

## Teaching Various Aspects of the Language and Forming Skills. Teaching Pronunciation. The Importance of Correct Pronunciation in Language Learning

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### Annotation

This article discusses methods of teaching various aspects of language and the formation of skills, the importance of correct pronunciation in language learning. Teaching speech activity, the development of oral speech in English in the classroom of modern technologies and methods of linguistics in modern English.

**Ключевые слова:** methods of teaching pronunciation, the content of teaching pronunciation, beginning level, speaking habits, representation of sound, English literary pronunciation.

### Annotatsiya

Ushbu maqolada tilning turli jihatlarini o'rgatish va ko'nikmalarini shakllantirish usullari, til o'rganishda to'g'ri talaffuzning ahamiyati haqida so'z boradi. Zamonaviy ingliz tilida tilshunoslikning zamonaviy texnologiyalari va usullari asosida nutq faoliyatini, ingliz tilida og'zaki nutqni rivojlantirishni o'rgatish.

**Калит so'zlar:** talaffuzni o'rgatish metodikasi, talaffuzni o'rgatish mazmuni, boshlang'ich daraja, nutq mohorati, tovushning ifodalanishi, ingliz adabiy talaffuzi.

### Аннотация

В данной статье рассматриваются методы преподавание различных аспектов языка и формирование навыков, важность правильного произношения в изучении языка. Обучение речевой деятельности, развитие устной речи на английском языке на занятиях современных технологий и методы лингвистики в современной англистике.

**Ключевые слова:** методика обучения произношению, содержание обучения произношению, начальный уровень, компетентность, звук, английское литературное произношение.

The first impact of any language comes from the spoken word. The basis of all languages is sound. Words are simply combinations of sounds. It is in these sound sequences that the ideas are contained. Listening is the first experience; the attempt to understand accompanies it. The acquisition of good pronunciation depends to a great extent on the learner's ability of listening with care and discrimination. One of the tasks of language teaching consists in devising ways to help the learners "aud" the unfamiliar sounds. The hearing of a given word calls forth the acoustic image of that word from which a meaning is obtained. Therefore teaching pronunciation is of great importance in the developing of students' hearing and speaking habits and skills.

Teaching pronunciation is of no less importance in the developing of reading and writing habits and skills, since writing or what is written, is a graphic representation of sound sequences. In reading the visual images become acoustic images. These are combined with kinesthetic images, resulting in inner speech.

Wrong pronunciation often leads misunderstanding. For example, when a speaker or a reader replaces one phoneme with another he unintentionally uses quite a different word, in this way

altering the sense of what he wanted to say. For example, white instead of wide; meet instead of meat; beet instead of beat, etc.

Every teacher must understand how important the teaching of correct pronunciation is. Teaching English pronunciation is a challenging task with different objectives at each level. This guide on how to teach pronunciation provides a short overview of the main issues to be addressed at each level, as well as pointing to resources on the site, such as lesson plans and activities, that you can use in class to help your students improve their English pronunciation skills. Following each level are a few suggestions for level appropriate activities. Finally, the best way to help students improve their pronunciation skills is to encourage them to speak English as much as they possibly can. Introduce the idea that even when doing homework students should be reading aloud. Learning to pronounce English well takes muscle coordination, and that means practice - not just mental activity!

At the beginning level, English learners need to focus on the basics of pronunciation. In general, the use of rote learning is best for this level. For example, the use of grammar chants is a great way to help students pick up pronunciation skills through repetition. Teaching the IPA (International Phonetic Alphabet) is too challenging at this point as learners are already overwhelmed with the challenges of learning a language. Learning another alphabet for pronunciation is beyond the capability of most beginning level English learners. Certain patterns such as silent letters in English and the pronunciation of -ed in the simple past is a good starting point for future pronunciation drills. Students should also learn the difference between voiced and voiceless consonants.

#### **Beginning level of English Learners;**

1. Syllable Stress-students need to understand that multisyllabic words require syllable stress. Point out common syllable stress patterns.
2. Voiced and Voiceless- Teach the difference between voiced and voiceless consonants. Have students touch their throats to note the difference between 'z' and 's' and 'f' and 'v' to demonstrate these differences.
3. Silent letters- Point out examples of words with silent letters such as the 'b' in 'comb', '-ed' endings in the past for regular verbs.
4. Silent final- Teach the influence of the final silent 'e' generally making the vowel long. Make sure to point out that there are many exceptions to this rule (take vs. give).

