"Assessing Pronunciation Gains"

Bronwyn Mehan

Master of Arts TESOL

University of Technology, Sydney
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ABSTRACT

The objective of the research project was to explore methods of assessing improvement in pronunciation, at the phonemic and prosodic levels, of advanced learners of English as a second language.

Of particular interest to the researcher was the question of whether gains could be observed in the rhythm and intonation of the spoken English of young adult Vietnamese. Further, the project was concerned with the issue of whether learners may have different rates of development at the phonemic and prosodic levels. The hypothesis is that students whose rhythm and intonation more closely approximates that of spoken English will have less difficulty making themselves understood compared to students who make similar errors with individual sounds but whose speech is characterised by staccato rhythm and problems in stress and pitch.

The subjects of the study were twelve senior high school students who had been in Australia for between one to eight years and whose first language is Vietnamese. The students were participating in a Pronunciation Program held at a large comprehensive suburban school for fifteen minutes, four mornings per week.

The research data consists of seven oral assessment tasks which were administered and tape recorded at regular intervals over a nine month period, between February and October in 1993. The assessment included prepared and impromptu speaking, reading, role play and listening tasks as well as a reading test which was administered in March and repeated in October.

The study found that students' performance improved from between 10% - 40% in the assessment tasks. Three of the students were found to rate better in terms of their control of rhythm and intonation than in their pronunciation of phonemes. However, for the majority of the twelve students these two aspects of

spoken English seemed to be developing at a fairly even rate.

The project concludes that aspects of pronunciation such as rhythm and intonation can best be assessed using authentic, interactive tasks as opposed to structured reading activities and prepared talks. The project's method of assessing pronunciation gains using a 5-point scale for the key areas of phonemes, word and sentence stress and tone is recommended for use by teachers, and by students for self-assessment.

I   RATIONALE

The students who are the subjects of this research project are young adult Vietnamese senior students who are experiencing varying degrees of difficulty with spoken English and who are participating in a Pronunciation Program. As almost all of the students concerned have been studying English for less than five years, many of their communication problems stem from their level of language. Whether in writing or in speech therefore, their use of vocabulary and grammar may cause communication breakdown or a qualitative difference between the intended meaning and what is produced. When communicating in the spoken mode, a further barrier to effective communication is pronunciation.

Following the initial encounters with the students at the commencement of the program it was clear that there were a handful of students who had more difficulties with pronunciation than the others. These were students who could not produce even fairly commonplace utterances clearly enough to be understood the first time and who relied heavily on the context of situations, as well as other speakers, to communicate in English. These students tended not to communicate in English much in classroom situations to teachers or to other students. When placed under pressure to participate orally they would tend to respond with sullenness, flippancy, shyness or lack of co-operation. For these students, pronunciation problems were probably a significant factor in their progress at school and their self-esteem as learners.

For the remainder of the students, everyday communication presented less of a problem. These students fell into the categories of intermediate to advanced learners of English. Their English would be regarded as heavily accented however, and most native speakers would find it difficult to understand long stretches of their speech. Their delivery has a staccato rhythm which native speakers can tend to find

distracting. At times their intonation seems to fluctuate from being flat to high pitched. These tones of voice can convey, often quite wrongly, an impression of boredom or abruptness.

The objective of the program is to help the students to improve their pronunciation. It tries to do this by providing activities which make students more aware of the factors which contribute to intelligibility and which help them to take more control of these factors. These main aspects of pronunciation that the program has set out to work on are the suprasegmentals (that is, rhythm, stress and intonation) as well as those segmentals (such as vowel length and consonant clusters) which can most directly affect those suprasegmental, or prosodic features.

There are many ways in which the effectiveness and value of this kind of program can be measured. Indicators could include the students' own feelings about the course and any sense they may have of their progress or increased confidence. They could also include anecdotal evidence from informants such as the students' classroom teachers. Or, the effectiveness could be gauged by the results of test items administered at regular points throughout the year. The focus of this research project is on the latter.

The test items devised for this initial year of the program are themselves exploratory and experimental. They are an attempt to serve two functions. Firstly, the teachers involved saw a need for a diagnostic test which could be used to direct programming as well as to assess student strengths and weaknesses. Given the limited lesson and teacher time allocated to the program it was also seen as desirable to have a bank of test items which reflected the curriculum and which could be administered quickly and easily.

Given the emphasis on the prosodic level of pronunciation in this program, it

seemed useful to experiment specifically with ways of diagnosing and assessing performance at this level. The challenge however was two-fold. Although there has been literature produced, especially in the past ten to fifteen years, on teaching prosody, there has been little written about how to assess gains at this level. Coupled with this lack of expert advice, is the fact that the teachers operating the program are new to the field of phonology. Therefore, the assessment tasks that were devised would have to be able to be processed by non-experts. Eventually, the audience for these test results would be the students themselves; another reason for the assessment procedure to be comprehensible to non-experts.

From the outset of this project, the pitfalls of using formative assessment to determine language development have been acknowledged. For instance, a student's one-off performance (whether showing progress or not) does not necessarily reflect their every day competence in the aspect of language being tested. Likewise, progress that appears to have been made from one test to another may be the result of factors outside of the course or it may be due to the fact that the tests used were not comparable.

It must also be acknowledged, that the methods used for assessing the test items are impressionistic. If the tests were aimed only at measuring accuracy at the phonemic or polysyllabic levels, the analysis could be carried out through a reliable and objectively verifiable method - the number of incorrect approximations divided by the total. With tests which attempt to quantify the student's control over such features as rhythm, pitch and sentence intonation, the same kind of certainty does not exist when non-expert assessors are involved. The assessment will be subjective and the only claim to reliability is that the tests are marked under the same conditions, using the same criteria and the same markers.

II BACKGROUND

This research has been conducted within the wider context of a Pronunciation Program offered to senior students of Vietnamese and Chinese background in a large, comprehensive inner west high school. The program was in its first year, operated for fifteen minutes four mornings per week and was staffed by four teachers who were all relatively inexperienced in the field of pronunciation teaching. It is one of two specialist programs which are run in the school library during the school's silent reading period. The other is a remedial reading program aimed at Year 7 students with reading difficulties.

The establishment of the Pronunciation Program was the result of a number of factors. The main catalyst was probably the controversy that arose at the school's executive meeting over recently-arrived students from the Intensive Language Centre who were speaking in their first language during school time, both in and outside of the classroom. The controversy, which is believed to have begun from a single complaint to the Principal, escalated into open criticism of the efficacy of the courses offered at the local ILC and the alleged retarding effect that the use of the mother tongue had on English language development. The controversy continued over two more meetings of the executive and the concerns were basically addressed through the citing of the Multicultural Education Policy and studies which pointed to the socio-cultural and educational benefits of bilingualism.

Attention was then turned to the school's own efforts to improve the literacy,

but more particularly the oracy of the recently-arrived senior students of Asian background. It was felt that these students were in danger of leaving the school with speaking skills which were below the level needed in tertiary institutions and most workplaces and which did not adequately reflect their ability.

The concerns being expressed by members of the school executive are legitimate according to "Australia's Workforce in the Year 2001" which was recently published by the Department of Education, Employment and Training. In a table which compares unemployment rates and migrant characteristics, dated 1986, poor English speaking ability is strongly associated with a higher probability of unemployment. The commentary on the statistics states that:

> Depending on the their level of qualifications, migrants who had poor
> English speaking ability had unemployment rates two to five times
> higher than those who spoke English well. Migrants in the former group
> are likely to experience prolonged periods of unemployment with the
> risk of continuing poor performance in the labour market. (DEET,p92)

Similarly, the concern expressed by the executive staff regarding oral communication skills and tertiary education is also well-founded. Due to the implementation of the NSW Board of Studies' Pathways document, all students sitting for the Higher School Certificate as from 1995 will have one unit of their compulsory 2 Unit English course counted in their Tertiary Entrance Score. The TES is used to select students into university courses. This change will have serious ramifications for students with poor levels of pronunciation since oral skills count for approximately 20% of the school assessment of any course in English. Indeed, the majority of new arrival students undertake the 2 Unit Contemporary English

course, which is the only course to have a Listening Exam. Since there is a corre-
lation between poor pronunciation skills and poor aural discrimination, these
students will be disadvantaged in approximately 30% of the assessment marks.
As a consequence, their ability to score well in the one unit of English may be
adversely affected.

Nor is it just the final year exam itself that requires good speaking skills. The
teaching/learning methods adopted in most modern institutions, regardless of
which discipline, tend to involve a fair degree of oral participation. The author
found anecdotal evidence of this in a small scale language audit of the oral lan-
guage demands of Senior Maths and Science (Mehan, unpub.1992). Interviews
with teachers of Physics and 3 Unit Maths showed that the ability to ask ques-
tions clearly, provide oral reportbacks and engage in discussion with teachers
and peers were highly valued both in the secondary and tertiary contexts. All of
the teachers interviewed in that study expressed a concern that some of their
students of Asian background would matriculate into tertiary courses but may
find situations such as seminar presentations difficult due to their poor speaking
skills.

The available options for addressing the specific needs of these students were dis-
cussed by the school executive as well as by the ESL faculty. It was agreed that
the students' general level of English, both in literacy and oracy, was developed
through special ESL classes and communicative language teaching methods
across the school. However, it was felt that the issue of intelligibility in spoken
English needed more, specific attention. It was agreed that staff would be made
available to operate a pronunciation program during the morning reading period

and funds were provided from the ESL budget to purchase resources.

The program was first started by myself and an ESL teacher and our initial aim was to involve students from the same language group. We chose the Vietnamese students because they were reported by various teachers to be having the most difficulties in oral communication. We also felt that they were, as a group, relatively isolated within the student body and that their needs were not being particularly well catered for in the school.

Basically students join the pronunciation program on a voluntary basis. Initially, however, all twelve senior students who were born in Vietnam were approached and asked to attend the program. When I was able to arrange for an additional two teachers to join the program we were faced with the option of offering more intensive help to these twelve students or opening the program up to other students who were identified by teachers as experiencing pronunciation difficulties. We chose the latter and a further twelve students, this time with Chinese backgrounds were added.

The two teachers who joined the program in at the end of Term Two were a drama trained English teacher and a Science teacher who was born in China. Due to the demands of our teaching loads, the four of us rarely met outside of the fifteen minute period to discuss the program. As the co-ordinator of the program, and the only one with any degree of formal training in the area of pronunciation, it has become my role to gather resources and devise activities. It is partly for these reasons that many of the resources and even test items used in this first year of the program were

loosely adapted from commercially produced kits and textbooks. In some cases, these resources proved to be inappropriate for the ability and interest levels of our students and there was a lack of resources available in authentic Australian English. It is hoped that as the program continues, more appropriate resources can be located or produced.

During this first year, we have followed a process of trial and error in terms of both resources and methodology. That is, the direction of the program relied very much on the level of student response and motivation and on teacher judgement. The usual pattern is that I will set a series of activities for each teacher or pair of teachers to offer over a number of mornings. These "workshops" may be organised around a particular element of pronunciation such as word stress, pitch or thought groups. Or the work-shops may offer different activities such as a role play, game or group discussion. The students are divided into the two language-background groups and a further smaller, mixed group is formed of those students who need the most help. Alternating with the cycle of workshops are whole group activities such as singing along to Karaoke videos, diagnostic assessment or structured group discussion.

III Literature Review

Introduction

The subject of this research project is assessment of English pronunciation. In particular, the project is concerned with the assessment of that part of pronunciation which above the segmental level. That is, it attempts to investigate ways in which gains the suprasegmental or prosodic level of pronunciation can be assessed. This has necessitated background reading about what constitutes the suprasegmental level and various theories and methodologies associated with it.

The following Literature Review has four sections. It begins with a brief history of how the concept of Intonation has evolved since the 1950's. Much debate surrounded both the definition and the function of intonation and the key positions in this debate are surveyed below. This is followed, in Section 2, by an account of two of the main factors that are believed to most influence pronunciation development; that is, the speaker's first language and his or her motivation to change their accent. Section 3 outlines and critiques the main methods employed to teach prosody. Finally, Section 4, examines some of the different ways prosody or intonation can be assessed.

1. THEORIES OF INTONATION

1.1   DEFINITIONS

The definitions of Intonation differ markedly from one theorist to another and from one teaching resource to another. The narrowest definition is that intonation is the rise and fall of pitch level. This definition was the most common one used by pronunciation teaching resources until Brazil's intonation theory emerged in the late 1970's. An insight into how the former definition was characterised can be gleaned from the following extracts from The Teaching of Pronunciation (MacCarthy,1987) .

Although this text was published in 1978, the same year as Brazil's theory of intonation, it is representative of the myriad of earlier resources which defined intonation only in terms of the "rise and fall of the voice created through variations in pitch during speech" p106. MacCarthy makes mention, although mainly in the glossary, of other features above the segmental level such as stress, prominence and elision. But there is no attempt in the text's structure to draw these prosodic features together. As the following chapter titles demonstrate, the text is structured around isolated physical aspects of speech production such as Management of Breath, Activity of the Larynx, Tongue Activity and Facial Movement. As its audience appears to be absolute beginners, this text, like many others that precede it, can offer little to the teacher who is trying address the various factors contributing to reduced intelligibility of intermediate to advanced speakers of English as a second language.

Two broader definitions of intonation can be found in the work of Halliday and Brazil et al. Halliday defines intonation as the "melodic rise and fall of the voice which

is controlled through pitch contrast, stress, loudness and rhythm" (Halliday 1967, p48). A decade later David Brazil, Malcolm Coulthard and Catherine Jones published Discourse Intonation and Language Teaching in which they not only outline their definition but also point out how it differs from others which had developed since the 1950's. For these writers, intonation consists of pitch, stress, rhythm, tone, key, prominence and accent. In terms of pitch, defined as the effect created by the length and width of the vocal cord, Brazil et al suggest three levels: High, Mid and Low. This contrasts to the four pitch levels postulated by Trager and Smith (1951) and the seven levels suggested by Crystal (1969).

There is more agreement amongst the scholars when it comes to stress, which is defined by Brazil et al as the effect of producing louder, longer and more high pitched sounds when air is pushed from the lungs and when the vocal cord vibrates faster and tightens. This phenomenon has been described similarlyby Bolinger (1958), Lieberman (1960), O'Connor and Arnold (1961) and Halliday (1970). With regard to rhythm, the observation that languages are either stress- or syllable-timed was made as early as 1945 by Pike who compared English and French. Crystal(1969) notes that the stressed beat or foot occurred not only at regular intervals in English, but that these intervals were of the roughly same length or isochronous.

