Teaching Phonetics Strategies and Students' Vowel Sounds Competence

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ABSTRACT

The levels of use of teachers of the teaching phonetics strategies are as follows for the two groups of teachers: for inductive teaching, MSU posted a mean of 3.61, while Manlin NHS posted a mean of 3.75, with both means interpreted as very high; for deductive teaching, MSU posted a mean of 3.79, while Manlin NHS posted a mean of 3.91, both means interpreted as very high; and for teaching use of content, MSU posted a of 3.62, while Manlin NHS posted a mean of 3.63, both means interpreted as very high. Average mean tor MSU was 3.67, while that of Manlin NHS was 3.76, both means interpreted as very high (cf. Table 6). No significant difference existed in the levels of use of teaching phonetics strategies between teachers in MSU and Manlin NHS, as the hypothesis was rejected (cf. Table 8). The levels of students' vowel sounds competence were 21.40% for Muslim students, interpreted as very poor, and 26.10% for Cebuano students, also interpreted as very poor (cf. Table 7). The hypothesis that projected the significant difference between Muslim and Cebuano students'vowel sounds competence was accepted and significant differences were established in all the sub-variables (cf. Table 9). The hypothesis that tried to significantly relate the levels of teaching phonetics strategies and students' vowel sounds competence was accepted and significant relationships were established in all the sub-variables (cf. Table 10).

Keywords : Teaching Phonetics; Vowel Sounds; Inductive Teaching

1 INTRODUCTION

Recent researches in pronunciation teaching had shown that the speaking part of the language can be mastered through effective teaching on phonetics. Liu and Fu (2011), in their experimental study on Chinese foreign language learners, exclaimed the effectiveness of teachers' instruction and continuous monitoring technique used to improve their accurate pronunciation of English. Thompson (1991), conducted an experiment on thirty-six Russian native speakers by making them read sentences and prose texts and examining their responses towards spontaneous speech. The inference from this experiment was that, those tasks positively influenced the learners' performance in gaining pronunciation accuracy.

Jilka M. et al (2007), say that acquiring a new sound system of an unfamiliar foreign language largely depends upon the 'individual aptitude' of a learner. Yokomoto (2016), investigated on the recent trends in teaching pronunciation, especially on 'Teachers' instructional decision-making' in Tokyo Universities and found that the technique of giving effective instruction and peer feedbacks can exclusively support the teaching of pronunciation. Meskhi (2002), highlighted on the fact that in learning a second language, 'phonology' must be given preference, as it renders a 'systematic approach' to ESL teaching. This idea was emphasised by conducting a comparative study on Georgian and English native speakers (adult) learsning English and Georgian, respectively and analysing the phonetic mistakes made by the learners during the process. The paper also suggests a systemic approach to vowel acquisition. Researches on different native language speakers and their optimistic outcomes couldn't serve the best for Indian English speakers. The drawback of all these researches is been rectified in this paper. Ikhsan, M. (2017) has observed only on the main factors manipulating ESL learners' pronunciation by experimenting on the students of 'STKIP PGRI', West Sumatera. Pronunciation, being the toughest part in speaking English, has more to do with teaching and practicing other than just diagnosing the factors and misconceptions.

This paper in relation to the above premises had to explore similarly Filipino students' problems on pronunciation but limited to their speaking competence of the 11 vowel sounds of the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA). It also tried to present teaching strategies used by teachers in teaching phonetics to two student groups Muslims and Cebuanoss.

2 METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study used the descriptive method of research, with the survey and testing as the main methods in generating the necessary data, using the questionnaire.

Fraenkel and Wallen (1995) stress that there are three major characteristics of all surveys:

1) information is collected from a group of people in order to describe some aspects of characteristics, such as abilities, opinions, attitudes, beliefs and or knowledge of the population of which respondents' area a part; 2) information is collected through asking questions, the answers to which constitute the data of the study; 3) and information is collected from a sample rather than from member of the population.

Research Environment

This study was conducted in Buug District, Buug, Zamboanga Sibugay. The research environment was limited to the two secondary schools in the subject district, namely, MSU Buug College High School Department and Manlin National High School.

Research Subjects

The research subjects of this study were the English teachers and second year students in the two public secondary schools at Buug District, shown in Table 2.

Table 2
Teachers' and Students' Populations in the Two Secondary Schools

	Teachers	Muslim Students		Cebuano Students	
		Population	Samples	Population	Samples
MSU Buug College HS. D.	8	50	25	60	30
Manlin National	3	30	15	204	102
Total	11	80	40	264	132

The table indicates that the two public secondary schools have 11 teachers in English, 80 Muslim students, 40 of which were taken as samples for the study; and 264 Cebuano students, 132 of which were taken as samples. The English teachers in the two Secondary public schools were taken in their population.

Sampling Technique

The sampling technique used in this study was the probability sampling technique. To identily the actual student-respondents from the two groups, the simple random process was used, with the lottery as the method in establishing the identity of the student-respondents. The sampling design applied to students was 50 percent of the total student population in each school, for both Muslim and Cebuano students.

In going about with the lottery, the names of pupils were written in small sheets of paper, which were rolled and placed in a box. Then the drawing of samples was done. The students whose names were drawn became the samples. The drawing of names continued until the desired number of samples was reached. The same procedure was done in the other schools for both Muslim and Cebuano students.

Research Instruments

This study used two sets of questionnaire. The first questionnaire elicited the responses from the teachers in terms of their levels of use of the teaching phonetic strategies. The questionnaire was set in a four-point scale of 4 - very high; 3 - high; 2- low and l- very low. In processing the data, the following hypothetical meanrange was utilized to establish the teachers' level of use of the strategies: 1.00- 1.75 very low 1.76-2.50- low; 2.51- 3.25-high; and 3.26-4.00-very high.

The second instrument was also a questionnaire to measure the vowel sounds competence of the subject students which focused on their sspeaking drills on the eleven vowels.

