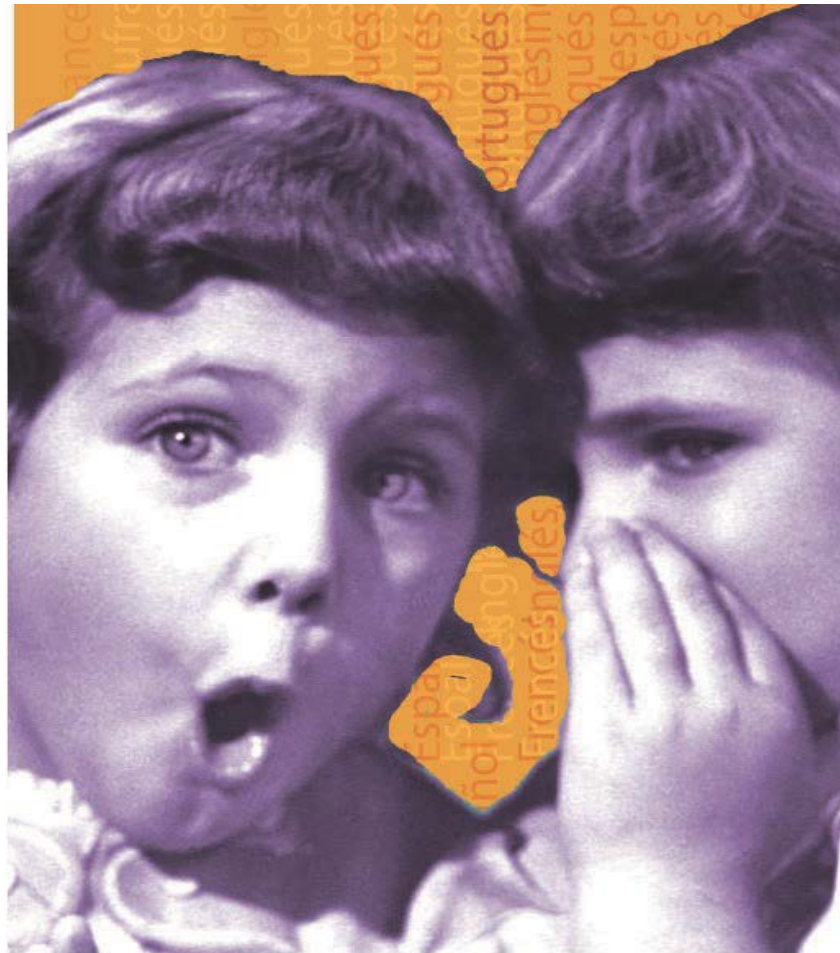


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Didáctica de la Fonética de las Lenguas Extranjeras

Editora Gabriela Leiton



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‘FUNOLOGY’: ENGAGING ACTIVITIES FOR THE PHONOLOGY CLASS 2.

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Abstract

In recent years, the idea of approaching pronunciation teaching from different modalities (i.e. auditory, visual, kinaesthetic, tactile) has become very popular within the field of foreign language teaching. Also, different studies have shown that a relaxed frame of mind and a degree of confidence pave the way for a correct production of target sounds, hence, the need of establishing a non-threatening student-friendly environment. Moreover, humour studies applied to teaching have shown that dullness in the classroom may reduce students’ intellectual interest in the subject. The use of humour, on the other hand, can help create a more positive learning environment and build rapport between students and teacher. In this presentation I will show a range of sample fun activities which can be introduced into the Phonology I classroom and used for presenting, practising, revising or reflecting upon sounds and theory. These activities motivate students and encourage their participation, either by allowing them to discover different segmental features, or by letting students put the theory into practice in a relaxed environment. On the whole, students prove more alert in connection with perception and respond positively to the different stimuli, thus enhancing the production time during the lesson.

Key words: segmental features, fun, participation, learning styles, sample activities.

‘FUNOLOGY’: ENGAGING ACTIVITIES FOR THE PHONOLOGY CLASS 2.

