

How Simple Mind Mapping Can Enhance Young Learners' Pronunciation Ability

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How Simple Mind Mapping Can Enhance Young Learners' Pronunciation Ability

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Abstract:

Learning process varies in many ways. Both teachers and learners are keenly aware that graphic organizers can and should be used to enhance the quality of language learning. One of them uses an influenced tool of graphic organizers, *i.e.* mind mapping. Evidence shows that mind mapping can facilitate the various learning processes. Mind mapping can be helpful for young learners' English language success, especially in developing their pronunciation ability. These young learners are Indonesian elementary learners who are mentioned as learners with good achievements in all subjects. They are differed from the regular classes by trained using English for all subjects once in a week. Two broad criteria will be suggested in this presentation. First, the learners are introduced how mind mapping is affordable and easily made. Secondly, the selection of pronunciation topics should be based on sound principles of language learning derived from TEYL research; *i.e.* syllables and two-vowel words. Having these values, therefore, this article will illustrate how relatively simple mind mapping can be helpful used to enhance the young learners' pronunciation ability.

Keywords: Mind Mapping, Teaching English to Young Learners (TEYL), Pronunciation Ability

Introduction

Teaching pronunciation is simple, straightforward, and interactive. The earliest part of teaching it always focuses first on sounds. Expending time on learning phonemes at the beginning will succeed learners later when they are improving their pronunciation of challenging vocabulary. Once the learners have mastered the essential phonemes, both the long and short vowels, they will be ready to move on to word-level pronunciation practice. On one occasion, the learners start learning multiple syllable words, it is definite to teach them how to count syllables, how to read pronunciation

notations in dictionaries (the stressed ones), and how to practice pronunciation at the level of words.

There is a need for teaching one area of language acquisition, i.e. English pronunciation, specifically in the area of phonology and phonetics to entirely grasp how native-like accents are accomplished in Second Language Acquisition (SLA).

¹ Phonological awareness is essentially how the language acquirer learns to identify and understand the system and patterns of speech sounds (Nilsson, 2011). ¹ In contrast to phonological awareness, phonetical awareness is learning to understand the physical sounds or articulatory structures of the L2-second language (Yule 2006: 30, 43-44).

In order to avoid the problems of “hardened accents”, introducing pronunciation ¹ from the first week of language learning ¹ instruction for L2 learners is required. It offers ¹ them support and help to avoid errors in their oral language acquisition. ¹ School curriculums and course planners do not include classroom tasks in pronunciation for beginners in English; however, progressively ¹ introduce it at higher levels of language acquisition (Baker, 1982). Pronunciation ¹ is often ¹ disregarded ¹ in the classroom at beginner level of SLA.

Teaching English to Young Learners (TEYL): Pronunciation

³ There is a typical judgement ³ that children should learn alphabets first and then ³ pronunciation but it should be practiced from childhood. It is easy to imitate ³ in the childhood. In ³ the childhood, the ³ organs are in the process of adjusting to pronunciation and they can pronounce whatever they hear (Nourin, 2012). She states that ³ childhood is ³ the best time for learning a foreign language. It is not to achieve a perfect imitation of a

native accent, but simply to get the learners to pronounce accurately enough to be easily and comfortably comprehensible to other speakers.

Teaching phonetics to learners, Hom (1957) comments, depends on the way of giving instruction. Learners who have been taught to relate sounds and written symbols can arrive logically at the spelling of most words that they can pronounce. The capacity to spell words can be improved further through phonetic instruction, and phonetics is a great solution for reading difficulties. In relation to increasing young learners' vocabulary knowledge, the greater correspondence of orthography to phonetic deep structure can be used in teaching spelling.

Teaching pronunciation to young learners should be easily and fun. The limitation of young learners is learners between ages 10 to 12. These young learners ages begin to be logical and analytical, have greater control of emotionl ambivalence, can work with others and learn from others, are enthusiastic and positive about learning, and like to experiment with the language. Having these characteristics, there are activities or exercises in teaching pronunciation to young learners such as 'Words are not enough', "Total Physical Response (TPR)", "Keep their hands busy!", "Enjoyment", "Motivation", and "Cooperation". Hence, teaching pronunciation on counting syllables and two-vowel words using games can improve the young learners' motivation in learning English. In order to develop their concentration, cooperation, and enjoyment of learning English pronunciation, the games will use an interactive tool called mind mapping.

Mind Mapping

A mind mapping is a tool that makes thinking become visible; a thought organizer that works in accordance with the brain work mechanism; a system to save and retrieve data to and/or from the brain; and, a note that is fast and easy to be made and remembered. ² As a visual diagram used to record and organize information in a human's brain, mind mapping finds it captivating and easy to process (Team of Buzan Licensed Instructors, 2009). Thoughts, ideas or facts are laid out around a central theme so that we can clearly see their flows in different levels which lesser categories are portrayed as branches of larger branches.