The students were presented a phrase in each vowel category that they would read. Scoring was done by frequency of correct pronunciation, which established the scores of the students in each vowel sound category. The scores were transformed into mean percentage scores and were interpreted using the following hypothetical mean range: 95 – 100 - excellent; 90 – 94 - very good; 85 – 89 - good; 80 – 84 - fair; 75 – 79 - poor; and 74 and below - very poor.

Data Gathering Technique

A request to conduct the study was made through proper channels and was shown to the school head in each school to realize the investigation. The researcher contacted each school head, the class advisers of the second year students, and the English teachers in the first school visited. The researcher first discussed with the teachers the objectives of the study and the manner to answer the teaching phonetics strategy questionnaire, after which the questionnaire was administered to them. While the English teachers were answering the instrument, the researcher, with help of the class advisers, identified the student-samples, with whom the researcher conducted the graded speaking drills with the help of two English tescherausistants. The speaking drills were tape-recorded.

The instrument answered by teachers was retrieved after completing the student exercises. The above procedure was followed in both schools. The recorded drills were later run and appraised by the three teachers. The corresponding mean percentage scores were given to each student. The assembling and tabulation of the data followed. Results of these activities were entered in the succeeding chapter. Foremost among problems encountered by the researcher in the course of investigation was mobility, as the schools were at some distances from each other and the researcher had to sacrifice with the miserable road condition in the area, not mentioning the oftentimes uncooperative weather condition.

Statistical Treatments

This study used the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) to test the significant differences of the two variables in terms of the two groups of teachers and students; and Pearson Coefficent of Correlation to test the significant relationship of the two variables. The processing was done on the computer, using the software Special Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), for more accurate and reliable results.

3 RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Teaching Phonetics Strategies

This variable involves the selected strategies that English teachers in the subject schools use to teach their students the sounds of the English language. The variable in this study is limited to the following teaching procedures: inductive teaching, the deductive teaching, and teaching use of content. The assembling of the data used the average weighted mean.

Inductive Instruction. The data generated for this sub-variable of teaching phonetics strategies are indicated in Table 3, for the teachers in the two secondary schools.

MSU Teachers. As shown in the table, the highest mean of 4.00, interpreted as very high, is posted for Item 8 (I ensure that the words I use as examples are within their vocabulary) and Item 13 (When I use words not within the students' vocabulary, I read them first); and the lowest mean of 2.90, interpreted as high, is posted for Item 3 (r students don't read simple words, I show them pictures).

Table 3
Levels of Practice of Teachers' Phonctics Strategies in Tems of Inductive Instruction

Items	MSU		MNHS	
	Mean	**Interp.**	**Mean**	**Interp.**
1. When teaching a certain sound, I let students choose sample words.	3.50	VH	3.30	VH
2. I find out if students read simple words before I introduce the sound.	3.60	VH	4.00	VH
3. If students don't read simple words, I show them pictures.	2.90	H	3.70	VH
4. Once students labeled the pictures correctly, I transfer them to the chalkboard for further reading and mastery.	3.40	VH	4.00	VH
5. I proceed to stress the sound by recalling three simple words in the chalkboard.	3.60	VH	4.00	VH
6. I try to let students give other words that begin with the same letter as the three words read and discussed.	3.90	VH	4.00	VH
7. I write on the board at least four words given by the students and Iet the whole class read them.	3.80	VH	4.00	VH
8. I ensure that the words I use as examples are within their vocabulary.	4.00	VH	3.70	VH
9. Illustrate initial sound using single-syllable words as examples.	3.90	VH	4.00	VH
10. For initial sounds, I choose words with vowels following the sound.	3.80	VH	4.00	VH
11. When teaching sounds, I emphasize visual first before auditory.	3.10	H	3.30	VH
12. When generalizing about sounds, I use one-vowel words.	3.50	VH	3.30	VH
13. When I use words not within the students vocabulary, I read them first.	4.00	VH	4.00	VH
14. I help students generalize about sounds through placements.	3.60	VH	3.70	VH
15. I write the generalization on the board for students to remember.	3.50	VH	3.30	VH
Overall Mean	3.61	VH	3.75	VH

Hypothetical Mean Range:

1.00-1.75- Very Low (VL)	2.51-3.25- High (HD)
1.76-2.50-Low (L)	3.26-4.00-Very High (VE)

Eleven other items are anchored on the very high scale: Item 1 *(When teaching a certain sound, I let students choose simple words)*, with a mean of 3.50; Item 2 *(I find out if students read simple words before I introduce the sound)*, with a mean of 3.60; Item 4 *(Once students labeled the pictures correctly, I transfer them to the chalkboard for further reading and mastery)*, with a mean of 3.40; Item 5 *(I proceed to stress the sound by recalling three simple words in the chalkboard)*, with a mean of 3.60; Item 6 *(I try to let students give other words that begin. with the three letter as the words read and discussed)*, with a mean of 3.90; Item 7 *(I write on the board at least four words given by the students and let the whole class discuss it)*, with a mean of 3.80; Item 9 *(I illustrate initial sound using single-syllable words as examples)*, with a mean of 3.90; Item 10 *(For initial sounds, I choose words with vowels following the sound)*, with a mean of 3.80; Item 12 *(When generalizing about sounds, I use one-vowel words)*, with a mean

of 3.50; Item 14 *(I help students generalize about sounds through placements),* with a mean of 3.60; and Item 15 *(I write the generalization on the board for students to remember),* with a mean of 3.50.

The last item is anchored on the high scale: ltem 11 *(When teaching sounds, I emphasize visual first before auditory),* with a mean of 3.10.