Crystal(1969) and Halliday (1967, 1970) developed the concept of tones or tone groups (also known as pitch patterns). They shared the view that each tone group had a peak or tonic which gave it its tune, but they disagreed on the number of tunes or pitch movements. Crystal discerned four pitch patterns (falling, rising,

low-rising and high-falling) while Halliday discerned five movements. Brazil et al contest these categories however, arguing for a simpler formula of two tones (low-rising and falling). They also add to the long inventory of intonation terminology the concepts of prominence or accent and key.

In order to explain these latter elements of intonation I draw on two interpretations of Brazil's theory provided by Bradford, author of the teaching resource Intonation in Context (1988) and Taylor, who strongly supported the theory in his article, "Intonation and Accent in English: What Teachers Need to Know" (IRAL 1993, p1-21). According to Bradford's 'user-friendly' explanation, 'prominence' determines the noticeability of words by making the accented syllable of that word stand out more than others in the context. The syllable can be accented using variables such as lengthening vowels, increasing volume and varying pitch. Taylor reminds us that this is different from word stress in which the placement of prominence of a syllable is determined semantically rather than by the speaker's context. Finally, 'key' refers to the general pitch level of a tone group relative to the ones around it as opposed to 'pitch' which is used to refer to the level of syllables.

Before proceeding to the farthest end of the intonation continuum, it is worth considering the neat rubric that Taylor proposes as a way of understanding the distinctions between these apparently similar elements. What, after all, are the differences between intonation, tone and pitch? Taylor's answer is: intonation is the pattern of tones, tones are patterns of pitch and pitch is the range of high to low that our vocal cords produce. To clarify even further he explains the different domains of these elements. That is that the domain of both pitch and tone is the

syllable while the domain of intonation is the utterance. It may be frustrating to discover minor differences in the way that these elements are termed and defined. However, compared to the earlier, narrower taxonomy described above, this approach to intonation is much more helpful to the teacher. The way the elements are grouped and the attempts made to show the connection between the levels of the individual sound through to the tone group and whole sentence assist the teacher who is wanting to construct an intonation syllabus.

In contrast to those above, the broadest definition of intonation is one that encompasses any aspect of acoustics above the segmental or individual sound level. In her introduction to Intonation and Discourse , Johns-Lewis (1986) briefly describes this range and provides a useful commentary. For instance, she notes the distinction between prosody and intonation. For theorists such as Crystal 1969 , Cutler and Ladd 1978, Lehiste 1970, and Grimson 1980 intonation is pitch and is just one of the elements of prosody along with others such as volume and length. This view contrasts with one that sees prosody as a subset of intonation. That is, that intonation consists of a complex of features from different prosodic systems such as tone, pitch range, rhythm, tempo as well as pause, tension, voice qualifiers and quality. Although this taxonomy provides a useful reminder of the various contributors to intonation, it is an unwieldy list for instructional purposes.

1.2   THE FUNCTIONS OF INTONATION

Theorists have also failed to concur on the role that intonation plays in communication. The theories basically fall into three camps.

1.2.1 INTONATION & ATTITUDE

The first of these to be considered is one that the layperson would probably think of when asked what intonation is used for. That is, that the intonation in our speech expresses our attitude to what we are speaking about. (O'Connor and Arnold in Coulthard 1975 p.9). This idea that a given intonation contour expresses a specific individual attitude or even a set of attitudes is discredited by Brazil, Coulthard and Johns (1987, p116). They argue that it is not possible to ascribe a finite set of attitudinal meanings to a particular intonation and that in fact the possible meanings of a given intonation contour are endless. They also argue that there is no way of systematizing intonation and attitude for teaching purposes. The rules for using intonation would be too "obscure, amorphous and easily refutable". Even if a system were found, they warn of "the danger of learners making faulty generalisations about the relationship between particular tones and attitudinal meanings." Finally, they argue that attitude is not conveyed by intonation alone but through "the interaction of situational factors, the knowledge that the speaker and hearer have of each other and the choices of both lexis and syntax" (Brazil et al 1987, p117).

Clearly, if the attitudinal role of intonation is taught as a set of simplistic formula, the dangers that Brazil et al warn of will be realised. If they are used as a springboard for discussion, however, this would not necessarily eventuate. There could be much gained by the learner if they were asked to think of alternative meanings for a given intonation, to think of other tones that could express the same meaning or to consider the kind of situational factors that Brazil et al suggest. Advanced learners, of the type that this research project is aimed at, would be

capable of participating in such activities. In fact, Mah in her Adult Migrant Education Service research paper ("Language Awareness in Teaching Pronunciation" 1987) describes precisely this kind of activity being successfully undertaken in both English and in Chinese with first phase learners.

1.2.2 INTONATION & GRAMMAR

The second explanation of intonation to be discussed also has a level of commonsense appeal. That is that the intonation used will be largely determined by the function of your utterance; statements and commands use a falling tone while questions, requests and unfinished sentences have rising tones. According to Brown, Trager and Smith (1951), the elements of intonation such as rhythm and pitch contour are used to mark off coherent chunks of information, or thought groups. They cite the typical newsreader's speech pattern as evidence of this. This theory is often described as grammatical since the tone groups mark off syntactic structure, especially clauses. Halliday (1985, p49) elaborated this theory by ascribing particular speech functions such as questioning, listing and showing concession to particular intonation patterns.

But the grammatical explanation of intonation has also come under fire. As Brazil et al point out, a sentence with the same grammatical function can have different meanings in different situations and using different intonation. The following example used in the Pronunciation Program illustrates this point. The question "Where do you think you're going?" has different intonation when said by a father to a teenage son who is going to a brothel, by a flatmate to the young man dressing in jeans and old shirt to wear to a formal dinner and by a bad-

tempered man who has collided with a person carrying a pile of parcels (Rinvolucri, 1984). Of course, the intonation possibilities are not infinite since the grammatical function will limit the range of options to a certain extent.

1.2.3 INTONATION & DISCOURSE

The third function suggested for intonation relates to discourse and comes from Brazil et al. It is not surprising, given their line of argument against the aforementioned theories, that in their theory intonation relates to context. Rather than tying tone patterns to some absolute, whether that be an attitude or a grammatical function, they argue that the choice of intonation is made by a speaker on a moment to moment basis as the speaker responds to the situational factors mentioned earlier. The key concept is that of the 'given' and the 'new', or in their terminology, the functions of 'referring' and 'proclaiming'. In any utterance, they argue, there is information which is presented as known, given or shared between the speaker and listener and information which is presented as new. The former is known as referring and is assigned a fall-rising tone by the speaker, while the latter is proclaiming and is assigned a falling tone.

Although the most common pattern is for the 'given' information to appear before the 'new', speakers can use the unmarked form for rhetorical effect. What is different about this theory, then, is that it does not attempt to set up preconceived formulas for intonation. Even when provided with the context, it is difficult to predict the given or new since speakers can exploit each. For instance, the speaker decides what is to be taken as assumed or common ground in a discourse and what

part of the utterance will be presented as new. This approach to intonation provides a neat method for making students more aware of sentence intonation and more attuned to the effect that intonation has on meaning.

2. FACTORS AFFECTING IMPROVEMENT IN INTONATION

2.1 INFLUENCE OF FIRST LANGUAGE

All of the students involved in the research are fluent and literate in their first language, Vietnamese. Contrastive Analysis literature such as "Some Characteristic Aspects of Vietnamese English Pronunciation",(MacNeil, Prospect Vol 3, No 1 September 1987) provide useful advice for pronunciation teachers. The intonation features of Vietnamese and English are very different since the former is a syllable-timed language while the other is stress-timed. In English, stress is governed by grammar. That is, in unmarked utterances, lexical items are stressed while structural words are unstressed. Stress is also used to mark the speaker's intention and attitude. In Vietnamese, stress is accorded equally to all syllables, regardless of grammar or attitude. Consequently, the students could be expected to experience some difficulties with the rhythm and the placement of stress in English.

Pitch in English is influenced entirely by the context of the utterance and is related to intonation and stress. Changing the pitch or tone of a word does not change its lexical meaning but it can show a change in what the speaker means. That is, "cat"

will always mean a feline in English no matter what tone of voice it is said with. But it could carry different attitudinal information as in the following contexts:

Example	Description	Possible Contexts
Oh, it's a cat.	High rising	A cat-lover gets a birthday present
Oh, it's a cat.	Low falling	A cat-hater gets a birthday present
Oh, it's a cat.	Low falling	Householder who thinks s/he has caught a prowler

Fig. 1 Differing Attitudes

In Vietnamese, however, the pitch or tone changes the meanings of words. For instance, "ma" in Vietnamese can have the following meanings when given one of the six tones:

ma	(mid-level)= ghost	má	(high-rising)= cheek
mà	(low-falling)=but	mạ	(low-broken)=rice seedling
mả	(low-rising) =tomb	mã	(high-broken)=horse

(from <u>Tieng Viet Vietnamese for Beginners 1</u> by Phan Van Gioung

Asian Language Project National Distance Education Conference 1990)

Given that the written form of Vietnamese provides such specific directions for tone, it would be expected that Vietnamese students would look to written English for the same sorts of clues and, when not finding such direction would read English in a very monotonal way. This certainly does seem to be the case even with the prepared reading activities such as the jokes we taped, and especially where the written pieces contain unfamiliar vocabulary.

With spontaneous conversation and non-scripted role plays, however, the same would not expected. The students would draw on a range of contextual clues such as the facial expression of the interlocutor, the tone of voice used and so on in order to choose the appropriate tone or pitch. Consequently, the students would be expected to have more difficulty with tone and pitch in situations where they are unclear of the demands of the context. According to this reasoning, the students being assessed would be likely not to score as well in reading tasks compared to spontaneous or prepared speaking tasks. Also, they could not be expected to perform as well if the context were unfamiliar or ambiguous.

2.2 MOTIVATION and RESISTANCE

In his paper entitled " Changing Student Pronunciation - Getting People to Eat Worms", Newmark (1990) explains the important role of both attention and motivation. As the title suggests, he equates the attempts by teachers to improve students' pronunciation with forcing them to eat worms. In his analogy he recounts a time when he was invited to a colleague's place and served snails. He knew some French and had stayed in France for a couple of months and his colleague's French wife thought she

was giving him a treat by serving him snails. Clearly, Newmark dislikes snails. But he is able to go through the motions of eating and enjoying them since he can imitate his hosts' behaviour. Like the student learning a second language, he can do this by attending to the motor skills of the teacher (that is, host) and he can draw on previous language learning, that is eating experiences, to be able to perform the function.

However, the motivation to eat snails of his own volition is not there. He will eat them again, but only when he needs to fulfil social obligations like this or when he wants to avoid feeling like an outsider. The same can be said, according to Newmark, about the second language learner. Mastering the mechanics is just one part of the process of changing pronunciation. The crucial agent for change is the motivation to demonstrate this competency outside of the classroom context.

His article is critical of the sometimes misplaced or excessive emphasis on motivation. By way of example, Newmark cites the example of the Spanish language class, conducted in English, and dominated by an elaborate motivational strategy. Students formed teams and when they successfully gave the Spanish word for an English one from a 250 word list they were given a free shot at basketball hoop erected at the back of the classroom. What was lacking from this classroom, apart from any extended samples of the target language, was a motivation to use it outside of the classroom context. Newmark has grave doubts, however, about any teacher's ability to generate the motivation in students to adopt native-like pronunciation outside of the classroom.

To do so, he argues, teachers should be looking to the theories of the behavioural psychologists since changing one's pronunciation is akin to changing part of one's personality or identity. The kind of questions teachers could pose are:.

What methods are most effective in curing unwanted behaviours such as phobias? (An example no doubt suggested to Newmark by the worms analogy.) What motivates people to use certain people as role models and not others? What are the features of successful role models?

Stevick (1978, p115-6) also recognises the challenge that pronunciation teaching poses to the student's self image:

> The work that makes the difference is the work that the student does within himself. ...an improvement in his feeling toward speakers of the language may change the limit which the self-image imposes, or may even change the self-image a little.

Stevick advises teachers to try to "reduce the student's barriers against sounding like a foreigner" and suggests that teachers engage in "building a relationship that will permit the student to change either the way he sees himself, or the way he sees foreigners, or both."

A further dilemma for Newmark concerns the compliant student avoiding the label of "teacher's pet" when he or she emulates the teacher's pronunciation patterns. Students may go through the motions of trying to conform to native pronunciation in the classroom; the context motivates them. But does the same motivation exist when they are amongst peers from the same language background? Scarcella cites research from Khlief (1979) which showed that "competent second language learners frequently receive pejorative labels from members of their native community". When this speech community is in the minority, its members may regard the use of the dominant language as advantageous in terms of access to socioeconomic power, but they may also wish to retain and actively maintain their

cultural identity.

A linguistic position then, which is safely between the two worlds is one where the target language is spoken with the conversational features of the first language. Accordingly, members of the group who practice native-like fluency in the second language may be seen as traitors; too eager to assimilate and reject their cultural heritage. The eagerness may be valued by the teacher, but to the other students it is like eating Newman's worms.

3. TEACHING METHODOLOGIES

It is not surprising that, given the plethora of theories about intonation, there are a number of quite different methods for teaching intonation, stress and rhythm. It is not feasible to survey any more than a few representative examples of the pronunciation teaching resources that are currently available. These examples will be compared in terms of the prosodic aspects of pronunciation that they cover as well as the teaching and learning activities that they employ.

3.1 Different Intonational Functions

The resources below have been chosen for this survey because they reflect the different theories of intonation discussed earlier in Section 1. For instance, Pronunciation Exercises for Advanced Learners of English as a Second Language (Esarey, 1977) contains a syllabus built around the

grammatical functions of stress and intonation, while Intonation in Context (Bradford, 1988) has used a modified form of discourse intonation. Teaching English Pronunciation (Kenworthy, 1987) uses a taxonomy of intonational patterns which is structured around a small number of attitudes and speech functions.

