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# I-RoLE 2023

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF  
RESEARCH ON LANGUAGE EDUCATION 2023

**EMBRACING CHANGE:  
EMANCIPATING THE LANDSCAPE  
OF RESEARCH IN LINGUISTIC,  
LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE**

**13 - 14 MARCH 2023**

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**“Embracing Change: Emancipating the Landscape of  
Research in Linguistics, Language and Literature”**

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# PHONE THE PHONETICS; PHONETIC FLASHCARDS

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## ABSTRACT:

Phone the Phonetics is a set of flashcards designed to introduce phonetics to a younger set of generation whilst allowing easier access for individuals who are learning English as a second language. As widely agreed on, pronunciation is one of the harder English skills to master, especially if it is not your mother tongue. Therefore, this project is generally surrounding the concept of pronunciation and linguistics; to encourage and raise awareness of proper pronunciation and increase of vocabulary. The creation of these flashcards was curated for a younger audience between the ages of four to seven year olds. Evidently, kids at this age are at their most prime years to inhibit new skills and master another language. The subconscious mind is how young children pick up language (Smalle, 2022). Constructing these flashcards took over the course of three months with the help of online research, surveys, and persistent interviews with expatriate students and adults who wished they had access to learning English at an easier rate. Phone the Phonetics has an interactive design inclusive of bright colours and easy to read fonts, targeted to garner specifically children's attention. Additionally, these flashcards are accessible through an online platform, where parents are able to purchase with simplicity for their learning kids.

**Keywords:** Flashcards, Phonetics, Children, Pronunciation, Linguistics

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Language acquisition in children is easier and quicker than compared to an adult. Studies demonstrate that children are better than adults at picking up new language norms passively, that is, without being aware of what they are learning. It has been widely proven that immersion education produces greater language gains than conventional foreign language programmes. Therefore, by consistently implementing practices of re-occurring words with proper pronunciation, children are able to retain and gain the information quicker. Language acquisition involves both an implicit (unconscious) memory and an explicit (conscious) memory across developmental stages. Language is acquired by children subconsciously. Although these cognitive methods for learning are crucial for sophisticated intellectual pursuits like studying, they frequently interfere with more instinctive learning processes like language acquisition. The 'critical period' is referred to in neuroscience as a time of increased plasticity, during which the brain is more easily able to build new neural connections in response to various types of information (Kulhman, 2019). It serves as the basis for most 3-year-language learners' development in hopes that they would ultimately speak English like a native speaker from the United Kingdom.

Therefore, with this information in mind, the creation of phonetic flashcards was ignited. This set of flashcards was formed to answer questions such as "*what mediums available could*

*have helped English language learning individuals?” or “how could young expatriate children benefit from this project?”*. Speaking from personal experience, having access to multiple English learning mediums, would have been more than helpful. Taking that into consideration, Phone the Phonetics is inclusive of verbs that children are bound to use in their day to day activities. Thus, this will lead to a subconscious practice and better conservation of the corresponding skill; in this case pronunciation.

### **1.1 Project Objective/Purpose**

Phone the Phonetics is a set of flashcards designed to introduce phonics to younger audiences. Additionally, it is designed to invigorate pronunciation skills; especially for those learning English as a second language. Learning English when it is not your first language is already difficult as is. Thus, with this concept in mind, Phone the Phonetics hopes to allow accessibility in better understanding the English language. This 10 page set of flashcards will be inclusive of a word (in this case verbs) and its corresponding phonics as well as the phonetic chart as a reference. Phonic flashcards was created after thorough research that it not only has not been created before within the Malaysian market but also one targeted for kids in their critical period. Lastly, making materials that are accessible is also one of the main objectives regarding the making of these flashcards.

### **1.2 Entrepreneurial Opportunities**

When it comes to reaching a target audience profitably, Phone the Phonetics mainly targets three groups. Firstly, this project caters towards primary school students between the ages of four to seven. This is because, scientifically it has been proven that this is the best growing period where kids are able to obtain and inhibit a new language into their subconscious mind. Secondly, Phone the Phonetics is intended for expatriate kids, which also goes hand in hand with students who are learning English as a second language. After various responses from surveys and interviews, many children of expatriates - even the older generation of expats themselves - wished they had access to something similar in order to fasten their learning progress. Evidently, having access to a faster learning environment promotes children's self-esteem and competency to grow.

