

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

1.0 Context of the Study

When English language was proposed to be reintroduced as the medium of instructions for Mathematics and Science subjects at three school levels beginning January 2003, this had indeed raised many brows. This had also led to an assumption that our education system had somewhat deteriorated due to the usage of bahasa Malaysia as the sole medium of instructions.

The scenario we have here in Malaysia has much to do with the outcome of our education system. The acceptance of the New Education Policy among others provides steps to be taken in the conversion of the former English schools to national schools. The gradual implementation of the national language policy in the education system of the country took place beginning the year 1970 to 1983 with the annulment of the Lower Certificate of Education (LCE) examination in 1978, and the Malaysian Certificate of Education (MCE) examination in 1980. An estimated total of 6.3 million students (from the year 1975 to 2002 only) have gone through this national education system up to at least Form Five or SPM level.

It is undeniable that this batch has reaped its harvest. It has produced thousands of professionals, academicians, specialists, scientists, technocrats, leaders and many more who have contributed to the Malaysian state-building. But nevertheless, to a certain extent, something is still lacking. The influential wave of globalisation and information and communication technology is one good reason for a revamp of the national language policy. It is essential to keep in mind that though bahasa Malaysia plays a key political role in creating a culturally homogeneous polity out of a multi-lingual society, English language on the other hand, has a functional role by virtue of the nation, particularly for Malaysia to remain globally competitive.

In addition, certain problems were overlooked throughout the nationalisation of the school system. Little consideration was given to students from non-English backgrounds. The syllabus contained the maximum items to be mastered. Being a common content syllabus arranged in a linear format, the emphasis was a complete coverage of all the items at a common pace, irrespective of the students' lack of exposure or usage to the language at home, or their immediate need to learn the language. With the switch to bahasa Malaysia as the one and only medium of instructions at all level of education, the English language, though compulsory for all pupils, is taught as just another subject in the school system.

There is a persistent need to clarify that although English has been accorded the status of a second language in Malaysia, it is only second to bahasa Malaysia in importance and is not a second language to the definition in applied linguistics. English language may not necessarily be the second language of Malaysian students. It can be the first, second, or even a foreign language depending on among other things, the locality they live in. For most students in the rural areas, English is a foreign language based on the quantity of exposure and usage to the language. As a result, those whose exposure and usage to the language were limited to the language classroom became underachievers. Sadly, they would continue to be so as the pace of teaching could not be slowed down. Bearing this situation in mind, it is unthinkable to imagine their oncoming uphill battle as they moved on in their pursuance for academic excellence.

Since that the education system has shifted to using bahasa Malaysia and English language is thus given the status of a subject in the school curriculum with the allotment of 200 minutes a week, one could expect the level of competence to drop. Carrying the status as an essential second language, the role of English language in Malaysia is fast changing from being the language for education and official proceedings to being a tool of communication in limited circumstances. Despite the fact that the role of English in the nation has changed from an official language to that of a second language, there is a continued need for Malaysians to be competent in the language. English is essential for

employment opportunities and for higher education, and English is a necessity for Malaysians of various ethnics to rise up the socioeconomic ladder.

Though much has been done to enhance English as the most important language, it is neither correlative with the intensity of use of the language, nor is it with the level of proficiency attained. There is a steady decline in the standard of English language. The opinion from various quarters that there is a drop in the standard of English among Malaysian speakers is undeniably justified.

Hence, the government has taken a very drastic and radical action to reintroduce English language as the medium of instructions for Mathematics and Science subjects at three school levels to remedy this pivotal and unsettling situation. The year 2003 marked the first year that Mathematics and Science subjects were conducted in the English language. This 2006/2007 academic year sees a major face-lift for Maths and Science tertiary education. The recurring question – Is this an appropriate prescription to address the crucial matter?

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Technology, especially the emergence of the Internet, is affecting every aspect of education and changing the way we teach and learn. According to Li and Hart (1996), the web's multimedia capabilities and interactive functions have made it an attractive medium to conduct instruction.

