Abstract

Enhancing Post-secondary Language Majors' Accentual Awareness
through Video Analysis and Reflection

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Objectives: This study investigates the effectiveness of integrating video analysis and reflective practice into phonetic education to enhance accentual awareness among post-secondary language majors. The primary objective was to determine whether video-based assignments and structured reflection could improve students' ability to perceive, analyse, and articulate differences in English accents, beyond British Received Pronunciation (RP).

Methodology: Twenty-two students enrolled in a phonetics course participated in an individual assignment requiring them to select authentic YouTube videos featuring diverse English accents. Students were tasked with identifying segmental (consonant and vowel) and suprasegmental (syllable, stress, intonation) features, transcribing at least five words using the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA), and recording their own explanations. Written analyses required students to generalise differences between the target accent and British RP, supported by secondary sources, while reflective components encouraged self-assessment of accent familiarity and learning challenges.

Results: Analysis of assignment data revealed a broad engagement with a variety of English accents, including Hong Kong Cantonese, Putonghua, Japanese, American, British RP, Indian, Australian, and others. Assignment data were further analysed across key criteria: understanding and explanation, relevance and originality, IPA transcription, analyses and depth of reflection. Results indicated strong performance in understanding and explanation (average: 79.1/100), relevance and originality (83.6/100) and analyses (79.6/100), with moderate scores in IPA transcription (75/100). However, depth of reflection was notably lower (65.9/100), revealing challenges in articulating nuanced differences and providing example-rich commentary. Correlation analysis showed that overall assignment and coursework marks were strongly predicted by understanding and explanation ($r = 0.87$ and $r = 0.79$ respectively), followed by relevance and originality ($r = 0.75$ and $r = 0.52$ respectively), while technical skills in transcription ($r = 0.58$ and 0.65 respectively) and analyses ($r = 0.62$ and 0.4 respectively) had moderate influence. Reflection scores were weakly correlated with other criteria ($r = -0.27$ to 0.12), suggesting that metacognitive skills require distinct instructional support. Students excelled in recognising and explaining accentual features, but many struggled with suprasegmental analysis, particularly in identifying and describing rhythm, stress, and intonation patterns. Reflections often lacked depth and concrete examples, indicating a need for more guided prompts and exemplars. These findings highlight the importance of explicit instruction in suprasegmental analysis and reflective writing, as well as the value of peer review and scaffolded reflection to deepen learning outcomes.

Discussion: The study concludes that integrating video analysis and structured reflection into phonetic education effectively fosters accentual awareness and practical analytical skills. Multimedia assignments expose students to a wider range of accents, while reflection encourages self-evaluation and awareness of accent biases. The results underscore the need for curriculum designers to incorporate diverse accent exposure and targeted support for reflective practice, ensuring that students are better prepared to navigate the linguistic diversity encountered in academic and professional contexts. This pedagogical model may serve as a reference for similar courses aiming to bridge theory and practice in phonetic education.