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### INTELLIGIBLE PRONUNCIATION IS INDISPENSABLE TO EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION FOR ESL SPEAKERS

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#### **Abstract:**

*Incontrovertibly English is a paramount language which is still being extended to every corner of the world. Most of the day-to-day colloquies are in English in India. Speakers, who had their education in English medium schools, are able to communicate with ease but the interlocutors with their vernacular medium school milieu scuffle to hitch with the language. Prodigiously, though they speak well, they deplorably flunk in pronunciation skills which is a backbreaking mission for extreme number of speakers. The major problem areas: stress at the inapplicable syllable, incongruously intonated, dumb letters are pronounced, illegitimate sounds are supplemented etc. Speakers are callow to adept the sounds hence they pronounce some of the English words reprehensibly. Therefore, this research article is to through some light upon English pronunciation skills and some methods to follow to master the skills.*

**Key Words:** English Language, Words, Pronunciation, Stress, Intonation, Mispronunciation etc.

#### **Introduction**

English is the numero uno and the most regnant lingo in the sphere here and now. English is the mother tongue of myriad in UK, USA, Australia, New Zealand, and Canada. But preponderance of the English speakers is from the non-English countries like India, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, China, Malaysia, Singapore, Nigeria etc. Multitudinous non-native speakers rummage it arrantly moiling to grasp and ace this language because of its intricate grammatical structure. But for majority of the speakers, who can speak English with perfect grammar, mastering the legitimate pronunciation has been extremely strenuous.

There are plenty of rationale to surmise as to why the pronunciation skills is a laborious chore to learn. According to Daniel Jones, *the MTI (mother tongue influence) is one of the most important deterrents for not being able to achieve proficiency in English pronunciation.* But we can outdo native-like command in pronunciation if we try to assimilate with decisiveness and adhesion.

This article, therefore, object not reprehend our English but aims at reiterating the account of correct pronunciation of English words and ensuing the Intelligible English which will refurbish our speaking skills and accelerate more employability in this highly competitive job market. The repercussions of correct pronunciation are needless to be reiterated. Most of us are under the cognition that it is a challenging skill to acquire the pronunciation skills still influencing us from advancement and some presuppose that it's impertinent to learn. But we are blind to ascertain the fact that it is the keys to intelligible communication.

#### **The Importance of English Today**

English has never been as remarkable as it is today due to globalization. In the days of yore, perfect grammar with adequate vocabulary satisfied the process of communication between people and nobody teed off with the quality of pronunciation. But today, in a highly a competitive globalized job market where candidates with superlative communication skills

threshold the arena to contend each other. Prerogative pronunciation skills indeed a necessary want and also it is an added perk for those contesters. The run-of-the-mill English is just not enough to get a job. Every employer looks for employees with better communication skill because most of the jobs are involved with foreign clients. Hence, it is imperative for every learner to whet their pronunciation skills for intelligible communication. In the job market people are judged on the basis of their communication skills at the outset, their academic records besides. English language is the gateway to explore the career world.

In the job interviews the interviewers get impressed by the way we speak and what we speak becomes less important. Better communication abilities increase our confidence level by leaps and bounds. Most of the students in our colleges don't bother about the importance of this skill but they feel an urgent need to learn and speak only at the time of campus interview or when they search for a job. As a result, most of the students get rejected just because of poor communication skills.

### **Pronunciation is as Important as Grammar and Vocabulary**

English pronunciation has always been one of the hardest nuts to crack for many non-native speakers. In India, though it was ignored in the past, today learners are beginning to understand the importance of the pronunciation skills. Because, when we speak English the listeners understand us, not based on what we speak but, how effectively we communicate with others. Every word is understood based on the tone or sound; so the sounding must be appropriate for clear understanding or else it may cause confusion. In English language, there are so many homonyms, homophones and homographs which are understood properly by their exact pronunciation. One of the most important suprasegmental features of English is 'stress'. Stress is characterized by syllables that are more forcefully produced, and hence, are longer; louder and usually contain a pitch change. Listeners rely on stress pattern when decoding it, and hence, even if the segmental features (individual sounds) of a word are pronounced correctly, if it is spoken with the wrong stress pattern, it can be difficult to understand.

### **Instances**

The following utterance, 'the content of the presentation is good' would probably fail to cause communication difficulties for some because, the word 'content' has more than one meaning if it is mispronounced the intended meaning may not be understood.

- **Content** (noun) – the ideas that are contained in a piece of writing, a speech or a film
- **Content** (adj.) - pleased with your situation and not hoping for change or improvement

So are most of the two syllabic words like **defect, object, progress, project, conduct, present, suspect, subject**, etc. In all these words nouns are stressed on the first syllable but verbs and adjectives are stressed on the second syllable. Hence, the stress plays a major role in understanding the meaning of a particular word.

Some of us may argue that we are not talking to native speakers to pronounce words correctly with right intonation. But I would like to highlight certain points for such questioners. First of all, a person who speaks English with correct pronunciation gets more attention and more opportunities than the person only with good grammar and vocabulary. Therefore, English must be learnt as English not as any other language. Today's English is more sophisticated, more polished, more stylistic and spoken beautifully than the English spoken in the past. If we still be speaking in the old fashion way we would neither be able to put ourself across nor get the recognition that is our due.

