INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF MULTIDISCIPLINARY: APPLIED BUSINESS AND EDUCATION RESEARCH
2024, Vol. 5, No. 2, 423 – 438
http://dx.doi.org/10.11594/ijmaber.05.02.05

Research Article

Teacher-Mediated Pronunciation Instruction: Its Effects on Enhancing the Oral Language Fluency of Seventh-Grade English Students

Jason S. Barrun[1]*, Jonald B. Sia[2]

[1]Schools Division Office of Masbate, Masbate City, 5400 Philippines
[2]Osmeña Colleges, Masbate City, 5400 Philippines

Article history:
Submission November 2023
Revised February 2024
Accepted February 2024

**Corresponding author:*
E-mail:
jason.barrun@deped.gov.pgh

ABSTRACT

This study investigated the effects of teacher-mediated pronunciation instruction on enhancing the oral language fluency of seventh-grade English students. Using a quasi-experimental pretest-posttest non-equivalent groups design, 32 learners served as respondents of the thirteen-session- study in a secondary school in Southern Luzon, Philippines. The student-respondents were tested to find out whether there would be a significant difference in their knowledge and application of the segmentals and suprasegmentals before and after the implementation of the said intervention.

In all the instruments, namely the dictation test, pronunciation achievement test, and aural-oral achievement test, the findings revealed that the experimental group performed significantly higher than the control group. Through the independent sample t-test and Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA), the results revealed that the experimental group had higher mean scores than the control group with t-computed values exceeding the tabular values affirming that an explicit pronunciation instruction is better in enhancing the oral language fluency of students than only incidental acquisition. The more the learners are exposed to an intervention, the more that they will become intelligible. Other effects also include the more frequently that the teacher conducts various games, the more that the students enjoy and learn pronunciation; and the more refined a learner's pronunciation skill is, the more improved he/she is when it comes to listening comprehension and spelling. Finally, it is recommended that more and newer interventions regarding second language phonology or any content that focuses on speaking as a macro-strand in English should be delved into.

Keywords: *Intelligibility, Oral language fluency, Teacher-mediated pronunciation instruction*

How to cite:
Barrun, J. S. & Sia, J. B. (2024). Teacher-Mediated Pronunciation Instruction: Its Effects on Enhancing the Oral Language Fluency of Seventh-Grade English Students. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary: Applied Business and Education Research*. *5*(2), 423 – 438. doi: 10.11594/ijmaber.05.02.05

Introduction

At present, speaking the English language represents one of the essential requirements of today´s society. Besides other skills and knowledge, it is considered one of the most influencing factors for a student to keep abreast with an educated society in which he thrives. However, a student's good command of the language can be hindered by how he/she is intelligible with his/her pronunciation. Being able to maintain a fluent conversation in the classroom can mirror the importance of speaking skills in real-life situations.

Producing spoken language has often meant a difficulty and an obstacle for English learners. In the spoken language, students are required to be aware of the meaning and accuracy of their statements. Nevertheless, speaking in a foreign language has often been viewed as the most demanding of the four skills. Harmer 1995, 16 (2001) states that "while listening and reading involve the ability to correctly receive messages and are therefore referred to as receptive skills, speaking and writing, on the other hand, involve language production and are referred to as productive skills.

But even before students can speak fluently conversational English, they need to undergo the complex spelling and sound system of the English language being second language learners hence this is where pronunciation appears to be of importance.

Pronunciation is one of the most important parts of learning a second language, Pennington (1996); thus, speaking skills play a major role in acquiring and using a language, Dan (2006). Dan claims that language competence covers many aspects. Theoretically and practically, phonetics sets up the basis of speaking above all other aspects of language, and pronunciation is the base of speaking. Correct pronunciation may lead to easier, more relaxed, and more useful communication.

Morley (1991) stated that understandable pronunciation is the main objective of pronunciation instruction. It is a necessary component of communicative competence. Furthermore, he emphasized that learners should develop functional intelligibility, functional communicability, increased self-confidence, speech monitoring abilities, and speech modification strategies.

However, pronunciation is always believed to be a difficult area for both teachers and learners of English. Like listening, pronunciation is also partially ignored in language teaching as they pay more attention to reading and writing, for the purpose of succeeding in the examination in societies that are very much focused on these skills. However, it seems somehow insignificant to study a foreign language if one does not converse in that language with other speakers of it and in order to achieve that, one must learn how to pronounce it in an intelligible way for a variety of English listeners. Understandable pronunciation is one of the basic requirements of learners' competence and it is also one of the most important features of language instruction. Good pronunciation leads to learning while bad pronunciation promotes great difficulties in language learning. Pourhosein Gilakjani (2012).

According to Yates and Zielinski (2009), much attention to English pronunciation indicates that pronunciation has a key role in learning English. If teachers don't present the general rules and principles toward comprehensible pronunciation to their EFL learners, nobody will certainly do it. This is the responsibility of EFL teachers to do this by teaching the new sounds, words, sentences, and phrases and arranging appropriate materials for understandable pronunciation in their EFL classes. EFL teachers should explore new ways of indicating, practicing, and giving feedback on English pronunciation that are appropriate for learners to learn English pronunciation easily and effectively.

Harmer (2001) emphasized that the main aim of teaching and learning in any language is to enable students to communicate in the target language and if this is the case, communication is an important term to explain. Communication means to understand and be understood. Many learners think that because they can talk to their teachers and other students, they can easily communicate in English. But they make a big mistake. Morley (1991) stated that understandable and intelligible pronunciation is the main objective of pronunciation instruction. It

is a necessary component of communicative competence and without having perfect pronunciation skills learners would not be able to communicate effectively. Scovel (1988) called it comfortable intelligibility and it should be the aim of English pronunciation.

At the time of writing this paper, the insights gathered from the mentioned related literature and studies revealed similarities and relatedness to the present study. However, upon analysis of the cited writings and upon consideration of the teacher on the instructional materials that he used and the crafted flow of instruction that he has devised, none has been done as to the procedures applied by the researcher. Hence, this study aimed to determine the effects of teacher-mediated pronunciation instruction on enhancing the oral language fluency of seventh-grade English students.

