



Basic English Speech Support and Pronunciation Skills Of Senior High School Students

Henry Orbasayan Alperito Jr.

Senior High School Teacher II, Libertad National High School, Libertad, Surallah, South Cotabato, Philippines

Cristobal Millenes Ambayon EdD.-ELT

Associate Professor V, Sultan Kudarat State University, College of Teacher Education, ACCESS, EJC Montilla, Tacurong City, Sultan Kudarat, Philippines

ABSTRACT

The Basic English Speech Support is audio with transcription which is composed of the features of pronunciation that is purposely compiled to enhance pronunciation skills specifically, the sounds of English, stress, intonation, and linking. It is applied within the study with the aim of measuring its effectiveness to the pronunciation skills of Senior High School students. The study is designed to evaluate, validate and determine the effectiveness of Basic English Speech Support to the Senior High School, Grade 12, Accountancy, Business and Management students in Libertad National High School. English-teacher Evaluators evaluated the audio and its transcription. The design involved the experimental group and the control group which were carefully selected through the randomization process. The data gathered were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential tools such as mean, standard deviation, and t-test. The results revealed that students from the experimental group got a higher mean gain compared to the control group. It was factually and statistically confirmed that the utilization of Basic English Speech Support served as a significant element in teaching pronunciation and evidently, advances better learning among Senior High School students.

Keywords: Speech Support, Audio with Transcription, Pronunciation Skills, Senior High School

INTRODUCTION

Learning to speak English with correct pronunciation is a shared objective among the general population in the world, considering the way that it is viewed as the most widely used language. However, English is a complex language. It has inconsistent vowel sounds and has rules to speak the words appropriately and accurately. Pronunciation is another factor that impacts the communication process. It is seen to be an essential aspect of speaking. One of the vital elements of language proficiency is to secure acceptable pronunciation for language learners (Akyol 2012). As believed by Cakir (2011) mispronunciation and bad intonation are critical issues in the discourse of the nonnative instructors of English in underdeveloped countries, because of the

absence of materials, insufficient model educators, and so forth. Sara (2015) learning the English language would not be successful if a person cannot communicate with others; an inappropriate pronunciation often creates misunderstanding which causes a breakdown in communication. Hence learning proper pronunciation is really important for successful communication. However, Celce-Murcia, Brinton, and Goodwin (2000) suggest that techniques like visual and auditory reinforcement, tactile reinforcement, kinesthetic enforcement, use of authentic materials can be effective in developing approaches of pronunciation in a second language context. Howlader (2011) proposed the use of imitation as a technique of teaching English pronunciation.

In the Philippine context, Senobio (2015) believes that English is not taught clearly and adequately in grade school. If students acquire the necessary knowledge and skills in the language in their formative years, they will not have a hard time in high school. English pronunciation problems occur because of the diverse dialects and languages that affect the production of sounds. Ryan (2009) enumerated the specific pronunciation problems for Filipinos, and these include the schwa vowel sound, how to use voiced consonant sounds such as the /z/, /b/ & /v/ sounds, and lastly, the articulation of the TH sounds.

Senior High School students are expected to have a skillful pronunciation. Unfortunately, there are several students who have difficulty in identifying and producing words and read English texts skillfully. They are also experiencing discriminations since their pronunciation are influenced by their ethnicities. And others are misunderstood because they are not able to enunciate the accurate word, otherwise it will alter the meaning of the word. Evidently, it is a problem that requires a careful study because one of the fundamental aspirations of English language education is to develop learners to be language competent and able to communicate effectively. Pronunciation in consideration is a primary element in communication if we fail to give importance to this aspect; this aim has not been completely realized. This undertaking will enhance students listening, reading and communication skills in English. Further insights with this study, will help develop the teaching of English pronunciation, better communication in the community regardless of ethnicities and it might be useful to future researchers. Thus, this study was initiated.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND QUESTIONS

This study generally aims to evaluate and determine the effectiveness of Basic English Speech Support in terms of Pronunciation Skills of Senior High School Students. It specifically aims to answer the following questions:

1. What is the level of evaluation of Basic English Speech Support as a strategy in developing the students' pronunciation skills in terms of its:
 - 1.1. Content;
 - 1.2. Accuracy and Timeliness;
 - 1.3. Appropriateness (Pacing and Language);
 - 1.4. Technical Quality; and
 - 1.5. Usability?

