The Chaos: Improving the Pronunciation of Grade Nine Students

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ABSTRACT

Pronunciation is taught primarily at the elementary level. It is a skill that students should master throughout their studies so that they can express their opinions clearly. This study aimed to identify Grade 9 students' mispronounced words and their causes, level of pronunciation, and the exposure of students in pronunciation using the poem titled *The Chaos* written by Gerard Nolst Trenité. The researchers used a purposive sampling technique by acceptable pronunciation standards to select the respondents who are in level 1 from Grade 9 students in a selected private school in San Jose del Monte, Bulacan. This study utilized Patole's English Pronunciation Problems to classify the mispronounced words followed by a focus group discussion. The results showed that irregular pronunciation was the most common pronunciation problem encountered by the students. Additionally, two respondents stepped on level 2 and one respondent stepped on level 3 wherein the respondents agreed that companions are a great help for them to pronounce the words because they can correct it right away.

Keywords: *grade 9, mispronunciation, pronunciation, speaking*

Introduction

Speaking is one of the macro skills that are essential in expressing oneself. It helps individuals to state their concerns, opinions, knowledge, and suggestions. Becoming proficient with sounds and articulation opens doors to more in-depth comprehension, involvement, and academic success for students. Pronunciation is the way a person delivers the sounds of words. This helps the students understand someone's message and to be understood as well if they are the ones delivering the sounds or messages. However, there are specific concerns which lead the students to mispronounce words. These are stressing individual words incorrectly, mixing short and long vowel sounds, and forgetting to finish words often caused by mother tongue interference, age, personality and attitude, phonetic ability, and exposure (Education, 2021).

In Philippine education, pronunciation is taught at first in elementary and neglected by the students when they enter high school. The basic education curriculum also lacks the inclusion of teaching pronunciation in classroom setting that is why high school teachers, upon realizing that it is still essential, make necessary adjustment to give pronunciation instructions to the learners. Students are required to speak in front of the class; may it be introducing oneself, explaining something, proving an opinion, or gaining exposure to have confidence. Unfortunately, students struggle to stand in front to speak because they are afraid of committing mistakes, being laughed at by their classmates, and even hindering their learning and participation. With this, their knowledge in pronouncing words correctly must be continuous in nature to make the improvements evident. Cole et al. (2022) stated that mispronunciation is not a mistake to be laughed about. This could be a source of change on something which helps for the betterment of the concern. Moreover, this can be as common as it is depending on the person and places a person is in. Speech errors display the characteristics of the speaker delivering the words.

Students who are aspiring to sound as the native speakers of the language they are learning had a hard time achieving natural pronunciation because of their mother-tongue. Teachers and experts must be present to help children where mistakes are still easy to correct from proper placing of tongue and lips to stress and intonation. People who are learning a language attempt to learn by understanding more words, phrase, and sentences to start communicating with native speakers (Toci, 2020). However, there are teachers who do not believe in the value of correct pronunciation and take it less important among grammar skills which resulted to students' errors related with pronunciation. Toci believed that teachers should learn the standard pronunciation to help students lessen the errors. The results showed that errors in pronunciation were mainly because the students give less consideration with the problems in sound production: wrong stress, mispronunciation of words, and combination of

the two. This is why textbooks and teachers play an integral part in improving students' pronunciation.

Teachers revealed that they treat teaching the pronunciation of less importance; not their top priority because they believe that their students are good at it. They explained that grammar is more important than having the skill in pronunciation. The teachers still have the will to teach it; however, some find it difficult to teach. It is the reason why they are contented with students speaking and not paying attention to pronunciation (Madzo, 2019). Patole (2024) enumerated problems in English pronunciation. First on the list is irregular pronunciation which displays words with different sounds such as tough, through, and though. Second, phonetic complexity where sound is unfamiliar to a native speaker (Susanti & Rika, 2023). Third, stress and intonation can lead to confusion if placed incorrectly. Fourth, silent letters where the specific sound of the letter is intentionally not voiced such as k in knight and h in honest. Fifth, regional variations greatly differ from one country's sound to another. Sixth, homophones which consist of words with the same sounds but vary in meaning and spelling such as there, their, and they're. Lastly, the lack of exposure because learning pronunciation needs profound auditory input and practice. Knowing these problems can aid the development of pronunciation and communication. This requires an individual to listen vigorously to native speakers to be exposed to the most appropriate pronunciation of words. It must be followed by regular practice to correct specific sounds, stress, intonation, and articulation with the help of teachers and language experts. Speakers learning the correct pronunciation must be patient and persistent because this skill will require more time to master.