The treatment of stress and intonation in Esarey's textbook can be described as grammatical since the generalisations made about different tone patterns refer to the grammatical category of the utterance as opposed to the attitude of the speaker. That is, the chapters dealing with different intonations are concerned with Yes/No questions, compound and complex sentences and question tags. In Bradford's text, intonation is examined in terms of the role it plays in performing a function within a discourse. The first set of functions, those of "Highlighting", Telling" and "Referring" are all concerned with the Given or New status of information. Other intonational functions convey the role and status of speakers, or indicate which information the speaker is contrasting or assigning a low key role.

Some of Bradford's categorisations are shared by Kenworthy. For instance, Kenworthy's "Backgrounding" and "Foregrounding" correspond to Bradford's "Highlighting", although Bradford tends to emphasise the role of syllable prominence or stress whereas Kenworthy emphasises the use of high and low pitch. The majority of Kenworthy's functions are attitudinal however, expressing such feelings and attitudes as involvement, expectation, politeness and diplomacy.

The table overleaf (Fig 2)shows the variety of meanings that these writers have ascribed to the basic intonation patterns.

Tone	Description	Author: Function
↘	falling tone	Esarey: on question tag means speaker is just confirming
		Bradford: used to present new information ie Telling
		Kenworthy: on question tag means speaker is confirming .
↗	rising tone	Esarey: seeking information in Yes/No question
		Bradford: "Referring" tone dominant speaker uses, shows assertiveness
		Kenworthy: shows involvement, excitement
↘↗	fall-rising	Esarey: this tone not covered
		Bradford: presents what is already known "Referring"
		Kenworthy: diplomacy; meaning "Yes, but..."

Fig. 2 Different Functions Ascribed to Three Tone Patterns

It is interesting to note that both Esarey and Kenworthy define the use of the falling tone in the same way. Roach (1991, p176) refers to this overlap between the grammatical and attitudinal functions in his discussion of question tags. It also interesting that Esarey does not deal with the use of the fall-rising tone at all, but confines his lessons to the simple rise and fall tones. Halliday's grammatical explanations of tone includes this two-part tone, describing it as the tone expressing reservation (Halliday, 1967). Esarey's teaching text appears limited not only when compared to the fuller range of intonational functions described by Bradford and Kenworthy, but even in comparison to the range of grammatical functions offered by Halliday. Whilst there would be some merit in reducing and simplifying the complex intonational features of English for the learners, there is also the danger of not providing students with enough information about the language.

3.2   Separating Pitch, Tone, Stress

Teaching Pronunciation: Focus on English Rhythm and Intonation_(Wong, 1987) and Speaking Clearly Pronunciation and Listening Comprehension for Learners of English (Rogerson and Gilbert, 1990) differ from these preceding approaches in that they make more of an attempt to delineate stress, pitch and rhythm for the purposes of teaching them more explicitly. Both cover much the same ground, although Wong does so in more detail and requires the students to learn pitch and stress transcription. Despite this comparatively greater degree of technicality, Wong argues against teaching intonation through rules:

Some simple rules have been formulated, which have been
helpful for learners at the beginning stages. However, as they
progress beyond this stage and encounter authentic speech
samples, they find that these rules cannot be consistently applied.
(1987, p57)

The first section of this quotation could have been used as an epigram for
Rogerson and Gilbert's text. They present the learner with a small number of
general rules about stress and intonation and reinforce these through carefully
selected authentic-sounding spoken texts. The limitations of this approach are
clear as Wong goes on to cite some examples of rules which oversimplify what
actually happens in differing context. For instance, she examines the rule that
wh-questions are spoken with a rise-fall intonation. Using the question:

What's for homework?

Wong explains that a speaker who wanted to sound nonchalant could
successfully use a rising tone. Despite the dangers of oversimplification or
confusion, the approach that the texts adopt is useful for intermediate to
advanced learners. As Wong says:

In order for students to learn to listen for intonation and begin to
explore its functions, they need to start by learning to differentiate
pitch changes. (1984, p61)

The same could be said about the need for students' awareness of stress
and rhythm.

3.3 A Communicative Approach

Bradford and Pica, meanwhile can be distinguished from all of the above due to their overt use of communicative activities to enforce the rules and patterns they introduce. The difference in approach is summed up by Pica:

> ...a shift away from explicit instruction in what Widdowson has labelled rules for language 'usage' and toward active participation by the learner in rules for language 'use' (Widdowson,1978). Learning materials that reflect this communicative approach thus engage learners in a discovery of the rules of the formal system of English through participation in group activities focused on information exchange and problem-solving tasks. (1984, p332)

Teaching resources which simply present minimal pairs and isolated words, phrases and sentences for modelling and practice are described by Pica as offering the learner "nothing in the way of involvement in meaningful exchange and problem-solving tasks." (1984, p333) She goes on to cite research conducted by Purcell and Suter (1980) which found "explicit instruction in pronunciation to be a negligible factor in predicting pronunciation accuracy."

But Pica does not subscribe to discovery learning on the part of students. The activities that she devised provide learners with "experiences in the pronunciation of English, embedded in the context of meaningful

communication." The activities are always preceded by teacher input explaining and modelling the pronunciation rule to be examined, as well as about the communicative activity itself. The difference between this approach and communicative language activities as they are popularly used in schools is that teacher input and the nature of the student performance or reportback helps to ensure that the words which are crucial to the pronunciation point are explicitly scaffolded.

Bradford uses communicative activities in her course book, but they are not scaffolded to the same degree as in Pica's approach and there is not the same variety. These are basically information gap activities, whereas Pica has the learners scripting dialogues using minimal pairs, writing and recording radio news reports and completing Cloze lecturettes. In both cases, the activities are designed to exploit particular pronunciation features which have been focused on by the teacher. According to Pica's approach the activity revolves around the focus feature and the teacher can closely monitor the key words. Bradford, on the other hand, acknowledges that "the full range of intonational features will come into play" in her activities and teachers are asked to ensure that "at some stage the focus feature is used appropriately." Clearly there are benefits and limitations with both approaches, but the general thrust of teaching intonation in more meaningful contexts can only be a progressive step.

3.4 Learning Styles

Research into preferred learning styles, that is whether students learn more

effectively when the mode of presentation is aural, verbal or visual, has much to offer the teaching of pronunciation in general and of prosody in particular. Larson-Freeman and Long (1991) quote various studies (Levin, 1974; Hartnett, 1975; Lepke, 1977) in the field of hemisphere specialisation. The most pertinent finding is that the right hemisphere of the brain in some subjects is able to "perceive and remember images - whether visual, tactile or auditory - even when those subjects find the images hard to describe or name, [these latter being] special talents of the left hemisphere.(p198) In "Gadgets: non-verbal tools for teaching pronunciation", Gilbert (1978) explains the use of many 'Right Brain Gadgets'; that is, visual and musical aids which she uses not as "just a nice supplement, but a fundamental teaching approach; the verbal and non-verbal tools should be used as a matched pair". (p309) In terms of teaching prosodic features, Gilbert suggests two gadgets in particular. Vowel stretchers are lengths of rubber that students can stretch when they hear longer, stressed vowels. The kazoo , a plastic party horn, is used to demonstrate intonation, syllable and word stress. It may be useful, too, for students such as those in the program who habitually leave off final sounds. Whilst these may be very effective, their success will ultimately depend on how the use of such toys is perceived by the students.

3.5 Teaching Rhythm

Since the staccato rhythm of Vietnamese English is often cited as a source of difference, if not difficulty in pronunciation, it would seem appropriate to examine some of the main methods used for teaching and correcting rhythm. To begin with there is a difference of opinion about just what causes the staccato rhythm in some second language learners. The most widely held view is that

because English is stress-timed, the staccato effect occurs in the speech of those learners whose first language is syllable-timed. In the case of syllable-timed languages, sentence length will be determined by the number of syllables. In stress-timed languages, sentence length depends on the number of stressed syllables only. To use an example from "Connected Speech" (Avery 1987), the sentence:

Birds   eat   worms.

will take roughly as long to say as the sentence:

The **birds**will have **eaten**   the**worms.**

since they both contain only three stressed syllables. A commonly suggested test of this proposition is to say the two sentences as you beat out the rhythm by clapping on each stressed syllable. The staccato effect, then, is produced when speakers "assign equal weight to each syllable in English sentences, regardless of whether the syllable is stressed or unstressed." (Avery 1987, p65)

Faber (1986) disagrees with this explanation, and believes that the strategy of beating in time with the rhythm of stress timed speech does not work for anything above a short piece of spoken text. Further, he asserts that "teaching rhythm by regular banging produces unnatural rhythm and is of no help". The crucial factor between languages is syllable length, and according to Faber's paper, "Teaching The Rhythms of English: A New theoretical Base", the failure of non-native speakers to "incorporate this variation

into their English is a factor that is primarily responsible for unEnglish speech rhythm." (1986, p 210). He argues that the most useful way of improving rhythm is to ensure that students can correctly produce the full and reduced vowel and apply the "borrowing rule" in which a vowel is shortened or lengthened according the type of syllable that follows it.

Whilst Faber's focus on syllable length is valid, it is not the only factor affecting use of appropriate rhythm. Wong identifies four factors affecting rhythm apart from vowel length. These are whether syllables are stressed or accented, the use of pause and the structure of syllables; that is, whether the syllables end in consonants which tend to shorten syllable length or vowels which tend to lengthen them. Many of the current pronunciation teaching resources include these features when they deal with contractions and linkages (that is, when adjacent words end and begin with vowels or with consonant and vowel). Schwa or reduced vowel practice, and the pauses used in thought groups or "chunking" also provide help with rhythm. Activities designed around these aspects can help to correct problems caused by incorrect rhythm.

It is important to realise that the concept of faulty rhythm is not simply an aesthetic or subjective judgement. As Gilbert points out:

> If a foreigner puts stress on the wrong word, s/he may be misunderstood in an embarrassing way. For instance, if s/he says, 'I AM studying' it would sound unnecessarily argumentative. If s/he said, ' You have SOME good ideas', it would sound insulting. The normal stress pattern hasn't been followed; therefore an unintended message has been conveyed."(1978, p315)

Faber also comments on the adverse affects of a non-native speaker's abnormal rhythm on the native-speaking listener:

> ...they will be liable to hear signals of linguistic markedness which were not intended and to miss those which are intended. ... if not mutual incomprehension, that at least mutual weariness is the likely outcome... (Faber,1986, p247)

Many teachers of pronunciation share these concerns and as a consequence try to include in their curriculum exercises which will not only help to correct problems in rhythm but to provide opportunities for students to hear and produce English rhythms of speech. It is quite common therefore to find poetry and song included in pronunciation syllabi as effective means of fulfilling this latter aim. When these singing or recital sessions are held in a relaxed and entertaining atmosphere, there is the psychological benefit of associating work on pronunciation with enjoyment as well as the physiological benefit of relaxing the vocal muscles which is desirable for producing English rhythm.

Singing along to Karaoke video has proven to be very popular and useful in the pronunciation program which is the subject of this study. When the video clips were first used in the program, the songs chosen had simple tunes and few words. These were songs such as The Beatle's "She Loves You, Yeah, Yeah" and Abba's "Money, Money, Money." The songs would be played two to three times in each session with the verses sung by small groups and the chorus sung in unison. The next category of songs used were slower ballads such as Denver's "Country Road" and Elvis' "Love Me Tender".

The main prosodic features which are assisted by the mucial beat are the strengthening of word and sentence stress. In some songs there is also the need to lengthen syllables and

the exaggerated linkages. A song such as "Oh, Carol," is useful because it contains lines of varied length. Two lines that students had great difficulty with, for instance, were:

There will never, ever be another

and

I will always want you for my sweetheart.

The fact that the lyrics are printed, line by line on the screen and are highlighted in time with the music provides an excellent method of teaching these features. Many of the focus features were mastered, thanks to video replay, numerous repetitions of the song and the fact that students were willing to practise outside of the lesson time.

4. ASSESSING INTONATION

4.1 USING TECHNOLOGY

Recent advances in computer technology have provided effective tools for both the teaching and the assessment of stress, intonation and rhythm. One such system has been developed by a Sydney speech specialist, Dr Corrine Adams. The computer program was originally designed to help deaf children speak, but according to Adams (SMH August 27, 1992, p9) it is "proving equally useful for migrants who may have already spent years learning English but are still unable to communicate effectively." Adams mainly uses the computer program with migrants with Asian backgrounds whose "single biggest cause of fluency problems and strong accents is the failure to grasp the rhythm, stress and intonation

patterns of English."

The program contains hundreds of sentences whose patterns are represented on the computer monitor visually. The sentence is represented in two ways; one shows the intonation and the other the sentence stress. With the use of a microphone, students can see their own attempts at the target sentence displayed on the screen. This device would undoubtedly be both popular and useful and its introduction into the current course would basically depend on availability and cost.

Another, albeit rather limited, use of computer technology for pronunciation are CD-Rom dictionaries, such as Microsoft Word SoundBlaster, which have the facility to pronounce words. The pronunciations produced are monotone, have a "dalek" quality about them and are often American-accented, but the device is useful for showing students word stress.

4.2   ASSESSMENT TESTS

The test items used in the pronunciation program and the methods used to assess them in this research project have been largely adapted from Kenworthy (1987) and Underhill (1989). The benefits and drawbacks of using these are discussed in detail in the section where the data is analysed. The basic principles underlying the choice of assessment items are that they are inkeeping with the content and activities in the course and that they are purposeful. The marking systems developed are subjective rather than objective but

consistency and reliability are attained through using the same assessors for each item. The tape recording of tasks is used to make the assessor's task easier, but as Underhill points out, ratings made by assessors based on recorded rather than live performances are often lower. Tapes were used for the sake of convenience, but it has to be acknowledged that students' non-linguistic communication skills are ignored using this method, that the recording equipment affects clarity and it is not always reliable. Furthermore, the tape-rater has more opportunity to replay the student's errors and this may contribute to the lower rating.

4.4   PEER & SELF ASSESSMENT

In papers concerning advanced learners with "fossilised pronunciation," Acton and Cook (TESL Talk, 17.1) both describe their students' use of tape recorders to improve pronunciation. Speakers who are described as "fossilised" are those who "have developed inaccurate speech habits over a long period of time and which are resistant to change" (Cook, p1). Whilst both Acton and Cook see a role for teacher input around specific pronunciation features, their programs rely largely on the students' practise outside of the classroom. Each week the students hand in to the teacher, in the case of Cook, or play their previous week's taped practice for the class , in Acton's case,.

