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Teaching English Pronunciation

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Introduction

The English language is a Kingdom and a sleeping beauty. You must awaken her in yourself, and the whole kingdom will come to life and be yours.

The knowledge of more than one language is advantageous for any person, the need to communicate in this globalized world is becoming more essential. the challenge of contemporary education is to contribute to develop the skills of students, especially those of higher education who can be able to integrate these language skills that they can live in their local community contributing a link through the English language, approaching the global community.

We started to study English when we were young, that was more than forty decades, by then, anybody could be an English teacher, it was just an option; that means, if the teacher, regardless his profile, needed to complete their schedule, they took some hours to teach English. So, we did not learn more than some basic vocabulary and the verb to be for the whole secondary school, without any hint of pronunciation.

We both used to live in a town only half an hour to the border to the north of Peru, so there were pretty many tourists from overseas, passing by, then we found out that like like singing and loved the sons of The Bee Gee, Barbra Streisand, and were fascinated by the movie Grease. So that we made our mind up and decided to study English as a majoring, for that reason I left my town and followed my dreams.

Once in college, the authors had chosen to study English as a foreign Language, in a country where English is taught as EFL. However, and to our surprise, Phonetics was not included within the contents of any syllabi. We knew that English pronunciation was difficult not only for us, but for all of our classmates, whose mother tongue is Castellano. We made our choice to learn pronunciation on our own, by greeting the native speakers who travelled from Loja to Vilcabamba. We started by watching their mouths to try to imitate what they uttered. It worked for both of us. So that, we used this way and started teaching our learners a pronunciation through imitation and repetition. With the time, we researched about an approach to learn pronunciation, namely "the imitative intuitive approach" We were not wrong, at all.

The English language is considered a language of great prestige for an endless number of reasons, including those people speaking it as a foreign language in the world, its common use in various areas of life, and the growing need for it in the labor market. In consequence, the English language has become the language of many branches and areas; and one of the most important subjects in basic, middle, and higher education (Al-Ghasab, 2022).

In Ecuador, the English subject is mandatory, since the second grade of basic education, since 2016. However, not all state schools have an English teacher in the classroom, since most of English teacher do no hold the respective certificate which qualify them to get a tenure within the Ecuadorian teaching

system. The aspirants who hold a bachelor degree, have to submit an international certificate of English, in this regard, the Ministry of Education has facilitated various kind of international B2 tests. it does not matter the University or enterprise these tests are issued from.

The English language teacher is considered not only in Ecuador, but all over the world, the backbone of teaching and the process of learning and teaching in both EFL and ESL because it is considered the link between the national English curriculum and students, which the teacher conveys with his experience, language competence, and skills during the teaching-learning process, evaluation, and the use of the appropriate method (Al-Ghasab, 2022).

The English teacher shall manage not only the approaches of methods to teach the language itself, there is a very important issue he needs to know, master and discriminate: the sounds of English, he will be the model of their learners, because students just parrot what they hear from their teacher, so he has a twofold responsibility: to know how to integrate the receptive and productive skill as long as to deal with activities to achieve this goal.

After 30 years of teaching English, our English is quite better than it was before when were teenagers, now our skilled imitation way was improved by another focus, the *Linguistic analytic Approach* which has assured a better learning of utterance of sounds, where details on the manner and point of articulation is given. In this way, students have an ideal tool to overcome the obstacles we found a way to hold an intelligible pronunciation of English.

This class-text is designed to make the journey of learning and teaching English pronunciation clear, practical, and enjoyable. It takes readers step by step through the sounds of English—consonants, vowels, voiced and unvoiced sounds, silent letters, and clusters—while also exploring the bigger picture of how we speak through intonation, stress, rhythm, and connected speech. With the help of the IPA and simple examples like minimal pairs, learners can see how even small differences in sound change meaning. More importantly, the focus is on being understood (intelligibility) rather than trying to sound "perfect" or completely native. Teachers will find guidance on how to support learners effectively, and students are encouraged to take an active role in their own progress. Above all, this book highlights why pronunciation matters: it is the key to confident, clear, and successful communication in English.

UNIT 1: TEACHING AND LEARNING PRONUNCIATION

The road is difficult, not because of the deep river and the high mountains that bar the way, but because we lose heart when we think of the river and the mountain.

Vietnamese saying

Teaching and Learning Pronunciation

One of the biggest problems EFL learners face is the hindrance to utter words in English. Some authors stated that pronunciation holds an indispensable role within English communication. It refers to how people produce the sounds to get the meaning through, when people speak the language. On the other hand, another author remarks that Pronunciation relates to tolerable standards of sounds rhythm for different words (Zemanova, 2007). Most of authors coincide in declaring pronunciation as the tangible production of speech sounds, stressing how the hearer grasps the sounds produced Richards and Schmidt (2013) In simple terms pronunciation is how the sounds are uttered verbally to label the differences between words.

Some authors even have sustained that pronunciation shall be considered as an integral component of communication rather than an isolated drill (Akyüz, 2017) that is what hinders some teachers to include pronunciation within their lesson plans, besides the integration of receptive and productive skills, grammar and vocabulary. This teaching strategy has been neglected by the majority of English teachers in Ecuador.

> No matter how long history does pronunciation have in language teaching, it has been a neglected skill by language teachers according to some researchers (ÜMRAN, 2018).

Intelligible pronunciation of users of English will have effect on productive communication. Therefore, English pronunciation, including understanding the English phonological system is very essential for students leaning English as a second language or a foreign language. The former applied to state school and the latter to the private ones (Dandee & Pornwiriyakit, 2022). Speakers need to utter words clearly and correctly, and listeners must be able to analyze and decode the speech that they heard, according to phoneme and phonological system to interpret the message correctly.

Clear pronunciation is crucial in job interviews, presentations, and international communication, making it an essential skill for career growth and academic success.

Proper pronunciation is critical for several reasons:

1. **Communication Clarity**: Accurate pronunciation ensures that spoken messages are understood by listeners, reducing the risk of misunderstandings. English is not like Spanish the former is well spelled whereas the latter is badly spelled

2. **Social Integration**: Clear pronunciation aids learners in integrating into English-speaking communities, enhancing social interactions. The teacher must have an accurate pronunciation of English and provide activities that let learners can enjoy as if they were living in an English spoken country within the classroom.
3. **Professional Opportunities**: Proficiency in pronunciation can improve job prospects and professional communication in global markets.
4. **Confidence Building**: Mastery of pronunciation boosts learners' confidence in using English, encouraging more active participation in conversations.

Many learners struggle with English pronunciation due to differences between their native language and English. Explicit pronunciation instruction helps them overcomes these challenges. Learners often face specific challenges in mastering English pronunciation, including:

1. **Unfamiliar Sounds**: Sounds not present in the learner's native language can be difficult to articulate.
2. **Stress Patterns**: Incorrect word or sentence stress can lead to misunderstandings.
3. **Rhythm and Intonation**: Misplaced intonation patterns can alter the intended meaning of sentences.
4. **Phoneme Substitution**: Replacing difficult sounds with more familiar ones from the native language, leading to accented speech.

What is Teaching Pronunciation?

Teaching pronunciation is an essential aspect of language instruction, particularly for learners of English as a second or foreign language. Effective pronunciation teaching not only enhances communication but also builds learners' confidence, making them more proficient in both speaking and listening skills.

English Pronunciation learning has increased the last decades, teachers are involved in two-fold dilemma; whether to teach what they know (background) or to let students learn what they want (really need) currently, there are several teaching materials that have been produced to be used in teaching the way learners can utter the foreign language.

Many students are confused as to appreciate the difference between accents, and they often speak with a mixed of accents perplexing somewhat a native speaker and the communication cannot go through. Languages have different accents. They are pronounced differently by people from different geographical places and diverse social classes, ages, backgrounds all over the world (Roach, 2000). Teaching English pronunciation has then varieties, dialects. The problem raises when the teacher does not how to adjust to any of those varieties. On the one hand he is the model students see to imitate what

he says, on the other hand teacher does not manage strategies on how to make those differences to be noticed.

Coskun categorized the sociolinguistic profile of English within three concentric circles as follow: The inner circle which refers to the traditional basis of English spoken by native speakers. The outer circle refers to those who speak English as a second language and the expanding circle which comprises countries where English is spoken by non-native speakers of English (Coskun, 2010)

> The ordinary person is usually not aware that there is something called phonetics. The teacher of foreign languages, on the other hand, is very well aware of the existence of phonetics; and he often does not like it. He is always being told, in books of method and at training courses, that is essential for him to be a phonetician; and this is also something that he does not like very much (Raaja, 1969).

On the other hand, there are learners who do want to learn English, and set high goals, to have a native-like pronunciation and shall not be possible, unless they make their best on their own. Unfortunately, most of learners, study in public schools where the teaching of English is compulsory, the time devoted to the process is not enough for them to grasp the basic structure of the foreign language.

Pronunciation refers to the way in which a language is spoken, encompassing the production of sounds, stress, rhythm, and intonation. It involves the correct articulation of phonemes—the smallest units of sound—as well as the suprasegmental features like stress and intonation, which contribute to the natural flow of speech.

As Kenworthy (1997) says the views teachers hold about the abilities and limitations of learners are bound to influence the priorities and schedule of events in any teaching program they devise for students. Teaching English pronunciation is essential for effective communication, confidence, and language comprehension. Here are key reasons why it matters:

- Uttering words correctly ensures that listeners understand the speaker without confusion.
- Poor pronunciation can lead to misunderstandings even if grammar and vocabulary are correct.
- Learners who practice pronunciation become better at distinguishing sounds in spoken English, improving their listening comprehension.
- Clear pronunciation gives learners the confidence to speak without fear of being misunderstood, making interactions smoother in social, academic, and professional settings.
- Good pronunciation helps learners speak more naturally and at a comfortable pace, making conversations flow better.
- Pronouncing words correctly helps learners remember them better and recognize them in written texts, aiding overall language acquisition.

Teaching pronunciation is a dynamic and integral part of language education that requires a multi-faceted approach. By addressing common challenges and using effective strategies, educators can significantly improve their learners' pronunciation skills, leading to better overall communication and language proficiency.

The Teacher's and Learners' Role

The Role of the Teacher

A teacher must understand that English pronunciation regardless learners' culture, beliefs, and backgrounds, it has to be the goal for them to reach, without any prejudices and stereotypes. Pronunciation has an instrumental function, teachers have to encourage their learners to want to success pronunciation, learner should have big expectations. On the one hand, when they hold intelligible utterance, they become into users of English, they are better educated people to get better jobs, more gates are opened to them. So English teachers ought to use the foreign language as a medium of instruction in both secondary and superior education.

In the process of learning pronunciation, both teachers and learners have distinct but complementary roles. The effectiveness of pronunciation instruction relies heavily on the active participation and interaction between the teacher and the learner. Understanding these roles can enhance the learning experience and ensure that pronunciation goals are met.

1. **Helping Learners to Produce Sounds:** This is probably the hardest task of a teacher, to make learners to produce voiced and voiced-less sounds. First of all, teachers need to make sure that their students feel relaxed and expected to succeed.
2. **Providing Exposure**: Introducing students to a variety of English accents and dialects to build listening versatility. At the time the teacher motivates them to use the language outside of the class with their neighbors.
3. **Creating a Safe Environment**: Encouraging learners to practice without fear of making mistakes. The teacher is up against strong resistance, prejudice and myths.
4. **Providing Constructive Feedback** Constructive feedback is crucial for learners to identify and correct their pronunciation errors. Teachers must offer timely and specific feedback to help learners refine their skills. to help students refine their listening and pronunciation skills.
5. **Utilizing Tools and Resources**: Employing audio tools, phonetic exercises, and visual aids to support learning.
6. **Continuous assessing of progress:** Teacher must need to know what they are teaching, and how well they are progressing in mastering and identifying contracted forms, weak and strong stress of simple words.

7. **Facilitator of Learning**: The teacher acts as a guide, providing the necessary tools, resources, and strategies for learners to improve their pronunciation.
8. **Model of Correct Pronunciation**: Teachers serve as the primary source of correct pronunciation for learners to emulate. Consistent exposure to accurate pronunciation helps learners develops their phonetic skills.
9. **Creator of a Supportive Environment**: A positive and encouraging classroom atmosphere motivates learners to practice and make mistakes without fear of judgment. This is essential for building confidence.
10. **Designer of Engaging Activities**: Teachers must create activities that make learning pronunciation fun and interactive, using games, songs, and role-plays to maintain learner interest.

The Role of the Learner

The role of learners in acquiring English pronunciation is crucial, as they are active participants in the learning process. Developing clear and accurate pronunciation requires consistent effort, awareness, and the use of effective strategies. Below is a thorough breakdown of the learners' role in learning English pronunciation:

1. Awareness and Self-Monitoring

- Learners must develop awareness of their own pronunciation and identify areas where they struggle.
- Self-monitoring involves actively listening to one's speech and comparing it to native or proficient speakers.
- Recording and playback techniques help learners recognize errors and track progress.

