



USEFUL TECHNIQUES IN PRONUNCIATION PRACTICE: A SPECIAL FOCUS ON STRESS AND INTONATION

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ABSTRACT:

Is it vital to teach good English pronunciation to non-native English speakers in places such as India where English is taught as a second or foreign language? The answer is unmistakably „yes.“ We should pay close attention to the sound system of each language we speak. Every language has its own distinct characteristics that set it apart from others. When we speak English in India, we should try to sound like English speakers rather than Indian speakers. The present research paper tries to focus on the innovative techniques in pronunciation that the teachers have to use.

Keywords: Pronunciation, native speakers, non-native speakers,

We have various varieties of English in India, including Urdu English, Kashmiri English, Telugu English, and Tamil English, among others. As a result, it is vital to speak English that is free of regional influences, understandable, and acceptable on a national and worldwide level. That is, Received Pronunciation, the pronunciation of England. Kenworthy (1987), in *Teaching English Pronunciation*, puts forward the “concept of comfortable intelligibility as a suitable goal for the majority of learners.”

A teacher who has received extensive phonetics training from a reputable institute such as EFLU can polish their pronunciation skills. English pronunciation can be effectively taught by those who are interested in English literature and have a thorough understanding of the English sound system. We cannot argue that teachers with many certifications and years of

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experience in the field of education can teach exceptionally effectively; rather, it is dependent on the teacher's dedication. Those who are uninterested in teaching English language effectively teach English pronunciation.

Native speakers of English know that learners have difficulty with vowels and consonants. When interacting with someone who is not a native speaker of English, they make allowances for segmental errors, but they do not make allowances for errors in intonation. (Wells, 2006)

Many institutions in India don't teach English pronunciation as part of their English language or literature programmes. It's ironic in that when a non-native English teacher says a word or a sentence in class, she or he is teaching the pronunciation of that word or sentence without even knowing it. The majority of English teachers in India speak in General Indian English, and this insensitive and inadvertent teaching of English results in the teaching of incorrect pronunciation, which is extremely harmful. Here are a few common misconceptions regarding English:

1. English words are not spoken in the same way that they are written.
2. English pronunciation is not governed by any norms.
3. Good readers don't rely on their ability to "sound out" words.
4. Understanding and sounding out are incompatible.
5. People who learn to sound out their words do not have a "slight" vocabulary.

Because students are accustomed to pronouncing in Indian English, if a teacher teaches in R.P., the students may not understand the words. As a result, students' speech reflects their teachers' mispronunciation of words or sentences. Many students in the class look up to their English professors as the only role models they have.

How can literature students enjoy Shelley's poems if they aren't aware of English stress, rhythm, or intonation patterns? Understanding the English sound system not only helps in better English pronunciation, but also aids in the comprehension and explanation of literary texts. It is critical to actively and successfully teach English pronunciation.

The truth is that spoken English will always play an important part in the teaching of English literature. In our colleges and universities, spoken English must be taught as a subject of study. If it isn't, the students will not attempt to pronounce it in R.P. Whatever the purpose of our teaching English language or literature; we know that teaching English pronunciation should not be overlooked.

Because English is a library language and a link language in our multilingual country, we can't escape teaching or learning it in our universities, institutions, and schools. It is critical to educate our pupils how to pronounce words and grammatical structures when we introduce new grammar or vocabulary. It not only helps them become more understandable English speakers, but it also helps them learn the language better.

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Our biggest concern right now is how to teach English in India's current context. Here are some recommendations to help us answer this essential question:

1. There are a number of approaches to teaching English pronunciation.
2. The majority of them entail drilling and rote memorizing of vocabulary word pronunciation. These strategies may benefit some students, particularly those with mother tongues that are comparable to English, but they may leave a significant amount of other classes behind.
3. The best way to teach English pronunciation is to use a method that has been proven to work.
4. Start at the beginning and reduce the words down into their smallest components to teach pronunciation. These are referred to as phonemes. The /p/ in „pat“ and „pan“ against the /c/ in „cat“ and „can“ are two examples of phonemes that help us distinguish words. Begin by letting students to listen to these varied noises until they are able to identify them in class exercises. They can then try to communicate on a rudimentary level.

It's similar to a child learning to speak at a faster pace; phonemes are combined into words, and words are linked together to form sentences. Hearing the various sounds fine-tunes the process, which then leads to intonation and syllable stress. There are pictures showing how to hold the lips and tongue in the correct position to make more difficult sounds like „g“ and „r.“ These can help reduce frustration among the students when you teach sounds that are articulated inside the mouth, and watching videos of English speakers will help them to start developing proper facial expressions.

Before teaching pronunciation, a diagnostic test should be performed to identify the student's pronunciation issues. This would aid in identifying their areas of difficulties and focusing on particular solutions to eliminate those issues. Students should be taught how to express themselves clearly in English sounds. To avoid confusion, the students should be taught the phonetic symbols for these sounds without delving into detail about phonetic terminologies and descriptions. This would allow students to reference English pronunciation dictionaries for tricky words rather than spelling them out.

While learning vocabulary, word stress should be taught. The meaning of a word changes or even disappears as the word's stress changes. As a result, students should have plenty of practice with word stress, and not just any practice. Non-native speakers find it challenging to pick which syllable to stress in English because it is both fixed and free.