The advent of the Internet and the wide spread of technology in our life create new opportunities for language learning. Since most of the Internet content is in English, the teachers of English gain access to the enormous variety of authentic materials relating to all spheres of life at almost no cost. Teachers using technology in their English language classrooms are not only improving their instruction for their students, but they are also changing the very nature of that instruction.

Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) is an approach to language teaching and learning in which computer technology is used as an aid to the presentation, reinforcement and assessment of material to be learned. The reasons for using CALL include experiential learning, motivation, enhance student achievement, authentic materials for study, greater interaction, individualisation, independence from a single source of information, and global understanding.

The main basic element proposed in this study to aid the teaching of phonetics, namely Podcast, has received a lot of attention from CALL researchers. A Podcast is an audio file that is downloaded from the Internet, after which one can listen to it on computer or an MP3/portable music player, for example iPod or iRiver. Although the word 'Podcast' is a combination of the words 'iPod' and 'broadcast', an iPod is not needed to subscribe to or listen to Podcasts. All that is needed is a computer with speakers or a device that can play the downloaded digital audio files.

An ESL Podcast is an audio file which comes together with a Learning Guide and Teacher's Page. The Learning Guide includes:

- Complete transcripts of ESL Podcast
- Definitions
- Sample sentences
- Comprehension questions
- Additional explanations
- Cultural notes
- Tips on improving one's English

Vodcasts are identical to Podcasts with the exception being that Vodcasts are video-based Podcasts. To play a Vodcast, the end-user must have an appropriate digital video player installed on their computer, such as iTunes, QuickTime or Windows Media Player, or a portable digital video player, such as the video iPod.

Podcasting is a fast, convenient and low-cost way to extend the eLearning offering and improve the learning experience. There are many benefits achieved through Podcasting. Firstly, it enhances learning experience. Learners can listen to Podcast material multiple times, allowing them the opportunity to grasp complicated concepts as well as study and review content more effectively. Secondly, it is flexible. One of the largest benefits of eLearning is that it provides an asynchronous learning environment that allows students to access course content any time, any place. Podcasting provides the same. Thirdly, is the immediacy of the podcast. Instead of just reading text on-screen, students can develop more meaningful relationships between class peers and their instructors through audio and visual communication.

Podcasts can supplement current online course material, providing a more robust and enhanced educational offering. The 508 Compliance in podcasting provides audio and video resources within an online course for blind and deaf students. Podcast is also convenient for its portability. Since Podcasts can be downloaded to portable digital audio/video players, distance learners do not need to be in front of their computer at all times to receive instructional material.

Podcast's Multi-Modal Learning provides multiple ways of learning the subject matter. The more ways people can learn something, the more they will genuinely understand it. In addition, as our lives constantly get busier, podcasting also allows for one to multitask. For example, students can listen to a Podcast while they exercise or clean the house. Finally, Podcasts require low developmental cost, and also low cost to the learner. Creating Podcasts requires inexpensive hardware and software – most of which people likely already have, such as a computer microphone. Moreover, Podcasts and the computer software to listen to are free.

Podcasting and Vodcasting have tremendous potential for eLearning. There is already a wide range of educational content being developed for and delivered by Podcasting. It is important for us as educators to think constantly of the possibilities and potential this ingenious technology has to offer. As with any instructional endeavor, Podcasting in

eLearning environments must be aligned with the instructional goals and objectives and simultaneously provide a creative, interesting, and genuine learning experience for the students.

1.2 Research Problem

The Effects of Utilising ESL Podcast in Phonetics Instruction.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to examine the effects of utilising ESL Podcast in phonetics instruction. The researcher believes that appropriate research design will uncover the effects of using this approach. It is also the purpose of this study to document, describe, and illuminate the significant and protruding actions, events, and processes that contribute to this attained effects.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to find out the effects of utilising ESL Podcast in phonetics instruction. In order to do that, the researcher needs to:

- i) examine the measures taken by the instructor in promoting the:
 - a. teaching of phonetics using the ESL Podcast.
 - b. learning of phonetics using the ESL Podcast.
- ii) examine the strategies used by the:
 - a. instructor teaching phonetics using the ESL Podcast.
 - b. learners learning phonetics using the ESL Podcast.
- iii) examine the students' performance before and after the using this approach.
- iv) to examine the instructor's and students' predicaments while undergoing the instruction using this approach.