2. Listening and Imitation

- Exposure to native and fluent English speakers helps learners internalize the correct pronunciation.
- Watching English movies, listening to audiobooks, podcasts, and songs enhances listening skills.
- Shadowing (repeating after a speaker) helps improve pronunciation and rhythm.

3. Understanding Phonetics and Phonology

- Learning the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) can aid in recognizing how sounds are produced.
- Understanding concepts like voiced vs. voiceless sounds, aspiration, and stress patterns improves pronunciation.
- Awareness of phonemes (distinct sounds) and allophones (sound variations) helps in distinguishing similar sounds (e.g., /ɪ/ vs. /iː/ in *bit* vs. *beat*).

4. Practicing Pronunciation Drills

- Learners should practice minimal pairs (words differing by one sound, e.g., *ship* vs. *sheep*) to refine distinctions.
- Tongue twisters help improve fluency and articulation (e.g., *She sells seashells by the seashore*).
- Repetition exercises reinforce correct pronunciation and muscle memory.

5. Understanding Stress, Intonation, and Rhythm

- Learners must recognize word stress (e.g., *record* as a noun vs. *record* as a verb).
- Sentence stress and rhythm affect meaning and comprehension.
- Intonation (rising and falling pitch) influences how a sentence is perceived (e.g., questions vs. statements).

6. Using Technology and Resources

- Online dictionaries provide audio examples of word pronunciation.
- There exist several tutorials about anything regarding to pronunciation
- Pronunciation apps (e.g., ELSA Speak, Forvo) and AI speech recognition tools give instant feedback.
- Language exchange platforms allow practice with native speakers.

7. Confidence-Building Exercises, Such as Role-Playing or Public Speaking, Help Reduce Anxiety

- Accepting mistakes as part of the learning process fosters continuous improvement.
- Communicate with his peers inside and outside the class
- To laugh with his peers on their own mistakes rather than laugh at someone else.
- Pronunciation improvement requires daily practice and long-term dedication.
- Setting realistic goals (e.g., mastering specific sounds each week) keeps learners motivated.
- Celebrating small improvements encourages continuous learning.

8. Receiving and Implementing Feedback

- Constructive feedback from teachers, native speakers, or pronunciation tools helps pinpoint areas of improvement.
- Learners should be open to corrections and actively incorporate feedback into their practice.
- Teachers must be careful when address a student about their utterances failing.

9. Consistency and Perseverance

By taking an active role in these areas, learners can significantly enhance their English pronunciation and communicate more effectively by working with a partner; then, mixing these pairs and make groups, then

make new groups to continue to use the foreign language by having fun.

Examples and Exercises

1. **Minimal Pair Drills**: Practice with words that differ by only one sound (e.g., “pit” vs. “bit”).
2. **Stress and Intonation Activities**: Use sentence strips and mark stress and intonation patterns for practice.
3. **Role-Playing**: Engage learners in dialogues to practice pronunciation in contextualized speech.
4. **Recording and Playback**: Have students record their speech and compare it to native speakers.

The International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA)

There are several phonetic alphabets, of which the most widely used is the IPA International Phonetic Alphabet. These phonetic symbols represent sounds. They are not letters. Therefore, they cannot be capitalized or varied. Many sounds have almost the same figure as a letter. However, not all letters have their own sound. This is the case of the letter “c” and “g” which are called double-valued consonants (Kenworthy, 1997) since they need another phoneme to represent it, when forming syllables: ca, co, cu /k/: or ge, gi /ʤ/. For example: the Spanish word casa is transcribed /ˈkasa/ and the word cero /ˈseɾo/. The phonemes or sounds usually go between slashes / /, to indicate that it is not a conventional writing but phonemic scripts.

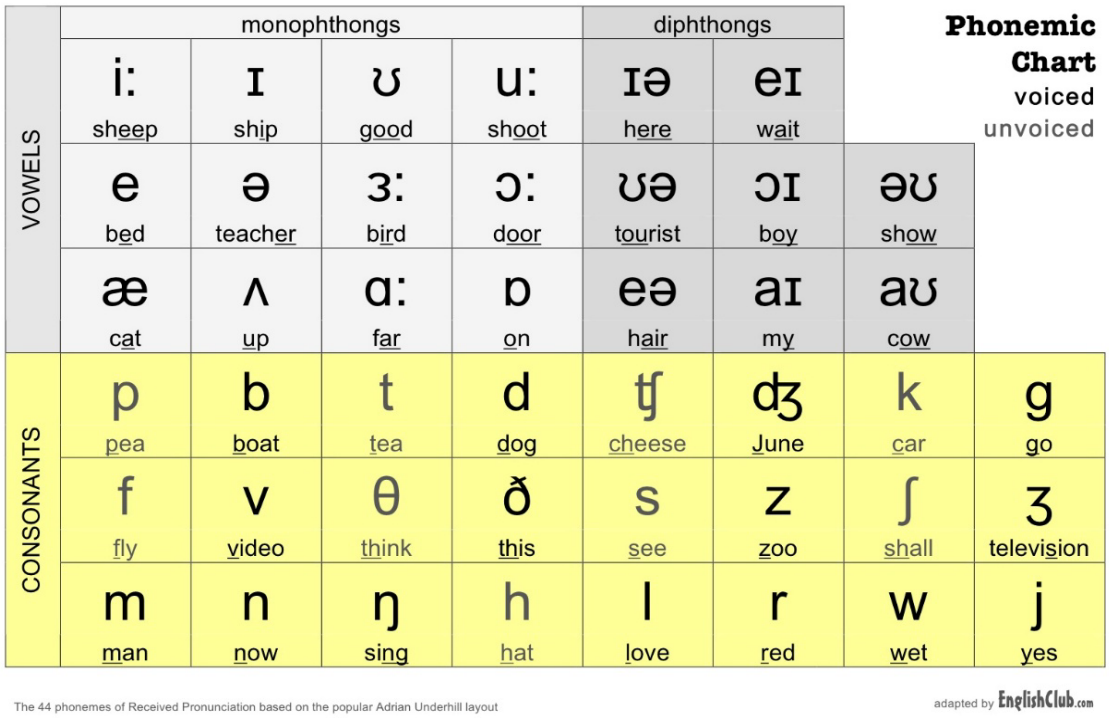
The group of phonetic or phonological transcription symbols serves to present the sounds of all languages. However, for each specific language a subset of the available symbols is used. It is a good idea to start by introducing some sounds with those symbols that are quite similar to the letters of the alphabet

David Abercrombie says that is not necessary for a teacher to be a phonetician, regardless this fact the English teacher needs an understanding of on how the vocal organs work, and how speech might be best uttered and explained, in this case, most of Ecuadorian English teachers share the L1 with their learners. On the other hand, the teacher needs to hold a sensitive hearing of vocal organs in order to able to produce or imitate English sounds. The advantages of our current learners are multiple, for the internet is of a great help for them to visualize transcriptions and hear in real time how words are uttered, something that old folks did not have four decades ago (Nasr & Knight, 1987).

This is the only way to help leaners to develop abilities to understand spoken language, and be able to be understood by the hearer, that is to get the purpose of real communication, an issue of coding and decoding (Akyüz, 2017).

Figure 1.

International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA)



Note: Taken from: International Phonetic Association (1999)

Learners should know how to use the **International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA)** because it is a powerful tool that helps them understand and master English pronunciation more effectively. Here are several reasons why IPA is beneficial for English learners:

1. Accurate Pronunciation of Words

- English spelling is not always phonetic (e.g., *though*, *tough*, and *through* are spelled similarly but pronounced differently).
- IPA provides a clear and consistent way to represent sounds, eliminating confusion caused by irregular spelling.
- For example, the word *knight* is written in IPA as /naɪt/, showing the silent *k* and *gh*.

2. Understanding English Sounds (Phonemes)

- English has 44 phonemes (distinct sounds), and IPA helps learners recognize and differentiate them.
- Many learners struggle with similar sounds (e.g., *ship* /ʃɪp/ vs. *sheep* /ʃiːp/).
- By using IPA, they can see the exact difference in pronunciation.

3. Improving Listening and Speaking Skills

- Knowing IPA allows learners to **decode** unfamiliar words by looking them up in dictionaries.
- It helps in **listening comprehension**, as learners can better distinguish similar sounds.
- Speaking becomes clearer because learners can focus on producing the correct sounds instead of relying on misleading spelling.

4. Mastering Word Stress and Intonation

- IPA includes stress markers (ˈ for primary stress, ˌ for secondary stress).
- Example: *banana* → /bəˈnænə/ (stress on the second syllable).
- Understanding stress patterns helps learners pronounce words naturally and with correct rhythm.

5. Knowing IPA helps learners adapt to different pronunciations depending on their goals.

6. Avoiding Fossilized Pronunciation Mistakes

- Many learners develop bad pronunciation habits that are hard to correct later.
- IPA helps prevent these mistakes early by providing a precise guide to correct pronunciation, for example the different position of organs of speech when producing the sounds of /b/ and /v/. One of the biggest problems for Spanish speakers. This is what Kenworthy (1997) and Gerald (2000) sustained in their books.

7. Better Use of Online and Offline Dictionaries

- Most dictionaries provide IPA transcriptions for words, making it easy for learners to check pronunciation.
- Without IPA knowledge, learners might struggle to understand these transcriptions and rely on incorrect assumptions.

8. Facilitates Self-Learning and Independence

- Learners don't always have access to a teacher or native speakers for pronunciation help.
- With IPA, they can independently check and practice correct pronunciation.

9. Helpful for Learning Other Languages

- IPA is not just for English—it's a universal system used for all languages.
- If learners know IPA, they can apply it when learning new languages with different sounds.

While learning IPA may take some time initially, it provides **lifelong benefits** for pronunciation, listening, and speaking. It helps learners overcome English's irregular spelling and pronunciation rules, making them more confident and effective communicators. Would you like guidance on learning IPA or practicing with specific words?

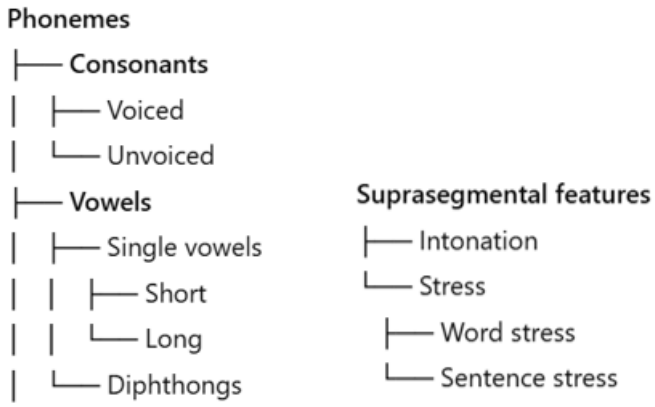
Helping Learners Hear

All over the world there are people who speaks or understand at least one language other than their own. In Ecuador, whose position is as poor level of English as a Foreign language, English first started to be including within the curriculum by the late 1950's, but the numbers of teachers who master the language was very reduced. This another story so far. A mother tongue is experienced by children when they are very young. At this point they shall be taught some specifications on parts of speech, for them not to have to struggle with when they learn a second language, and in this case this second language is mandatory for them to learn (Alimemaj, 2021).

When the English teacher of EFL refers to pronunciation, he has to keep in mind that there are various components and characteristics on this issue, such as: word stress, sentence stress, elision and assimilation of sounds. The teacher has the responsibility to develop in their students a concern for pronunciation (Jahan, 2011) English pronunciation include segmental and supra-segmental features.

Figure 2.

Phonology components in English language



Note: Own elaboration

Segmental features such as consonants (voiced and unvoiced) vowels (single and diphthongs) as well as the suprasegmental intonation and stress, become the priorities in pronunciation teaching. It is fundamental that teacher gives accurate models of utterance of the foreign language. On the one hand, teachers should know the basics of the IPA, he must be able to discriminate voiced and unvoiced consonants, to deal with the long and short vowels, compare the production of their leaners' mother tongue and contrast with the new sounds. On the other hand, teachers can make their learners imitate the words they say. Auerbach (2016) states that there is not pertinent for teachers let learners use their L1 indiscriminately, but as the process of involvement of the new sounds is being used, they can provide tasks where receptive and productive skills can be integrated with familiar topics and simple reading and

writing activities as well as including telling their partners their likes and dislikes (Shinga & Pillay, 2021).

English pronunciation shall not be taught in their learners L1, when sounds are being compared either in the manner and the place of articulation, is acceptable, for example when teaching the vowels (in Spanish there are five vowels and five sounds for each) whereas English vowels 12 singe vowels, five long and seven shorts.

