

IMPORTANCE OF PRONUNCIATION IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE COMMUNICATION

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Abstract

Learners with good communication skills are likely to be understood even though they make errors in other areas, whereas learners with bad pronunciation will not be understood, even if their grammar is perfect. Learners who have bad pronunciation feel lonely, employment difficulties, avoid speaking in English, limited opportunities for further study. If the sound of word is differing it may lead the listener to some other meanings, and if this happens, it is very much obvious that it's not a proper communication. Everybody judge people by they communicate, and so learners with poor pronunciation can be judged as uneducated, lack of knowledge in pronunciation or incompetent. So learners should have knowledge about the pronunciation. Many learners find pronunciation is difficult aspect of English to acquire. Therefore, some sort of instruction and practice is must in class. This paper analyses the importance of pronunciation, discuss the English pronunciation, and communication.

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

In this aspect for the communication, people have adapted English language as the local language of the world. Communication is the most important component in our daily life. Our society moves on the wheels of the communication. So, for the better communication, we need correct pronunciation, because pronunciation affects very much on the understanding of the meanings of the words. For the effective communication everyone should have vocabulary, knowledge of grammar rules. There is no doubt that knowledge of language structure and material is essential in communication. But they may not be applied to all situations. Being able to pronounce proper words and understand it also important in communication. Good pronunciation can contribute a lot to leaving a good first impression. Correct pronunciation is a basis for efficient communication in English. English is widespread language and it has developed a large number of regional dialects but they should not matter too much to a non-native speaker. Native speakers should work on practicing correct and authentic English pronunciation. Learning phonics can be of great help with this – listening to the sounds and practicing through constant repetitions can be immensely beneficial in one's quest for native-like English pronunciation.

In globalizes world, all regions of world coming closer to each other. People are getting more familiar with each other. This way, they affect each other in all aspects of life, especially in the language, which affects more. As English is local language of the world, it has immense number of people around to speak it up. Every one of them has its own way to deal with it but it's quite sure that Language is not that kind of abstract art which can be dealt in one's own way like any abstract painting. "Language is humankind's distinctive feature. Whether we think of rationality or sociability, we are thinking of language. It is language that makes us different from other species." And especially when one talk about speaking of English or learning to speak English, he must replace the saying: "Seeing is believing" with "Hearing is believing" because speech is the basic form of language.

Communication is a mutual relationship between the speaker and the hearer. This means that one must comprehend what he/she hears in the target language and must

produce the sounds of the language he/she is trying to learn accurately. Unless he has sufficient knowledge of the sound patterns of the target language, he can neither encode a message to anybody nor decode the message sent by another person by learning the sounds of the target language within his mother tongue. Therefore, pronunciation instruction is of great importance for successful oral communication to take place since it is an important ingredient of the communicative competence.

Basic of Pronunciation

Pronunciation refers to the way words are spoken. With the ability of pronunciation, everyone will be able to pronounce words correctly while speaking in English and will be able to gain self-confidence to speak in English. 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.

Cook states that Pronunciation is a set of habits of producing sounds. The habit of producing a sound is acquired by repeating it over and over again and by being corrected when it is pronounced wrongly. Learning to pronounce a second language means building up new pronunciation habits and overcoming the bias of the first language.

