



## Teaching Pronunciation: a Critical Assessment of the Role of Instructors

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### ABSTRACT

Teaching English Pronunciation poses challenges due to several factors. Educators encounter a lack of definitive norms and are confronted with inconsistent approaches when it comes to instructing pronunciation. This study critically examines many significant aspects pertaining to the education of English pronunciation. The objectives of this study are to provide a comprehensive definition of the term pronunciation, analyze the objectives of pronunciation instruction, elucidate the significance of pronunciation instruction, expound upon the responsibilities of teachers in facilitating pronunciation learning, and ultimately propose recommendations to assist teachers in enhancing learners' pronunciation skills. The literature evaluation indicates that in order to effectively teach pronunciation, it is essential for instructors to get proper training in pronunciation education.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The topic under consideration is to the field of pronunciation, specifically focusing on the concept of goal-setting and the significance it has within this domain. The acquisition of English pronunciation is well recognized as a challenging talent that requires a significant investment of time and effort for learners to enhance their proficiency in this area (Aliaga García, 2007; Martínez-Flor et al., 2006; Pourhosein Gilakjani, 2016). Comprehensible pronunciation is a fundamental aspect of learners' linguistic proficiency and has significant importance in language pedagogy. According to Pourhosein Gilakjani (2012), proficient pronunciation facilitates language acquisition, but poor pronunciation hinders the learning process and presents significant challenges. The user's text lacks clarity and specificity. It is recommended that the user provide more context and details in order to facilitate a more and more. Fraser (2000) argues that it is essential to provide instructors specialized courses and instructional tools to enhance their proficiency in teaching pronunciation. The speaker also asserted that the focus of second language education research should lie not on the importance of English pronunciation training, but rather on the methods used in teaching pronunciation. According to Morley (1991), the primary goal of pronunciation education is to achieve a clear and comprehensible pronunciation. Intercultural awareness is an essential element of communication skill.

Morley (1991) highlighted the importance of learners cultivating operational comprehension, functional communicability, enhanced self-confidence, speech monitoring skills, and speech modification methods. This study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the concept of pronunciation, elucidate the objectives of English pronunciation training, and underscore the importance of English instruction in pronunciation.

The objective of pronunciation training does not include requiring learners to emulate the pronunciation of native speakers. The primary objective of oral communication should be the attainment of clear and comprehensible pronunciation. In order for learners to modify their pronunciation of English words, it is necessary for them to alter their cognitive perception of the phonetic elements comprising those words. This is true for both discrete phonetic units and larger linguistic components, including sounds, patterns of stress, and rhythmic patterns. Regrettably, the aspect of pronunciation training is sometimes disregarded within the realm of English language pedagogy (Pourhosein Gilakjani, 2011; Pourhosein Gilakjani, 2016). This study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the concept of pronunciation, delineate the objectives of English pronunciation, underscore the significance of pronunciation, elucidate the role of educators in imparting pronunciation skills, and provide pedagogical recommendations for the effective teaching of English pronunciation.

## **METHODOLOGY**

A number of activities related to library data collection techniques make up library research. The term "library research" refers to research that makes

use of existing resources found in libraries, such as books, magazines, papers, historical narratives, or pure literature relevant to the topic of study.

## **RESEARCH RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### ***The Definition and Significance of Pronunciation***

According to Cook (1996, as referenced in Pourhosein Gilakjani, 2016), pronunciation may be described as the act of producing sounds in the English language. The acquisition of pronunciation skills involves the process of iteratively reproducing sounds and afterwards rectifying any inaccuracies in their production. When individuals start the process of acquiring speech skills, they develop new patterns of behavior and surmount the challenges that arise from their native language. According to Yates (2002, as referenced in Pourhosein Gilakjani, 2016), pronunciation refers to the act of producing sounds in order to convey meaning.

According to Paulston and Burder (1976), pronunciation refers to the generation of a sound system that does not impede effective communication, whether from the perspective of the speakers or the listeners. Pronunciation refers to the act of articulating a word in a manner that is widely recognized and acceptable (Otlowski, 1998). In addition, the definition of pronunciation provided by Richard and Schmidt (2002) pertains to the technique used in the production of certain sounds.

### ***The objective of English pronunciation instruction***

According to James (2010), the determination of acceptable pronunciation may be comprehended by considering the fundamental stages outlined below. In the first level, the speaker's message is incomprehensible to individuals. The speaker exhibits phonological errors in the production of English words, whereby incorrect sounds are used. Additionally, the speaker demonstrates errors in the use of prosodic characteristics while constructing English sentences. Hinofotis and Bailey (1980, as referenced in Celce-Murcia & Goodwin, 1991) posit the existence of an initial stage in the development of pronouncing skills. If the speaker's pronunciation falls below this threshold, they will be unable to effectively communicate without also considering their proficiency in grammar and vocabulary. In the second proficiency level, the comprehensibility of the speaker's message is discernible to individuals. However, the speaker's pronunciation is deemed unsatisfactory due to the presence of an unconventional and pronounced accent.

