
**PRONUNCIATION OF WORDS IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE:
THE DIFFICULTIES IN LEARNING AND THE DETERMINING FACTORS**

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ABSTRACT

The study examined the extent of difficulties in learning pronunciation of words in English Language and the determining factors. Pronunciation is an essential aspect of learning to speak a foreign language. Pronunciation is difficult for some students since English is a foreign language to them. Pronunciation is considered a sub-skill of communication. English is regarded as a global or international language for communication and it is used in many areas such as the military, politics, education, business, diplomacy, and science. The study concluded that pronunciation is one of the most challenging aspects of learning a language and one of the most difficult things for teachers to handle in the classroom. There are several reasons why ESL pronunciation instruction is currently ineffective, and blaming any group, whether instructors, pronunciation specialists, or academics, is incorrect. Second language pronunciation is a topic of tremendous academic and practical importance that has unfortunately been out of fashion for some decades. A few well-publicized and interesting developments appear to have the potential to bring this topic back into fashion among a wide range of people with relevant skills and interests, allowing EFL learners to make a significant contribution to global developments in this area. However, with careful preparation and integration, pronunciation can play an important role in supporting the learners' overall communicative power. One of the recommendations made was that English teachers should help students by highlighting elements of pronunciation such as sounds, syllables, stress, and intonation.

KEYWORDS: Difficulty in Learning and Pronunciation

Introduction

According to general observation, people who begin learning English after high school have the most difficulty achieving understandable pronunciation, with the degree of difficulty growing dramatically with age. This problem is unrelated to IQ, educational attainment, or even an understanding of English grammar and vocabulary. Of course, there is no straightforward explanation for why pronunciation is so difficult to learn. In fact, there are a variety of theoretical approaches to the subject (Gilakjani & Ahmadi, 2011). The difficulty of learning to speak a foreign language is generally acknowledged by psycholinguists and phonologists who specialize in this subject as being cognitive rather than physical, and that it has something to do with how "raw sound" is categorized or conceptualized in speech. Many learners of English as a second language have major difficulties with English pronunciation, even after years of learning the language. This often results in them facing difficulties in areas such as finding employment. Hinofotis and Baily (1980) note that up to a certain proficiency standard, the fault that most severely impairs the communication process in EFL/ESL learners is pronunciation, not vocabulary or grammar.

English is regarded as a global or international language for communication and it is used in many areas such as the military, politics, education, business, diplomacy, and science (Heng, 2017). This is true despite the fact that research by the likes of Davis (1999), for example, reveals that an area of concern and indeed one of the top priorities of ESL students after completing elementary English courses is pronunciation. It is important at this point in time to make a distinction between speaking and pronunciation, as the two are sometimes used interchangeably. Pronunciation is considered a sub-skill of communication. In general, if we want a learner to modify the way they pronounce words, we must first change the way they think about the sounds that make up those words (Gilakjani & Ahmadi, 2011). This applies to larger aspects of speech, such as syllables, stress patterns, and rhythm, as well as individual sounds. Despite this, pronunciation instruction is generally overlooked in the English language classroom. This paper covers frequent pronunciation fallacies as well as factors that influence pronunciation acquisition. Then they go through the learners' requirements and come up with some ideas for teaching pronunciation.

Concept of Pronunciation in English Language

Pronunciation refers to the act or result of producing the sounds of speech, including articulation, stress, and intonation, often with reference to some standard of correctness or acceptability (Dictionary.com, 2022). It is an accepted standard for the sound and stress patterns of a syllable, word, phrase, etc. Pronunciation is the way in which a word or a language is spoken. This may refer to generally agreed-upon sequences of sounds used in speaking a given word or language in a specific dialect (correct pronunciation) or simply the way a particular individual speaks a word or language. Paulston & Tucker (2003) stated that a word can be spoken in different ways by various individuals or

groups depending on many factors, such as: the duration of the cultural exposure of their childhood, the location of their current residence, speech or voice disorders, their ethnic group, their social class, or their education. Pronunciation refers to the way in which we make words sound. To pronounce words, we push air from our lungs up through our throat and vocal chords, through our mouth, past our tongue, and out between our teeth and lips.