2. What is the level of pronunciation skills among Senior High School students in the control and experimental groups in their pre-test and the post-test result?
3. Is there a significant difference in the pronunciation skills between the control and experimental groups in the pre-test and the post-test?
4. Is there a significant difference in the mean gain of the control and experimental groups in the pre-test and the post-test on the pronunciation skills?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study utilized descriptive-evaluative and experimental research designs. In a descriptive-comparative research design, the researchers considered two variables and established a formal procedure to compare and conclude that one is better than the other Palar-Calmorin and Calmorin (2007). Experimental research design, on the other hand, is a systematic and scientific approach to probe in which the researchers manipulate one or more variables, and control and measure any change in other variables, Blakstad (2008). The researchers employed two designs in determining the effectiveness of Basic English Speech Support to the students. The data were gathered through pretest and post-tests and researcher-made "Basic English Speech Support" assessment tool intended only to assess the pronunciation skills of students as to correct production of vowel sounds, consonant sounds, stress, intonation, and linking. It is employed purposely to give a distinct comparison and differences of results particularly from the pretest to post-test.

Respondents of the Study

The Senior High School students of Libertad National High School enrolled during the School Year 2018-2019 were the respondents of the study. Particularly, they were Grade 12 students from Accountancy, Business, and Management (ABM) Strand. Moreover, the evaluation and validation of instruments were done by a panel of English teachers. They analyzed, evaluated, and validated the "Basic English Speech Support" in terms of Content, Accuracy and Timeliness, Appropriateness (Pacing and Language), Technical Quality, and Usability. The criteria were adopted from Smaldino, Lowther, & Russell (2008). For the evaluation and validation of the panel of the experts, a scale of three (3) was used with corresponding interpretation. The team evaluators were English and reading teachers from different schools in the province of South Cotabato namely: Panay National High School, Notre Dame of Marbel University, and Libertad National High School.

Research Instruments

The study on Basic English Speech Support and the Pronunciation Skills of Secondary Students was conducted at Libertad National High School during the School Year 2018-2019 with Grade 12 students as subjects. The research instrument for the study employed the Basic English Speech Support, Evaluation, and Validation Instrument and the Record-Test Instrument.

The Basic English Speech Support developed by the researchers was the primary treatment instrument for this study. It was a self-reliant and individualized self- instructional package, which helped students attain a wide range of objectives at their own pace. Topics included in Basic English Speech Support are the Features of English pronunciation based on Burns, (2003). These features are the sounds of English (vowel and consonant), stress, intonation, and linking.

The prepared evaluation and validation instrument for the Basic English Speech Support were given to three (3) English Teachers to get their assessment, comments, suggestions, or another course of action to ascertain the validity of the audio and its transcription content.

The pre-test and the post-test instrument was evaluated and validated by the researchers. These were conducted with the use of a recorder purposely in the analysis of accurate production of sounds and pronunciation from the list of words, phrases, and sentences.

Data Gathering Procedure

The Basic English Speech Support was compiled and modified by the researchers. It was evaluated and validated using the Evaluation and validation instrument. The evaluation and validation tool was adapted and revised from Instructional Technology and Media for Learning. The researchers gave the Basic English Speech Support personally to the evaluators to establish truthfulness, discipline, and trustworthiness.

Besides, the researchers started the pre-test to both the experimental and control group consecutively. The pre-test was administered by the researcher at the senior high school computer laboratory with headsets and microphones for a well-managed test administration with the utilization of a recorder. The data was checked and analyzed to get accurate results of the pre-test. Throughout the pre-test and post-test, respondents produced the words, phrases, and sentences with the use of a recorder. Then, the researchers dealt a careful review of the speech recordings, examined them, and assessed the students' performance according to the set of criteria for the pronunciation skills. The researchers had noted an extremely evident difference between the levels of pronunciation skills of the control from that of the experimental group. The accomplished forms and data were collected and the results were analyzed and interpreted.

