

Pui Kuet Poh/ Using Emoji word slide and Bingo game to improve pronunciation of long vowel /i:/ among Year Four pupils

USING EMOJI WORD SLIDE AND BINGO GAME IN IMPROVING PRONUNCIATION OF LONG VOWEL /i:/ AMONG YEAR FOUR PUPILS

Pui Kuet Poh
puisunny92@gmail.com

Abstract

This action research was carried out during my third phase of practicum in a sub-urban primary school. The objectives were to improve my own practice in teaching pronunciation of long vowel /i:/, to my Year Four classroom as well as to improve five of my pupils' pronunciation of long vowel /i:/ using Emoji word slide and Bingo game. My participants were five Year Four pupils with average English proficiency. The Emoji word slide was designed with the Emoji visual that corresponded the lip shape in producing the long vowel /i:/. Bingo game was fun and facilitated the assessment of pronunciation. I collected the data through observation and interviews. The data were analysed and triangulated to establish the credibility and trustworthiness of the data. The findings showed that I have improved my teaching and my participants also have improved pronunciation of long vowel /i:/. I also became more observant and rational in doing certain action. Emoji word slide could be enhanced to teach other long vowels too.

Keywords: Emoji word slide, VARK model, long vowel, Bingo game, pronunciation

Abstrak

Penyelidikan tindakan ini telah dilaksanakan sewaktu praktikum fasa tiga saya di sebuah sekolah luar bandar. Tujuan penyelidikan ini adalah untuk meningkatkan pengajaran saya dalam sebutan vokal panjang /i:/ kepada murid-murid Tahun Empat serta meningkatkan pembelajaran lima daripada murid saya dalam sebutan vokal panjang /i:/ dengan menggunakan Emoji word slide dan juga Bingo game. Peserta kajian saya adalah seramai lima orang murid Tahun Empat dengan tahap penguasaan Bahasa Inggeris yang sederhana. Emoji word slide telah dicipta dengan menggunakan visual Emoji yang menunjukkan bentuk bibir bagi menyebut vokal panjang /i:/. Bingo game yang mempunyai unsur keseronokan turut membantu dalam penilaian sebutan. Saya telah mengumpul data melalui pemerhatian dan temu bual. Data yang dikumpul telah dianalisis dan ditriangulasi bagi mewujudkan kredibiliti dan kebolehpercayaan data. Dapatan kajian ini menjelaskan bahawa saya telah menunjukkan peningkatan dari segi pengajaran serta murid-murid saya menunjukkan peningkatan dari segi sebutan vokal panjang /i:/. Saya juga menjadi lebih prihatin dan rasional apabila melakukan sesuatu perkara. Emoji word slide boleh diperbaiki bagi pengajaran sebutan vokal panjang yang lain.

Kata Kunci: slaid perkataan Emoji, model VARK, vokal panjang, Bingo game, sebutan

INTRODUCTION

Context

I am a trainee teacher majoring in Teaching English as Second Language (TESL) from Institute of Teacher Education Batu Lintang Campus

(ITE BLC). Throughout the years in this institute, we were exposed to different kinds of teaching programmes, such as, practicum, that could develop and train us to be holistically qualified teachers. In order to protect the rights of all parties, all the names of the schools, teachers and pupils used are pseudonyms. In my third phase of practicum, I was assigned to SJK Chung Hua Ara, which is also a sub-urban school, with 30 pupils in my class. Due to the fact that my pupils were mostly weak in the English language, I then devised and planned interesting lessons to motivate my pupils to try out the English language.

Research Focus

In my previous teaching practice, I have developed my personal theory in teaching English as a second language, particularly in the teaching of pronunciation. I totally agree with the ideas proposed in the Affective Filter Hypothesis in Krashen's Theory of Second Language Acquisition (2009). He argued that learners with high motivation, self-confidence, positive self-image, and low anxiety level are better equipped for success in second language acquisition. These factors allow the affective filter to lower for the input to 'strike deeper' and be acquired (Du, 2009). Some of the relevant activities were language games, poems, songs and stories. In fact, I have integrated several activities mentioned in my lessons but I found my pupils liked games more than other methods. In games, they participated actively as they wanted to beat other teams. Indirectly, my pupils also picked up the language from the language games. This incident made me select games as one of my research tools to help my pupils because I believe with the help of exciting language games, my pupils would be motivated and confident in learning the English language, particularly in the production of long vowels.

