

IMPORTANCE OF PRONUNCIATION IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE COMMUNICATION

Nafisa Raimovna Kobilova

Chirchik State Pedagogical Institute of Tashkent region

ABSTRACT

Accurate pronunciation is a crucial part of learning English. Having incorrect pronunciation causes learners not to be understood, even if their grammar is perfect. The speech sounds way can have a big impact on whether or not to be understood what they are saying and their initial impression. The tricky thing about pronunciation is that it is not just a question of acquiring knowledge, it's a physical skill that the learners need to practice regularly. So they should know the pronunciation. Many learners find pronunciation a difficult aspect of English to acquire. Therefore, some sort of instruction and practice is a must in class. This paper analyses the importance of pronunciation and discusses English pronunciation, and communication.

Keywords: Pronunciation, Communication, Effectiveness of Pronunciation, English Pronunciation.

INTRODUCTION

Many international students studying English as a second language make the mistake of not paying enough attention to English pronunciation. This underestimation of pronunciation's importance stems primarily from students' mistaken belief that pronunciation is less important than other aspects of the English language such as grammar, lexicology, and vocabulary.

Pronunciation is critical to proper communication because incorrect pronunciation inevitably leads to the recipient misinterpreting the message. Pronunciation of letter sounds in words, as well as syllable emphasis on parts of words, will frequently drastically change the words' meaning and context, irreversibly altering the meaning of the sentence being communicated. The word present is a good example of this.

Another important aspect is, the proper use of English pronunciation inclines to highlight and add value to an individual speaking English. Consider the following: in a situation where a student's grammar and vocabulary is exceptionally good, he or she may be able to write good English. But, if that same student lacks a fundamental knowledge of

pronunciation despite having an excellent knowledge of grammar, etc. his or her communication in English will be severely impeded. He or she will be able to write in English, but will not be able to construct a meaningful sentence when speaking and thus fails at communicating a message.

At the very least, students studying English as a second language, should give all the aspects of English an equal importance. At best, however, those who wish to excel at the English language will always have to give the knowledge of pronunciation a higher priority.

METHODOLOGY

Basic of Pronunciation

Proper pronunciation can be defined as a reproduction of language sounds in such a way that the intended message is passed easily. The exact meaning of pronunciation is how word is pronounced. If we change in pronunciation, the meaning will be changed .Pronunciation is the production of sounds that we use to make meaning. It includes attention to the particular sounds of a language (segments), such as intonation, syllable, phrasing, stress, timing, rhythm how the voice is projected (voice quality) and attention to gestures and expressions that are closely related to the way we speak a language. A broad definition of pronunciation includes both suprasegmental and segmental features. These all features work in combination when we speak, and are therefore usually pronunciation as an integral part of spoken language.

Importance of Pronunciation

Pronunciation plays an important role in English speaking to express our ideas. It is an essential part for every speaker to speak with the right pronunciation. English is a widespread language and has a variety of speech in different parts of the world, there is no purity of pronunciation. Therefore, we often come across alternate pronunciations and mispronunciations. However, no matter how common the incorrect pronunciation is, people always need to strive to acquire correct pronunciation. Many people learning and speaking the English language often do not pay any attention to their pronunciation. Some of them underestimate it and ignore it. They think that pronunciation is not as important as speaking and pronunciation are less important than grammar and vocabulary. But the fact is that pronunciation is extremely important. Many cases of misunderstanding in communication were caused by the mispronouncing of words or improper intonation. For example, if someone pronounces the words big and pig, sea, and she with relatively no differences, in some cases can lead to a

misunderstanding. Another example: when one pronounces the word present with stress in the first syllable, whereas she uses in the sentence “ He’d like to contest” is certainly incorrect and irritating. In addition, good pronunciation can also give a plus value to those who master it, and it cannot be underestimated. It must become one’s priority while learning English to give the same proportion of time and attention to pronunciation as to grammar and vocabulary. They must practice it and train themselves with good pronunciation every day because communication is nothing but the correct pronunciation.

It is often difficult for a student to reach the exact pronunciation by spelling because English phonemes are not much in the order in which the spellings are in practice. So only a teacher can move away from a student from spelling to phonemic script to learn correct pronunciation. It is often difficult for a student to reach the exact pronunciation by spelling because English phonemes are not much in the order in which the spellings are in practice. So only a teacher can move away from a student from spelling to phonemic script to learn correct pronunciation. Teaching pronunciation is also needed because learning the phonemic script involves getting to know the symbols and ensuring to say the right sound for each one.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Reason for the Incorrect Pronunciation

There are two main reasons which lead us to acquire incorrect pronunciation. In a native or first language situation, children learn to respond to sounds and tones which their elders habitually use while talking to them from a very early stage. In due course, children start learning English in English-speaking countries; they tend to speak in their mother tongue accent. But in our country, where English is a second language, children listen to wrong sounds and tones produced by their teachers/ grownups in their environment and tend to pick up faulty pronunciation. It is mainly due to their lack of sufficient exposure to the correct variety of the language. A good pronunciation consists of pitch, quality, pace, and volume. The message should be conveyed properly and loud enough, and intoned properly. Language skills can be learned through practical use, not in the classroom. The best way to learn any language is by listening to native- speakers. Conversation with native speakers can be embarrassing for the adult but not for the child, and so they tend to acquire pronunciation in a better way. Lack of production can fail to convey the message and can cause troubles in communication.