An overall mean of 3.61, interpreted as very high, is posted by MSU teachers. This finding indicates that the teachers have very high level of use of teaching phonetics strategies in terms of inductive teaching *Manlin NEHS Teachers.* As shown in the table, the highest mean of 4.00, interpreted as very high, is posted for Item 13 *(When I use words not within the students' vocabulary, I read them first),* and the lowest mean of 3.20, interpreted as high, is posted for Item 11 *(When teaching sounds, I emphasize visual first before auditory).* The rest of the thirteen items are anchored on the very high scale: Item 1 *(When teaching a certain sound, I let students choose simple words),* with a mean of 3.40; *Item 2 (I find out if students read simple words before I introduce the sound),* with a mem ot 3.80; Item 3 *(If students don't read simple words, I show them pictures;* Item 4 *(Once students labeled the pictures correctly, I transfer them to the chalkboard for further reading and master),* with a mean of 3.70; Item 5 *(I proceed to stress the sound by recalling three simple words in the chalkboard),* with a mean of 3.80; Item 6 *(I try to let students give other words that begin with the three letter as the words read and discussed),* with a mean of 3.95; Item 7 *(I write on the board at least four words given by the students and let the whole class discuss it),* with a mean of 3.90; Item 8 *(I ensure that the words I use as examples are within their vocabulary),* with a mean of 3.85; Item 9 *(I illustrate initial sound using single-syllable words as examples),* with a mean of 3.95; Item 10 *(For initial sounds, I choose words with vowels following the sound),* with a mean of 3.90; Item 12 *(When generalizing about sounds, I use one-vowel words),* with a mean of 3.40; Item 14 *(I help students generalize about sounds through placements),* with a mean of 3.65; and Item 15 *(I write the generalization on the board for students to remember),* with a mean of 3.40.

An overall mean of 3.68, interpreted as very high, is posted by Manlin NHS teachers. This finding indicates that the teachers have very high level of use of teaching of phonetics strategies in terms of inductive teaching.

The findings for the two groups of teachers indicate that they practice inductive strategies in teaching phonetics on the very high level. The findings further indicate that they proceed with their phonetics instruction by making students reason on sound characteristics from particular sound to a conclusion about them. Specifically, for MSU teachers, they do this by ensuring that the words they use as examples are within their students" vocabulary and if the words are not within the students' vocabulary, they read them first. These two steps in teaching posted for MSU teachers the highest mean.

For Manlin NHS teachers, they usually start their phonetics instruction by reading them first if these are not within the students' vocabulary. And in terms of the other steps, the two groups of teachers similarly performed them on the very high level.

The results for the two groups of teachers on inductive teaching strategy implies that inductive teaching has a common start for the two groups of teachers, and usually vary in following the other steps depending on the lesson they are discussing. For instance, MSU teachers tend not to show pictures if students don't read simple words, while Manlin NHS teachers tend not to emphasizing visual first before auditory, when teaching sounds. These steps posted varying low indices for the two groups of teachers.

To support the above observation of the researcher, Durkin (p. 45) says that although more often teachers do not make any generalization when they teach phonetics, but merely give the sound and let students master them by exercises or drills, inductive instruction can be initiated in more than one way. For instance, if the teacher finds out that the students do not know any appropriate word in the sound being introduced, the teacher can begin with a bulletin board display of labeled pictures showing objects whose spoken and written names begin with the sound or letter being discussed presently. Or another teacher might choose to proceed by calling students attention to the words already discussed and displayed on the board whose sounds and initial letters are similar with the ones being undertaken in class (p. 57).

Deductive Instruction. The data for this component of teaching phonetics strategies are shown in Table 4, for teachers in the two secondary schools.

MSU Teachers. As shown in the table, the highest mean of 4.00, interpreted as very high, is posted for Item 3 *(I read the words first then let students read them after me)* and Item 4 *(I emphasize the initial letter by describing its sound),* and the lowest mean of 3.40, interpreted as very high, is posted for Item 15 *(I let students write on a piece of paper the syllabic break of words).*

The rest of the twelve items are anchored on the very high scale: Item 1 *(I ask students for some words with the same initial sound),* with a mean of 3.90; Item 2 *(I point out to students that the words start with the same letter),* with a mean of 3.90; Item 5 *(I read the words and ask students the sound of the initial letters of the words),* with a mea), with n of 3.90; Item 6 *(I ask then to give some words that start with the same letter/sound,)* with a mean of 3.90; Item 7 *(I ask students to produce the sound of the initial letter of the words),* with a mean of 3.60; Item 8 *(I teach syllabication using words with two consonants preceded and followed by vowels),* with a mean of 3.50; Itom 9 *(I write the sample words on the board and ask students to read them),* with a mean of 3.90; Item 10 *(I ask students to find out the number of syllables in each word),* with a mean of 3.80: Item 11 *(I ask students where to divide the words in terms of syllables),* with a mean of 3.90; Item 12 *(I tell students that first syllable begins and ends with a consonant),* with a mean of 3.80; Item 13 *(I tell students that the second syllable also begins and ends similarly),* with a mean of 3,80; and Item 14 *(I give students similar words to divide and ask them where the syllable break occurs in each words),* with a mean of 3.60.

Table 4
Levels of Practice of Teaching Phonetics Strategies in Terms of Deductive Instruction

Items	MSU		MNHS	
	Mean	Interp.	Mean	Interp.
1. I ask students for some words with the same initial sound.	3.90	VH	4.00	VH
2. I point out to students that the words start with the	3.90	VH	4.00	VH

same letter.				
3. I read the words first then let students read them after me.	4.00	VH	4.00	VH
4. I emphasize the initial letter by describing its sound physically.	4.00	VH	4.00	VH
5. I read the words and ask students the sound of the initial letters of the words.	3.90	VH	4.00	VH
6. I ask them to give some words that start with the same letter/sound.	3.90	VH	4.00	VH
7. I ask students to produce the sound of the initial letter of the words.	3.60	VH	4.00	VH
8. I teach syllabication using words with two consonants preceded and followed by vowels.	3.50	VH	4.00	VH
9. I write the sample words on the board and ask students to read them.	3.90	VH	4.00	VH
10. I ask students to find out the number of syllables in each word.	3.80	VH	4.00	VH
11. I ask students where to divide the words in terms of syllables.	3.90	VH	4.00	VH
12. I tell students that first syllable begins and ends with a consonant.	3.80	VH	3.70	VH
13. I tell students that the second syllable also begins and ends similarly.	3.80	VH	3.30	VH
14. I give students similar words to divide and ask them where the syllable break occurs in each word.	3.60	VH	3.70	VH
15. I let students wile on n piece of paper the syllable break of words.	3.40	VH	4.00	VH
Overall Mean	3.79	VH	3.91	VH