² Mind mapping has four (4) important characteristics: Central Image (CI), Basic Ordering Ideas (BOIs), Branches, and Sub-Branches (Buzan, 2007). The big topic of our attention is mentioned as central image which consisting words and images. The main ideas that radiate out from the central theme of a mind mapping are known as Basic Order Ideas (BOIs). These primary concepts are responsible for shaping and guiding the process of association by setting the basic framework and hierarchy from which ideas can be extended. The BOIs are clockwise-starting from right and circling to the left. We are easily to imagine or describe them. ² The branches consist of keywords, images, symbols, and/or a code which is written on the associated line. The last is sub-branches. ² The supporting ideas are placed as sub-branches.

⁴ Mind mapping involves a combination of keywords and images, and Buzan (2007) encourages the use of at least three colours, symbols, and codes to highlight or signify ideas. The main approach in the making of a mind map is to begin in the centre of the page with a keyword representing a concept. From this keyword a central line spreads out, links to another word associated with the starting concept word. From this

central line, thinner lines send out radial shoots. Each radial is connected to an off-shoot idea (Neville, 2006: 16). Mind mapping is drawn as follows:



Figure 1. Mind Mapping taken from Nevil, 2006: 16

The laws of mind mapping are the using of paper, lines, words, image and colour to help us visualize the interconnected information. To design a mind mapping, the first law is that we have to use a blank paper which is in a landscape and then the writing should be started in the middle or in the center. For the second one is about the lines. They should be thick lines for BOIs and thin ones for the sub-branches. The lines should be connected and length enough for the places of a word and an image. The third law is about words. It is the rule for placing one word per line, using key word, and it is printed capital for BOIs and small one for the sub-branches. The fourth law is about image. The image used can be 3D, symbols, and strong because it is placed in the

middle of the word. And the last law of a mind mapping is about colour. It is suggested to use more than three colours and supported with code and categories so that it will be eye-catching.



Figure 2. Example of BOIs

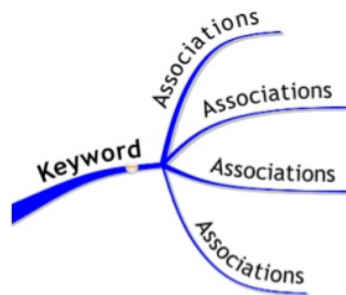


Figure 3. A keyword triggers numerous associations

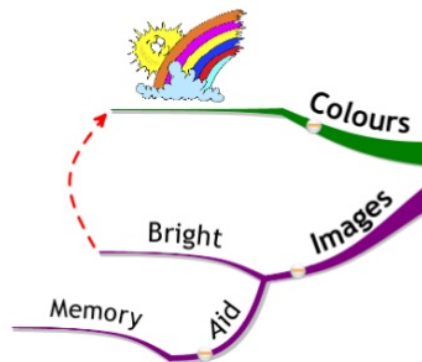


Figure 4. Making a connection across the map with a relationship arrow

Simple Mind Mapping in Teaching Pronunciation

a) Counting Syllables

What is called by simple mind mapping is that a mind mapping which is drawn simple, straightforward, and interactive because of its colour and images/symbols. The learners just write the title of the lesson, for instance “Counting Syllables” in the center of a blank landscape paper. Then, every syllable is described as a main branch. If there are one (1) to four (4) syllables of words assigned; thus, there are four (4) main branches drawn in the learner’s mind mapping. Then, every main branch which is written how many syllable are, is followed by some sub-branches to portray the examples of words which contains of the syllable mentioned on the main branch. For example, if the main branch is written “1 syllable”, so the sub-branches consist of “Car”, “Book”, “Brain”, etc. It happens too for the other syllables. This learning technique is helpful the young learners to enhance their English pronunciation in counting syllables.

For the games in counting syllables using mind mapping, the young learners are given example for the syllables are asked. In the activity below, the young learners are given already four (4) kinds of syllables which are asked to be continued by finding and writing down on the sub-branches which words (later will be given) are signed to the right sub-branches.



Figure 5. Counting Syllables Using Mind Mapping.

