

Tutoring Session #1 (1.5 hours)

Goal:

For the tutor and tutee to familiarize themselves with each other and create a workable atmosphere. Also, for the tutor to observe and determine the tutee's English skills level and what the tutee's needs/wants are.

Materials:

- Ice breaker activity:
(My name is...
I like to...
People think I am...
My favorite food is... because...
Never would I...
In ten years, I hope to...)
- Appendix 14: Student Profile Questionnaire

Procedure:

- The tutor and tutee open up with an ice breaker activity prepared by the tutor.
- The tutor and tutee will talk and get to know each other.
- The tutee answers questions from the appendix 14 questionnaire that the tutor is interesting in knowing.
- The tutor allows the tutee to express any concerns, questions, needs, and desires, and what the tutee's goals are from the tutoring sessions.

Observation:

- The tutee seems very confident and willing to open up and challenge herself to improving her English pronunciation skills.
- The tutee has a wide range of simple English vocabulary and has an intermediate to advanced level of English grammar.
- The tutee seems to confuse alveolar liquids /r/ and /l/ frequently.
- Tutee also has a hard time determining when to use and pronounce bilabial stop /b/ and labiodental fricative /v/. Tutee cannot determine the difference when listening.
- Both are areas tutee desires to improve on.

Tutoring Session #2 (2 hours)

Goal:

Determine the tutee's areas of pronunciation difficulty and to familiarize the tutee with the International Phonetic Alphabet.

Materials:

- Handout of the international phonetic alphabet
- Appendix 16 handout: Diagnostic passage and accent checklist
- Interlanguage analysis handout
- Computer with voice recorder

Procedure:

- The tutee will have 5 minutes to look over Appendix 16 and get a quick glance at what she will be reading.
- The tutee will be able to practice the reading once before being recorded.
- The tutee will then read the passage 2 times out loud while being recorded.
- The tutee will then read the interlanguage analysis handout and be recorded.
- The tutor will listen and determine tutee's areas of pronunciation difficulty.
- After, the tutor will go over IPA with the tutee.

Observations: (From the first paragraph in Appendix 16)

- Tutee has difficulty with /l/ and /r/ phonemes. Throughout reading passages, the tutee occasionally mixed up the two different phonemes (sometimes she would catch herself).
- Vowels: confused the tense, mid-front tense vowel /eɪ/ with low-front lax vowel /æ/ in the word "language." Example: lan was pronounced /læn/ instead of /leɪn/
- Confused low-front lax vowel /æ/ for low-central tense vowel /ɑ/ in the word "answers, an, and factor." Example: an was pronounced /ɑn/ instead of /æn/.
- Tutee deleted phonemes. Example: second vowel /I/ in "difficult" or /t/ at the end of "perfect."
- Tutee substituted /θ/ for /s/ in "answers." Example: pronounced /ænsθrs/ as /ɑn θ ɜrs/.
- Tutee also has difficulty with differentiating phonemes /dʒ/ and /ʒ/. Example: pronounces "usually" as /yuwɔʒuəli/**

- Second reading sounded less choppy compared to the first, however bigger words and commas tend to have longer pauses and breaks made by the tutee.

Tutoring Session #3 (2.5 hours)

Goal:

To continue finding pronunciation areas the tutee has difficult with and help tutee with pronunciation errors.

Materials:

- Appendix 16 handout
- List of words with phoneme sounds of /dʒ/ and /ʒ/ difference (measure, leisure, vision, usually, juice, judge, jog, jam)

Procedure:

- Tutor and tutee will continue reading Appendix 16.
- Tutee will repeat tutor when pronunciation errors occur.
- To continue tutee's pronunciation error of the phonemes /dʒ/ and /ʒ/.
- Tutor will try a exercise using the phoneme /ʃ/ and add voicing and switch from phoneme to /ʒ/ like "/ʃ/-/ʒ/-/ʃ/-/ʒ/-/ʃ/-/ʒ/" to try and produce /dʒ/.

Observations:

- Tutee practiced phonemes /dʒ/ and /ʒ/ over the week and is beginning to be able to tell the difference between the two sounds and use them a bit more naturally.
- Tutor and tutee did the "/ʃ/-/ʒ/" activity to try and produce /dʒ/.
- Tutee was able to produce the sound, so tutee re-read the list of words and produced the sounds perfectly.
- Tutee also remembered vowel confusion errors from previous session and corrected her pronunciation of /æ/ vs. /ey/.

Tutoring Session #4 (2 hours)

Goal:

To continue working with tutor on the different phonemes of difficulty for the tutee which include but aren't excluded to /l/, /r/, /ɑ̃/, /ʒ/, /ɑ/, and /æ/.

Materials:

- Appendix 16
- ABC's by Dr. Seuss (found at Hamilton Library)

Procedure:

- Tutee will read Appendix 16 once, just so tutor can ensure that tutee has been practicing correcting the phonological errors in pronouncing certain phonemes.
- Tutor and tutee will read through a basic (beginner level) Dr. Seuss book so that tutee can practice ALL consonant and vowel sounds, especially how they change in different situations.