Hypothetical Mean Range:

1.00-1.75-Very Low (VL)   2.51-3.25-High (H)
1.76-2.30-Low (L) s   3.26-4.00-Very High (VH)

The overall mean of 3.79, interpreted as very high, is garnered by MSU teachers. This finding shows that the teachers practice the steps in deductive strategy in teaching phonetics to their students. *Manlin NHS Teachers.* As shown in the table, the highest mean of 4.00, interpreted as very high, is posted for Item 3 *(I read the words first then let students read them after me)* and Item 4 *(I emphasize the initial letter by describing its sound),* and the lowest mean of 3.55, interpreted as very high, is posted for Item 13 *(I tell students that the second syllable also begins and ends similarly).*

The rest of the twelve items are anchored on the very high scale: Item 1 *(I ask students for some words with the same initial sound),* with a mean of 3.95; Item 2 *(I point out to students that the words start with the same letter),* with a mean of 3.95; Item 5 *(I read the words and ask students the sound of the initial letters of the words),* with a mean of 3.95; Item 6 *(I ask then to give some words that start with the same letter/sound),* with a mean of 3.95; Item 7 *(I ask students to produce the sound of the initial letter of the words),* with a mean of 3.80; Item 8 *(I teach syllabication using words with two consonants preceded and followed by vowels),* with a mean of 3.75; Item 9 *(I write the sample words on the board and ask students to read them),* with a mean of 3.95; Item 10 *(I ask students to find out the number of syllables in each word),* with a mean of 3.90; Item 11 *(I ask students where to divide the words in terms of syllables),* with a mean of 3.95; Item 12 *(I tell students that first syllable begins and ends with a consonant),* with a mean of 3.75; Item 14 *(I give students similar words to divide and ask them where the syllable break occurs in each words),* with a mean of 3.65; and Item 15 *(I let students write on a piece of paper the syllabic breaks of words),* with a mean of 3.70.

The overall mean of 3.85, interpreted as very high, is garnered by Manlin NHS teachers. This finding shows that the teachers practice the steps in deductive strategy in teaching phonetics to their students on the very high level.

The findings for the two groups of teachers show that they practice the steps for deductive teaching in phonetics on the same level. It is also noteworthy to mention here that the two groups of teachers similarly start their phonetics instruction using the deductive method by using the same initial steps, which posted the highest mean, and this are reading the words first then letting students read them after, and emphasize the initial letter by describing its sound.

However, the two groups of teachers differ in the item they practice less. For MSU teachers, they tend not to let students write on a piece of paper the syllabic break of word, while those from Manlin NHS tend not to tell students that the second syllable of a certain word also begins and ends similarly. These items posted the lowest means for the two groups of teachers.

In terms of the other items, the teachers similarly practice them on the very high level. This finding indicates that the teachers use the telling rather than the reasoning technique in teaching the sounds and other phonetic clues. The teachers also believe that to teach deductively is to emphasize the generalization in phonetics instruction. For instance, when there are two consonants preceded and followed by vowels, there usually is a syllabic division between the consonants, as in pencil *(pen/cil);* number *(num/ber),* and garden *(gar/den).*

Durkin (p.64), however, emphasizes that the deductive technique in ton phonetics should be used by teachers in a sort of moving back and forth from inductive to deductive in the day-byday work of the classroom, which is the most natural and in the long run the most productive way to

proceed with phonetics instruction. Nonetheless, teachers should be cautioned that each strategy has its own distinct advantages that ought to be kept in mind.

Four major deficiencies in reading instruction that prevent students from learning how to decode certain sounds in English are forwarded by: (1) nearly 20 percent of students do not develop threshold levels of phonemic awareness in kindergarten (This means that they cannot distinguish the discrete sounds in words and manipulate and sequence them, which is necessary to connect sounds and letter sin words.) and these children were not diagnosed and given assistance; (2) students were not taught enough about the main letter/sound correspondences and thus did not learn the alphabetic system; (3) about a third of students have difficulty leaning how to read through a word or sound it out and have not been taught it; and (4) students have not had opportunity to practice reading a large number of words based on the beginning letter/sound patterns in the text. As a result, they have not come to become automatic at recognizing those words (Honig, p. 19)

Research results in the reading field have established how important it is for students to be able to hear and manipulate the discrete sound parts of words, which is termed as phonemic awareness. And it is important to learning to read. Most phonemic awareness is learned by children through the process of learning how print maps are used to sound in phonics instruction, which is a starting point in an authentic phonetics instruction. Threshold levels, however, are necessary for students to learn this. For instance, if a child cannot tell the last sound in *cat,* he is going to find it impossible to connect the sound with the written symbol *t,* or to read through a word while keeping the letters and sounds in proper sequence (Honig, p. 19).

