



Escuela Normal Superior en Lenguas Vivas

“Sofía E. B. de Spangenberg”

Profesorado de Inglés

LAB 3

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TEACHING /h/ SOUND

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2013

1. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Background note

I chose this sound because I believe it is very tricky to learn and teach. Spanish speakers do not pronounce the *H* if it is initial, so when they read it in English they either fail to pronounce it or make it sound very strong like a *J*. I feel it is a challenge to teach it and I am interested in learning which is the best way to do so.

What Every Teacher Should Know

/h/ is a voiceless forties glottal fricative. It is articulated in the glottis. The two vocal folds approach each other, interfering with the airstream. The narrowing between the vocal folds produces the friction noise.

Spellings:

- Initial h: ham, hotel, harmony, herb
 - Exceptions: honest, honour, hour, heir, heiress.
- Middle h: perhaps, behind
 - Exceptions: yoghurt, vehicle, exhibition, exhaust, philharmonic, shepherd, exhilarate, exhibit, vehement.
- Never found finally: not full distribution
 - Exception: pharaoh
 - Silent in:
 - rheumatism, rhyme, rhythm, rhinoceros.
 - Wh: white, which, when, why.
 - Exceptions: who, whose, whole
 - Proper names: Graham, Nottingham, Birmingham, Durham, Clapham.

Allophones:

Voiced allophone: between voiced sounds (behind, inhabit, perhaps)

Voiceless: in almost all positions.

Problems for River Plate speakers:

Degree of difficulty: above normal.

Although the graph h exists in Spanish, it is mute. So the learner may fail to pronounce it or even replace it with the Spanish voiceless velar fricative|χ|. For example, in the word horse, they might pronounce |χɔrs|.

Tips for correction: Exercises meant to practise aspiration of fortis plosives.

2. An Approach to the Teaching of Pronunciation

The approach that will support the activities is task-based learning or TBL.

There are two assumptions that will be behind our activities:

- Interaction is important to language learning.
- It is desirable for classroom activities to have a focus on pragmatic meaning.

In a task meaning is primary, and there is a goal which needs to be worked towards. The activities are outcome evaluated and there is real- world relationship.

But putting the focus on pragmatic meaning alone may not be sufficient to engage acquisitional processes. There are two types of tasks:

- ✓ Unconstrained tasks: wide focus on form.
- ✓ Constrained tasks: narrow focus on forms.

Concerning pronunciation, unconstrained tasks are suitable for practising rhythm, tone units, nucleus placement, and overall fluency. While constrained tasks are suitable whenever greater precision in the production of individual sounds is required.

A task is placed in the task environment. There are two options: increased complexity vs. gap noticing.

A task cycle (pre-task activity, task proper, post-task activity) which starts out with a focus on form essentially follows a Present-Produce-Practise pattern, with the task representing an “increased complexity” form. This type of tasks allows to move away from the form (once it has been presented and produced) to communicative use by practising the newly-learnt forms in a context of increased complexity.

The reverse order, i.e. focusing on form after the task, corresponds to the approach of “gap noticing”. The first task creates a need for certain pronunciation features, showing the learners what they need, and only then those features are being explicitly focused upon.

Given that I will be working with young students who are learning to read, it is important that I include phonemic awareness. Identifying phonemes in spoken language is a crucial first step in learning to read, because it enables good progress in phonics (linking phonemes to written language).

I will take Letterland’s proposal of humanising characters and bond them into the plain letter shapes. This makes the teaching strategy viable and exciting for kids. Children give the activities their full attention because they play it as a game.

2.- THE FIELD PRACTISE:

The Targeted Group

Since the target is the teaching of pronunciation to children, tasks will include storytelling, games and songs.

We will begin telling them a story called “The Tree of Sounds”, which will introduce the idea of learning pronunciation in a fun way. We have prepared the story together with other teachers who will focus on other sounds. In my particular case, I chose to work with a group which is made up of 13 children aged 7. They belong to a bilingual school in Florida. They have studied English since Kinder 2, so they are good speakers and understand very well.

Description of the lessons

The first lesson went very well. We met in a small classroom and there were eight students present. They were very easy to work with. I told them the story of the tree. Then I presented Happy Horse and told them his story. I asked to do the mimic when they heard h. Most of them were able of recognizing it.

