

Variations on Pronunciation Bingo

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usually in preparation for "Front vowel bingo" (Table 1) or "Back vowel bingo." (Table 2) The students have to organize the words on the list (given in scrambled order) into five columns according to the vowel sounds they contain:

Although they recognize most of the words, it would be possible to modify the list by removing any of the rows or any single words, or by substituting other words for those in the list. Substitutions would preferably involve at least three words with the same stem, but different minimal-pair vowel sounds: e.g., beat-bit-bait-bet-bat, or seat-sit-(sate)-set-sat. Students should receive some practice hearing the words and pronouncing them.

Procedure

On the day you decide to use the words to play bingo, have ready sets of grids of 25 squares (or if you decide to use fewer words, a grid of 16 squares). You can also ask the students to do this in a few minutes before beginning the game. The

students are then instructed to write any 25 (or 16) of the above words in any of the squares in the grid at random, filling each of the squares with a word. It's likely that they will not use all of the words, and as a result, each student will have a different selection of words, all in random order.

The teacher usually calls the words out twice, selecting them at random from the list, and the students mark the words on their playing grid. The first student with 5 marked words across, up-down, or diagonally is the winner. Of course, it is important to check the winner's playing card to be sure that he has marked only the words you have called out.

Variation 1: To see where comprehension problems occur

When the teacher calls out each word, he assigns a number, and the students write the number next to the word on their playing grid, eg. T: "Number 1 is: hate...hate." The advantage to using this system is that the teacher can see whether the student-marked answers correspond to the words he actually called out. This is very useful for determining where students are having problems.

[iʏ]	[ɪ]	[eʏ]	[ɛ]	[æ]
feet	fit	fate		fat
eat	it	ate		at
lead	lid	laid	led	lad
heat	hit	hate		hat
sheep	ship	shape		
leak	lick	lake		lack
feel	fill	fail	fell	
cheap	chip			chap
	rid	raid	red	

Table 1. Words for Front Vowel Bingo

[u ^w]	[U]	[o ^w]	[ə]	[ɔ]
		coat	cut	caught
	took	toke	tuck	talk
	should	showed		
pool	pull	pole		Paul
fool	full	foal		fall
boot		boat	but	bought
Luke	look		luck	
			sun	
	stood		stud	
			sung	song
	put		putt	

Table 2. Words for Back Vowel Bingo

After one student calls out bingo, and the teacher has checked to make sure of the student's listening accuracy, the teacher can write the words on the board in the numerical sequence in which they are called out, so that the students can self-correct, and the teacher can discover which words are causing difficulty. Students often discover at this point that they've had bingo all along, but they weren't aware of it.

Variation 2: Practice in Transcription

If the students are accustomed to using transcription, the words can be put into transcription and randomly distributed on

the grid. This could be done with the word in transcription by itself, or in combination with the word spelled out normally.

Results

Since the rows of words can be changed for words already familiar to the students, the vocabulary is that which the students have already practiced but might not be able to identify when they hear the word pronounced. Students have to develop an ear for distinguishing sounds that are confusing or that sound the same to them. Pronunciation bingo helps them distinguish among several sounds rather than just pairs of sounds.

Variations on Pronunciation Bingo

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In order to check whether students hear the difference between two sounds, teachers commonly use minimal pair drills, first asking students whether two words are the same or different.

Teacher: "Hat - Hat"

Students: "Same."

Teacher: "Hat - Hate".

Students: "Different"

They then often ask which of the sounds is being produced, sound 1: [eʏ] or sound 2: [æ]:

Teacher: "Hate"

Students: "One" (or they hold up one finger to represent [eʏ] or two to represent [æ]).

The next steps, of course, are imitation and production of the sounds.

Students can often become quite adept at indicating which sound they hear when choosing from a pair of sounds. However, when they are confronted with more sounds from which to choose, the task becomes more difficult. Of course, minimal pair drills could be adapted to become "minimal trio drills" or "minimal quartet drills", but it might be more motivating and productive to have a different type of activity, such as...

"Minimal Pair Bingo"

Preparation

A few days before playing this bingo game, give students a list of approximately 30 words which contain the sounds they've been practicing. This is

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