1.5 Research Questions

The research problem here is to find out the effects of utilising ESL Podcast in phonetics instruction. The researcher's initial concern is 'How does the ESL Podcast affect the

teaching and learning of phonetics?', and this, hence, ignites a lot of questions as to how the technology has an effect to the outcome.

The research questions formulated are to gather information that highlights the beliefs, attitudes, actions, events, processes, and social structures that may have significant influence to the research problem (Gay & Airasian, 2003). The researcher hopes that the research questions will lead to a more pertinent questions and thus illuminate on the phenomenon under study.

Based on the research problem and objectives of this study, the research questions formulated for this study are identified from the sources of informant, namely the:

1. Instructor

- a. Who is the instructor?
- b. What are her experiences, qualifications, and attitude towards using the ESL Podcast in instruction?
- b. How does she execute the teaching and learning using the ESL Podcast?
- c. What other activities are carried out with regard to the teaching and learning of phonetics?

2. Students

- a. What do the students do in the English language classroom?
- b. What learning strategies do they use in the language classroom?
- c. What other factors outside the classroom which contribute to the effects?

1.6 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual model is adapted from Hidden Markov Model (HMM) 1981. An HMM-based speech recogniser consists of five basic components: a) an acoustic signal analyser which computes a spectral representation of the incoming speech from the Podcast; b) a set of phone models trained on large amounts of actual speech data; c) a lexicon for converting sub-word phone sequences into words; d) statistical language model or

Instruction	Approach, method, and technique used in delivering the Teaching of English as a Second or Foreign Language.
Case Study	A way to study a system or organisation which portrays view, people, and action, to give enough context to understand a phenomena.
Second Language	Refers to another language besides the speaker's mother tongue or first language. It may not be rated as the official language of the country but it usually covers a large domain of use among the people of that country.
Foreign Language	One in which the target language is not the mother tongue of any group within the country where it is being learnt and has no internal communication function.
Interpretive Analysis	Researcher's attempt to articulate some set of understandings about a particular situation, cultural form, or social process.
Interview	A formal or informal meeting for consultation or clarification on certain issues.
High English Proficiency (HEP)	Refers to second language learners who have acquired a high level of proficiency in LHP 455 English language based on the Speaking Band Scale provided. HEP A , A-

Average English Proficiency (AEP)	Refers to second language learners who have acquired a mediocre level of proficiency in the LHP 455 English language based on the Speaking Band Scale Speaking Skills Band Scale provided. AEP B+ , B , B-
Low English Proficiency (LEP)	Refers to second language learners who have acquired low levels of proficiency in LHP 455 English language based on the Speaking Band Scale provided. LEP C+ , C , C- , D+ , D , D- , F
Non-Participant Observation	Observation done as an outsider.
Participant Observation	Observation done as an insider.
Phenomenon	The central idea, event, happening, incident about which a set of actions or interactions are directed at managing, handling, or to which the set action is related.
Reliability	The attribute of an evaluation which would award the same judgement when administered at different time by different people.
Validity	Concerning the appropriateness of the interpretations made from test measurements.

1.9 Limitation of the Study

Due to the constraint of time, the researcher has to carry out the study during four double-period of the students' contact hours only. The samples chosen for this study are a group of 20 final year LHP 455 - Pronunciation Skills students from the School of Humanities,

out of 430 students who have registered for this course. Therefore, the findings from the study may not reflect the entire general population of the Humanities students. It has to be reiterated, however, that the purpose of this study is to understand and not to generalise.

The samples used in this study are not equal representatives of both gender and also the three major ethnic groups in Malaysia due to factors such as the choice of fields of study and the selection criteria of admission into university.

In order to understand the phenomenon under study, the researcher anticipates that much longer time is expected to be familiarised with the qualitative research paradigm, to then transcribe, analyse, and to carry out an initial interpretation of the data in order to understand the issues involved, to triangulate the data collected, and also to organise the information into categories and topics.