## **2. METHODOLOGY**

This project focuses on those who are uptaking English as their second language and perfecting one of the major skills when it comes to English proficiency; pronunciation skills. With this objective in mind, a complete online survey was carried out amongst Malaysian youths and expatriates to gain thorough information on what could be significant to the production of these flashcards.

The online survey is inclusive of the following **eight questions**:

> Is English your second language?

> At what age did you first learn English?

> Was learning English difficult? If not, do you think those who have difficulties in learning English would improve if some learning materials are given? If yes, would it have been easier if you had accessibility to a material that can ease your learning (eg: flashcards, books, websites)?



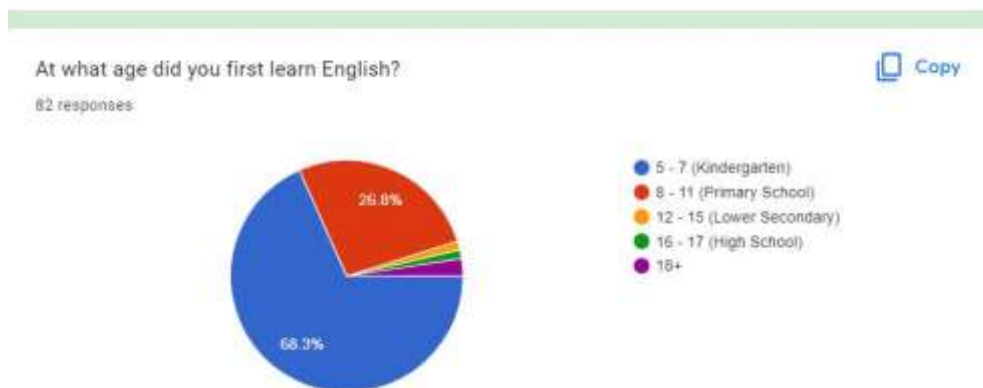
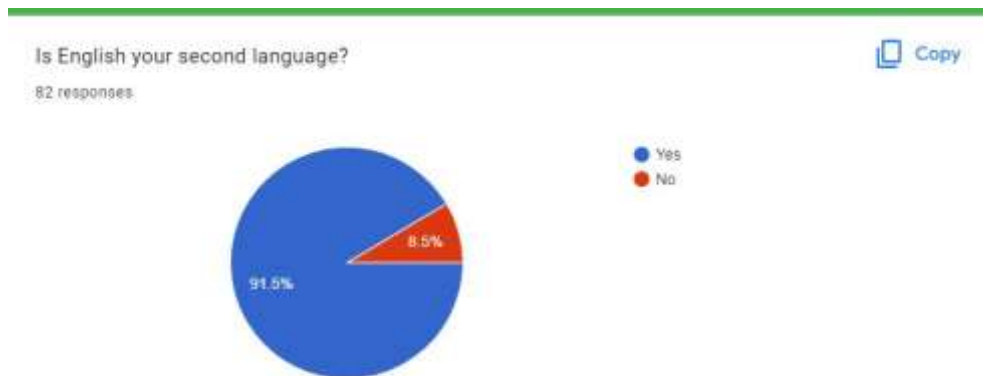


- > Would flashcards consisting of proper pronunciation for words and phrases interest you as a consumer?
- > Would you prefer said flashcards to come in physical form or via online?
- > What is the suitable market price for these flashcards?

With this survey, the production of these flashcards was able to garner a total of 82 respondents. Moreover, of the 82 respondents more than half was answered by adults that are 30 years and above. This could only mean that half the responses were answered by the older generation who not only have their own kids to educate but in hindsight, it gives an early exposure as to how the elderly would have wanted to assimilate the language. Thus, the creation of these flashcards will have absence of cash outflows. This is because the production of these flashcards were made on an online and free platform; *Canva Education* where it has been provided by the affiliation themselves. Lastly, this project was a constant force through in order to catch deadlines and stay on track. A comprehensive layout was curated in order to record each passing progress.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### 3.1 Online Survey Results

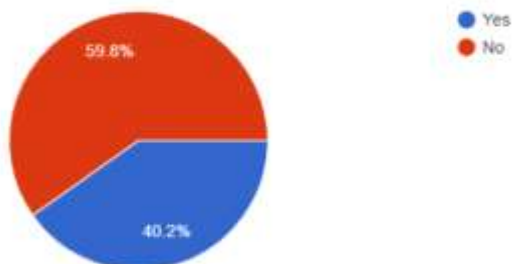




Was learning English difficult?