Teaching Use of Content. The data for this component of teaching phonetics strategies are indicated in Table 5, for the two groups of teachers. *MSU Teachers.* As shown in the table, the highest mean of 3.90, interpreted as very high, is posted for Item 4 *(I write on the board a word sample with the sound and another with different initial sound),* and the lowest mean of 3.30, interpreted as very high, is posted for Item 15 *(In decoding unfamiliar words, I tell students to use visual cues).*

The rest of the thirteen items are anchored on the very high scale: Item 1 *(If I want to teach a certain consonant sound, I will do it with two other almost similar sounds),* with a mean of 3.80; Item 2 *(I ask students to tell me which word has the sound),* with a mean of 3.80; Item 3 *(I stress to students the relationship of the letter and its sound),* with a mean of 3.80; Item 5 *(I stress to students the close resemblance of the two sounds),* with a mean of 3.80, Item 6 *(I ask students the sound and meaning of the second word),* with a mean of 3.60, Item 7 *(I give a sentence with a blank to be filled with one of the words and ask them to fill it with the correctword),* with a mean of 3.40; Item 8 *(I present some words for substitution of initial sound),* with a mean of 3.40; Item 9 *(I ask students to decode the substituted sound in each example),* with a mean of 3.40; Item 10 *(I present samples of words for substitution in the final sound),* with a mean of 3.80; Item 11 *(I ask students to decode the substituted sound in each example),* with a mean of 3.50: Item 12 *(I tell students that to decode an unfamiliar word, the first step is syllabication)* with a mean of 3.80; Item 13 *(I differentiate to students the meaning of digraph and letter),* with a mean of 3.60; and Item 14 *(I believe decoding deals with syllables not words),* with a mean of 3.40.

Table 5
Levels of Practice of Teaching Phonetics Strategies in Terms of Teaching Use of Content

Items	MSU		MNHS	
	Mean	Interp.	Mean	Interp.
1. If I want to teach a certain consonant sound, I will do it with two other almost similar sounds.	3.80	VH	4.00	VH
2. I ask students to tell me which word has the sound.	3.80	VH	4.00	VH
3. I stress to students the relationship of the letter and its sound.	3.80	VH	3.70	VH
4. I write on the board a word sample with the sound and another with different initial sound.	3.90	VH	3.70	VH
5. I stress to students the close resemblance of the two sounds.	3.80	VH	3.30	VH
6. I ask students the sound and meaning of the second word	3.60	VH	3.70	VH
7. I give a sentence with a blank to be filled with one of the words and ask them to fill it with the correct word.	3.40	VH	3.30	VH
8. I present some words for substitution of initial sounds.	3.40	VH	3.70	VH
9. I ask students to decode the substituted sound in each example.	3.40	VH	3.30	VH
10. I present samples of words for substitution in the final sound.	3.80	VH	3.70	VH
11. I ask students to decode the substituted sound in each example.	3.50	VH	3.30	VH
12. I tell students that to decode an unfamiliar word, the first step is syllabication.	3.80	VH	3.70	VH
13. I differentiate to students the meaning of digraph and letter.	3.60	VH	3.70	VH

14. I believe decoding deals with syllables not words.	3.40	VH	3.70	VH
15. In decoding unfamiliar words, I tell students to use visual clues.	3.30	VH	3.70	VH
Overall Mean	3.62	VH	3.63	VH

Hypothetical Mean Range:

1.00-1.75-Very Low (VL)	2.51 -3.25-High (E)
1.76-2.50-Low (L)	3.26-4.00- Very High (VH)

The overall mean of 3.62, interpreted as very high, is garnered by MSU teacher. This finding shows that the teachers practice on the very high level the steps in teaching use of content strategy to their students.

Manlin NHS Teachers. As shown in the table, the highest mean of 3.90, interpreted as very high, is posted for Item 1 *(If I want to teach a certain consonant sound, I will do it with two other almost similar sounds)* and Item 2 (I ask students to tell me which word has the sound), and the lowest mean of 3.30, interpreted as very high, is posted for Item 7 *(I give a sentence with a blank to be filled with one of the words and ask them to fill it with the correct word)* and Item 9 *(I ask students to decode the substituted sound in each example).*

The rest of the eleven items are anchored on the very high scale: Item 3 *(I stress to students the relationship of the letter and its sound),* with a mean of 3.80; Item 4 *(I write on the board a word sample with the sound and another with different initial sound),* with a mean of 3.80; Item 5 *(I stress to students the close resemblance of the two sounds),* with a mean of 3.80; Item 6 *(I ask students the sound and meaning of the second word),* with a mean of 3.60, Item 8 *(I present some words for substitution of initial sound),* with a mean of 3.40; Item 10 *(I present samples of words for substitution in the final sound),* with a mean of 3.80; Item 11 *(I ask students to decode the substituted sound in each example),* with a mean of 3.50, Item 12 *(I tell students that to decode an unfamiliar word, the first step is syllabication),* with mean of 3.80, Item 13 *(I differentiate to students the meaning of digraph and letter),* with a mean 3.60, Item 14 *(I believe decoding deals with syllables not words),* with a mean of 3.40; and Item 15 *(In decoding unfamiliar words, I tell students to use visual cues).*

The overall mean of 3.63, interpreted as very high, is garnered by Manlin NHS teachers. This finding shows that the teachers in Manlin practice on the very high 1evel the steps in the use of content strategy in teaching phonetics to their students.

The results for the two groups of teachers indicate that they practice the steps in teaching use of content on the very high level. However, MSU teachers prefer to write on the board a word sample with the sound and another with different initial sound, in going about with the strategy, while those in Manlin NHS prefer to start the phonetic lesson using this strategy with other similar sounds when teaching a certain consonant sound, and asking students to tell which word has the sound.

The item least preferred by MSU teachers is telling students to use visual cues in decoding unfamiliar words, while for Manlin NHS teachers, the least preferred items are giving students with a sentence with a blank to be filled with one of the words and asking them to fill it with the correct word; and asking students to decode the substituted sound in each example.

The findings indicate that the two groups of teachers differ in their practice of teaching use of content as a strategy, although their levels of use of such strategy are the same, which is described as very high. This finding is in order because every teacher has his/her way of going about with the lesson, since the creativity of teaching is widely spread out among teachers. This is so because all teachers undergo teaching preparation in college and putting the knowledge they gained in school depends so much on the level of creativity and innovative inclination the teachers possess.

Many students seem never to be able to learn phonics, and decoding is one reason for the growth of the whole-language movement as a way of teaching the English language. Teachers are naturally inclined to find ways for students to learn the sounds or English words. But those ways, which entail predictions using context and first-letter clues, are seen to be too slow and inaccurate to replace phonological decoding, and teaching children to rely on them produced many poor readers. It is then known that they key reason for many of these students not to be able to lean to decode was that they could not hear and abstract the sounds. It is then an obvious solution that assurance should be made that children are properly prepared to learn phonics and decoding so that they could proceed to the more difficult or stressful phonetics instruction (Honig, p. 20). This is also one essence of the new approach in language teaching, which is communicative language teaching. This is teaching the language for real understanding and communication.