Besides, I found that my pupils have similar pronunciation issues as my previous practicum pupils as they faced difficulty in pronouncing the long vowel sounds. Moreover, I was not very happy as there was a gap between the usual pronunciation class and my personal theory of fun learning. As a result, I would like to integrate the elements of fun learning and assessing my pupils' pronunciation at the same time. Therefore, I have come up with the Emoji word slide and Bingo game to help my pupils in pronouncing the long vowel sounds.

The selection of my research participants was through purposive sampling. To obtain their information, I have referred to the assistant headmistress for the Year Three examination results (Figure 1) as well as the topical tests results (Figure 2).

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Figure 1. Year Three examination results

Figure 2. Year Three English tests results

My teacher mentor also suggested me five pupils to participate in my study, namely Alison, Alva, Catherine, Ching Meng and Jacky. To triangulate and confirm the selection of these five pupils, I have prepared and conducted a memory game session on 6 February 2015. The whole memory card session was video recorded and I analysed my pupils' pronunciation using the International Phonetics Alphabets (IPA) (1886), and then tabulated the data as shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Participants' Pronunciation on Words with Long Vowels /ɔ:/ and /i:/.

Participants	Words with long vowels /ɔ:/ and /i:/					
	prawn	Crawl	Straw	meat	leaf	eat
	/prɔ:n/	/krɔ:l/	/strɔ:/	/mi:t/	/li:f/	/i:t/
Alison	[prɔ:n]	[krɔ:l]	[strɔ:]	[mɪt]	[lɪf]	[ɪt]
Alva	[prɔ:n]	[krɔ:l]	[strɔ:]	[mɪt]	[lɪf]	[ɪt]
Catherine	[prɔ:n]	[krɔl]	[strɔ:]	[mɪt]	[lɪf]	[ɪt]
Ching Meng	[prɔn]	[krɔl]	[strɔ]	[mɪt]	[lɪf]	[ɪt]
Jacky	[prɔn]	[krɔ:l]	[strɔ]	[mɪt]	[lɪf]	[ɪt]

From Table 1, three of the five pupils correctly pronounced the words with /ɔ:/ as correspond to letter 'aw'. On the other hand, the remaining two pupils mispronounced the words. They pronounced the words using the short vowel /e/. Besides, all five of my pupils pronounced incorrectly the words with /i:/ as correspond to letter 'ea'. All of them pronounced the words using the short vowel /ɪ/ as [mɪt], [lɪf] and [ɪt] instead of pronouncing the long vowel /i:/. Hence, from the initial data collected, I decided to conduct an action research to improve my teaching practices as well as to improve my pupils' pronunciation on long vowel /i:/, which was a prominent pronunciation problem faced by five of my pupils.

Research Objective

The objectives of this study were to improve my own practice in teaching pronunciation of long vowel /i:/, to my Year Four classroom, as well as to improve five of my pupils' pronunciation of long vowel /i:/ using Emoji word slide and Bingo game.

Research Questions

The following research questions would guide the course of my research.

- In what ways do the Emoji word slide and Bingo game help in improving my own practice in teaching pronunciation of long vowel /i:/, to my year four classroom?
- In what ways do the Emoji word slide and Bingo game help in improving my Year Four pupils' pronunciation of long vowel /i:/?

PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION OF ACTION

Action Plan

In Malaysia, pronunciation can be the most challenging part of a language and one of the least favourite topics (Gilakjani, 2012) because it is very time-consuming (Jayapalan & Pillai, 2011). Due to the fact that pronunciation and oral work are not tested formally in public examinations, teachers in schools tend to pay less attention to the pupils' pronunciation. Instead, they are worried that teaching pronunciation will take up valuable time to cover other aspects of the language that pupils need to master in order to get good grades.

Behaviourism holds the philosophy of seeing outcome of learning as a change in behaviour (Woolfolk, 2010). Hence, this school of thought emphasizes on the effect of external events on the individual's learning. Thorndike (1911) introduced two laws under the Law of Acquired Behaviour or Learning, namely law of exercise and law of effect. In law of exercise, he stressed that the relationship between stimuli and responses can be enhanced through frequent exercises. In fact, this law is very relevant to my action research as I gave frequent exercises and drillings to my participants in terms of the pronunciation of the long vowel sound.