Cook bases his approach on music teaching methodology, in which performance is believed to be best improved by systematic practice. Each student is given an individualised program of sentences designed to make them practise correcting their speech. Priority is given to those features which are most interfering with sound

production, but " drilling individual sounds is useless. It is the combination of sounds, especially in consonant clusters that present the most difficulty". (p15). Cook's program would have limited use in improving intonation since it involves students in practising only isolated and decontextualised sentences. However, it could be modified to include longer stretches of text, especially dialogue which may extend it applicability.

In addition to getting students to use tape recorders, Acton also gets his adult migrant students to use "informants" in their workplace as a method of assessing their improvement. The informant is a native speaker of English who can be trained to provide the learner with useful feedback on their oral communication. This may require educating them in how to present words crucial to the field of work in an authentic way, and how to correct the learner most effectively. The learner records conversations and other samples of interactions with the informant and discusses them back in the classroom. The use of informant, or a form of native-speaker "buddy-system" would be very useful for students in the high school context, and may have positive ramifications for both types of participants.

Mah (AMES, 1987) also uses taped recordings of students' speech in her work with Chinese beginning to intermediate students. Students are given two types of tasks to record; one involving reading intonation, the other spontaneous speech with a native speaker or another student from the class. Feedback sheets are filled in by the teacher and the students are also engaged in monitoring and assessing their own speech and that of others in the class. This approach is an excellent way of increasing students' awareness of pronunciation features and of encouraging self-monitoring even after the pronunciation course has been completed. Modified versions of Mah's two pro-formas are appended.

IV Research Data and Analysis

Introduction

The data collected and processed for this research project takes a number of forms. In the main it consists of audio recordings of the subjects performing a range of oral tasks at different intervals throughout the nine months of the Pronunciation program. The written evidence consists of a listening pre-test and a questionnaire. In the following section each of these items will be described in the order that they were administered. This description is accompanied by comments regarded their strengths and weaknesses as diagnostic or assessment tools. Included also is an account of how the data has been processed in each case This section is followed by a discussion of the data processing results.

1. Listening Test - February 22nd, 1993

2. Reading Test

> • **Pre-test - March 1st, 1993**
>
> • **Post-test- October 13-18th, 1993**

3. Prepared Oral Task - March 1st, 1993

4. Reading Test Captions - June 21st, 1993

5. Spoken Description -Photographs -June 21st, 1993

6. Role Play "Going Out" - October, 1993

1. Listening Test - - February 22nd, 1993

This test item (Appendix II) appears in <u>Speaking Clearly Pronunciation and Listening Comprehension of Learners of English</u> (Gilbert & Rogerson, 1990) and the authors recommend that it be used at the beginning a course to ascertain "which parts of English pronunciation may interfere with the way (the student) understands and uses spoken English." Rather than using a test of students' production skills to diagnose pronunciation difficulties, an aural test is used. The authors' rationale for this is: "How you hear English is closely connnected with how you speak English" (p2).

There is a range of pronunciation elements covered in this test. Firstly students are asked to identify the number of syllables in some polysyllabic words and then to mark stressed and unstressed syllables. This is followed by sentences containing minimal pairs; that is words that differ in one phoneme only and differ in meaning. Rhythm is tested by juxtaposing pairs of phrases with the same or different rhythm patterns. This is followed by an activity in which students have to identify common contractions such as "can't" and "don't". This is followed by two activities which focus on stress. The former asks students to identify the words stressed in a short dialogue and the latter lists sentence pairs which contain identical words but whose meaning differs due to punctuation. For example students must mark the sentence that they hear given the following options:

Alfred said, "The boss is stupid."

"Alfred," said the boss, "is stupid."

The final exercise asks students to classify sentences according to the pitch used by the speaker. For instance, they have to decide whether the recorded voice is enthusiastic or not in the sentence, "I like the garden." This activity tests whether a student can discern the pitch pattern of questions from statements, certainty from uncertainty and statement from contradiction.

Objectively, this pronunciation test is a good one. Each section of the test includes an explanation to the students of what is being tested and an example is provided. The test items are spoken clearly, repeated at a pace which is suitable for an aural test and using a range of male and female voices, albeit all of British origin. The test is useful for programming in that each of the items corresponds to a different section of the text, and this makes it easier for teachers who wish to set up a remediation program for individuals or groups experiencing the same difficulties.

For students such as ours, for whom most of the activities were unfamiliar, the test presents some difficulties. As a diagnostic tool it has limited use if the students are encountering new concepts or practices at the same time as they are being tested. In hindsight, we should have spent more time introducing and explaining the less familiar sections of the test such as the section on rhythm. It is difficult to tell whether poor scores resulted from pronunciation weakness or a failure to understand what to do. Conversely, it was difficult to tell with the "tick-the-box" style questions whether students had made serious attempts or whether they had simply guessed.

Analysis of Results

NAME*	Listening Test
HIEN	71
TRANG	67
DAO	62
SON	60
LOC	60
DINH	58
BAU CHI	56
MINH	53
DUC LONG	52
THAO	52
LUU	50
NHI	38

Table 1 *Listening Results*

* NB The real names of students have beeen replaced by fictional ones for the pur pose of this project.

Table 1 shows the Listening Test results ranked from highest to lowest. Neither of the two highest scoring students, Hien or Trang, managed to top-score any of the other tests, in fact they are both low to middle-range students as far as the course is concerned. Trang, for instance, was placed in the Intensive Workshop to help overcome her pronunciation difficulties. Bau Chi, who is by far the poorest student, managed not only to pass but to score more highly than five other students. An even more curious fact is that that one of the students that Bau Chi outscored

in the listening test was Nhi, who scored very well in almost all of the other tests. Nhi's score of 38% seems discrepant not only because it contrasts so sharply with her other scores, but also because it was well below the other scores for this test.

2. Reading Test

- Pre-test - March 1st, 1993
- Post-test- October 13-18th, 1993

This oral reading test was designed to augment the aural pronunciation test with a production component and to provide further data for both diagnostic and pre-testing purposes. Students were withdrawn and taped individually over a number of days and the recordings for each student were made on a separate tape which would be used to record all of that student's spoken tasks gathered for diagnosis and assessment purposes throughout the course.

The reading test (see Appendix III) is comprised of some of the more common problems which Vietnamese speakers of English experience , according to contrastive analysis literature (MacNeil, 1987 and Asian Language Notes, 1983). For instance, it contained minimal pairs using consonants and consonant clusters in the initial and final positions. as well as long and short vowels and diphthongs. It also included a number of polysyllabic words, containing some of the sounds that often present problems because they either do not exist in Vietnamese or because they are harder to say when placed in certain positions. The /dʒ/ in 'leisure' and the /ks/ in 'extra' are two examples. Other polysyllabics are included because they have tense and plural suffixes which are often omitted such as 'es' and 'ed'. The third category of individual words were polysyllabics in which students would need to show their use of weak vowels such as the /ə/ in chocolate as well as correct placement of syllable stress.

Throughout the test we tried to include words which are in common usage such as 'international' so that the test would not be a vocabulary knowledge one, but a pronunciation one. Ironically, the two words which almost every student had difficulty with were "gin" and "ant". These two are not only short but, I would have also thought, reasonably common words. Most students however, pronounced "gin" with either a hard "g" /g / or carried the /tʃ/ from chin; and the /œ/ in ant was pronounced / a:_/as in "aunt". An important omission from the test were words with more than two consonants clustered initially, medially or in final position. The course was underway when we realised the problems that these feaures caused some speakers, but this realisation came too late for inclusion in the test. Despite these drawbacks, this section of the reading test worked well. Appendix IV, "Pronunciation Test: Common Errors" highlights the common problems that the test isolated.

The use of decontextualised sentences, however, is a different matter. In the end thesewere mainly only useful for what they could tell us about the students' pronunciation of individual sounds, their appropriate use of syllable stress, and the degree to which their delivery exhibited the rhythms of English as opposed to a Vietnamese staccato rhythm. Any attempt to gauge control of intonation, which was the intended use, was stymied by the fact that no context clues were available and consequently any pitch pattern was acceptable as long as it fell within the range of either the question or the statement.

The final element of the reading test was a limerick and this also fell short of expectations since few of the students were familiar with this

Table 2 Pre and Post Reading Scores

	%	%	%
CUONG	68	88	20
CHAU	44	62.7	18.7
DIEP	78	92.5	14.5
HUAN	70	82.9	12.9
TRI	66	78.7	12.7
CINDY	72	84	12
CAO SON	63	70	7
THI LAM	79	84	5
HOANG	65	70	5
PHUNG	55	60	5
DUYEN	50	55	5
BAO	80	84	4
	Test 1	Test 2	DIFFERENCE
	(March)	(October)	

quite specific rhythmic pattern. Even the better readers seemed to be put off by the form of the poem despite our efforts to avoid both difficult vocabulary and a culturally specific situation. As a consequence it too failed to tell us much about the students' control of rhythm or tone. A small number of students did produce the limerick's rhythm pattern fairly accurately in the post-test, but this was an exception. One can only assume that they actually came into contact with limericks in the intervening time between the test or that they were in fact familiar with the form all along but their performance was affected by the test situation.

Analysis of Results

Each student improved on their performance in the re-test as shown in Table 2. The greatest improvement was achieved by Dinh who improved his results by 20%, while the least improvement, by a margin of 4%, was experienced by Loc. Probably the most dramatic, and gratifying, were the results achieved by Bau Chi who is by far the weakest student. Her marks increased by 18.7% from a score of 44% to a score of 62.7%. It is interesting to look more closely at her results:

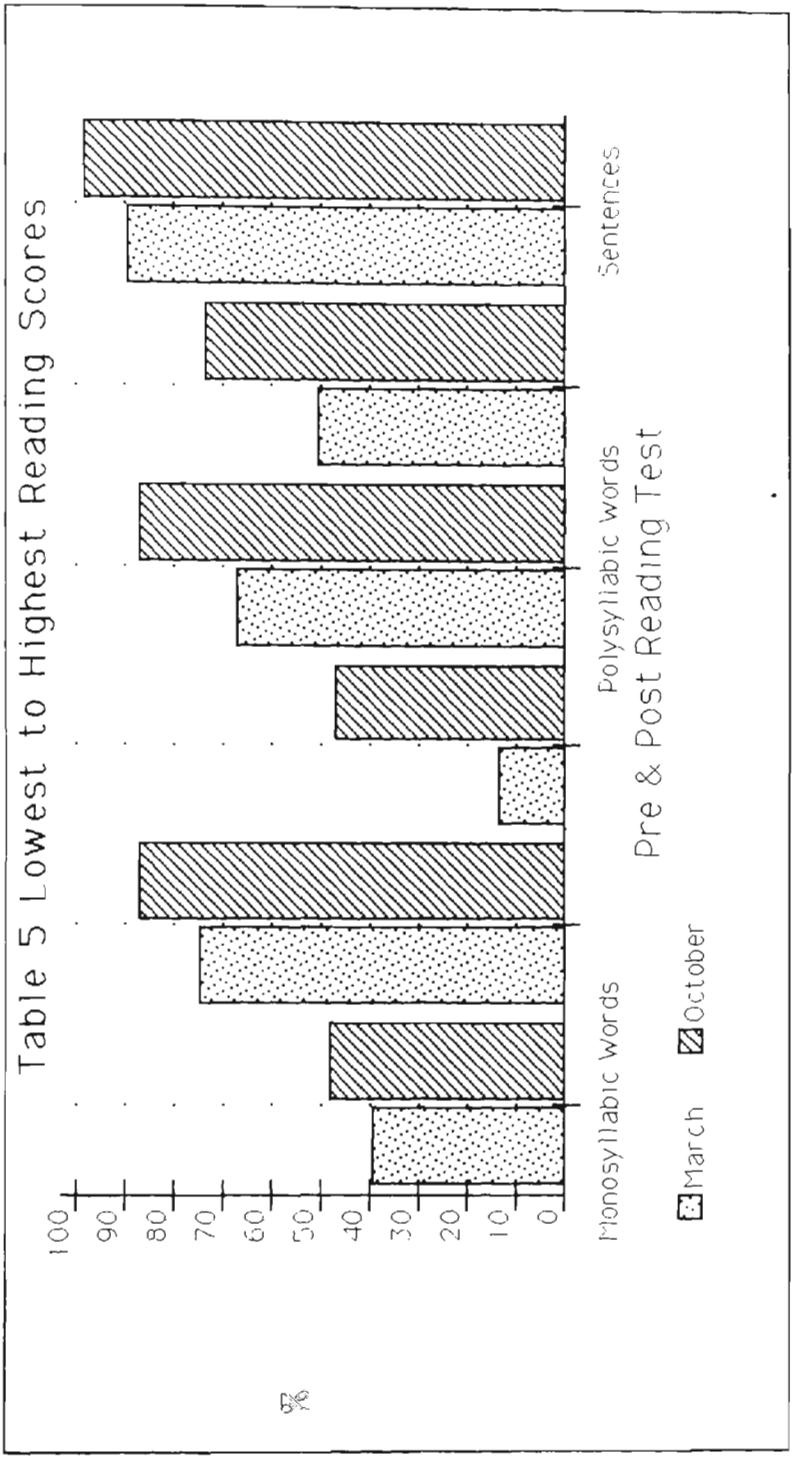| ELEMENTS	MARCH	OCTOBER
Monosyllabic words	9/23	11/23
Polysyllabic words	4/15	7/15
Sentences	28/56	41/56

Table 3 Chau Ly's Reading Scores

The areas of greater improvement, albeit by still a very small margin, are those where more demands are being made on her. That is, where she is being asked to articulate individual sounds, allocate stress to appropriate syllables and vary her pitch. It may seem curious that she can improve in these and yet get just over half of the minimal pairs incorrect. The explanation is of course that the first section of the test gathers together some of the most difficult words for Vietnamese English speakers to say. Interestingly, Bau Chi was one of a small group of students who were involved in the Intensive Workshop which focussed on some of these problems. The workshops used material from Speaking Clearly which provided practice in the auditory discrimination and production of minimal pairs with differing vowel and consonant sounds. It would seem from these results that this kind of remediation would need to occur over a longer period of time. Probably a more crucial factor in improvement, however, is the amount of time spent by the student working on pronunciation problems. As with the other students in the course, Bau Chi resisted any encouragement by the teachers to practise at home.