Helping learners hear accurately is a foundational step in teaching pronunciation. Auditory discrimination—the ability to perceive and differentiate sounds—is critical for mastering pronunciation. Teachers play a vital role in guiding learners through the process of improving their listening skills, which in turn enhances their ability to produce sounds correctly. Teachers are instrumental in developing learners' auditory skills. Their responsibilities include:

Resources and Activities

1. **Audio Materials:** Use recordings of native speakers, focusing on different accents and speech speeds to challenge learners.
2. **Phonetic Apps:** Leverage apps like "Speechling" or "Pimsleur" for interactive pronunciation practice.
3. **Interactive Games:** Employ games like "Pronunciation Bingo" where students listen for specific sounds and mark them on their cards.
4. **Visual Aids:** Use diagrams showing mouth and tongue positioning to aid in understanding sound production.

Pronunciation Goals

Setting clear pronunciation goals is a critical component of language learning. These goals provide a roadmap for both teachers and learners, ensuring focused and structured progress in mastering the sounds, rhythm, and intonation of a new language. Understanding and establishing realistic pronunciation objectives can significantly enhance the effectiveness of language instruction and learning outcomes.

1. **Clarity and Comprehensibility:** The primary aim of pronunciation goals is to ensure that learners can communicate clearly and be easily understood by native and non-native speakers alike.
2. **Confidence Building:** Achieving pronunciation milestones boosts learners' confidence, encouraging them to participate more actively in conversations.
3. **Professional and Academic Success:** In many professional and academic settings, clear pronunciation is essential for effective communication and success.
4. **Social Integration:** Proper pronunciation aids in social interactions, helping learners integrate better into English-speaking environments.

Some Case studies have been researched where EFL students have had to struggle with pronunciation issues:

1. **Sudan – Secondary School Learners:** A study of higher secondary school students in Northern Kordofan, Sudan, found that learners often produced incorrect English pronunciations due to teaching-related challenges. The researcher, Zahir Ahmed, recommended implementing pronunciation strategies and setting up language laboratories to enhance phonetic practice and intelligibility. (CCSE, s.f.)
2. **Indonesia – Young Learners:** In SDN 06 Ciputat (sixth-grade students), researchers observed that teachers effectively used drills—such as repetition and chain drills—and visual aids (realia) for pronunciation practice. Despite some inconsistencies in using visual materials, these approaches proved beneficial for young learners. (UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, s.f.)
3. **Malaysia – Low-Proficiency Students:** A case study targeting low oral proficiency Malaysian students identified common mispronunciation areas: pure short and long vowels, diphthongs, plosives, fricatives, affricates, silent letters, and the -ed ending. Researchers emphasized the significance of pronunciation for job performance and employability (Universiti Malaysia Pahang Al-Sultan Abdullah, s.f.).

Types of Pronunciation Goals

1. **Short-Term Goals:** These include mastering specific sounds or intonation patterns within a set period. For example, focusing on correctly pronouncing the /th/ sound either voiced (mother) or unvoiced (thank)
2. **Long-Term Goals**: These involve broader objectives, such as achieving a near-native accent or maintaining correct stress and rhythm in connected speech over time.
3. **Functional Goals:** These are practical objectives focused on ensuring that learners can be understood in specific contexts, such as ordering food or giving a presentation.

Setting Pronunciation Goals

1. **Assessment of Current Level:** Begin by assessing the learner's current pronunciation abilities using diagnostic tools such as recordings or pronunciation tests.
2. **Identifying Key Areas of Improvement:** Focus on the most challenging sounds or patterns for the learner's language background.
3. **SMART Goals:** Pronunciation goals should be Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound to ensure clarity and accountability.

Strategies to Achieve Pronunciation Goals

1. **Regular Practice:** Encourage consistent practice through daily exercises focusing on challenging sounds or patterns.
2. **Use of Technology:** Leverage apps and online resources that provide instant feedback on pronunciation.

3. **Listening and Mimicking:** Expose learners to native speech and have them mimic pronunciation to improve accuracy.
4. **Feedback and Correction:** Provide constructive feedback regularly to help learners refine their pronunciation.
5. **Peer Practice:** Engage learners in peer activities where they can practice and correct each other's pronunciation in a supportive environment.
6. **Pronunciation Journals:** Have learners maintain a journal documenting their daily practice, challenges, and improvements in pronunciation.
7. **Role-Playing:** Create scenarios where learners practice pronunciation in context, such as a job interview or a casual conversation.
8. **Phonetic Transcription:** Use the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) to help learners understand the precise pronunciation of words.
9. **Intonation Drills:** Practice rising and falling intonation patterns in questions and statements through repetition and feedback.

Collaborative Strategies for Teachers and Learners

1. **Interactive Lessons:** Conduct lessons that involve both teacher and learner in active dialogue, ensuring continuous practice and immediate feedback.
2. **Peer Learning:** Encourage learners to work in pairs or groups to practice pronunciation, allowing them to learn from each other and provide mutual support.
3. **Use of Technology:** Utilize apps and software that offer pronunciation practice with immediate feedback, such as speech recognition tools.
4. **Cultural Immersion:** Promote activities that involve listening to and interacting with native speakers through media, conversations, and cultural exchanges.

Factors that Affect Pronunciation

All over the word, for those who are dealing on how uttering words, there are different reasons for them not to find a way to improve their hearing of English. Many authors such as Isaac, cited by Sesma and other authors (2022) said that teaching pronunciation is challenging not only because of the complexity in finding the right balance between form and meaning, but also for the historical exclusion of pronunciation teaching from the teaching of English as a second or foreign language. Gerald (2000) states that pronunciation has been the Cinderella of language teaching. This is what has happened in our schools for more than fifty years. UTMACH and the Pedagogía de los Idiomas Nacionales y Extranjeros degree, is the only one which has included this subject in the curricula of the majoring. Let us see some of the factors that hinder pronunciation learning.

1. **Native Language Influence**: Learners' first language can affect their ability to produce certain English sounds, leading to accented speech, because they have not received the appropriate instruction on how stress words, and the fact that tonic syllables are never put a symbol in English words as it goes

in Spanish. That is learners will never hear about syllable accentuation in *aguda*, *graves* or *esdrújulas*. English uses notation to identify the stress in words. another difficulty learners face is sometimes they generalize rules for pronunciation whereas English language gives too many meanings and categories for the same word. Laver said that when someone learns other language than their mother tongue, during the process the patterns of the first language interfere when learning the foreign language (Alimemaj, 2021).

2. **Age**: Younger learners often acquire pronunciation more easily than adults due to greater neural plasticity. It is common to hear that the younger the person is, the better they utter words. let us remember that it is easy for child to imitate sounds and since they are natural hearers, every single sound they grasp is learned in an accurate way, they know how to place his tongue and produce the sound without being told to. They become experts in using speech organs without having leaned in their mother tongue. However, when an adult is trying to learn English, they already have their linguistic scheme and it is quite hard to make them produce sounds they have not heard or made in their whole life, and problems will always arise.
3. **Lack of Well-trained Teachers:** Some teachers struggle with significant limitations as they are often required to meet the demands of a strict curriculum focusing on receptive and productive skills, of which pronunciation is typically viewed as only one small component. Failing to give sufficient attention to pronunciation, teachers seem not to understand how positive impact giving students pronunciation instruction. In Ecuador many teachers do not really have sufficient knowledge nor strategies on how to adequately assess pronunciation. On the one hand, they do not have training in identifying the features of pronunciation that cause communication breakdowns, On the other hand, they neglected their own concern on pronunciation matters because they are afraid to fail in the attempts to teach the characteristics of pronunciation instruction. Sanjay Kumar state that there exists communicative competence as well as pedagogical incompetence of teachers by the part of the teacher (Jha, 2013) that is why they make grammar or vocabulary the first reference when they plan their lessons and students need to see the full picture of the theory of pronunciation (Baker & Burri, 2016).
4. **The Amount of Exposure:** Students who are learning English as a Foreign language, shall be exposed to the L2 as much as if they were living in an English spoken environment, and this space is the classroom, the use of English as the teachers give instructions, making learners work either in pairs or in groups in the classroom language by using the target language. The frequency of practice can significantly impact pronunciation development. The use of

social nets is also advisable, they have to be asked to listen to stories, according to their level. There exists pretty much information on the internet, Students have to be told what link to use and be given feedback of their findings. Unfortunately, in Ecuador, the numbers of hours devoted to the teaching of English in basic education, is not enough to help learners reach the adequate level, it is almost impossible for a teacher to fulfill any improvement in two or three hours per class.

5. **Phonetic Ability:** Some learners have a natural ability for phonetic acquisition, while others may require more intensive practice. Here is the moment when a teacher has to take advantage of the imitative and intuitive approach, Students do not necessarily require to know much about the IPA signs and sounds. Just to prepare themselves to have an intelligible pronunciation for their students to parrot and produce sounds without being told of voiced or voiceless phonemes. For this teacher of pronunciation need as follow: a good grounding in theoretical knowledge, practical classroom skills, access to good ideas for classroom activities and manage intelligible pronunciation skill (Gerald, 2000).

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UNIT 2: THE SOUNDS OF ENGLISH

> *Persistence and resilience only come from having been given the chance to work through difficult problems.*
>
> Gever Ty

The Sounds of English

When we refer to "the sounds of English" there are so many facts that cross our mind related to voiced and unvoiced sounds, long and short sounds, intonation, stress, elision assimilation, and so on. The Questions is "how can a teacher help learners deal with such a big task? As regard to these question Roach (2000) states:

> When we speak to each other, the sounds we make, have to travel from the mouth of the speaker to the ear of the listener. We can capture everything that the listener hears in the form of a recording, and then measure whichever aspect of the signal that we want to know about (p.4).

English is as a struggling experience for Spanish speakers because it does not have correspondence between the spelling system and pronunciation system, which has been a great problematic issue to non-native learners of English, whose L1 in not a stress-timed language (Demirezen, 2021). Spanish on the other hand is easy to spell and read since letters are read in the order they are written.

What Learners Need to Know?

We have to recognize and help learner to do it as well that there are two main varieties of English and that they shall be able to deal with that, on the other hand, to select the approach to be used in order to make them differentiate and contrast the twofold varieties. We belong to a specific region in our countries, there are some regional variations regarding to the way people utter words. For example, in Ecuador, there is a region of the highlands where people seem to sing as they speak, the communication is not broken provided that they use their tongue properly with a singing variation.

As far as we know there two approaches for pronunciation instruction. The intuitive-imitative approach based on students' abilities to listen and imitate sounds, rhythm and stress of the target language, without telling any specific information. The Analytic-linguistic approach in which students are told about the IPA characteristic voiced and unvoiced sounds.

Vowel Sounds

There are twelve pure vowels in English. "They are called vocalic sounds" (Fitzpatrick, 1995). They are all voiced and may be single or combined (diphthongs and triphthongs) single vowel sounds may be short or long.

Figure 3.

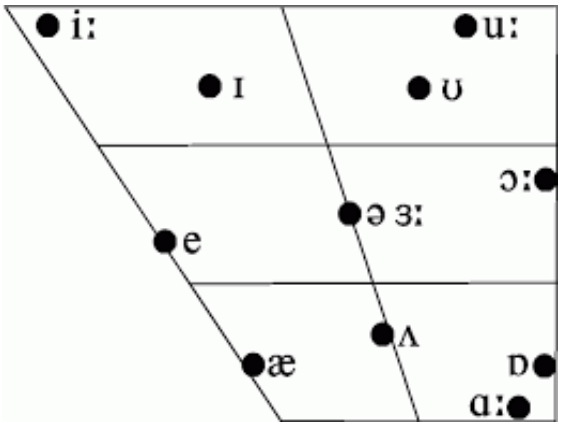
Short and long vowels sound

Short Vowel Sounds	**Long Vowel Sounds**
/ɪ/ as in big	/i:/ as in bead
/ʊ/ as in book	/u:/ as in food
/ə/ as in about	/ɜ:/ as in bird
/æ/ as in hat	/ɔ:/ as in horse
/ʌ/ as in run	/ɑ:/ as in dark
/ɒ/ as in dog	

Note: Own elaboration

Figure 4.

The International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) vowel quadrilateral.



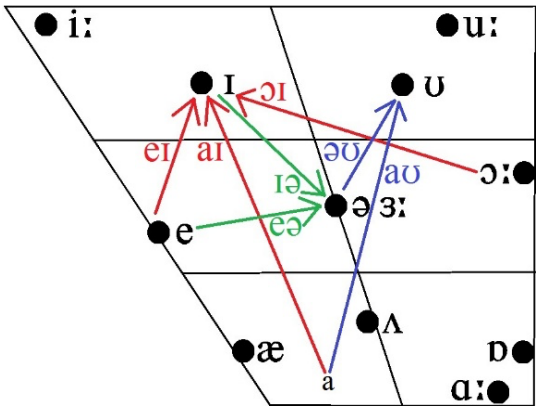
Note: Taken from (Ball M, 2010)

These sounds blend progressively into each other as our lips and tongue migrate from one position to another.