Language will be forever subjected to change. This change is also applicable in pronunciation with grammar and vocabulary because English has irregular spelling-to-sound correspondence. Historical language change caused by social interactions, mishearing, spelling pronunciation, phonetic processes, or influence of other languages. This study supports the idea that no one should be degraded because of their pronunciation because their ways of delivering the lines signify their background and experience (Setter, 2021).

Putri (2020) mentioned that pronunciation, which has sounds or phonemes, is greatly used in speaking and reading and varies depending on the locality, early influences, and social surroundings. Additionally, students were afraid to pronounce words and had difficulties in memorizing sound distribution. In conclusion, the participants had the average score of 16.5, out of 25, which stated that the students' pronunciation ability of lexical items in collocation and phrasal verbs at Senior High School 12 Pekanbaru is under the good category. Students' errors in pronouncing lexical items are in vowels and voiced/voiceless sounds of words which 32 (100%) of students that incorrectly have problem in vowels and voiced/voiceless.

This study sought to address the following objectives: to identify Grade 9 students' mispronounced words and their causes, their level of pronunciation, and the exposure of students to pronunciation. This research also seeks to answer the following questions: (1) What are the mispronounced words? (2) What is the level of pronunciation do respondents have after the observation? (3) Why did students mispronounce words? and (4) How much exposure do the students have in speaking?

Albert Bandura's social learning theory proposed in the 19th century discussed the importance of observation and modeling. These two activities help individuals to learn because people will have direct experiences from watching others' behavior. Bandura's theory requires attention, retention, reproduction, and motivation to turn these practices to a habit. This theory consists of observational learning, punishment-based learning, and reward-based learning. Observational learning happens when a person imitates what he had observed from the other person. Next, punishment-based focuses on giving negative reinforcement for specific behavior to avoid or lessen the occurrences. On the other hand, reward-based learning gives positive reinforcement to encourage the person to continue doing it. Social learning theory also believes in the power of active learning and vicarious learning. Active learning gives a chance for the students to learn by doing, on the other hand, vicarious learning is to learn by observing others. This study focuses on observational learning because the students will observe themselves, their co-respondents, and a recording of moving visual images made digitally. The pronunciation activity will have three trials for retention purposes so the respondents will have a deep awareness of the things they need to learn that they can use in their school requirements. This study will give the students time to learn the words and understand it by doing. They will also have the time to correct their mispronounced words by observing other respondents and watching a video.

Nguyen et al. (2021) explained that

pronunciation requires the collaboration of the speaker and listener to understand the statement being delivered. It enhances the capability of the hearer to decode the content of the material heard and this enhances their listening skills. On the other hand, students who are good in grammar and vocabulary but not in pronunciation will not be understood because words are really crucial in their field. To aid this concern, paraphrasing, self-repetition, writing, and spelling are of use. They used the communicative pronunciation teaching (CPT) model with five stages: (1) Description and analysis; (2) Listening discrimination; (3) Controlled practice; (4) Guided practice; and (5) Communicative practice. As mentioned in the findings, teachers in the secondary schools only focused on grammar and vocabulary which resulted in the students having poor listening skills and speaking skills, specifically pronunciation, which are needed in the tertiary level. It is recommended for tertiary schools to add programs for pronunciation to spread awareness that this is an integral part of mastering listening and speaking skills. It also reiterated that pronunciation should be fully addressed in elementary because English is being taught as well in that level. Mastering pronunciation will lead the students to have communicative engagement towards success for the teachers and learners believed that it is the most essential language skill.

Abdul-Samad and Mahmood (2021) elaborated that learners should give more attention to English pronunciation if they want acquire that skill because it can display their competence in speaking. This study recommended that it is not only the students should focus in learning pronunciations; the teachers should also be given training in pronunciation instructions. The goal of these pronunciation instructions is to commit in accomplishing oral communication and not to make them sounds as a native does. This study recommended three levels to understand acceptable pronunciation. Level 1 is when the speaker's statement cannot be understood by the listeners. This can be caused by stressing a different syllable in a word or sentence. This is the beginning level for pronunciation. In level 2, the speaker's utterances can be understood by people but the speaker's pronunciation is not acceptable to listen to because of the strange and heavy accent. Lastly, level 3 is when people understand the speaker and accept the English statements which are the aim of communication. This means that acceptable pronunciation happens when the speaker delivers sound in a way that the listeners will understand. This is critical for it is one of the main sources of understanding.