The table below shows the improvement rate between March and October on the same reading test amongst all twelve students across the three categories.

Monosyllabic words	13%
Polysyllabic words	20.9%
Sentences	10.2%

Table 4 Improvement between March and October

Table 5 Lowest to Highest Reading Scores

March October

Monosyllabic words   Polysyllabic words   Sentences

Pre & Post Reading Test

The most notable aspect of these results is that there is almost twice the rate of improvement in one of the three categories. The smaller increase in the monosyllabic minimal pairs can be accounted for as above. As also mentioned above there was a problem with the de-contextualised sentences and limerick and one would not expect to see much improvement due to that. As a consequence, the improvement in the polysyllabics might appear more promising than it really is. On the other hand, it could be that the activities in the course which focussed on word stress have had some benefit. Table 5, which plots the lowest to highest scores for both tests, shows clearly that the polysyllabic sector of the test saw the greatest overall improvement.

3. Prepared Oral Task March 1st, 1993

This task was recorded immediately after the reading test and in many cases the students' performance seemed to be adversely affected by the test conditions created by this context. Students had been informed prior to the task that they would be asked to speak for about a minute and that were to prepare a talk on a topic of their choice. All of the students seemed to have prepared a topic on which to speak, but the degree of preparation varied. This could be seen in the students who needed prompt questions so that their performance would extend beyond one or two sentences.

Some students coped well with the socio-linguistic demands of the task, launching into an extended monologue but not phased by attempts by the teacher to interact with them. Others were put off by the unfamiliarity of

the situation. Duc Long, for instance, responded with a look of terror and fell silent when I asked him to speak to me. I then thought that he had misunderstood and had not prepared a talk. Suddenly he launched into an unintelligible monologue about why he chooses to learn other languages, ending his outburst as abruptly as he had begun. Bau Chi Ly, on the other hand, could not be coaxed or cajoled into offering anything apart from a half-hearted giggle.

Most students chose to talk about their backgrounds, attitudes to school and to learning English. Generically speaking then they mostly fell into the categories of Recount and Observation/Comment. Given their similarities in field and genre I felt that this task would be both a valid and reliable assessment item which could be used not only to compare with individual student's other oral tasks but to compare students with one another.

The method used for assessing the speaking tasks has been adapted from Kenworthy (1987). The tapes were each played once through and the assessor made notes and allocated an impression mark out of five for the four categories of sentence stress (that is, rhythm), phonemic level(referring mainly to the sounding of individual words), word stress (that is, appropriate stress in polysyllabic words) and communicative competence. This latter category encompassed such things as appropriate pitch, the speaker's ability to sustain a fluent monologue or interchange and general presentation skills such as volume, appropriate expression, sensitivity to context (that is, of student performing in front of a a tape recorder) and audience (that is, teacher as assessor). The numerical results for this task were converted to percentages and the students were ranked accordingly in Table 6.

Name	%
NHI	90
DAO	85
SON	80
LOC	70
LUU	65
DINH	60
MINH	60
TRANG	43
THAO	40
DUC LONG	40
HIEN	37.5
BAU CHI	0

Table 6   Prepared Talk, March

4. Reading Test (2) "Captions" - June, 1993

In this activity, taken from Kenworthy (1987), a context was provided for the written texts and it was hoped that this would overcome the problems of testing intonation that occurred in the earlier reading test. Although it consists of five unrelated sentences, they had a related context. The students were given five cards with sentences printed on them and told that these were the captions to go with five

holiday photographs. They were to read the sentences (Appendix V) on to their tape and then the tape would be played to a person who had to match the captions with the five photographs. The students were told that they were being recorded as part of the process of gauging whether their pronunciation and intonation were improving.

It was assumed that, given this context, the students would produce the sentences with relatively similar tone pattern and sentence stress. As with the limerick from the earlier activity we had misjudged the cultural specificity and difficulty of some of vocabulary and for many students even relatively simple words such as 'oldish', 'cathedral', and 'varied' presented problems, and this unfamiliarity may have adversely affected their level of confidence and consequently their performance.

A major problem with this assessment task concerns the choice of field and genre. The objective of this task was misguided in that the idea was to produce a controlled situation whereby each student would be tested on their mastery of intonation as well as pronunciation. The task, however, was inappropriate since there was not enough in the context of photograph captions to motivate tone of voice and the intonation did not have to vary from a fairly neutral description. Although a purpose and audience was described to the students as the task was introduced, the students were not provided with the photographs themselves so there was no guidance as to what information should be emphasised or contrasted. Consequently, the only clues to sentence stress and intonation were grammatical ones. Four of the five captions contained Clauses, but one of them, "Ancient, walled city with magnificent cathedral" was simply a Noun Group and a

Circumstance, so its potential to indicate stress or tone was limited.

In hindsight, a far better tool for assessing intonation would have been a short, scripted dialogue, perhaps one which accompanied a picture. The dialogue could involve two people disagreeing, questioning and responding, and so on.

Analysing the Results

The difficulty outlined above has meant that the analysis that was carried out on these sentences for sentence stress is unreliable. Even the native speakers who read these sentences aloud for me produced differing patterns of sentence stress. The test is still useful, however with respect to what it can reveal about pronunciation and word stress.

A comparison was made in Table 7 between the number of words which were read with correct pronunciation and syllable stress across the three reading tests. The general trend is for increased scores in pronunciation across the nine month period between the test. Depressed figures for the June test do, however, confirm the earlier fear that the difficult and unfamiliarvocabulary would have a detrimental effect. It is interesting to note that all but two students had less trouble with word stress than pronunciation in that activity. This may be accounted for by the fact that they have developed better "word attack" skills for polysyllabic words as a result of the focus on this in the Pronunciation Course. Such skills may also have been developed through their studies in other subjects, particularly in the Science Key Learning Area where they would be often expected to read and

Table 7 Comparing Reading Test Scores
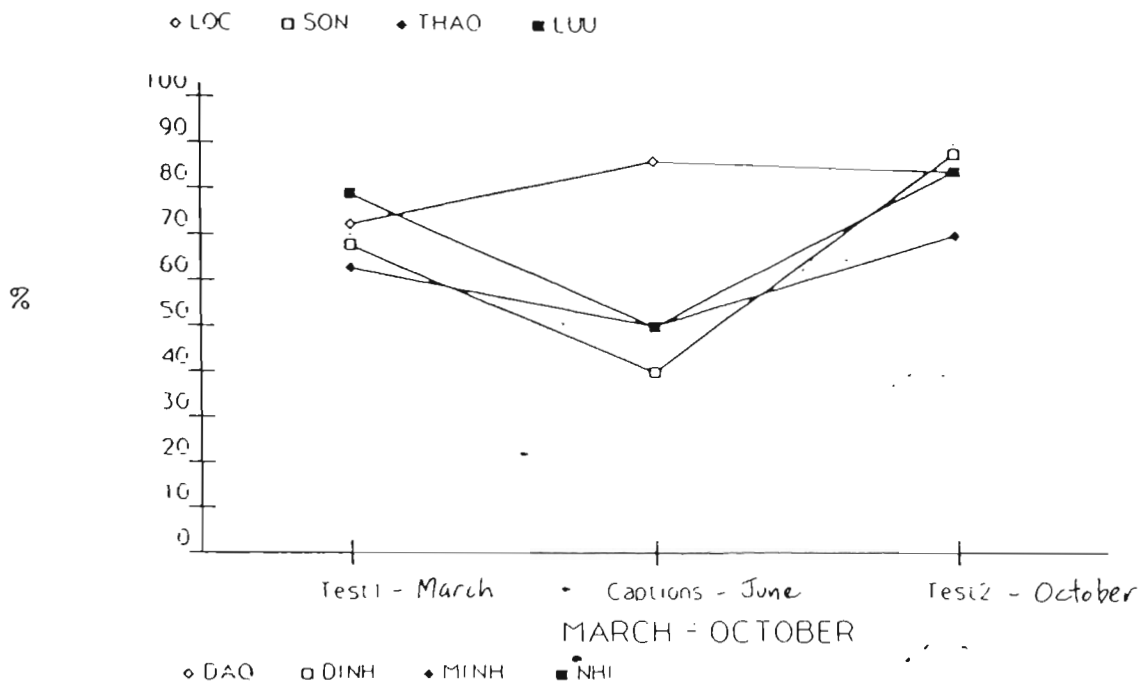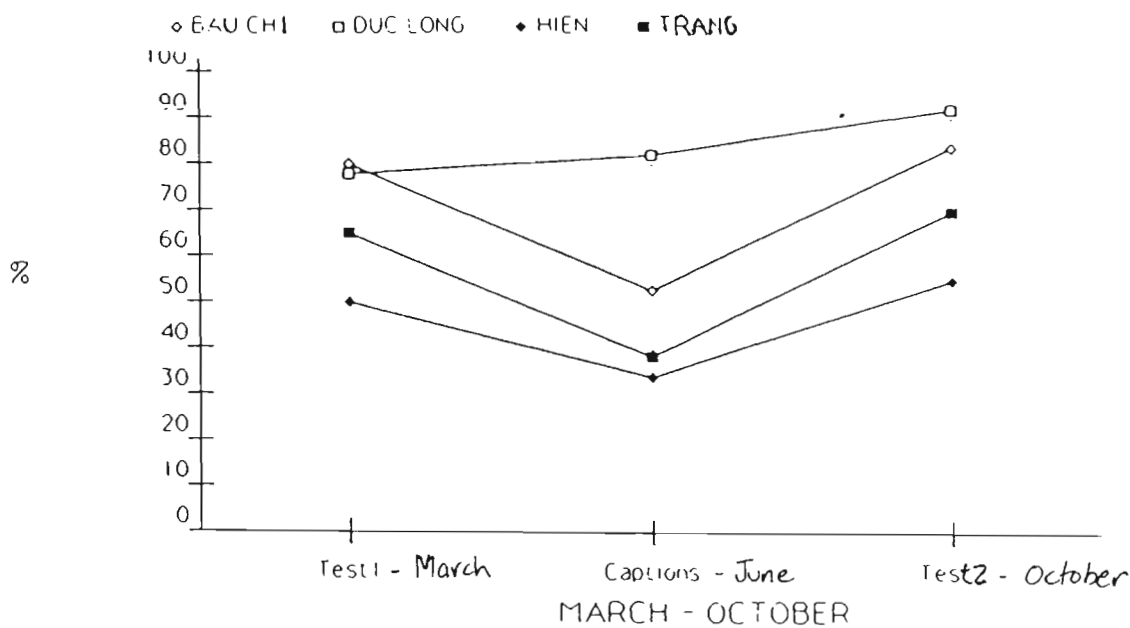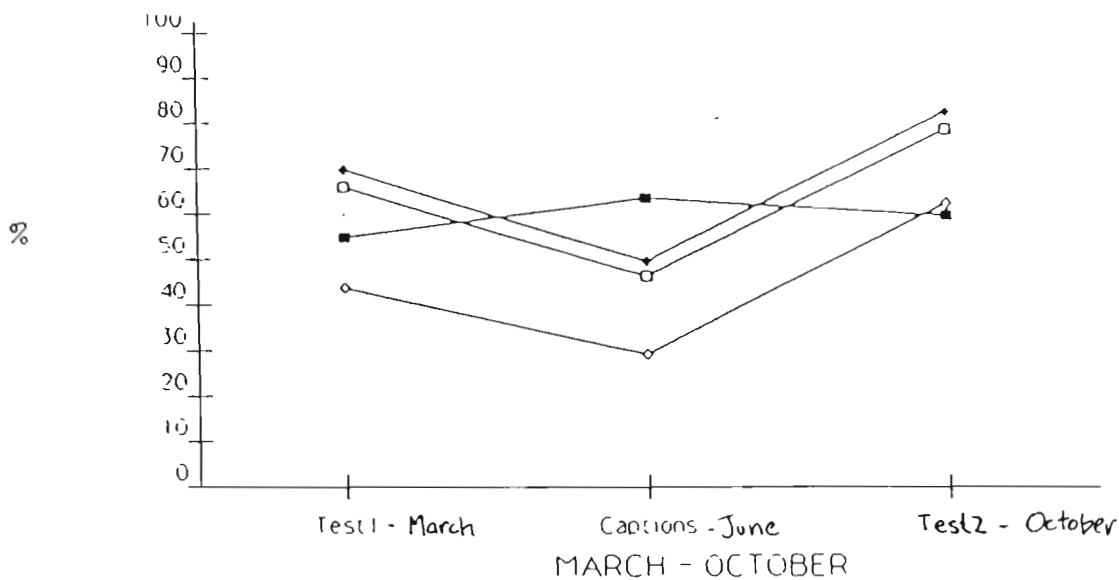
remember many polysllabic technical words of Latinate origin.

The results also indicate that the majority of students seem to find it easier to stress syllables appropriately in words that appear in the context of sentences rather than in isolation.

5. Spoken Description " Photographs" March 1st, 1993

This oral task was conducted immediately after the photograph caption reading activity. Students were presented with three similar holiday photographs. All three showed the same woman cyclists pictured at different spots along the seaside. The students were asked to choose one of the photographs and to describe what it showed. They were asked to imagine that the recording they were about to make was to be played back to a person who would also be looking at these same three photographs. The listener would decide which photograph was being described by the accuracy and detail of the description. All of the students understood this activity and each one, except for Bau Chi Ly, produced extended descriptions. Chau's vocabulary was too limited to do more than point our some very basic features of the scene and her whole utterance was only a few seconds in length.

These verbal descriptions were not subjected to the same degree of textual analysis as the earlier tasks. In this case two assessors listened together to each recording twice and, in consultation, rated each wholistically on a five point scale. This initial impression was then verified using the dictation method. Both assessors wrote down what they heard and then compared their versions. Adjustments to the students' ratings were then

made on the basis of the dictations. The students' rank and ratings on this test could then be compared to those of the prepared talk task, Table 8.

6.   Structured Oral Tasks - "Going Out" - September, 1993

This speaking activity was specifically designed to assess students' control of intonation. The students are not only assigned acting roles but also intonational roles. The idea is an adaptation from Kenworthy where she sets up activities in order that students can practice specific intonation.