According to Morley (1994), the comprehension of a speaker may be influenced by the presence of a pronounced accent in their speech. At the advanced level of language proficiency, individuals demonstrate comprehension of the speaker's message, while also finding the speaker's English language skills to be satisfactory. At the third proficiency level, individuals demonstrate comprehension of the speaker's message, while also finding the speaker's English language skills to be sufficiently intelligible. According to Scovel (1988), the concept referred to as "comfortable intelligibility" should be regarded as the objective of English pronunciation.

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Hence, the pivotal inquiry that arises is as follows: what factors influence the establishment of acceptable pronunciation? Acceptable pronunciation is achieved when the speaker's utterances are comprehensible to others, and the speaker's English proficiency is well regarded in terms of its auditory appeal. James (2010) posits that some learners want to have a native-like accent as the primary objective of their speech acquisition. While it may be considered a key aim, it cannot be deemed the optimal goal for educators seeking to enhance their students' pronunciation skills.

According to Morley (1994), when an accent deviates significantly from a recognized standard, it may lead to confusion. Consequently, it is recommended that learners strive to develop accents that closely resemble a standard variation. The presence of a pronounced English accent in a speaker's speech may potentially lead to unfavorable evaluations on their personality traits and level of competence. If learners are not required to pronounce English like native speakers, but nevertheless need to develop an accent that closely resembles a recognized standard, what English models might an instructor use while working with their students?

According to James (2010), there exists a variety of models available for the instruction and acquisition of English pronunciation. Individuals have the ability to activate their television sets and access networks such as CNN International, BBC, or Sky News. These channels provide the exposure to a diverse range of individuals from Germany, France, and other countries where

English is not the primary language. Each of these channels demonstrates correct pronunciation, which may greatly aid individuals in their comprehension.

Yates and Zielinski (2009) assert that much emphasis has been placed on English pronunciation, highlighting its pivotal significance in the acquisition of the English language. If educators fail to provide their English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students with a comprehensive understanding of the fundamental laws and principles governing pronunciation, it is unlikely that anyone else will fulfill this crucial task. It is the duty of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instructors to fulfill this task by imparting instruction on novel phonetic elements, vocabulary, sentence structures, and idiomatic expressions, while also curating suitable resources to facilitate comprehensible pronunciation inside their EFL instructional sessions. EFL educators need to investigate novel approaches for conveying, reinforcing, and providing criticism regarding English pronunciation that are really suitable for facilitating learners' acquisition of English pronunciation in a facile and efficient manner.

Pronunciation teaching has significant importance in facilitating effective oral communication, as emphasized by Hismanoglu's (2006) research. Furthermore, it is important to acknowledge that it constitutes a substantial component of one's communication skill. The significance of English pronunciation in the English language is noteworthy; nonetheless, it is observed that a considerable number of educators fail to allocate sufficient emphasis on this crucial aspect. Several studies have provided evidence of the challenges associated with pronunciation teaching. According to Morley (1991), the inclusion of English pronunciation training is vital in both ESL and EFL classrooms, despite the fact that many instructors tend to overlook its significance in their teaching practices.

According to Gilakjani (2012), the teaching of English pronunciation is regarded as one of the least preferred areas by instructors in their instructional settings. According to Morley (1991), it is argued that possessing comprehensible pronunciation is an essential component of communication competence. Without proficient pronunciation abilities, learners may have difficulties in successfully conveying their intended messages.

According to Hismanoglu and Hismanoglu (2011), a significant number of educators attempt to impart vocabulary, syntax, and the four language skills to their students, but neglect to include English pronunciation into their instructional framework.

### ***The Significance of Instruction in English Pronunciation***

Harmer (2001) asserts that a considerable number of educators fail to allocate sufficient emphasis on the aspect of English pronunciation. There are several factors contributing to this lack of attention. Numerous learners assert that the acquisition of pronunciation skills is unnecessary and is a futile use of time. The assertion is made that proficiency in English as a means of communication is sufficient, and once comprehension is achieved, other factors become inconsequential.

According to Harmer (2001), a primary objective of language instruction is to facilitate students' ability to interact successfully in the target language. Consequently, it becomes crucial to provide a comprehensive definition of the word "communication." Communication is the process of comprehending and being understood. Numerous learners have the belief that their ability to engage in conversations with their professors and peers equates to effortless communication in the English language. However, it is evident that they have committed a significant error.