As a novice researcher in the qualitative field of study, unintentional shortcomings are anticipated too even though all possible measures will be taken to ensure the reliability and validity of the research.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

2.0 The Internet

The Internet is an information carrier - a medium – which links information providers to information users. Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) is an approach to language teaching and learning in which computer technology is used as an aid to the presentation, reinforcement and assessment of material to be learned, usually including a substantial interactive element. The CALL is concerned with the pedagogic potential of this medium, with its strengths and weaknesses in respect of educational provision and educational requirements.

Gerald Fox (1998) considers the use of the Internet in second language. In his article ‘The Internet: Making it Work in the ESL Classroom’, he focuses on how the internet can be used to motivate students in their efforts to acquire English proficiency skills. Also, he discusses the most important components of a successful on-line programme such as integration of the on-line component with the curriculum, sufficient level of computer competence, both for the teacher and of students, and finally, the active teacher involvement in a variety of roles, as the tutor, supervisor, teacher, assistant, and technician.

Victoria Muehleisen (1997) discusses different possibilities of using the Internet in the classroom in her article ‘Projects Using the Internet in College English Classes’. She strongly advocates using the Web in foreign language instruction, mainly because learning to use a computer provides strong intrinsic motivation for learning English. The Internet places English in an international context, Internet projects are interactive and facilities for using the Net are often readily available. She urges English teachers to make use of the Internet in their English classes since the projects involving the Web are

a good way of motivating students to use English outside the classroom and to make English the part of their daily lives.

Krajka (2000) says that one should incorporate on-line lessons into the curriculum because such lessons provide recency to the classroom, since students can experience problems or read about issues which relate to the present day, and are not out-dated because of the time that passes from the publication of the coursebook. The Internet gives students variety and choice, since they have the enormous number of sites to choose from. Every student should be encouraged to do something different, and later the class could compare their findings orally. In this way adding speaking and listening development to the lesson. This is a sharp contrast with the traditional coursebook, where the whole class is given the same text or exercise, and there is no possibility of change.

Krajka adds that because of its very nature that the Web is multi-national and without borders, the lessons with the use of the Internet serve best the goal of increasing student's cultural awareness, allowing them to know and appreciate other cultures, giving students the feeling of having the whole world right at their fingertips and moving from one place to another without any obstacles or cost.

The Internet lessons provide Web materials which are completely authentic, unabridged and not prepared with a learner in mind, which can be sometimes difficult in terms of language, but extremely rewarding when students realise that what they read or write is real and belongs to the outside world, not the world of the classroom and textbook.

Students, especially teenagers, are additionally motivated through using computers and the Web, especially when they do not have the chance to use it outside the classroom. Here, some students might feel a little intimidated by computers and the Web, and it is the responsibility of the teacher to remove these psychological barriers, either through giving necessary assistance or mixed grouping. The on-line lessons, while done from

time to time, might add some new flavour to the classroom, and the Internet instruction could spice classes up with some new elements.

Warshauer and Whittaker (1997) asserts that teachers should carefully consider their goals, since little is gained by adding random on-line activities into the classroom. Clarifying course goals is, thus, an important first step toward the successful use of the Internet. The next crucial aspect of the Internet instruction is integration, and the teacher should think about how to integrate on-line activities into the syllabus rather than adding these on top of the rest of the classroom activities in a disconnected fashion.

Also, the teacher should be aware of all the complexities of the on-line learning environment, such as difficulties in scheduling access to the computer lab, or students finding computers outside the class time to continue their activities, malfunctioning hardware and software or problems with students' schedules not allowing them to return to the computer lab at a time when computers are available to complete their assignments. Support from the teacher should be given to students, so that they do not feel lost or overwhelmed by technology, and students should be involved in decisions about the content of their learning, which is possible given the variety and abundance of materials on the Web.

2.1 Phonetics and Speech Communications

According to SOCRATES Thematic Network in Phonetics and Speech Communication, there are a number of special requirements of speech sciences as elaborated below.

2.1.1 Multiple Disciplines

The study of speech sciences is inherently multidisciplinary, involving elements of linguistics, modern languages, psychology, computer science and electrical engineering as well as many biomedical areas.

