

STRESSING, PRONUNCIATION, AND SPEAKING EXERCISES IN “PATHWAY TO ENGLISH” TEXTBOOK

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Submitted: 2020-03-04

Accepted: 2020-05-05

Abstract: The aim of this research is to investigate how the “Pathway to English” textbook facilitates students’ learning of speaking, specifically in pronunciation and stressing of words. Learning the English language involves four skills: speaking, listening, reading, and writing. As such, textbooks need to be equipped to facilitate the teaching of these skills. However, globalization and the change in what types of English is accepted in broader world contexts may make the textbook obsolete. To see if the textbooks used in Indonesian High Schools are adequate enough to facilitate the teaching of stressing, pronunciation, and speaking, the researcher studied the “Pathway to English” textbook using a content analysis method to see if it has the necessary contents to facilitate the learning of stressing, pronunciation, and speaking. The results of this study shows that the textbook is inadequate to facilitate the learning of pronunciation and stressing, but it is equipped to facilitate the teaching of general English speaking skills. This means that English teachers in High Schools of Indonesia are expected to use supporting media to teach pronunciation and stressing when using the textbook.

Keywords: Pathway to English; textbook; speaking; stressing; pronunciation

INTRODUCTION

Learning a language is more than just the act of imitating a native speaker. It requires mastery in four different skills, namely: listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Husain, 2015). To that end, Language teachers and instructors must design their teaching activities and methodologies to teach all those skills. This includes the tools that they choose, as it too must cover all those skills.

One of the most commonly used tools to teach a Language is the textbook. The textbook is often used as the primary tool in classroom-based teaching, and the teachers would use other materials to supplement their teaching (Marie, Johnston, & Bill, 2018). Despite the item itself being static, creative teachers can make use of the humble textbook to teach in different ways, given enough agency (Tao & Gao, 2017). In addition, a textbook can also be obtained by the students, allowing them to see the first impressions of a curriculum and what they can expect to learn in future classes (Okeeffe, 2013). However, the worldwide shift into the era of digital and instantaneous communication has the potential of endangering the textbook in more ways than one.

The worldwide push of globalization has made English the primary language in communicating with people from all around the world. Naturally, this has inflated the number of English Language Learners. In mainland China, the most populated country in the world, there are over 390 million English Language Learners (Wei & Su, 2012). That statistic does not include the number of English Language Learners in Hong Kong and Taiwan, where the citizens use English as their first language. Naturally, with the number of learners in different countries, a lot of English accents will emerge. This phenomenon, called World Englishes (Rajagopalan, 2012), is changing the world to be more accepting of the various accents of the English Language (Sung, 2013). The researcher is interested in how the textbook used in English Language Education keeps up with these changes, specifically in the stressing and pronunciation section.

The teacher limits this research to the textbook used in high school level English. Despite the growing acceptance of the various accents of English, the world of education still seemingly focuses on the end result of the classes, and not the growth of the students. This tendency to focus on test scores is called the *systemsworld* (Sloan, 2006). The fact that textbooks are generalized means that they can be used by any teacher, regardless of agency. The second limitation of this study is the focus on pronunciation and stressing. In the World Englishes phenomenon, listening and speaking is the first skills the learners are exposed to, and the ones that the learners are constantly exposed to the most (Sung, 2013).

This research plans on analyzing a textbook used for English Language instruction in an Indonesian high school, specifically on speaking, stressing, and pronunciation. To that end, the research questions of this research are thus:

1. How does the “Pathway to English” textbook facilitate stressing and pronunciation?
2. How does the “Pathway to English” textbook facilitate speaking?

The Purpose of this research is to find out if English textbooks used by Indonesian teachers to teach English speaking skills, particularly stressing and pronunciation, have contents that can help the teachers teach those skills. The results of this study can hopefully reveal the effectivity of those books and can help future English teachers adjust their teaching method or, with adequate amount of agency, pick their own textbooks.

To validate the aim of this research, the researcher included several studies that are similar to this research. However, these studies differ in one or more aspects and are unique in one way or another.