There are several factors contributing to their errors. Firstly, educators possess a heightened ability to comprehend their students' linguistic expressions, beyond those of the general population, owing to their familiarity with non-standard English use. Furthermore, individuals who share a same language and are fellow students possess similar speech patterns and tend to make comparable errors, hence facilitating mutual comprehension. Furthermore, the classroom setting is not an authentic context since it is confined to the school environment, hence limiting students' exposure to interactions with native speakers (Harmer, 2001).

A significant number of educators lack awareness of the significance of pronunciation. Teachers provide sufficient attention to grammar and vocabulary acquisition in the process of learning a foreign language, hence facilitating learners' development of proficiency in hearing and reading. Furthermore, it is widely believed by a significant number of educators that the acquisition of proper pronunciation is seen as a challenging and tedious endeavor for language learners (Harmer, 2001).

Harmer (2001) asserts that inadequate teaching and learning resources of sufficient quality, as well as limited opportunities for practicing pronunciation, are the primary factors contributing to instructors' insufficient emphasis on English pronunciation.

Educators perceive an excessive workload and see pronunciation education as a futile use of their time. Certain educators hold the belief that their pupils possess the ability to acquire accurate pronunciation skills without the need for explicit training in pronunciation.

According to Kenworthy (1987), some elements contribute to the acquisition of proficient pronunciation by pupils, independent of their reliance on professors. The factors under consideration include the phonetic talents of learners, their integrative motivation, and their accomplishment motivation. Certain pupils possess an understanding of the significance of proficient pronunciation. It is the duty of educators to effectively encourage their students to prioritize the study of pronunciation and assist them in acquiring accurate English phonetic articulation. It is advisable for educators to inform their pupils that the first English class includes the study of pronunciation. Failure to engage in proper pronunciation practice during the first stages of the learning process may result in the acquisition of incorrect linguistic patterns. Consequently, it is important to acquire knowledge about words in relation to their phonetic characteristics. Alternatively, this might potentially undermine the overall academic achievement of learners.

According to Harmer (2001), pronunciation is the first aspect that native speakers tend to observe while engaging in a conversation.

The precise pronunciation of grammar and vocabulary is crucial in language proficiency as it makes these linguistic components meaningful. Ineffectual pronunciation by speakers may render these elements and words futile. Despite grammatical faults, native speakers are able to comprehend those who use precise pronunciation. The assurance of communicative efficiency may be achieved by the accurate pronunciation of words and sounds. The accurate pronunciation of words is a crucial component of effective communication. It is important for individuals to possess precise pronunciation in order to claim a comprehensive understanding of the English language.

Harmer (2001) also highlighted the significance of pronunciation training in facilitating the acquisition of various sounds and sound qualities, as well as enhancing students' speaking proficiency. Focusing on phonetics enables learners to develop an awareness of word stress patterns, so enhancing their understanding of spoken English and facilitating their objective of comprehension and intelligibility.

Kenworthy (1987) posits that some educators argue against the efficacy of pronunciation teaching, asserting that it may not provide significant benefits since only a limited number of learners are capable of attaining native-like pronunciation. It is important to acknowledge that achieving native-like pronunciation may be a desirable objective for some learners, but not necessarily for all learners. The pursuit of intelligibility is a rational objective for the vast majority of individuals engaged in the process of learning.

According to Harmer (2001), it is uncommon for learners to attain flawless pronunciation. Certain individuals may choose not to adopt the pronunciation patterns of native speakers, instead opting to maintain their foreign accent as a means of preserving their unique cultural identity. Achieving a level of pronunciation that is indistinguishable from that of a native speaker may not be a realistic objective for the majority of language learners. One of the fundamental objectives for language learners should be to have clear and comprehensible speech. The education of pronunciation encompasses many pragmatic objectives that need emphasis in order to develop effective communication skills.

In accordance with the findings of Wrembel (2002), the objectives encompassed in this study are as follows: 1) the cultivation of functional intelligibility, which pertains to the development of spoken English that is readily comprehensible to listeners; 2) the promotion of functional communicability, which involves the acquisition of spoken language skills that effectively fulfill communicative requirements; 3) the enhancement of self-confidence, which entails the fostering of explore the impact of four key factors on language learners' oral communication skills: 1) the development of a positive self-perception, 2) the acquisition of effective listening skills, 3) the enhancement of speaking skills via regular practice and feedback, and 4) the development of speech surveillance abilities and language modification methods. These factors are believed to contribute to the learners' capacity to

retain comprehension, communicability, and confidence in real-life communication situations outside of the classroom. According to Butler-Pascoe and Wiburg (2003), assert that the objectives of teaching pronunciation encompass the cultivation of English that is comprehensible and devoid of ambiguity for the listener, the cultivation of English that fulfills individuals' requirements and leads to communicative proficiency, the facilitation of learners' confidence in utilizing English, the fostering of a positive self-perception as those who are not native speakers in spoken language, the cultivation of awareness of speech patterns, personal speech monitoring abilities, and speech adaptation techniques that aid learners in their development both within and outside the classroom.

