FROM SOUNDS TO A SPEECH: TEACHING PRONUNCIATION IN GRADES 1-4

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ABSTRACT: This study looks at how teaching pronunciation from sounds to a speech can help young learners improve their speaking skills. It focuses on primary school students and uses simple, interactive methods such as spelling bee, games, and repition activities. The results show that students became more accurate in pronunciation and more confident in speaking. The study suggests that early and engaging pronunciation practice plays an important role in language learning.

KEY WORDS: Pronunciation, young learners, primary education, spelling bee, language learning.

ANNOTATSIYA: Ushbu tadqiqot tovushlardan nutqqa o‘tish orqali talaffuzni o‘rgatishning yosh o‘quvchilarga qanday yordam berishini o‘rganadi. Tadqiqot boshlang‘ich sinf o‘quvchilariga qaratilgan bo‘lib, unda spelling bee, o‘yinlar va takrorlash mashqlari kabi sodda va interaktiv usullar qo‘llanildi. Natijalar o‘quvchilarning talaffuzi yaxshilangani va o‘ziga bo‘lgan ishonchi oshganini ko‘rsatdi. Tadqiqot qiziqarli talaffuz mashqlari muhim ekanligini tasdiqlaydi.

KALIT SO’ZLAR: Talaffuz, yosh o’quvchilar, boshlang’ich ta’lim, spelling bee, til o’rganish.

Аннотация:Данное исследование рассматривает, как обучение произношению по принципу «от звуков к речи» помогает младшим школьникам улучшить навыки говорения. В работе использовались простые и интерактивные методы, такие как spelling bee, игры и упражнения на повторение. Результаты

показали улучшение точности произношения и рост уверенности учащихся. Исследование подтверждает важность раннего и интересного обучения произношению.

Ключевые слова: произношение, младшие школьники, начальное образование, spelling bee, фонетика

INTRODUCTION. Pronunciation is an essential part of learning a foreign language, especially for young learners in primary school. At an early age, children can easily learn and imitate new sounds, which helps them develop clear and correct speech.However, in many classrooms pronunciation is not taught directly, and more attention is given to grammar and vocabulary. As a result, students may face difficulties in speaking.Therefore, this study focuses on teaching pronunciation “from sounds to speech” and aims to explore how pronunciation activities and a survey can help young learners improve their pronunciation skills and confidence.

BACKGROUND. Pronunciation plays a fundamental role in early foreign language learning, particularly in primary education. Research shows that young learners are more sensitive to sounds,rhythm,and intonation patterns compared to adults.This idea is strongly connected to the Critical Period Hypothesis,which suggests that children acquire phonological systems more naturally at an early age.[1] Children in grades 1-4 have greater flexibility in articulatory control and auditory discrimination,which allows them to imitate native-like pronunciation more effectively. Early exposure to accurate pronunciation models increases the likelihood of developing intelligible speech.[2] However, in many classrooms pronunciation is not taught systematically and is often integrated indirectly through vocabulary and grammar instruction. Scholars argue that neglecting explicit pronunciation teaching may lead to fossilized errors that are difficult to correct later.[3] Effective pronunciation

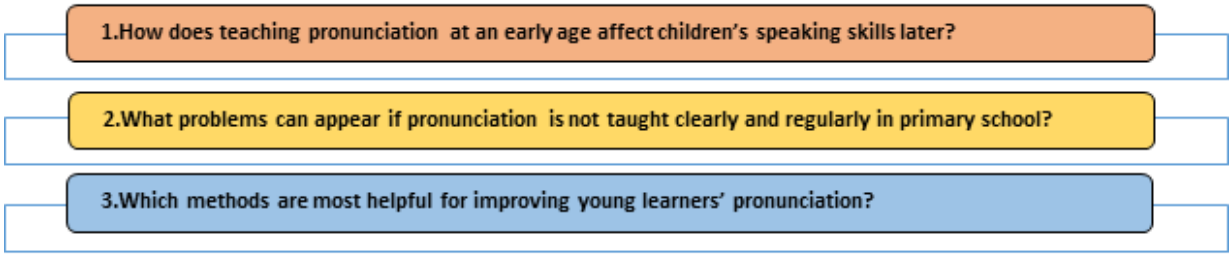
[1] Eric Lenneberg (1967),Biological Foundation of Language

[2] Joan Morley (1991), The Pronunciation Component in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages.

[3] Larry Selinker (1972) Interlanguage.

teaching in primary grades should move from individual sounds to connected speech. This progression – from phonemes to words phrases, and sentences – is supported by communicative language teaching principles and phonological awareness development.[4] Songs, chants, rhymes, repetition drills, and Total Physical Response (TPR) are recommended as age-appropriate techniques for young learners, These methods align with children's cognitive and affective development and support natural acquisition processes.[5]

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES:



RESEARCH PROBLEM:

This study shows simple ways to teach pronunciation by presenting practical and effective methods that help improve learners' pronunciation skills. It focuses on teaching English sounds and sound patterns and explains why early pronunciation training is important for young learners.The study also looks at typical difficulties in the classroom, including teaching mistakes and learners' lack of interest in pronunciation tasks. Finally, it suggests simple and engaging techniques that can help children develop clearer and more confident speaking skills.