So many words are mispronounced and cause misunderstanding. Some samples are given below:

**Examples**

Advertisement	/əd'vɜ:.tɪs.mənt/	Alternative	/ɒl'tɜ:.nə.tɪv/
Avenue	/'æv.ə.nju:/	Barbecue	/'bɑ:.bɪ.kju:/
Bargain	/'bɑ:..gɪn/	Cabbage	/'kæb.ɪdʒ/
Courage	/'kʌr.ɪdʒ/	Cucumber	/'kju:.kʌm.bə r /
Colleague	/'kɒl.i:g/	College	/'kɒl.ɪdʒ/
Decision	/dɪ'sɪʒ. ə n/	Democratic	/, dem.ə'kræt.ɪk/
Develop	/dɪ'vel.əp/	Equipment	/ɪ'kwɪp.mənt/
Environment	/ɪn'vaɪ ə .rə n .mənt/	Entrepreneur	/, ɒn.trə.prə'nɜ: r /
Fatigue	/fə'ti:g/	Graffiti	/grə'fi:.ti/
Harassment	/'hær.ə.smənt/	Horse	/hɔ:s/
Jeopardize	/'dʒep.ə.daɪz/	Interrogative	/, ɪn.tə'rɒg.ə.tɪv/
Logistics	/lə'dʒɪs.tɪks/	Message	/'mes.ɪdʒ/
Miscellaneous	/, mɪs. ə l'ei.ni.əs/	Maths	/, mæθs/
Preview	/'pri:.vju:/	Pomegranate	/'pɒm.ɪ,græn.ɪt/
Provocative	/prə'vɒk.ə.tɪv/	Plumber	/'plʌm.ə r /
Quiet	/kwaɪət/	Queen	/kwi:n/
Vehicle	/'vi:.ɪ.kl/	Mentor	/'men.tɔ: r
Competitor	/kəm'pet.ɪ.tə r /	Thoroughly	/'θʌr.ə.li/
Statistics	/stə'tɪs.tɪk/	Sword	/sɔ:d/
Vowels	/vaʊəl/	Restaurant	/'res.trɒnt/
Receipt	/rɪ'si:t/	Genre	/'ʒɑ:.rə/ , /'ʒɒn-/
Education	/, ed.jə'keɪ.ʃ ə n/	Situation	/, sɪt.ju'ei.ʃ ə n/
Percentage	/pə'sen.tɪdʒ/	Tortoise	/'tɔ:.təs/
Onion	/'ʌn.jən/	Interrogative	/, ɪn.tə'rɒg.ə.tɪv/
Question	/'kwes.tʃən/	Enough	/ɪ'nʌf/

So let's stop ignoring the pronunciation skills and give equal importance as that of grammar and vocabulary.

### **IPA (International Phonetic Alphabet)**

As English is spoken as the first language in many countries with lots of variation, the lexicographers decided to bring out a standard in English pronunciation. The IPA is the result of the plan. It was created with the intention of standardizing the pronunciation throughout the world. According to the **International Phonetic Alphabet** English has twenty-six letters but it produces 44 sounds which are divided into 12 pure vowels 8 diphthongs and 24 consonants. So it is necessary that every learner must learn all the sounds before beginning to learn the words. Each and every word must be pronounced based on the phonetic symbols not based on the spelling because it's only for the purpose of writing. The phonetics symbols are like formulas which help us to pronounce words appropriately. So it is mandatory to learn all the sounds of English language.

But in most of the non-native speakers especially in India, the vowels and consonant sounds are ignored. Words are pronounced based on the spelling, stress is given at the wrong syllable and the right intonation pattern is completely ignored which lead to mispronunciation and misunderstanding and ultimately ineffective communication.

### **Developing Pronunciation Skills:**

- One of the best ways to improve our pronunciation skill is imitation. Whenever we talk to the learned speakers we may need to imitate their pronunciation but not the accent.
- English movies play a major role in developing our pronunciation. To learn the correct pronunciation one must watch lot of English movies.
- Listening to news channel such as BBC can definitely influence our pronunciation skills. Whenever we watch the BBC we must only pay attention to their pronunciation of words not the content.
- Cambridge Advance Learner's Dictionary's CD (Compact Disk) can play a significant role in helping us developing our pronunciation skills. We can learn the pronunciation of any word any time by using the CD in our PC or Laptop.

These methods alone can never make our pronunciation better. Confidence, determination and dedication are needed to develop English pronunciation. To perfect our English pronunciation, we must practice well. More the practice, better the pronunciation.

### **Conclusion**

Proper pronunciation is one of the primary keys to language proficiency. Knowing the right vocabulary and when to use it simply is not enough. When we teach English as a second language, the primary goal is to make students communicate effectively. Language enables one to communicate with one another. It is pointless if one can't understand what the other is trying to say, in spite of the appropriate vocabulary and perfect grammar. In the job market, he/she who speaks English with correct pronunciation gets more attention and more opportunities than anybody else. With correct pronunciation, we can communicate more effectively and impressively and above all we will sound more confident.

Pronunciation is a prominent factor in foreign language teaching since sounds play the most important role in communication. Communication is a mutual transaction between the speaker and the hearer. Therefore, one must comprehend what he hears and must produce precisely the sounds of the language he is trying to learn. Without sufficient knowledge of the sound patterns of English language, we can neither encode messages sent or received. Hence, correct pronunciation is the key for successful communication.

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