

## Simplification of Teaching English Through Pronunciation Activities

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**Abstract.** *article covers the information concerning various methods and approaches which aid to diminish the complexion of teaching English, specifically pronunciation activities. Easy and funny implementation of these task can be motivational guide for the teachers. Procedures and materials are also mentioned in this article.*

**Key words:** *pronunciation, belief, teacher-learner, study, activities, Bingo, pairs, group.*

### Introduction

Teaching pronunciation to students can be an interesting task, especially when their first language affects how they understand and say English sounds. Some English words and sounds can be really hard, making it tough for students who find pronunciation tricky.

As teachers, we get the challenges of teaching pronunciation, from noticing the small differences between ‘th’ sounds in “thought” and “though” to getting the tricky ‘r’ in “rural” right.

Getting through these pronunciation challenges needs patience, creativity, and a really good understanding of each student’s own language background. It’s all about striking the right balance between correcting them and cheering them on, making sure students feel helped, not put off by the complex parts of English pronunciation.

As teachers, we’re always looking for new ways to make pronunciation practice more fun and less scary for our students. Whether it’s with interactive games that make everyone feel lighter or with songs that bring music into learning language, our aim is to create a classroom where students can try out sounds and rhythms without being scared of making mistakes.

With this in mind, finding creative ways to teach pronunciation isn’t just about trying out new teaching methods; it’s about creating a classroom vibe where curiosity and trying new things lead to getting better at the language. By using these lively methods, we can guide our students through the tough parts of English pronunciation with confidence and a spirit of discovery.

### METHODS AND RESULTS

#### Minimal Pairs Bingo

**Description:** Minimal pairs are pairs of words that differ in only one sound, with the sound occurring in the same position in each member of the pair, e.g. bat vs. bet. Certain combinations are known to be challenging for certain groups of foreign language learners, depending on their native language. For example, Japanese learners have trouble with l and r. Russian learners have trouble with short vowels, such as e and a. Placing such minimal pairs side-by-side in a game situation can raise learners’ consciousness of their pronunciation challenges, albeit in a non-threatening context.

#### Goals:

- To develop students’ phonological awareness.
- To promote student-to-student negotiation.
- To promote a more student-centered classroom.

#### Objectives:

1. Students will be able to identify the differences between minimal pair phonemes when spoken b Avery, P. & Ehrlich, S. (1992). Teaching American English Pronunciations
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Thomson, R. I., and Derwing, T. M. (2014). The effectiveness of L2 pronunciation instruction: a narrative review. *Appl. Linguis.* 36, 326–344. doi: 10.1093/applin/amu076y others.

Students will practice and improve their pronunciation of minimal pair phonemes.

#### **Materials:**

Pencils, erasers, chips (to cover Bingo sheets), [Bingo Sheets](#)

#### **Procedure:**

Prepare a list of minimal pairs, based on your students' pronunciation challenges. (For example, l and r for Japanese students; as in lip and rip.) Introduce the target phonemes to students and practice them. Divide the students into pairs. One student receives Bingo Sheet A, and the other student receives Bingo Sheet B. Let the students dictate their words to each other (taking turns) until they have completed 12 minimal pairs. Once they have written all of the words on their sheets, correct their answers as a group. Address any questions that students might have. (This is a good chance for supplementary instruction, too. As an alternative, the teacher could hand out an answer key and have students correct their answers with a partner.)

Inform students that they will use their sheets to play a game of Bingo! Have students choose one word from each of 12 minimal pairs listed on their papers. Students fill in the blanks on the racetrack with the words they have selected. (It is important to make sure that students choose only one of each pair. This allows another chance to focus students' attention on the difference between the minimal pairs when the words are read out loud.) Hand out chips which can be used to cover the words on students' Bingo sheets. Let the races begin! (Play Bingo!) Read only one of each pair until all the pairs are exhausted. If there is still no winner, then continue with the second word from each pair. Have students evaluate their results. (Note: For a variation in the Bingo game, use rhyming words or normal vocabulary words instead of minimal pairs.) **Assessment:** Collect students' Bingo sheets to check for accuracy. Note any words which are giving students difficulty, and focus on these words for the next class.