[4] How to Teach Pronunciation by Gerald Kelly (2000) published by Longman.

[5] James Asher (1969),Total Physical Response method.



MAP OUT OF THE PAPER:

This paper initially introduces the importance of teaching pronunciation in primary education especially in Grades 1-4. What is more, it describes the research was conducted with 20 students who studied 3-4 class at school No.45 in Turakurgan District.

METHODS:

This study is based on the idea that effective pronunciation teaching should progress from individual sounds to connected speech (Kelly, 2000).

This study was conducted with 20 primary school students from Gradeds 1-4 at a local school. The participants were selected from one English class randomly. The students were between 9 and 11 years old and had a beginner level of English.

The data for this research consisted of questionnaire responses related to students' pronunciation skills and their attitudes toward learning pronunciation. The survey included 14 multiple-choice questions. Some questions focused on students' interest and motivation, while others tested their ability to recognize the correct pronunciation of common English words.

The spelling bee was then used as the central teaching method. Lessons were designed to help students improve their pronunciation step by step, starting from individual sounds, then moving on to words, and finally to simple sentences. The

spelling bee provided a fun and motivating way for students to practice pronunciation, reinforce their understanding of word structures, and participate actively in class. In addition to the spelling bee, supporting activities were used, including repetition drills, phonics exercises, songs, and simple pronunciation games. These exercises helped students consolidate the sounds and words they encountered during the spelling bee and build confidence in speaking English.

After completing the instruction period, students' progress and engagement were analyzed descriptively. This methodology shows how a structured, competitive, and interactive activity the spelling bee, combined with complementary exercises, can effectively enhance pronunciation skills and student motivation primary classrooms.

RESULTS:

The results of the post-test, conducted after the implementation of the spelling bee activity, demonstrate a clear and measurable improvement in students' pronunciation skills. Overall, the majority of students were able to correctly pronounce and recognize the target vocabulary. For instance, 16 out of 20 students (80%) correctly pronounced "elephant", while only 20% made errors. An even stronger result was observed for the word "computer", where 100% of students (20/20) provided the correct pronunciation, indicating a full understanding of this high-frequency word. Similarly, high levels of accuracy were recorded for "family" and "chocolate", with 100% (20/20) and 95% (19/20) correctness, respectively. In the case of "beautiful", 70% (14/20) of students answered correctly, while 30% (6/20) selected incorrect forms, suggesting that multisyllabic words still pose moderate difficulty.However, some words revealed noticeable challenges. For example, only 45% (9/20) of students correctly pronounced "different", whereas 55% (11/20) struggled with this word. A similar pattern was observed for "library", where 60% (12/20) achieved correct pronunciation, and 40% (8/20) made mistakes. These results indicate that longer or less frequently practiced words require further reinforcement. The word "favourite"

also presented difficulties, with only 55% (11/20) correct responses and 45% (9/20) incorrect. In contrast, “vegetable” showed better results, with 80% (16/20) accuracy, while “interesting” had 55% (11/20) correct answers, reflecting moderate progress in more complex lexical items. In general, the data reveals that students performed significantly better on familiar, frequently practiced, and phonetically simpler words, while less Beyond accuracy, qualitative observations indicated a noticeable increase in students’ confidence and classroom engagement. A larger number of students actively participated, volunteered to answer, and demonstrated reduced hesitation when pronouncing words.



This suggests that the spelling bee activity positively influenced not only

pronunciation accuracy but also students' motivation and willingness to speak familiar or structurally complex vocabulary resulted in lower accuracy rates. In conclusion, the findings provide strong evidence that the spelling bee method contributed to a significant improvement in students' pronunciation accuracy, with an overall average correctness rate of approximately 76–78%, alongside enhanced confidence, participation, and engagement in the learning process.

DISCUSSION:

The findings of this study show that teaching pronunciation step by step, from sounds to speech, is effective for young learners. Students performed better with familiar and frequently practiced words, which highlights the importance of repetition and regular exposure. This supports Joan Morley's idea that early and clear pronunciation models help learners develop better speaking skills.However, students had more difficulty with longer and less familiar words such as "different" and "library". This may be due to their complexity. As Larry Selinker explains, lack of practice can lead to persistent pronunciation errors.The use of interactive methods, especially the spelling bee, increased students' motivation and participation. Supporting activities like games, songs, and repetition also made learning more engaging.In addition, students became more confident and willing to speak. Overall, the study shows that combining structured teaching with interactive activities can improve both pronunciation and confidence in primary school learners.

CONCLUSION:

This study shows that teaching pronunciation from sounds to speech is effective for primary school learners. Students improved their pronunciation, became more confident, and participated more actively in class.They performed better with familiar words, while more complex words were still challenging. This highlights the importance of regular practice and clear instruction.Interactive methods such as spelling bee, games, and repetition activities made lessons more engaging and helped

reduce students' fear of speaking.Overall, the study suggests that a step-by-step and interactive approach can successfully improve both pronunciation and motivation in young learners.

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