#### **The difficulties in English pronunciation usually experienced by Russian-speaking students.**

Over the past 15 years I've worked with hundreds of Russian speaking professionals to help them improve their English pronunciation skills. They wanted to speak English more clearly so listeners could understand them easily. Somewhere already clear and wanted to sound more like a local.

The 8 areas below are typical problem areas for Russian speakers. Some of these are relatively straight forward and easy for them to correct and some were very challenging and took a lot of dedicated, systematic training and practice.

Any language has its specific phonic system. This is true for English as well. The sounds of English are not the same as the sounds of Russian, though there are, of course, some sounds which occur both in English and in Russian.

There are many difficult sounds in English for Russian learners, To Russian speaking -students the combination of sounds which occurs in English at the end of a word(months, clothes) is strange and they find great difficulty in pronouncing a word with this sound combination. In English it comes in the middle or at the end of many words: English, song, sitting, longer and presents a lot of trouble to students to produce it correctly as there is no sound like this in the Russian language. Many Russian speakers have **difficulty pronouncing the English consonant sounds**

/w/, /v/, /r/ & 'th'. Russian has a quarter of the vowels that English does so many English vowels are challenging. Word stress is often flatter and more even than an English native speaker.

Consider the basic errors in English pronunciation, which have Russian roots. Legendary combination of «th» is the visiting card of Russians abroad. These specific sounds - [θ] and [ð] Russian-speaking people often pronounce as - [f] and [z]. The words "zeriz" (there is), "zera" (there are), "free" (three) and "fenkyu-senkyu" (thank you) are the most common examples. It seems to us that we pronounce similar Russian sounds and there is no harm in that. However, native speakers do not understand us, because words lose their meaning due to the replacement of sound. When pronouncing the sound / θ /, linguists recommend placing the tongue between the teeth and uttering the Russian letter "т", and for the sound / ð / say the Russian "д". Keep in mind that you should feel a slight vibration of the air in the throat.

The sounds of English may be arranged in three groups: vowels, double vowels or diphthongs, and consonants. **A**, **i**, and **u** can be doubled for emphasis. When an **aa**, **ii**, or **uu** appears in a word, that syllable is stressed. If there is a consonant before a double vowel, there is a slight pause before pronouncing that consonant. The reduced vowel **e** is never doubled. The vowels of *bit*, *let*, *foot* are shorter than those of *bid*, *led*, *lead*, *wood*. There is a modern tendency in South-Eastern English to lengthen some or all of the traditionally short vowels in many situations. Words like *fit*, *feet*, *cot* and *caught*, *wood* and *wooded* are, or may be, distinguished by vowel quality only, instead of by a complex of duration and quality.

Some authorities, writes D. Jones, consider the state of tension of the tongue to be an important factor in the production of various vowel qualities, and they distinguish tense vowels from lax vowels; the [i:] of [li:p] *leap* has a tenser articulation than the [I] of *lip*, and that the [u:] of [bu:t] *boot* has a tenser articulation than the [u] of [fut] *foot*. This can be tested by placing the finger against the outside of the throat about half way between the chin and the larynx. When pronouncing the vowel of [lip] this part feels loose, but when pronouncing the vowel of [li:p], it becomes tenser and is pushed forward.

Long sounds are fully long only when final- *far*, *sea*, *saw*, *two*, *fur*, *car*; when a voiced consonant follows and the syllable is final in a sentence-*feed*, *spoon*, *bird*, *farm*, *pause*, and when they are said by themselves. In other cases the traditionally long vowels are pronounced short. D. Jones says that the length of vowels is determined in most cases by the phonetic context, and in few cases differences of quality distinguish one word from another. Hence in teaching English vowels the quality of sounds should be emphasized and not their duration.

There are double vowels and diphthongs in English. Some of these diphthongs are strange to Russian-speaking students because they do not appear in their native language. Students are tempted to substitute for them English monophthongs or sounds from their own language. The following vowel sounds have been found to be particularly difficult for Russian-speaking students. Consonants may vary in length. In this connection D. Jones writes that when final they may be observed to be longer after short vowels than they are after long vowels. The [n] in *bent* is much shorter than that in *bend*, the [I] in *gulp* is shorter than that in *bulb*. The teacher of English should know this to be able to help his students in pronouncing words as close to the pattern as possible. The pronunciation of words is not only a matter of sounds, but also of stress or accent. Some words have the heavier stress on the first part of the word: *sorry*, *evening*, *morning*, *answer*, and other words have the heavier stress on the second part: *begin*, *mistake*, *about*, *reduce*, *result*, *occur*, *effect*. Stress is very important to the assimilation of English pronunciation. Foreigners often find it difficult to understand an English-man's speech and ask him to speak more slowly, because in quick speech he accented syllables are so strong that they almost drown the others. The pronunciation of sentence patterns includes also variations of musical tones: rise and fall. English