#### **Rhyming pair memory game**

After some repetition drills on the target words and sounds, you can try a "Rhyming Pair Memory Game." Make cards with words that rhyme, like *man/can*, *bit/sit*, *fame/came*, and so on, and place them face down. Students take turns turning over the cards to find the pairs that rhyme.

#### **Minimal pairs games**

ESL phonics worksheets on minimal pairs are a good way to fill some minutes at the end of a lesson, or you can provide them as homework, while a "Minimal Pairs Slap Game" can keep your students engaged in a group game for the main part of the lesson. Hand out sets of flashcards to each group and tell your students to spread them out on the table. You say one word of a minimal pair, such as "cat." The students have to find and slap the card that shows the minimal pair partner,

for example, “cap.” You can extend this game to exercises on stress and intonation, and you can also let your students take turns being the person who says the word or sentence.

### **Language apps**

There are a variety of language tutoring applications these days that students can download to practice speaking English beyond the classroom and build important pronunciation skills. For example, [FLOW Speak](#) provides over 400 short lessons, including business lessons, so students can practice English conversations on their own time, extending learning beyond the classroom. Teachers can recommend or provide access to the app and track students’ progress on the admin dashboard. The app uses voice recording technology to generate instant, AI-powered feedback so students can keep practicing and improving. Apps like this offer easy, low-stakes speaking practice that can build students’ confidence and practical conversation skills.

### **Sound chain**

Let your students line up or make a circle, or if you’re teaching online, let your students decide on an order. Give the key sound and have each student come up with a new word with the same sound.

You can vary this ESL pronunciation game, for example, by letting the next student repeat the previous words in the right order before adding their own, or by having your class tell a story with the words they came up with during the sound chain game, in groups or as a whole class.

This is a great way to increase student talking time. They can then write the story down in their own words as homework or during class time.

### **Sing Along**

Incorporating music into language learning through sing-alongs can make pronunciation practice more dynamic and memorable. English songs often feature a wide range of vocabulary, idiomatic expressions, and varied sentence structures, offering a rich linguistic environment.

By singing, students can naturally absorb the rhythm, stress patterns, and intonation of English speech, which are crucial components of fluent pronunciation. A song like “Yesterday” by The Beatles can introduce learners to different vowel sounds and the natural melody of English language.

**Benefits:** Natural learning of rhythm and intonation; exposure to colloquial language; enjoyable group activity.

### **DISCUSSION**

To be more precise, the study has advanced our understandings about teachers and learners’ beliefs about the role of pronunciation instruction in EFL education in a particular tertiary context in Asia. The study findings provide useful insights for curriculum designers within the Vietnamese tertiary EFL context and beyond together with pedagogical implications for L2 pronunciation teaching and learning. These understandings and insights might also be applicable to similar settings such as EFL education in Asia, which involves a considerably large number of L2 teachers and learners.

A possible limitation of the current study is that it only involved a small number of participants from one particular context of EFL education in Vietnam. Therefore, it only provides part of a whole picture of how Vietnamese EFL teachers and learners perceive pronunciation instruction at university level. As such, future research could be conducted at different settings with participation of a larger number of teachers and students so that generalizations can be made to obtain more insights into pronunciation instruction within this particular EFL context.

### **CONCLUSION**

This study represents an exploratory step in understanding teachers’ and learners’ beliefs about pronunciation instruction in Vietnamese tertiary EFL education. The findings demonstrate that both the teachers and students considered pronunciation teaching an integral component at tertiary level. More importantly, the study highlights both the teachers’ and learners’ stated beliefs about the benefits of a communicative approach to pronunciation teaching within this EFL context. In light of the study findings, it is important that a place for pronunciation instruction be substantially articulated in EFL programs at Vietnamese universities. A practical first step, we believe, is to include more guidance on pronunciation in course books as they are one of the key sources for teachers to guide their classroom instruction ([Derwing et al., 2012](#); [Macalister, 2016](#)).

Given the teachers' and learners' strong beliefs about the potential of CPT, it might be useful for pronunciation instruction in the Vietnamese tertiary EFL classroom to be delivered communicatively so as to facilitate learners' communication needs.

## Reference

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