### ***The Importance of the Role of the Instructor in Teaching Correct English Pronunciation***

According to Morley (1991), instructors have a facilitative role in learners' acquisition of pronunciation rather than just instructing. The function of instructors encompasses several aspects, including that of a coach, namely in the areas of speech and pronunciation. The work of the pronunciation coach is crucial as they are responsible for assessing and providing guidance on adjustments to spoken English at two distinct levels: speech production and speech performance.

According to Morley (1991), educators use pronunciation evaluations to discover certain elements that might have a substantial influence on learners' speech and improve their ability to be understood. Educators provide support to students in formulating both long-term and short-term goals, employing diverse instructional methods and modules including whole-class instruction, small-group collaboration, individualized one-on-one tutorials, prerecorded audio and/or video resources, and the integration of novel programming languages speech analysis systems. Furthermore, educators use in-class oral communication exercises that include engagement with those proficient in English as their first language as well as those who are not native English speakers. The software offers many models, signals, and recommendations to assist learners in improving their speech patterns. Additionally, it constantly monitors the speech output and performance of learners, while evaluating any alterations in speech patterns as an essential component of the program. In addition, educators strive to cultivate their understanding of their own verbal communication and promote practical self-evaluation.

### ***Recommendations for Enhancing English Pronunciation Pedagogy***

Numerous beneficial recommendations exist for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instructors aiming to assist pupils in enhancing their English pronunciation skills. According to Shahzada (2012), it is essential for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instructors to have comprehensive training in pronunciation in order to enhance the English pronunciation skills of their students. In the context of pronunciation lessons, it is advisable for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers to use clear and deliberate speech patterns, ensuring that their utterances are enunciated clearly and at a measured pace.

Additionally, it is essential for these instructors to foster a sense of confidence among their learners, assuring them that the language being taught is really comprehensible. According to Bradley-Bennett (2007), actively listening to learners may aid in the improvement of their pronunciation.

Educators need to impart to their students the significance of using deliberate speech characterized by accurate pronunciation, as opposed to rapid communication accompanied by erroneous pronunciation. It is crucial for learners to comprehend that prioritizing understandability over rapid speech is of greater significance (Rasekhi Kolokdaragh, 2010). It is important for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instructors to possess a comprehensive understanding of their students' individual linguistic requirements and challenges pertaining to pronunciation. According to Shahzada (2012), instructors should provide learners with suitable resources in order to address their pronunciation difficulties. Educators are encouraged to use computer technology, namely various types of software, into their instructional practices. This integration aims to enhance learners' pronunciation skills by providing them with exposure to genuine materials (Rasekhi Kolokdaragh, 2010).

It is recommended that educators acquaint their students with both American and British English, allowing them to comprehend and appreciate the distinct pronunciations of both language variants (Rasekhi Kolokdaragh, 2010). It is recommended that educators integrate pronunciation instruction into various language activities, as this may facilitate learners' acclimation to the phonological structures of a foreign language and assist in addressing emotional challenges associated with the acquisition of English (Rasekhi Kolokdaragh, 2010).

Educators need to establish achievable objectives that are suitable for the communicative requirements of their students. According to Thanasoulas (2002), it is recommended that teachers assume the role of speech coaches in order to assist learners in improving their pronunciation. This involves providing feedback to students and encouraging them to enhance their pronunciation skills.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

In summary, it may be inferred that the information presented supports the notion that. The concept of pronunciation should be seen as including more than the mere accurate articulation of individual phonetic elements or lexical units. The incorporation of communication into classroom activities should be seen as a significant component. Educators have the capacity to encourage their students to actively examine their own pronunciation and diligently engage in speaking exercises both inside and outside the confines of the classroom. The ability to pronounce words clearly and accurately is a crucial aspect of effective communication skills. Considering this perspective, it is important for educators to establish achievable objectives that are relevant and appropriate for meeting the communication requirements of students. The primary objective of pronunciation training should be to develop understandable pronunciation. Teachers should actively promote their learners'

active output, foster an understanding of pronunciation, and provide opportunities for practice. The provision of pronunciation education has significant importance as it serves as the primary means of comprehension. If someone is unable to articulate the accurate form of a word, their ability to communicate effectively is compromised. The provision of pronunciation education helps learners in developing a more comprehensive comprehension of native speakers and enhances their proficiency in communicating effortlessly and efficiently.

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