Learners process information differently. According to Fleming and Baume (2006), there are four learning modalities found in all learners, namely the visual, auditory, read/write and kinesthetic learning modalities, or known as the VARK model. In addition, most of the learners prefer one of the four learning modalities and will learn more effectively if they are taught in the preferred modality.

Visual learners need to see in order to make sense of the information given (Tilestone, 2004). Hence, pictures and graphic organizers help the visual learners to process information more effectively. Auditory learners

learn best by sitting and listening. They prefer to hear the information through lectures, discussion and media to effectively process the information. Read/write learners are slightly different from visual learners as they prefer words instead of graphic symbols. Kinesthetic learners, on the other hand, need to move, hold and touch objects in order to learn. Besides, they need hands-on activities in order to make sense of what they are learning.

In my action research, I took in account of my participants' different learning modalities and came up with the Emoji word slide. The Emoji word slide had an emoji that facilitates visual learners by showing the correct lip shape in producing the long vowel /i:/. Besides, I was the model of sound production for my auditory learners. The words pronounced were explicitly written for the read/write learners. Also, the movement of holding the Emoji word slide and sliding the word helped my kinesthetic learners to process the information more effectively.

Implementation of Action Plan

I have chosen the Emoji word slide and Bingo game to improve my own teaching practice as well as my pupils' pronunciation of long vowel /i:/. I decided to integrate the Emoji (Figure 3), which means 'picture letter' in the Japanese language, into the word slide.

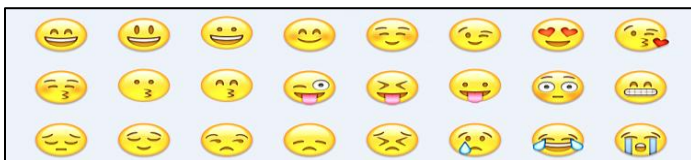


Figure 3. Examples of Emojis used in social media

These Emojis were chosen because they were current and widely used in SMS and social media, such as, 'Whatsapp' and 'Facebook'. As a result, pupils were familiar with the Emojis and could facilitate their learning. Besides, the Emojis were catchy and interesting. From the phonetics and phonology's perspective, I found that some of the Emojis are very suitable to be used in teaching sound production as they actually corresponded to the lip position (Figure 4) in order to produce the desired sound, for example, the vowel /i:/ as in meat.

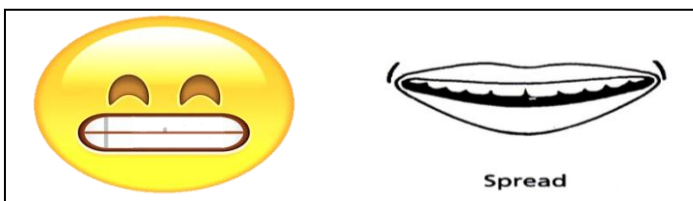


Figure 4. Emoji and the lip position for vowel /i:/

Apart from that, the word slides created suspense in the targeted words. Pupils were constantly motivated to seek for the next word. I also let my pupils manipulate the Emoji word slides. This indirectly benefited the kinesthetic learners according to Fleming and Baume's (2006) VARK Model as they learn better if given a chance to touch and move the Emoji word slides. Combining the good features of Emoji and word slide, I have designed and come up with my Emoji word slide (Figure 5). On 25 February 2015, I have implemented my first cycle of action using the Emoji word slide (Figure 6).



Figure 5. Emoji word slide



Figure 6. Emoji word slide used in the first cycle (25 February 2015)

Apart from that, I have chosen Bingo game to further enhance my pupils' pronunciation. Bingo is a game in which random numbers are called and plotted on papers to form patterns and to win prizes (Tse, 2013). I chose Bingo game because it is easy to administer, cost effective and only required minimal materials such as pen and Bingo game sheets. Besides, the game is also applicable for class of any size. Above all these, the Bingo game allowed my pupils to pronounce as well as listen to the targeted phoneme in the words. I also modified and enhanced the Bingo game sheet (Figure 7) in relation to my action research.