The first related study is *Pronunciation Instruction and Students’ Practice to Develop their Confidence in EFL Oral Skills*. This study was conducted by Ana Cristina Tlazalo Tejeda and Nora M. Basurto Santos of Universidad Veracruzana, Xalapa, Mexico (Tlazalo Tejeda & Basurto Santos, 2014). This study was conducted at an elementary school, and was aimed to explore the impact of pronunciation training on the students’ confidence. The research found that pronunciation training conducted by teachers are important in English Language Learning contexts, and that these pronunciation training must involve a lot of practice to be impactful in developing the students’ speaking skills. Tejeda and Santos’ research is similar with the current research in that they both investigate about pronunciation. However, this research is a quantitative research while the sampled research is qualitative. In addition, while Tejeda and Santos researches the impact of pronunciation, this research aims to inquire how a textbook can be used to teach pronunciation and stressing. In addition, Tejeda and Santos’ research was conducted at an elementary school with students as the participants, while this research was conducted at a high school level and uses a textbook as the main subject of the research.

The second related study is *How Pronunciation is Taught in English Textbooks Published in Japan*, written by Junko Sugimoto and Yoko Uchida (杉本, 2018). This study was published in the *Seishin Studies Journal* in 2018. The researchers aim to find out how the textbook used in Japanese senior high schools can be used to teach pronunciation. This research focuses mainly on three items, namely the scope of pronunciation features, the nature of pronunciation exercises, and the type of English used as a pronunciation model. The results of this research shows that most pronunciation exercises are controlled. The most used pronunciation exercises are phonics, consonants, linking, and relation between tones and sentence types. In addition, the research found that the audio materials of the textbook is not effective in teaching speech especially in first year students, because it only employs one variation of the English accent. Sugimoto and Uchida’s research is similar in this research in that both concerns the contents of a textbook. However, their research is conducted on a textbook used in Japanese Junior High Schools, while this research is conducted on a textbook used in Indonesian Senior High Schools. All Japanese textbooks are issued by the government because they need to fit the curriculum established by the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology. Meanwhile, this research is conducted in Indonesia,

where the teachers are given enough agency to choose what textbook to use in their teaching activities.

The third and final related study, *An Analysis and Evaluation of Two Pronunciation Textbooks*, was written by Huang Jianbin and Yuan Fang. In their research, Jianbin and Fang investigated the impact of two pronunciation textbooks on the degree of satisfaction in English learners. This is a mixed method research, where the researchers distributed questionnaires to 102 students of Zhejiang University, followed by a content analysis of two pronunciation textbooks. The research found that the participants are satisfied by the textbooks and that the textbooks meet their demands (Jianbin & Fang, 2010). While both Jianbin and Fang's research both investigated the contents of a textbook, Jianbin and Fang's research was conducted using a textbook specifically designed to teach pronunciation, while this research used a textbook not only for pronunciation, but also other activities as well.

The main difference of this research compared to the research mentioned above is the location. Unlike those research, this research took place in Indonesia, a country that is united in an organization called ASEAN and uses English as a communicative language (Jenkins, 2006). As such, the English language learning process in Indonesia starts earlier, and by the time the students reach high school, they are expected to have learned some degree of English in junior high school.

METHOD

The research method used in this research was the quantitative research method, more specifically the textbook analysis method. Textbook analysis is used when the researcher wishes to examine the content and the design of a textbook. Because this research inquired about the contents of a textbook used to teach English Language on a High School level in Indonesia, textbook analysis was the most fitting method to use.

To select the textbook that will be analyzed for this research, the researcher has selected two criteria that it must fulfill. The first is that the textbook must be used by the majority of high school teachers. Because this research aimed to create a practical example of a teaching pronunciation, stressing, and speaking in a textbook used in Indonesian classrooms, this criterion was established by the researcher. The second criterion is that it must be a generic textbook. During the course of this research, the researcher found that textbooks specifically designed to teach pronunciation exist, and are used in classes outside of Indonesia. However, the researcher chose to not include pronunciation textbooks because unlike the generic textbook used by the teachers, students do not always own this type of textbook.

After establishing the criteria for the textbook, the researcher interviewed several English Language teachers of high school level institutions in Indonesia. The aim of the interview was to find out what textbook they use when teaching English. The results of the interview showed that most English teachers use the "Pathway to English" textbook published by Penerbit Erlangga, one of the prominent publishers of educational textbooks in Indonesia.