Statistical Treatment

The researchers used the weighted mean and the 3-point Likert Scale in the evaluation and validation of the Basic English Speech Support (audio and transcription) as to its content, accuracy and timeliness, appropriateness (pacing and language), technical quality and usability. In addition, the researchers used the simple mean and the 4-point Likert Scale in describing the performance of the respondents in the pre-test and post-test of both control and experimental group. Furthermore, a t-test was utilized for the computation of the significant difference in the pronunciation skills between the control group and experimental group in the pre-test and the post-test. On the other hand, in assessing the respondent's level of pronunciation skills, a significant difference between the mean gain scores of the control and experimental groups were used.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Level of Evaluation of the Basic English Speech Support

The table below presents the mean level of assessment of the Basic English Speech Support in terms of its content, accuracy and timeliness, appropriateness, technical quality, and usability.

Table 1. Teachers' Assessment of Basic English Speech Support in terms of its content, accuracy and timeliness, appropriateness, technical quality, and usability.

Category	Mean	Description
Content	3.00	High Quality
Accuracy and Timeliness	2.67	High Quality
Appropriateness	2.67	High Quality
Technical Quality	2.33	Medium Quality
Usability	3.00	High Quality
Section Mean	2.73	High Quality

Key: High Quality (2.34-3.00), Medium Quality (1.67-2.33), Low Quality (1.00-1.66)

As shown in the evaluation of Basic English Speech Support, it obtains a section mean of 2.73 with the description of "High Quality". Particularly, in terms of content, the Basic English Speech Support is "High Quality". This result means that the standards, outcome, and objective in creating speech support were addressed and that the use of audio could enhance the learning of students. For accuracy and timeliness, it is "High Quality". It means that the sets of information utilized in the speech support are correct and do not contain material that is out of date. In terms of its appropriateness, it is assessed to be "High Quality". This shows that the language used is appropriate and is presented well so most of the users can understand and process the information. As to Technical Quality, it is assessed to be "Medium Quality". It means that the material represents technology and media that are of good quality. Finally, the teachers' assessment of Basic English Speech Support in terms of its Usability is "High Quality". It means that the material follows easy-to-use patterns with nothing to confuse the user. Based on the descriptive and evaluative results, it is evident that the Basic English Speech Support is recommended and accepted for classroom use. In the study of Pantaleo (2018), he revealed that the higher the sound quality of the information the more likely listeners will trust what they're hearing, compared to any material with poor audio quality.

Level of Pronunciation Skills of the Control Group and Experimental Group in the Pre-test

Table 2 below presents the level of pronunciation skills of the control group and the experimental group in the pre-test.

Table 2. Level of Pronunciation Skills of the Control Group and Experimental Group in the Pre-test.

Features of Pronunciation	Mean of Control Group	Description	Mean of Experimental Group	Description
Sounds of English	3.39	Excellent	3.58	Excellent
Stress	2.00	Fair	2.25	Fair
Intonation	1.72	Needs Improvement	1.91	Fair
Linking	1.00	Needs Improvement	1.03	Needs Improvement

Key: Excellent (3.25-4.00), Satisfactory (2.50-3.24), Fair (1.75-2.49), Needs Improvement (1.00-1.74)

As reflected on the table, the first feature of Pronunciation which is the sounds of English, students under the control group have a mean score of 3.39 while students under the experimental group have a mean score of 3.58 which both have an “excellent” description. This outcome means that students can identify and produce correct vowel sounds with 0-2 errors.

On the second feature of Pronunciation which is the Stress, students under the control group have a mean score of 2.00 while students under the experimental group have a mean score of 2.25 where both have a “fair” description. These figures mean that students can identify and produce correct consonant sounds with 0-2 errors.