Pronunciation is an essential aspect of learning to speak a foreign language. Pronunciation accuracy is difficult for some students since English is a foreign language to them (Pollard 2008). Some teachers and learners complain about difficulties in pronunciation since pronunciation is considered one of the most complicated but significant features of second language (L2) teaching and learning (Zhang, 2009). Pronunciation is a crucial component of the learning of oral skills in a second language (L2). Pronunciation has always been perceived as a difficult area by teachers and learners. Like listening, pronunciation is sometimes neglected in the process of language teaching in favour of reading and writing, which are rather more likely to lead to success in an examination (Ikhsan, 2017). Pronunciation has an important social value, which means that it should be related to prestige, such as intelligence, professional competence, persuasiveness, diligence, and social privilege. Pronunciation accuracy can provide information about the speaker's geographical and social origin, and in most cases, it is the most salient characteristic of non-native speakers.

However, it is more comfortable to speak English if a person knows and understands the rules of English pronunciation. Although English pronunciation rules are impossible to memorise when considering all the different words with the same spelling but pronounced differently. And that there are a variety of reasons why many words in English are not pronounced the way they are spelled, and some sounds can be represented by more than one combination of letters (Nordquist, 2020). As a result, in order to improve English pronunciation skills, it is important to understand a number of terms and concepts related to it, such as phonemes, consonants, vowels, minimal pairs, syllables, rising intonation, falling intonation, contractions, etc. (Beare, 2020).

Concept of English Language

Early modern English is a West Germanic Indo-European language that was originally spoken by the people of early medieval England (Wardhaugh, 2010). It is named after Anglia, a peninsula on the Baltic Sea (not to be confused with East Anglia) and the Angles, one of the ancient Germanic peoples that migrated to the area of Great Britain that later took their name: England. Living languages most closely related to English include the Low Saxon and Frisian languages, while English's vocabulary has been significantly influenced by Old Norman French and Latin, as well as by other Germanic languages, particularly Old Norse (a North Germanic language) (Svartvik & Leech, 2006). The English language is an Indo-European language belonging to the West Germanic branch, and is the official language of Britain, the United States, and most of the

Commonwealth countries. Nordquist (2020) affirmed that the term "English" is derived from "Anglisc," the language of the Angles, one of the three Germanic tribes that invaded England during the fifth century. The English language is the primary language of several countries, including Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and many of its former colonies, and the United States, and is the second language in a number of multilingual countries, including India, Singapore, and the Philippines.

English language refers to the system of production of meaning for the expression of living by English people who were originally from Germany, but the language has spread to many parts of the world where it is used as a second, third, or foreign language (Sanuvickybless, 2021). English is a language that was originally the language of the people of England. Today, English is the main language in the United Kingdom, Ireland, the United States of America, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and more than fifty other countries. The English language is a West Germanic language of the Indo-European language family that is closely related to the Frisian, German, and Dutch (in Belgium, called Flemish) languages. English originated in England and is the dominant language of the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, Ireland, New Zealand, and various island nations in the Caribbean Sea and the Pacific Ocean (Potter, 2020). For instance, the concept "English" represents various dimensions; for instance, English is the name of a European people, and it is also the language spoken by people in that country (as well as in several other countries, depending on the definition of other concepts such as "speaker" and "language"). In addition, Rindal (2014) noted that English is also, for instance, the codification of a language in dictionaries and grammars, and in many contexts (particularly related to education), it also refers to literature written in English.

Some common Misconceptions about English Language Pronunciation

Pronunciation skills are thought to be linked to musical abilities. However, there has been little evidence of a correlation between musical ability and pronunciation ability, and many people possess only one of these "natural talents." English language pronunciation is a cognitive skill for which some people have a natural aptitude, interest, and motivation than others, but which everyone can learn to some degree if given the appropriate opportunities. The main problem that English-language learners face when it comes to pronunciation is the necessity to shift a conceptual pattern that they learned in their first language and have internalized since childhood (Gilakjani & Ahmadi, 2011). It is not the case that learners are best helped if they are able to 'see' speech, whether in articulate or acoustic form. Learners need help in categorizing or conceptualizing sounds in a way appropriate to English. Simply seeing a speech-wave or a diagram of the articulation of a sound, however 'animated' and however accurate, will not help them unless they are also helped to understand what features of the sound are significant and given appropriate ways of thinking about the sound so that they can reproduce it.