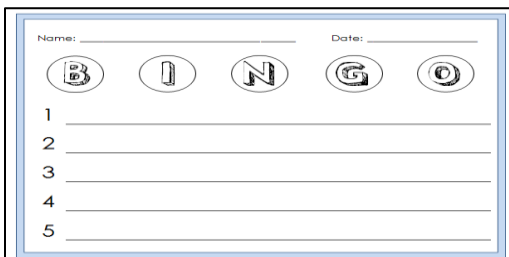


Figure 7. Bingo game sheet (25 February 2015)

For my action research, I have conducted it outside the normal classroom. In order to do this, I asked my participants to meet me in the Science laboratory, at 7:00am, before the class started. This was because I only focused on a small number of pupils and I did not want my research to

interfere with my normal teaching session. Also, I could give individual attention to all five of my participants' pronunciation and provide rectification when needed. I also further elaborated the procedures of the actions involved in my 30-minute session in Table 2.

Table 2

Actions Carried Out in First Cycle of Action Research

Date	Time	Actions
25/02/2015	0700	1. Teacher elicited participants' responses on the Emoji word slide.
	-	
	0730	2. Teacher asked participants to imitate the lip shape from the Emoji word slide.
		3. Teacher modelled the sound of the phoneme, participants repeated.
		4. Teacher chose a participant to pull the Emoji word slide.
		5. Teacher elicited participants' responses on the different phonemes that made up the word.
		6. Participants pronounced all the six words.
		7. Teacher gave every participant a Bingo game sheet.
		8. Participants filled in the blanks with the words learnt.
		9. Each participant got a turn to pronounce a word while rest of the participants crossed the word heard.
		10. The participant who got five words and shouts 'Bingo!' first was the winner.

In my first cycle, I carried my action on 25 February 2015. Prior to that, I also got my teacher mentor's permission to carry out my action at that time frame. I first implemented my action by showing the Emoji word slide to my participants and elicited their responses. The rationale was to engage my pupils and prepare them for the lesson. After that, I asked my participants to imitate the lip shape of the Emoji. Then, I modelled the long vowel /i:/ using the same lip shape and my pupils repeated. I then pulled the Emoji word slide and reviewed the first word with the long vowel /i:/. I elicited the individual phonemes and later blended the individual phonemes into words. The process was repeated for all the six words and pupils were given sufficient drillings with positive reinforcement, such as, praise and encouragement. Then, I gave each pupil a Bingo game sheet. They were asked to fill in the words learnt. In the Bingo game, each participant got a turn to pronounce a word while the rest crossed the word heard. Finally, the first participant who got five words in the Bingo game sheet and shouted 'Bingo!' was the winner.

METHODOLOGY

Research Participants

In order to improve on my own practice, I was also one of the participants in my action research (Water-Adams, 2006) as I involved actively throughout the research process. Apart from that, I also identified and selected five pupils from my Year Four class, namely Alison, Alva,

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Catherine, Ching Meng and Jacky to be participants in the research. They were chosen because they have average level of proficiency and faced pronunciation problems.

Research Ethics

In order to conduct my action research ethically, I ensured that I was aware of the fundamental ethical standards. For all my research participants, I seek permission in terms of informed consent as well as written consent. I used pseudonyms to ensure my participants' information was not revealed. I blurred my participants' faces and names in the photos and video recordings to protect my participants' privacy. Also, my participants might be too young to understand the implications of giving permission (Burns, 2010). So, I had to seek written permission from my participants' parents or guardians. In accordance to this, I have prepared a consent form that set out the terms of their agreements to be involved. Written consent also ensured my participants were clear with the procedures and could easily refer back to them.

Data Collecting Methods

Observation. Through observation, I used video recording to obtain a clear overview of my teaching and my participants' behaviour when the action was implemented. Pictures were then snapshot from the video to capture the important process of the action. From the video recording, the targeted words with long vowel /i:/ were transcribed using IPA with slashes to show the sound quality produced by my participants. Besides, I also asked my critical friend to observe my teaching while filling in the field note given to him.

I also used descriptive journal as my tools in collecting the data. This was because journal was useful in capturing significant reflections throughout the process. I reviewed the video recording and noted the factual events in my journal. At the same time, I also recorded my thoughts and feelings in relation to my participants' behaviour. The thoughts were then clarified and prompted when I met my participants.