In the level pronunciation skills in terms of Intonation which is the third feature of pronunciation, students under control group have a mean score of 1.72 with “Needs improvement” description which means, students can identify and produce correct English stress patterns with 9 or more errors while students under the experimental group have a mean score of 1.91 with “fair” description which means students can identify and produce correct English stress patterns with 6-8 errors.

As to the level of Pronunciation skills in terms of Linking which is the last feature of pronunciation, students under the control group have a mean score of 1.00 while students under the experimental group have a mean score of 1.03 which both gain the “needs improvement” description. This data means that students can identify and produce correct English linking with 9 or more errors.

The result of the pre-test manifests that Senior High School students have developed the sounds of English with excellent description, yet the level of pronunciation skills in stress, intonation, and linking is not yet fully improved. These findings are supported by Busà (2008) in which many teachers are confronted with the question of which aspects should get more focus than the other. In most language classes, vowels and consonants are the basis of pronunciation teaching. The prosodic features such as stress, intonation and linking are not taught.

Level of Pronunciation Skills of the Control Group and Experimental Group in the Post-test.

Table 3 presents the level of pronunciation skills of the control group and the experimental group in the post-test.

Table 3. Level of Pronunciation Skills of the Control Group and Experimental Group in the Post-test

Features of Pronunciation	Mean of Control Group	Description	Mean of Experimental Group	Description
Sounds of English	3.39	Excellent	4.00	Excellent
Stress	2.19	Fair	3.69	Excellent
Intonation	1.94	Fair	3.78	Excellent
Linking	1.31	Needs Improvement	3.69	Excellent

Key: Excellent (3.25-4.00), Satisfactory (2.50-3.24), Fair (1.75-2.49), Needs Improvement (1.00-1.74)

As revealed in the table above, the first feature of Pronunciation which is the Sounds of English, students under the control group have a mean score of 3.39 while students under the experimental group have a mean score of 4.00 which both have an “excellent” description. This indicates that students can identify and produce correct vowel and consonant sounds with 0-2 errors.

On the second feature of Pronunciation which is the Stress, students under the control group have a mean score of 2.19 with a “fair” description. It reveals that students can identify and produce correct vowel and consonant sounds with 6-8 errors while students under the experimental group have a mean score of 3.69 with an “excellent” description. It implies that students can identify and produce correct English stress patterns with 0-3 errors.

In terms of Intonation which is the third feature of pronunciation, students under the control group have a mean score of 1.94 with a “fair” description. It emphasizes that students can produce correct English intonation with 6-8 errors while students under the experimental group have a mean score of 3.78 with an “excellent” description. This shows that students can identify and produce correct English intonation with 0-2 errors.

As to the level of Pronunciation skills in terms of Linking which is the last feature of pronunciation, students under the control group have a mean score of 1.31 with a “needs improvement” description. It implies that students can identify and produce correct English linking with 9 or more errors while students under the experimental group have a mean score of 3.69 with an “excellent” description. It indicates that students can identify and produce correct English linking with 0-2 errors. The results serve as evidence that the students in the experimental group obtain excellent description in pronunciation skills particularly in stress, intonation, and linking in comparison to the control group in which the result of pronunciation skills is the same in the pre-test. Mikuláščíková (2012) in his study noted that the pronunciation activities which focus on stress usually include practicing intonation and linking as well.

Analysis of Pre-test Scores of Control Group and Experimental Group

Table 4 presents the analysis of pre-test scores of the control group and the experimental group.

Table 4. Analysis of Pre-test Scores of Control Group and Experimental Group.

Group	N	Mean	SD	df	t-comp	t-tab
Control	30	2.35	0.28	58	1.10	1.66
Experimental	30	2.43	0.33			

$\alpha=0.05$ level of significance

Comparing the mean of pre-test scores of the control group and experimental group it obtains a $t_{\text{computed}}=1.10$ which is less than $t_{\text{tab}}=1.66$ at $\alpha=0.05$ level of significance. There is enough evidence to claim that difference between the mean of the pre-test of the control group, and the experimental group is due to chance. The results imply that the achievement of the control group is comparable to the experimental group during the pre-test. Further, it means that at the start of the experiment, the achievement of the control group is as good as the experimental group.