Since people generally think about sounds in terms of their auditory quality, rather than directly in terms of their articulation or acoustics, the key is to find ways of describing the auditory quality of sounds that make sense to the learner. There is a major role for the use of computers in helping learners with pronunciation, but it is not the role of displaying speech-waves with no guidance as to how they should be read. It is not the case that learners have an accent primarily because they 'transfer' the sounds of the native language to English. The notion of "transfer" as the "cause" of accents and the key to helping learners with pronunciation has been seriously questioned by specialists for at least two decades. Though there is some validity to the "transfer" idea, it is only useful in an elaborated form that requires a good understanding of its limitations and ramifications (Bohn, 1995). A simplistic idea that learners are transferring sounds from their native language to the new language is a hindrance rather than a help. It is unfortunate that so many teachers still hold so strongly to a simple notion of transfer.

Factors Influencing Difficulty in Learning Pronunciation in English Language

Pronunciation in language learning refers to the production and perception of a language's important sounds in order to successfully use the language in meaningful circumstances or develop communicative competence (Brown, 2007). The segments and suprasegmental elements of the English sound system are split into two categories (Goodwin, 2014). Consonants and vowels, including stressed and unstressed syllables, make up segments, while stress, length, tone, and speech melody or intonation make up suprasegmental qualities (Ladefoged & Johnson, 2011). Voice quality, speech speed, and overall loudness all have an impact on how we make sound. In addition to the sound system, the increase in the number of English-speaking users is also another factor to take into consideration. The number of English users has increased tremendously, and the growing acceptance of different English varieties (Englishes) has "given rise to concerns that speakers of different English dialects will cease being intelligible to each other" (Yazan, 2015). Our pronunciation is responsible for intelligibility and whether or not we can communicate our meaning.

Furthermore, in teaching pedagogy, our ultimate goal in pronunciation instruction is to assist pupils in speaking without an accent (Seidlhofer, 2001). Accent-free speech refers to a wide range of accents created by foreign language speakers. Because their accent is a component of their identity or a sign of their membership in particular communities, speakers from various sociocultural origins are inclined to preserve their own accent when speaking English (Harmer, 2007). In this way, a person's accent emphasizes the importance of their sociocultural background, making the acquisition of a native-like accent unnecessary. As a result, language teachers should place a premium on clear, precise, and understandable pronunciation (Brown, 2007). Undeniably, different problems with pronunciation teaching and learning have been found in different contexts, and it is not surprising that teachers and students find it difficult to master English pronunciation. However, there are several key factors influencing the difficulty of

learning pronunciation. Seom, (2021) stated that the most important learner variables that influence difficulty in learning pronunciation are native language, age, exposure, innate phonetic ability, identity and language ego, and motivation and concern for good pronunciation.

Conclusion

The study concluded that pronunciation is one of the most challenging aspects of learning a language and one of the most difficult things for teachers to handle in the classroom. There are several reasons why ESL pronunciation instruction is currently ineffective, and blaming any group, whether instructors, pronunciation specialists, or academics, is incorrect. Second language pronunciation is a topic of tremendous academic and practical importance that has unfortunately been out of fashion for some decades. A few well-publicized and interesting developments appear to have the potential to bring this topic back into fashion among a wide range of people with relevant skills and interests, allowing EFL learners to make a significant contribution to global developments in this area. However, with careful preparation and integration, pronunciation can play an important role in supporting the learners' overall communicative power.

Recommendations

1. English teachers should help students by highlighting elements of pronunciation such as sounds, syllables, stress, and intonation.
2. English teachers should ensure that they are well-versed in both the subject matter and instructional methodology to assuage students' difficulty in pronouncing words.
3. English teachers should focus on the students' level and ability to include pronunciation into their oral skills and other classes both segmental and supra-segmental features whenever there is an opportunity or time.

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