
Rationale

The unit plan is designed for S1 students to acquire correct pronunciation of -ed ending and CV and VV linking. To cater for the practical restriction that teachers in school may not be able to spend a whole unit focusing on pronunciation teaching, the lessons plan in this unit does not refer to a single reading passage. This design allows more flexibility for teacher to use the materials. Teachers can extract a lesson and make modifications accordingly to let it fit in their own teaching plan. For example, teacher can embed the lesson of teaching alternations of -ed ending pronunciation in the chapter with past tense as the main grammar focus, which is a must-taught topic in junior secondary school.

Although each lesson can be taught separately, the unit plan still follows a logical sequence which aims to connect students' prior knowledge with new knowledge, given that the previously learnt language skills are the building blocks for the next. The three pronunciation items chosen to be taught in this unit all together improve student's oral fluency and intelligibility.

Pronunciation items chosen

There are six lessons in this unit. The first two lessons focus on the three alternations of -ed ending. Grammar accuracy is often emphasised in Asian context. Many students are able to use past tense correctly but not to pronounce correctly. According to the data collected from the pronunciation corpus developed by Chen and Chan (2018), only 2 out of 20 Hong Kong speakers show awareness to all three alternations of -ed ending, while, still, their accuracy is inconsistent. One reason for students' inability to produce the different pronunciations of -ed ending is the lack of proper pronunciation learning in school. Teachers may think that pronunciation teaching, especially for segmental items, requires acquisition of phonics, which is usually not compulsory in the curriculum and is often considered to be too time-consuming and difficult to teach at school. Pronunciation of -ed ending can actually be taught with only very basic understanding of phonics, i.e. ability to distinguish vowels and consonants. Most students, in fact, have already learnt such topic in primary school when learning the use of indefinite articles, "a" and "an", in primary school. It is simple enough for students to learn in secondary education even if they have not learnt such concept before. It is

possible for students to achieve correct pronunciation of -ed ending without necessarily learning IPA or transcription.

Teaching of CV and VV linking is arranged after that of -ed ending in lesson 3 and 4. It is because they both require the ability to distinguish between vowels and consonants. Students can, on one hand, revise the concept of vowels and consonants and, on the other hand, do the linking between the regular past participle and the word comes afterwards.

Use of tasks and materials

The tasks and materials chosen in this unit follow the context-based approach, of which the topic and activity are highly related to students' daily life (CDC, 2004). For example, the activity of recording narration for Mr. Bean's animation relates to students' daily entertainment, which triggers them to participate, and encourages students' correct pronunciation of -ed ending in a natural manner. Singing song used in TV commercial to practice linking can raise students' awareness to the use of English in daily life. The production of a "Youtuber video", which is popular among adolescents, sharing an unforgettable experience of their own relates to students' past experience and their daily entertainment as well. The connectedness between the learning task and past experience, especially for those aligning with strong emotions, can effectively enhance learners' memorisation and learning of knowledge (Immordino-Yang & Faeth, 2010).

The final product of producing a "youtuber video" not only enhances students' learning motivation, it also provides an authentic and essential purpose for the writing task. The recount serves as a script with which students have to read and practise repeatedly so as to present themselves naturally in front of the camera. Moreover, when students are taking the responsibility to present themselves to the others, they will be more careful when thinking of what they would like to share and which part of the experience others will find the most interesting. Their content of their writing will then be more fruitful.

Furthermore, the creation of a video channel will hopefully attract students to do listening practice on their own outside classroom. Even though students stay together in the class for a long time at school, it is common that there are classmates they are not familiar with. Even for close friends, it is not necessary that they know everything about each other. If

they want to know about others' stories, they will watch the videos. As a result, their listening skills can then be improved through self-practice.

References:

1. Curriculum Development Council. (2004). *CDC English Language Curriculum Guide (Primary 1-6)*. HKSAR: Education and Manpower Bureau.
2. Chen, H. C., & Chan, K. Y. (2018). *The Spoken English Corpus of Chinese and Non-Chinese Learners in Hong Kong*. The Education University of Hong Kong. Retrieved from https://corpus.eduhk.hk/english_pronunciation/index.php/our-spoken-english/
3. Immordino-Yang, M. H., & Faeth, M. (2010). The role of emotion and skilled intuition in learning. In Sousa, D. A. (Eds.), *Mind, Brain, & Education: Neuroscience Implications for the Classroom*, pp. 67-81. Bloomington: Solution Tree.