Introduction

Pronunciation is very sensitive to emotional factors and ‘its nature is strongly related to students’ ego, identity and the level of self-confidence.’ (Hismanoglu 2006: 105). Back in the early 80s, Krashen emphasised three affective or attitudinal variables related to SLA: high motivation, self-confidence and low levels of anxiety. Krashen (in Richards & Rogers, 1994) mentioned the importance of having a low affective filter to allow for the reception of input. Since then, different studies have shown that a relaxed frame of mind and a degree of confidence pave the way for a correct production of target language sounds, hence, the need of establishing a non-threatening student-friendly environment.

In this respect, the use of humour in the classroom can help create a more positive learning environment and build rapport between students and teacher, thus making students less intimidated and less inhibited about asking questions or participating in class. Moreover, the physiological effects of humour, such as muscle relaxation, stimulated circulation, improved respiration and exercise of the lungs and chest muscles (Deiter 2000), are beneficial for the Phonology lesson.

On the other hand, in recent years, the idea of approaching pronunciation teaching from different modalities (i.e. auditory, visual, kinaesthetic, tactile) has become very popular within the field of foreign language teaching. Wrembel (2007) posits that

Recently, a holistic approach to learning has found a number of proponents also amongst pronunciation educators, who claim that L2 pronunciation training should involve the whole learner not just the speech apparatus or learners' cognitive faculties (cf. Acton 1997). This approach manifests itself, among others, in the use of multisensory modes of presentation and practice. The process of teaching and learning practical phonetics is thus expected to be enhanced by appealing to a combination of modalities involving different senses through auditory, visual, tactile, kinaesthetic reinforcements.

These types of modalities can be applied to different stages of phonetic instruction, either during the initial exposure, including both perception and production or during the reinforcement stages.

All in all, the activities presented in this paper seek to appeal to different learning styles, catch students' attention and hold their interest. Below, I present a range of sample fun activities which exemplify how, long established techniques used in the SLA classroom can be introduced into the Phonology lesson in order to create an environment that facilitates the acquisition of the new sound system.

SAMPLE ACTIVITIES

1- VIDEOS

The following videos focus on a variety of segments. As most of the material presented here, they can be applied in different ways: as warm-up activity, to present a topic, to generate discussion or to exemplify a point of theory.

➤ *The English and their 'teas' /t/*, extract from the video: "British Accent vs American Accent, Funny": American humourist jokes about how British people pronounce the letter /t/. Useful for discussion on allophones: he talks about 'over-pronouncing' the letter (with affrication) or 'ignoring the letter completely' (using the glottal stop).

http://veehd.com/video/4748931_British-Accent-vs-American-Accent-Funny-flv

➤ *The Big Bang Theory*: Sheldon Cooper: "It's not a present, it's *the* present. Look." In this extract, one of the main characters uses the definite and indefinite articles in isolation, stressing a schwa instead of using the usual strong form.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=bJPXDdbZ_8KI

➤ *Friends*: "Enunciate by spitting." Focus on aspiration of plosives.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0ISJS4gSBh0&feature=kp>

➤ *The Big Bang Theory*: "Get back on the whores." In this extract, Raj, who is not a native, fails to see the difference between horse/whores. It is useful to discuss /s/z/ contrast and pre-fortis clipping. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jobvVaekOKA>

➤ *The McGurk Effect*: What we see overrides what we hear! Very interest material to present the concept of place of articulation. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G-IN8vWm3m0>

➤ *V for Vendetta*: Introductory Speech: The main character makes use of alliteration of the phoneme /v/. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=26h-H6CFO-A>

2- FLASHCARDS

These are one of the most important resources for the SLA classroom, so why not incorporate them into the Phonology classroom? They are quick and easy to use and they bring fun into the classroom. They can be used as a warm-up activity or to revise or practise a new theoretical point. Also, their manipulative nature appeals to both, kinaesthetic and visual students, who can work cooperatively in the completion of the different tasks.

Preparation: A set of cards with the I.P.A phonetic alphabet, another set with the classification of consonants (e.g. voiced alveolar plosive) and another one with simple sagittal diagrams of consonants. Some of the sets will have to be repeated according to the number of students and the aim of the game. Below I suggest different ways of using flashcards (Irazábal 2013):

- a. **Classification:** Give pairs of students a set of phonemes for them to classify according to different labels; for consonants: voice, place or manner of articulation; for vowels: open vs. close vowels, front vs. back vowels, according to their lip position.

