (i.e. the distribution around the mean) in group B was 1.79, which was higher than in group A ($SD=1.45$). This indicates that there is a larger range of values in group B. One of the values in group B was 7, which was considerably more spread out than all the other values, which ranged from 0 to 4. Without that particular value, the standard deviation of group B would have been 1.20 with the mean of 1.71. Indeed, there is no significant difference in the performance of the two groups. The number of the two highest scores (the total number of errors being 0 or 1) was nearly equal in both groups. In the group of those having special instruction the number of those scoring 0 or 1 errors was 8, while in the control group it was 7. The most remarkable difference was the division between the scores of 2 and 3 error points. In the group having special instruction, four test subjects scored 2 and one scored 3 whereas in the control

group the corresponding numbers were 3 and 3.

To get statistically more significant results the study should have been larger in scale. The results might have been more significant if the number of those tested had been greater. Furthermore, the time devoted to teaching of phonetic issues should have been longer. Considering how powerful effect correct pronunciation acquired by accurate formation of memory models has on language learning, there is every reason to expect positive learning outcomes, if adequate time is devoted to pronunciation. Indeed, a 45-minute lesson cannot be compared to an extensive teaching program continuing throughout the school year. However, such settings are difficult to organize unless the author of the study is the actual teacher of the tested groups.

Despite the minor statistical significance of the findings, contemplating the parts in which the students made most errors reveal important data. Nearly one third, which is nine students, altogether, did not recognize the word *easy* that appeared on tape. (see table 3). One reason might be, as suggested in Morris-Wilson (2003), the fact that one of the major problems for Finns is confusing all the four sibilants of English to the Finnish letter *s*. It is possible that as the students saw the word *easy* in its orthographic form they were expecting to hear something similar to /i:si/, and thus did not recognize its voiced counterpart /i:zi/. The same error was made, even though not as frequently, with the word *crazy*. The errors made with the words *French* and *Swedish* may be due to Finns' problem with affricates. Affricates cause problems if the sibilants have not been mastered (Morris-Wilson, 2003:2). The students might have been expecting to hear something such as /frents/ and /svi:dis/, and hence, did not percept them in speech. Indeed, if the proper auditory memory model is lacking, one starts to make false assumptions on the basis of the conventions of his/her first language.

Another major cause of error was the word *play*. However, the error can be explained by the fact that it appeared in its continuous form *playing* (see Appendix A). Additionally, several students had heard *interesting*, *speak* and *week* in spite of their not occurring in the conversation (see table 4). Errors related to the particular words are difficult to explain, since there were not any words on the list that could easily be mistaken for one of them (see Appendix A). However, such mishearings might be explained by the expected occurrence of the particular words in a particular context.

An aspect worth contemplating was to find out whether repetition correlated with the number of errors. Some words occurred on tape more than once, and there had been an assumption that there might have been fewer errors with such words. However, despite the fact that the word *French* appeared three times altogether, some students had not perceived it. Also the word *terrible* occurred

twice, but not all of the students had recognized that either. *I think* was a phrase that occurred once as a whole phrase, and the word *think* by itself appeared four more times, and yet several students had not recognized it.

Furthermore, the items with no errors were the words *boring*, *fantastic* and *talk*. None of them occurred in the conversation and neither had any of the students circled them on the list. However, the absence of errors with the word *fantastic* might be explained by its relatively long structure, which makes it more easily identifiable. On the other hand, *interesting* has quite a long structure as well, but still there were mishearings related to that word.

The study conducted might have been even more valuable, if the words used in the test had been tailor-made, each of them containing a phoneme or phonemes that are problematic for Finns. Moreover, the material could have been derived from a source other than the student's text books, for instance, from an exercise book designed especially for training phonemic awareness. In order to discern even the slightest differences in the students' phonemic awareness, some trick words could have been used in the test, so that a word occurring on tape would have been the minimal pair of the word on the list.

Table 1. The data of the t test.

	Group A	Group B
Number of values	15	15
Mean	1.40	2.07
Standard deviation	1.45	1.79

Table 2. The errors of the individuals being tested.

The total number of errors	Group A	Group B
0	6	2
1	2	5
2	4	3
3	1	3
4	2	1
5	-	-
6	-	-
7	-	1

Table 3. The words of the list that appeared on tape.

The word appearing on tape	The number of errors in the test group having phonetics	The number of errors in the control group
easy	4	5
difficult	0	0
terrible	0	3
funny	0	0
crazy	2	1
play	3	3
Finnish	0	1
Swedish	2	3
French	1	1
I think	1	5
Total	13	22

Table 4. The words of the list not appearing on tape.

The word on the list not appearing on tape	The number of errors in the test group having phonetics	The number of errors in the control group
interesting	2	4
boring	0	0
fantastic	0	0
talk	0	0
speak	4	1
week	1	4
Total	7	9

5. CONCLUSION

Indeed, the application of phonemic transcriptions in the classroom is worth further research. The study conducted was small in scale and will serve as a pilot study for the future pro gradu work of the author of the present study. As the pro gradu work will be processed simultaneously with the teacher training, it will be easier to arrange more time for more comprehensive teaching program of the phonemic

transcriptions. Chances are that such a better organized study will have more statistical significance. Despite the fact that the present study had no statistical significance, it still provided valuable data to support some previous research concerning the problems that Finns usually have with the pronunciation of English.