Let us see the combination of vowels:

Figure 5.

Approximate positions for each of the above vowels within a vowel chart.



Note: Taken from (Ladefoged, P., 1996)

Diphthongs

A diphthong is defined as a gliding complex of sounds (two vowel sounds which run together) which begins with a vowel and ends with another one. Diphthongs are uttered the same as producing single vowels at the beginning and the end, because they are single units phonetically, the combination of two vowels make the lips and tongue migrate from the monophthong position to the other in order to combine the two sounds being produced (Fitzpatrick, 1995). These are the most common combination of vowels.

/eɪ/ as in take

/ɔɪ/ as in toy

/aɪ/ as in tie

/əʊ/ as in phone

/aʊ/ as in cow

/ɪə/ as in dear

/ʊə/ as in tour

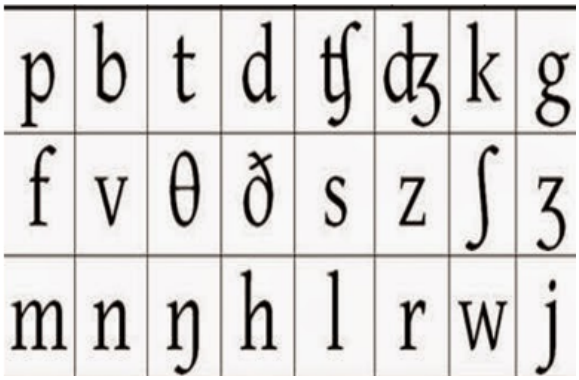
/eə/ as in pair

Consonant Sounds

Consonants are classified in voiced and unvoiced and are produced by positioning the organs of articulation (tongue, lips and teeth) Many of the IPA symbols are identical with the orthographic symbols used as the letters of ordinary spelling. This fortunate situation greatly facilitates greatly facilitates rapid learning of the alphabet in fact, as it can be seen in the chart the letters p, b, t, d, k, g, l,, m, n, r f, v, s, z h, whereas the phonemes are /p/, /b/, /t/, /d/, /k/, /g/, /l/, /m/, /n/, /r/ /f/, /v/, /s/, /z/ /h/, /w/. There are only 8 phonemes which students need to learn by heart.

Figure 6.

Reference of Spanish alphabet and International Phonetic Alphabet



Note: Own elaboration

We have already referred to the use of IPA and the hindrance students have with some unfamiliar sounds. Let us see a chart presented by Ortiz 2024. The struggling consonant phonemes for speaker of other languages.

Figure 7.

Some difficulties in consonant phonemes

CONSONANT PHONEMES DIFFICULTIES						
Speakers of	/ʤ/	/ʧ/	/θ/	/ʃ/	/ð/	Source
Iranian			X		X	Saeli Hooman et al., 2021.
Italian	X		X		X	(Kenworthy, J. 1989) (Gerard, k. 2000).
Chinese		X		X	X	Wu, C. & Wang, P. 2020.
Spanish	X	X	X	X	X	(Kenworthy, J. 1989) (Gerard, k. 2000) (Febronia, L. 2020)
Turkish	X		X		X	Kenworthy, J. 1989
Arabic	X	X	X	X	X	(Yakout, K., & Hind Amel, M. 2019) (Jahara, S., & Abdelrady. A. 2021).
Greek	X		X	X		(Kenworthy, J. 1989) (Gerard, k. 2000).
French	X	X	X	X	X	(Kenworthy, J. 1989) (Gerard, k. 2000).

Note: Taken from: Ortiz (2024)

At this point we can see that the majority of Romance Language speakers are facing the same problems with some affricate and fricative sounds. There is where the EFL teacher need to reinforce, and help learners identify how the organs of speech can help them produce these sounds. This is not something new, it has been a problem that teachers of teachers have been facing their whole school life.

How to Approach Sound Work

Phonetics is a method for a teacher and not a subject to be taught. The teacher of pronunciation is dealing with approaches and activities that lead the student to grab little details of how to utter sounds, at this point and in this class, learners will be introduce with ways to face features of pronunciation, in a superior level (level 4th) they will be taught more details on what phonetics and phonology is. I like what Abercrombie, cited by Nasr and Knight, (1987) who stated the best way to attain ease and speed in speech in more important than the mastery of detail, in other words is more important to have something to pronounce than just having a good pronunciation (Nasr, 1987)

Minimal Differences

Minimal pairs are pairs of words that differ by only one sound, often used to highlight specific phonemes. In the case of the twelve English vowels, minimal pairs are pairs of words where only the vowel sound differs. *Sheep and ship, chip and cheap,* for example.

Introducing phonemic script involving the learner

Written English is just an approximant representation of spoken language, because in Phonetics transcription every symbol stands for only one sound. No capital letters, there are not silent letters, it is the written sound. Transcription is not only a written record of sounds of a spoken language. Both phonetic

transcription and spoken language are very similar. Phonetic transcription is like natural speech, because it is the way how the symbols sounds, how they are linked by using assimilation, elision, rhythm (connected speech). Let us see an activity used by Frank Fitzpatrick (1995) in his book A teacher's guide to practical pronunciation (see annexed section).

It is a good idea to start by introducing sounds where the symbols are identical or close to the letters of the alphabet in English. Teachers need to help their learners that the IPA will be useful for them not difficult to learn and student must be clear that they will work with sounds, for instance the phoneme /p/ which resembles as the grapheme "p" is uttered as one sound and not in the way we said the letter /pi/.

Figure 8.

The six more difficult phonemes.

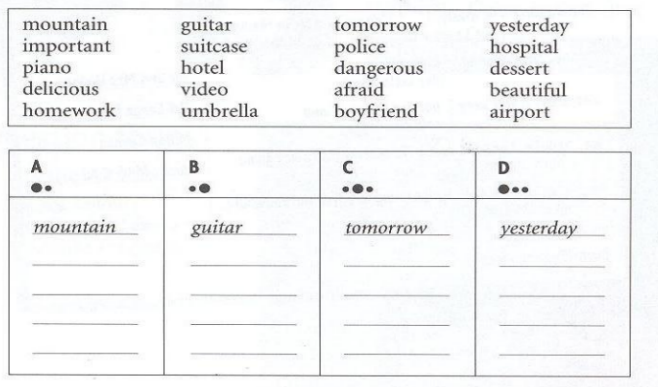
Easy Phonemes	**Difficult Phonemes**	**Scary Phonemes**
/p/ /b/ /t/ /d/ /k//g/ /f/ /v/ /s/ /z/ /m/ /n/ /h/ /l/ /r/ /w/	/θ/ /ʃ/ /ʤ/ /ð/ /ʧ/ /ʒ/	/ŋ/ /j/
Easy Graphemes	**Difficult Graphemes**	**Scary Graphemes**
p b t d k g k g f v s m n h l r w	th sh j th ch s/g	ing- ink, y

Note: Own elaboration

Matching sound and words

Figure 9.

Exercise where there are words with one, two and three syllables to classify.



mountain	guitar	tomorrow	yesterday
important	suitcase	police	hospital
piano	hotel	dangerous	dessert
delicious	video	afraid	beautiful
homework	umbrella	boyfriend	airport

A ●•	B •●	C •●•	D ●••
mountain	*guitar*	*tomorrow*	*yesterday*

Note: Taken from (Headway Elementary workbook 1998)

Task Two. The words in phonetic spelling have two syllables. Write the words and mark the correct stress.

1.- /ˈtræv.əl/ _____
2.- /ˈsuːt.keɪs/ _____
3.- /fəˈget/ _____
4.- /ˈfraɪ.tənd/ _____
5.- /ˈspeʃ.əl/ _____
6.- /ˈlɪs.ən/ _____
7.- /əˈraɪv/ _____
8.- /ˈnəʊ.tɪs/ _____
9.- /ˈfɒr.ən/ _____
10.- /bɪˈgɪn/ _____

Task Three. Here are some paired words in phonetic script. Look at the stress mark and transcribe the words.

1.- /ˈsuː.pə.vaɪz/ /ˈsuː.pə.vaɪ.zər/

_____ _____

2.- /ˈfəʊ.tə.grɑːf/ /fəˈtɑː.grə.fə-/

_____ _____

3.- /ˈmɜː.dər/ /ˈmɜː.dər.ər/

_____ _____

4.- /ˈɪn.tə.vjuː/ /ˌɪn.tə.vjuˈiː/

_____ _____

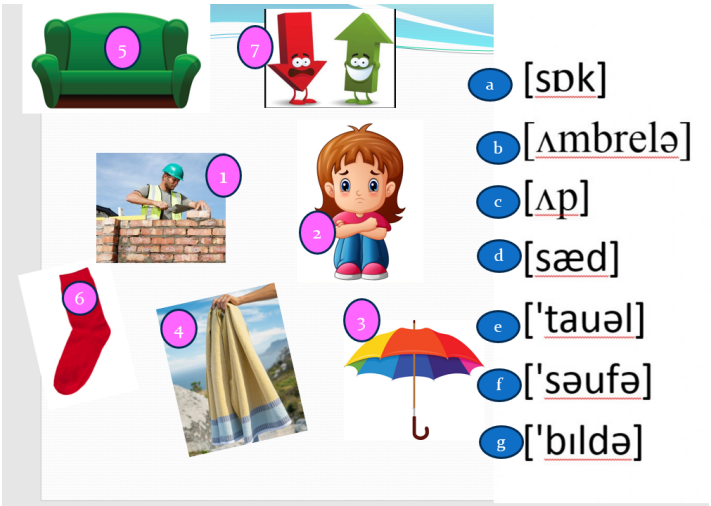
5.- /ɪkˈsplɔː.rər/ /ˌek.spləˈreɪ.ʃən/

_____ _____

Matching Transcription, Words and Pictures

It is a good idea to give pictures with the phonemes in one syllable words with the transcription, for example:

Figure 10. *An example of the activity.*

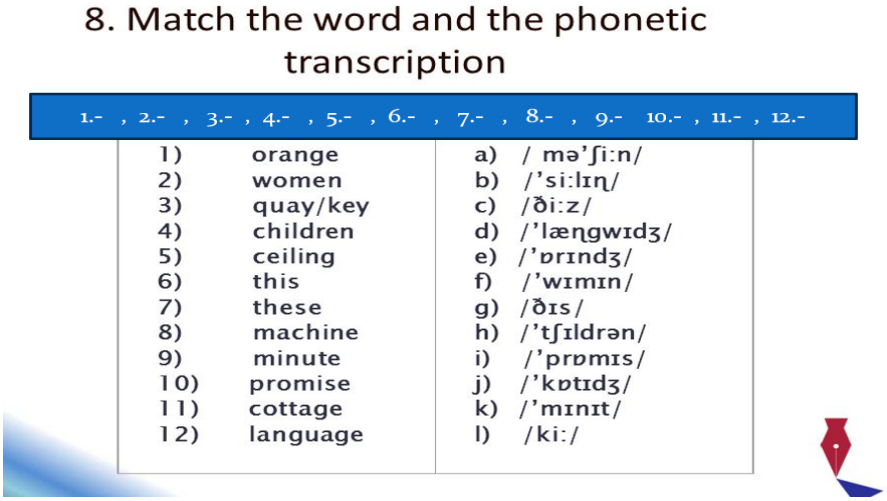


Source: Own elaboration

Task Four. The teacher selects and dictate some words from the chart:

Figure 11.

Words for dictation



Note: Own elaboration

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UNIT 3: ASPECTS OF PRONUNCIATION

Mastering others is strength, mastering yourself, is true power.

Lao Tzu

Building Awareness and Concern for Pronunciation

Both teachers and learners must have a commitment when deciding to study English as a foreign language. This is a warning for those who have make a choice to put over the shoulders the big responsibility of dealing with the segmental and suprasegmental characteristic of English pronunciation.

Raaja (1969) Brown (1992) have stated that many English teachers tend to avoid dealing with issues on pronunciation because of their lack of confidence, knowledge and skills to bear how the sounds of English work, that is the inconsistency or lack of correspondence between spelling and pronunciation.

A child learns his own language just by hearing what other people say, they start babbling their first sounds by imitation because that is the only reliable source of linguistic data according to Chomsky cited by (Li, Y & Zhang, G. 2016) they just need to grasp the vocabulary, this restated by (Bzavli, 2016) childtren are unaware that they are learning with the environment which they interact with.

> The second language is a long and complex undertaking. Your whole person is affected as you struggle to reach beyond the confines of your first language and into a new language, a new culture, a new way of thinking, feeling, and acting. Total commitment, total involvement, a total physical, intellectual. and emotional response are necessary to successfully send and receive messages in a second language (Brown, 1980).