Learning correct pronunciation will help in understanding oneself and understanding mother-tongue English speakers; it is, indeed, with the same level of gaining knowledge in grammar. A speaker should know the sounds that characterize a certain language and the sounds which are difficult to deliver and to understand. Foulkes (2024) explained four pronunciation traps to be avoided: silent letters, consonants and intrusive vowel sounds, vowel sounds, and the disappearing R in the standard British English and other accents. Words with silent letters such as Wednesday, know, fruit, half, could, climb, cupboard, and receipt. Words with consonants and intrusive vowel sounds such as equipment (equip-a-ment-a) and apartment (apart-a-ment-a). Words with confusing vowel sounds such as early, mountain, and country. Lastly, words with disappearing R as apparent with British pronunciation such as warmer and girl. Correct pronunciation will be evident once these traps are removed as individual's barriers in delivering sounds.

Megariani et al. (2020) explored the mispronunciation of Indonesian graduate students in their projects. The results showed 26 mistakes in the pronunciation of non-native sound because the graduate students used their nearest native phoneme to replace the sound. Additionally, there were 36 mistakes due to continuous usage of pronunciation regularities from the mother tongue (L1). Lastly, 27 mistakes were evident because the participants used sounds that did suit the words. This proved that mispronunciations were still present and encouraged the graduate students to be conscious of delivering sound for their oral proficiency.

Yowani et al. (2021) explained that students experienced problems in consonant clusters and linking sounds and final sounds due to the difference between the native language and the target language, individual capabilities, and previous learning experiences. These concerns encouraged the teachers to address the factors affecting pronunciation and to incorporate enjoyment in their teaching.

OpenLearn (2024) explained the reasons for teaching pronunciation. It is as important as the four language skills: speaking, reading, writing, and listening. It helps learners to use their ears in listening first before using their mouths to speak; it can also work the other way, where children speak first the words to hear it and acknowledge its correct pronunciation. Children can also give life to the language they are learning for they are using it. Lastly, pronunciation helps in gaining self-esteem. The capability to communicate with

proper pronunciation through listening and speaking is a great help to be understood and be able to understand others.

Andini & Zaitun (2020) believed in the positive effect of Youtube videos in improving the pronunciation of Indonesian high school students. It helps to develop correct pronunciation like native speakers. Being able to access social media platforms easily guides the participants to watch tutorials and search for additional information. It is also suggested for the teachers to include English teaching materials to provide entertaining and conducive classroom.

While mastering speaking fluency can be challenging, studies suggest that engaging with poetry can offer a valuable tool for its development. As Burns (2019) highlighted that effective speaking requires proficiency in areas like vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation; skills that can be honed through the analysis and performance of poems. Additionally, the expressive nature of poetry can help build confidence in learners; another crucial component of fluent speaking. Through analyzing the language, rhythm, and emotional depth of poems, learners can gain a deeper understanding of how to effectively use language to express themselves verbally.

The researchers observed the Grade 9 students' mispronounced words; this helped them seek knowledge to determine the misstated words and analyze their causes. This study focusing on the Grade 9 students' mispronunciation concerns aims to also recommend necessary solutions and practices that would benefit the students, parents, teachers, and future researchers. The students will realize that improving pronunciation is a great skill to master for them to have language competence. The parents will be involved in guiding their children in speaking. This will also make the parents prioritize giving time to their kids because a companion will help a learner to gain skills in speaking. This study will encourage the teachers to add more speaking activities for the students to develop and enhance their pronunciation capabilities. This study can be a guide for future researchers if they want to pursue studies about pronunciation. This can be their references on the importance of having this skill in today's world.