After that, we played the game altogether. One of the students thought of a word that began with H, J, I or Z and the others had to guess. We used the verse: “Knock, knock. Who’s there? I like...” We wrote the words on the board under the drawing of the characters of The Tree of Sounds (Happy Horse, Zoe the Zebra, the Joker, Eenie Eedie and Inga).

The students were enthusiastic and they participated a lot. All of them raised their hands and wanted to come to the front and be the one who thought of the word. They were able of recognizing the sound and made almost no mistakes.

On the second lesson, the children played spelling the words with their bodies one more time, because they had enjoyed that game and it helps their second language acquisition process. I took pictures which I attach below, in the appendix. Then, they completed both photocopies, which I also attach. We did not have much time left, so we sat in a circle and I began telling them Happy’s story one more time. But I did not complete it. I asked them questions for them to tell the story and they really remembered it! The activities were a total success and I am satisfied with the outcome.

Final reflection

Pronunciation had never been the objective of my lesson before this experience. I now feel it is important to add it in the syllabus. Children can profit from it. I would have liked to continue the process by teaching the spelling of H, which is really tricky due to silent H. Also the difference between Spanish and English H. I felt their level of English was quite good. They could imitate sounds very well. I feel that going deeper into spelling and pronunciation with these students might have been interesting and productive.

3.- REFERENCES

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4.-APPENDIX 1

4.1 -Stories:

The Tree of Sounds

Once upon a time, there was a big tree in the playground of a school in Palermo. It had lots of green leaves and on top of these leaves, near the sky, there lived some letters.

The letters saw everything from up above, but they couldn't get down from the leaves. Every day they saw the children play on the playground during break. They saw them playing hide and seek, hop scotch and tag. And they really wanted to join the children in the fun, but they did not know how.

One day, the children were having break, practising for their English lesson. The letters were watching from above and saw how the students struggled to pronounce English sounds, because they were River Plate speakers. The letters wanted to help them. Since they were part of the tree of sounds, they knew that they could help children

to speak any language! But although they tried, they could not get down from the leaves in order to go and help the kids.



One night, there was a storm, and lightning struck on the tree! The letters felt energy throughout their bodies and suddenly they realized that they had magically popped out of the tree alive and free to move around! They knew what to do next! They were going to help the children pronounce all the English sounds.

From that day on, they have been out and about helping River Plate speakers learn English sounds! The twin sisters teach children to say “Cheese!” and “Chip” for pictures. Happy Horse teaches the students his special laughter “hahaha”. Zoe the Zebra teaches kids to dance in a zigzag way. And the Joker helps them jump joyfully like a jelly!

Have fun with them!

Presentation of the Character

This is Happy Horse. He is a Young horse who loves playing hide-and-seek. When he hides, they often find him because he has hiccups. But when they can’t find him, he can’t stop laughing! His laughter is special. It is a silent laughter so that no one will find him. “Ho ho ho! Ha ha ha! He he he!”

He lives on a farm with many friends: a hen, a honeybee, a hare and a hedgehog. He is always happy and loves wearing a huge yellow hat. He hates hyenas and what he loves most of all are big hugs. Would you like to give him a hug?

Happy Horse is Hiding

One day Happy Horse couldn’t find anyone to play with. He was bored. He had been playing with a mirror like this: he put the mirror in front of his face and fogged it up with his breath “hhh”. Then he wrote things with his nose. But that wasn’t fun anymore.

Suddenly, he heard his Mum calling for him, “Happy! Where are you?” Instead of answering, he decided to play a joke on her and hide.

First, he ran to the hen’s house. There were piles of hay where he could hide. But the hens made so much noise that he had to leave. So he started to look for another place to hide, and saw the bees’ hive. “I wonder if there is any honey. I am so hungry!” he thought. And he headed towards the hive. But it was full of busy bees working! He was afraid of bees, so he left.

Then, he decided to head for the house. He went into the hall and saw a huge ham on the table. “Mmmm, that looks good!” he thought. But horses don’t eat ham so he left to look for another hideaway. Suddenly, he saw the hamster’s cage. Harold the hamster was watching him and said “Happy, your mother is looking for you, she has got a surprise!” “A surprise?” said Happy, “I wonder what it is...”

Finally, he left in a hurry to look for Mum. Outside he found Mum, who was still looking for him. “Hooray! I finally found you Happy! I have something for you” said Mum. And she gave him two honey muffins and one big hug!