- b. **Odd-one-out:** Give pairs of students a set of phonemes for them to decide which the odd phoneme is. Then they have to explain why. For example, in the set /p/ /b/ /k/ /n/ /g/ the odd one is /n/ based on the contrast plosive / nasal. Some sets could have different possible odd sounds, for example, in the set /k/ /g/ /ŋ/ /b/ the odd ones can be /ŋ/ (plosives vs. nasal), /k/ (voiced vs. voiceless) or /b/ (velar vs. bilabial).

- c. **Matching:** This activity can be carried out in different ways: Students can work in pairs cooperatively at their desks; each student in the classroom can have a card and has to find their matching partner; there can also be 'competitions' in groups of three or more, with one student or the teacher reading the classification and seeing who can pick up the flashcard faster. The matching options are as follows: **1.** Students match the I.P.A symbol with classification of the phoneme. For example: /p/ voiceless, bilabial plosive. **2.** Students match the I.P.A symbol with the corresponding sagittal diagram and then describe and/ or classify the sound. Alternatively, students can match the sagittal diagram with the card containing the classification of the phoneme.

d. **Domino:** cards with a phonetic symbol on one end and the classification of a consonant on the other end. Students play in pairs or groups of three or four and, as with the usual domino, match one end of one card with one end of another card.

/p/	/m/	/ŋ/	/d/	/g/
---- * ---- voiced alveolar nasal	---- * ---- voiceless velar plosive	---- * ---- voiced alveolar fricative	---- * ---- voiced palatoalveolar affricate	---- * ---- voiced dental fricative
/n/	/k/	/z/	/dʒ/	/ð/
---- * ---- voiced bilabial plosive	---- * ---- voiceless labiodental fricative	---- * ---- voiced alveolar lateral	---- * ---- voiceless dental fricative	---- * ---- voiceless palatoalveolar fricative
/b/	/f/	/l/	/θ/	/ʃ/
---- * ---- voiceless palatoalveolar affricate	---- * ---- voiceless glottal fricative	---- * ---- voiced post alveolar approximant	---- * ---- voiced labiovelar approximant	---- * ---- voiced palatal approximant
/tʃ/	/h/	/r/	/w/	/j/
---- * ---- voiced bilabial nasal	---- * ---- voiced velar nasal	---- * ---- voiced alveolar plosive	---- * ---- voiced velar plosive	---- * ---- voiceless alveolar plosive
/t/	/ʒ/	/v/	/s/	[ʔ]
---- * ---- voiced palatoalveolar fricative	---- * ---- voiced labiodental fricative	---- * ---- voiceless alveolar fricative	---- * ---- voiceless glottal stop	---- * ---- voiceless bilabial plosive

3- SONGS

Listening is, of course, closely related to phonology. In the same way as songs are used in the SLA classroom for teaching or revising vocabulary and grammar, topic discussion, etc., they can also be applied to the phonology classroom for different purposes. Here are a few examples.

a- **Rhyming sounds:** Students group the words according to the vowel sounds that rhyme, write them in the corresponding place in the song and listen and check. One possible popular song for this type of activity is 'Radio Ga ga' by Queen. It contains lots of rhymes with diphthongs and interestingly enough, makes the words 'stars' rhyme with 'hours' thus offering the possibility to discuss the process of smoothing or levelling.

b- **Strong and weak forms:** One very clear song to work with this is 'Underneath' by Adam Lambert. Students are given the lyrics in ordinary spelling (optional) except for the strong and weak forms of the target words (e.g. Strip away /ðə/ /ði:/ flesh /ænd/ /ən/ bone/ Look beyond /ðə/ /ði:/ lies you've known/ Everybody wants /tu:/ /tu/ /tə/ talk about /ə/ /eɪ/ freak/ No one wants /tu:/ /tu/ /tə/ dig /ðæt/ /ðət/ deep...) then listen and circle the option they hear. Later, they categorize the selected words and explain why the strong/weak form is used in each case. (Irazábal 2013)

c- **Assimilation:** The aim of this activity is to help students discover the process of assimilation and work out the rules in a deductive way, through the examples provided in the song. An ideal song to analyze is 'Viva la Vida' by Cold Play, since it contains examples of various alveolar sounds assimilated into bilabial or velar sounds. They are very easy to hear and enough to be able to elicit the rule for assimilation. (Irazábal 2012)