Traditionally, expertise in all these areas has been distributed across a number of academic departments, each with its own human resources, facilities and tools. Students

find the multiplicity of disciplines hard to manage, as their background rarely prepares them in breadth. The Internet as a medium of communication can help in a number of ways.

Firstly, it gives students the means to draw on varied expertise throughout the community. Secondly, it facilitates communication between ‘virtual’ communities of teachers or students working in a particular sub-discipline. Thirdly, it enhances quality and reduces a duplication of effort in the creation of teaching materials. Finally, it encourages the dissemination of good practice.

2.1.2 Distance Learning

Many students in modern languages or computer science, for instance, find their interests in speech science cannot be satisfied by their local institution. There are relatively few specialised departments of Phonetics or Speech Science in Europe. The Internet enables students to participate at a distance with teachers in other institutions, using the variety of mechanisms for computer mediated communication.

2.1.3 Language Diversity

Speech science education should be built on the universals and specifics of human languages. The Internet can allow easier access to linguistic resources, tutorial information and native speakers of any human language regardless of geographical location.

2.1.4 Multiple Media

Speech processing is inherently multimedia in nature, involving both sound and vision. Current printed materials struggle to convey the co-ordination between articulation, sound production and sound perception. The Internet standards for audio, video and even three-dimensional models could lead to materials where such interactions become much clearer to the students. For example, a 3D model of a vibrating larynx.

2.1.5 Practical Skills

The speech sciences student needs to acquire practical skills in listening, analysis and performance. Interactive assessment and peer assessment through the Internet can increase the efficiency of student self-study in these skills.

2.2 Listening and Speaking

In giving exposure, listening activities are important as they provide context, vocabulary and structure. In designing listening activities for the students, language instructors should simulate the listening found in the real world as far as possible. This is to develop students as active listeners as they need to be in the real world as according to Rost (1991), it is vitally important for the listeners to become engaged in the process of listening and develop the desire to understand.

One of the purposes of a listening activity is to expose the students to spontaneous language as much as possible. However, if students are only given listening activities based on a monologue read by the instructor, they are deprived of the experience of listening to an authentic spoken language. Monologue as defined by Burgess (1995) means speech produced by one participant in communication with another or others. Such speech tends to be extended, and the participation of the 'others' is mostly as listeners.

When students learn the English language, they are influenced by the sounds, rhythm and stress of their mother tongue. The instructor must, therefore, help the students to hear and produce the correct sounds, rhythm and stress which are found in the English language according to the phonic rules. Minimal pair drills, consonant digraphs, voiced and voiceless consonants should be practiced through listening and pronouncing. Practice in these areas may be done through pronunciation games, discussions, story-telling, miming, or play-acting.

2.3 Decoding the Input in Language Learning

The issue of language decoding is an abstract one. Decoding is intangible and not readily available for scrutiny. However, this does not mean it is an impossible task to analyse the processes involved in decoding. Although their views may differ, it is largely accepted that the process of decoding a language are: the recognition and selection of sounds (for listening), letters (for reading), and a cognitive process where the message is checked and matched with the listener's/reader's schemata with the information already stored in the long-term memory. Curfs' (1982) diagram is very useful for us to understand the processes involved in decoding process. Nevertheless, we must bear in mind that as stated by Rost (1990), it is more accurate to think of the processes of perception and interpretation as continuous, overlapping, and mutually informing.

With reference to the diagram, one would notice that competent learners depend a great deal on the recognition and selection of significant items. Competent learners also depends on their own ability to select information correctly, essentially because if the wrong item of information is selected, a breakdown in communication is almost inevitable as the item incorrectly selected may contain the wrong piece of information or none at all.

Similarly, Broughton (1978) suggests that the sender has to encode his thought, while the receiver decodes the language. Most of the time, these processes are so fast that one could say that both sender and receiver perform them instantaneously and virtually simultaneously. When thoughts are very complex, the process takes longer. Based on this concept, when an unfamiliar language (English language) is being used, the process is slow enough for the distinction between thought and language to be clearly observed. Therefore, it should be possible to observe the LHP 455 students decoding the exposed language to them.