Specifically, it investigated how pronunciation instruction can enhance the students' oral language fluency specifically stating its effects on other skills of the students. Furthermore, the present study leads to an intervention that will be an innovation in the field of teaching English specifically when it comes to teaching pronunciation.

Methods

Research Design

The study employed a quasi-experimental pretest-post-nonequivalent groups design to determine the effects of teacher-mediated pronunciation instruction compared to incidental acquisition on learning pronunciation. The independent variable (the teacher-mediated pronunciation instruction) was under investigation to know the effects on the dependent variable (acquisition and learning of pronunciation). The research also used qualitative design to gain an understanding of the underlying reasons or opinions using a method like focus group discussions and reflective journal entries as discussed in Table 1.

Table 1. Description of the Research Variables and Sources of Data

Independent Variable: Teacher-Mediated Pronunciation Instruction		
	Experimental Group: Teacher-mediated Pronunciation Instruction (Intervention)	**Control Group: Incidental Acquisition (Non-Intervention)**
Dependent Variable: Acquisition and Learning of English Sounds and Suprasegmentals	3 Main Instruments: • Pronunciation Dictation Test/Pretest and Posttest • Pronunciation Achievement Test/Pretest and Posttest • Post Evaluation Oral-Aural Test Formative Assessments • 10-item test • Student's reflective journal entry • 3 Summative Tests	• Pronunciation Dictation Test/ Pretest and Posttest • Pronunciation Achievement Test/ Pretest and Posttest Formative Assessments • 10-item test • (Other instruments like the reflective journal entry, summative tests, and the post-evaluation oral-aural test will be utilized by the experimental group ONLY as part of the intervention.)

The coined term 'teacher-mediated pronunciation instruction' is used by the proponent to refer to his originally crafted flow of the lesson on pronunciation (embedded into a lesson plan). The study was run for thirteen separate sessions for thirteen weeks in the fourth quarter of the school year 2018-2019 with specified topics on English sounds namely vowels, consonants, diphthongs, and suprasegmentals (stress, intonation, juncture, and pitch). Table 2 below shows the difference in the flow between the experimental group and the control group.

Table 2. Flow of the Teacher-Mediated Pronunciation Instruction

(Experimental Group)	(Control Group)
1. Motivation **2. Opening Drills** (Through Tongue Twister Exercise featuring the sounds for the day's session) **3. Discussion of the Featured Sounds** *(Note: Lessons on Stress & Rhythm, Intonation and Juncture will be included)* **4. Application through Engagement Activities** • Supply Me and Boards Up • Words in a Bundle-Sound Me Out • Pass Me That Paper • Whisper Circles **5. Firming Up through Contrast Drills and Pronunciation Exercises** (Words- Sentences- Sample Conversation/Dialogue) **6. Evaluation** • 10-item test (teacher-made) • Self-Assessment (open-ended pronunciation assessment adapted and modified from Fisher and Frey's vocabulary assessment)	**1. Opening Drills** **2. Brief Discussion** **3. Presentation of Examples** **4. Evaluation** • 10-item test

Respondents

The respondents of the study were the thirty-two (32) purposely selected seventh-grade Special Program in the Arts students with DNME (did not meet expectations) and fairly satisfactory English grades in a secondary school in Southern Luzon, Philippines. Students from SPA 1 formed the experimental classroom and the other 16 students from SPA 2 formed the respondents of the control classroom. This means that the researcher opted to let the intervention be experienced by all the students of the experimental class and the non-intervention by all the students of the control class (since the respondents were already identified purposively). Furthermore, based on the grades, the researcher opted to equalize the number of respondents for easier, more objective, and more accurate comparison and analysis of data.

Instrumentation

There were three main instruments used in this study namely the pronunciation dictation test, the pronunciation achievement test, and the post-evaluation oral-aural test.

Pronunciation Dictation Test. The dictation test required the participants to spell out 30 words (which are representatives of all the Standard American English sounds based on the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) symbols). Each word was dictated twice by the teacher and participants were asked to write their answers. This tool is a spelling test that measures how students respond to their listening skills and transfers them to written form.

Pronunciation Achievement Test. This achievement test required the participants to answer 30 items (which are valid and reliable representative of all the content of pronunciation as evidenced by the table of specification.) (See Appendix F for the Table of Specification). This test is a multiple-choice test. It measures the participants' in-depth content knowledge of pronunciation.

Post-Evaluation Oral-Aural Test. This is a speaking skill/oral language fluency test that requires participants to read a voice recording material (that incorporates all the aspects of pronunciation). The test recorded the errors of the participants and was subtracted from the highest possible score (which is 57) obtaining

their computed score. This tool measures the students' insights on how to transfer their content knowledge to the spoken form.

A table of specifications was consulted in the formulation of the pronunciation achievement test. Moreover, the reliability of the pronunciation dictation test and pronunciation achievement test was calculated using the Kuder-Richardson Formula (KR-20) which resulted in a 0.88 reliability coefficient for the dictation test and a 0.72 reliability coefficient for the achievement test. A separate group of 30 students participated in the pilot testing.

Another research-completed instrument used was the type of formative assessment for each session which is the 10-item test.

10-item test. This is a teacher-made test consisting of two parts: the first part (1-5) asked the participants to write on their answer sheets the IPA symbol of the sounds of the words that they listen to; the second part (6-10) allowed the participants to spell out the words correctly based on the transcribed words (words with IPA symbol instead of the usual letter) written on the board by the teacher. This test measures the students' insights as they undergo each session of study.

In addition, three summative tests were conducted separately for the whole duration of the study. Reflective journal entries after every formative assessment were also gathered as additional data-gathering tools to further explain the effects of the intervention on the experimental group.