English teachers should formulate an organized program that directly teaches basic consonant/vowel combinations and follows principles of linguistic sequencing. Such program introduces words based on short vowel patterns and simple consonants in the early years, and then follows with more complicated vowel marker patterns. In this program, the basic highfrequency words that cannot be sounded out should also be taught in some sequence (Honig, p. 20).

Another new insight into the reading problem or students revealed by research results is the influence of home reading support to children's comprehension development. Richardson (1998) suggests reading out to children in the home as one effective reinforcing activity for students' reading progress." We know how important it is for parents to read to their children" he notes, but laments on the inability of parents to do this to their children at home: "We have just about exhausted our bag of tricks doing everything under the sun to get families to read. We need people to help us motivate kids and their families to read." One suggestions offered by Fry (p. 3) is for the school, in collaboration with the community, to organize volunteer reading service using college students taking summer vacations in their respective home communities, to help families whose members could not give reading support to their children in school.

Summary of Teachers' Teaching Phonetics Strategies. The summary for this variable is entered in Table 6 for the two groups of teachers.

Table 6
Summary of Level of Use of Teaching Phonetics Strategies
In the Two Public Secondary Schools

Items	MSU		MNHS	
	Mean	Interp.	Mean	Interp.
Inductive teaching	3.61	Very High	3.79	Very High
Deductive teaching	3.79	Very High	3.91	Very High
Teaching Use of Content	3.62	Very High	3.63	Very High
Overall Mean	3.67	Very High	3.76	Very High

Hypothetical Mean Range

1.00-1.75- Very Low (VL)	2.51-3.25-High (E)
1.76-2.50- Low (L)	3.26-4.00- Very High (VE)

As shown in the table, MSU Teachers posted the highest mean of 3.79, interpreted as very high, for deductive teaching, and the lowest mean of 3.61, interpreted as very high, to inductive teaching. Teaching use of content garnered for this group of teachers a mean of 3.62, also interpreted as very high. The table show that the overall mean of 3.67, interpreted as very high, is posted by MSU teachers.

For Manlin NHS teachers, the highest mean of 3.91, interpreted as very high, is posted for deductive teaching, and the lowest mean of 3.63, also interpreted as very high, is posted for teaching use of content. Inductive teaching posted a mean of 3.75, also interpreted as very high. The overall mean of 3.76, interpreted as very high, is garnered by Manlin teachers for their teaching phonetics strategies.

The very high level of use of teaching phonetics strategies in the two secondary schools could be explained by the fact that teachers in these schools have undergone various trainings supplementary to their basic skills in teaching language acquired from college. The finding also implies that the teachers are highly creative in their teaching, and in using variations of the three phonetics teaching techniques in introducing their lessons, as revealed in the preceding sets of tables.

Communicative language teaching, as a new trend, is quite diverse, yet underlying all of its variations are these similarities: (1) communication competence is the goal at each level of instruction; (2) interaction between language users and their environment is the primary objective of all exercises; and (3) the processes involved in using the language, that is the strategies for making sense of something and for negotiating meaning, are the center of attention (Nattinger, 1993).

Students' Vowel Sounds Competence

This competence involves the ability of the subject students to produce the correct sounds of the English vowels, using the sound patterns identified with the standards set by the Philippine Center for Language Study (PCLS). In this study, these vowel sounds are limited to the eleven vowels commonly occurring in everyday speech, as follows: 1) [iy] – seat; 2) [I] – him; 3) [ey]- sail; 4) [e] - bell; 5) [æ]- sat; 6) [a] – block; 7) [ʊ] - call; 8) [ow] - go; 9) [u] - cool; 10) [uw] – fool; and 11) [∂] - Italy.

Table 7 presents the data gathered for this variable, for both Muslim and Cebuano students, whose differences in producing the eleven vowel sounds was significantly established in this investigation. Assembling of the data for this variable was done by frequency of correct answers. The raw scores were transformed into mean percentage scores (MPS), indicating the level of students' vowel sounds competence. *Muslim Students.* As shown in the table, the highest MPS of 50.00%, interpreted as very poor, is posted by Muslim students for Item 2 ([I] - him), and the lowest MPS of 0.00%, interpreted as very poor, is posted for Item 5 ([æ] - sat). The rest of the nine items are also posted on the very poor level: Item 1 ([iy] - seat), with an MPS of 15.50%; Item 3 ([ey] -sail), with an MPS of 32.50%; Item 4 ([e] - bell), with an MPS of 25.00%, Item 6 ([a] - block), with an MPS of 40.00%;, Item 7 ([ʊ] - call), with an MPS of 2.50%; Item 8 ([ow] - 80), with an MPS of 2.50%; Item 9 ([u] - cook), with an MPS of 35.00%, Item 10([uw] - fool), with an MPS of 2.50%; and Item 11([∂] - Italy), with an MPS of 27.50%.

Table 7
Summary of the Level of Students' Vowel Sounds Competence
In the Two Public Secondary Schools

Vowel Sounds	MSU		Cebuano Students	
	Rating (%)	Interpretation	Mean	Interpretation
1. [iy] - seat	17.50	Very Poor	16.00	Very Poor
2. [I] – him	50.00	Very Poor	43.90	Very Poor
3. [ey] - sail	32.50	Very Poor	32.60	Very Poor
4. [e] - bell	25.00	Very Poor	26.50	Very Poor
5. [æ] - sat	0	Very Poor	0	Very Poor
6. [a] - block	40.00	Very Poor	55.30	Very Poor
7. [ʊ] - call	2.50	Very Poor	9.10	Very Poor
8. [ow] - go	2.50	Very Poor	13.60	Very Poor
9. [u] - cook	35.00	Very Poor	19.70	Very Poor

10. [uw] - fool	2.50	Very Poor	8.30	Very Poor
11. [∂] - Italy	27.50	Very Poor	62.10	Very Poor
Overall Mean	21.40	Very Poor	26.10	Very Poor

Hypothetical Rating Range:

95 – 100	– Excellent	80 – 84	- Fair
90 -94	- Very Good	75 -79	- Poor
85 -89	- Good	74 & below	- Very Poor

The average MPS garnered by Muslim students for the eleven vowel sounds is 21.40%, interpreted as very poor.

