

Preliminary Investigation of a Computer's Pronunciation Software for Phonetics Symbols Learning

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Abstract

Many teachers of English as a second or foreign language have experienced coming into a classroom with learners who have had different amount or types of prior language instruction. The lowest-level students could only utter very limited words and have difficulty matching sounds their teachers pronounce with written words in the text books, and therefore could hardly catch up with their instructors' paces. The advent of computer-assisted language learning (CALL) or more specifically computer-assisted pronunciation teaching (CAPT) provides EFL (ESL) teachers with new hope and more alternatives to help learners who are lagging behind in pronunciation. The purpose of the current study was to evaluate the effectiveness of a simple pronunciation software called Phonics Master by dividing participants into two groups: control group receiving teacher-led instruction and experiment group receiving training of a computer assisted pronunciation software. Results showed that the improvement of the pronunciation of the experiment group was found to be comparable to the control group after 7 one-hour sessions. This indicated that computer-assisted language teaching could possibly alleviate a teacher's burden in a sizable class and helped remediate students' individual problems such as pronunciation or grammar as well.

Keywords: language instruction, computer-assisted language learning, phonics computer-assisted pronunciation teaching, phonetic symbols

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