Summative Tests. The three summative tests are just longer versions of the 10-item test (bearing the same two parts but having a wider scope) which were administered in three separate testing time specifically after every four sessions of the study. The thirteenth session assessed the critical lessons on Suprasegmentals.

Reflective Journal Entry. This tool is accomplished by the participants right after they answered the 10-item test and the open-ended pronunciation assessment for every session. The sheet contains three questions to wit: What did you learn about pronunciation today? How did you feel about the lesson and the activities? Why? This tool provides a pool of data reflecting the concrete impacts of the intervention on the participants and is therefore providing descriptive and qualitative data to the study.

Validation of the Instruments

The content of the three primary instruments and other supplemental tests were validated by one Oral Communication teacher, one Head Teacher in English, and one Education Program Supervisor in English using a research validation sheet. Their comments were incorporated in the revision of the instruments before the pilot testing. For the pilot testing, a separate group of seventh-grade students was utilized as examinees of the two main instruments. Using the Kuder-Richardson test (KR-20), the two main instruments namely the pronunciation dictation test and pronunciation achievement test were tested for reliability with reliability coefficients of 0.88 for the former and 0.72 for the latter instrument.

Data Analysis

The following statistical tools were used to analyze the data gathered from the instruments. The tools were mean, standard deviation, independent samples t-test (Welch's t-test), and Analysis of covariance (ANCOVA). All tests were set at a significance level of 0.05 and were computed using statistical computations in Excel.

Results and Discussion

Before the Implementation of the Intervention

Comparison of the Pretest Results between the Experimental and Control Groups

The dictation test results in Table 3 showed that the t-computed value which is equal to 2.86 was significant because it exceeded the critical tabular value which is 2.06 at a degree of freedom (df=30). It implies that the students from the experimental group already had knowledge of spelling out words based on the sound. Though this is the case, the researcher still has to prove that there is still a need for the intervention and that the noted significant increase in the post-test is attributable to the effect of the intervention. (This will be discussed later under the sub-heading Effects of the Teacher-Mediated Pronunciation Instruction).

Table 3. Summary of Pretest Results on Pronunciation Dictation Test

Group	Pretest Mean Scores	SD	t-Stat	t-Critical (two-tail)	df	p-value
Experimental Group	19.63	4.43	**2.86***	2.04	30	0.007564
Control Group	14	6.56				

significant at (0.05 alpha)

For the achievement test, the results in Table 4 showed that the t-computed value which is equal to 1.52 is not significant for it did not exceed the critical tabular value of 2.04 at a degree of freedom (df=30). It implies that the students' scores before the conduct of the intervention are insignificant. It means that students have a noted lack of knowledge when it comes to in-depth content of the sound system and prosodic features of speech of the English language which are what the achievement test measures.

Table 4. Summary of Pretest Results on Pronunciation Achievement Test

Group	Pretest Mean Scores	SD	t-Stat	t-Critical (two-tail)	df	p-value
Experimental Group	8.44	2.65	**1.52^{ns}**	2.04	30	0.138345
Control Group	7	2.68				

^{ns} not significant at (0.05 alpha)

<u>During the Implementation of the Intervention</u>

Comparison of the Formative Test Results between the Experimental and Control Groups

As the intervention (teacher-mediated pronunciation instruction) went on, the researcher administered one formative assessment, the 10-item test that is common to both the experimental and control groups (though the control group experienced more incidental acquisition only of the target sounds). This is to make a clear comparison of the effect of the intervention. Table 5 shows the results of the 13 sessions of the 10-item test administered to both groups.

Table 5. Summary of Results of the 10-item Formative Test

Group	Mean Scores	SD	t-Stat	t-Critical (two-tail)	df	p-value
Experimental Group	8.34	0.49	**7.07***	2.04	30	5.57
Control Group	4.53	1.88				

Based on the table presented, as the study went on, there was a notable difference between the mean scores of the experimental and the control group. Furthermore, when the mean scores were subjected to an independent sample t-test, the result displayed a 7.07 t-computed value which is significant at 0.05 alpha for it exceeded the critical tabular value of 2.14. This means that the result is attributable to the effect of the intervention. It can be implied that as the sessions (on different aspects of pronunciation) went on, students' insights on pronunciation became clearer and deeper as compared to their performance before the study. Figure 1 clearly shows the difference between the performance of the experimental group and the control group as both underwent the 13 sessions of the study.

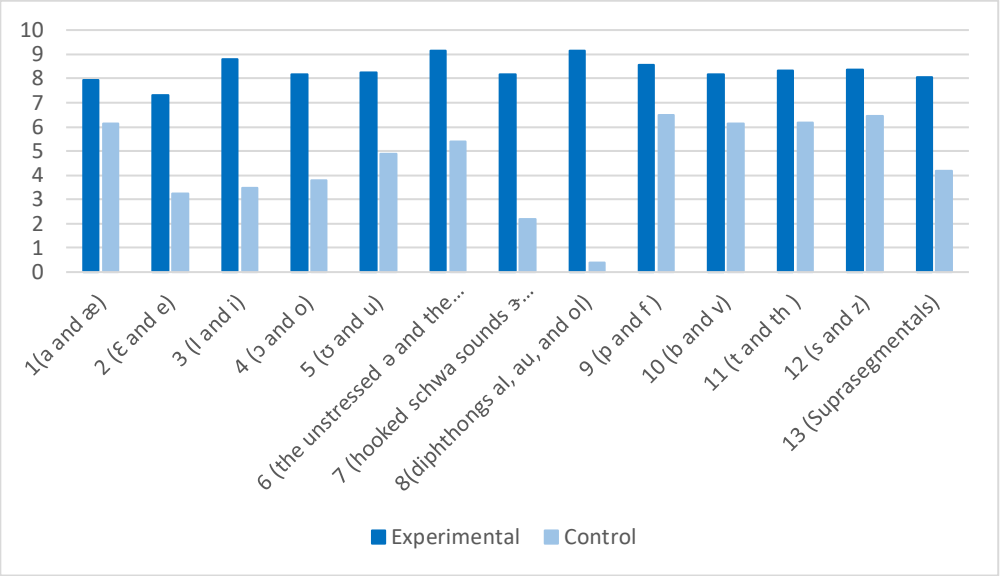

Figure 1. Detailed mean scores of the Experimental vs. Control Group in a 10-item test