The mother tongue is taught for about twelve years (in Ecuador) but at the end, our students, native speakers of Spanish, do not master its use properly, because there are different fields they still need to learn, unless one chooses a specific majoring, their vocabulary knowledge will be fluently mastered, but still there will be some words which will not be active in their lexical knowledge. Noone knows all the vocabulary of any language, not even the writers of dictionaries in the case of English, Spanish speakers are ruled by the Academy of Spanish Language The impact of pronunciation on listener perception and communication effectiveness hinders with common pronunciation myths and misconceptions techniques for self-monitoring and self- correction. Teachers must be tolerant with learners when making mistakes when Spanish interferes in oral activities. Once they are more fluent, learners can be persuaded to be more accurate when communicate their insights or ideas.

Aspects of Pronunciation

There several aspects of pronunciation that students need to pay attention to, for example: the segmental and suprasegmental aspects, where they need to make differentiation of the articulation between consonants and vowels sounds, then to recognize the intonation of simple syllables, word stress and sentence stress. This is a crucial element of communicative competence.

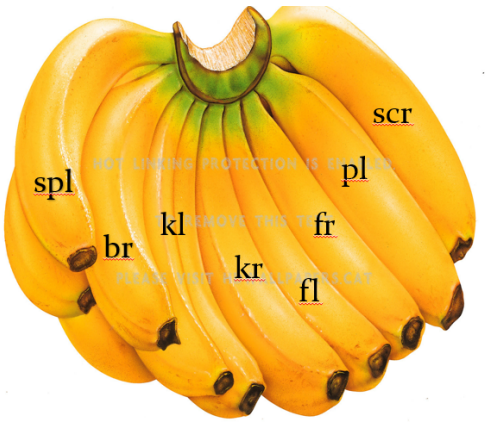
> Learners have to learn how to compare and discriminate against voiced and voiced-less sounds. How the organs of speech deal with each phoneme, etc. They need to identify the varieties of English accent (American or British). In Britain, accents are strongly tied to regional identity (e.g., London, Liverpool, Newcastle, Scotland). Received Pronunciation (RP) is often taught as the "standard," but it is spoken by a small minority. Learners are encouraged to be aware of different British accents. In the U.S., regional accents also exist (e.g., Southern, New York, Midwestern), but General American is often used in teaching because it is considered neutral and widely understood (Roach, 2009, p.45)

Combination of Sounds Consonant Clusters

Consonants are divided in regards to the manner of articulation in Plosive, fricative affricate sounds as well as nasal, lateral and approximant. The 21 consonants are sometimes put together in some words, which make a hindrance for learners to deal with the articulation of two, three and sometimes four consonants are positioned together in the same word:

Figure 12.

A banana clusters



Note: Own elaboration

This is what students know about a bananas cluster and then the consonant combination is taught:

Words with Two Consonants

Two Initial Consonants	Two Final Consonants
Frog	Lamp
Dream	Salt
Break	Hand
Flower	Fast

Spean	Black
Stole	Bind

Words with Three Consonants

Three Initial Consonants	Three Final Consonants
Script	Scripts
Spray	Desks
Split	Tasks
Stress	Chants
Thread	Pants

Words with Four Consonants

Four Final Consonants
Prompts
Attempts

Learner have difficulties with consonant clusters, especially those which do not match their mother tongue nor their pronunciation system. For Spanish speakers for example, they tend to add vowels either to the beginning or end of words. For example, in words like "*student*, *speak*, *school*". They put the vowel "e" to the beginning of the words (Kenworthy, 1997). Consonant cluster lessons must be careful taught since ear training practice is needed, most of the time it is a matter of articulation. Therefore, the teacher must be a good model of pronunciation for their student to produce and demonstrate the correct sound of words as many times as learners need, to straightforward succeed the imitation of those words.

Silent Consonants

Learners always complaint that they were taught how to pronounce every consonant in consonant clusters; later on, they are told that there are some consonants that are not uttered.

Within the learning process, learners face some difficulties in dealing with utterance of words. Ecuadorian students find difficulties in understanding.

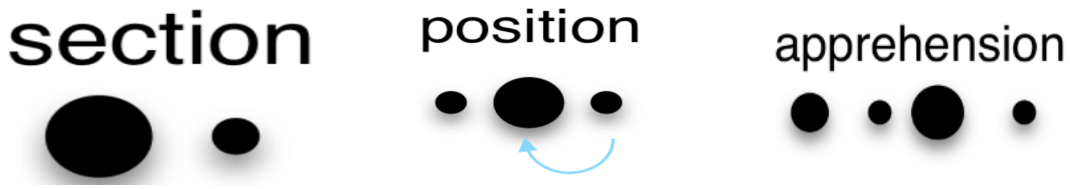
English pronunciation because the words they have heard or spoken are often different from their written forms. Teaching pronunciation for Indonesian students is quite difficult. The difficulties are due to the fact that irregular spelling of English offers faulty instructions to its pronunciation. This is also what happens with Ecuadorian students. From the statement, it is clear that the distance existing between pronunciation of words and their spelling creates a special hindrance. The Anglo-Saxon and the Romance languages English and Spanish, may seem to have quite similar phonological features; but this is not necessarily true. Even though the alphabet is nearly the same in both languages, there are extreme differences in pronunciation.

Shoebottom (2017) cited by (Silva, 2025) states that the phonological system of English differs a big deal from that of Spanish, mainly in several significant

segmental features such as vowel and consonant sounds as well as syllable and sentence stress. As a result, for English speakers, trying to learn to speak Spanish, at times may not be such an easy task to do because there are certain sounds that they do not have in their mother tongue and do not know how to deal with the IPA. In like manner for Spanish speakers, it becomes quite complicated to gain English as a second or foreign language due to the complexity of words utterances.

Word Stress and Weak Forms

The suprasegmentals of English pronunciation are quite difficult to explain learners, unless they are really committed to deal with these characteristics.
Linguist have created a nice way for pointing out stress, it helps learners to give emphasis to the stress syllable, this is called Notation, let us see some examples:
Figure 13.
Example of notation



Note: Own elaboration

When using the phonetic transcription, there is mark (') to show primary stress, which is the stronger degree of stress and another (.) at the bottom of the word to show secondary stress, which is the weaker of two degrees of stress when a word is uttered. Let us see the following examples.

Sentence Stress

It has been said that every word of two or more syllables, when said alone, has a stress on one of its syllables. This is called word-stress. However, in connected speech learners do not notice a stress on every word. Some words lack the perception of those stresses, especially when we talk quickly, However, other words do keep their stresses and these stressed syllables form what is linguists call sentence stress.
How does sentence stress work, then? Sentence stress has two main functions: Its first function is to indicate the important words in the sentence (from the point of view of grammar, meaning or the speaker's attitude). For example: I could `hardly `believe my `eyes. In this sentence the words "hardly", "believe" and "eyes" are stressed because they are important in meaning. The second function of sentence stress is to serve as the basis for the rhythmical structure of the sentence. Which mean the use of content and function words? The rhythm of English speech is produced by the recurrence of stressed syllables at more or less regular intervals of time and by the alternation of stressed and unstressed syllables (Cai, 2008).
Technology has changed the perception of teaching pronunciation, the internet is of a great help for teachers for making learners hear and recognize

sounds, if not When the teacher has to read or play the oral text, students ought to look at the script. The teacher should direct students to pay attention when he lowers, rises, loudness, pause, slowing of sounds and imitate silently as they are carrying on the task provided by the teacher.

Intonation

Intonation can be described as the way in which meaning is defined, that is to say our attitude or intension, in order to communicate by articulating sounds, raising or lowering the pitch, it is in constant change when we use our voice. Gerald (2000) says that intonation refers to the way the voice goes up and down in pitch whenever we utter sounds in speaking, throughout intonation we express our own thoughts and it strengthen us to understand what the interlocutor wants to mean. When people request anything, they often to ask questions, these questions can be either direct and indirect. Let us see some guidance with some statements provided by Gerald.

In information questions intonation falls. For example: What do you want? What time is it? Where do you come from? In Yes/no questions intonation rise. For example: Are you ok? Is it a pen? Do you like pizza? In question tags: expecting agreeing or disagreeing. You're American. Aren't you? They're friends, aren't they?

When we speak, we must have control of for important features, namely loudness, speed, voice quality and of course pitch, these four issues they are interconnected with stress, rhythm and enunciation. When they are combined they all at the moment of rise and fall of voice, the change of tune is what we call intonation (Thompson, 1981) Some teachers in Ecuador, do not notice that the way they vary their voice helps to keep any communication action active and let the interlocutor pay attention to those little details of intensity or attitude by part of the speaker. We can gain an idea of whether someone is interested, bored, being kind, teasing or speaking seriously. Spanish speakers do not follow a specific semantic order to ask a question. Is it the intonation that help them to be understood? For example: "*tú quieres* ***agua***" just by stressing the last syllable, Not necessarily use the form ¿quieres tú agua?

> In dealing with intonation in the language classroom, we need to examine the nature of these unconscious processes, bring them to the surface and show how we believe they work. To be of use to students, work on intonation in the classroom needs to focus on practice rather than theory (Gerald, 2000 p. 86)

Connected Speech

Connected speech refers to the continuous and fluid manner in which native speakers of English pronounce words in rapid, natural speech. Unlike the careful enunciation often used in formal speech, connected speech involves various processes that simplify the pronunciation of adjacent sounds. These processes include the blending, omission, reduction, and alteration of sounds, all of which serve to make speech faster, more efficient, and easier to articulate.

In rapid speech, individual words are not pronounced in isolation, but rather, their boundaries are less distinct, and the sounds are often modified.

Understanding connected speech is crucial for non-native learners because it significantly influences the natural rhythm, flow, and comprehensibility of spoken English. Students who are only familiar with slow, formal speech may struggle with the pace and the sound modifications in natural conversation.

- **Fluency and Naturalness:** Native speakers often use connected speech without consciously thinking about it. Non-native speakers, on the other hand, may focus on individual words and sounds, which makes their speech sound more formal and less natural.
- **Comprehension:** Recognizing features like elision, assimilation, and linkage is essential for understanding native speakers, especially in fast-paced, informal communication.
- **Pronunciation:** Understanding these connected speech processes allows learners to speak more fluently, improving their pronunciation and overall communication.

Key Features of Connected Speech

Connected speech manifests in several ways. The main features that shape the sound of natural spoken English are: Elision, Assimilation and Linkage

Each of these features simplifies pronunciation and ensures smoother, faster speech, but they can make it difficult for learners to understand and replicate. Let's explore each of these features in detail.

Sound Substitution

Definition: Replacing one sound with another in a word.

Example:

- **Word:** cat
- **Substitution:** Replace the /k/ sound with /h/
- **New Word:** hat

Another Example:

- **Word:** dog
- **Replace:** /d/ with /l/
- **New Word:** log

Sound Deletion

Definition: Removing a sound from a word.

Example:

- **Word:** stop
- **Deletion:** Remove the /s/ sound
- **New Word:** top

Another Example:

- **Word:** plane
- **Remove:** /l/
- **New Word:** pane

Sound Insertion

Definition: Adding a sound into a word.

Example:

- **Word:** blue
- **Insertion:** Add /ə/ (a schwa sound) between /b/ and /l/
- **Result:** bəlu (as sometimes heard in early speech development)

Another Example:

- **Word:** athlete
- **Insertion:** Add /ə/ between /θ/ and /l/
- **New Pronunciation**: athəlete (a common mispronunciation)

Elision (Omission of Sounds)

Elision occurs when a sound is omitted from speech, often to facilitate smoother transitions between words or to make the pronunciation quicker and less effortful. This process is particularly common in fast, informal speech.

- **Key Characteristics of Elision:**

Elision usually happens with unstressed syllables, where sounds that are less important for the overall meaning of a sentence are omitted. Elision often occurs in consonant clusters (two or more consonants together) or in the middle of words where certain syllables are weakly stressed or completely unstressed. The sounds that are most likely to be omitted in connected speech are consonants (such as /t/, /d/, /n/) or weak vowels (such as /ə/, /ɪ/).

Types of Elision:

- ***Elision of Consonants:***

When two consonants are adjacent, one of them may be elided, particularly if it makes speech easier or faster.

Example 1: next day → /nɛks deɪ/

(The /t/ in “next” is elided because the following word begins with a consonant /d/ that is easier to pronounce without the /t/)

Example 2: handbag → /ˈhæmbæg/

(The /n/ sound is dropped because it is followed by a bilabial /b/, and producing both sounds can be awkward in rapid speech)

- ***Elision of Vowels:***

The weak vowel /ə/ (schwa) is especially prone to elision, as it is the least stressed sound in English and can be omitted in casual speech.

Example 1: a lot of → /ə lɒtəv/

(The /ə/ in "a" is elided, especially when the following consonant is voiced, as in the case of "lot of.")

Example 2: better → /ˈbɛtə/

(The second schwa /ə/ is elided, leading to a quicker and more natural pronunciation)

- ***Elision of /t/ and /d/:***

In many cases, /t/ and /d/ sounds are elided when they occur in unstressed syllables or when they are followed by sounds that are difficult to articulate.