Interview. I conducted semi-structured interview with my participants. This was because semi-structured interview is more open and flexible for my participants to respond. I have used a set of questions in guiding and obtaining my pupils' responses, in which my goal was to find out the effect of Emoji word slide and Bingo game on my pupils.

After the implementation of action, I requested my participants to meet me during recess time. This was because I wanted immediate feedback from my participants. I interviewed them individually as I did not want the participants to parrot one another's responses. For the interview session, I

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made use of my mobile phone to do the audio recording for easier retrieval and reference in future. All the responses were reviewed and transcribed.

Apart from that, I interviewed my critical friend, Timothy regarding my teaching. I also used a set of questions prepared to explore the effects of my teaching as well as the teaching tools that I have used. The interview session was also audio-recorded, reviewed and transcribed.

Analysis of Data

Observation. For the effect of action data, I did content analysis on the words given to my participants. In addition, all the words given were comprised of the targeted long vowel /i:/ that I researched on. I reviewed the video recording and transcribed the words pronounced by my participants using the IPA symbols (Figure 8).

Participants	Words with long vowel /i:/					
	read	leaf	lead	seat	bean	bead
Alison	[ri:d]	[li:f]	[li:d]	[si:t]	[bi:n]	[bi:d]

Figure 8. Sample of the IPA transcription of my participants' pronunciation

From the transcription made, I also did frequency count in the number of correct and incorrect pronunciation (Figure 9).

Participant	Words						Correct Pronunciation	Incorrect Pronunciation
	read	leaf	lead	seat	bean	bead		
Alison	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	x	5	1

Figure 9. Sample of frequency count in terms of correct and incorrect pronunciation

I also did content analysis on my critical friend's field notes (Figure 10) and my descriptive journal (Figure 11) by identifying the keywords to several broad themes. The keywords were highlighted in boxes and connected to the broad themes, such as, "interesting", "excited" and "happy".

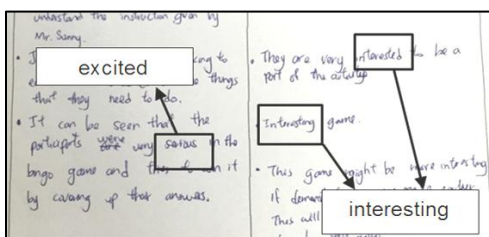


Figure 10. Sample of analysis of data in Timothy's field notes (25 February 2015)

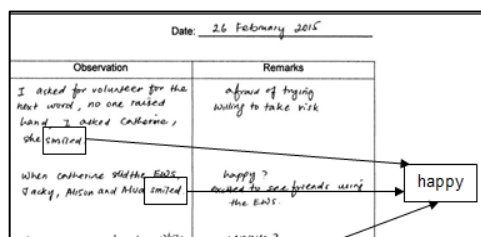


Figure 11. Sample of analysis of data in my journal (26 February 2015)

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Interview. As for the interviews done with my participants and my critical friend, I transcribed the interview session into words to check the content matter of the interviews. I did content analysis to see if the questions were relevant in relation to my research focus. Not only that, responses given by my participants were categorised in themes, such as, “happy”, “active participation” and “funny” (Figure 12).

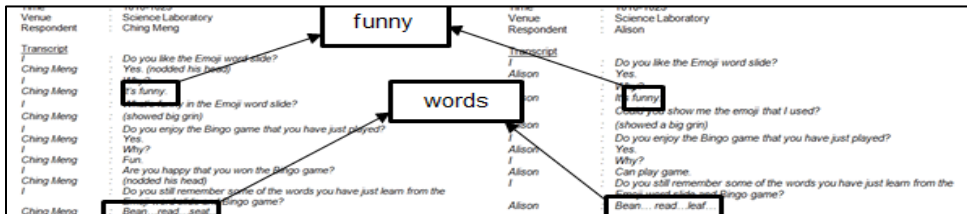


Figure 12. Sample of analysis in participants’ interview transcript (25 Feb. 2015)

From the analysis of interview transcript, I did frequency count on my participants’ responses and the reasons given were put under the Remarks column (Figure 13).

Questions	Responses	Remarks
1. Do you like the Emoji word slide? Why?	Yes 5	funny, cute
	No 0	

Figure 13. Sample of interview responses given by participants

I also analysed Timothy’s interview transcript by highlighting the keywords and categorised them into broader themes, such as, “effective” and “like the Emoji word slide” (Figure 14).