Based on the bar graph showing the comparison of the mean scores for the experimental and control group, the data are: for session 1 (a and æ), experimental got 7.94 while control got 6.13; for session 2 (Ɛ and e), experimental = 7.31 and control = 3.25; for session 3 (I and i), experimental =8.81 and control =3.5; for session 4 (ɔ and o), experimental =8.19 and control = 3.81; for session 5 (ʊ and u), experimental = 8.25 and control = 4.88; for session 6 (unstressed schwa sound ə and the stressed schwa sound ʌ), experimental = 9.13 and control = 5.38; for session 7 (hooked schwa sounds ɝ and ɚ), experimental = 8.19 and control = 2.19; for session 8 (diphthongs aI, au, and oI), experimental = 9.13 and control = 0.38; for session 9 (p and f), experimental = 8.56 and control = 6.5; for session 10 (b and v), experimental = 8.19 and control = 6.13; for session 11 (t and th/θ), experimental = 8.31 and control = 6.19; for session 12 (s and z), experimental = 8.38 and control = 6.44; and for session 13 (suprasegmentals), experimental = 8.06 and control = 4.19.

For the experimental group, there are two sessions that garnered the highest mean of 9.13 – session 6 (unstressed schwa sound ə and the stressed schwa sound ʌ) and session 8 (diphthongs aI, au, and oI). On the contrary, the session that garnered the lowest mean is session 2 (Ɛ and e) with 7.31. For the control group, the session that got the highest mean was session 12 (s and z) with 6.44 while the session that yielded the lowest mean was session 8 (diphthongs aI, au, and oI) with 0.38.

These results apparently imply that the experimental group outperformed the control group in almost all of the sessions considering that the range of the mean of the former is from 7. 31 to 9.13 compared to the latter which has a mean range of 0.38 to 6.44. It is worth comparing that the effect of the intervention is very evident on this premise: session 8 (diphthongs aI, au, and oI) has the highest mean score for the experimental group with 9. 13 is the session which has the lowest mean score for the control group with 0.38. This clearly shows the huge gap difference in the extent of the effects between the processes of intervention as opposed to non-intervention. This is noted especially that the researcher underlines that in the focused group discussion (FGD) conducted, an alarming average of 0-1 surfaced prior to the conduct of the intervention. This affirms that the experimental group has gained insights on diphthongs far better than the control group which has still a very alarming knowledge of diphthongs considering the mean of 0.38 has not even reached the mean of 1. Based on the figures in the graph, the same better results are seen in the experimental group compared to the control group on their newly gained insights on vowel sounds including the schwa

sounds, the consonants, and the suprasegmentals.

Furthermore, the mean scores of the experimental group are less dispersed from one another compared to that of the control group which are too scattered. These data readings are strong enough to support that indeed the (teacher-mediated pronunciation instruction) given to the students of the experimental class is far more effective than only incidental acquisition which was experienced by the control class. Students in the experimental group have closer scores with one another leading them to yield closer and higher weighted mean reflecting the insights that they have gained under the explicit and direct teaching of the aspects of pronunciation that the control group did not experience.

In addition, the performance of the experimental group as it progressed with the sessions is also strengthened by the results of the three summative tests administered by the researcher during the duration of the study. The three summative tests have the following coverage to wit: 1st- (1st set of vowels), 2nd – (2nd set of vowels and diphthongs), and 3rd (consonants). Figure 2 shows the results of the three 20-item summative tests taken by the experimental class.

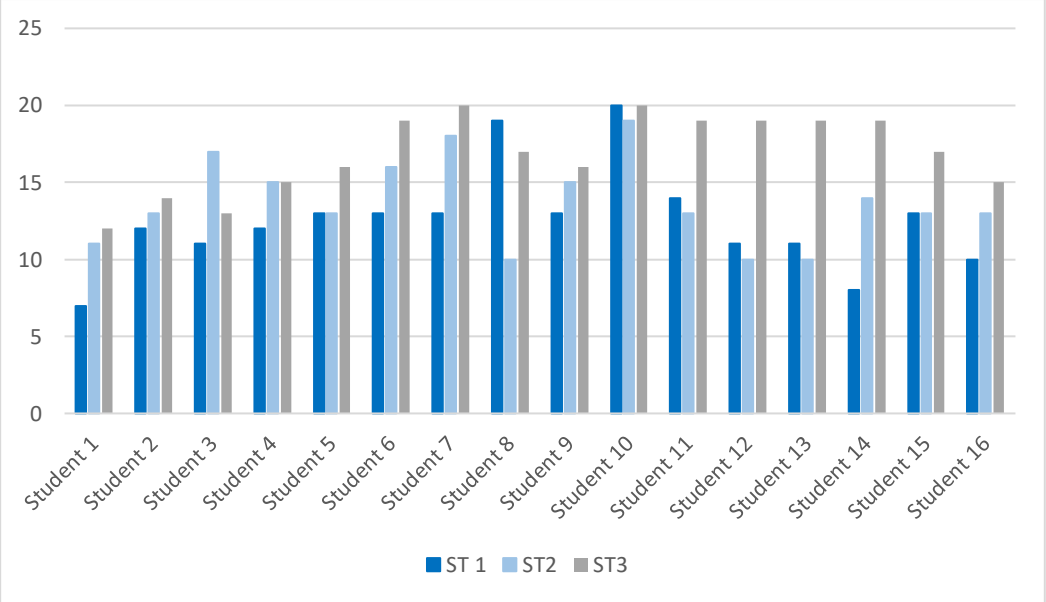

Figure 2. Detailed mean scores in the summative tests taken by the Experimental Group
Weighted Mean ST1 – 12. 5 ST2- 13.75 ST3-16.88

Based on the bar graph, the student who consistently got the highest score for the three summative tests is Student 10 with scores 20, 19, and 20 while the one who garnered a consistently low score compared to the rest of the students is Student 1 with the scores 7, 11 and 12. These two can be considered outliers (those students who performed way better or worse than the rest) and greatly affected the mean of the scores. Nevertheless, the other scores are clustered around 8 to 19 and the trend is upward. 88% or 14 students have scores that increased much up to the third summative test except for Student 3 whose score went down and Student 4 whose score remained the same. This implies that since the scores are increasing, students are gaining insights into their pronunciation as affected by the intervention (teacher-mediated pronunciation instruction). To support this claim, the weighted mean for the three summative tests are 1st – 12.5, 2nd – 13.75, and 3rd – 16.88 which obviously increases from first to third. Again, this is attributable to the effect of the mentioned intervention.

