

مشاكل نطق الصوت /ŋ/ في آخر الكلمة لدى
معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في محافظة
المهرة

**Pronunciation Problems of the sound
/ŋ/ at the End of the Word among EFL
Teachers in Al-Mahra Governorate**

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الملخص

تحاول هذه الدراسة تصحيح خطأ شائع في نطق الصوت /ŋ/ ونطقه كصوت مركب /ŋg/ من قبل معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية اليمنيين من خلال تطبيق نموذج النطق الصوتي. تم تطبيق النموذج على عينة من ٣٠ طالبا من طلاب المستوى الرابع حيث يعتبرون معلمين متدربين للحصول على ملاحظات محددة حول أخطائهم وكيفية تصحيحها خاصة عند مقارنتها بنطق المتحدثين الأصليين. يؤكد النموذج السمعي اللغوي ، المعروف هنا ، على أهمية تدريس نطق المفردات بشكل صحيح. طريقة تدريس النطق المقترحة يمكن أن تكون ذات فائدة كبيرة في علاج هذه المشكلة. قد لا تكون هناك طريقة أفضل لتحسين النطق الضعيف بدلا من الجمع بين أنشطة مهارات النطق الدقيقة والكلية لتكرار تعليمي ملائم للأصوات المشكلة في سياق التواصل.

الكلمات الافتتاحية: الدقة , الطلاقة , نموذج النطق الصوتي, الفهم المتبادل, تداخل اللغة الأم

Abstract

This study attempts to correct a common mispronunciation of the sound /ŋ/ and pronounce it as a compound sound /ŋg/ by Yemeni English teachers by applying the phonetic pronunciation model. The model was applied to a sample of 30 students from the fourth level. These students are considered trained teachers to get specific feedback about their mistakes and how to correct them especially when compared to the pronunciation of native speakers. The audio-lingual model, presented here, emphasizes the importance of teaching vocabulary pronunciation correctly. The proposed method of teaching speech can be of great benefit in treating this problem. There may not be a better way to improve poor pronunciation than to combine micro- and macro articulation skill activities to educationally and appropriately repeat problematic phonemes in a communicative context. Keywords: Accuracy, Fluency, Phonetic Articulation Model, Intelligibility, Mother tongue interference





Introduction

Teaching a foreign language is a professional job, so developing intelligible pronunciation is an integral part of the profession. Pronunciation issues for EFL teachers should no longer be ignored, and pronunciation teaching should not be left out in EFL education. Teaching pronunciation should be an integral part of any English education program from the beginning, and leaving language learning to the advanced level should not be a luxury.

Statement of the Problem

Yemeni English teachers have problems with word-specific /ŋ/ pronunciation. They mispronounce the sound as /ng/. Mistakes like this result in poor pronunciation and bad accents for foreign language teachers. Such poor pronunciation must be taken into consideration as it interferes with and obscures target language comprehension, accuracy, fluency, and automatic control of pronunciation. Mistakes in pronunciation repeatedly disrupt the fluency of communication between working trainee teachers and foreign language trainee teachers.

Literature Review:

Couper (2017) revealed that lack of prior knowledge and training of pronunciation teaching raised doubts about what and how to teach in the classroom. Many non-native speakers undergoing student English teacher training need to listen to various micro- and macro-listening sub-skills and practice pronunciation mistakes to build the conversational skills to communicate fluently in and out of the classroom. There is no suitable way to deliver these activities while respecting the interactive dynamics, classroom atmosphere, and useful feedback. For this reason, the following high-level pronunciation teaching methods have been developed by applying phonetic articulation model.

According to Al-Zayed (2017 p. 86), "...the sounds which was existed in Arabic language, were easier to read, while the absent sounds in Arabic and





exist in English caused some confusion for the students, what made them tended to pronounce the nearest sound from the Arabic phonemes to the English phonemes.” English has three nasal phonemes: /m, n, and ŋ/. Since the Arabic consonant dictionary has the phonemes /n/ and /m/, these phonemes do not pose any pronunciation problems for English learners in Yemen. However, the phoneme /ŋ/ is a voiced velar nasal and does not exist as a separate phoneme in Modern Standard Arabic. This poses terrible pronunciation problems for Yemeni teacher trainees and teachers of the profession, who tend to express this phoneme in the form [ŋg] ending.