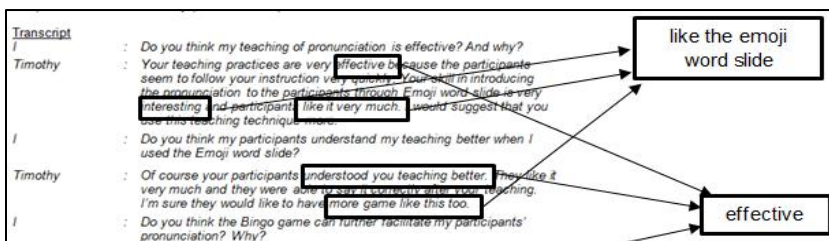


Figure 14. Sample of analysis in Timothy’s interview transcript (3 March 2015)

Data Checking

I used member checking for observation and interviews that has been carried out. In this method, I prepared and submitted the relevant materials to the source of information, which were my participants and my critical friend. The aim was to check and confirm that they have said and provided me the information submitted. I also used person triangulation in my

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research. I asked my critical friend, Jay, to cross check the video-recording and the IPA transcription that I have prepared. This was to ensure that I have correctly counted the number of correct and incorrect pronunciation.

For the journal that I have written, I used the method triangulation. I cross checked my descriptive journal with my critical friends' field notes to show the events written in my journals really happened (Figure 15).

Observation	Remarks	Time	Observation	Remarks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 45 students had been selected and being exposed to the game's emoji image. Some students, especially the ones Fandi called, also seem not to understand the instruction given by Mr. Sunny. Jacky and Ching are talking to each other to handle on the things that they need to do. It can be seen that the participants were serious during the long game and then to win it. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The children look happy during the activity. English language proficiency of the students are not very good. They are very interested to be a part of the activity. Including game. This game might be more interesting. 	<p>happy</p> <p>serious</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I explained vocabulary using pictures and visual aids to make it easier for the participants to understand. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> understand the sentence? phrase? happy?
		Video 3		
		04:00	Jacky covered his face with his hands on the Bingo sheet.	wanted to win the game more participants?
		03:55	I asked who wanted to be a part of the Bingo game and Alison raised her hand.	eager to try? active participation.
		04:02	Jacky covered his Bingo sheet by flipping the cover paper.	wanted to win the game more?
		05:06	Callister smiled and returned another signpost in.	happy? almost winning? eager for the next round.

Figure 15. Method triangulation of Timothy's field note and my journal (3 March 2015)

Not only that, I also used time triangulation in establishing trustworthiness of the data. In my previous visit to SJK Chung Hua Ara on 28 July 2015, I did time triangulation to find out if my participants could still remember the long vowel /i:/ that I have taught them at a different time frame. However, on that day, Ching Meng was sick and was absent. I only managed to triangulate the four participants' pronunciation

FINDINGS

- In what ways do the Emoji word slide and Bingo game help in improving my own practice in teaching pronunciation of long vowel /i:/, to my year four classroom?

Improvement of teaching aids

I have improved in producing my teaching aid, which is from the Gnome slide (Figure 16) to the Emoji word slide (Figure 17).



Figure 16. Gnome slide



Figure 17. Emoji word slide

The Emoji word slide was attractive and appealed to my participants. This concurred with my critical friend's field notes, saying "the students

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looked happy when they saw the smiley”. In fact, this also in line with the responses I received from interview with my participants as shown in Table 3.

Table 3

Interview Responses Given by Participants

Questions	Responses		Remarks
1. Do you like the Emoji word slide? Why?	Yes	5	<i>funny, cute</i>
	No	0	
2. Do you enjoy the Bingo game that you have just played? Why?	Yes	5	<i>can play game, fun</i>
	No	0	
3. Do you still remember the words that you have learnt from Emoji word slide and Bingo game? Could you please give me an example?	Yes	5	<i>bean, read, leaf, seat</i>
	No	0	

From the interview transcripts and Table 3, I found that all five participants said that they liked the Emoji words slide and they gave responses such as *“it’s funny”*, *“it is cute”* and *“it’s fun”*.

Improvement in Follow-up Activities.

In relation to my action research, I revisited my previous follow up activities which was spelling puzzle (Figure 18) and made some adjustment and came up with the Bingo game sheet (Figure 19).