Transcription

|wʌn dei hapi hɔs kʊdnt faɪnd eni wʌn tə pleɪ wið| hi wɜ bɔd| hi həd bi:n pleɪnɪ wiθ ə
mɪrə| laɪk ðɪz| hi pʊt θə mɪrə ɪm frəbt əv ɪz feɪs| ən fɒgd ɪt ʌp wiθ ɪz brɜθ|hhh| ðen| hi
rəʊt θɪŋz wið ɪz nəʊz|bət ðæt wɔznt fʌn eni mɔl
sʌdnli| hi həd ɪz mʌm kɔlɪŋ fə ɪm| hæpi| wɜ a ju:| ɪnstəd əv ʌnsrɪŋ| hi dɪsʌɪdɪd tə pleɪ
ə dʒəʊk ɒn hɜr ʌn haɪd|
fɜst| hi ræn tu ðə henz haʊs| ðeə wɜ pɑɪls əv heɪ wɜ hi kʊd haɪd| bʌt ðə hens meɪd səʊ
mʌtʃ nɔɪz| ðæt hi həd tə li:v| səʊ hi stɑ:tɪd tə lʊk fɜr ənə:ðə pleɪs tə haɪd| ən hi sɔ ðə bi:z
haɪv| aɪ wɔndər ɪf ðeə ɪz eni hʌni| aɪ æm səʊ hʌŋrɪ| hi θɔt| ən hi hədɪd təwɔdz ðə haɪv|
bʌt ɪt wɜ fʊl əv bɪzi bi:z wɜkɪŋ | hi wɜ əfredɪ əv bi:z| səʊ hi left|
ðen hi dɪsʌɪdɪd tə həd fə ðə haʊs| hi went ɪntu ðə hɔl ən sɔ ə hɜdʒ hæm ɒn ðə teɪbl|
mmm| ðæt lʊks gʊd| hi θɔt| bət hɔsɪz dəʊnt i:t hæm| səʊ hi left tə lʊk fɜr ənə:ðə
haɪdəweɪ| sʌnli| hi sɔ ðə hæmstɜz keɪdʒ| hærdl| ðə hæmstə| wɜ wɔtʃɪŋ hɪm| ən sed|
hæpi| dʒ mʌðər ɪz lʊkɪŋ fə ju:|ʃɪ həz gʊt ə səpraɪz| ə səpraɪz| sed hæpi| aɪ wɔndər wɔt ɪt ɪz|

famli| hi left in ə həri tə lək fə mʌm| aʊtsaɪd hi faʊnd mʌm| hʊ wz stɪl ləkɪŋ fə ɪm|
həreɪ| aɪ famli faɪnd ju| aɪ hæv səmθɪŋ fə ju| sed mʌm| ən ʃɪ geɪv ɪm tu: hʌni mʌfɪns ən
wʌn bɪg hʌg||

4.2.- Lessons

Lesson 1

Objectives

By telling a story children will get familiarized with the characters of “The Tree of Sounds”, specially the initial sounds |h|z|dʒ|i:|ɪ|.

Procedure

PRE TASK: Telling of the story “The Tree of Sounds”. (see the story in 1)

TASK: Presentation of the character and telling of the story “Happy Horse is Hiding”. While the students listen to the presentation and the story, they will imitate happy horse’s laughter and put their hands in front of their mouth, every time they listen to the sound /h/.

FOLLOW UP: Happy Horse Game. Students will play in pairs.

A: Knock, knock.

B: Who’s there?

A: I like hats and hugs. Who am I?

B: Happy Horse!

A has to make up other objects that Happy Horse likes. They will also play with the Joker, the twin sisters and Zoe the Zebra. As support, they will have flash cards with things that the characters might like and begin with the same sound as their names.

Lesson 2

Objectives

By playing a game, children will reinforce the recognition of the initial sound /h/ and they will practise the pronunciation of the sound.

Procedure

PRE TASK: The students will complete a photocopy in which they will match the horse with the drawings of objects that begin with H. They will have to recognize the object, name it in English and match. The students will complete a photocopy in which they will complete some words with its initial sound. They will write the missing letter and then, they will colour the picture that begins with H.

TASK: Guessing game. The teacher will give clues and the students have to guess a word that begins with /h/ and make the missing word in groups with their bodies.

Eg. It goes on your head. HAT.

You live in it. HOME.

You make me feel like this. It is the opposite to sad. HAPPY.