Cebuano Students. As shown in the table, the highest MPS of 62.10%, interpreted as very poor, is posted by Cebuano students for Item 11 ([∂] - Italy), and the lowest MPS of 0.00%, interpreted as very poor, is posted for Item 5 ([æ]- sat).

The rest of the nine items are also posted on the very poor level: Item 1 ([iy] - seat), with an MPS of 16.00%; Item 2 ([I] - him), with an MPS of 43.90%; Item 3 ([ev] - sail), with an MPS of 32.60%; Item 4 ([e] - bell), with an MPS of 26.50%; Item6 ([a] - block), with an MPS of 55.30%, Item 7 ([ʊ] - call), with an MPS of 9.10%; Item 8 ([ow] - sat), with an MPS of 13.60; Item 9 ([u] - cook), with an MPS of 19.70%; and Item 10 ([uw] - fool), with an MPS of 8.30%.

The average MPS garnered by Cebuano students for the eleven vowel sounds is 26.10%, interpreted as very poor.

The findings show that both Muslim and Cebuano students posted average ratings interpreted as very poor. This finding means that the Muslim and Cebuano students who took the phonetics vowel test are similarly categorized as very poor in their vowel sounds competence. However, the mean percentage scores garnered by the two groups of students differed in terms of the numerical weights, with Cebuano students seen as slightly better than the Muslim students. This slight difference was statistically tested to find out their significat difference. The results of the testing are shown in Table 8, presented in the succeeding section.

Expectedly, Filipino students rarely fare well in English phonology, owing to the fact that English for them is a second language. Cleary and Lim (1997) stressed that the knowledge of a native language the learner first acquired tends to hinder learning for a second language. This notion is especially true to Filipino learners who already mastered their own dialects before learning another language like English. Muslim and Cebuano students in this study, are no different in terms or the hindrance posed by the knowledge of their native languages.

Another hindering factor for the subject students to be able to master the English sounds, most especially those of vowels, is the range of their vocabulary. The usefulness being able to sound new [English] words depends on the state of the [speakers'] vocabulary. If the word that is unfamiliar in printed form is also unfamiliar in spoken form, the reader who can sound it out will not understand the word any better than the reader who cannot sound it. And the real advantage in being able to sound a word that is unfamiliar in print only appears when the word is familiar in speech (Durkin, p. 5).

Grenfell and Harris (p. 41) argue that knowing a language involves complex psychological processes, many of which seem to be beyond research observation. Learning a second language calls upon these, but not in an identical way from when the first language is learned. The second language has to sit alongside and/or integrate with the first. When the individual learns their first language it is bound up with the development of their cognitive maturity and their very identity. This formed personality is brought to the second language learning process and has to be expressed with it.

Testing of the Hypotheses

There were three hypotheses proposed for testing for their validity in this study using the 0.05 level of significance.

Hypothesis No. 1. There are differences in the levels of practice of teaching phonetics strategies among English teachers in the two public secondary schools.

The results of the testing of the above hypothesis, using the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) are entered in Table 8.

As shown in the table, for inductive teaching, the testing yielded an F-stat value of 0.7200 and probability value of 0.6831 that is higher than the 0.05 level of significance, which rejected the hypothesis and established no significant difference between the levels of use of inductive teaching phonetics strategy by teachers in the two secondary schools.

Table8
Test on the Significant Differences in the Levels of Practice of
Teaching Phonetics Strategies between the Two Public Secondary Schools

Strategies	F-stat	Probability Value	Decision on the Null Hypothesis	Interpretatio006E
Inductive teaching	0.7200	0.6831	Reject	Not Significant
Deductive teaching	2.2219	0.1132	Reject	Not Significant
Teaching Use of Content	2.5276	0.0827	Reject	Not Significant

For deductive teaching, the testing yielded an F-stat value of 2.2219 and probability value of 0.1132 that is higher than the 0.05 level of significance, which rejected the hypothesis and established no significant difference between the levels of use of deductive teaching phonetics strategy by teachers in the two secondary schools. For teaching use of content, the testing yielded an F-stat value of 2.5276 and probability value of

0.0827 that is higher than the 0.05 level of significance, which rejected the hypothesis and established no significant difference between the levels of use of teaching use of content strategy by teachers in the two secondary schools.

The findings that there is no significant difference in the levels of use of teaching phonetics strategies between teachers in the two secondary schools could be explained by the fact that these teachers undergo simsilar college preparation courses and trainings and seminars when already in the service. It is then not a wonder that they would be performing at par with each other in terms of the use of teaching strategies in phonetics. Durkin (p. 6) has the contention that phonetics instruction will be effective only when presented by teachers who are thoroughly knowledgeable about it. And since the two groups of teachers posted similar indices in this study, it is also contended that they are equally competent and knowledgeable to teach the subject.

Wesche (1981, in Grenfell & Harris, p. 47) has shown how matching method to learner type may facilitate rate of learning; in this case, grammar-analytical methods with deductive reasoners, and communicative language teaching with more socially affective types. There is no reason not to believe that strategies are affected in the same way. So for social types, inferencing strategies will be best employed by learners whose preference is for inductive methods and in context where there is high contact with native speakers of the language. More academic types, deductive strategies will be used by those favouring an analytical approach to knowing a language (p. 47).

Hypothesis No. 2. There are differences in the levels of competence between Cebuano and Muslim students in articulating the eleven vowel sounds. The results of the testing of Hypothesis No. 2, using the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) are shown in Table 9.