After the Implementation of the Intervention

Effects of the Teacher-Mediated Pronunciation Instruction

The chief purpose of this study is to determine the effects of the intervention (teacher-mediated pronunciation instruction) on enhancing the oral language fluency of seventh-grade English students.

After the full conduct of the intervention, the content knowledge of the two groups was assessed using a posttest. This is to test whether the differential posttest performance is due to chance occurrence/incidental acquisition only or attributed to the intervention used in the experimental class. Table 6 summarizes the result of posttests and compares posttest scores of the control and experimental groups.

Table 6. Summary of Posttest Results on Pronunciation Dictation Test

Group	Mean Scores	SD	t-Stat	t-Critical (two-tail)	df	p-value
Experimental Group	25.87	3.04	**5.26***	2.04	30	3.22
Control Group	17	5.77				

**** significant at 0.05 alpha***

For the dictation test, the t-computed value is equal to 5.26, which exceeds the critical tabular value (t tab = 2.08) at a given degree of freedom (df=30) and level of significance (alpha=0.05). This means that the notable increase in the mean scores and in the computed value for t-Stat is attributable to the effect of the intervention. Now, at this point, the pretest result for the dictation test which has a mean score of 19.63 and a t-computed value of 2.86 was proven to be already high and therefore significant even before the conduct of the study. This is worth scrutinizing.

The results of the posttest are even higher compared to that of the pretest so to better analyze the figures and to prove that the increase is still attributable to the effect of the intervention, the researcher utilized the statistical treatment, Analysis of covariance (ANCOVA). ANCOVA evaluates whether the means of a dependent variable (DV) are equal across levels of a categorical independent variable (IV) often called a treatment, while statistically controlling for the effects of other continuous variables that are not of primary interest, known as covariates (CV) or nuisance variables. In this case, the co-variate is the pretest result of the respondents. Together with the posttest result as the dependent variable, they were analyzed through ANCOVA. Table 7 summarizes the result of ANCOVA.

Table 7. Summary of ANCOVA with posttest scores as the dependent variable and pretest scores as the covariate

Dependent Variable: Posttest					
Source	**Type III Sum of Squares**	**Df**	**Mean Square**	**F**	**Sig.**
Corrected Model	870.404[a]	2	435.202	36.322	.000
Intercept	478.342	1	478.342	39.922	.000
Pretest(covariate)	257.904	1	257.904	21.525	.000
Group	209.956	1	209.956	17.523	.000
Error	347.471	29	11.982		
Total	16096.000	32			
Corrected Total	1217.875	31			

- ***R Squared = .715 (Adjusted R Squared = .695)***

Based on the results of the ANCOVA, 71.5% of the variations in the posttest scores for the dictation test are attributable to the effect of the treatment (pronunciation instruction) after removing the effect of the pretest scores (assigned as a covariate). First, this implies that the noted increase of the mean scores from 19.63 to 25.87 and the t-computed value of 2.86 to 5.26 is not some left-over effect of the pretest but a reliable figure as a direct effect of the intervention. Secondly, this accounts that the variation around the posttest means comes from the variations in where the respondents started at the pretest. The noted increase is again attributable to the extent of the effect of the treatment (teacher-mediated pronunciation instruction).

The results of the posttest for the pronunciation achievement test are discussed in Table 8.

Table 8. Summary of Posttest Results on Pronunciation Achievement Test

Group	Mean Scores	SD	t-Stat	t-Critical (two-tail)	df	p-value
Experimental Group	15.53	3.36	**7.66***	2.04	30	1.2
Control Group	7.93	1.87				

For the achievement test, the t-computed value is equal to 7.66, which exceeds the critical tabular value (t tab = 2.07) at a given degree of freedom (df=30) and is significant at a level of significance (alpha=0.05). This implies that the data results are because of the intervention.

With these apparently strong data readings for the two main instruments namely the dictation test and achievement test, the study proves that there is a significant difference between the performance of the experimental and the control group that is attributable to the intervention (teacher-mediated pronunciation instruction). The researcher rejects the null hypothesis and can attribute that the results are not due to chance occurrence. Moreover, the results are statistically correct and applicable to the entire population.

The analysis and interpretation of most of the data have been discussed in the previous paragraphs of this chapter. However, in this more detailed summary, it can be implied that if students are subjected to teacher-mediated pronunciation instruction, they are likely to improve and enhance their oral language fluency compared to a method just like incidental acquisition. It is therefore high time to include pronunciation instruction in the English class because of the noted positive effects hence teachers should not be hesitant as to the effects of pronunciation instruction as supported by the cited literature that follows.

Several researchers (Champagne-Muzar et al., 1993; Derwing et al., 1998; Gordon & Darcy, 2016; Richard-Amato, 1988; Trofimovich et al., 2009; Lee et al., 2015; Saito, 2012; Thomson & Derwing, 2015) stated that 'the consistent uncertainty voiced by teachers about teaching pronunciation and the overall low satisfaction they feel about how they teach it stands in contrast to their clear perception of its importance—as well as to the actual benefits of explicit pronunciation instruction." These studies have confirmed global improvement as a result of pronunciation instruction sessions, even when these lasted only a few weeks, and several studies have found that it improved intelligibility and comprehensibility.

