

Method and System for Teaching Spelling and Pronunciation of a Language

Field of the Invention

5 This invention relates to a method and system for teaching spelling and pronunciation of a language and relates particularly, though not exclusively, to a method and system for teaching spelling and pronunciation of English to a non-native speaker of the English language.

10 Background of the Invention

Phonics is the study of the way in which spellings represent the sounds that make up words. Children are taught the sounds of the letters of the alphabet and how the letters are combined to form words. Traditionally, synthetic phonics is used to teach phonics to children when learning to read. This method involves looking at
15 every part of the phonic without necessarily taking into account the blends or meaning for example, "s-t-r-e-e-t". Analytic phonics involves looking at the phonic blends, for example "str-ee-t"

The children will have to learn to tie the written words with the words they hear during conversations with their families and friends as well as the dialogues of
20 television programmes. This causes great difficulty for children living in non-English-speaking households as it is difficult to learn to read this way. Further, many combinations of letters that do not follow the regular rules are for example, irregular vowels. An irregular vowel may be, for example, "ost". "ost" in "lost" is not the same sound as "ost" in "most".

25 Figure 1 shows the International Phonetic Alphabet (hereafter, "IPA") drawn by the International Phonetic Association (Department of Theoretical and Applied Linguistics, School of English, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Thessaloniki 54124, GREECE). The IPA chart is a system of phonetic notation devised by linguists to accurately and uniquely represent each of the wide variety of sounds
30 (phones or phonemes) used in all spoken human languages such as, for example, English. In phonetics, the place of articulation of a consonant is the point of contact, where an obstruction occurs in the oral cavity between an active (moving) articulator (typically some part of the tongue) and a passive (stationary) articulator (typically some part of the roof of the mouth). Along with the manner of articulation
35 and phonation, this gives the consonant its distinctive sound.

A manner of articulation may be, for example, a plosive, or oral stop, where there is complete *occlusion* (blockage) of both the oral and nasal cavities of the vocal tract, and therefore no air flow. An example of a manner of articulation may be, for example, a English letter "p" (voiceless) and a English letter "k" (voiced). If the
 5 consonant is voiced, the voicing is the only sound made during occlusion; if it is voiceless, a plosive is completely silent. What we hear as a "p" or "k" is the effect that the *onset* of the occlusion has on the preceding vowel, and well as the release burst and its effect on the following vowel. The shape and position of the tongue (the *place* of articulation) determine the resonant cavity that gives different plosives
 10 their characteristic sounds. All languages have plosives.

All of these manners of articulation are pronounced with an airstream mechanism. An airstream mechanism may be, for example, a pulmonic egressive, meaning that the air flows outward, and is powered by the lungs (actually the ribs and diaphragm).

15 The IPA symbols are generally drawn from Greek and Latin alphabets. English is written using the Latin alphabet. The English alphabet comprises a set of letters consisting of: {a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h, i, j, k, l, m, n, o, p, q, r, s, t, u, v, w, x, y, z}. The set of letters comprises a set of vowels 11 consisting of: {a, e, i, o, u} and a set of consonants consisting of: {b, c, d, f, g, h, j, k, l, m, n, p, q, r, s, t, u, v, w, x, y, z}.

20 The spelling system of English is developed as a result of history not through phonetics. Thus, the pronunciation of many words cannot be directly represented by conventional phonic rules. As such, this increases the difficulty in learning the English language.

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Summary of the Invention

In accordance with a first preferred aspect there is provided a method for teaching pronunciation and spelling of a language comprising a plurality of letters forming a
 30 plurality of words, each of the plurality of letters selected from a group consisting of: vowels and consonants, the method comprising:

pronouncing each letter individually to generate a letter sound; and
 blending a first consonant and a second consonant without using a vowel
 to generate a consonant sound; and

blending the consonant sound or the letter sound for a consonant with a single vowel to teach the pronunciation and the spelling of the language.

Each of the plurality of words may comprise only one syllable.

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The number of consonants may be incrementally increased to generate additional consonant sounds.

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The number of vowels may be incrementally increased to blend with the consonant sounds.

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The consonant sound and the single vowel may be blended to generate a plurality of inflection blends, each of the inflection blends for blending with a second consonant to generate a second plurality of words.