Method

This study used mixed method for the data collection where in the quantitative data will come from direct observation and qualitative information will come from focus group discussion. This is used to let the respondents express their pronunciation and explain answers freely. The study will be conducted in a selected private school in San Jose del Monte, Bulacan. This research focuses on the Grade 9 students' mispronounced words and its causes, level of pronunciation, and the exposure of students in speaking. They will be selected using purposive sampling technique in accordance with their levels in acceptable pronunciation published by Abdul-Samad and Mahmood (2021). All Grade 9 students who are listed in level 1 will be the respondents of this study to help them improve their pronunciation and guide them to be in level 2 after the conduct of the study. Level 1 in pronunciation happens when the student's statement cannot be understood by the listeners. Students in level 2 and 3 will not be included in the sample size to give assistance for level 1 students. This will also be used to give information in the amount of exposure in speaking and importance of having companions while having this task. These respondents do not represent the entire school; however, they are sufficient to achieve the overall goal of this study. The Grade 9 students were chosen because their textbooks lack in giving importance to pronunciation, specifically sounds, stress, and phonemes (Katawazai & Haidari, 2019).

This research will use a poem to be read by the students to identify the mispronounced words. This poem consists of 590 words with different English sounds. After reading, the respondents will be subjected to a focus group discussion to elicit data regarding their exposure in pronunciations and the contribution of their companions in the learning process. The FGD will have five questions and is open for follow-up questions if necessary to gather adequate amount of needed data. While earlier studies have looked into the usage of different media, such as words to pronounce, this study takes a different approach by looking specifically at Trenité's poem *The Chaos* to improve pronunciation. Poetry is more than just words because of its intricate web of rhythm, rhyme, and vivid imagery. Its artistic presentation can fascinate both the head and the heart, influencing the comprehension of language. It may explore a wide range of topics and feelings because of its innate flexibility of expression which makes it a useful and interesting tool for language learning. This poem is notorious for its playful defiance of pronunciation norms. For generations, this has captivated and frustrated readers alike. Words like "corps," "horse," and "worse" morph into unexpected shapes, challenging learners' preconceived notions of how English ought to sound. Additionally, teaching pronunciation with poetry has its own special set of difficulties. The study recognizes these intricacies and queries the precise techniques and

tactics required to harness *The Chaos'* power successfully. The process of engaging with poetry actively engages learners in analyzing and understanding the purpose of various literary devices. This heightened awareness of formal features such as rhyme, rhythm, imagery, and figurative language which fosters the development of stronger language skills tangibly and engagingly. Through exploring and experimenting with the unique language used in poetry, learners gain a deeper understanding of the various linguistic elements that contribute to meaning and expression. In essence, reading and analyzing poetry offers a dynamic platform for students to develop their overall language awareness in a meaningful and beneficial way (Mart, 2021).

Once the participants are secured, the observation will take place. The students will read the poem assigned to them. While pronouncing the words, the researchers will take note of the mispronounced words by the students and show it. The mispronounced words will be classified using Patole's study of English pronunciation problems and will be calculated using the percentage formula:

([P=F/N*100%)
P=percentage
F=frequency of mispronounced words
N=total number of mispronounced words.

After reading, they will watch a video delivering the poem they have. Then, they will read the piece again; this will happen three times. After this, the respondents will be part of the focus group discussion to know the problems encountered in pronouncing the words and their exposure and companions in pronouncing words. The personal information of the respondents and results will only be used for research purposes to maintain the confidentiality of those individuals who participated in this study.

Findings and Discussion

Mispronounced Words

This study utilized Patole's English Pronunciation Problems to classify the mispronounced words of the Level 1 Grade 9 students from selected private school.

Table 1. English Pronunciation Problems by Patole (2024)

Problems	F	% (out of 718)
Irregular pronunciation	241	33.57%
Lack of exposure	152	21.17%
Homophones	110	15.32%
Silent letters	87	12.12%
Phonetic complexity	77	10.72%
Regional variations	28	3.90%
Stress and intonation	23	3.20%
Total	**718**	**100%**

Table 1 displays the percentage of problems in English pronunciation encountered by the students. Irregular pronunciation is the most evident problem in pronouncing words which happened to have 241 mispronunciations out of 718 which is equivalent to 33.57%. It is followed by lack of exposure with 152 mispronunciations (21.17%), homophones with 110 mispronunciations (15.32%), silent letters with 87 mispronunciations (12.12%), phonetic complexity with 77 mispronunciations (10.72%), regional variations with 28 mispronunciations (3.90%), and stress and intonation with 23 mispronunciations (3.20%). Alvarez (2023) explained the importance of pronunciation being the initial impression projected by the speaker to the listener. The native speaker will have a hard time understanding the statements of non-native if they accidentally mispronounce words due to poor knowledge of correct pronunciation. On the other hand, students who are confident in pronouncing the words tend to be more comfortable in conversing with other people.