The same study was conducted at Golestan University of Iran by Abdolmanafi-Rokni (2013) wherein the result of a t-test used to compare the differences between the two groups indicated that the mean score of the experimental group was almost the same as the mean score of the control group in the pre-test.

Analysis of Post-test Scores of the Control Group and the Experimental Group

Table 5 presents the analysis of the post-test scores of the control group and the experimental group.

Table 5. Analysis of Post-test Scores of the Control Group and Experimental Group.

Group	N	Mean	SD	df	t-comp	t-tab
Control	30	2.49	0.24	58	24.82	1.66
Experimental	30	3.82	0.16			

$\alpha=0.05$ level of significance

Evaluating the contrast of the control group and experimental group in the post-test, it obtains a t-computed= 24.82 which is greater than the t-tabulation=1.66 at 0.05 level of significance. Statistically, there is sufficient verification that the difference between means of the control group and the experimental group is greater than expected by chance. The outcomes signify that the experimental group performed better than the control group in the post-test. Moreover, the experimental group has a significant change in their pronunciation after subjecting them to Basic English Speech Support. The findings are supported by Cakir (2011) in his study; found that extensive listening of the audio materials had a great contribution to the enhancement of correct pronunciation of the participants.

Analysis of Mean Gain of Control Group and Experimental Group

Table 6 presents the analysis of the mean gain of the control group and the experimental group.

Table 6. Analysis of Mean Gain of Control Group and Experimental Group.

Group	N	Mean	SD	df	t-comp	t-tab
Control	30	0.15	0.13	58	21.59	1.66
Experimental	30	1.39	0.29			

$\alpha=0.05$ level of significance

In the assessment of the difference between the mean gain of the control group and experimental group, it obtains t-comp=21.59 which is greater than t-tab=1.66 at 0.05 level of significance, the result is significant. There is enough evidence to claim that difference between the mean gain of the control group and the experimental group is greater than expected by chance. The results denote that the experimental group has more gains than the control group after the post-test. This result confirms what has been found in previous study by Abdolmanafi-Rokni (2013) in which students who were engaged in their learning recognize that their pronunciation improved after treatment.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions are inferred. First, the Basic English Speech Support developed by the researcher himself is of High Quality as to its content, accuracy

and timeliness, appropriateness, medium quality as to its technical quality, and high quality as to usability as evaluated by the panel of experts.

Secondly, the experimental group who were administered with Basic English Speech Support has obtained a higher mean score compared to the control group who underwent the usual and traditional teaching method. The Basic English Speech Support is very effective as a treatment and strategy in enhancing the pronunciation skills of the senior high school students as shown in the post-test result of the experimental group and is significantly different from the control group. The content, accuracy and timeliness, appropriateness, technical quality, and usability of the Basic English Speech Support have a significant contribution to the post-test results. Students have developed independent learning and a positive learning attitude towards pronunciation skills.

Additionally, the two groups have the same performance in pronunciation skills indicating the homogeneity of the respondents during the pre-test. The experimental group showed relatively higher performance in the post-test as compared to the control group.

Lastly, the use of Basic English Speech Support in pronunciation skills had significantly improved the students' level of performance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the findings and conclusion of the research study, the following are recommended:

1. Basic English Speech Support can be introduced to teachers of any discipline who wish to upgrade their pronunciation skills.
2. The Basic English Speech Support should be used as a medium of instruction in language learning among Senior High School students.
3. The Basic English Speech Support can be used as part of the motivation in pronunciation instruction in any English subject.
4. Encourage more students to utilize the Basic English Speech Support for effective and efficient learning; and
5. The Basic English Speech Support should be subjected to further evaluation of curriculum developers in the institution. For further study, developed multimedia as Basic English Speech Support is highly suggested.

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