4- **BOARD GAMES:** (Irazábal, 2013)

a- **Vowel chart:** (adapted from Taylor and Thompson, *Vowel Discovery Activity*). Students work with Underhill's vowel chart as board (Underhill 2005). They have to place word cards on the corresponding vowel, for example <class> will be placed on the vowel /ɑ:/. Specific spelling combinations can be exploited, for example, the focus could be the different pronunciations of the spelling <ough> or the possible spelling for different vowel sounds (such as <ee, ea, i, etc >) plus exceptions (e.g. <quay>). Teacher can provide the cards with words students have already practised, new words with regular spelling or words which are usually confused. Alternatively, cards may be produced by the students themselves under the teacher's directions: give out blank cards and have students think of words with specific sounds. Collect the cards and redistribute them

among students. Follow the same procedure as above. Students can work in pairs or in groups, cooperatively or as a competition game to see who gets more correct answers.

b- **Allophones:** Allophonic variation is an area that teachers cover to different extents and in different degree. For this reason I have designed a game for revising allophonic variation which can be adapted by teachers according to the theory they have dealt with. The aim of the activity is to have students practise in a pressure free environment by applying ‘tactics’ which will lead them to answer the questions they are more sure of, while at the same time profiting from other students’ answers. They are also asked to judge their partners’ answers and decide if they are correct or not. During the game, T will go around the class checking the answers given or helping students when in doubt.

Sample board:

What is the phonemic status of [ʔ] in English?	Which of the following pairs are contrastive in English? Explain why: /rein / vein / /veri / veri / /put / putʰ /	Which phonemes are dentalized and in what context?	Which phonemes can be devoiced and in what context?	Describe the various lateral articulations in the phrase <i>Lil climbed the little tree.</i>	Is [ŋ] a member of the English /n/ phoneme? Give reasons for your answer
Give an example of allophones in complementary distribution.	Explain the different releases of /t/ in the following words: <i>top, stop, pot, eighth, buton, bottle</i>	Give an ex ample of allophones in <i>free variation.</i>	Which set of plosives are aspirated and in what context?	What do the final consonant sounds of the following words have in common? /wɪsl/, /hæpm/, /brɪtn/	In what contexts are you going to produce nasalized vowels?
In what context are /l / /j / w / and / r / fully devoiced?	In what contexts do you articulate plosives with non audible release?	Ex plain the different releases of /p/ in the following words: <i>spot, top, people, happen, stopped</i>	Discuss neutralization of phonemes and provide an example	Provide an alternative name for <i>broad</i> and <i>narrow</i> transcription	Classify [ʔ]
Explain the difference between <i>phoneme</i> and <i>allophone</i>	Describe the retroflex [ɟ] In which accent is it typically used?	What is the type of release of the highlighted plosives in the following words? <i>robbed, cupcake, act</i>	Give examples of labiodentalization	When are plosives, affricates and fricatives fully voiced?	In what context is the allophone [β] produced?
Which phonemes are weakly aspirated and in what context?	Discuss glottal reinforcement	What do the vowel sounds have in common in the following words? /nu:n / mʌŋk / neɪm /	Ex plain the different releases of /k/ in the following words: <i>cotton, school, bacon, actual, uncle</i>	Which of the following pairs are contrastive in English? Explain why: /ʃɒp / ʃɒʔ / /berkən / berkɪŋ / /ntʃ / ntʃʔ /	Is assimilation a case of phonemic or allophonic variation?

Instructions:

The aim of the game is to be able to answer 5 questions correctly. Throw the dice and decide if you want to move about the board vertically, horizontally or diagonally (only changing direction when you reach a corner) according to the number indicated by the dice. When you answer a question correctly, 'take possession of the square' by writing your name on it. You cannot choose to answer a question another student has already answered correctly.

5- PUNS AND JOKES

a- **Jokes** can also help students reflect upon how mispronunciation can lead to communication problems. Here are a few examples:

1- A French guest is staying at a fancy hotel in New York City. He calls room service and asks for some "pepper". On the other end of the line the concierge asks, 'Black pepper or white pepper, sir?' 'No,' says the Frenchman, 'toilet pepper.'