Importance of Pronunciation

Pronunciation plays an important role in English speaking to express our ideas. English is not native language for everyone and hence the pronunciation of Indian speakers of English is different from that of the native speaker. Some speakers of the English language attract us with their good command of English language. It is their pronunciations that leave impact on us as listeners. It is an essential part of every speaker to speak with the right pronunciation. Since we are not native speakers of English, there exists a very serious problem with regard to the pronunciation of the Indian speaker's English. English is widespread language. Because of a variety of English spoken in different parts of the world, there is no purity of pronunciation. Therefore, we often come across alternate pronunciation 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 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 is less important than grammar and vocabulary. But the fact is that pronunciation is extremely important. In many cases of misunderstanding in communication were caused by the mispronouncing of words or the improper intonation. For example, if someone pronounces the words fog and fox, see and she, sick and six 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 "I'd like to present" is certainly incorrect and irritating. In addition, good pronunciation can also give a plus value to those who master it. People get amazed of your English language when they hear you speaking in English and thinking about your pronunciation skill? The answer is the quality of the pronunciation. Good pronunciation skill can give you more self-confidence when you speak in front of many people. So, it has become more and more obvious that pronunciation cannot be underestimated. It must become one's priority while he/she is learning English. At least, the learners of English should give the same proportion of time and attention to pronunciation as they do to grammar and vocabulary. To English Diploma / English Department students, pronunciation should have become compulsory menu in their daily language activities. They must practice it and train themselves good pronunciation every day. If not, then they will regret at the time they graduate, because there will be only a slight difference between the graduates of English Diploma Program/English Department and those of Public Relations Program/ Communications Department of FISIPOL who master English language fluently.

It is very much necessary to learn correct pronunciation because it is the communication, by which we form our society and get near to the people, and communication is the tool which is the basic content to perform every job in the social sphere. And it is very much clear that communication is nothing but the correct pronunciation. "Pronunciation involves far more than individual sounds. Word stress, sentence stress, intonation, and word linking all influence the sound of spoken English, not to mention the way we often slur words and phrases together in casual speech. 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. Effective communication is of greatest importance", so we should choose first to work on problems that significantly hinder communication and let the rest go initially. We should remember that students also need to learn strategies for dealing with misunderstandings, since native pronunciation is for most an unrealistic goal. "A student's first language often interferes with English pronunciation. For example, /p/ is aspirated in English but not in Spanish, so when a Spanish speaker pronounces 'pig' without a puff of air on the /p/, English may hear 'big' instead. Sometimes the students will be able to identify specific problem sounds and sometimes they won't." It is often, difficult for a student to reach the exact pronunciation by spellings because English phonemes are not much in that order in which the spellings are in practice. So only a teacher can move away student from spellings to phonemic script to learn correct pronunciation. Teaching pronunciation is also needed because learning the phonemic script involves not just getting to know the symbols but also making sure you can say the right sound for each one, lots of help by a teacher is needed very much.

Reason for the Incorrect Pronunciation

There are two major reasons which lead us to acquire incorrect pronunciation. In a native or first language situation, from a very early stage children learn to respond to sounds and tones which their elders habitually use while talking to them. In due course, children start learning English in English speaking countries; they tend to speak in the mother tongue accent. But in our country, where English is used as a

second language, children listen to wrong sounds and tones spoken by their teachers/ grownups in their environment and tend to pick up faulty pronunciation. This happens mainly due to their lack of sufficient exposure to the right variety of the language. Moreover, we tend to speak English as we speak our mother tongue; therefore we tend to commit mistakes due to its influence. Good pronunciation considers pitch, quality, pace, volume of your pronunciation. Message should be conveyed in proper manner and loud enough and properly intoned.

Language skills can be learnt through practical use, not in classroom. The best way to learn any language is listening native- speakers. Conversation with native speakers can be embarrassing for the adult but not for the child and that's why they tend to acquire pronunciation in a much better way. Lack of pronunciation can result in a failure to convey the message and can cause troubles in communication.

Received Pronunciation

English is spoken as a first or second language by a very large number of people throughout the world. In some countries such as the UK, the USA, Canada and Australia, English is the native or first language. In other countries such as India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, etc. English is spoken as a non-native or second language. As there is such a wide range of variation in pronunciation and accent, it is essential for us to follow a standard. One native regional accent that has gained social prestige is the Received Pronunciation of English. It is the pronunciation of the people of south-east England and is used by educated English speakers. 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. This contrasts with consonants, such as English 'Sh!' [ʃ], where there is a closure at some point along the vocal tract.

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.

1.7 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. Example:

Noun/ Adjective	Verb
'produce	pro'duce
'record	re'cord

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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