tone patterns differ from those of Russian that is why students find it difficult to use adequate tone patterns in conversation or while reading aloud. Sometimes Russian people speaking English use wrong intonation because of the interference of the mother tongue. That often leads to misunderstanding and impoliteness. For example, *Will you wait for me here?* (*Подождите меня здесь.*) is not only a wrong tone pattern, but is impolite in its form. In teaching English pronunciation the teacher should bear in mind that the difficulties he will meet with- and they occur throughout the course-are sounds, stress, and musical tones strange to Russian-speaking students. He should know what they are and how to teach students to overcome these difficulties.

### **The content of teaching pronunciation**

Students should study English literary pronunciation which constitutes received pronunciation. This is the language of radio, TV, theatres, universities and schools we teach students literary pronunciation which is characterized by: (a) clear stress in all the rhythmic groups, (b) clear pronunciation of the sounds, for example, *give me* and not *gimme* admitted by colloquial English; (c) typical abbreviations in auxiliary words: *it's*, *won't*, *doesn't*, *can't*, *shouldn't*, etc.

Proceeding from the aims and objectives the foreign language syllabus sets out, Students must assimilate:

1. The sounds of the English language, its vowels and consonants. They should be able to articulate these sounds both separately and in different phonetic context.
2. Some peculiarities of the English language, in comparison with those of the Russian Language, such as: English vowels differ in quality and in length, whereas in the Russian language the length of vowels is of no importance; there are no palatal consonants, and if some consonants may be pronounced slightly palatalized, This does not change the meaning of the word. For instance, we may pronounce the word *like* with dark [l] and *light* [l], i.e., slightly palatalized, the meaning of the word remains the same. In the Russian language there are palatalized and nonpalatalized consonants and palatalization changes the meaning of the word: e.g., *был-бѣль*; *конь-кон*; *банка-банька*.
3. Stress in a word and in a sentence, and melody (fall and rise). Students must be able to divide a sentence into groups and intone it properly.

I don't know what his native language is.

Do you speak English?

Only when pronunciation is correct, when all main phonic rules are strictly followed, can one understand what one hears and clearly express one's thoughts in English. The teacher, therefore, faces the following problems in teaching students English pronunciation:

The problem of discrimination; i.e., hearing the differences between phonemes which are not distinguished or used in the Russian language and between falling, rising, and level tones;

The problem of articulation, i.e., learning to make the motor movements adequate to proper production of English sounds;

The problem of intonation, i. e., learning to make right stresses, pauses and use appropriate patterns;

The problem of integration, i.e., learning to assemble the phonemes of a connected

Discourse with the proper allophonic variations (members of a phoneme) *in\_ the, months, hard\_ times*;

The problem of automaticity, i.e., making correct production so habitual that it does not need to be attended to in the process of speaking.

Consequently, discrimination, articulation, intonation, integration, automatic are the items that should constitute the content of the teaching of pronunciation, i.e., students should be taught to

discriminate or to distinguish English sounds from Russian sounds, long sounds from short ones; falling tone from rising tone; to articulate English sounds correctly, to use appropriate tone patterns; to integrate or to combine sounds into a whole and, finally, they should be taught to use all these while hearing and speaking the English language. Of course absolute correctness is impossible. We cannot expect more than approximate correctness, the correctness that ensures communication between people speaking the same language.

### **How to teach pronunciation.**

In teaching pronunciation there are at least two methodological problems the teacher faces:

1. To determine the cases where conscious manipulation of the speech organs is required, and the cases where simple imitation can or must be used.
2. To decide on types of exercises and the techniques of using them.

Teaching English pronunciation in schools should be based on methodological principles. This means to instruct students in a way that would lead them to conscious assimilation of the phonic aspect of a foreign language. The teacher instructs his students to pronounce sounds, words, word combinations, phrases and sentences in the English language. Students must become conscious of the differences between English sounds and those of the native language. This is possible provided the foreign sound is contrasted with the native phoneme which is substituted for it, for example; E. [t]- R. [T]; E [n]- R. [H]; E. [h]- R. [X].