The general instruction for this activity was: "The two of you are planning an outing. The aim is to see how well Partner A can keep an enthusiastic tone and how well Partner B can show a change from expressing agreement to disagreement." Each half of the pair was given a different instruction sheet (Appendix VI), basically providing them with conflicting suggesting about where they should go, where and when they should eat and how they should get home.

The focus of this activity was meant to be control of intonation and it was initially conceived as a fairly impromptu role play in which the pairs would be taped in isolation from the others. . As it turned out, the students found it quite engaging and wanted to rehearse their role play before committed it to tape. As there is no arguing with teenagers once a tape recorder is involved, we relented and not only allowed the pairs minimal rehearsal time, but also allowed the others to 'sit-in' while each pair was taped. This was a mistake, since the some of the pairs played up the dramatics a bit and lost sight of the instructions. It is also quite likely that the students found the instructions confusing or simply inauthentic and they ad -libbed their own roles. This makes for

entertaining listening, but tended to jeopardise our original idea of closely monitoring a set of intonation patterns.

For a number of reasons then, "Going Out" did not work as well as was intended. The intonation patterns which we had anticipated the students would use in order to achieve their purpose were not the ones that they did in fact use. This was in part because the students interpreted the intention of the roles differently . It was also because the set of intonation patterns that we had predicted they would use was too restricted.

In order to overcome these problems, we needed to abandon our original assessment pro forma (see Appendix VI). The assessor and I decided to try and define the role that each speaker seemed to be adopting and to judge the appropriateness and consistency of the intonation in terms of that role. Other elements of pronunciation such as word and sentence stress, pronunciation of words and volume were all marked on a five point scale as per the previous oral tasks.

Analysing the Results

Table 8 overleaf shows the total scores from the three speaking tasks. In addition, it shows the total difference in percentages between the three scores for each student. The individual scores show whether the student was scoring consistently or otherwise in the three different tasks and whether all students seem to perform better or worse on particular tasks. As the total percentage differences are ranked from highest to lowest, it is possible as well to see which students have made the most overall improvement and which have seen little improvement.

In terms of greatest improvement, Trang and Thao improved by around 40% across the speaking tasks, doubling their first two scores. This dramatic increase is partly due to the nature of the October task in which most students, except for Loc and Tri, performed better. This sharp increase may between the first two and the last task

TABLE 8 Comparing Three Oral Tasks

NAME	Talk	Photos	Going Out	DIFF
TRANG	43	40	86	43
THAO	40	36	80	40
HIEN	37.5	60	74	36.5
BAO CHI	0	20	32	32
DINH	60	60	90	30
MINH	60	48	80	20
SON	80	88	96	16
DUC LONG	40	60	54	14
LUU	65	56	72	7
NHI	90	84	96	6
DAO	85	76	90	5
LOC	70	92	52	-18

would also be due to the different nature of the tasks. The first two were performed and recorded individually whereas the third task was a paired role play which was rehearsed and performed in the more relaxed and supportive atmosphere of a small group. Hien also has a sharp increase in scores between the first and two final tests. This may be simply be that his first score was aberrant and that he simply performed badly on that day. However, by examining his performance across all seven test items (Table 9) we can see that this improvement in the speaking scores between March and October is echoed in his improved reading scores across the same period.

In general, the students performed better as the tasks became more concrete and interactive. Dinh and Minh's performance, for instance, improved by increments of 10-20%, while for Son and Dao the scores remained both consistently high and increasing. A special mention should be made of Bau Chi who was unable to make any recording at all in the first task. Her scores are extremely low but overall she has increased by 32%, again reflecting the general trend.

It is difficult to account for why Luu and Nhi's scores are not consistent with this trend of incremental improvement. For both of them the second test, where they were asked to describe a photograph, was their weakest result by 9% and 6% respectively. These are not significant differences and may be accounted for by the fact that the other two tests were different in nature to the second. That is, the students were able to prepare in advance for the prepared talk in March and there was preparation and rehearsal time for the test in October. Whilst this preparation time may have been a factor in Luu's performance, however, it is unlikely to have affected Nhiwhose scores are generally higher than his.

Finally, a point needs to be made about Bao's scores. he begins with a 22% improvement by June, but drops by a significant 40% in the third task. This discrepant

Table 9 All Test Scores

MARCH – OCTOBER

Table 9   All Test Scores

MARCH – OCTOBER

◇ DINH   ◻ HIEN   ◆ TRANG   ■ MINH

Table 9 All Test Scores

x-axis labels (left to right):
List (Feb) — Read1 (March) — Talk (March) — Captions (June) — Photos (June) — Going Out (Oct) — Read2 (Oct)
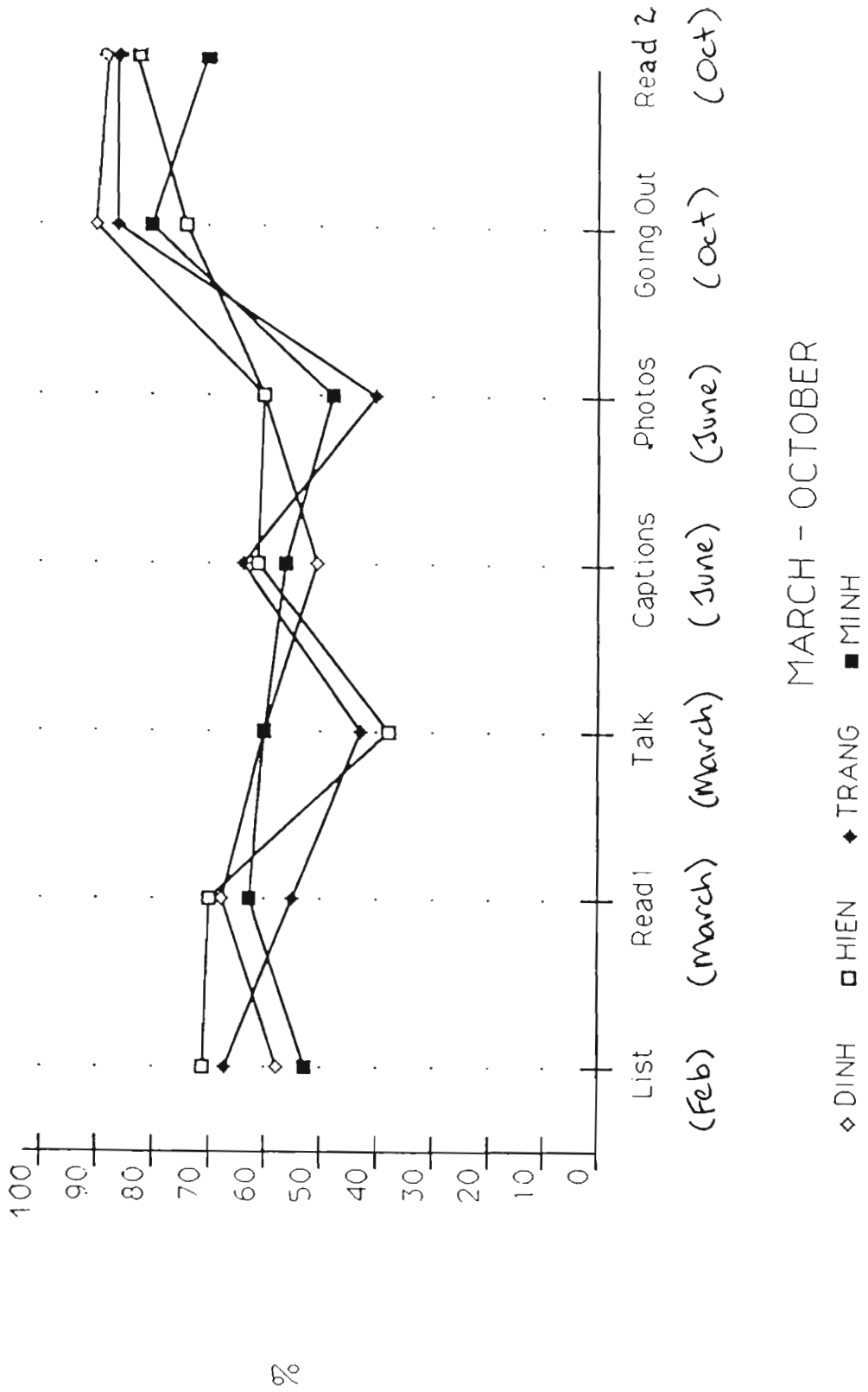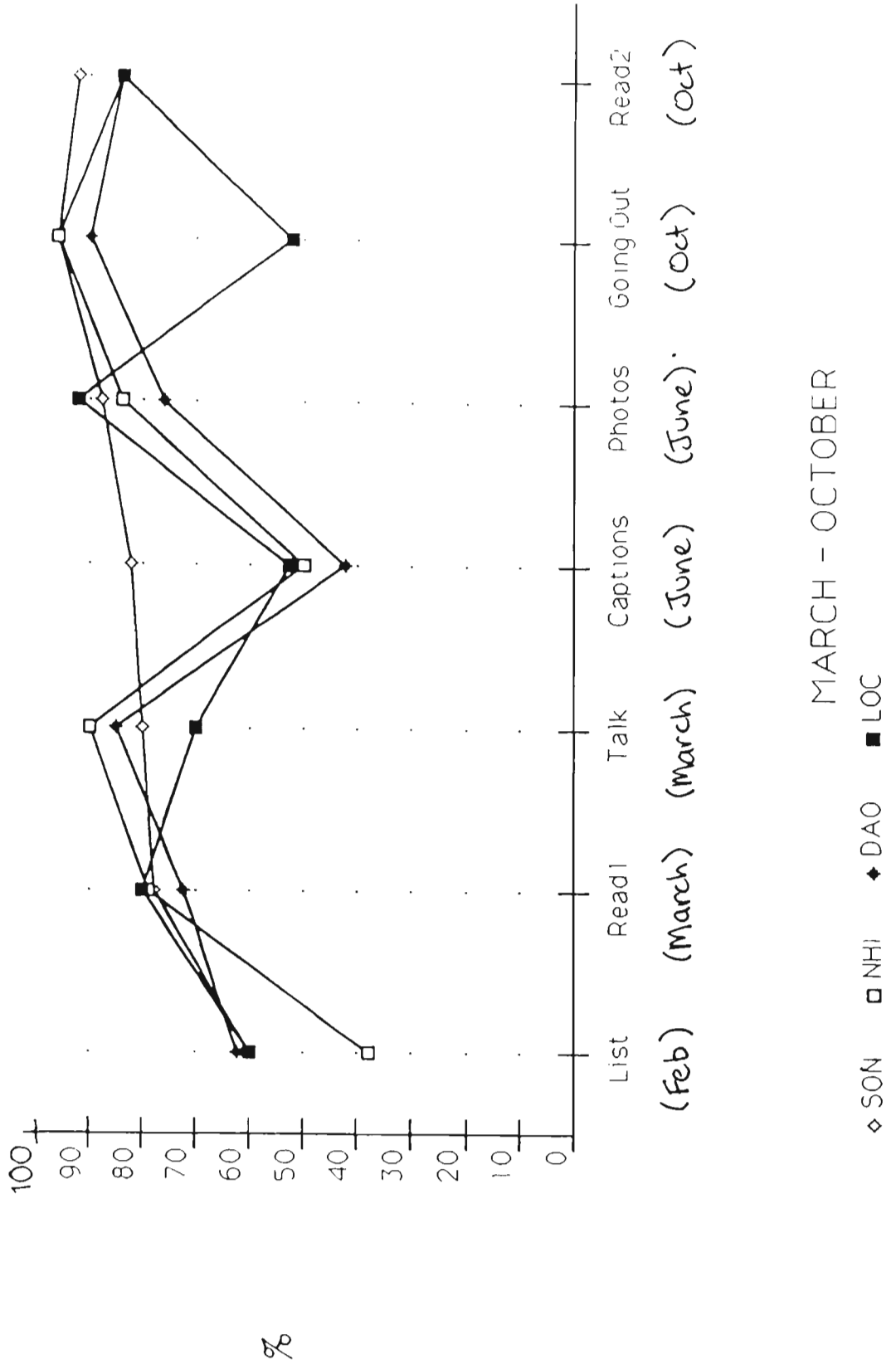
y-axis: % (0, 10, 20, 30, 40, 50, 60, 70, 80, 90, 100)

MARCH – OCTOBER

◇ SON   □ NHI   ◆ DAO   ■ LOC

result is most likely due to Bao's over-acting rather than a sign that he is regressing. He over-interpreted his role in "Going Out", sounding far too harsh for the situation. The fact that this is an intonation problem is confirmed by his high scores in the pronunciation and word stress categories compared to both pitch and sentence stress which were low. This would correlate with the observation made by Kenworthy (1987, p11): "Sentence stress and intonation work together to help speakers send the precise message they want to send." In this case, it must be assumed that they worked together in the wrong direction, because he was not clear about his speaking role.

Bao's case leads to the question which is the focus of this research: what do the results tell us about the relative importance of the suprasegmental features in relation to the segmentals? That is, are there students who can score quite differently in the categories for pitch and sentence stress as opposed to those for pronunciation and word stress? By comparing the scores on the five-point scales for each of the speaking tasks it is possible to isolate three students, Luu, Dao and to a lesser extent Thao, who could be said to have better intonation than pronunciation. With the exception of Loc, for the majority of the twelve students, the two aspects of spoken English, intonation and pronunciation developed at a fairly even rate.

V   Recommendations

The findings from this research project have number of implications for both the curriculum and assessment of this ongoing Pronunciation Program. There are, for instance, modifications that should be made to the existing test items discussed in this project. These modifications are elaborated in i, ii and iii below. The analysis of the data available to the research project also highlighted the fact that a more systematic approach needs to be taken in the teaching of word and sentence stress as well as intonation. This more structured curriculum would be mirrored by a more systematic approach to the assessment of these prosodic features. Some possible approaches are canvassed in iv.

The next two sections, v and vi, suggest two additional types of activities which could be utilised as part of the teaching/learning curriculum as well as part of the bank of assessment items that could be used to assess gains in pronunciation. These additions attempt to build on the more successful aspects of the existing program namely the innovative use of Karaoke video and the relative success of introducing intonational role play as an assessment tool. The focus of this research has been the teachers' experimental attempts to monitor gains in pronunciation. This was seen as a necessary preliminary stage before introducing assessment tools for use by students. Section vii outlines this move towards peer and self-assessment and a sample monitoring pro-forma is provided in the Appendix I.

i.   A more useful way of testing auditory discrimination   is needed.