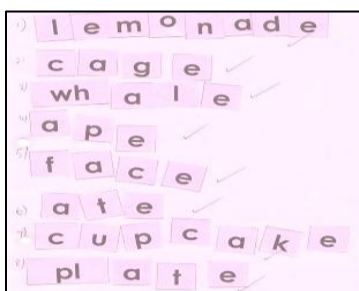


Figure 18. Spelling puzzle

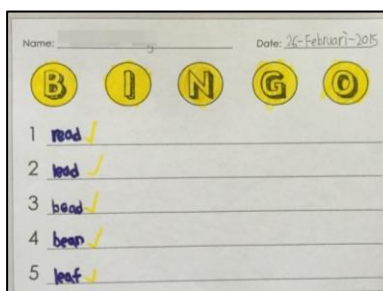


Figure 19. Bingo game sheet

Previously in spelling puzzle, I realised that I was promoting passive learning as pupils merely listened to the words pronounced by me and recognized the phonemes learnt. This left no room for my pupils to practice pronouncing the words with the targeted sound. In this Bingo game, my participants not only listened to the words pronounced passively, but they took active roles in pronouncing the words in the Bingo game. This eventually provided more repetition for my participants and which later would become a condition in them.

Assessment in pronunciation.

From the action research, I have improved my practice by coming up with a systematic assessment strategies in assessing pronunciation (Figure 20) which I never did in previous teaching practice.

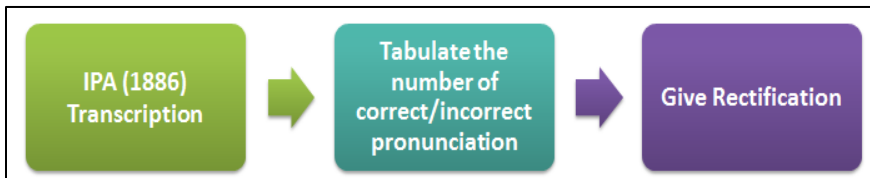


Figure 20. Assessment strategies in assessing pronunciation

In assessing pronunciation, I reviewed the video recording and transcribed the words heard using the IPA symbols. Then, I cross checked the transcription of the words from the English dictionary. Then, I did frequency count in the number of correct and incorrect pronunciation of words by each of my participant as described earlier. With that, I could keep track with each of my pupils’ pronunciation of words, and give rectification if needed.

- **In what ways do the Emoji word slide and Bingo game help in improving my Year Four pupils’ pronunciation of long vowel /i:/?**

Pronunciation of words with long vowel /i:/

I reviewed my participants’ pronunciation from the video recording taken by my critical friend and transcribed the words in Table 4.

Table 4

IPA Transcription of My Participants’ Pronunciation

Participants	Words with long vowel /i:/					
	read	leaf	lead	seat	bean	bead
	/ri:d/	/li:f/	/li:d/	/si:t/	/bi:n/	/bi:d/
Alison	[ri:d]	[li:f]	[li:d]	[si:t]	[bi:n]	[b I d]
Alva	[ri:d]	[li:f]	[li:d]	[si:t]	[bi:n]	[bi:d]
Catherine	[ri:d]	[li:f]	[li:d]	[si:t]	[bi:n]	[bi:d]
Ching Meng	[ri:d]	[li:f]	[li:d]	[si:t]	[bi:n]	[bi:d]
Jacky	[ri:d]	[li:f]	[li:d]	[si:t]	[bi:n]	[bi:d]

From Table 4, I further orgnised my data and did frequency count in number of correct and incorrect pronunciation of words with long vowel /i:/ in Table 5.

Table 5

The Number of Correct and Incorrect Pronunciation of Long Vowel /i:/ by Each Participant

Participant	Words						Correct Pronunciation	Incorrect Pronunciation
	read	leaf	lead	seat	bean	bead		
Alison	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	5	1
Alva	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	6	0
Catherine	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	6	0
Ching Meng	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	6	0
Jacky	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	6	0

From Table 5, I found that Ching Meng, Alva, Catherine and Jacky could pronounce all the six words correctly. In other words, they were able to pronounce the long vowel /i:/ in the words given. This also shows that all the four participants could associate the letter ‘ea’ to the long vowel /i:/. However, Alison pronounced five words correctly as she mispronounced the word ‘bead’. In fact, she pronounced the word as [bɪd], using the short vowel /ɪ/. In order to find out the reason behind this, I furthered prompted Alison when I did member checking with her. She mentioned that she “*always say it that way*”. Hence, more exercise and drilling should be given to her in order to condition the correct pronunciation. As compared to the initial data (Table 1) where all five of the participants mispronounced all the three words with long vowel /i:/, they have shown improvement in pronunciation of words with long vowel /i:/ in the effect of action data.