Example 1: could you → /kʊdʒə/

(The /d/ sound is elided, and the /ʒ/ sound is inserted in the process, making the pronunciation smoother)

Example 2: want to → /wɒnə/

(The /t/ sound is omitted, leading to a much faster and more fluid pronunciation)

Auditory Discrimination: Focus on listening exercises where students must identify and mark the elided sounds in natural speech. This will help them become more attuned to the reductions and omissions that occur in spoken English.

Repetition and Drills: Start with short phrases where elision occurs, and have students repeat them in their most natural form. For example, begin with "next day" (/nɛks deɪ/) and gradually increase speed.

Contextual Practice: Give students sentences and have them practice saying them as naturally as possible, emphasizing the elided sounds.

Assimilation (Modification of Sounds)

Assimilation is the phenomenon where a sound changes to become more like a neighboring sound. This process occurs because the articulation of speech becomes easier when adjacent sounds share certain features, such as place of articulation or manner of articulation.

- **Key Characteristics of Assimilation:**
- Assimilation can affect both consonants and vowels.
- There are different types of assimilation, depending on which sound influences the other.
- Assimilation is a process that facilitates faster and more efficient speech by making transitions between sounds smoother.

Types of Assimilation:

- ***Progressive Assimilation:***

In progressive assimilation, a sound influences the sound that follows it, changing the latter. This type of assimilation is less common in English but still occurs.

Example 1: handbag → /ˈhæmbæɡ/

(The /n/ sound in "hand" is assimilated to the /m/ sound due to the following bilabial /b/)

- ***Regressive Assimilation:***

In regressive assimilation, the sound that comes before the modified sound is influenced. This is more common in English than progressive assimilation.

Example 1: good night → /ɡʊd naɪt/

(The /d/ sound changes to /tʃ/ because of the following /n/, and the nasal consonants influence each other)

Example 2: don't you → /dəntʃu/

(The /t/ sound is assimilated to /ʧ/ by the following /j/ sound)

- ***Reciprocal Assimilation:***

In reciprocal assimilation, both adjacent sounds modify each other to make the articulation more efficient.

Example 1: don't you → /dəntʃu/

(Both the /t/ and /j/ sounds influence each other, resulting in the /ʧ/ sound)

Teaching Assimilation:

Minimal Pair Practice: Present students with pairs of words that differ only in terms of assimilation (e.g., good night /ɡʊd naɪt/ vs. good night /ɡʊd naɪt/) and ask them to compare the sounds.

Contextualization: Have students listen to short, rapid dialogues and identify examples of regressive, progressive, and reciprocal assimilation. Follow up with discussions on how the sounds changed in each example.

Linkage (Connecting Sounds Between Words)

Linkage refers to how words are linked together in fluent speech. In rapid speech, the boundaries between words are often blurred, and sounds are connected in ways that help the speech flow smoothly. The primary reason for linkage is to avoid awkward pauses or breaks between words and to maintain the rhythm of the sentence.

- **Key Characteristics of Linkage:**

- Linkage can occur between consonant sounds and vowel sounds, as well as between vowel sounds.

- It occurs in both casual speech and formal settings, although it is more prominent in informal conversation.
- There are two main types of linkage: consonant-to-vowel linking and vowel-to-vowel linking.

Types of Linkage:

- ***Consonant-to-Vowel Linking:***

This type of linkage occurs when a word ends with a consonant sound, and the following word begins with a vowel sound. The final consonant of the first word is linked directly to the initial vowel of the next word.

Example 1: go on → /gəʊ wɒn/

Example 2: take it → /teɪ kɪt/

- ***Vowel-to-Vowel Linking:***

When two vowels occur next to each other, a glide sound like /j/ or /w/ is often inserted to facilitate the transition between them.

Example 1: I saw it → /aɪ sɔːr ɪt/ → /aɪ sɔːr jɪt/

Example 2: go on → /gəʊ wɒn/

- ***Linking /r/ (Especially in Non-Rhotic Accents):***

In non-rhotic accents, the /r/ sound is linked between words when the first word ends in /r/ and the following word starts with a vowel.

Example 1: far away → /fɑːr əweɪ/

Example 2: there is → /ðeər ɪz/

Teaching Linkage:

Pronunciation Drills: Have students practice connecting sounds by reading short dialogues with common linkage patterns. Emphasize the smooth transition between words to build fluency.

Listening and Shadowing: Play recordings of fast, natural speech, and have students "shadow" the speaker, mimicking the linkage of sounds.

Role-Play and Fluency Practice: Engage students in role-playing activities where they need to maintain the fluidity of speech, using linkage to connect words.

Mastering connected speech, including elision, assimilation, and linkage, is a crucial aspect of becoming fluent in spoken English. By understanding these features, students can significantly improve both their comprehension of native speakers and their ability to speak more naturally and fluidly.

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UNIT 4: INTELLIGIBILITY

When you have exhausted all possibilities, remember this: you haven't.

Thomas Edison

What is Intelligibility?

Intelligibility is frequently phonologically defined as being able to make difference when producing essential sounds such as long vowels from short vowels, in words such (book and food) It is not only to manage fluently and accurately words, a basic mastery of other aspects of language like grammar and vocabulary are also necessary. Learners' main goal must be to communicate in English with other people among these folks there are native speakers, many of these learners strive to hold a native-like pronunciation. This is not the requirement, they need to be understood and understand other, how can they do this. They just need to be intelligible to the other speakers, in other words intelligible pronunciation is crucial for mutual understanding, this means "Being understood by an interlocutor at a given time in a given situation" (Coskun, 2010, pg. 8)

There are two key principles in pronunciation teaching: the nativeness principle, aiming for native-like speech, and the intelligibility principle, focusing on being understood regardless of accent. The nativeness principle is problematic since most adult learners rarely achieve native-like proficiency and even strong accents can still be clear (Munro & Derwing, 1995). Thus, research has shifted toward intelligibility, defined as how well listeners understand a speaker's message (Munro & Derwing, 1995). A common measure is the percentage of words correctly transcribed by listeners. For example, Munro and Derwing (1995) and later Parlak (2010) had raters transcribe short speech samples, with intelligibility scores based on word-matching accuracy. The present study followed this method.

Tench in his book: Pronunciation skills cites Professor *David Abercrombie* who proposed an alternative for the majority of language learners of English; instead of perfection, he advocates *intelligibility:* " most language learners need no more than a comfortably intelligible pronunciation which can get the meaning through with little or no conscious effort on the part of the listener (Paul, 1981).

Intelligibility refers to how easily a speaker's pronunciation can be understood by listeners. Instead of focusing on achieving a native-like accent, intelligibility-based approaches prioritize clear and effective communication. These approaches help learners improve their pronunciation in a way that ensures they can be understood by a wide range of listeners.

Sources of Intelligibility Problems

Whatever accent a user of English holds, this must be intelligible. If a learner wants to be understood, he does not only need to be accurate and articulated. Pronunciation cannot be taught in an isolated way, it must be associated with questions such as "why do we talk? "How well do we talk", "what can help me

get the meaning across"? (Seidlhofer, 1995) This unit explains the concept of intelligibility and how it differs from native-like pronunciation.

It covers:

- How intelligibility is more important than accent reduction
- Factors that contribute to clear communication
- Correct articulation of sounds
- Proper use of stress, rhythm, and intonation
- Understanding the difference between having an accent and being understood
- Why accents are natural but clarity is essential

- Strategies to Improve Intelligibility
  - Focusing on key sounds that impact understanding
  - Practicing stress, rhythm, and sentence melody
- Testing and Assessing Intelligibility
  - Methods for measuring speech clarity and effectiveness
  - The role of listener feedback in improving pronunciationWays to Assess Intelligibility

Pronunciation can be assessed from two different angles, accuracy and intelligibility; however, I would include an intelligible fluency, It is not just the fact of knowing vocabulary, learners need to have a structured knowledge of semantics to give to parts of speech the categorize these components hold to reach the goal of communicating and highlighting their feelings.

1. Lingua Franca Core (LFC) Approach

- Developed by **Jennifer Jenkins**, this approach focuses on pronunciation features that are essential for mutual intelligibility in international communication.
- It recognizes that English is a global language and that native-like pronunciation is unnecessary for effective communication.
- Key priorities in LFC:
  - Correct pronunciation of consonant sounds (except /θ/ and /ð/ as in *think* and *this*, which are often replaced in global English).
  - Proper vowel length distinctions (e.g., *ship* /ʃɪp/ vs. *sheep* /ʃiːp/).
  - Clear word stress patterns.
  - Avoiding the deletion of sounds that change meaning (e.g., pronouncing *interest* as /ˈɪn.trəst/ instead of /ˈɪnt.rəst/).

2. **Functional Load Principle**

- This approach prioritizes pronunciation features that significantly affect meaning.
- Sounds that distinguish many words (high functional load) should be emphasized, while less crucial sounds can be overlooked.

- Example:
    - The difference between /p/ and /b/ (as in *pat* vs. *bat*) is crucial because it changes word meanings.
    - The difference between /θ/ and /s/ (as in *think* vs. *sink*) is less important, as listeners can usually infer meaning from context.

3. **Communicative Approach**

- Encourages real-life communication and interaction rather than mechanical drills.
- Focuses on **contextual intelligibility**, where pronunciation is practiced in meaningful conversations.
- Methods:
    - Role-plays, interviews, and discussions.
    - Using pronunciation in functional, everyday settings.
    - Listening exercises with varied accents to build adaptability.

4. **Suprasegmental Approach**

- Focuses on features beyond individual sounds, such as:
    - **Word and sentence stress:** Emphasizing the correct syllables in words and key words in sentences.
    - **Rhythm:** The natural flow and timing of speech.
    - **Intonation:** The rise and fall of pitch that conveys meaning and emotion.
- Example:
    - The sentence *I didn't say she stole the money* changes meaning depending on which word is stressed.
    - Using the wrong intonation in a question (*You're coming?* vs. *You're coming!*) can confuse listeners.

5. **Listener-Oriented Approach**

- Shifts the focus from the speaker to the listener's perspective.
- Learners practice adjusting their speech based on how well their listener understands.
- Techniques:
    - Asking for feedback: "Did you understand me?"
    - Observing listener reactions and adjusting speech accordingly.
    - Practicing rephrasing and self-correction when misunderstood.

Intelligibility approaches emphasize clarity over perfection. They help learners develop pronunciation skills that ensure effective communication, even if they retain elements of their native accent. By focusing on essential sounds, stress,

rhythm, and listener feedback, learners can improve their ability to be understood in various English-speaking contexts.

1. Awareness and Self-Monitoring

- Learners must develop awareness of their own pronunciation and identify areas where they struggle.
- Self-monitoring involves actively listening to one's speech and comparing it to native or proficient speakers.
- Recording and playback techniques help learners recognize errors and track progress.

2. Listening and Imitation

- Exposure to native and fluent English speakers helps learners internalize the correct pronunciation.
- Watching English movies, listening to audiobooks, podcasts, and songs enhances listening skills.
- Shadowing (repeating after a speaker) helps improve pronunciation and rhythm.

3. Understanding Phonetics and Phonology

- Learning the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) can aid in recognizing how sounds are produced.
- Understanding concepts like voiced vs. voiceless sounds, aspiration, and stress patterns improves pronunciation.
- Awareness of phonemes (distinct sounds) and allophones (sound variations) helps in distinguishing similar sounds (e.g., /ɪ/ vs. /iː/ in *bit* vs. *beat*).

4. Practicing Pronunciation Drills

- Learners should practice minimal pairs (words differing by one sound, e.g., *ship* vs. *sheep*) to refine distinctions.
- Tongue twisters help improve fluency and articulation (e.g., *She sells seashells by the seashore*).
- Repetition exercises reinforce correct pronunciation and muscle memory.

5. Understanding Stress, Intonation, and Rhythm

- Learners must recognize word stress (e.g., *record* as a noun vs. *record* as a verb).
- Sentence stress and rhythm affect meaning and comprehension.
- Intonation (rising and falling pitch) influences how a sentence is perceived (e.g., questions vs. statements).

6. Using Technology and Resources

- Online dictionaries provide audio examples of word pronunciation.
- Pronunciation apps (e.g., ELSA Speak, Forvo) and AI speech recognition tools give instant feedback.
- Language exchange platforms allow practice with native speakers.

7. Engaging in Meaningful Communication

- Active participation in conversations builds confidence and reinforces pronunciation skills.
- Practicing with peers, teachers, or language partners improves fluency.
- Speaking aloud, even when alone, solidifies correct pronunciation patterns.

8. Overcoming Psychological Barriers

- Learners should overcome fear of mispronunciation by adopting a growth mindset.
- Confidence-building exercises, such as role-playing or public speaking, help reduce anxiety.
- Accepting mistakes as part of the learning process fosters continuous improvement.