The researcher's method of analyzing this textbook consisted of several steps. The first step was procuring the textbook. The second step was verifying whether or not the procured textbook was the correct textbook. This was done by asking the teachers that were interviewed when the criteria of the research was established. The third was reading the textbook for any relevant themes, and the fourth was the data analysis.

Before the data from the textbook can be analyzed, it had to be organized through several coding processes. This research used the thematic coding method. Thematic coding is done when the researcher wishes to arrange and group the text into several categories. The categories that the researcher has grouped the findings to are: 1) Pronunciation exercises, 2) Stressing exercises, 3) Speaking activities. The data was then documented in the form of a Microsoft word file. The documentation showed the themes contained in the textbook in a categorized form. To answer the first research question, the researcher identified the

pronunciation and stressing exercises in the textbook and put them into chart 1. To answer the second research question, the researcher identified the speaking activities in the book and put it into chart 2.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

This study aims to find the pronunciation, stressing, and speaking activities in an English textbook used by High School English teachers in Indonesia. As such, the researcher established the two research questions above. To answer the research question, the researcher obtained a textbook commonly used by high school English teachers and performed content analysis on the book. The results of the research can be seen on this section in the form of charts, followed by the details of the findings.

The pronunciation and stressing training in the “Pathway to English” textbook

After thorough investigation of the Pathway to English textbook, the researcher only found one activity for practicing pronunciation and stressing training in the textbook, namely repetition. There are only eleven pronunciation training through repetition, with seven of the activities attributed to pronunciation and four of the activities attributed to stressing. A research conducted by Bajri (2018) investigated the effects on using repetition drilling to the pronunciation skill of students of Grade XI. His research shows positive effects, where the students’ mastery over pronunciation increased and the students themselves becoming more active in class activities (Bajri, 2018).

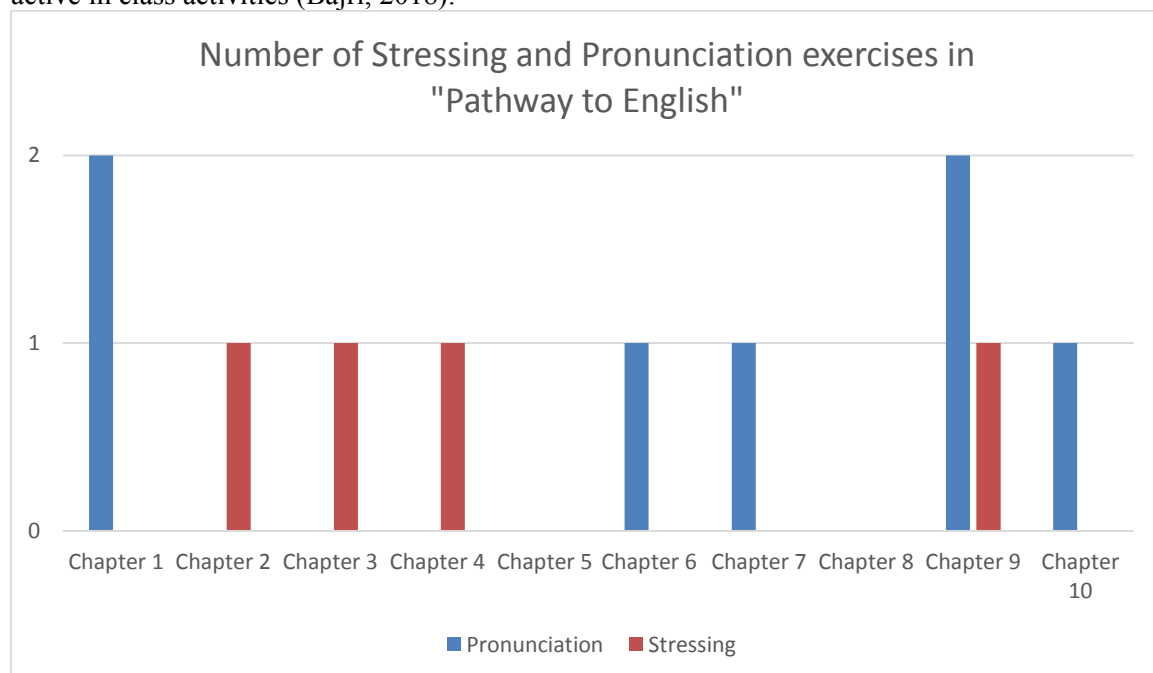


Chart 1: Number of Stressing and Pronunciation Exercises in “Pathway to English”

