

## LINGUISTICS, LITERATURE, PHILOLOGY

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### PERCUSSION TO TEACH PRONUNCIATION IN ENGLISH

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*The article presents a step-by-step description of an activity that demonstrates how learners at all levels and all ages can use percussion and percussion instruments to support their learning of English pronunciation.*

**Introduction.** One of the main problems is lack of confidence among teachers as to how to teach pronunciation, stemming from their own lack of training in this area. Many teachers really wish to be able to help learners with this crucial aspect of language [1, p. 50]. When we introduce new vocabulary, it is important to teach our students how to pronounce the word. In beginner and elementary stages we can devote whole lessons to training specific sounds or intonation patterns [2].

**The main part.** English has a particular role as the language of communication between people who are speakers of English as the second language. They want to be able to apply their acquired knowledge of English by participating wherever English is used. The goals of pronunciation teaching are to practice syllable identification, word stress, and rhythm in spoken English. The students should be able to recognize musical elements in the English language. A more realistic goal, and one that more and more teachers and researchers recommend, is intelligible pronunciation – speaking in a way that most listeners, both native and nonnative speakers, can understand without too much effort or confusion [4, p. 6-7].

The use of percussion is a fast and effective way for teaching English pronunciation. It caters for all learners, from young learners to adults. Apart from that the time required is about 10-20 minutes. The teacher prepares the following materials for the lesson: pictures of animals or cards with animal names written on them; sticks, pencils, drumsticks, or any objects that could serve as percussion instruments.

The learning process begins with the teacher and students look at the pictures of animals, using either the handouts or pictures on display. As the students look at each picture, he asks them to identify the animals by name. For example, the teacher can point to the picture of the elephant and ask learners the name of the animal. If they identify it, the teacher says the animal's name again and asks the class to repeat it, using gestures if needed to make this instruction clear. The teacher says, "Elephant." They students, "Elephant." In this step, the emphasis is on sound and rhythm. The students focus on listening, hearing the word clearly, and repeating it. This process continues for all the target vocabulary items.

Then the teacher prepares students to make music with the sounds of each animal word. First students move into a semi-circle. If possible, they sit on the floor with the pictures still in view. If sitting on the floor is not practical, the students can stand. The goal is to vary the classroom routine and energize students by getting them up and out of their seats. And after that, the teacher asks the student volunteers to hand out a pair of sticks or other percussion instruments to each student. It is possible to use alternative percussion instruments such as drumsticks, chopsticks, and pencils, or the learners can use their hands to clap or feet to stomp. Essentially, a percussion instrument can be anything a student can tap, clap, hit, or use to keep time with a given rhythm.

If everything is ready the students tap the sticks together to match the different sound parts of each word. These parts are called syllables. The teacher can choose whether or not to use the word syllable in an explanation, based on the students' level. If the students are already familiar with syllable identification, the teacher can reduce the amount of time he spends on this part of the activity [3, p. 43-44].

As an example, the teacher starts with the word animal. He uses their own sticks, taps them together for each syllable in the word: an/i/mal. This requires three taps of the sticks. Then he asks students how many taps they hear. And after that, the students say "animal" while tapping along with the three parts of the word that they hear. The teacher demonstrates the tapping and does it along with the students repeatedly until they feel comfortable with the rhythm.

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It is necessary to model and practice additional words with different numbers of syllables so that students can hear how the number of taps changes accordingly. The students start with the three-syllable word elephant. They repeat it while tapping their sticks in time. Then they answer how many parts they hear in the word. Again, they should be tapping three times. Then the students repeat the process with the word dog, which requires only one tap. And they finish modeling with a two-syllable word such as dolphin.

The way to teach English pronunciation must be fun, interesting and simple. So the teacher can break the class into groups of three or four students. The learners continue the activity on their own with the remaining animals. The teacher assigns each group one or two animals, perhaps by distributing the animal-word cards.

Then the teacher asks groups to tap out the word for their animals and identify the number of syllables in each. They have time to practice tapping. Only after that the groups bring back together as a large group. Each group teach the rest of the class their taps. For example, each group could come to the front of the room, then say and tap the group's word. The group can then ask the rest of the class to say and tap the word. This exercise can last until all the animals have been presented.

Teaching syllable stress in words is important. The students need to be taught how to pronounce words correctly. As for when to teach stress, it is likely that most students will need some work on it, so it is worth starting with stress for all learners. Let's look now in some detail at a possible 'recipe' the teachers can use for teaching word stress with percussion instruments [1, p. 52-54].

The teacher says the word animal slowly while stressing the first syllable naturally but loudly: AN/i/mal. He repeats the word, tapping the sticks loudly for the stressed syllable and softly for the unstressed syllables: TAP/tap/tap.

It is necessary to reinforce the idea by asking students which sound is the loudest. The teacher repeats saying and tapping the syllables with the emphasis on the stressed syllable. Then the students join the teacher in saying the word and tapping the sticks to the stress rhythm.

The teacher and students try another word, such as cheetah, together as a class. They start by saying the word together in a natural way at a normal pace. The teacher asks students, "which is louder, the first part [syllable] or the second part [syllable]: CHEE/tah. CHEE/tah. CHEE/tah." After the answers of the students, the teacher says the word and tap it out with their sticks. The first tap should be louder and the second tap quieter. It is important to model a one-syllable word such as dog. The teacher explains that in one-syllable words, like dog, the stressed syllable is the only syllable [3, p. 44-47].

This activity can be ended here. But to make this type of pronunciation activity as effective as possible, the teacher and students should do it often and vary the language used as new vocabulary words are presented in class.

**Conclusion.** We find it important to know that there is an effective method to teach pronunciation in English with percussion instruments. It must be noted that using the percussion in the process of teaching does not only increases participation and the general enjoyment of classes but also contributes to learning, fosters interactions. This method can also be used as reference by second language teachers and learners to enhance educational performance in the language classroom.

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