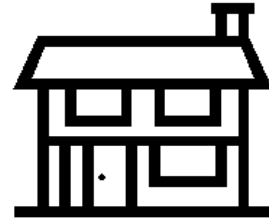
It is a bird that doesn't fly and lays eggs for us to eat. HEN.

It is an animal that lives under the water. It is big, grey and has four legs.
HIPPOPOTAMUS.

FOLLOW UP: The students will have to work in groups. They will spell the words they have just guessed with their bodies. Each student will represent one letter, and together they will make up words. E.G.: for HAT, one student will make the H raising his arms, the other student will represent the A, by crossing his arms in front and opening his legs, etc...

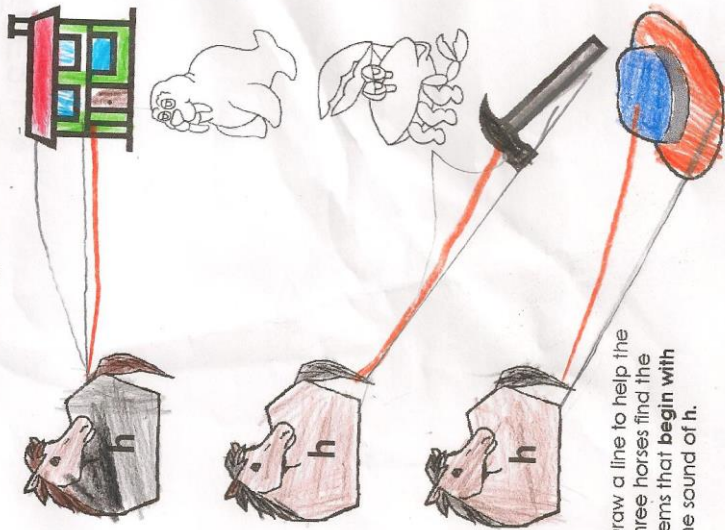
5.- CLASSROOM MATERIAL

What Begins with H?



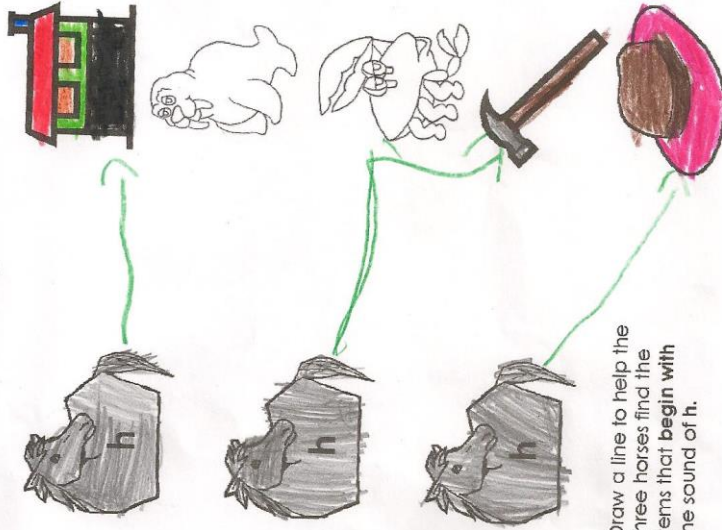
Draw a line to help the three horses find the items that **begin with** the sound of **h**.

What Begins with H?



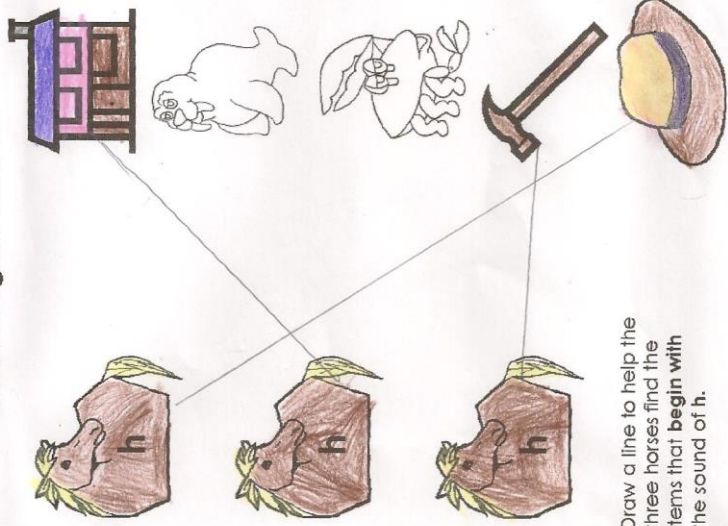
Draw a line to help the three horses find the items that **begin** with the sound of h.