Gilbert's listening test, at least in its current form, does not seem to yield reliable results

for our students. There seemed little, if any correlation between these results and the students' results in reading and speaking.

The reliability of the test could be increased by reducing the number of multiple choice-type questions so that we could be more certain that the students were not simply guessing. These could be replaced by similar items which were more open-ended, that is where students would need to supply their own endings or punctuation. Exercises which ask students to identify attitudes with sentence intonation could be made more valid by providing a larger number of attitudes to choose from or asking students to supply their own.

Whilst it seems important to ascertain the level of students' auditory discrimination skills, there seems little point in using an assessment tool which contains activities, such as comparing rhythm patterns, that are totally new to the students. This only increases the likelihood of guesswork and reduces the students' confidence. This was evidenced by the number of sections which were not attempted by some students. The Gilbert test, with some modification, may be better administered further into the course, when some of these activities are more familiar to the students.

ii.   The reading tests should provide more context for the   reader, should include both written and spoken English text and should involve a variety of registers.

This is a fairly tall order since the test should enough to administer in less than ten minutes. Ideally, there should be time enough in the session for the student to complete the reading test as well as a speaking task. The slight increase that was seen in the students'

pronunciation of minimal pairs of monosyllabic words suggests that little would be gained by retaining this section of the test. The list of polysyllabic words should be kept, but it may be more useful to include words with more than three syllables and some compound nouns.

The section of the test which contains sentences could test sentence stress more explicitly. For instance, it could include minimal pairs of sentences with differing punctuation which changes meaning. Longer sentences containing adjectival phrases, or inserted expressions such as "as you may know" and "for some reason or other" could be used to test control of pitch and volume.

iii   More interesting and authentic reading tasks should   be used for assessment purposes.

For instance, students could be asked to record an item for the radio news, radio advertisement or, in pairs, they can read a scripted interview. Source material for the news items can be easily found in the News in Brief section of a newspaper, the advertisements can be adaptations of print advertisements from newpapers or magazines, and interview scripts are commonly used in popular magazines, often accompanied by photographs and other visual clues.

It is hoped that by providing authentic, performance tasks such as these, students may be motivated to practice at home. If this did eventuate, the likelihood of improvement would be greatly enhanced.

iv   A more systematic approach to the teaching of word   and sentence stress and intonation.

This more systematic approach would not prohibit the teachers from continuing to draw upon a range of theories of intonation, or indeed on the range of resources and activities. It simply suggests that the curriculum provide a more clearly defined and categorised approach to these suprasegmental elements.

The periodic assessment tasks used should reflect this more systematic approach. For instance, a workshop where sentence stress has been the focus should be followed by an assessment activity which specifically tests students' use of sentence stress placement ,such as a barrier game involving giving directions. This would not mean that all of the the specific intonation patterns practised in the course would be slavishly tested. Rather, the students' control of a range of intonation and the appropriate use of stress and intonation in context could be asessed by constructing controlled activities or by setting up role plays.

Stress

One of the more significant findings of the research project was that many of the students had continue to have difficulty with both word and sentence stress. It was not only in the less familiar vocabulary that the students were asked to read, but even in some of the more common polysyllabic words such as "bicycle" and "barbecue" that students misplaced stress. As Roach says, "incorrect stress placement is a major cause of intelligibility and therefore is a subject hat needs to be treated seriously." (1991, p87) Undoubtedly, it would help students if a set of simple rules for stress placement in polysyllabic words was available

to them. However, the rules governing word stress are in fact very complicated. Were it simply a matter of taking into account such factors as whether the words are simple, complex or compound, the number of syllables they contain or their grammatical category, then the rules may be learnt. Stress is also determined by the phonological structure of the syllables and it is this factor, coupled with the catalogue of exceptions to these rules, which complicates this enterprise and places it beyond the scope of this program.

In balancing the obvious need for students to improve their use of stress with the complexity of understanding stress placement in English, the solution may be to aim at increaed student awareness of the issue in general. After all, few native speakers would be able to describe any of the rules, yet they apply them successfully. This phenonemon occurs through a gradual process as native speakers generalise about known words and apply that generalisation to new words. If second language learners are deliberately placed in learning situations where they too must hypothesise about language, this process may be helped along.

For instance, Kenworthy suggests an exercise where students are provided with lists of polysyllabic words which do conform to rules, such as words where the suffix is unstressed and the second syllable is stressed. By posing questions to the students such as 'Are all of the final syllables stressed? Which syllables tend to be stressed? Does it seem to matter how many syllables the word has?' they should be able to draw up rules which in response which operate for those words at least. This activity could be used to raise awareness of some of the basic stress rules. Exceptions to these rules are cited by the teacher in order to reinforce the idea that irregularities do exist and that the rules that the students have 'invented' are there as a rough guide.

Intonation

The course could broaden its intonation syllabus to include the the basic discourse functions from Bradford's Intonation in Context (1988) as well as a simplified version of Halliday's grammatical functions and Kenworthy's attitudinal functions of intonation. All of these approaches include more technical detail than would be necessary or desirable for a program of this type. Even if a simplisitic version of each is used, this would mean that the program would include more stress and intonation practice than it currently contains. This more explicit teaching and assessment of the various functions of stress and intonation may not only lead to a greater awareness but also an improvement in the students' pronunciation.

v   More role play and drama improvisation activities should be used as both teaching/learning activities and as assessment tools.

The role plays could centre around telephone use as in the text, Person to Person (Richards and Bycina, 1985) and Telephone Gambits a Module for Teaching Telephone English to Second Language Learners (Fox, Woods, Deeble 1985) or around stimulus pictures and simulations as in What Do You Think? (Byrne, Wright 1978). The activities in these texts are communicative and can be incorporated into the more systematic framework as suggested above in Section iv.

For instance, "Ask the Panel" (Byrne, Wright, 1978, p70) is a simulated radio program in which on-air panel members give advise in response to callers or letters from callers. This role play would require students to use intonation which may range from showing

reservation, involvement and confirming information. Other stimulus material from this text includes line drawings depicting scenes from a job interview, a domestic kitchen and a clerical office. The body language and facial expressions would easily lend themselves to students' role-playing dialogues in which attitudinal intonation is the focus. The attitudes to be assessed could be made explicit and rehearsed through some preliminary questions such as 'How do you think the daughter is feeling? What is the mother thinking? Why is the typist crying? What has happened just before this scene?"

Telephone Gambits offers a series of structured scenarios around typical telephone situations such checking information and closing a phone conversation unexpectedly. This is a useful text for practising particular intonation patterns such as confirming and showing diplomacy as well as scaffolding the more demanding situations offered in Person to Person. The chapters in this text focus on particular speech functions such as 'evading an offer of help', 'giving an excuse', 'responding to anger,' and 'politely countering'. Each chapter includes a scripted dialogue which provides a context for and demonstraton of the speech function as well as other role play scenarios for the students to try.

Many of the activities described in Theatresports Down Under A Guide for Coaches and Players (Pierse, 1993) could be used to develop prosodic features as well as the use of body language and voice projection. The activities suggested range from 'warm-ups' which involve the whole group, to 'training' activities for individuals and pairs and finally to the Theatresports games which can involve teams of four to five people. As drama activities, their objectives are to teach improvisation skills, develop creativity and build confidence, and these objectives are also valued in the ESL curriculum. Many of the activities could be used as a supplement to a pronunciation course by providing a context for some of the focus features, particularly in the areas of rhythm, stress and intonation. Appendix VIII provides a suggested pronunciation curriculum based on Theatresports.

vi   More communicative activities and games could be used both in the course and as assessment tools.

The approach adopted by Pica successfully integrates teaching rules, practice and performance within a context of problem solving or information exchange. The activities that she suggests for teaching word stress, voiced and unvoiced syllables in past tense and plurals forms and thought groups would all be useful additions to the program. Similarly, the communicative activities provided by Bradford would be provide effective assessment items as well as meaningful contexts for practising the focus stress and intaonational features.

There would also be a role for information gap games such as those found in Back& Forth Pair Activities for Language Developement (Palmer, Rodgers, Olsen 1987). These would be especially useful for beginning to intermediate students or for training students in assessing others by beginning with simple speech functions such as yes/no question and response to question.

vii   As part of a move towards increased awareness and self-assessment, a modified assessment pro-forma should be used by students to assess each other's performance.

The assessment pro-formas would be a combination of that devised by Mah, and a simplified version of the categories used in this project in which features such as stress, phonemes and intonation were assessed on a five-point scale. As with Mah's program, performances would be made live, on audio and video recordings and students would be

trained to assess themselves and each other. The assessment pro-formas are kept deliberately simple since the main objective is to use them as awareness raisers rather than as empirical tools to measure pronunciation improvement. It is hoped, however, that some degree of progress would be noted through this form of monitoring.

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STUDENT FEEDBACK

NAME:_____

TAPE MONITORING

Listen to the tapes and comment on the following:

1. Intonation: Is it appropriate?
2. Meaning: Is the meaning clear? Can you understand easily?

●●●●●●●●●●●●●

Tape 1   Name:_____
Comments:

Rating: A   B   C   D   E
(Circle one)

Tape 2   Name:_____
Comments:

Rating: A   B   C   D   E
(Circle one)

Master of Arts TESOL   Bronwyn Mehan

TEACHER FEEDBACK

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┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│                                    NAME:_____       │
│ HOMEWORK  EVALUATION  SHEET                                       │
│ Comments on tape                                                  │
│ Strong  Points:                                                   │
│                                                                   │
│                                                                   │
│                                                                   │
│                                                                   │
│ Weak  Points:                                                     │
│                                                                   │
│                                                                   │
│ Things  to  work  on  the  next  tape:                            │
│                                                                   │
│                                                                   │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
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PART 1: PRONUNCIATION

Name: .... Date: . ..
Nationality: ....

Pronunciation test

The purpose of this test is to find which parts of English pronunci-
ation may interfere with the way you understand and use spoken
English. How you hear English is closely connected with how you
speak English.

This test is recorded on the cassette.

A

How many syllables (beats) are there in these words?
Example:
beauty = 2 (beau–ty)
beautiful = 3 (beau–ti–ful)

Now listen and write down the number of syllables you hear in each
word. You will hear each word twice.

1 open   ....   4 closed   ....
2 difficult   ....   5 variation   ....
3 taxes   ....

B

Which syllable is prominent or stressed in these words?
Example:
Monday
tomorrow
education

Now listen and draw a line under the most strongly stressed syllable.
You will hear each word twice.

1 participant   4 photography
2 photograph   5 reliable
3 November

2   © Cambridge University Press 1990

C

Which syllables are not stressed (have weak sounds)?
Example:
ábout
atóm
átomíc

Now listen and draw a line through the weak sounds in each word.
You will hear each word twice.

1 banana   4 women
2 woman   5 Japan
3 Canada

D

Which word do you hear in these sentences?
Example:
So, your name is i) Lampert, is it? ....
                ii) Lambert   ....X.....

Now listen and put a cross next to the word you hear:

1 That's i) Miss, isn't it? ....
        ii) Ms (mizz)   ....
2 And you live at 22 i) Rishley Road. ....
                     ii) Richley   ....
3 And your name, sir, is i) Vinney, is that right? ....
                         ii) Finney   ....
4 And the address is 15 i) Boot Street. ....
                    ii) Booth   ....
5 That's in i) Axbridge, isn't it? ....
          ii) Haxbridge   ....

E

Is the rhythm of these phrases the same or different? Listen to this example:

Trafalgar Square   a cup of tea   'Same'

Now listen and decide if the the rhythm of the phrases on the left is the same (write S) as or **different** (write D) from the phrases on the right. You will hear each phrase once.

1 Oxford Circus	please be quiet	....
2 Richmond Road	hurry up	....
3 Victoria Station	a cup of tea	....
4 Leicester Square	answer the phone	. ...
5 Pall Mall	sit down	. ...

F

Dictation. What are the missing words in these phrases?
Example:
She .... go. <u>can't</u>
He .... going. <u>isn't</u>

Now listen and write in the missing words. You will hear each sentence once.

1 She doesn't .... to do it now.
2 Please .... message.
3 .... think she'll come?
4 Where .... go?
5 How .... you been here?
6 .... busy?
7 .... call her at six?
8 What .... done?
9 I'm afraid .... at the moment.
10 .... told me if he'd known.

G

Which word has the most stress (prominence) in each sentence?
Example:
That's a <u>great</u> idea.

Now listen to the dialogue. Underline the most stressed word in each sentence. You will hear the dialogue once only.

A: What's the matter?
B: I've lost my hat.
A: What kind of hat?
B: It was a rain hat.
A: What colour rain hat?
B: It was white. White with stripes.
A: There was a white hat with stripes in the car.
B: Which car?
A: The one I sold!

H

Can you recognise groups of words? Two identical sentences may have a different interpretation.
Example:
John said, 'My father is here.'
'John,' said my father, 'is here.'

Now listen to one sentence from each of the following pairs. Put a cross next to the sentence you hear. You will hear it twice.

1 a) Alfred said, 'The boss is stupid.' ....
  b) 'Alfred,' said the boss, 'is stupid.' ....

2 a) He sold his houseboat and motorbike. ....
  b) He sold his house, boat and motorbike. ......

3 a) If you finish, quickly leave the room. ....
  b) If you finish quickly, leave the room. ....

4 a) Pressing the pedal slowly, push the lever forward. ....
  b) Pressing the pedal, slowly push the lever forward. ....

5 a) The passengers, who had blue boarding cards, were told to board the plane. ...
  b) The passengers who had blue boarding cards were told to board the plane. ....

I

The movement of our voice (pitch) can change the interpretation of sentences. Can you interpret the meaning of these sentences?
Example:
It was awful.   (statement)
It was awful.   (question)

Now listen to these sentences. Underline one of the two words or phrases in brackets that best interprets the meaning of each sentence. You will hear each sentence twice.