Here are the words to be filled up on the sub-branches:

- | | |
|---------------|------------------|
| 1. Calculator | 16. Telephone |
| 2. Photograph | 17. Population |
| 3. Cheese | 18. Green |
| 4. Invitation | 19. Football |
| 5. Jeans | 20. Cinema |
| 6. Understand | 21. Fruit |
| 7. Yellow | 22. Morning |
| 8. Aeroplane | 23. Elephant |
| 9. Night | 24. Bottles |
| 10. Little | 25. Shoes |
| 11. Trousers | 26. Intelligent |
| 12. Bird | 27. Eight |
| 13. Newspaper | 28. Remember |
| 14. Mouth | 29. School |
| 15. Airport | 30. Conversation |

b) Two-Vowel Words

The learners are taught about two-vowel words which is about the sound of “ea”. The words with ‘ea’ can have five (5) sounds, e.g.:

/i:/ → beat

/e/ → bread

/eə/ → bear

/iə/ → dear

/ei/ → break

The young learners write the title of the lesson with “Two-Vowel Words” in the center of a blank landscape paper. Then, every syllable is described as a main branch. If there are one (1) to five (5) sounds of words assigned; thus, there are five (5) main branches drawn in the learner’s mind mapping. Then, every main branch which is written how many sounds are, is followed by some sub-branches to portray the examples of words which contains of the sound mentioned on the main branch. For example, if the main branch is written “/i:/”, so the sub-branches consist of “Beat”, “Meat”, “Cheat”, etc. It happens too for the other sounds. This learning technique is helpful the young learners to enhance their English pronunciation in two-vowel words.

For the games in two-vowel words using mind mapping, the young learners are given example for the sounds are asked. In the activity below, the young learners are given already five (5) kinds of sounds which are asked to be continued by finding and writing down on the sub-branches which words (later will be given) are signed to the right sub-branches.

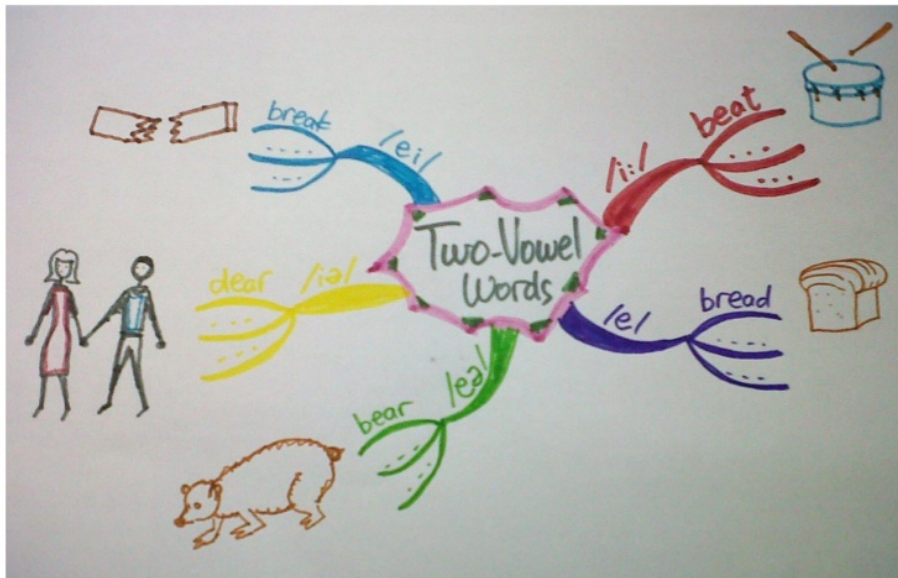
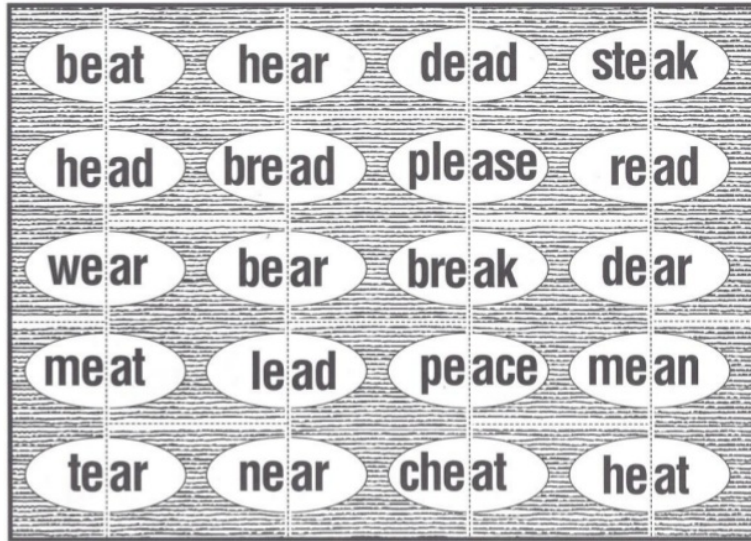


Figure 6. Two-Vowel Words Using Mind Mapping.

Here are the words jigsaw to be filled up on the sub-branches:



Conclusion

Young learners enjoy playing with language. When pronunciation of English is taught interestingly since the beginning, the learners will find English as an incredible language to be mastered.

In conclusion, mind mapping is a creative tool that helps learners learn and explore more in pronunciation skill processes. Learners are trained and taught to be familiar in employing mind mapping. It could help them think critically and the knowledge itself could lead to the neatness of organizing and writing. This technique could enhance the learning process of learners and so lecturers or teachers.

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