Table 2. Mispronunciation due to Irregular pronunciation

Mispronounced words	F	% (out of 718)
aisles	9	1.25%
exiles	6	0.84%
measles	5	0.70%
reviles	6	0.84%
similes	8	1.11%
topsails	2	0.28%
billet	7	0.97%
chalet	7	0.97%
mallet	4	0.56%
bleak	6	0.84%
steak	4	0.56%
streak	6	0.84%
bouquet	2	0.28%
croquet	7	0.97%
chaise	6	0.84%
chaos	2	0.28%
chalice	6	0.84%
lice	4	0.56%
dough	2	0.28%
hiccough	9	1.25%
plough	9	1.25%
though	5	0.70%
through	2	0.28%
efface	2	0.28%
preface	8	1.11%
solace	7	0.97%
foliage	4	0.56%
mirage	7	0.97%
gauge	8	1.11%
gauze	8	1.11%

gouge	9	1.25%
hyphen	9	1.25%
Stephen	2	0.28%
indict	9	1.25%
verdict	6	0.84%
phlegm	2	0.28%
phlegmatic	1	0.14%
scour	6	0.84%
scourging	2	0.28%
succour	9	1.25%
disciple	5	0.70%
mauve	8	1.11%
mould	5	0.70%
Total	**241**	**33.57%**

Table 2 enumerates the words with irregular pronunciation based on the explanation of Grade 9 students. Students got confused with the pronunciation of words ending in –les, specifically aisles, exiles, measles, reviles, similes, with topsails. Also, words with –let at the end of the word such as billet, chalet, and mallet. Likewise, the sound of –eak in bleak, steak, and streak; –quet in bouquet and croquet cause; ch in chaise and chaos; and –ice in chalice and lice. Students mispronounced the words dough, hiccough, plough, though, and through because of the confusing sound of –ough. Correspondingly, the students misstated the sounds of –ace in efface, preface, and solace; –age in foliage and mirage; –au and –ou gauge, gauze, gouge, mauve, and mould; –phen in hyphen and Stephen; –dict in indict and verdict; –legm in phlegm and phlegmatic; –our in scour, scourging, and succour; and –sci in disciple.

Table 3. Mispronunciation due to Lack of Exposure

Mispronounced words	F	% (out of 718)
abyss	7	0.97%
aerie	7	0.97%
ague	9	1.25%
anemone	9	1.25%
cloven	7	0.97%
constable	4	0.56%
crevice	6	0.84%
dost	4	0.56%
doth	7	0.97%
Gertrude	4	0.56%
gunwale	6	0.84%
joust	8	1.11%
lichen	9	1.25%
loth	2	0.28%
Melpomene	7	0.97%
mica	6	0.84%
nob	2	0.28%
privy	5	0.70%
sieve	4	0.56%
skein	2	0.28%
spikey	2	0.28%
stout	2	0.28%
stowed	6	0.84%
strewn	6	0.84%
Terpsichore	9	1.25%
trickery	2	0.28%
vicar	6	0.84%
viscous	4	0.56%

Total	**152**	**21.17%**

Table 3 shows the mispronounced words due to lack of exposure to the students. The students mispronounced ague, anemone, lichen, and Terpsichore nine times during the three trials. Eight times for the word joust; seven times for the words abyss, aerie, cloven, doth, and Melpomene; six times for crevice, gunwale, mica, stowed, strewn, and vicar; five times for the word privy; four times for constable, dost, Gertrude, sieve, and viscous; and two times for the words loth, nob, skein, spikey, stout, and trickery.

Table 4. Mispronunciation due to Homophones

Mispronounced words	F	% (out of 718)
ally	2	0.28%
aye	7	0.97%
whey	2	0.28%
ye	6	0.84%
yea	8	1.11%
busy	6	0.84%
dizzy	2	0.28%
clamour	6	0.84%
clangour	7	0.97%
devour	7	0.97%
enamour	4	0.56%
deafer	6	0.84%
feoffer	6	0.84%
heifer	6	0.84%
zephyr	9	1.25%
sword	6	0.84%
sward	6	0.84%
tear	6	0.84%
tear (in eye)	8	1.11%
Total	**110**	**15.32%**

Table 4 displays words with homophonic features that cause mispronunciation. Students mispronounced the words ally, aye, whey, ye, and yea because of the –y, –ey, and –ye sounds. Students interchanged the pronunciation of –sy and –zy in the words busy and dizzy. Also, students mispronounced words with –our such as clamour, clangour, devour, and enamour; –fer and –phyr in deafer, feoffer, heifer, and zephyr; –swo and –swa in sword and sward; lastly, tear in eye and tear which is other term for rip.