2.4 Conclusion

An approach of ESL Podcast can be considered innovative. The recent approach to CALL sees it in relation to other technologies in society, and also to stress the possibility may only become fully effective in language teaching and learning when they have become normalised. Normalisation of CALL will be achieved when we use computers every day in language teaching as we use pens and books, without excessive expectations and without undue fear. Normalisation could therefore be seen as potentially a valuable aim and agenda for second language teaching and learning.

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

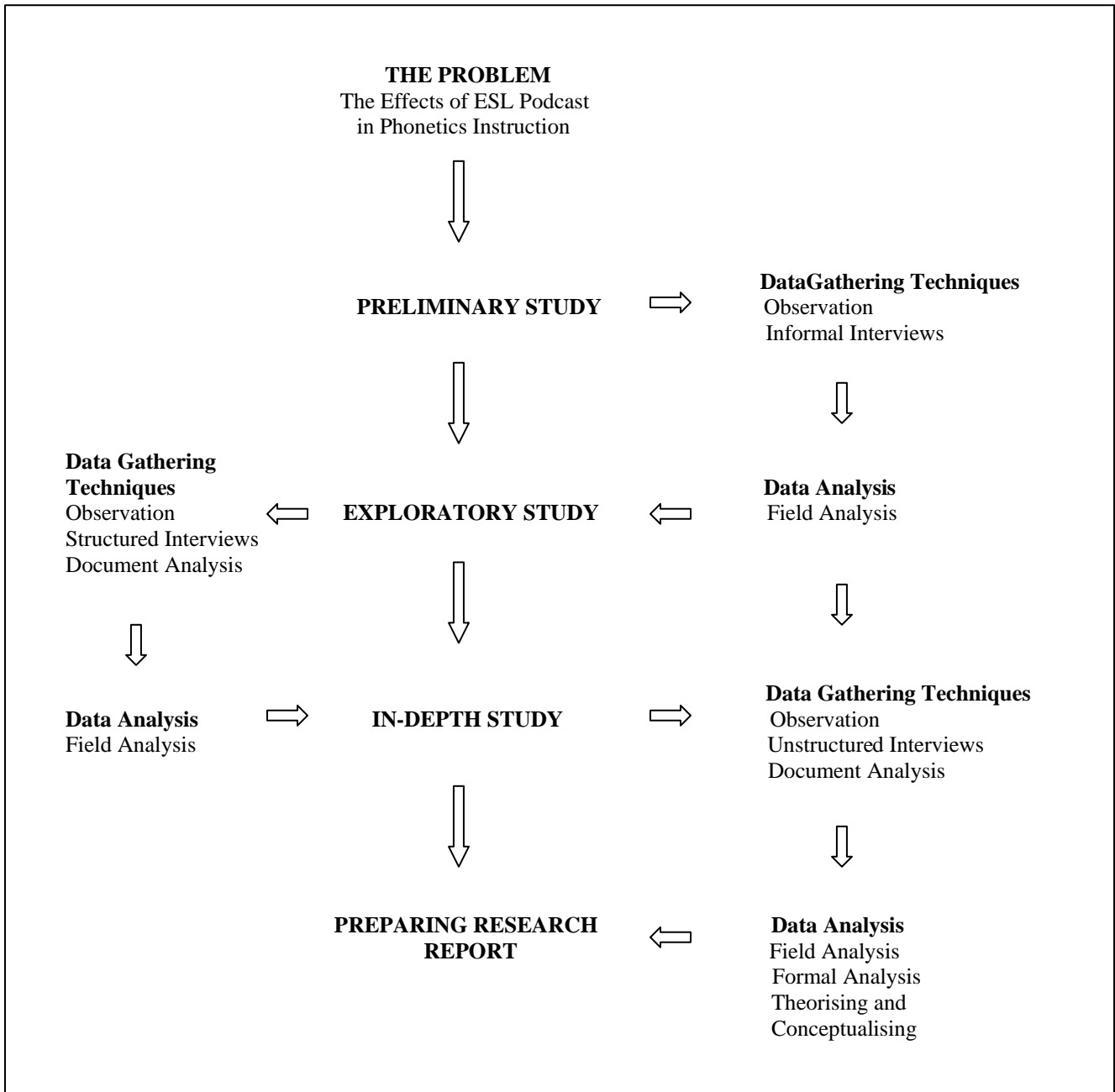
3.0 Research Design

This study is to examine the effects of utilising ESL Podcast in phonetics instruction. The researcher will adopt the case study approach as a research strategy. This is because the study draws attention to the question of what specifically can be learned from a single case rather than the generalisation beyond. Case studies can be used to provide basic information on the complexity of the little understood learning processes. It is a way to study systems or organisations which gives an in-depth view on the scrutinised matter.