Correct pronunciation of words in English requires an understanding of the different sounds of spoken English.

Vowels: We were taught there are five vowels- a, e, i, o, u. But indeed there are as many as twenty vowel sounds in English. Out of these twenty vowel sounds, twelve are pure vowels and eight of them are a diphthongal glides. It means that out of these twenty vowel sounds, eight are a combination of two vowel sound, it is called a diphthong. Apart from these twenty vowels there are twenty four consonant sounds. A vowel is a sound in spoken language, such as the English ‘Ah’ [a] or oh! [O], pronounced with an open vocal tract so that there is no build up of air pressure at any point above the glottis.

Pure Vowels: A vowel sound whose quality does not change over the duration of the vowel is called a pure vowel.

Consonants

A consonant is a speech sound that is articulated with complete or partial closure of the vocal tract. Examples are /p/, pronounced with the lips; /t/, pronounced with the front of the tongue; /k/, pronounced with the back of the tongue; /h/, pronounced in the throat; /f/ and /s/, pronounced by forcing air through a narrow channel; and /m/ and /n/, which have air flowing through the nose.

Word Stress: For the transcription of the words, we need to know where to stress a word. English is an accent- based language, and that in a word not all the syllables are pronounced with equal emphasis. For example, in the word ability is – bi and not ‘a’ that is heard prominently. If you look up in the dictionary for this word, it would be seen something like /ə'biləti/. Notice the little mark ‘ ’ after /ə/ and before- /biləti/ this is known as word stress. Now this stress changes the way a word is to be pronounced. Because of the shift in the stress, the corresponding vowel sound and consequently the pronunciation changes completely. When the word is used as a noun or adjective, the stress is on the first syllable. When the word is used as a verb, the stress is on the second syllable.

Intonation

When we hear someone speaking, we observe that the person does not speak on the same note throughout. We find frequent rises and falls in the person’s voice. This variation in the pitch patterns of voice is called intonation .while speaking we glide over the less important words such as pronoun, articles, verbs, prepositions and conjunctions which are called functional words in English, whereas nouns, principal verbs, adjectives and adverbs which are called content words are stressed more. Very simply put it is simply the rising and falling sounds of the voice when speaking. This is something we are very well aware of – as in the characteristic intonations of a questioning statement. Intonations are the reason why when a non-native speaker speaks a language by

pronouncing each and every word of the sentence as individual sounds- the effect of the spoken language is very different from the effect a native speaker has. Hence, in a lot of ways it is intonation which creates accents and distinguishes one accent with another. Pitch fluctuations might be either in terms of rising pitch or falling pitch.

Generally speaking there are four principal kinds of intonations:

- Peaking (pitch goes up and then falls down)
- Dipping intonation (falls and then rises)
- Rising intonation
- Falling intonation

Intonation normally can serve different purposes in language. These can be:

- Informational: answering a question through the use of intonation
- Grammatical: Use of intonation for converting a statement into a question. The intoned version “He saw a man in his backyard at that late hour” versus the flat “ He saw a man in his backyard at that late hour!!”

- Attitudinal: intonation is also used while speaking to convey the attitude of the speaker, i.e., show approval, disapproval, dissent, assents, etc.

- Inquisitive: seeking information by adopting a questioning intonation.

Homophones

Homo means same and phone means sound. A homophone is a word that is pronounced the same as another word but differ in meaning. The words may be spelled the same, such as rose (flower) and rose (past tense of ‘rise’), or to, two, and too.

Examples:

Buy – purchase

By – beside

Knew – did know

New – not old.

Homonyms

Homonyms are words in which spelling or sound can be same with differ meaning. Sometimes homophones and homonyms are same.

Bank – side of river

Bank – This provides financial services

Tense – nervous

Tense – time of action

Eponyms

An eponym is a word which is derived from the name of a real, fictional, or mythical character or person. Most eponyms



originate from a person's surname: boycott, for instance, from the Irish landlord Captain Charles Boycott.

CONCLUSION

English is spoken by educated people in India does not differ radically from native English in grammar and vocabulary, but in pronunciation. Good pronunciation skill can give you more self-confidence when you speak in front of many people. English pronunciation involves too many complexities for learners to strive for a complete elimination of accent, but improving pronunciation will boost self esteem, facilitate communication, and possibly lead to a better job or at least more respect in the workplace. This leads to the conclusion that speech should be emphasized accurately for the effective communication.

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