1	She left her glasses.	(question / statement)
2	He's finished.	(question / statement)
3	The number is 35547.	(statement / contradiction)
4	It's 22 Hills Road.	(statement / contradiction)
5	You're English, aren't you?	(fairly sure / not very sure)
6	That's his sister, isn't it?	(fairly sure / not very sure)
7	Really.	(very interested / not very interested)
8	Thanks.	(very interested / not very interested)
9	I like the garden.	(enthusiastic / not very enthusiastic)
10	The kitchen is nice.	(enthusiastic / not very enthusiastic)

Pronunciation Test

MOUSE

MOUTH

SUM

THUMB

SUE

ZOO

TELEVISION

LEISURE

AGREE

USUALLY

CHIN

GIN

SICK

THICK

BUS

BUZZ

EXCITEMENT

WAKE

WANT

ANT

BAG

TAG

WAIT

WAND

AND

BACK

TACK

TAKE

EXTRA

STARTED

STOPPED

WATCHES

SENTENCES

COMMUNICATED

INTERNATIONAL

CHOCOLATE

LIBRARY

INTERESTING

WILL YOU SEND ME SOME MONEY?

THE BUS IS COMING.

CAN I'VE A PIECE OF PAPER PLEASE?

THANKS A LOT.

I'VE LOST MY KEYS.

THERE WAS AN OLD LADY OF CREWE

WHO FOUND A LARGE MOUSE IN HER STEW

SAID THE WAITER, "DON'T SHOUT

AND WAVE IT ABOUT,

OR THE REST WILL BE WANTING ONE TOO.

TEST	COMMON ERRORS	COMMENTS
MOUTH / MOUSE	final consonants omitted	
SUE / ZOO	[ʃ] for [s], [j] for [z]	
SUM / THUMB	[ʃ] for [s], [t] for [θ], sounding of 'silent b'	
LEISURE	[z] for [dʒ]	
CHIN / GIN	[ʃ] for [tʃ], [ʒ] or [tʒ] for [g]	
THICK / SICK	[t] for [θ], [ʃ] for [s]	
BUS / BUZZ	[u:] for [ʌ], [ʃ] for [s] , [s] for [z]	
BAG / TAG	[e] for [eɪ], [k] for [g]	
WAKE / WAIT	[e] for [eɪ], final consonant not sounded	
ANT / AND	[e] for [ɒ]	
BACK / TACK / TAKE	[e] for [æ], [e] for [eɪ]	
EXCITEMENT	[s] for [ks], final consonant omitted	
AGREE	[j] for [g]	
TELEVISION	teleVISion for TELevision	
USUALLY	[s] for [ʃ]	
EXTRA	[s] for [ks]	
WATCHES	'es' omitted	
INTERNATIONAL	[eɪ] for [æ]	
STARTED	'ed' omitted	
SENTENCES	'es' omitted	
STOPPED	'ed' omitted	
CHOCOLATE		
COMMUNICATED	communiCATed for COMmunicated	
LIBRARY		
INTERESTED	inteRESTing for INteresting	
WILL YOU SEND ME SOME MONEY?	[oʊ] for [ʌ] in 'money' WILL YOU SEND me SOME MONEY	
THE BUS IS COMING	[t] for [θ] in 'the', [s] left off 'is', [ŋ] left off 'coming' the BUS IS COMing	

TABLE 2 Common Errors in Pronunciation Reading Test

THANKS A LOT	[t] for [θ], final [t] left off 'lot' T(h)AN(k)s (a) LO(t)	
I'VE LOST MY KEYS	[a] for [i:] in 'keys' I'VE LOST | my KEYS	
CAN I'VE A PIECE OF PAPER PLEASE?	CAN I'VE | A PIECE | OF PAPER PLEASE	[f] for [p], [b] for [p] – only two students
THERE WAS AN OLD LADY OF CREWE	[t] for [θ] in 'there', [s] left off 'was', [g] for [k] in 'Crewe'	
WHO FOUND A LARGE MOUSE IN HER STEW	[d] left of 'found', [dʒ] and [s] left off 'large' & 'mouse'	
SAID THE WAITER, 'DON'T SHOUT'	[eɪ] for [e] in 'said', [t] left off 'shout'	
AND WAVE IT ABOUT	[v] and [t] left off 'wave' and 'about'	
OR THE REST WILL BE WANTING ONE TOO.		

TABLE 2 Common Errors in Pronunciation Reading Test.

Appendix V

"Captions"

1. Oldish sort of town where lots of weavers and potters still live.

2. The children went for three months to a free school.

3. The circus tents were set up on the verge of a river bank.

4. Ancient walled city with magnificent cathedral.

5. The hotel was by the beach and night life was varied and exciting.

PERSON _____B_____

You're planning to go out on Saturday night and you want to:

1. get a video

2. stay in this suburb

3. a detective movie

4. go to eat something before the movie

5. at Macdonalds

6. before the movie go to church

7. go home in the taxi.

PERSON ___A___

You're planning to go out on Saturday night and you want to:

1. go to a movie

2. in the city

3. an action movie

4. after you go to eat something

5. at Chinatown

6. after the movie go to Timezone

7. go home in the bus

DATING

Student _____

PARTNER A should mainly a RISING TONE and WORD STRESS to show ENTHUSIASM.

*eg I'd love to go to the **movies**.*

Suggestion	Appropriate Tone/Stress ✔ ✛
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	

Student's main problems are with:
☐ SENTENCE INTONATION
☐ WORD STRESS
☐ LOW LEVEL OF VOCABULARY
☐ PRONOUNCING WORDS
☐ HESITATION
☐ VOLUME

DATING

Student _____

PARTNER B should at first use WORD STRESS and FALLING TONE to show AGREEMENT.

*eg Well, I **wanted** to get a video, but let's go to a movie*

The change of attitude (to disagreement) may be shown through WORD STRESS , VOLUME or TONE

Suggestion	Appropriate Tone/Stress ✔ ✛
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	

* marks where tone changed
Student's main problems are with:
☐ SENTENCE INTONATION
☐ WORD STRESS
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Theatresports Program

	Theatresports Activity	Pg
RHYTHM	Where Do You Come From?	345
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	Rhyming Couplets	134
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	One-word-at- a-time Singles	
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	Line in a Bucket	246
	One, two , three-word Sentence	208
	Saving	366

Appendix VIII

TEACHER FEEDBACK

NAME:_____

HOMEWORK EVALUATION SHEET
Comments on tape
Strong Points:

Weak Points:

Things to work on the next tape:

PART 1: PRONUNCIATION

Name: .... Date: ..... , ...
Nationality: ....

Pronunciation test 📼

The purpose of this test is to find which parts of English pronunciation may interfere with the way you understand and use spoken English. How you hear English is closely connected with how you speak English.

   This test is recorded on the cassette.

A

How many syllables (beats) are there in these words?
Example:
beauty = 2 (beau–ty)
beautiful = 3 (beau–ti–ful)

Now listen and write down the number of syllables you hear in each word. You will hear each word twice.

1 open   ....   4 closed   ....
2 difficult ....   5 variation   ....
3 taxes   ....

B

Which syllable is prominent or stressed in these words?
Example:
<u>Mon</u>day
to<u>mor</u>row
edu<u>ca</u>tion

Now listen and draw a line under the most strongly stressed syllable. You will hear each word twice.

1 participant   4 photography
2 photograph   5 reliable
3 November

C

Which syllables are not stressed (have weak sounds)?
Example:
ábout
atóm
átomíc

Now listen and draw a line through the weak sounds in each word.
You will hear each word twice.

1 banana   4 women
2 woman   5 Japan
3 Canada

D

Which word do you hear in these sentences?
Example:
So, your name is i)   Lampert, is it?   ....
                    ii) Lambert   ....X.....

Now listen and put a cross next to the word you hear:

1 That's i)   Miss, isn't it?   ....
        ii) Ms (mizz)   ....
2 And you live at 22 i)   Rishley Road.   ....
                    ii) Richley   ....
3 And your name, sir, is i)   Vinney, is that right?   ....
                        ii) Finney   ....
4 And the address is 15 i)   Boot Street.   ....
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5 That's in i)   Axbridge, isn't it?   ....
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»»→

E

Is the rhythm of these phrases the same or different? Listen to this example:

. ‾ . ‾   . ‾ . ‾
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Dictation. What are the missing words in these phrases?
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A: What kind of hat?
B: It was a rain hat.
A: What colour rain hat?
B: It was white. White with stripes.
A: There was a white hat with stripes in the car.
B: Which car?
A: The one I sold!

H

Can you recognise groups of words? Two identical sentences may have a different interpretation.
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4 a) Pressing the pedal slowly, push the lever forward.   ....
   b) Pressing the pedal, slowly push the lever forward.   ....

5 a) The passengers, who had blue boarding cards,
       were told to board the plane.   ....
   b) The passengers who had blue boarding cards
       were told to board the plane.   .. .

5

I

The movement of our voice (pitch) can change the interpretation of sentences. Can you interpret the meaning of these sentences?
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8	Thanks.	(very interested / not very interested)
9	I like the garden.	(enthusiastic / not very enthusiastic)
10	The kitchen is nice.	(enthusiastic / not very enthusiastic)

Pronunciation Test

MOUSE

MOUTH

SUM

THUMB

SUE

ZOO

TELEVISION

LEISURE

AGREE

USUALLY

CHIN

GIN

SICK

THICK

BUS

BUZZ

EXCITEMENT

WAKE

WANT

ANT

BAG

TAG

WAIT

WAND

AND

BACK

TACK

TAKE

EXTRA

STARTED

STOPPED

WATCHES

SENTENCES

COMMUNICATED

INTERNATIONAL

CHOCOLATE

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CAN I'VE A PIECE OF PAPER PLEASE?

THANKS A LOT.

I'VE LOST MY KEYS.

THERE WAS AN OLD LADY OF CREWE

WHO FOUND A LARGE MOUSE IN HER STEW

SAID THE WAITER, "DON'T SHOUT

AND WAVE IT ABOUT,

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LEISURE	[z] for [dʒ]	
CHIN / GIN	[ʃ] for [tʃ], [ʒ] or [tʒ] for [g]	
THICK / SICK	[t] for [θ], [ʃ] for [s]	
BUS / BUZZ	[uː] for [ʌ], [ʃ] for [s] , [s] for [z]	
BAG / TAG	[e] for [æ], [k] for [g]	
WAKE / WAIT	[e] for [eɪ], final consonant not sounded	
ANT / AND	[e] for [æ]	
BACK / TACK / TAKE	[e] for [æ], [e] for [eɪ]	
EXCITEMENT	[s] for [ks], final consonant omitted	
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USUALLY	[s] for [ʃ]	
EXTRA	[s] for [ks]	
WATCHES	'es' omitted	
INTERNATIONAL	[eɪ] for [æ]	
STARTED	'ed' omitted	
SENTENCES	'es' omitted	
STOPPED	'ed' omitted	
COMMUNICATED	communiCATed for COMmunicated	
INTERESTED	inteRESTing for INteresting	
WILL YOU SEND ME SOME MONEY?	[ou] for [ʌ] in 'money' WILL YOU SEND me SOME MONEY	
THE BUS IS COMING	[t] for [θ] in 'the', [z] left off 'is', [ŋ] left off 'coming' the BUS IS COMing	
THANKS A LOT	[t] for [θ], final [t] left off 'lot' T(h)AN(k)s (a) LO(t)	
I'VE LOST MY KEYS	[aɪ] for [iː] in 'keys' I'VE LOST I my KEYS	

TABLE 2 Common Errors in Pronunciation Reading Test

CAN I'VE A PIECE OF PAPER PLEASE?	CAN I'VE| A PIECE | OF PAPER PLEASE	[f] for [p], [b] for [p] – only two students
THERE WAS AN OLD LADY OF CREWE	[t] for [θ] in 'there', [z] left off 'was', [g] for [k] in 'Crewe'	
WHO FOUND A LARGE MOUSE IN HER STEW	[d] left off 'found', [dʒ] and [s] left off 'large' & 'mouse'	
SAID THE WAITER, 'DON'T SHOUT'	[eɪ] for [e] in 'said', [t] left off 'shout'	
AND WAVE IT ABOUT	[v] and [t] left off 'wave' and 'about'	
OR THE REST WILL BE WANTING ONE TOO.		

TABLE 2 Common Errors in Pronunciation Reading Test

"Captions"

1. Oldish sort of town where lots of weavers and potters still live.

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3. The circus tents were set up on the verge of a river bank.

4. Ancient walled city with magnificent cathedral.

5. The hotel was by the beach and night life was varied and exciting.

PERSON ___A_____

You're planning to go out on Saturday night and you want to:

1. go to a movie

2. in the city

3. an action movie

4. after you go to eat something

5. at Chinatown

6. after the movie go to Timezone

7. go home in the bus

PERSON _____*B*_____

You're planning to go out on Saturday night and you want to:

1. get a video

2. stay in this suburb

3. a detective movie

4. go to eat something before the movie

5. at Macdonalds

6. before the movie go to church

7. go home in the taxi.

GOING OUT

What do tell the two students:

Partner A and Partner B are planning to go out together. Throughout the conversation Partner A remains **very enthusiastic** about his or her own ideas.

Partner B has different ideas about what to do.

At first Partner B is very easy-going. He or she makes an alternative suggestion but quickly drops that idea to **agree** to do whatever Partner A wants.

By half way through the conversation, Partner B gets tired of this and suddenly gets **very stubborn** and pushes strongly for his or her ideas.

GOING OUT

Student _____

PARTNER A should mainly a RISING TONE and WORD STRESS to show ENTHUSIASM.

*eg I'd love to go to the **movies**.*

Suggestion	Appropriate Tone/Stress ✔ ✚
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	

Student's main problems are with:
☐ SENTENCE INTONATION
☐ WORD STRESS
☐ LOW LEVEL OF VOCABULARY
☐ PRONOUNCING WORDS
☐ HESITATION
☐ VOLUME

GOING OUT

Student _____

PARTNER B should at first use WORD STRESS and FALLING TONE to show AGREEMENT.

*eg Well, I **wanted** to get a video, but let's go to a movie.*

*The change of attitude (to disagreement) may be shown through **WORD STRESS** , **VOLUME** or **TONE**.*

Suggestion	Appropriate Tone/Stress ✔ ✚
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	

* marks where tone changed

Student's main problems are with:
☐ SENTENCE INTONATION
☐ WORD STRESS
☐ LOW LEVEL OF VOCABULARY
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☐ HESITATION
☐ VOLUME

Theatresports Program

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