



Language teachers' preferences of pronunciation teaching techniques in ESL classes

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Abstract: The purpose of this paper is to discover which pronunciation teaching techniques are preferred by language teachers, whether traditional or modern. It summarizes the trends in pronunciation teaching, lists traditional and modern pronunciation teaching techniques, and attempts to determine which techniques language teachers prefer using to teach pronunciation to their students. To help people learn languages, instructional software (tutorial drills and practice) is commonly used. In the teaching of pronunciation, learning, adaptation of authentic materials, and the use of instructional technology are all important.

Keywords: pronunciation teaching; techniques of pronunciation teaching; foreign language teaching; segmental and suprasegmental aspects of English pronunciation; Received Pronunciation

Introduction

Pronunciation is a critical component of oral language acquisition in a second language. However, the role it plays in adult English language programs varies, and the amount of time and effort spent on it appears to be mostly dependent on the language teacher. This means it could be included or excluded from regular classroom activities or student self-study. Teachers in adult ESL programs have reported that they have difficulty satisfying their students' pronunciation learning goals, and that many language teachers prefer to avoid dealing with pronunciation because they lack confidence, skills, and understanding. Furthermore, these researches demonstrated that shortcomings in teaching and learning in this subject were caused by curricula, methodology, and a lack of relevant materials.

We focused on teaching pronunciation techniques because language teachers in foreign language classes do not use modern teaching pronunciation techniques. Language teachers, particularly in speaking lessons, do not provide their students with the necessary phonetic or phonological knowledge regarding segmental and suprasegmental aspects of English pronunciation, which, unfortunately, leads to students being unable to remove the fossilized pronunciation mistakes, achieve a high level of pronunciation in relation to both segmental and suprasegmental features of English pronunciation, and improve oral skills in terms of both accuracy and fluency, improve listening comprehension, and develop self-confidence and autonomy.

The fact that few second language learners can speak a second language without transferring pronunciation features from their native language reflects not only the difficulty of acquiring native like pronunciation, but also the goals learners set for them. Many learners are quite comfortable displaying evidence of their native language on their second language phonology, as it is sometimes regarded as an important part of their cultural identity.



Approaches to teaching pronunciation have evolved significantly in recent years, moving away from an emphasis on the accurate production of individual speech sounds and toward a focus on the broader, communicative aspects of connected speech.

However, many teachers are unsure of the status of pronunciation and whether or not it should be given systematic attention in a language course.

- Is pronunciation something that is worth teaching?
- How effective are any of the various approaches to teaching pronunciation found in course books and teaching materials?
- Is a direct or an indirect approach more effective?
- Is there any value in using drills on specific sounds and sound patterns?
- What should one do about persistent and intrusive pronunciation errors from learners?

Many pronunciation textbooks may reflect more recent ideas about the nature of pronunciation, but the teaching techniques and task types remain based on behaviorist notions of second language learning, relying heavily on imitation and discrimination drills, reading aloud, and contrastive analysis of L1 and L2 sound systems.

Within the field of language teaching, opinions on the importance of teaching pronunciation vary greatly: Ideas about the importance of teaching pronunciation vary widely within the field of language teaching: Some believe that teachers have little influence over the natural course of L2 phonological development, which often produces less-than-satisfactory results; others believe that teaching can play an important role not only in helping learners develop ways to improve their pronunciation, but also in shaping their attitudes toward the nature and importance of pronunciation.

Methodology

There are two key problems with pronunciation teaching. Firstly, it is frequently overlooked. Second, when it is not neglected, it tends to be reactive to a specific problem that has arisen in the classroom rather than being strategically planned.

The fact that teachers tend to ignore pronunciation may not be due to a lack of interest in the subject, but rather to a lack of confidence in how to teach it. Many experienced teachers will admit to a lack of knowledge of pronunciation theory, and as a result, they may feel the need to improve their practical skills in pronunciation teaching. Despite the fact that trainees and less experienced teachers may be very interested in pronunciation, their primary concerns are grammar and vocabulary.

Language learners, on the other hand, frequently show a strong interest in pronunciation. They believe it will help them communicate more effectively. As a result, despite the fact that both teachers and students are enthusiastic about the subject, it is frequently overlooked.



Teachers of pronunciation need:

- a solid theoretical foundation;
- practical classroom skills;
- access to good ideas for classroom activities.

A lot of pronunciation instruction is given in response to mistakes made by students in class. Of course, such reactive teaching is and will always be necessary. Grammatical and lexical problems arise in the classroom as well, and teachers deal with them reactively. However, when it comes to planning a lesson or creating a timetable of work to be completed, teachers tend to prioritize grammar. Lexis follows closely behind, with items of vocabulary and longer phrases ‘slotted in’ as needed. A simple look at the contents pages of most course books reveals that we tend to think of language organization in terms of grammatical structures, despite the fact that some more recent publications claim to have a lexically organized syllabus. As a result, making grammar the primary reference point when planning lessons is quite natural.

Pronunciation work, on the other hand, can and should be planned for. Teachers should consider pronunciation characteristics to be essential to language analysis and lesson planning. Any language analysis that ignores or minimizes pronunciation factors is incomplete. Similarly, a lesson that focuses on specific language structures or lexis must include features of pronunciation in order to provide students with a complete picture and, as a result, a better chance of communicating successfully. Teachers should decide what pronunciation issues are relevant to the specific structures and lexis being addressed in the lesson while planning. They can also anticipate pronunciation issues that their students are likely to encounter and plan their lessons accordingly. Of course, there will still be reactive work to be done in the classroom, just as there is with grammar and lexis, but by anticipating and planning, the teacher can present a more complete analysis to students and provide them with more opportunities for language practice. Integrating pronunciation instruction with the study of grammatical and lexical features has the additional incremental benefit of increasing learners' appreciation for the importance of pronunciation in determining successful communication.