The following will be the stages of the study.

- The Preliminary Stage
- The Exploratory Stage
- The In-Depth Stage

In the preliminary stage, the researcher's main aim is to collect initial data and refine the conceptualisation, to explore the phenomenon of experience at the site, to become grounded or familiarised with the site, and to become acquainted with the key personnel at each site. The researcher will acquire basic understanding of the research problem through data gained from observations and informal interviews. It will aid the researcher to review the research framework, research plan, and also to review the literature for the study. The data will be reviewed from the researcher's own experience, and also the experience of the respondents and informants. This is a pivotal stage of the study as it will help the researcher to gain a better understanding of what to focus on. The researcher will need basic and fundamental data that will aid in gathering data for the subsequent stages of the study. This will also be the initial point where the problem of the study is formally established.



The Research Design

In the exploratory stage, the researcher aims at investigating further the phenomenon that would have surfaced in the first stage. It is also to triangulate data which has emerged during the preliminary stage. The researcher will use various techniques such as observations, interviews, and archives in order to gain further understanding of the main issues and phenomenon.

In the in-depth stage, the researcher will try to narrow down and triangulate the findings of the initial two stages, and subsequently to focus and refocus the study issues that will be emerging. The researcher will use different techniques to gather data such as observations, interviews, and archives. A variety of methods and data collection strategies will be utilised in order to achieve the objective of in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under study.

Finally, the researcher will transfer the field notes and data gathered in a systematic coding for analysis and presentation. LeCompte and Preissle's (1993) 'assumptive mode', which is the continuum of possibilities for approaching a research study, will be employed to report the result of this analysis.

It has to be reminded that the researcher's operational design is only tentative. This is because as the research gradually unfolds, necessary adjustments and adaptations are needed. Nevertheless, the operational design is important in directing the study and making it concertedly organised. (Please refer to diagram on page 17).

3.1 Population and Research Sample

The purposive samples in the study will consist of carefully selected LHP 455 instructor, and 20 LHP 455 (Pronunciation Skills) students out of 430 students who have registered for this course. They will be chosen based on their involvement and also their willingness to take part in the study.

3.2 Research Instrument

Based on the objectives and research questions of the study, the researcher plans three stages in order to gather the data. The researcher will be the main instrument, utilising non-participant observations, unstructured interviews, and archives for collecting empirical data using the research questions formulated as guides.

3.3 Research Implementation Procedure

The gathering of evidence in this study will be done in strict adherence to the principles of data collection effort in case study research (Merriam, 1988). The three principles are:

- multiple sources of evidence
- a case study data base
- chain of evidence.

Based on the objectives of the study, the researcher decides on the following techniques for gathering data:

- Non-Participant Observations
- Unstructured Interviews
- Archives

i. Non-Participant Observations

Observational protocols will be one of the main techniques of data gathering. Everything possible pertaining to the issue that happens in the setting will be observed continuously and the researcher will try to record it virtually as it exists. The intention of observation is to record events as accurately and as honestly as possible. The initial observation will aid the researcher to get acquainted with the research setting. It will also provide data that will guide the researcher to focus on emerging issues during the course of the study. In this study, observation entails the systematic noting and recording of events, behaviours, and artifacts in the social setting chosen for the study. Therefore, observation and field notes are closely connected with one another.

During the preliminary stage, the researcher will conduct non-participant observations on the teaching and learning of phonetics in the classroom without predetermined categories or strict observational checklist. This will enable the researcher to discover recurring patterns of behaviour and relationships. The researcher will document these observations by writing extensive field notes of the lessons. After analysing the data from the field notes, the researcher will become more focused in the exploratory stage.