Observations:

- Tutee still pronounced, "people" as "peeper" by confusing the /l/ and /r/ phonemes.
- Tutor explained that with "people" the tip of the tongue will end with placement on the alveolar ridge. Tutee and tutor went over the word a numerous amount of times using "people" vs. "peeper."
- From Appendix 16, tutee has improved a lot of phonological sounds that tutor pointed out in the beginning sessions.
- Tutee still had trouble pronouncing "answer" as "ansther," and the same with "concentrated" as "conthentrated."
- Tutee also pronounced "strategies" as "stratezies." It's difficult for tutee to move mouth and tongue in so many different places with the word, but tutee tried and improved.
- Tutor explained the NAE flap (where the phoneme /t/ sounds like /d/) that is commonly heard. (/t/ → [ɾ]/__[l])
- Tutor also explained /t/ → [ʔ]/__[n] and how both /l/ and /n/ become syllabic consonants.
- Tutor gave tutee a list of words:
 - Battle, little, Seattle, bottle, better, butter, kettle, turtle
 - Button, mitten, kitten
- Tutee had trouble with /z/ phoneme so during our next session we will work on that.

Tutoring Session #5 (2 hours)

Goal:

To determine tutee's improvement areas and (if time permits) continue working on tutee's weaker pronunciation areas.

Materials:

- Appendix 16
- Computer for sound recordings

Procedure:

- Tutor and tutee will review past sessions and phonemes tutee had difficulty with.
- Tutee will then read Appendix 16 once while being recorded.
- Tutor and tutee will then listen to first recording and last recording and compare.
- Tutor and tutee will discuss the past tutoring sessions and determine if any improvement has been made (especially for casual conversation).

Observations:

- Tutee has improved tremendously!
- Tutee has fixed a lot of phonological errors made in the first session. Especially with words such as language, accent, factor, answer, concentrated, people
- Tutee has improved flow of oral reading and doesn't sound as "choppy" as the first session.
- Tutor has been improving with /r/ and /l/ phonemes, but has been practicing and has been able to produce and perceive the differences between the sounds.
- Tutee uses the phoneme /ʒ/ when appropriate.
- Tutee heard (and laughed) at her first phonological errors and is glad to have changed them and improved.

Final Report:

Before setting up the tutoring sessions I didn't know what to expect. I had no prior tutoring experience in a second language before. I did tutor in Spanish, but to me, it's easier than English. Even though I am a native speaker in English, the language is still difficult. There are too many rules, exceptions, grammar rules, and is just plainly confusing. I wasn't extremely confident at first, but I knew it was something I needed to experience.

My tutee is a really nice and sweet person. She lived in Japan most her life and took English classes when she entered junior high because it was required of the students. She briefly explained how the school didn't care for pronunciation very much and focused more on grammar. The students didn't have the opportunity to speak very much in class, and outside of school, they spoke Japanese only. After she graduated from a Japanese university, she stopped learning English for six to seven years until 2010. Occasionally, she'd try to teach herself English, but her attempts only left her in the same position she started.

My tutee improved tremendously from our five tutoring sessions. By the end, she was able to pronounce the phoneme /ʒ/ without difficulty. Although the phoneme isn't extremely common, she was able to differentiate /ʒ/ and /dʒ/ in words she read. I was really glad we were able to work on those phonemes and help her to produce and perceive the /ʒ/ sound. We also worked on the /z/ phoneme. At times, her /z/ sounded like /s/. I don't think Japanese has many extremely voiced consonants like /z/ or /ʒ/ because they were hard for her to produce. However, in the end she improved on producing those two phonemes.

Along with those two phonemes, she improved on /r/ and /l/. I know for Japanese speakers those two phonemes are extremely difficult. My tutee had prior knowledge and pronunciation with the two phonemes, she would just get confused at times. She didn't notice how she would pronounce them at times and instead of "play," she'd say "pray." Although I understand what she was trying to say other English speakers might not understand. By the end of the tutoring sessions, she still confused the two phonemes at time, but not as often as before. She allowed me to point out her errors when she made them, and we would spend a good amount of time working on those certain words in order for it to stay in her mind.

My tutee also improved on her pronunciation with most of the vowel sounds. I think going over vowels was the hardest part because they change in numerous different positions in words. We didn't have any specific ways to study them, but we'd go over them every session and use an extended amount of words to produce and perceive all the different ways vowels can be pronounced.

I really enjoyed the tutoring experience and sessions. My tutee and I connected and grew close with each other. I was so glad that we were able to laugh at her errors or my errors or just laugh in general and not be too serious about the sessions. I enjoyed speaking with her and learning about her. We both agreed to continue meeting up to talk story and continue working on her pronunciation. She speaks really well, and I hope to see her reach her goals of trying to speak without a strong Japanese accent.