To further substantiate the claim of the researcher on the effects of teacher-mediated pronunciation instruction, Figure 3 shows the scores of the 16 respondents on the post-evaluation oral-aural test that was administered to the experimental group. The test is the third main instrument in this study which assesses the oral language fluency of the respondents.

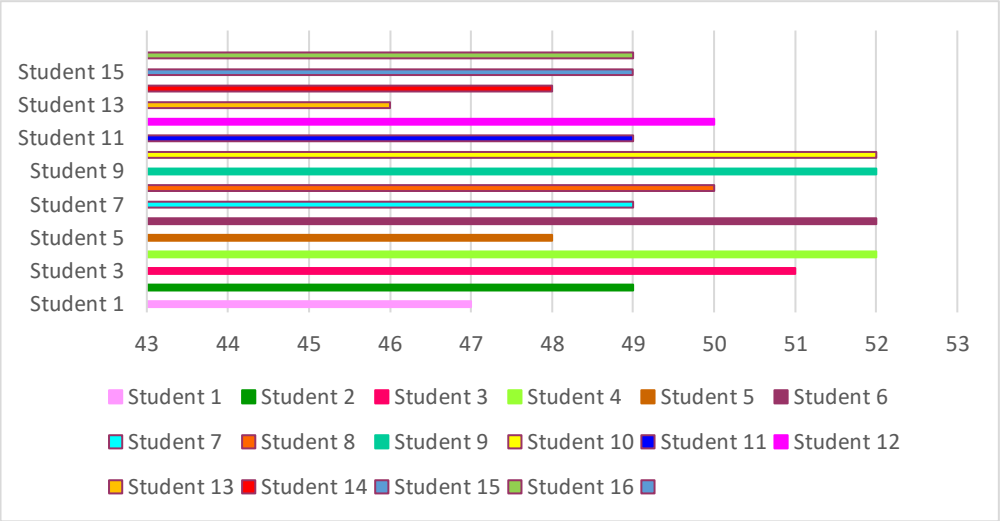

Figure 3. Detailed Scores on the Post-Evaluation Oral-Aural Test of the Experimental Group

Highest Possible Score – 57	Passing Score (75%) - 42.75
Weighted Mean = 49.56	SD= 1.86

Based on the results of the third instrument, it clearly shows that all 16 students passed the test which has the highest possible score of 57. Conforming to the DepEd standard of assessment of 75%, the passing score is 42.75; the lowest score is 46 which means that all the respondents passed the test based on the scores alone.

Applying the rules of standard deviation on the weighted mean of the scores of 49.56, it can be deduced that with an SD of 1.86, at a 95% confidence interval, scores should fall within the range of 45.84 to 53.28 which appeared in this graph. Descriptive statistics reveal that the scores are less dispersed and are clustered closely around the mean which makes the results reliable and attributable to the effect of the intervention. It can be implied that the students' garnered scores which are above the passing rate are clustered around the mean because they learned well their lessons on pronunciation as brought about by the teacher-mediated pronunciation instruction.

Students' Claims on the Positive Effects of the Intervention as reflected in their Unedited Journal Entries

The intervention (teacher-mediated pronunciation instruction) consisted of a part called Engagement Activities. In this part of the lesson, students (in groups) had a chance to participate interactively and collaboratively in the activities which were in the form of games. Moreover, this part of the lesson serves as the Application part which aims to develop mastery of the featured sounds/aspects of pronunciation. The activities are: Supply Me and Boards Up, Words in a Bundle – Sound Me Out, Pass Me that Paper, and Whisper Circles.

The effects of the intervention are palpable in the reflective journal entries of the students (which were written by students after every session of the study) as shown in Table 9.

Table 9. Sample journal entries on the positive effects of pronunciation instruction as claimed by students

On being happy with their correct pronunciation skills	"… feel happy because now I learned how to pronounce short u and long u." "…learned about the difference between long I and short I. happy, because I know how to pronounce clearly." "…this pronunciation can help me on how to pronounce vowel sounds a and ae."
On enjoying the fun and competition of the activities	"…learned how to pronounce long e and short e. Happy, because Sir let us play a game." "… was fun to learn new lessons and to be part of the activities…" "…learned how to pronounce ɜ˞ and ɚ˞. I'm feeling happy because finally, we win in the game."

This dominant feeling of happiness of the students as they wrote these journal entries is supported by Nurhayati (2008a), who indicates that the frequency of conducting various games could make the students more enjoyable to study English, especially reducing their burden to join activities. According to her, the students became very energetic, and they needed some activities that could make them move. It implies that teachers need to be creative in creating activities for the students so that the students do not get bored easily. This way of teaching-learning process applies better techniques to get the perfect result in improving the students' English vocabulary, spelling, and grammar. This claim is also supported again by the research of Nurhayati (2015) which investigated improving students' pronunciation ability through Go Fish and Maze Game; Moreover, it was also conducted to get more information as to what activities make the learners tend to become more confident to pronounce some basic words in an enjoyable situation.

The Engagement Activities using games introduced a more learner-centered, more discovery approach-based kind of atmosphere for the students in learning pronunciation. Most of the literature on pronunciation deals with what and how to teach, while the learner remains a silent abstract in the classroom but in the researcher's flow of pronunciation instruction, learners are audibly heard. Morley (1994) underlines that the prevalent focus on pronunciation teaching nowadays should be on designing new-wave instructional programs. Moreover, she stresses that these instructional designs should consider not only language forms and functions but also issues of learner self-involvement and learner strategy training. In other words, students who have developed the skills to monitor and modify their speech patterns, if necessary, should become active partners in their learning. Yule, Hoffman, and Damico (Yule et al., 1987) assert that self-monitoring is critical for creating independent and competent learners and is a necessary part of the consciousness-raising process. Finally, expansion activities are made for students to incorporate the language into their use as supported by these authors (Harmer, 2001; Celce-Murcia, 1991; Celce-Murcia et al., 2010; Celce-Murcia & Goodwin, 1991; Krashen, 1987; Richard-Amato, 1988).