The number of vowels may be incrementally increased to generate a vowel sound selected from a group consisting of: monophongs, diphthongs and vowel-digraphs.

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In accordance with a second aspect there is provided a system for teaching pronunciation and spelling of a language comprising a plurality of letters forming a plurality of words, each of the plurality of letters selected from a group consisting of: vowels and consonants, the system comprising:

a letter pronounced individually to generate a letter sound;

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a first consonant blended with a second consonant without using a vowel to generate a consonant sound;

a single vowel blended with the consonant sound or the letter sound for a consonant to teach the pronunciation and the spelling of the language.

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Each of the plurality of words may comprise only one syllable.

The number of consonants may be incrementally increased to generate additional consonant sounds.

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The number of vowels may be incrementally increased to blend with the consonant sounds.

The consonant sound may be blended with the single vowel to generate an inflection blend for blending with a second consonant to generate a second word.

- 5 The number of vowels may be incrementally increased to generate a vowel sound selected from a group consisting of: monophthongs, diphthongs and vowel-digraphs.

Brief Description of the Drawings

- 10 In order that the present invention may be fully understood and readily put into practical effect, there shall now be described by way of non-limitative example only embodiments of the present invention, the description being with reference to the accompanying illustrative drawings.

- 15 In the drawings:

Figure 1 is an International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA);

Figure 2 is a system for teaching pronunciation and spelling of a language according to a first embodiment of the present invention;

- 20 Figure 3 illustrates Figure 2 in detail;

Figure 4 illustrates Figure 2 in detail;

Figure 5 is a variation of Figure 4;

Figure 6 illustrates Figure 2 in detail;

Figures 7 to 28 are a variation of Figure 6;

- 25 Figure 29 is a flow chart illustrating a method according the system of Figure 2;

Figure 30 is a system for teaching pronunciation and spelling of a language according to a second embodiment of the present invention;

Figure 31 illustrates Figure 30 in detail;

Figure 32 is a variation of Figure 31;

- 30 Figure 33 is a variation of Figure 31;

Figure 34 is a flow chart illustrating a method according to the system of Figure 30;

Figure 35 is a system for teaching pronunciation and spelling of a language according to a third embodiment of the present invention;

Figure 36 illustrates Figure 35 in detail;

- 35 Figures 37 to 44 are a variation of Figure 36;

Figure 45 is a flow chart illustrating a method according to the system of Figure 35;

Figure 46 is a system for teaching pronunciation and spelling of a language according to a fourth embodiment of the present invention;

Figure 47 illustrates Figure 45 in detail;

Figure 48 is a variation of Figure 46; and

5 Figure 49 is a flow chart illustrating a method according to the system of Figure 45.

Detailed Description of the Embodiments

Figure 2 illustrates a system 20 for teaching pronunciation and spelling of a language and in particular, the English language according to a first embodiment.

- 5 The English alphabet consists of a group of letters 10, the letters 10 consisting of vowels 11 and consonants 12. The system 20 comprises a first table 21 for pronouncing each letter 10 of the English alphabet, a second table 31 for blending the consonant letters 12, and a third table 41 for blending the consonant letters 12 and the vowel letters 11.
- 10 As shown in Figure 3, the first table 21 comprises the letters 10 and a first plurality of words 13. Each of the first plurality of words 13 is derived from each letter 10.

- The second table 31 is illustrated in detail in Figure 4. The second table 31 comprises a plurality of consonant letters 32 and a second plurality of words 33. A
- 15 first consonant letter 34 and a second consonant letter 35 are blended without using a vowel to generate a consonant sound 36. The number of consonants is incrementally increased to generate additional consonant sounds.
- Each of the second plurality of words 33 consists of the consonant sound 36 and a
- 20 base word 37. The consonant sound 36 may be located before or after the base word 37.

Figure 5 illustrates a variation of the second table 31.

- Vowels 11 have been intentionally left out in the forming of the second table 31
- 25 because of the inherent variety of vowel sounds. The English language uses a large set of 13 to 22 vowel sounds, including diphthongs thus making it more difficult for the learner. Further, different languages vary considerably in the number of these sounds that are considered to be distinctive in each of the languages.