9. Receiving and Implementing Feedback

- Constructive feedback from teachers, native speakers, or pronunciation tools helps pinpoint areas of improvement.
- Learners should be open to corrections and actively incorporate feedback into their practice.

10. Consistency and Perseverance

- Pronunciation improvement requires daily practice and long-term dedication.
- Setting realistic goals (e.g., mastering specific sounds each week) keeps learners motivated.
- Celebrating small improvements encourages continuous learning.

By taking an active role in these areas, learners can significantly enhance their English pronunciation and communicate more effectively. Would you like any further clarification or specific exercises?

While learning IPA may take some time initially, it provides lifelong benefits for pronunciation, listening, and speaking. It helps learners overcome English's irregular spelling and pronunciation rules, making them more confident and effective communicators. Would you like guidance on learning IPA or practicing with specific words?

Minimal pairs are pairs of words that differ by only one sound, often used to highlight specific phonemes. In the case of the twelve English vowels, minimal pairs are pairs of words where only the vowel sound differs. Below are examples for each vowel sound:

1. /iː/ vs. /ɪ/

- *sheep* /ʃiːp/ vs. *ship* /ʃɪp/

2. /eɪ/ vs. /ɛ/

- *bait* /beɪt/ vs. *bet* /bɛt/

3. /æ/ vs. /ɛ/

- *cat* /kæ t/ vs. *cot* /kɒt/ (in some accents, especially RP)

4. /ɑː/ vs. /æ/

- *father* /fɑːðər/ vs. *fat* /fæt/

5. /ɒ/ vs. /ɔː/

- *dog* /dɒg/ vs. *dawn* /dɔːn/ (especially in British English)

6. /ʌ/ vs. /ɔː/

- *cup* /kʌp/ vs. *caught* /kɔːt/

7. /uː/ vs. /ʊ/

- *food* /fuːd/ vs. *foot* /fʊt/

8. /ə/ vs. /ɪ/

- *sofa* /ˈsəʊfə/ vs. *sit* /sɪt/

9. /ɪə/ vs. /eə/

- *beer* /bɪə®/ vs. *bare* /beə®/ (RP, British English)

10. /aɪ/ vs. /eɪ/

- *my* /maɪ/ vs. *may* /meɪ/

11. /aʊ/ vs. /əʊ/

- *how* /haʊ/ vs. *home* /həʊm/

12. /ɔɪ/ vs. /ʌɪ/

- *boy* /bɔɪ/ vs. *buy* /baɪ/

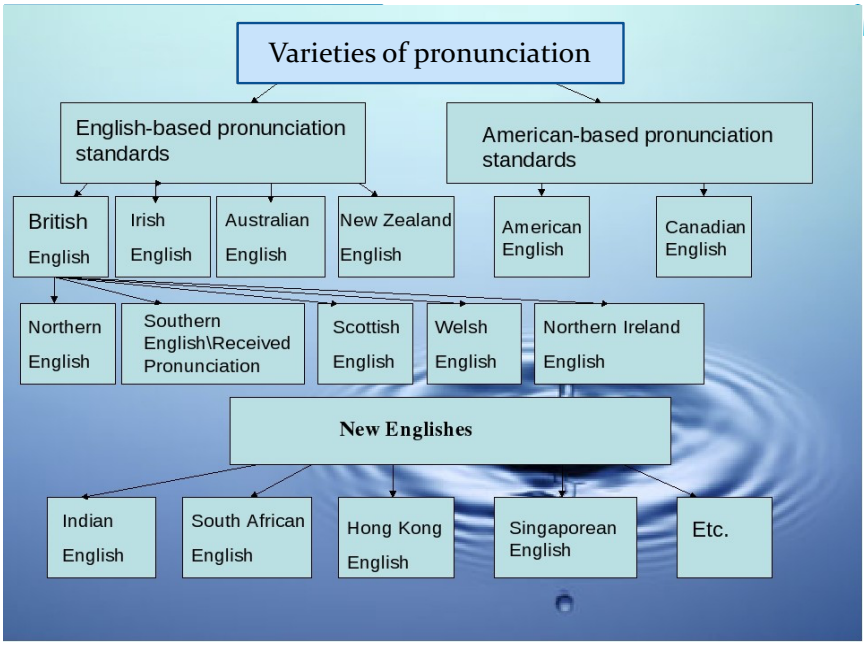
These examples cover both British and American accents. The exact minimal pairs can change based on the accent or dialect in question.

Differences between American and British English

English has numerous varieties, such as American English, British English, South African English, Australian English, Indian English, Singaporean English, and New Zealand English etc. Observation shows that British and American English are the two major varieties of English with a few distinctive features. So, there are remain relatively minor differences between the two. English accent variations of American English (AmE) and British English (BrE): An implication in English language teaching.

Figure 14.

Varieties of pronunciation



Note: Fitria (2023)

English is currently the second-most widely spoken native tongue worldwide and an official language in 53 countries. It was firstly developed in Britain—or, more precisely, in the British Isles— the biggest population and native speakers live in the United States. English is the main language for global communication and the most popular language among foreign-language learners.

The English language has changed in many ways. American English is one example. Early in the seventeenth century, some colonists landed in America, taking with them the Elizabethan English, the language used by Shakespeare and Milton. As time went on, English has gradually changed on both oversea sides of oceans (Han, 2019).

Like any language, English has many varieties. The best-known varieties are: British, called Received Pronunciation and American English, called General American. Let us see some of these differences as follow:

Vocabulary

British and American English sometimes use different words to refer to the same thing. In fact, there are many cases in which even native speakers need to notice how to deal with both varieties. You may ask how many words are different between British and American English. While it is hard to determine the exact number (Rahim and Akan, 2008). Nowadays, the two varieties of English are becoming more expressive for a huge borrowing of words from each other. Sometimes the alternative word(s) of the two may cause difference in meaning.

Differences in Spelling

To deal with the spelling of the vocabulary, there are some rules and adjustments to take into considerations.

Words ending with–er in American English have the ending as–re in British English. For example, in British English,

American English	British English
Theater	Theatre
Center	Centre
Fiber	Fibre
Liter	Litre
Centimeter	Centimetre

Words ending with–or in American English as–our in British English. For example,

American English	British English
Color	Colour
Labor	Labour
Honor	Honour
Humor	Humour
Favor	Favour

Thirdly, words having one consonant in American English whereas have two in British English. For example,

American English	British English
Traveler	Traveller
Wagon	Wagon
Jeweler	Jeweller
Dialed	Dialled
Canceled	Cancelled

Fourthly, words end with–se in American English have ending as–ce in British English. For example:

American English	British English
Defence	Defense
Offence	Offense
Licence	License

Fifthly, words ending with–ize or–yze in American English normally spell as–ise or–yse. For example,

American English	British English
Analyse	Analyze
Memorise	Memorize
Organise	Organize
Recognise	Recognize

However, more and more British people tend to use the American way of spelling. Besides what is discussed above, there are other differences in spelling. For example, in British English, axe, cheque, draught, grey, plough, tyre are spelled as ax, check, draft, gray, plow, tire in American English. From the discussion above, it is easy to draw the conclusion about one distinctive characteristic of the American English. That is to say, American English is more 'English' in accordance with the rules and regulations of the Modern English pronunciation and spelling systems. For example, in Modern English, the sound /ə/ represents what–er sounds as the ending letters in words like center, meter, fiber, etc. Whereas in British English, people would spell differently with the /ə/ sound. They will spell as centre, metre, fibre (Lin, 1987). There are more of these words: BrE AmE

Pronunciation (Stress)

British English and American English differ even more regarding their pronunciation. Somebody can immediately know the difference between these two accents when heard.

American English	British English
A**dult**	**A**dult
Bro**chure**	**Bro**chure
Gar**age**	**Ga**rage
Ma**ssage**	**Ma**ssage
Adver**tise**ment	Ad**ver**tisement

While the *r* sound is pronounced in American English, it remains silent in British English unless it occupies an initial syllable position. For example:

Grammar

The differences between British (RP) and American English (GA) grammar are slightly more complicated. The differences are small, but they are meaningful.

The verb *to have*, for instance. To talk about possession, British English uses the verb *to have got* (*I have got a pet*), whereas American English uses *to have* (*I have a pet*). An important note: the verb *has got* is also used in American English, but mostly to indicate obligation (*I have got to go*).

The present perfect tense usage differs as well. The British normally use the verb *to have* (*I have just arrived*) in this tense, whereas the Americans usually omit this verb. As a result, the sentences sound simpler: *I just arrived*.

There are other differences concern preposition usage:

The grammatical differences also include irregular verbs, for example:

British English	**American English**
Learn, learned, learned	Learn, learnt, learnt
Dive, dived, dived	*Dive, dove, dived*

What Are Silent Letters?

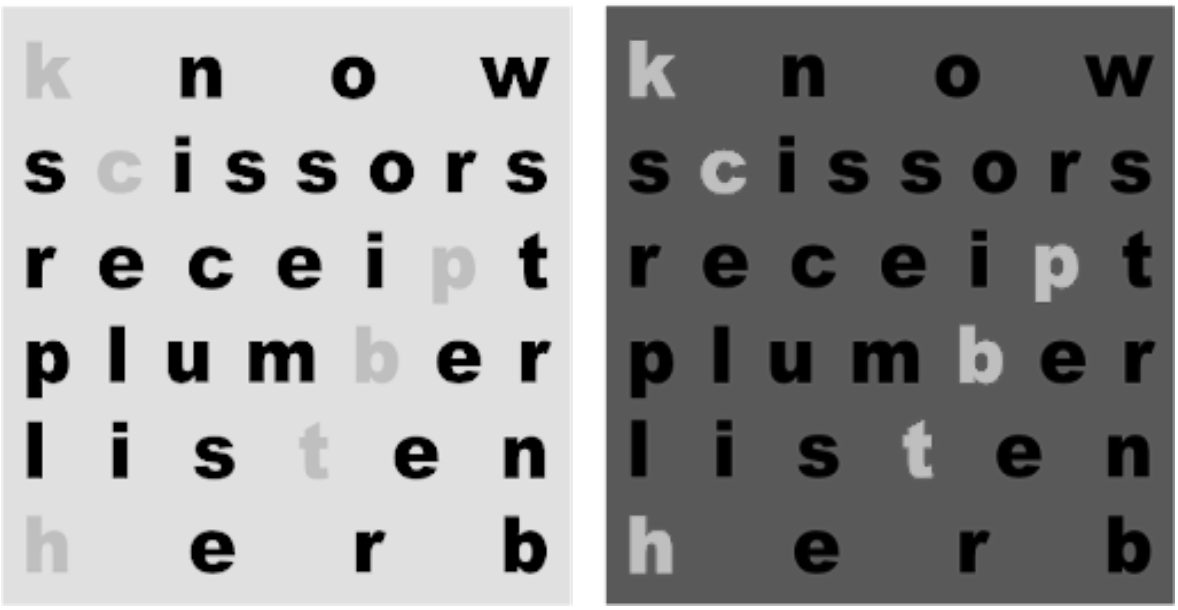
A *silent letter* is a letter either vowel or consonant which are not heard when a particular word is uttered. Think of the “b” in *debt*, the “a” in *head*, and the “h,” in *ghost*. Almost every word in the alphabet plays the role of a *silent letter* in at least one word.

It is advisable to help learners to familiarize with these frustrated characters, since some of the struggle recognizing them.

English borrows a lot of words from other languages, and sometimes we keep the pronunciation of the original word. The word "hour" comes from French. French speakers do not pronounce the "h" at the beginning of words, and so when we borrowed this word from French, we also borrowed their pronunciation. However, we DO pronounce other "h" sounds in borrowed words such as "hospital" and "hungry."

Figure 15.