The following data represents the phonetic distribution of the /ŋ/ phoneme in English:

Word-medial	Word-final	Word-Medial and Word-final
hanger [hæŋgə]	hang [hæŋ]	hanging [hæŋgɪŋ]
longer [lɔŋgə]	long [lɔŋ]	longing [lɔŋgɪŋ]
singer [sɪŋgə]	sing [sɪŋ]	singing [sɪŋgɪŋ]

Abker (2020) noticed that learners tend to replace inexistent sound by another sound existed in their first language sound system. So because the /ŋ/ phoneme, which is a *voiced velar nasal*, does not exist as an independent phoneme in modern standard Arabic, learners tend to add /g/ phoneme in the word-final position after [ŋ] phoneme as [ŋg]. The outcome is a nagging pronunciation. Again, the following data demonstrate this problem:

Expected Articulation	The Wrong Pronunciation of Yemeni Teachers
bang [bæŋ]	* bang [bæŋg]
lung [lʌŋ]	* lung [lʌŋg]
Ping [pɪŋ]	* Ping [pɪŋg]
belong [bəlɔŋ]	* belong [bəlɔŋg]
reading [ri:dɪŋ]	* reading [ri:dɪŋg]





In any case, this is a clear example of mother tongue failure through the process of neutralizing the final English phoneme [ŋ] as [ŋg] in the pronunciation of Yemeni English learners. Thus, the word-only /ŋ/ consonant phoneme is represented as [ŋg], significantly confusing acoustic translations of this English phoneme.

Words such as “building”, “things”, “all”, “evening”, “boxing”, “nothing”, “holding”, “meeting”, “eating”, “sleeping”, “briefing” Imprecise production Words ending in [ŋg] can seriously hinder communication with native English speakers. Native English speakers may hear strong love /strɒŋ lʌv/.

Methodology

Applying the Phonetic Articulation Model

EFL teachers can help their learners obtain the necessary skills of pronunciation they need for effective communication (Gilakjani & Sabouri, as cited in Jahara & Abdelradi, 2021). Khalifa (2020, p. 13) advises that students should be assisted with a model-based approach to gain specific feedback on their errors and how to correct them especially when it is compared with native speakers utterances. A model-based approach was applied to a sample of 30 fourth level students who are considered as teacher trainees to gain specific feedback on their errors and how to correct them especially when it is compared with native speakers utterances. The *audio-lingual model*, presented here, stresses the significance of teaching of the pronunciation of the vocabulary items correctly.

The phonetic articulation method tries to address the pronunciation errors of the teacher trainees and the teachers on-the-job.

The suggested phonetic *articulation* model that was developed by Demirezen (2007) has been applied below:

Basic steps in applying the phonetic articulation method:





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1. Foreign language teachers indicate phonemes that cause pronunciation problems. In this case, that phoneme happens to be the English /ŋ/ phoneme.
2. She creates common sentences of 50-100 words containing phonemic and phonetic pairs that cause problems.
3. She/he designates words in minimal pairs within the contrast analysis. For example, in this case the /ŋ/ phoneme is the tone-causing problem, and the /n/ phoneme is the closest match to that phoneme. She/he usually lists words from easy to pronounce to difficult.
4. As part of the contrast analysis, we create a minimal pair corpus from the entire corpus.
5. Create tongue twisters, minimal sentences, contextual cues, and focused question sentences for classroom practice.

A MODEL LESSON PLAN:

Level: In-service-training or teacher training

Method: The phonetic articulation Model

Duration: one class period (35-40 minutes)

1. Motivation-warm up:

(Teacher Trainer enters the class.)

TT: Good morning, students. How are you all today?

Students: Good morning, sir / mam! We are fine. And you?

T: I am well too, thank you. *Safa*, do you like cooking?

Safa: Yes, sir, I like *cooking* [kɔkiŋ]. (The teacher does not deliberately correct the mispronounced word *cooking* by *Safa*).

T: Fine!

TT: *Rami*, do you like running?

Rami: Yes, sir, I like *running* [rʌniŋ] because I am an athlete.

(Again the teacher does not make a correction on the wrong pronunciation of *running* which is produced by the student as [rʌniŋ]).