If we have a mixed ethnic class, we should have the students take turns teaching each other words and phrases from their various languages; this will help them understand and be patient when they hear different languages spoken with varied accents. Remember that Japanese with an English or American accent will sound the same to them as accented English does to a natural English speaker. This will also aid in the development of their pronunciation skills. Tapes of English speakers from all over the world are available for purchase. As we repeat the dialogue, we have the class listen to them first. The speakers on the tapes and detect both similarities and differences. All of these exercises can be included in our everyday curriculum

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as enjoyable group activities. Poor pronunciation is the result of accurately pronouncing each word. Because English is a time-stressed language, good pronunciation comes from putting emphasis on the proper terms.

Pronouncing every word correctly leads to poor pronunciation! Good pronunciation comes from stressing the right words - this is because English is a time-stressed language.

How to Start:

Many other languages are classified as syllabic, whereas English is classified as a stressed language. Each word in other languages, such as French or Italian, is given equal weight (there is stress, but each syllable has its own length). The emphasis in English pronunciation is on individual stressed words, with non-stressed ones floating by rapidly. Content words are those that are stressed:

Nouns: Eg: kitchen, Peter
Principal verbs: Eg: visit, construct
Adjectives: Eg: beautiful, interesting
Adverbs: Eg: often, carefully.

Non-stressed words are considered function words:

Determiners: Eg: a, an, the
Auxiliary verbs: Eg: am, is, are, was, were
Prepositions: Eg: before, of, in, on
Conjunctions: Eg: but, and, though
Pronouns: Eg: they, she

Tips:

1. Non-stressed words and syllables in English are frequently "swallowed."
2. Focus on pronouncing stressed words correctly at all times; non-stressed words can be skipped.
3. Concentrate on the meaning of the words rather than the pronunciation of each one. Concentrate on each sentence's stressed words:
4. 'money, 'father, a'cross, a'bout, a'head, a'go, millio'naire, ci'garatte, syste'matic,

In English, word stress is unrelated to a specific syllable since primary stress is occasionally placed on the first syllable:

Eg: 'danger, 'valid, 'normal, 'politics, 'photo

On the second syllable in some cases, for example,

Sometimes on the second syllable:

Eg: restri'ction, parti'cular, a'way, etc.

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Sometimes on the third syllable:

Eg: nume"ration, poli"tician, culti"vation, mecha"nician, distri"bution

Sometimes on the fourth syllable:

Eg: Assim"ilation, asso"ciation, intelli"gentsia, etc

Sometimes on the fifth syllable, e.g. Intelligi"bility, systemati"zation and so on.

Words with the same root can sometimes have various stress patterns, as in the example below.

Eg. „Photograph, pho'tographer, photo'graphic, phot'ogenic, 'politics, pol'itical, 'politician, 'normal, ab'normal, abno'rmality.

Sometimes words of the same root have the same stress patterns:

Eg: Pro'fession, pro'fessional, pro'fessionalism, o'rigina, o'riginal, re'vive, re'vival, re'vivalism, revo'lution, revo'lutionary, revo'lutionize.

The grammatical function of a word can sometimes be changed by changing the stress:

Eg: 'object (noun), ob'ject (verb), 'record (noun), re'cord (verb)

Similarly, primary stress can be placed on the initial part in compound words as in 'backboard, 'grandfather, etc.

Sometimes on the second element:

Eg: how'ever, after'noon.

Sentence stress and rhythm can be efficiently taught while teaching grammar. A stress-timed rhythm exists in English. In an English phrase, stressed syllables appear at regular intervals, regardless of the amount of unstressed syllables between any two stressed syllables, and the time between two stressed syllables is usually the same.

Faulty stress patterns and a broken rhythm usually throw off the typical English rhythm and alter the meaning of the phrases. This is a critical area for foreign English learners, as well as a challenging one. As a result, sentence stress and rhythm should be carefully taught in the classroom, with plenty of practice in articulating contracted and weak forms; students should be taught to stress all content words (meaning bearing elements) in a sentence while leaving all functional or grammatical words (non-meaning elements) unstressed. To indicate the stressed syllables, the teacher should make a firm downward gesture with a closed fist.

Intonation can also be taught along with the teaching of grammar. In the English language, there are rising and falling tones. When teaching Yes/No questions, rising tones are effective, while when teaching statements, dropping tones are effective. Intonation, like phonetics, may be learned. We won't be able to use proper tones in sentences until we practice intonation. Brazil (1980) says that "intonation contributes its independent share to the communicative value of an utterance in English" because the speaker, in using a certain intonation pattern,

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makes “an independent choice from a finite set of options available to him/her in the system of the language.”

The use of gestures and hand movements to teach grammatical functions of intonation should be effective and rigorous. Because of incorrect intonation patterns, foreign English learners are frequently misunderstood. As a result, when teaching intonation, you’ll require a lot of practice. The same words uttered to a rising melody may be a courteous request, whereas the same words said to a falling tune may be an order or a demand, causing confusion and significant misunderstanding. A phrase can be delivered with or without interest, confidently, cautiously, fiercely, or pleasantly. The music that one uses while speaking usually emphasizes these distinctions. These songs add something to the words (even though the meaning of the words remains same), and what is added is the speaker’s current feelings. Brazil (1984) states that “pitch variations resulting from the speaker having made an either or choice from a finite set of options available to him in the system of the language alone has communicative value.”

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