Risk taking in using the English language

I have observed in the video recording that my pupils were actively participating in the action research, especially the Bingo game. This concurred with Timothy’s observation. He wrote “the participants were serious in the bingo game and tries to win it” (25th February 2015). One of the reasons given by Alison was that she could “play game” in the session. In fact, games were seen as a break from the normal routine for her. Under this low stress and anxiety level atmosphere, participants dared to pronounce the words learned in the Bingo games as they “want to win” the Bingo game.

Recalling of words with long vowel /i:/

From the interview session with my participants, I was able to elicit some words with long vowel /i:/ from them. All of them were able to give me at least two words with the long vowel /i:/ that they have just learnt from the Emoji word slide and Bingo game. Examples of the words given were ‘bead’, ‘bean’, ‘leaf’ and ‘seat’.

Also from the session conducted on 28th July 2015, I observed that Jacky smiled (Figure 21) when he looked at the card. I was curious and when I prompted him, he mentioned that he knew how to read the word. These indirectly showed me that the frequent exercises given through Emoji word slide and Bingo game actually helped in conditioning the desired pronunciation in my participants.



Figure 21. Jacky smiled when he looked at the card

FURTHER REFLECTION

In relation to my action research, I have also improved my own practice through a deeper understanding on the content matter, which was pronunciation of long vowels. In fact, my personal theory of second language acquisition was strengthened in this research. I believe that learning should occur under a low anxiety and stress level environment. Through the use of Bingo games as a tool in fun learning, my participants were excited, at the same time, their stress and anxiety level lowered. That was where the learning took place.

Also, I learnt to be more observant. Through this action research, I realised that there were different tools that can be used, especially in observation. Field notes and reflective journals were the new tools that I have used in action research. I found them useful in jotting down the events happened as well as my reflection and thoughts regarding the events. By doing this, eventually I can be more critical in looking and analysing the event happened.

Besides, I also learned to rationalise my action based on previous research and literature review. This ensured that I did not do certain action solely based on my belief but based on underlying theory and principles to help my participants. For instance, I researched and read on the suitable methods in teaching pronunciation to my participants, which was the audio-lingual method. Then, I also planned and carried out my actions in line with the audio-lingual method in order to facilitate my participants, especially in pronunciation of long vowels.

SUGGESTIONS FOR NEXT CYCLE

During the action research, I frequently reviewed the Emojis to think if I could teach other phonemes using the Emojis. In fact, I have identified a few more Emojis to teach other long vowels, under the Year Three Curriculum Specification. The phonemes I would like to teach for next cycle would be /u:/ as in 'clue' and /ɔ:/ as in 'prawn'. I have chosen these two phonemes because some of my participants also could not pronounce them. In relation to that, I have also identified the visual Emojis that correspond to lip shape (Figure 22 and Figure 23) for my pupils to imitate in order to produce these long vowels.



Figure 22. Emoji and lip position for long vowel /u:/



Figure 23. Emoji and lip position for long vowel /ɔ:/

Besides dealing with pupils with pronunciation problems in vowels, I also want to focus on consonants. If I am given opportunity to work with pupils with pronunciation problems in consonants, I would like to try the Phonics Basket (Figure 24) and Phonics Scrabble (Figure 25) to explore their effect on teaching of pronunciation of consonants.



Figure 24. Phonics basket



Figure 25. Phonics scrabble

In conclusion, this action research has improved my pupils as well as my own practice, especially in pronunciation of long vowel /i:/. I believe through action research, I can consistently monitor the effect of my teaching practices that will drive me towards professional development in teaching profession. Not only that, I will continue to conduct action research that focuses on different teaching-learning problems in the future to bring about change in my profession. All in all, I hope from my effort in this action research, I can contribute to spearheading the transformation in education, especially in the field of phonetics and phonology.

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