2- A friend of mine (from Argentina) wanted to confirm her reservation at a hotel in England for her holidays. She phoned the hotel and this exchange followed:
Friend: Good morning, I have a reservation for July (pronounced /juli/)
Receptionist: Julie what?
Friend, confused, hangs up

3- A boss impressed with an employee's skills asks:
'Where did you learn to do that?'
'In Yale'
'And what's your name again?'
'Yohn Yackson'

b- **Linguistic puns** can also be used for different purposes (see c below). The aim of the activity below is to work on sound-symbol correspondence and help students become familiar with decoding I.P.A symbols in a stream of language, thus providing a bridge for future work on connected speech. T asks students to write the words that disambiguate the following jokes in ordinary spelling. The key is in brackets here.

1. /wɒts ðə simələriti bitwi:n ə prins ənd ə bɔ:l //
/ðə prins ɪz eə tə ðə θrəʊn ənd ðə bɔ:l z θrəʊn tə
ði eə // (heir / throne) (thown / air)

2. /waɪ dəʊnt pipl̩ daɪ əv stɑ:veɪf̩n̩ ɪn ðə dezət //
/bɪkɒz əv ðə sænd wɪtʃ ɪz ðeə //
(sandwiches / sand which is)

3. /weɪtə //
/jes / sɜ: //
/ wɒts ðɪs su:p //
/ɪts bi:n su:p /sɜ: // (bean)
/nəʊ mætə wɒt ɪts bi:n / wɒts ɪt nəʊ // (been)

Halloween jokes:

4. /wɒts ə mʌmɪz feɪvərɪt tɑ:p əv mju:zɪk //
/ə ræp // (rap / wrap)

5. /wɒt də ju kɔ:l ə wɪtʃ hu lɪvz ɒn ðə bi:tʃ //
/ ə sændwɪtʃ // (sand witch / sandwich)

6. /waɪ dɪdnt ðə skelɪt̩ də:ns ət ðə pɑ:ti //
/ hi hæd nəʊ bɒdi tə də:ns wɪð //
(nobody / no body)

7. /wɒt də ju gɪv ə skelɪt̩ fə vɛləntaɪnz deɪ //
/bəʊn bəʊnz ɪn ə hɑ:t feɪpt bɒks //
(bone bones / bombons)

8. /hu wəz ðə məʊst feɪməs frentʃ skelɪt̩ //
/nəpəʊliən bəʊnəpɑ:t // (Bonaparte/bone apart)

9. /hɑʊ kən ju tel ə væmpaɪə laɪks beɪsbɔ:l //
/evri naɪt hi tɜ:nz ɪntu ə bæʔ //
(homophones & homographs)

10. /wɒts ə mɒnstəz feɪvərɪt dɪzɜ:t //
/ aɪ skri:m // (I scream / ice-cream)

c- **Visual puns:** The variety of pictures available on the web can be used for different purposes: warm-up activity, presentation activity based on a particular sound or simply seek to leave an imprint message in students' memory. You can get them by typing 'linguistic / pronunciation / phonological puns' on google images. Below I exemplify some of the puns which can be found online

1- *Homophones:*

a- A piece of board says, 'I'm so board. I really hope something fun would come along.'

b- A sheep 'dancing' on the street with the phrase 🎵 Ewe can dance, you can jive 🎵

2- *Contrasting sounds: /t/ /dʒ/*

a- Church Mice: On a Sunday like any other Sunday, two church mice knock on a door and tell a third mouse, 'We'd like to talk to you about Cheeses.'

b- A: I've just swallowed a bone! / B: Are you choking or are you serious?

3- *Memorable phrases: Reflecting upon a specific theoretical point:*

a- 'I wanna be a schwa. It's never stressed.'

b- 'Ain't no party like a fricative party. 'Cuz a fricative party don't stop.'

CONCLUSION:

Deiter (2000:20) says that 'teaching effectively requires imagination and creativity to turn students on by turning negative perceptions (e.g. the subject is boring, difficult, stressful) off'. In this presentation I have shown a range of sample fun activities which can be introduced into the Phonology I classroom and used for presenting, practising, revising or reflecting upon sounds and theory and which may appeal to different learning styles. These activities encourage students' motivation and participation, either by allowing them to discover different aspects of phonology by themselves, or by letting them put the theory into practice in a relaxed environment.

From my own experience when using these activities, I could see students were more alert in connection with perception, were really engaged with the activities and responded positively to the different stimuli, thus enhancing the production time during the lesson.

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