Silent letters



Note: Taken from: http://myovient.com/blog/silent-letters-in-english

Here is a list of silent letters and the words you will find them hiding inside:

- Silent "b" : debt / plumber / doubt
- Silent "c" : muscle / scene / scissors / Connecticut (The middle "c" is silent)
- Silent "ch" : yacht
- Silent "d" : Wednesday / handkerchief
- Silent "g" : sign / foreign
- Silent "h" : herb / honest
- Silent "k" : knowledge / know / knack / knock / knife
- Silent "l" : talk / walk / half / folk / could / should / would
- Silent "n" : column / condemn
- Silent "p" : receipt / psychology / cupboard / Campbell
- Silent "s" : isle / island
- Silent "t" : listen / mortgage / fasten / Christmas
- Silent "z" : rendezvous

Englishes Worldwide

• ***Overview of global spread of English:*** In the early sixteenth century, there were approximately 3 million speakers of English. In the seventeenth century, American English and British English grew apart, but more recently, with improved communications and the popularity of American culture, they are growing closer together. Today, there are over 500 million native speakers of English. To this, one could add a further one billion who regularly speak English as a second language (i.e. in addition to their native language). In fact, it has been estimated that in total around 1.5 billion people use English with varying degrees of proficiency. English has gone global and it dominates the world stage in a number of languages uses: it is the main language of publishing, science, technology, commerce, diplomacy, air-traffic control and popular music. The reasons for this are to do with the political and economic power of Britain in the nineteenth century and the United States in the twentieth century. These same reasons also account for a dramatic increase in the number of users of English. Nevertheless, American English does contain a few features which are archaic from the point of view of British English. However, how many archaic features can be identified rather depends on which particular varieties of British and American English are considered.
• ***Importance of studying various English dialects:*** The last few centuries have seen the rapid expansion of English in terms of where it is

found in the world, the number of uses to which it is put and the number of users. Hence, the most important national varieties are British English and American English, owing to imperial and economic power. Other important varieties of English include those of Australia, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand and South Africa, where English is principally a native language, and also various countries in Africa, the subcontinent of India, the Caribbean and south-east Asia, where English is principally a second language. In each of these countries English has acquired its own distinctive characteristics and developed its own literature. Perhaps an indication that these literatures have come of age is the fact that the 1992 Nobel Prize for Literature was awarded to the Caribbean poet Derek Walcott. It needs to be noted that some factors such as the settlement of Britain by the Anglo-Saxons, Scandinavians and French, give place to the linguistic consequences of bringing different languages into contact. Though such dramatic settlements have not been repeated, immigration is still an important factor in explaining the development of many varieties of English. For example, features of Irish English, such as the use of *yous* for plural *you,* can be heard in Liverpool. Indeed, this particular feature of Irish English can also be heard in Australia and many parts of the United States. All these places have experienced Irish immigration in the last 200 years.

Standard English

- ***Definition and historical development:*** The term "standard" began to be applied to language and literature in the 18th century, though it originally referred to a battle/war flag in 12th-century England. A standard language is considered the norm, used for educational purposes and as a benchmark for other varieties. It is a prestige variety, spoken by a minority with power and position in society. Language standardization is the process of establishing and maintaining conventional forms of a language, completed through methods of codification.
- **Codification and standardization processes:** Standard codification involves creating dictionaries, style guides, and traditional grammar textbooks. Linguist Einar Haugen popularized the term in the 1970s, defining it as a process leading to "minimal variation in form." Language varieties gain prestige when spoken by individuals with high status, explaining the power attached to standard English. It is closely associated with writing, blending vocabulary and grammar, and is more clearly established through spelling than pronunciation.
- ***Role in education and global communication:*** Written English is more rule-governed than spoken English due to the influence of publishers, resulting in greater uniformity and fewer divergences. Language ideology also plays a role, with social, cultural, and economic factors contributing to the undue importance placed on the selected standard variety.

Black English

The slave trade created a unique form of English in the West Indies and mainland America. The Atlantic triangle connected Europe, West Africa, the

West Indies, and America in three stages: British ships traded goods for slaves in West Africa, African dealers kidnapped villagers and exchanged them for goods, and slaves were transported to the Caribbean and American coasts. Pidgin languages emerged, evolving into Creole English, which then mixed with standard English to form various dialects.

The status and use of English in Africa vary widely. In some countries like Namibia, it is used by a small number of people despite being the official language, while in others like Liberia, Zimbabwe, and South Africa, it is spoken by a larger population. Despite a shorter period of colonization, English has significantly influenced language use in Africa, enjoying power and prestige in government, education, and commerce across several countries (Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, and Tanzania). African English shows distinct syntactic characteristics, such as the omission of articles due to the absence of a comparable category in African languages, which is not an educational failure but a linguistic feature. Examples include sentences like "Let strong team be organized" and "He gave me tough time." Generic use of nouns and pronouns, pluralization of uncountable nouns, and redundant insertion of pronouns are also notable. Comparative constructions in African English differ, such as "It is the youths who are more skillful than the adults."

The Spread of English in Africa began in Cape of Good Hope, which was the only colonial settlement in Africa until 1794, with several territories emerging by 1914. After the World Wars, African countries gained independence, leading to the formation of the Organization of African Unity. The spread of English in Africa was driven by increased commerce and anti-slave activities, with the British Parliament abolishing the slave trade in 1807. Freed slaves settled in crown colonies like Sierra Leone, Ghana, Nigeria, Gambia, and Cameroon, where missionaries promoted standard English. English-based pidgins and creoles, like Krio, became major forms of communication. In East Africa, British colonial protectorates, established in 1888, declared English their official language after independence, influenced by emigrants and Africa-born whites using the British model in schools.

English in South Africa

In South Africa, English spread and evolved among 11 national languages. Afrikaans is the first language for whites of Dutch origin and the coloured population, though English holds higher prestige. English belongs to two of the three concentric circles in Kachru's model of world Englishes (inner, outer, expanding). It is used by the British-background population and is increasingly adopted by black and Afrikaner populations for upward mobility, with around 11 million second-language users. South African English exhibits a range of accents influenced by Afrikaans, British Received Pronunciation, and African languages, leading to more homogeneous accents across various South African communities.

South Africa experienced colonial rule under the Dutch (1652-1795), British (1795-1948), and Afrikaners (1948-1994). The Witwatersrand gold rush in the 1870s attracted many immigrants, including half a million English speakers by

the late 19th century. Initially, Dutch (later Afrikaans) and English were official languages, with struggles for linguistic power. The British anglicized the region after taking over in 1806, declaring Dutch and English as co-official languages in 1910. Afrikaners introduced Afrikanerization in 1948. English became popular among mixed ethnic backgrounds and Indian immigrants. The Bantu Education Act imposed Afrikaans in black schools, leading to violent resistance. Afrikaans was seen as the language of oppression, while English was viewed as a tool for liberation and international voice by the black population.

English in Australia and New Zealand

English in Australia and New Zealand shares similarities due to geographical proximity, frequent migration, and similar development stages. Both regions developed colonial varieties influenced by settlers from all over England, with Australian English significantly impacting New Zealand English.

Australian English has the same inventory of phonemes as RP, but nearly all the vowels are realized differently. On the same token, different instances are given from Australian Phonology, for example, /a/ and /e/ are closer than in RP, so to English ears Australian pan sounds like pen. In the same way, a comparison between BrE & AmE pronunciation is made. For example, the sound /r/ in GA and RP is compared. In GA, the letter 'r' is pronounced in all positions, but in RP it is only pronounced before vowels (e.g., very, paragraph). This session also provides a list of cultural & ethnic American Eng. varieties which include the following:

African American Vernacular/ Cajun Vernacular / Hawain Pidgin / Latino Vernacular Englishes / Chicano English / Miami English / A list of regional and local varieties is also provided which includes: Eastern New England / Boston / Rhode island / Southeast Super region / Midland

In Australia, settlement began in 1788 as a penal colony, showing a powerful "founder effect" with the majority of settlers from southeast England, whose variety held relative prestige. The stabilization of the Sydney colony in 1820 and the founding of the Port Philip (Melbourne) colony in 1831 led to further settlements, including the establishment of the New Zealand colony in 1840. The gold rushes and British policies in the 1850s to 1900s increased migration. De facto independence in the 1900-1960 period brought national and linguistic identity, with Received Pronunciation (RP) of England as a comparison norm.

From 1960 onwards, both nations recognized their English varieties as national standards, leading to the development of dictionaries like the Macquarie Dictionary in Australia and the codification of local varieties. Migration expanded linguistic diversity. In Australia, the pronunciation of the vowel /ɪ/ (as in "bit") has been raised and fronted, now appearing close to /i/.

English in South Asia

Southeast Asian Englishes, resulting from colonization, are known as 'post-imperial' Englishes in regions like Malaysia, Singapore, and the Philippines

(Outer Circle) and Vietnam, Indonesia, and Thailand (Expanding Circle). Strait Settlements such as Penang, Malacca, and Singapore were pivotal trading centers under the British East India Company. Post-independence, English became the dominant language in education and business, particularly in Singapore, with primary education in ethnic languages and English taught as a second language, leading to widespread use in secondary and higher education due to their effective efforts to become a centre of academic excellence in research and a knowledge society.

English is now acquired as a first language by many Singaporeans. In Malaysia, Malay was declared the national language for unity and instruction at all levels by the National Language Act of 1976. Malaysianization made Malay mandatory for civil servants and university students, with scholarly works translated into Malay by 1983. English was a subject from Grade 1 to 12. The Education Act of 1996 reintroduced English as a medium of instruction for science and technology subjects, while continuing the development of Malay for intellectual work. The younger generation in Malaysia is less competent in English, but the Malay elite continues to study abroad and form partnerships with British, American, and Australian universities.

In the Philippines, English became the medium of instruction under U.S. colonial rule in 1898 and continued after independence in 1946. The monolingual English policy was modified in 1937 with the introduction of Tagalog-based national language, and it became a required subject for future teachers by 1939. English was made an official language in 1941 and taught in schools and colleges. A bilingual education scheme was introduced in 1974. Nationalistic sentiments led to ambivalence towards English, with stress on Filipino from 1974-1986, before returning to English for globalization and international communication needs.

The Future of English

It is sometimes claimed that English as an international language will succumb to the same fate as Latin. Around 2,000 years ago, Latin was used throughout western Europe, North Africa and Asia Minor (i.e. including the area covered by today's Turkey). Today, Latin is a dead language, and its descendants - such as Italian, French and Spanish - are separate languages. Do you think this prophecy is likely to be fulfilled? Will English become a group of English languages which are not mutually comprehensible?

If you are part of a group, set up a debate: half argue in support of the prophecy, and half against it. *{Hint:* It may help to consider spoken and written forms of language separately)

It is imperative to consider that distinctive varieties of English have developed across the globe whereas immigration is still an important factor in the development of many varieties of English.

Types and Possibilities of Changes in English Language

Language is always changing, evolving, and adapting to the needs of its users. Why does a language change? There are several reasons for it. First, because the needs of the speakers change. New technologies, new products, and new experiences require new words. Consider texting: originally it was called text messaging because it allowed one person to send another text rather than voice messages by phone. Second, no two people have had exactly the same language experience.

We all know a slightly different set of words and constructions, depending on our age, job, education level, country etc. We pick up new words and phrases from all the different people we talk with, and these combine to make something new and unlike any other person's particular way of speaking. Was English more elegant in the past or is it today? The fact that language is always changing doesn't mean it's getting worse; it's just becoming different. Language will never stop changing; it will continue to respond to the needs of the people who use it. Like everything else in nature, the English language is a work in progress.

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ANNEXES

ACTIVITIES

This annex provides a selection of phonemes, diphthongs, and consonants for focused pronunciation practice. Each sound is accompanied by examples to illustrate its use and to highlight distinctions between similar sounds. The material is intended as a practical reference to support students in developing accuracy and clarity in spoken English.

near	/nɪə/
beer	/bɪə/
tier	/tɪə/

eɪ

say	/seɪ/
play	/pleɪ/
grey	/greɪ/

ʊə

tour	/tʊə/
pure	/pjʊə/

ɔɪ

toy	/tɔɪ/
boiler	/ˈbɔɪlə/
noise	/nɔɪz/

əʊ

sn<u>ow</u>	/snəʊ/
g<u>o</u>	/gəʊ/
al<u>o</u>ne	/ə'ləʊn/

eə

hair	/heə/
care	/keə/
stair	/steə/

aɪ

my	/maɪ/
eye	/aɪ/
bike	/baɪk/

aʊ

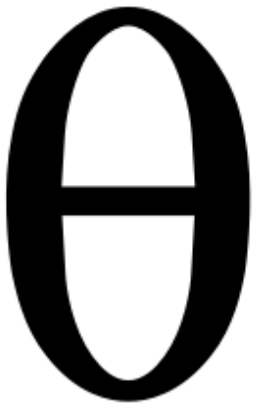
n<u>ow</u>	/naʊ/
h<u>ow</u>	/haʊ/
f<u>ou</u>nd	/faʊnd/

Consonant Phonemes

dʒ

June	/dʒu:n/
judge	/dʒʌdʒ/
journey	/'dʒɜ:nɪ/

church	/tʃɜ:tʃ/
chin	/tʃɪn/
chat	/tʃæt/



thin	/θɪn/
throw	/θrəʊ/
thumb	/θʌm/

then	/ðen/
this	/ðɪs/
there	/ðeə/

ʒ

plea<u>s</u>ure	/'pleʒə/
lei<u>s</u>ure	/'leʒə/
mea<u>s</u>ure	/'meʒə/

sheep	/ʃɪ:p/
shine	/ʃaɪn/
assure	/ə'ʃɔ:/

k

kick	/kɪk/
cake	/keɪk/
contact	/'kɒntækt/

j

yes	/jes/
yellow	/'jeləʊ/
usual	/'ju:ʒl/

ŋ

bring	/brɪŋ/
banged	/bæŋd/
singing	/'sɪŋɪŋ/

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Compás
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