What Begins with H?



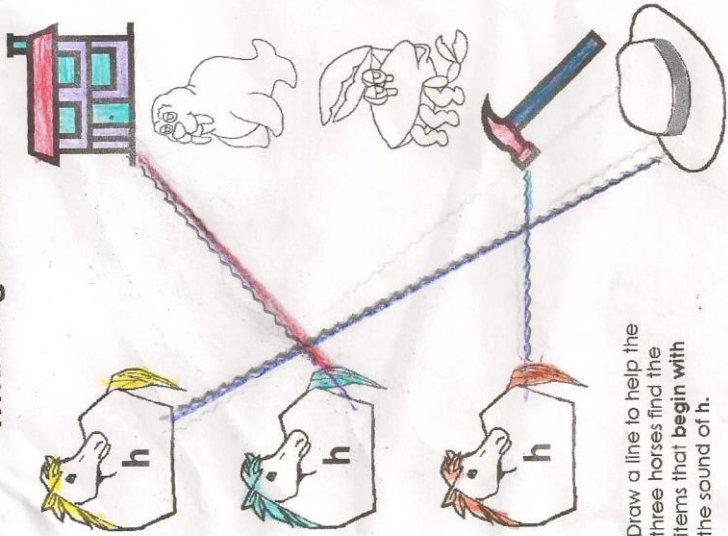
Draw a line to help the three horses find the items that **begin** with the sound of h.

What Begins with H?



Draw a line to help the three horses find the items that **begin** with the sound of h.

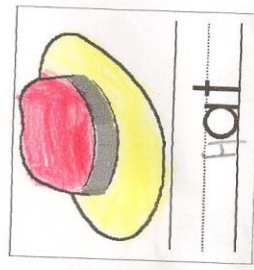
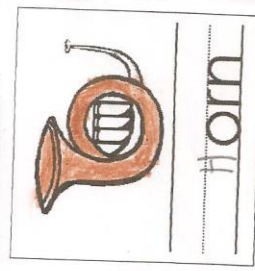
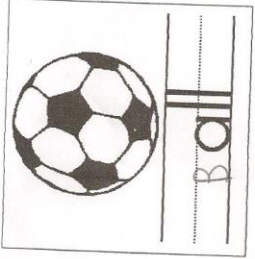
What Begins with H?



Draw a line to help the three horses find the items that **begin** with the sound of h.

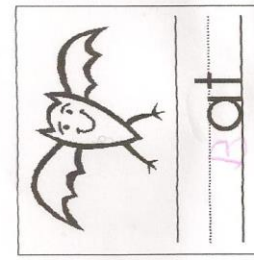
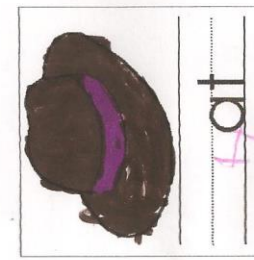
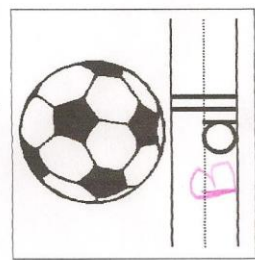
What Begins with H?

Color the pictures that begin with the letter h.



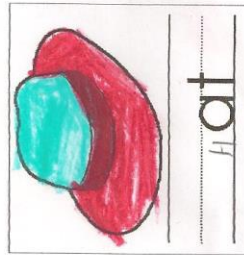
What Begins with H?

Color the pictures that begin with the letter h.



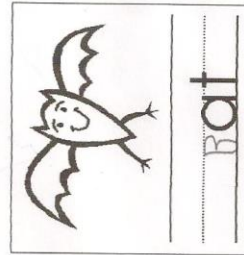
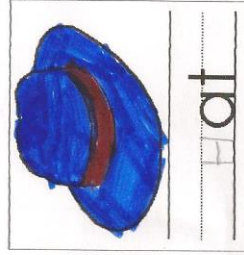
What Begins with H?

Color the pictures that begin with the letter h.



What Begins with H?

Color the pictures that begin with the letter h.



6.- CHILDREN PLAYING WITH SOUNDS