While both pronunciation and stressing exercises seem similar, the researcher decided to group the activities differently. Among the eleven repetition trainings, four of them pointed out the need to pay attention to the stressing of the words. Items number 4 and 12 (Listen and repeat these sentences. Pay attention to their intonations), number 16 (Listen to these sentences and repeat) and number 31 (Listen to the recording. Practice this dialogue with your friend, using correct intonation) fall under the stressing exercises category. Items 4 and 12 clearly

shows the need for the students to pay attention to their intonations, several words in item number 16 are italicized, showing the need to put stress on those words, and item number 31 clearly mentions the need for correct intonation, supported by a media. The use of visual aids such as these are commonly used in showing which words need to be stressed (Nair, Krishnasamy, & de Mello, 2017).

In addition to the stressing exercises, there are seven activities that are included under the pronunciation training category. In addition, all those exercises are in the form of repetition. The repetition method has always been used to teach pronunciation since the 17th century, and is among the most overused teaching methods (Murphy & Baker, 2015).

The Speaking Activities in the “Pathway to English” Textbook

In contrast to the lackluster content regarding pronunciation activities in the textbook, there are a lot of different types of speaking activities in the textbook. To make the data easier to analyze, the researcher has grouped the activities into several groups. Those groups are: 1) Discussion, 2) Roleplay, 3) Reading aloud, and 4) Presentation.

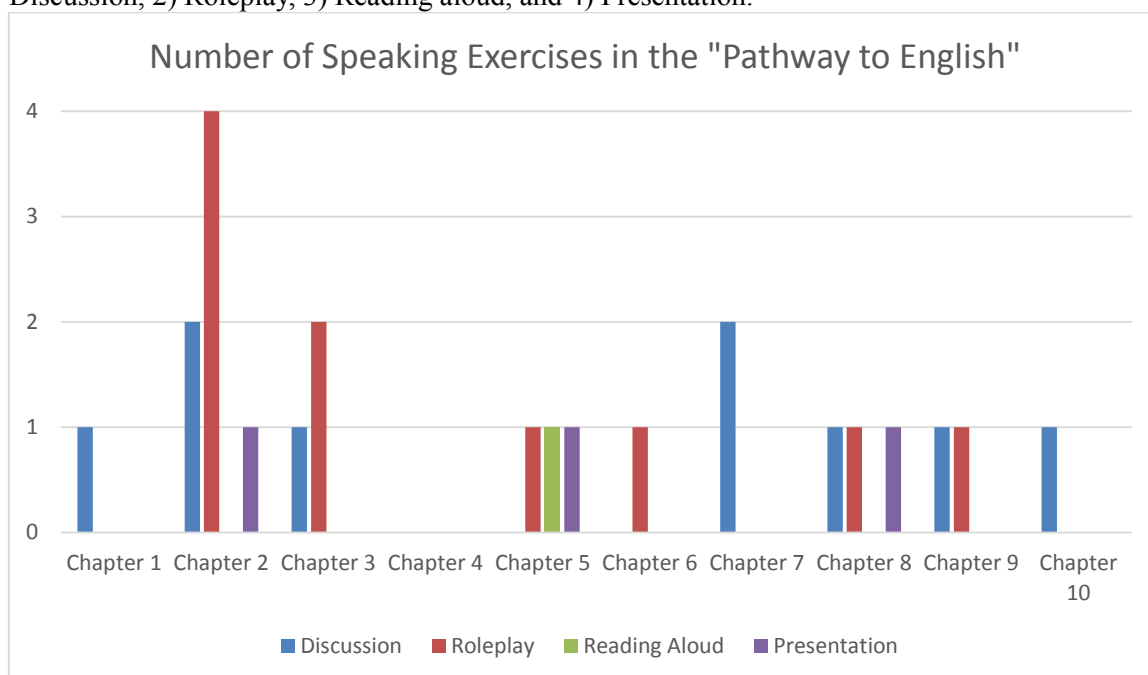


Chart 2: Number of Speaking Exercises in “Pathway to English”