(She/he passes on to the second step)

2. Reviewing the previous material related to the topic.

(The previously taught phoneme is the /n/ phoneme, which is the first element of the minimal pair /n/ and /ŋ/)

TT: Students, you hear the / n / phoneme in such words as **name, man, mine, money, run, sun, nine** and **aunt**. Today, you will study an English phoneme that is very close to it in the manner of articulation..

3. Giving detailed explanation of today's topic.

TT: Students, today, we will study about the articulation of the / ŋ / phoneme, which is a **voiced velar nasal**, as heard in such words as **song** [sɔŋ], **wrong**

[rɔŋ], **king** [kɪŋ], **building** [bɪldɪŋ], **strong** [strɔŋ], etc. (Teacher trainer writes the new topic on the board.)

4. Starting to teach the topic:

TT: Students, the following indicates the difference between /n/ and / ŋ / phonemes:

/ n / a **voiced alveolar nasal**

/ ŋ / a **voiced velar nasal**

A. Preparing a corpus

TT prepares a list of 50 to 100 words that contain the /n/ and / ŋ / contrasts from which he develops the oncoming exercises (Cambridge Dictionary of American English: ٢٠٠٠; Longman Dictionary ٢٠٠٤)

/n/		/ ŋ /	
sin [sɪn]	tune [tu:n]	sing [sɪŋ]	wing [wɪŋ]
kin [kɪn]	pin [pɪn]	king [kɪŋ]	Hong Kong [hɔŋ kɔŋ]
ban [bæn]	dun [dʌn]	bang [bæŋ]	tongue [tʌŋ]
pan [pæn]	thin [θɪn]	pang [pæŋ]	during [dʒu:rɪŋ]
son [sʌn]	pain [peɪn]	sung [sʌŋ]	ping [pɪŋ]





win [wɪn]	hen [hen]	being [bi:ŋ]	nothing [nʌθɪŋ]
nap [næp]	knock [nɒk]	long [lɒŋ]	dung [dʌŋ]
nest [nest]	neck [nek]	spring [sprɪŋ]	ping pong [pɪŋ pɔŋ]
nun [nʌn]	neat [ni:t]	losing [lu:zɪŋ]	hang [hæŋ]
next [nekst]	note [nəʊt]	gang [gæŋ]	interesting [ɪntərestɪŋ]
jogging [dʒɔŋɪŋ]	singing [sɪŋɪŋ]	gossiping [gɒsɪpɪŋ]	rafting [ræftɪŋ]
not [nɒt]	alone [ələʊn]	belong [bələŋ]	paying [peɪɪŋ]
none [nʌn]	ring [rɪŋ]	eating [i:tɪŋ]	King Kong [kɪŋ kɔŋ]
noble [nəʊbl]	sung [sʌŋ]	fling [flɪŋ]	song [sɔŋ]
ton [tʌn]	think [θɪŋk]	run [rʌn]	bowling [baʊlɪŋ]
thing [θɪŋ]	ink [ɪŋk]	slang [slæŋ]	yearling [ji:rɪŋ]
strong [strɔŋ]	morning [mɔ:nɪŋ]	punning [pʌnɪŋ]	mourning [məʊnɪŋ]
darling [da:lɪŋ]	pudding [pʌdɪŋ]	sibling [sɪblɪŋ]	young [jʌŋ]
bring [brɪŋ]	anything [eniθɪŋ]	dong [dɔŋ]	nagging [næŋɪŋ]
lung [lʌŋ]	everything [evriθɪŋ]	seeing [si:ɪŋ]	evening [ɪvənɪŋ]
sting [stɪŋ]	something [sʌmθɪŋ]	swing [swɪŋ]	wrongdoing [rɔŋdɔwɪŋ]
boxing [bɒksɪŋ]	wrestling [reslɪŋ]	digging [dɪŋɪŋ]	singing [sɪŋɪŋ]

(TT gets these words to be repeated individually and in chorus . They may also be taped and given to them to spot their mistakes).

B. Specifying the minimal pairs

TT chooses a few minimal pairs to show that he understands exactly the phonemes that caused the error. Without phoneme identification skills, learners are unable to express themselves or fully understand others. These may be taped.

/ n /	/ ŋ /
sin [sɪn]	sing [sɪŋ]
pan [pæn]	pang [pæŋ]
thin [θɪn]	thing [θɪŋ]





ban [bæn]	bang [bæŋ]
kin [kɪn]	king [kɪŋ]
ton [tʌn]	tongue [tʌŋ]

Teachers encourage and practice minimal pairs in the classroom without boring the students. Note that the TT here is a pronunciation coach, prescribing and providing various practice opportunities, providing appropriate models as needed, while also providing full support through encouragement to the learner as needed.