Table 5. Mispronunciation due to Silent Letters

Mispronounced words	F	% (out of 718)
corps	8	1.11%
corpse	6	0.84%
differences	2	0.28%
isle	7	0.97%
Islington	9	1.25%
leopard	4	0.56%
plaque	6	0.84%
prayer	6	0.84%
Psalm	6	0.84%
Psyche	9	1.25%
receipt	9	1.25%
victual	7	0.97%
viscount	8	1.11%
Total	**87**	**12.12%**

Table 5 presents words that were mispronounced due to silent letters. Corpse, differences, leopard, and prayer were

mispronounced because of the letter e which should be silent. Also, the letter s in isle and Islington should not be voiced; the sound of ue in plaque; c in victual; and s in viscount.

Table 6. Mispronunciation due to Phonetic Complexity

Mispronounced words	F	% (out of 718)
beard	4	0.56%
bosom	5	0.70%
Britain	9	1.25%
conscience	2	0.28%
haunt	5	0.70%
leisure	7	0.97%
linger	2	0.28%
moustache	7	0.97%
plague	7	0.97%
plait	7	0.97%
query	4	0.56%
script	3	0.42%
tomb	5	0.70%
typhoid	4	0.56%
worse	6	0.84%
Total	**77**	**10.72%**

Table 6 indicates the words mispronounced due to phonetic complexity. Britain was mispronounced nine times. Also, leisure, moustache, plague, and plait were misstated seven times. Consequently, worse was mispronounced six times and bosom, haunt, and tomb for five times. Likewise, beard, query, and typhoid were mispronounced four times; script for three times; and conscience and linger for two times.

Table 7. Mispronunciation due to Regional Variations

Mispronounced words	F	% (out of 718)
dandelion	7	0.97%
ere	2	0.28%
laurel	4	0.56%
malaria	4	0.56%
neither	2	0.28%
southern	9	1.25%
Total	**28**	**3.90%**

Table 7 indicates the mispronounced words due to regional variations. In the Philippines, Tagalog has strong sound on letters. In the word dandelion /ˈdan-də-ˌlī-ən/, students mispronounced it like /dan-de-li-yon/. Next, ere – /er/ in English, /ere/ in Filipino which is the Filipino term for air. The word laurel /ˈlȯr-əl/ is mispronounced as /law-rel/ which is a kind of leaf; malaria /mə-ˈler-ē-ə/ as /ma-la-rēya/; neither /ˈnē-thər/ or /ˈnī-thər/ as /nē-ter/; lastly, southern /ˈsə-thərn/ as /saw-thərn.

Table 8. Mispronunciation due to Stress and Intonation

Mispronounced words	F	% (out of 718)
creation	6	0.84%
creature	9	1.25%
heron	2	0.28%
pronunciation	2	0.28%
Turk	2	0.28%
turpentine	2	0.28%
Total	**23**	**3.20%**

Table 8 reveals the mispronounced words because of stress and intonation given by the students. Creation should be read like this /krē-ˈā-shən/; however, the students mispronounced it as /ˈkrē-ā-shən/. Then, creature /ˈkrē-chər/ as /krē-ˈā-chər/. Next, heron /ˈher-ən/ as /ˈhēr-ən/. Followed by, pronunciation /prə-ˌnən(t)-sē-ˈā-shən/ as /prə-ˈnən(t)-sē-ā-shən/. Second to the last is Turk /ˈtərk/ as /ˈturk/. Lastly, Turpentine /ˈtər-pən-ˌtīn/ as /tər-ˈpən-ˌtēn/.

