DEVELOPING THE PRONUNCIATION SKILLS OF YOUNG LEARNERS BY USING SONGS

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ABSTRACT

Young learners are tend to read the English words as they are written, because of the negative effect of their mother tongue, Turkish. In mainstream schools, there is not too much reading because of the level of the students; however, the students are willing to read what they see on the books, videos, visuals, etc. One of the most important way of having a good pronunciation is obtaining good English input. If students are not exposed to enough input, they could not produce of high quality output. Being in an EFL country blocks the learners hearing English outside of the class. They could not hear pure English, so they could not pronounce it correctly. For this project, participants, aged 7-8 years, were selected. And the study covers sixteen students. The participants are third class students of a mainstream school from a rural area. The given vocabularies on the book for the students are detected. The songs which include these words are selected. Yet the focus point will be on the known vocabularies, because it is not a vocabulary teaching, this study is about the pronunciation. The words of which meanings are known by the students, but could not be produced well are selected. At the beginning of the process, the pronunciation of the words is recorded and transcripted. After the treatment, songs, the same words' pronunciation will be recorded. And these obtained data is compared.

INTRODUCTION

Pronunciation is a challenging language area in teaching a foreign language. According to the curriculum, it is supposed that the first skill should be taught in the schools is pronunciation, because teaching English begins at second class, whose students are generally aged 7 – 8 years old. According to Chomsky the procedure of acquisition of a language ends at the age of thirteen (Chomsky, 1996). So it is enough for learning a language. However, in mainstream schools, it is not like this way. Generally there isn't a language teacher at primary school and the classroom teacher teaches English until fifth grade. They don't pay attention to the pronunciation of the words, but they just teach the meaning of words. Because of that the students pass to the secondary school without speaking English properly.

The main topics of this study are young learners and their pronunciation.

The aim of the study

This study aims to develop the pronunciation as a language area of young learners. For this purposes, the research questions are these:
- To what extent do the young learners pronounce the exact words?
- Do the songs effect the students' pronunciation level positively?
- How do the songs effect the students' pronunciation level?

The problem of the study

Young learners are tend to read the English words as they are written, because of the negative effect of their mother tongue, Turkish. In mainstream schools, there is not too much reading because of the

level of the students; however, the students are willing to read what they see on the books, videos, visuals, etc.

One of the most important way of having a good pronunciation is obtaining good English input. If students are not exposed to enough input, they could not produce of high quality output. Being in an EFL country blocks the learners hearing English outside of the class. They could not hear pure English, so they could not pronounce it correctly.

Hypothesis

Young learners may have a better pronunciation when they are speaking if they hear pure English from songs.

METHODOLOGY

Subject Group

Participants are aged 7-8 years. And the study covers sixteen students. The participants are third class students of a mainstream school from a rural area.

Data to be obtained

The given vocabularies on the book for the students are detected. The songs which include these words are selected. Yet the focus point will be on the known vocabularies, because it is not a vocabulary teaching, this study covers the pronunciation area. The words of which meanings are known by the students, but could not be produced well are selected.

At the beginning of the process, the pronunciation of the words will be recorded and obtained. After the treatment the same words' pronunciation will be recorded. And these obtained data will be compared.

The target vocabulary items for this study are:

Table 1. The target words' list

Unit 6 My house	Unit 7 My town	Unit 8 Transportation
Where	Zoo	Plane
Kitchen	Museum	Bus
Bathroom	Hospital	Bicycle
Living room	Shopping mall	Transportation
	School	

Technique

The major techniques in this study are recording and transcription.

This is not a vocabulary teaching study. For this reason the words of which students know the meaning but could not pronounce correctly will be selected.

At the beginning of the process, the pronunciation of the students of the formerly estimated words will be recorded and transcripted. Then the estimated songs which include these words will be listened and watched for three weeks.

At the end of the process, the same words' pronunciation will be recorded and transcripied. Finally, the two transcriptions will be compared.

Presuppositions

The participants are supposed to know the meaning of the words because of their former learning process.

FINDINGS

Collected Data

There were sixteen participants and thirteen words. These words were recorded at two different times, before the treatment and after the treatment. The total number of the recording is 416.

The total duration of the study is five weeks; two weeks for recordings, three weeks for the songs for three different units.

Common Pronunciation of the Words at the Beginning

Table 2. Pronunciation before the treatment

Vocabulary Items	The pronunciation at the beginning
Where	/vere/
Kitchen	/kɪtʃen/
Bathroom	/bʌtrom/
Livingroom	/lɪvɪngrom/
Zoo	/zɒ:/
Museum	/museum/
Hospital	/hɒspɪtʌl/
Shopping mall	/sıhopınmʌl/
School	/sıcɔhɔl/
Plane	/pɪlʌne/
Bus	/bus/

Bicycle	/bɪcɪyɪcɪle/
Transportation	/tɪrʌnspʊrtʌtɪɒn/

As it is seen, there are lots of mispronounced words in the list. The effects of the students' mother tongue, Turkish, on the student's pronunciation can be seen clearly.

Common Pronunciation of the Words after the Treatment

Table 3. Pronunciation after the treatment

Vocabulary Items	The pronunciation after the treatment
Where	/wer/
Kitchen	/kɪtʃɪn/
Bathroom	/bɑtru:m/
Livingroom	/lɪvɪngru:m/
Zoo	/zu:/
Museum	/müzyum/
Hospital	/hɒspɪtəl/
Shopping mall	/ʃɒpɪngmɒl/
School	/səku:l/
Plane	/pəleɪn/
Bus	/bʌs/
Bicycle	/baɪsɪkəl/
Transportation	/tɪranspʊrteɪʃən/

There are a lot of words which pronounced mostly correct after the treatment.

Table 4. Comparison of the words' pronunciation

Vocabulary Items	The pronunciation at the beginning	The pronunciation at the Cambridge Dictionary	The pronunciation after the treatment
Where	/vere/	/weər/	/wer/
Kitchen	/kɪtʃen/	/ˈkɪtʃɪn/	/kɪtʃɪn/
Bathroom	/bʌtrom/	/ˈbɑːθruːm/	/bɑtruːm/
Livingroom	/lıvıngrom/	/ˈlɪv.ɪŋ ˌruːm/	/lıvıngruːm/
Zoo	/zɒː/	/zuː/	/zuː/
Museum	/museum/	/mjuːˈziːəm/	/müzyum/
Hospital	/hɒspɪtʌl/	/ˈhɒspɪtəl/	/hɒspɪtəl/
Shopping mall	/sıhopınmʌl/	/ˈʃɒpɪŋmɔːl/	/ʃɒpɪngmɒl/
School	/sıcɔhɔl/	/skuːl/	/səkuːl/
Plane	/pılʌne/	/pleɪn/	/pəleɪn/
Bus	/bus/	/bʌs/	/bʌs/
Bicycle	/bıcıyıcıle/	/ˈbaɪsɪkl/	/baɪsıkəl/
Transportation	/tırʌnspɒrtʌtıɒn/	/trænspɔːˈteɪʃən/	/tıranspɒrteɪʃən/

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Young learners mostly read the words as they are written. There are a lot of way for impressing the students for learning. One of them is listening and singing a song. Songs attract the learners and motivate the learners for learning. This study reveals the big effect of songs on pronunciation. For this reason songs may be used for developing the pronunciation skill. Further studies can be done in terms of the numbers of the students, the number of the vocabulary items or the duration.

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