English has long outgrown the borders of the country that gave it its name. When we compare the languages of countries or regions where it is used as a first language, we can see how much it has changed. Consider the various dialects of English spoken in the United Kingdom, Ireland, the United States, Australia, and Canada. As English becomes more widely used in countries where it is not the first language, such development will continue, with new varieties of English emerging. As English becomes more widely used in countries where it is not the first language, new varieties of English emerge.

Teachers may face theoretical and practical challenges as a result of this. This can raise theoretical as well as practical issues for teachers. There may be disagreements about the English model that should be provided to one's students. The term “model” refers to the pronunciation characteristics of the language that a teacher presents to students in the classroom.

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Received Pronunciation was previously the preferred pronunciation model for teaching in the United Kingdom or among British teachers abroad (or RP). There are many different accents within the variety known as British English, and most of them give some indication of the speaker's regional origins. RP is unique in that it expresses social standing rather than geography. It is still perceived as a sign of status and education. A. J. Ellis, a dialectologist, coined the term "Received Pronunciation" in 1869. However, the number of people in the UK who speak with an RP accent is currently estimated to be around 3% of the population and is declining. It is also losing favor as a teaching model because few British teachers speak with this accent naturally. However, because RP has served as the foundation for much modern research into pronunciation, its influence endures.

As a teacher, the model you use in the classroom should be similar to the language you use outside of the classroom. Many teachers alter their accent slightly for the benefit of their students, but few could teach with an accent significantly different from their own on a consistent basis, even if they wanted to. Language teachers, on the other hand, must be aware of variations and differences, and the more knowledge one has about different accents and varieties of English, the more informed one's teaching will be.

As always, it is critical to consider the needs of the learners. Because of its historical significance, RP is still the preferred pronunciation for many people, though this is gradually changing. Learners usually have a target model in mind, whether it is British, American, Irish, Australian, or any other variation of English. Targets are often highly personal and, on occasion, ambiguous. They may also differ within a class where students aiming for British English sit alongside those aiming for American English (perhaps because of the people they meet or work with outside the classroom). And, if the teacher is Australian, what kind of role model can and should she provide? This may be a theoretical situation, but in multilingual classes, students have already been taught by teachers with various accents and varieties of English. There is a variety of personal pronunciation targets in monolingual classes as well.

There are no easy answers here, though teachers can, in catering for their students' needs, work on issues of production and reception independently, enabling students to understand a wide range of varieties, while allowing them to choose their own target model so long as it is widely comprehensible. In work on reception, teachers can, for example, focus on vowel differences between British and American English, or the rising intonation of Australian utterances in contrast to the way such utterances are completed by speakers of other English varieties. The best advice for teachers is to teach what they know and use, and be as informed as they can be about other varieties.

New directions in teaching and learning English pronunciation have come from other fields, such as drama, psychology, and speech pathology (Celce-Murcia, 1996). The techniques Celce-Murcia (1996) stressed are the use of fluency-building activities as well as accuracy-oriented exercises, appeals to multi-sensory modes of learning, adaptation of authentic materials, and the use of instructional technology in the teaching of pronunciation.

Today, there is a variety of current technology equipment and applications used in education. They include computers, digital cameras, scanners, LCD panels and/or projectors, distance

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education/video conferencing systems, word processing, databases, spreadsheets, drawing/graphics programs, website development, electronic references, discussion groups/list servers, instructional software (tutorials, drills and practice), presentation software, hypermedia, e-mail, internet, assistive technologies and instructional methods for integrating technology (Muir- Herzig, 2004). Among these technology equipment applications, instructional software (tutorial drills and practice) is used commonly to assist people learning languages. All of these techniques are based on teachers teaching their students each sound and then having them apply it in real speech. Some students benefit from these techniques, while others struggle to learn how to pronounce the other language. As a result, new techniques are being developed to supplement English pronunciation learning.

Other fields, such as drama, psychology, and speech pathology, have inspired new approaches to teaching and learning English pronunciation (Celce-Murcia, 1996). Celce-Murcia (1996) emphasized the use of fluency-building activities as well as accuracy-oriented exercises, appeals to multisensory modes of learning, adaptation of authentic materials, and the use of instructional technology in the teaching of pronunciation as techniques.

There is a wide range of current technology equipment and applications used in education today. Computers, digital cameras, scanners, LCD panels and/or projectors, distance education/video conferencing systems, word processing, databases, spreadsheets, drawing/graphics programs, website development, electronic references, discussion groups/list servers, instructional software (tutorials, drills, and practice), presentation software, hypermedia, e-mail, internet, assistive technologies, and instructional methods for integrating technology are among those included (Muir- Herzig, 2004). Among these technology equipment applications, instructional software (tutorial drills and practice) is commonly used to help people learn languages. Learning, adaptation of authentic materials, and the use of instructional technology in the teaching of pronunciation

Conclusion

Teachers prefer employing traditional classroom techniques, such as dictation, reading aloud, and dialogues to a great extent to teach pronunciation to their students. However, they are reluctant to use modern techniques, such as computers, instructional software, and the internet. At this point, it should be stressed that the teachers should be motivated to make use of some computer-based pronunciation teaching programs that are available on the market. Moreover, language teachers are to be stimulated to use the Internet so as to improve their pronunciation teaching skills and bring a variety to the language classroom. At this juncture, language teachers may be informed of available pronunciation teaching sites on the Internet through teacher training programs, which can also raise their awareness for the selection of the appropriate pronunciation teaching sites.

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