- 30 Therefore, the first embodiment reduces the difficulty of learning English by using consonants 12 without vowels 11 to teach pronunciation and spelling of English words in the second table 31. An advantage of the invention is no reliance on a substantial amount of prior knowledge to learn new words. This makes it easier for
- 35 children and non-native English speakers to learn the English language. A child has a biological capacity for integrating information. Culture and learning result in the building of entrenched integration that is difficult to dismiss as it is one of the

essential means an adult learner has for apprehending and constructing the language.

Figure 6 illustrates the third table 41 in detail. The third table 41 comprises a first plurality of blended letters 42 and a third plurality of words 43. Each of the third plurality of words 43 is derived from each of the blended letters 42. Each of the plurality of blended letters 42 comprises at least two consonant letters or a single consonant blended with a first vowel 45. The consonant sound 36 or a letter sound for the single consonant is blended with the first vowel 45 to teach the pronunciation of the words 43.

Figures 7 to 28 are variations of the third table 41 of Figure 5. Figures 7 to 10 use different vowels such as, for example, e, i, o, u for blending with the letter sound for the consonant or the consonant sound. Figure 15 teaches blending consonants with vowels to form an inflection blend.

Figure 29 illustrates a flow chart teaching a method 100 according to the first embodiment of Figure 2. Each letter 10 is pronounced 101 individually. The word 13 is pronounced 102 to teach the spelling of the word 13. The first consonant letter 34 is blended 103 with a second consonant letter 35 without using a vowel to generate a consonant sound 36. The consonant sound 36 or a letter sound for the third consonant 44 is blended 104 with a vowel sound 15 of the first vowel 45 to teach the pronunciation of the words 43.

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Using the cognitive ability of the brain, an early or non-native learner conceptually blends the spelling of the words with the sound of the words and associates the consonant sound 36 with the pronounced word 43.

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Figure 30 illustrates a system 60 for teaching pronunciation and spelling of a language and in particular, the English language according to a second embodiment, wherein the number of consonants is incrementally increased to generate a second consonant sound. The second consonant sound may be selected from a group consisting of: consonant blends and consonant diagrams.

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The system 60 comprises the first table 21 for pronouncing each letter 10 of the English alphabet, the second table 31 for blending the consonant letters 12, the

third table 41 for blending the consonant letters 12 and the vowel letters 11, and a fourth table 61 for generating the second consonant sound.

5 Figure 31 illustrates the fourth table 61. The fourth table 61 comprises a first consonant digraph 62, the first consonant digraph 62 blended with each of the plurality of vowels 11 and a plurality of words 63. Figures 32 and 33 are variations of the third table 41 of Figure 5. Figures 32 and 33 use different consonant
10 digraphs such as, for example, sh and th for blending with the letter sound for the consonant or the consonant sound. The first consonant digraph 62 may be selected from a group consisting of: {ch, sh, th, ng, wh, kn, kn, ph, wr and gh}.

Figure 34 illustrates a flow chart teaching a method 200 according to the second embodiment of Figure 30. The number of consonants is incrementally increased
15 201 to generate a second consonant sound. The consonant sound may be, for example, a consonant digraph. The second consonant sound is then blended 202 with a letter sound for a vowel to teach pronunciation and spelling of the word.

Figure 35 illustrates a system 70 for teaching pronunciation and spelling of a language and in particular, the English language according to a third embodiment,
20 wherein the number of vowels is incrementally increased to generate a second vowel sound. The second vowel sound may be selected from a group consisting of: monophthongs, diphthongs and vowel digraphs.

The system 70 comprises the first table 21 for pronouncing each letter 10 of the English alphabet, the second table 31 for blending the consonant letters 12, the
25 third table 41 for blending the consonant letters 12 and the vowel letters 11, and a fifth table 71 for generating the second vowel sound. The second vowel sound may be, for example, a monophthong, a diphthong or a vowel digraph.

30 Figure 36 illustrates the fifth table 71. The fifth table 71 comprises a plurality of diphthongs 72, each diphthong 72 blended with each of the plurality of consonants 12 to provide each of a fourth plurality of words 73. The diphthong 72 may be selected, for example, from a group consisting of: {aa, ii, ee, ea, ai, oo, ao, ou and uu}.