Students are comfortable in pronouncing words in front of their classmates and teachers because they know that they will be corrected right away. One respondent explained that he was able to pronounce the complete sounds of the words when pronouncing it loudly compare with reading it silently. Additionally, they are exposed in pronunciation in school because their English and Araling Panlipunan teachers required them to read and speak one by one during classes. This is simply by reading a certain slide to the class and explaining it to their classmates before their teachers gave the explanation. One respondent said that his English teacher requires them to read literature and share their learning in the class. Another respondent explained that their Filipino teacher will ask them to read a paragraph aloud and answer some comprehension questions. One respondent also explained that if they encounter unfamiliar words, their friends are willing to correct their misunderstanding and mispronunciation. One respondent said that he is grateful for the efforts of his teachers to guide them in pronouncing words even though they know that it is hard to teach them one by one.

Teachers should continue guiding the students in pronouncing words correctly to prepare the learners in presenting themselves using the words they learned from speaking activities. Oxford University Press (2022) offered ways to have effective teaching and learning of pronunciation. It is a must for instructors to educate their learners on the importance of pronunciation because it will help them to trace their improvement and be confident in communicating with other people. Also, learning pronunciation should be integrated with speaking, listening, and vocabulary. With speaking, pronunciation is present when delivering the sounds of letters. With listening, it helps the learners to differentiate the words under the category of homophones. With vocabulary, this shows the combination of speaking and listening in terms of giving vocabulary instruction that is essential in achieving the learning targets. Lastly,

incorporate technology to improve the teaching of pronunciation. Teachers must be able to identify the platforms that can help their students to learn the skill of delivering the words correctly.

One student hoped for his parents to be as supportive as his teachers in speaking activities. He explained that at home, his parents are busy with their work and do not have enough time to have conversation with them. Another respondent explained that he is taking care of his younger siblings at home and correcting pronunciation by him would be difficult. PlanetSpark (2020) gave seven ways to deal with mispronunciation to help children overcome speech problems. Parents' pronunciation is important for it will be the sound that their children will acquire. It is also essential for them to correct the mispronunciation of the kids if necessary because it may affect the academic performance of the students.

Mispronouncing words may result to poor communication and decline in speaking tasks. To aid this, first, parents should provide standards in pronunciation. They can use the mispronounced words of the children or the people around them. Second, they should tell it nicely to show gentle instructions. Third and fourth, it is important as well to ask them to monitor their mistakes and repeat the correct pronunciation many times. Fifth, the parents should help their children to be aware and memorize the overlapping sounds and language dynamics. Sixth, include games and rewards while learning pronunciation. Lastly, parents should teach children one element at a time to make the children's mastery of the sounds.

As the results were obtained after the observation of pronunciation for three trials, two respondents were able to move on level 2 and one respondent successfully classified in level 3. This means that enough speaking activities will help the students improve their pronunciation and be comfortable in pronouncing words in front of other people.

Conclusion

The researchers found that the Grade 9 students had difficulties in pronouncing words correctly because of irregular pronunciation of the words, lack of exposure, homophones, silent letters, phonetic complexity, regional variations, and stress and intonation. Words in irregular pronunciation such as dough, hiccough, plough, though, and through confused the students. Also, students experienced lack of exposure in words like ague, anemone, lichen, and Terpsichore and words under homophones, for example, tear (rip) and tear (in eye). Silent letters in words such as isle and Islington tricked the students to mispronounce it. Phonetic complexity happened to puzzle the students in pronouncing words like leisure, moustache, plague, and plait. Regional variations also affect the pronunciation of laurel /ˈlȯr-əl/ to /law-rel/. Lastly, the students misplaced the stress and intonation for the word creature /ˈkrē-chər/ as /krē-ˈā-chər/ which resulted to mispronunciation.

Additionally, the more exposure the students have in pronunciation activities, the more improvement they will accomplish through the help of their classmates and teachers. It can start from reading the teachers' PowerPoint presentation slides loudly to explaining their understanding on the literature they read. The students from level 1 in acceptable pronunciation were able to improve their levels; two students are now in level 2 and one respondent is now in level 3. These results showed the greater impact of speaking tasks for the learners to improve their pronunciation.

In the light of the findings of this study, the researchers recommend to integrate regular speaking activities in classrooms, incorporating both individual practice and opportunities for peer feedback in a supportive environment; focusing on commonly mispronounced words during speaking lessons and providing clear pronunciation models for students; encourage students to engage in leisure speaking, even for shorter periods, to improve overall oral fluency and pronunciation; and for future researchers to explore the effectiveness of specific pronunciation teaching methods for students at different proficiency levels and record the pronunciation activities of the respondents to be able to transcribe their mispronunciation.

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