
English Pronunciation – The Consonant Sound /l/

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Rationale

This lesson plan focuses on teaching students the articulation of the lateral approximant /l/ by using the recordings from Spoken English Corpus of Chinese and Non-Chinese Learners in Hong Kong (https://corpus.eduhk.hk/english_pronunciation/index.php/our-spoken-english/), a phonetically annotated learner corpus developed by Dr. Chen, Hsueh Chu, Rebecca and her research team in the Education University of Hong Kong. The articulation of consonant sound /l/ is easily made errors by learners. Among the existing 59 sets of recordings of Passage Two “The Boy Who Cried Wolf” in the corpus up to April 21st, 26 participants substitute the consonant /l/ with other sounds; and 56 participants omit the consonant /l/. Accordingly, in this lesson plan, the recording referred to as HK 05 (http://phonetics2.eduhk.hk/#/passage_two?id=6&feature=2-74-76) is selected since the participant made both kinds of mistakes including substitution (such as flocks-/frɒks/) and omission (plan-/pæn/) in terms of the consonant sound /l/. By analyzing the recording, students can raise their awareness of the consonant sound /l/. The Test-Teach-Test method is adopted in this lesson. First, students are guided to do peer check by reading the passage and reflect on their own pronunciation. Teacher, then through a video and in a learner-friendly way, instructs students how to pronounce the light /l/ and dark /l/ correctly. Finally, students are provided with some exercises to consolidate their learning.

It is reasonable to assume that students may have difficulty pronouncing the dark /l/ since its mispronunciation is quite common both in class and in the corpus. Thus, in order to help students do more practice, another short story entitled “three little pigs” which is available on Youtube (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2s7cz6p7jew>) is

used because it shares some similarities and differences with the passage “The Boy Who Cried Wolf”. Both include many words with /l/ sound and share the same topic “The wolf is coming”, but the endings and moral lessons behind them are different. With well-designed and organized activities, students master the correct pronunciation in an interesting way. In this lesson, there exist different patterns of classroom interaction, such as whole-class work, group work, pair work, and individual work, which improves students’ collaborative learning, discovery learning and independent thinking. Additionally, four skills are effectively integrated into activities, such as listening to two stories, reading the minimal pairs and sentences, speaking by story retelling, matching & sequencing and group discussion as well as writing by filling in the blanks and tables.