The observation that will be conducted during the exploratory stage will be confined to the phonetics class only. During the observation, the researcher will note down whichever is noteworthy, and these notes later will be deemed very useful upon analysis as they provide answers beyond the research questions of the study.

Finally, in the in-depth study stage, the researcher will conduct selective observations that focus on specific issues in order to understand the bigger picture of the study. Selective observations will also be used to triangulate findings from the earlier stages of the study. (Please refer to Table 1: Scheme for Observations)

ii. Unstructured Interviews

According to Silverman (1993), interviews in a qualitative research are useful for gathering facts, assessing beliefs about facts, identifying feelings and motives, commenting on standard of action (what could be done about situations), present or previous behaviour, and eliciting reasons and explanations.

The form of interviews that the researcher will use is the semi-structured interview. Interview sessions will be used to analyse what is being surfaced in the questionnaires. In preparing semi-structured interviews, the researcher has prepared a series of issues that need to be clarified during the interviews. The researcher will allow the interviews to flow so as not to influence the participants' line of thoughts. In a qualitative approach, the researcher studies the perspectives of the research participants. Nevertheless, it is essential to be reminded that although interviews appear to be indispensable in gathering data from the research participants, there is a very real possibility that the participants may not be entirely frank with the interviewer.

In the preliminary stage of the study, the researcher will conduct unstructured interviews after carrying out observations on the teaching and learning of phonetics in the classroom. The interviews will be later written out into transcripts and it will form the main source of data for this study. (Please refer to Table 2: Scheme for Interviews)

iii. Archives

Another method of available data collection is studying the archives such as the written documents, records and relevant artifacts. However, they may contain questionable elements such as asserted by Lincoln and Guba (1996), '*...that they may be unrepresentative, they may be selective, lack objectivity, be of unknown validity, and may be possibly deceptive*'. Hence, the validity of archival data should be evaluated initially, the authenticity of the source should be examined and cross-referencing should be done.

The archives will prove essential, especially in the first two stages of the study. The archival data is classified as secondary data because the researcher does not participate in the setting or with the subject and thus has no personal sense of the data, nor can he personally directly verify the data (Vierra, 1998). For case studies, the most important use of documents is to provide and to increase the amount of evidence from other sources. (Please refer to Table 3: Scheme for Collecting Archival Data)

3.4 Data Analysis Procedure

Since a qualitative research needs to be flexible in order to allow for the certainties of the social setting and to facilitate the gathering and analysis of data, therefore, an elaborate and rigid design cannot accommodate the flexibility of this qualitative approach. The researcher finds it best to segregate it into the three stages as mentioned earlier. The three stages are designed to facilitate the analyses of data and to help identify new areas of interest and to direct and redirect further data collection.

The raw data in the form of field notes from observations, transcripts of interviews from the preliminary and exploratory stages will be carefully analysed so that the researcher will be able to discover or identify noticeable points or recurring patterns of behaviour and relationships that will aid to focus on the gathering of data in the focus stage.

The accumulated data will be analysed and key words and phrases will be highlighted. Important sections in the field notes will be marked and the researcher will note down her own ideas, opinions, and reflections on the left-hand margin of the field notes. Key

words, phrases, patterns of behaviour, participants' actions and ways of thinking, events and topics that appear quite regularly in the field notes and transcripts will be coded accordingly. The researcher will also countercheck the data collected with the participants in order to validate the issues which surface from the field notes or those transcribed from the interviews.

In the in-depth stage of the study, the researcher will try to triangulate the findings of the earlier stages through in-depth interviewing, observations, and the collection of archival data. At the end of this final stage, the researcher will review the data again in order to assess whether there are any discrepancies in the data. Only then will the researcher halt the data gathering effort and begin the final analysis.

At the final stage, the researcher will develop a coding system to separate the data based on regularities, patterns, themes, and topics. These will be based on the objectives, research questions and conceptual framework of the setting.

In the final analysis, the researcher will be able to answer the research questions and other research questions which emerge as the study progresses. Finally, it will enable the researcher to give a holistic picture of the phenomenon that accurately represents the perspectives of the research participants in the setting.

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