35 The diphthong 72 may be located before or after or between the consonants 12.

Figures 37 to 44 are variations of the fifth table 71 of Figure 36. Figures 37 to 43 uses different combinations of vowels to form the second vowel sound for blending with the consonants.

- 5 Figure 45 illustrates a flow chart teaching a method 300 according to the third embodiment of Figure 35. The number of vowels is incrementally increased 301 to generate a second vowel sound. The vowel sound may be, for example, a monophthong, a vowel diagraph or a diphthong. The second vowel sound is then blended 302 with a consonant sound of the fourth table 61 or a letter sound for a
10 consonant to teach pronunciation and spelling of the word.

- Figure 46 illustrates a system 80 for teaching pronunciation and spelling of a language and in particular, the English language according to a fourth embodiment, wherein the consonant diagraphs and vowel sounds are blended to
15 teach the pronunciation and spelling of the language.

- Figures 47 and 48 illustrate the system 80 in further detail. The system 80 comprises a plurality of consonant diagraphs 81 blended with a plurality of vowel sounds 82 to teach the pronunciation and spelling of a plurality of words 83. Each
20 of the consonant diagraph 81 is blended with a vowel sound 82. The vowel sound may be a diphthong, monophthong or a vowel diagraph.

- The degree of complexity of learning the language is gradually increased to expand the vocabulary of the early learner.
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- Figure 49 illustrates a flow chart teaching a method 400 according to the fourth embodiment of Figure 46. The number of consonants is incrementally increased 401 to generate a third consonant sound. The number of vowels is incrementally increased 402 to generate a third vowel sound. The third vowel sound may be, for
30 example, a monophthong, a vowel diagraph or a diphthong. The third vowel sound is then blended 402 with the third consonant sound or a letter sound for a consonant to teach pronunciation and spelling of the word.

- Whilst there has been described in the foregoing description preferred
35 embodiments of the present invention, it will be understood by those skilled in the technology concerned that many variations or modifications in details of design or construction may be made without departing from the present invention.

THE CLAIMS

1. A method for teaching pronunciation and spelling of a language comprising a plurality of letters forming a plurality of words, each of the plurality of letters selected from a group consisting of: vowels and consonants, the method comprising the steps of:
 - (a) generating a letter sound for each letter of the language based on a word;
 - (b) generating a consonant sound by blending a first consonant sound and a second consonant sound; and
 - (c) pronouncing and spelling a word of the language by blending the consonant sound or letter sound for a consonant with a letter sound for a vowel.
2. The method according to claim 1, wherein each of the plurality of words has only one syllable.
3. The method according to claim 1, further comprising incrementally increasing the number of consonants to generate additional consonant sounds.
4. The method according to claim 1, further comprising incrementally increasing the number of vowels to blend with the consonant sounds.
5. The method according to claim 1, further comprising blending the consonant sound and the single vowel to generate a plurality of inflection blends, each of the inflection blends for blending with a second consonant to generate a second plurality of words.
6. The method according to claim 4, wherein incrementally increasing the number of vowels generates a vowel sound selected from a group consisting of: monophthongs, diphthongs and vowel-digraphs.
7. A system for teaching pronunciation and spelling of a language comprising a plurality of letters forming a plurality of words, each of the plurality of letters selected from a group consisting of: vowels and consonants, the system comprising:
 - (a) generating a letter sound for each letter of the language based on a word;
 - (b) generating a consonant sound by blending a first consonant sound and a second consonant sound; and
 - (c) pronouncing and spelling a word of the language by blending the consonant sound or letter sound for a consonant with a letter sound for a vowel.

8. The system according to claim 5, wherein each of the plurality of words has only one syllable.
9. The system according to claim 5 further comprising incrementally increasing the number of consonants to generate additional consonant sounds.
10. The system according to claim 5 further comprising incrementally increasing the number of vowels to blend with the consonant sounds.
11. The method according to claim 1 wherein blending the consonant sound and the single vowel further comprises generating an inflection blend for blending with a second consonant to generate a second word.
12. The system according to claim 10, wherein incrementally increasing the number of vowels generates a vowel sound selected from a group consisting of: monophthongs, diphthongs and vowel-digraphs.