Effects on the Spelling and Listening Comprehension Skills of the Teacher-Mediated Pronunciation Instruction

The effects of the intervention have been shown to not only affect the pronunciation skills and oral language fluency of the students but also it has influenced other skills such as spelling and listening comprehension These have been proven by the discussion on the significant results of the pronunciation dictation test in the earlier part of this article. The dictation test results revealed that the noted increase of the mean scores from 19.63 to 25.87 and the t-computed value of 2.86 to 5.26 is not some left-over effect of the pretest but a reliable and significant figure as a direct effect of the teacher-mediated pronunciation instruction on the spelling and listening comprehension skills of the respondents. The dictation test required the participants to spell out 30 words (which

are representatives of all the Standard American English sounds based on the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) symbols that measured how they responded to their listening skills and transferred them to written form.

To further substantiate the claim, the effects are also palpable in these reflective journal entries of the students as displayed in Table 10.

Table 10. Sample of students' journal entries on how pronunciation instruction affects listening

On learning how to listen attentively	"…feel challenged because we have to listen carefully to write the correct symbols." "…that a and ae have different pronunciations through careful listening. I learned that even if the word has the same sound, it may be different in spelling." "…learned about the short e and long e and how to pronounce it and how they are different…"

These journal entries support that the researcher's devised intervention (the teacher-mediated pronunciation instruction) also affected and/or influenced other skills of the students aside from speaking skills.

Pronunciation and phonology are related to speaking and listening. Pronunciation training improves speaking abilities by helping learners to develop clear speaking skills. Clarity of speaking improves intelligibility and minimizes effort for interlocutors. We know that pronunciation training can also help develop perception abilities, even though experimental evidence is still limited, Linebaugh & Roche (2015). In turn, clarity of perception also improves listening and understanding of naturally fluent, connected speech—also called running speech as revealed by researchers (Brown, 2011; Gilbert, 1995). So, owing to its potential to promote clear perception, pronunciation practice can help develop listening comprehension along with word segmentation skills (the ability to recognize separate words in running speech). Speaking and listening are also interconnected. We know that perceptual training can cause second language (L2) learners to improve both their perception and their production of segmentals and suprasegmentals (Bradlow, Akahane-Yamada, Lee & Lyster, 1999; Wang, Jongman, & Sereno, 2003).

Furthermore, the intervention was also proven to affect the spelling skills of the respondents as displayed in Table 11.

Table 11. Sample of students' journal entries on how pronunciation instruction affects spelling skills

On learning spelling with the correct sounds	"…learned how to write, speak and pronounce the symbols." "…happy because I know how to spell and pronounce correctly." "…now I know what is short o and long o." "…connecting what we listened to what we write is challenging but a good learning activity for us…"

Gilbert (1984) noted that there are different interlinked processes in learning English which means that each skill or area of the language that is being practiced can be helpful for improving other aspects of the language. For example, pronunciation and listening comprehension are interconnected by a unified system in which individual sounds are systematically related together. When their English pronunciation skills are improved, obviously their speaking and listening skills will become significantly refined. Spelling skills can also be improved when one's knowledge of English pronunciation is increased.

Furthermore, Gilbert (1984) believes the skills of listening comprehension and pronunciation are interdependent so that if speakers cannot hear English well and cannot

understand easily, they are cut off from conversations with native speakers. Noteboom (1983) also suggested that speech production is affected by speech perception; the hearer has become an important factor in communication discourse. This illustrates the need to integrate pronunciation with communicative activities to give the students situations to develop their pronunciation by listening and speaking. The current research and the current trend reversal in the thinking of pronunciation show there is a consensus that a learner's pronunciation in a foreign language needs to be taught in conjunction with communicative practices for the learner to be able to communicate effectively with native speakers.

Conclusion

First, it is concluded that not all pretests yield an insignificant result for they may yield significant ones which means that students are not all tabula rasa or blank slates for they may already possess a strong set of prior knowledge. However, it is also affirmed that even if the pre-test result may be significant, students' insights can still be added upon and/or enhanced through an intervention. An intervention like teacher-mediated pronunciation instruction can bring not left-over effects but direct and strong effect (s) to students' insights.

Second, the more the learners are exposed to an intervention, the better they will perform in any type of formative or summative assessment. Third, the study affirms the cited literature and studies and the researcher's theory that explicit pronunciation instruction just like the teacher-mediated pronunciation instruction devised by the researcher is better at enhancing the oral language fluency of students than only incidental acquisition. Fourth, the more frequently that the teacher conducts various games, the more that the students enjoy studying English especially reducing their burden to join such activities. Furthermore, the happier the students are while learning, the more learning that they get from the pronunciation instruction.

Lastly, Oral Language Fluency specifically described as pronunciation skills has interconnections with other skills such as listening comprehension and spelling. Therefore, the more refined a learner's pronunciation skill is, the more improved he is when it comes to listening comprehension and spelling.

These results conclude that a need for explicit teacher-mediated pronunciation instruction is one of the keys to enhancing students' oral language fluency which will make them intelligible and therefore be prepared for communication situations not only in the classroom but also in the real world.

With these findings, it is highly recommended that English teachers make a deliberate effort to let the students experience a more comprehensive approach to learning pronunciation. They should continuously devote themselves to learning the basics and complexities of explicit pronunciation instruction through attending training and/or seminars tackling a very specific kind of background in English phonetics and phonology, one that gives detailed attention to segmentals and suprasegmentals. Teachers are also encouraged to craft new interventions regarding second language phonology or any content that focuses on speaking as a macro-strand and skill in English.

Acknowledgment

The authors would like to thank their families: for Jason- his wife Precious, and his daughter, Faith Yuna; and for Jonald- his mother, Leticia and his father, Jaime; for their motivation and support. In addition, they would like to thank the faculty of the Osmeña Colleges Graduate School and Prof. Sherwin E. Balbuena for the significant inputs for the improvement of the paper.