English By The Nature Method introduced in Chapter 2 might provide a useful tool for teachers who want to avoid misconceptions about pronunciation in their students early on. The learning outcomes resulted from further consideration given to pronunciation might be extraordinary. Text book designers would do well to consider whether the use of phonemic transcriptions, besides vocabulary lists, could be extended to include the texts as well.

Indeed, the use of phonemic transcriptions as a teaching method is a potential field of future research when trying to help students find ways to improve their pronunciation skills and become well understood when communicating with other speakers of English in today's world of globalization. Providing them with such helpful aid can reinforce analytically the information the learners may have received imperfectly by ear, which in turn, may have positive learning outcomes.

Bibliography

- Aro, M. 2004. *The Effect of Orthography*. Jyväskylä: University of Jyväskylä.
- Adams, M., Foorman, B., Lundberg I. & Beeler, T. 1997. *Phonemic Awareness in Children*. Baltimore: Paul H. Brookers Publishing Company. Young
- Jensen, A. M. 1975. *English By The Nature Method*. Switzerland.
- Lintunen P. 2004. Pronunciation and phonemic transcription : a study of advanced learners of English / by Pekka Lintunen. Turku: University of Turku. Finnish
- Lintunen, P. 2005. <http://www.phon.ucl.ac.uk/home/johnm/ptlc2005/pdf/ptlcp30.pdf>
- Issakainen, T. 2006. Katso äännettä! *Opettaja*, 33, 30.
- Morris-Wilson, I. 2003. English pronunciation exercises for Finns. Oulu: University of Oulu
- Pons-Ridler, S. 1984. Oral comprehension: a new approach. *British Journal of Language Learning*. 22 (2), 87-89.
- Port, R. F. 2007. The graphical basis of phones and phonemes. In Bohn, O-S & Munro, Murray J. (eds.), *Language Experience in Second Language Speech Learning*. 349-364.
- Stringer, J. 1998. Teaching Language as Oral Communication: Everyday life performance in foreign language instruction. *Communication Education*. 47 (3), 221-33.
- Taft, M. 2008. Automatic activation of orthography in spoken word recognition: Pseudohomograph priming. *Journal of Memory and Language* 58, 366-79.
- The Phonetic Symposium 2006. Vieraan kielen sanojen foneettisten muistijälkien vahvistaminen multimediaohjelmalla. (6 Oct 2008)
- http://akseli.tekes.fi/opencms/opencms/OhjelmaPortaali/ohjelmat/FENIX/fi/Dokumenttiarkisto/Viestinta_ja_aktivointi/Julkaisut/Iivonen/YMxRAedited.2/pdf

Appendix A

The orthographic transcription of the recorded conversation between two native speakers of English

Dad: Hi Freddy! I'm going to ask you a few things about school, ok?

Boy: Sure

Dad: Ok, let me ask you about your subjects. Um(...) ¹ What sort of subjects would you say are easy?

Boy: (...)Math(...)and English(...)and music.

Dad: Ok so math English and music. Um(...) What sort of subjects do you find difficult?

Boy: Er(...) Let me think about that for a second(...)Let's see(...)Nothing really.

Dad: Er(...) What about(...)What languages do you study(...) at school?

Boy: English(...) and Finnish.

Dad: Do you study(...) Swedish?

Boy: No.

Dad: Um(...) Are there any other foreign languages in your school that you can study?

Boy: Um(...) You could study French or German, but I don't study them.

Dad: Er (...)When(...) ? You don't study them, but which kids do study them?

Boy: I think (--) ² study German but I don't know about the other kids.

Dad: Ok, and they are at the same grade as you, right?

Boy: (--) are only ones at my grade study German, but I think all the sixth graders are forced to study French.

Dad: Um(...) Do the kids like studying(...) French?

Boy: I don't know. I've never asked them.

Dad: Um(...) What's the funniest thing that happened at school?

Boy: When (--) started attacking people.

Dad: Um(...) Was he just playing?

Boy: Er(...)Or he does it all the time. [some laughing] And he bites people. So er(...) I can't really tell.

Dad: That sounds terrible. Is he crazy?

Boy: Yeah [laughing](...)or I don't think so.

Dad: Why does he do that?

Boy: Probably just because it's(...)

Dad: Does he think it's funny?

Boy: I think so

Dad: Do you think it's funny?

Boy: No, not really 'cause(...) Well actually sometimes I think it's funny even though one time he did jump on me and started biting me.

Dad: Oh my! That sounds terrible.

¹ (...) signifies a pause or hesitation

² signifies a section of speech impossible to comprehend

Appendix B

Kuulet nauhalta isän ja pojan välisen keskustelun englanniksi. **Sinun ei** suinkaan tarvitse ymmärtää kaikkea kuulemaasi. Riittää, että tunnistat puheesta koealueeseen kuuluvat sanat. Alla näet sanalistan. **Ympyröi** siitä kaikki nauhalla kuulemasi sanat. Älä siis ympyröi sanoja, joita et kuule. Väärästä vastauksesta tulee miinus piste. Tsemppiä kuunteluun!

easy

difficult

interesting

boring

fantastic

terrible

funny

crazy

play

talk

speak

Finnish

Swedish

French

week

I think