Each sound is also contrasted with the foreign phonemes which come close to it and with which it is often confused. The contrast is brought out through such minimal pairs as: *it- eat, spot- sport, wide- white, cut- cart, full- fool*. The experience of the sound contrast is reinforced audio-visually:

1. By showing the objects which the contrasting words represent. For example, *ship-sheep*. The teacher makes quick simple drawings of a ship and a sheep on the blackboard or shows pictures of these objects.
2. By showing the actions. For example, *He is riding. - He is writing*. Situational pictures may be helpful if the teacher cannot make a sketch on the blackboard.
3. By using sound symbols. Phonetic symbols do not teach the foreign sounds. They emphasize the difference in sounds and in this respect they are a valuable help. To teach students how to pronounce a new language correctly in a conscious way means to ensure that the student learns to put his organs of speech into definite positions required for the production of the speech sounds of this language. A person learning a foreign language unconsciously continues to use his muscle in the old ways and substitutes the phonemes and the intonation of his native tongue, e. g., he pronounces *zis* instead of *this*, or *veal* instead of *wheel*; *Do 'you 'speak 'English?* Instead of *'Do you 'speak English?* He does not even notice his mistake.

### **The importance of teaching pronunciation.**

Indeed, we should teach pronunciation because words can have different meanings depending on how you say them. For example, there is a big difference between a pear and a bear, two sounds that are not easy for Spaniards! A teacher's first goal for their students is to achieve basic communication. However, that can fail if their accent is so bad that no one can understand them. In addition, teaching pronunciation is necessary since it's embarrassing to ask someone to repeat themselves three times and still not understand them. **Phonetic symbols** : You might also **consider teaching your students symbols from the phonetic alphabet**. Learning some of these symbols can clear confusion where the same letters have different sounds. For example, the 'th' in 'there' and the 'th' in 'thanks' look the same, but they are not. Of course, knowing phonetic symbols isn't essential and would be overkill with children. That said, it would be worth it for visual or analytical learners. You can play all sorts of matching games with this material to make the drills more fun



and less stressful. For example, you can have students play with nonsense sounds and focus on the tiny differences between contrasted phonemic pairs, the key being to get them to hear the phoneme. In learning pronunciation great use should also be made of imitation. Students learn to pronounce a new language by imitating the pronunciation of the teacher. Since young people's ability to imitate is rather good it should be used in teaching pronunciation as well. Indeed, there are sounds in the English language which are difficult to explain, for example, vowels. The teacher is often at a loss how to show his students the pronunciation of this or that vowel, because he cannot show them the position of the organs of speech while producing the sound.

The description of a vowel requires the use of such words as "the back (the front) of the tongue", "the soft (hard) palate" and others which, in their turn, present a lot of trouble to students to understand. It is easier for them to pronounce a sound, a word, or a sentence in imitation of the teacher than to assimilate "what is what" in the mouth and apply the "knowledge" to producing sounds or sound sequences.

Therefore students merely imitate the teacher, It should be said that the correct pronunciation of some vowels often depends on the correct pronunciation of consonants. For example, if a student pronounces *did* as Russian *duð* it means he mispronounces [d], and not [I] because one cannot pronounce *duð* with the correct position of the tongue for producing the English [d].

As to intonation it should be taught mainly through imitation, though some explanations and gestures in particular are helpful. For example, the teacher can show the rise of the voice by moving his hand up and the fall by moving it down. He can also use the following symbols: for stress, for pause, for falling tone, for rising tone, and teach students how to use them while listening to a text and reading it. Consequently, teaching pronunciation in school must be carried out through conscious approach to the problem and imitation of the teacher and speakers when tape-recordings and records are used. Neither the first nor the second should be underestimated. Since imitation can and must take place in foreign language teaching, the teacher's pronunciation should set the standard for the class, and the use of native speakers whose voices are recorded on records or tapes is quite indispensable.

Teaching a foreign language in schools begins with teaching students to hear and to speak it, that is, with the oral introductory course or the oral approach. Since the aural-oral and the oral approach should be used, the unit of teaching is the sentence. We speak with sentences. Therefore students hear a long chain of sounds or a sound sequences from the very beginning. The teacher's task is to determine which sounds the students will find hard to pronounce, which sounds they can assimilate through imitation, and which sounds require explanations of the position of the organs of speech while producing them.

The following procedure in teaching pronunciation should be observed:

Students hear a sentence, then hear a word or words in which a new sound or new sounds occur and, finally, they hear a sound and the teacher's explanation of how to produce it.

E. g. My name is...

name

[I]

Students are invited to find the correct position of the tip of the tongue for pronouncing [n]. After they have found the position of the tongue for [n] they pronounce it as a single unit or as an isolated element. Then they pronounce the sound in the word *name* and in the sentence.

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