References

Bradlow, A., Akahane-Yamada, R., Pisoni, D., & Tohkura, Y. (1999). Training Japanese listeners to identify English /r/and /l/: Long-term retention of learning in perception and production. *Perception and Psychophysics, 61*, 977-985.

Brown, S. (2011). Listening myths: Applying second language research to classroom teaching. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Celce-Murcia, M 1991, *Teaching English as a second or foreign language,* Heinle & Heinle, Boston.207

Celce-Murcia, M., Brinton, D. M., Goodwin, J. M. (with Griner, B.). (2010). *Teaching pronunciation: A course book and reference guide* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Celce-Murcia, M., & Goodwin, J. M. (1991). Teaching Pronunciation. In M. Celce-Murcia (Ed.) *Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language,* 136-153. New York: Newbury House.

Champagne-Muzar, C., Schneiderman, E., & Bourdages, J. (1993). Second language accent: The role of pedagogical environment. *International Review of Applied Linguistics in Language Teaching*, *31*, 143-160.

Dan, C 2006, 'How can I improve my student's pronunciation?' Report submitted to China's Experimental Centre for Educational Action Research in Foreign Languages Teaching, June 2006, Guyuan, Ningxia.

Derwing, TM, Munro, MJ & Wiebe, G 1998, 'Evidence in favor of a broad framework for pronunciation instruction', *Language Learning,* vol. 48, no.3, pp. 393-410.

Gilbert, J. (1984). A Clear speech. Pronunciation and listening comprehension in American English. Student's manual and answer key, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Gilbert, J. (1995). Pronunciation practice as an aid to listening comprehension. In D. Mendelsohn & J. Rubin (Eds.), *A guide to the teaching of second language listening* (pp. 97-112). San Diego, CA: Dominie Press.

Gordon, J., & Darcy, I. (2016). The development of comprehensible speech in L2 learners: A classroom study on the effects of short-term pronunciation instruction. *Journal of Second Language Pronunciation, 2*, 56-92. https://doi.org/10.1075/jslp.2.1.03gor

Harmer, J 2001, *The practice of English language teaching*, (3rd ed.), Pearson Education London.

Krashen, SD 1987, *Principles and practices in second language acquisition,* Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs.

Lee, J., Jang, J., & Plonsky, L. (2015). The effectiveness of second language pronunciation instruction: A meta-analysis. Applied Lin¬guistics, 36, 345-366.

Linebaugh, G., & Roche, T. (2015). Evidence that L2 production training can enhance perception. *Journal of Academic Language and Learning, 9*, A1-A17.

Morley, J 1991, 'The pronunciation component in teaching English to speakers of other languages', *TESOL Quarterly*, vol. 25, no.1, pp. 51-74.

Morley, J. (1994). A Multidimensional Curriculum Design for Speech-pronunciation Instruction. In J. Morley (Ed.), *Pronunciation Theory and Pedagogy: New Views, New Directions* (64-91). Alexandria, VA: TESOL.

Morley, J 1998, 'Trippingly on the tongue: Putting serious speech/pronunciation instruction back in the TESOL equation', *ESL Magazine,* issue January/ February, pp. 20-23.

Noteboom, S 1983, 'Is Speech Production controlled by Speech Perception?'In VD Broecke et al. (ed.), *Sound structure, studies for Antonie Cohen*, Foris, Dordrecht, pp. 183-94.

Nurhayati, D. A. W. (2008a). Improving Students'English Vocabulary Mastery through Games (A Classroom Action Research in the Islam Kindergarten of Al-Irsyad Madiun in the Academic Year 2007/2008). Graduate School of Sebelas Maret University.

Nurhayati, D. A. W. (2015). Improving Students' English Pronunciation Ability through Go Fish Game and Maze Game). Vol.15, No.2

Pennington, M (1996), Phonology in English language teaching, Addison Wesley Longman, London

Pourhosein Gilakjani, A. (2012). A Study of Factors Affecting EFL Learners' English Pronunciation Learning and the Strategies for Instruction. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, *2*(3), 119-128.

Richard-Amato, P 1988, *Making it happen: Interaction in the second language classroom from theory to practice,* Longman, New York.

Ruellot, V. (2011). Computer-assisted pronunciation learning of French /u/ and /y/at the intermediate level. In J. Levis & K. LeVelle (Eds.), *Proceedings of the 2nd Pronunciation in Second Language Learning and Teaching Conference* (pp. 199 213). Ames: Iowa State University.

Saito, K. (2012). Effects of instruction on L2 pronunciation development: A synthesis of 15 quasi-experimental intervention studies. *TESOL Quarterly, 46*(4), 842-854. https://doi.org/10.1002/tesq.67

Scovel, T. (1988). *A Time to Speak: A Psycholinguistic Inquiry into the Critical Period for Human Speech*. New York: Newbury House.

Thomson, R. I., & Derwing, T. M. (2015). The effectiveness of L2 pro¬nunciation instruction: A narrative review. Applied Linguistics, 36, 326-344. https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/amu076

Trofimovich, P., Lightbown, P. M., Halter, R. H., & Song, H. (2009). Comprehension based practice. Studies in Second Language Ac¬quisition, 31, 609-639. https://doi.org/10.1017/S027226310999 0040

Wang, W., Jongman, A., & Sereno, J. A. (2003). Acoustic and perceptual evaluations of Mandarin tone productions before and after perceptual training. *Journal of the Acoustical Society of America, 113,* 1033-1043.

Yates, L., & Zielinski, B. (2009). Give It a Go: Teaching Pronunciation to Adults. Sydney, Australia: AMEPRC. Available: http://www.ameprc.mq.edu.au/resources/classroom_resources/give_it_a_go

Yule, G., Hoffman, P., & Damico, J. (1987). Paying attention to pronunciation: The role of self-monitoring in perception. *TESOL Quarterly, 21*(4), 765-768. https://doi.org/10.2307/3586994