Copy

82 responses



If no, do you think those who have difficulties in learning English would improve if some learning materials are given?

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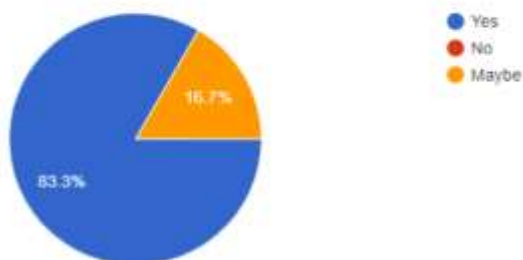
62 responses



If yes, would it have been easier if you had accessibility to a material that can ease your learning? (eg: flashcards, books, websites)

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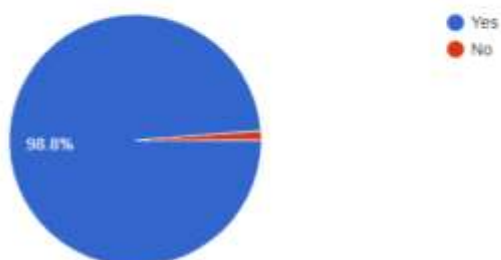
72 responses



Would flashcards consisting of proper pronunciation for words and phrases interest you as a consumer?

Copy

82 responses





Would you prefer said flashcards to come in physical form or via online?

Copy

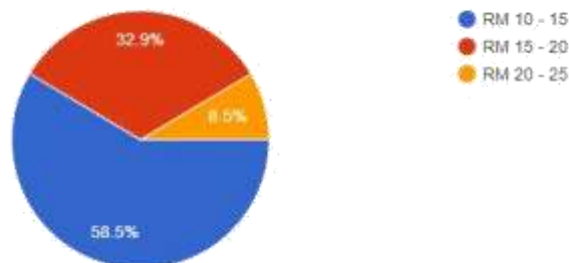
82 responses



What is the suitable market price for these flashcards?

Copy

82 responses



As seen in the outcome of the survey, a majority of the youth voted for both a physical copy of the flashcards but also an online copy. With that being said, in order to reduce wastage and overconsumption in the production of these flashcards, it has been decided that Phone the Phonetics will specifically be sold online through various platforms where consumers are able to purchase at their fingertips. Additionally, having these flashcards available online makes it accessible internationally, but also portable and easy for children to follow along - no matter where they could be.

### 3.2 Project Design

The making of Phone the Phonetics was a personal challenge. As an individual who is not creatively inclined, it was difficult to produce a design that was not only eye-catching and attention-grabbing for children, but it had to make sure it consisted of all significant aspects of pronunciation and mastering said skill. Initially, creating these flashcards started off with different types of flowers and its following pronunciation. However, after giving feedback, that idea came to a halt as most flowers usually consist of two syllables - which makes it hard for kids to manoeuvre through. Thus, the flashcards then progressed into verbs; specifically sports verbs. The reason why this concept was followed through is because these verbs such as walk, jump, and hop are often actions that kids use and subconsciously do in their daily activities. Therefore, it will help them pick up the skill easier as they have something to correlate the action to.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

In summary, as there were many benefits of producing this project, there were also just as many implications. Firstly, getting a grasp on what the target audience preferred was already difficult in itself. Curating specifically for kids meant that you would have to think like the kids and what they needed help with. Secondly, as an individual who is not so inventive, creating an eye-catching and imposing design was just as difficult. Making sure the colours were suitable for children to want to stay on track on focus was the ultimate goal with these flashcards. Lastly, promoting Phone the Phonetics was a heavy product to bring attention to. Additionally, it was easier to target to expatriate parents and children than it was to promote it to locals as they could not quite understand the weight of how significant pronunciation is; especially when travelling overseas and being surrounded by various backgrounds and ethnicities. Products like flashcards take up less energy to promote and depend highly on word of mouth.

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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