C. Practicing tongue twisters

TT produces the following tongue twisters from the general list in 4A, and she/he practices them in class by calling on students in single or choir activities. Such practices is fruitful for the learners to improve their own potential as active pronouncers of the target language.

(1)

A king

A wrong king

A crying wrong king

A crying wrong but strong king
with the king

(3)

A wing

A singing wing

A singing, hissing wing

A singing, hissing, springing wing
young king

(5)

A morning

A long morning

(2)

Bowling

Bowling in the morning

Bowling in the morning and evening

Bowling in the morning and evening

(4)

Everything

Everything for the king

Everything for the loving king

Everything for the loving

(6)

A wrongdoing

An interesting wrongdoing





A long mourning morning

An interesting wrongdoing during

A long mourning morning in spring
doing jogging

An interesting wrongdoing during

(7)

(8)

A song

A ring

A crying song

A stinging ring

A long, crying song

A stinging ring on a swing

A long, crying song in the evening
in Spring

A stinging ring on a swing

(9)

(10)

Dancing

A tongue

Dancing and singing

A punning tongue

Dancing and singing with the gang

A punning, biting tongue

Dancing and singing with the young gang
of my darling

A punning biting tongue

D. Doing recognition exercises

TT: Students, now I am going to articulate some words to you, if you hear the /n/ in the word, say ONE, if you hear / ŋ / in the word, say TWO and if it is / ŋg / say THREE. All right, let's begin:

TT: Ahmed, *begin*

Ahmed: One!

TT: That's correct. Thank you, Ahmed. Nada, *English*

Nada: Three.

TT: Very good. Thank you, Nada. Sana, *rain* and *dying*!

Sana: One and two.

TT: Well done, Sana, thank you. Ali, *swing-swing-swing*

Ali: Two-two-two.

TT: Perfect, Ali. Thank you. Fatma, *singer-moon-song*





Fatma: Three-one-two.

TT: Good. Thank you, Fatma.

TT: Huda, *bring-month-danger-mango*

Huda: Two-one-one-three

TT: Thank you Huda, very good!

(The teacher may continue on this practice, but must watch the timing.)

5. Giving the RULE.

(*She/he uses the audio-devices if necessary.*)

TT: Students, lend me your ears please because this is the RULE TIME.

Here is the rule:

As I have repeatedly stressed before,

/n/ a voiced alveolar nasal, as in **kin**, **pin**, **sin** and **pan**.

/ŋ/ a voiced velar nasal, as in **bring**, **sing**, **king** and **bang**.

The /n/ articulation closes the mouth by pressing the tip of the tongue against the alveolar ridge and the sides of the tongue against the sides of the palate, as heard in words such as pan [pæn] and ban [bæn]. , /ŋ/ articulations, the mouth is occluded by the back of the tongue pressed against the soft palate, blocking the path of airflow escaping to the nasal cavity where articulation occurs in the form of the [ŋ] sound. , like him can be heard with pang [pæŋ] and bang [bæŋ]. This case can be clearly seen in the two figures he follows.

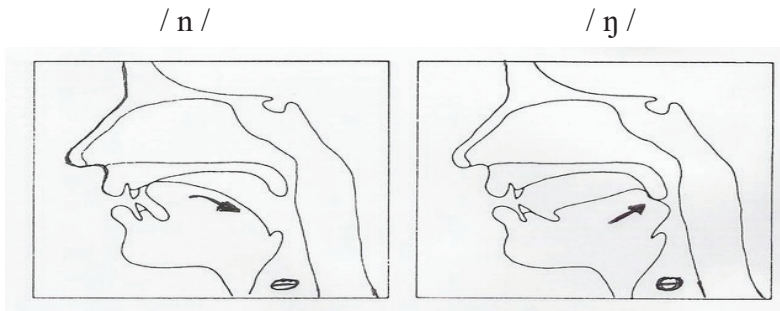




Figure 1: The articulations of /n/ and /ŋ/ in English pronunciation

Many non-native English teachers don't pay attention to the difference between /ŋ/ and /ŋg/, and use the correct spellings of long [lɔŋ], slang [slæŋ], young [jʌŋ], gang [gæŋ], raften, etc. Inadvertently mispronounce. funny, [dʒɔŋŋg], [sɪŋŋŋg], [gɔsɪŋŋg]. This is a terrible pronunciation error that needs to be addressed. /ŋ/ is only articulated when [ŋg] is in the middle of a word followed by the /g/ phoneme. This is clearly audible in the following words:

:

singer [sɪŋgə]	longer [lɔŋgə]	jungle [dʒʌŋgl]
England [ɪŋɡlænd]	strongest [strɔŋgest]	angry [æŋɡrɪ]
Hungry [hʌŋɡrɪ]	mango [mæŋgəʊ]	con-
grats [cɔŋgræts]		
finger [fɪŋgə]	Bengal [benɡa:l]	tango [tæŋgəʊ]

6. Producing further drills as a reinforcing power

A. Practicing with sentences called contextual clues

Such practices make the place, point and manner of articulation of the problem-causing phoneme better heard, recognized, and articulated (Demirezen (2007 ,:

1. England's KING is my KIN.
2. To be a KING is not a BITING SIN.
3. Her TONGUE weights a TON.
4. The PLAN of that CLAN made the CLANG.
5. A BAN does not BRING a financial BANG.
6. A BEAN is BEING BEATEN.
7. This long THING is THIN.





8. Is your PAIN bringing you any PAYING?
9. The word “SEEING” does not mean the word “SEEN.”
10. My SON has just SUNG a LONG SONG.
11. A MORNING has nothing to do with MOURNING.
12. She is a FAN with a funny FANG.
13. That angel will WIN her WINGS in the evening.

B. Problem-sound concentrated sentences:

It may seem unnatural to practice such phrases once or in chorus repeatedly, but it can help activate the face and throat muscles used to articulate problematic speech effectively.

1. The LUNGS of the SMOKING YOUNGS are not STRONG.
2. I like RAFTING, WRESTLING, and SAILING.
3. To SING a LONG SONG in HONG KONG is not WRONG.
4. The SINNING GANG is PLAYING PING PONG with KING KONG
5. I hate GOSSIPING, BADMOUTHING, AND LINGERING.
6. The KING is PLAYING PING PONG in HONG KONG with KING KONG.
7. The KING is SINGING a LONG SONG in HONG KONG in a tone of SINGDING- A DONG!
8. A STINGING bee can give a NAGGING PAIN DURING the MORNING and EVENING.
9. The KING is MOURNING DURING the MORNING and EVENING.
10. A CURSING and MURDERING KING will have no KINS and DAR-LINGS.

7. Making a summary

TT makes a summary by going over the already given rule in figure (1) and draws the students' attention to differentiate between the pronunciation of /n/





and / ŋ / and when / ŋ / becomes / ŋg/.

8. Giving homework(s)

TT: Students, each of you will prepare the following exercises on the following items;

1. In which of the words below there is no [ŋ] sound?
a. strange b. monkey c. single d. drunk e. sleeping?
2. In which of the words below do you hear / ŋg / ?
a. wronged b. belonging. c. gangs d. gongs e. springs
3. Study with a dictionary and find out your own five minimal pairs on / n /
and / ŋ /
4. Prepare 5 long sentences with contextual clues by /n/ and / ŋ /.
5. Prepare five long tongue twisters by /n/ and / ŋ /.





Conclusion

Yemeni learners of the English language cannot accurately pronounce the nasal sound / ŋ / phoneme of the English language because the / ŋ / phoneme does not exist as a separate phoneme in Modern Standard Arabic. A [ŋ] phoneme followed by [ŋg] results in a very strange-sounding articulation that detracts from the acoustic beauty and perception of this English phoneme. It must be borne in mind that during pronunciation teaching, some certain methods or techniques should be applied because teaching of pronunciation is not a simple task, on the contrary it must be the essential part of language teaching program (Pennington M.C. and Rogerson-Revell P. 2019).

The suggested pronunciation teaching method can be of great help in treating this problem. There may be no better way to improve false articulations than to combine micro- and macro skill articulation activities to educationally appropriately repeat problematic phonemes in a communicative context. . Do not overuse reps. Otherwise, it will hinder the creative use of language and become an obstacle to developing communicative fluency. Some pronunciation games (Hancock 1995) are also noteworthy.





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