As shown in the table, the testing yielded an F-stat value of 2.9062 and Probability value of 0.0107 that is lower than the 0.05 level of significance, which accepted the hypothesis and established significant differences between the levels of vowel sounds competence of Muslim and Cebuano second year students in the two Secondary schools.

Table 9
Test on the Significant Differences in the Levels of Vowel Sounds
Competencies of Muslim and Cebuano Second Year Students
in the Two Public Secondary Schools

Statistical Parameters	Findings
F-Stat	2.9062
Probability Valsue	0.0107
Decision on the Null Hypothesis	Accept
Interpretation	With Significant Differences

The testing results indicated that there is a significant difference in the levels of vowel sounds competence of Muslim and Cebuano students in this study. This must be so because of the peculiarities of the dialects of the two groups, which too often pose a hindrance in articulating properly English vowel sounds. But the influence of the dialect in the two groups of students also differ in that Muslim students are too insular in their socio-linguistic activities because they tend to mingle only with their own kind and seldom mix with other dialect groups. Cebuano students, on the other hand, circulate easily with English-speaking groups, as sororities and clubs, resulting in being good mixers even at an early age. In the process, they tend to become familiar with English pronunciations however deviant and exaggerated at times. Nevertheless, the constant use of English tends to make their tongue adaptive to the sounds of the language.

Cultural background, according to Grenfell and Harris (p. 48), may also be a significant factor in determining how language e learners approach a task as, for example, one study comparing Nigerian and Japanese learners suggests (Pery, 1993, in Grenfell and Harris, p. 48). To these differences, one could add differences in age and gender, as studied by Politzer (1983), Bugel and Buunk (1996), and Bacon (1992). The particular concern here are the secondary students, who are in their formative years, and it is known that cognitive, as well as affective and behavioral, maturity has an enormous impact on language learning (Grenfell & Harris, p. 48).

Hypothesis No. 3. There are relationships between the levels of practice of teaching phonetics strategies and students' competence in articulating the vowel sounds.

The results of the testing of the third hypothesis using Pearson Coefficient or Correlation are shown in Table 10.

Table 10
Pearson Correlation Coefficient Test on the Significant Relationships Between the Level of Practice of Teaching Phonetics Strategies and the
Level of Students' Vowel Sounds Competence

Statistical Parameters	Findings
Pearson "r"	0.7909
Probability Vale	0.0199
Decision on the Null Hypothesis	Accept
Interpretation	With Significant Relationship (All Sub-Variables)

As shown in the table, the testing yielded an Pearson "r" value of 0.7909 and probability value of 0.0199 that is lower the 0.05 level of significance, which accepted the hypothesis and established significant relationships between teachers' level of use of teaching phonetics strategies and the level of students' vowel sounds competence in all the sub-variables.

The findings indicate that there is a significant relationship between the levels of teaching phonetics strategies and students' vowel sounds competence. The findings affirm the idea that teachers must be familiar with all the contents of phonetics instruction before they are ready to select certain parts for certain students (Durkin, p. 6).

Most discussions on contributors to the success of phonetics instruction often focus only on the students. Yet, what any given child is likely to learn is very much dependent upon the knowledge and competence of his teacher. That she must be thoroughly knowledgeable about what she can teach is the reason for providing teachers with the necessary college preparation and training to perform excellently in the teaching of language.

CONCLUSIONS

The following conclusions were reached by this thesis writer based on the strength of the findings on the two variables assessed in this investigation.

1. The teachers' level of use of teaching phonetics strategies was categorized as very high in the three indicators of the variable, namely, inductive teaching, deductive teaching, and teaching use of content.

2. No significant difference was established between MSU and Manlin NHS teachers in terms of their levels of use of teaching phonetics strategies.

3. The level of Muslin and Cebuano students' vowel sounds competence was categorized as very poor in all the eleven vowels included in this study.

4. Significant differences were established between Muslim and Cebuano students' vowel sounds competence in all the sub-variables.

5. Significant relationships were established between the levels of teaching phonetics strategies and students' vowel sounds competence in all the sub-variables.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations were proposed by this researcher relative to the results of the study on the levels of teaching phonetics strategies and students' vowel sounds competence.

1. The findings on teaching phonetics strategies revealed that teachers in the two schools have very high level of use of these teaching strategies. School administrators should ensure that these high levels of teacher' phonetics teaching strategies are put to effective use in the classroom by undertaking periodic and continuing classroom observation and assessment activities.

2. The result on students' vowel sounds competence was very poor. School administrators and teachers should sit together and figure out where the problem in students' vowel sounds competence lies, the fact that teaching phonetics strategies was very high. Schools should devise some measures that would improve to a high level the vowel sounds competence of students and their overall learning of the English language.

3. Although the indices of Muslim and Cebuano students in appropriately producing the sounds of the eleven vowels included in this study, a significant difference was noted between the levels of competence of the two groups of students. Teachers should devise a development program that would immerse both groups of students in the English language sounds, especially the vowels, so that they could improve their ability to use English as a medium of expression.

4. The two schools should conduct a continuing assessment program for the competence of students in using English as a medium of expression and ensure that they use the language correctly and productively.

5. School administrators should include in the agenda of PTCA meetings the need for parents to provide reading support at home for children, as a way to help the school in improving the capability of students to use English in and outside the classroom.

6. Teachers should encourage their students to use English inside the classroom, as a means of making students improve their English speaking capability. Teachers as should also devise a merit system in the classroom for students who constantly use English in their interaction with teachers and classmates.

7. Copies of the results of this study should be furnished to school heads to inform them on the significant relationship of teaching phonetics strategies and students' vowel sounds competence.

8. Other researchers should conduct similar studies in other environment with the purpose of drawing out other inferences of the relationship of the two variables in other setting, and also as way to affirm or disprove the findings on this study on the significant relationship of teaching phonetics strategies and students' vowel sounds competence.

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