There are nine items that fall under the discussion category. These items, for example item number 1 (Discuss the following questions with your friend and your teacher) and number 11 (Discuss in groups. Draw some conclusions about asking and giving advice, recommendation, or opinion that you have learned) involve the students discussing something they have learned in a previous exercise with their teacher or fellow students. Discussion is normally used to obtain details from a number of participants (O.Nyumba, Wilson, Derrick, & Mukherjee, 2018). The discussion method is effective on all grade levels, but can be unwieldy if used by an inexperienced teacher (Gall & Gillett, 2019).

Roleplay There are ten items that are categorized under roleplay. These items, such as item number 7 (Listen to the dialogue and act it out in front of the class) and item number 10 (Create a role play with your friend based on this situation) involve acting out a scenario according to the instructions. Role-play is often used by teachers to teach speaking skills (Altun, 2015) especially if they would like to teach communicative competence (Koran, 2015).

Reading aloud There is only one item under the reading aloud category. This item is item number 17 (Listen to the following monologue and then read it aloud), and it involves reading a monologue in front of the class. Reading aloud is one of the simplest activity that can be used in

teaching, and it can in fact be done at home, but it is seldom used (Ledger & Merga, 2018). Despite this, most teachers are confident in using this method in the classroom (Warner, Crolla, Goodwyn, Hyder, & Richards, 2016)

Presentation There are three items under the presentation category. Those items are item number 6 (Present the results of your discussions in front of the class. Let the other groups give comments or additional information), item number 19 (Present your biography in front of the class), and item number 27 (Present your factual report text in front of the class. Use these guidelines to give your report). These activities involve presenting something the students have created in front of the class. The presentation method is unique that it is normally used by the teachers, but it can also be used to teach the students how to speak in public (Yakovleva & Yakovlev, 2014)

Discussion

Stressing and Pronunciation

From the findings of the research, it can be surmised the “Pathway to English” textbook is not adequately equipped to teach stressing and pronunciation. This seem to be the case with most textbooks, as general skills ESL textbooks are poorly equipped to teach pronunciation (Derwing, Diepenbroek, & Foote, 2013; Mahadi & Shahrill, 2014). Teachers must rely on supporting materials such as visual media, digital media, or even the teachers themselves for correct pronunciation.

The use of authentic materials, both visual and digital, can help the teachers' performance. Authentic materials are made by native speakers, those who use the language in real world contexts (Akbari & Razavi, 2015; Connor, Bickens, & Bittman, 2009; Giouroukakis & Honigsfeld, 2010; Pardede, 2011; Ruday, 2011; Smetana, Odelson, Burns, & Grisham, 2009). Using the teachers to teach pronunciation presents another problem in of itself: Because there are many English accents in the world (Kachru, 2008), the accents used in the teaching and learning activities may vary. However, more recent research has shown that there are no significant differences between pronunciation teaching practices of native and non-native English teachers (Levis, Sonsaat, Link, & Barriuso, 2016).

Speaking

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

This research examined the facilitation of stressing, pronunciation, and speaking activities within textbooks used in Indonesian high schools. After content analysis have been performed, the conclusion is that there are very few activities that address stressing and pronunciation in Indonesian textbooks. This may be a trend with other countries as well, as other researchers found that English textbooks are poorly equipped to teach pronunciation (Derwing et al., 2013; Mahadi & Shahrill, 2014). As such, teachers must use supportive materials to help them teach stressing and pronunciation.

Teachers with enough agency and creativity must be able to find and use a variety of materials to support the teaching and learning activity (Akbari & Razavi, 2015; Connor et al., 2009; Giouroukakis & Honigsfeld, 2010; Pardede, 2011; Ruday, 2011; Smetana et al., 2009). In addition, there are also textbooks specifically tailored to teach pronunciation that can be used. Unlike the general textbooks, these pronunciation textbooks are suitable to teach pronunciation (Jianbin & Fang, 2010).

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