

## Teaching Pronunciation and Speaking in ELT for Communicative Competence

**C. Raghavendra**

Assistant Professor of English GITAM Visakhapatnam A.P, India

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### Abstract

Learning the pronunciation of English language requires active participation of both the teacher and the student in the entire learning process. In learning speaking skills of English language it needs pronunciation. So both Pronunciation and speaking abilities should be considered interrelated while teaching or learning. These two should be viewed in the same light as grammar, syntax, and vocabulary which are essential parts of communication. Pronunciation and speaking are perceived as critical modules of communicative capability. Linking pronunciation with speaking activity, and allowing for meaningful pronunciation practice can do well in improving pronunciation and speaking abilities of English. So, the teacher has to set achievable goals that are applicable and appropriate for the communication needs of the students. As the student is an essential part of the learning process, he or she should be actively involved in learning. This paper focuses on various essential ways to teach pronunciation and speaking skills in ELT for effectively achieving communicative abilities.

**KEYWORDS:** pronunciation, speaking, active role, practice and communicative competence.

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### Introduction

English has overcome many stages and become a global language. “English seems to have been adopted as the language of globalization these days as the language of global culture and international economy” (British Council) Many language learners consider speaking ability as the measure of knowing a language. These learners describe fluency as the ability to converse with others more than the ability to read, write, or comprehend oral language. They also consider speaking as the most important skill as they assess their progress in terms of their accomplishments in spoken communication. So unavoidably pronunciation also should be included in the practice and learning activities of speaking skills.

### Motivation

Motivation is the fundamental key to all kinds of learning and teaching in ELT. The main objective of motivation is to attract the attention of the learners and to make them curious which can channel their energy towards learning. One of the biggest obstacles, perhaps, faced by teachers, school administrators, students and parents, is lack of motivation. Language learning problems, specifically pronunciation and speaking, in the classroom, often, seem to be linked to the lack of motivation. More language related academic achievements are done through appropriate motivation than intelligence. Academically poor students perform better than academically sound students with high motivation. Intrinsic motivation is motivation from within the person. An intrinsically motivated

student learns well in spite of difficult and challenging situation. When the students are motivated, the teachers can perform their job to their best. So the teacher in ELT is better to motivate himself and the learners in the teaching learning process.

### **Areas of knowledge in speaking**

Rivers rightly says “Speaking does not of itself constitute communication unless what is said is comprehended by another person. Teaching the comprehension of spoken speech is therefore a primary importance of the communication aim is to be reached”(196). Language learners need to understand that speaking involves three areas of knowledge. The first one is ‘Mechanics’ in which pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary are parts. ‘Mechanics’ teach using the right words in the right order with the correct pronunciation. Second area is ‘Functions’ where interaction and information exchange are involved. Here clarity of message for precise understanding is required. The third one which is also very important is social and cultural norms which teaches rate of speech, length of pause etc. Keeping in mind some of the important characteristics of a successful speaking activity given by Penny Ur, teachers can do better. One of the characteristics is ‘Learners talk a lot’. In this, much possible time is allotted to the activity for learners’ talk. Second one is that students should be allowed to participate in their own way as they feel comfortable talking about a topic.

The main objective of teaching pronunciation and speaking skills is communicative efficiency. Learners should be able to use correct and understandable pronunciation and speak themselves presentable and proficient. They should try to avoid confusion in the message due to faulty pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, and to observe the social and cultural rules that apply in each communication situation.

### **Goal setting**

Students need to know what they are expected to do and learn. It is useful to set small achievable goals on a daily basis and make learners aware of how they are to accomplish these goals in pronunciation and speaking. This goal setting helps them to participate actively in learning and they also can understand what they are learning and how they are learning. Teachers can make learners overcome the common recurring problems by offering immediate feedback.

A persistent problem faced by many English teachers from learners is the attempt to sustain genuine interest in continuing to use pronunciation and English speaking skills after the examinations are over. Teachers have to inculcate the notion in the minds of the learners that these are life-long language skills. Teachers have to encourage students to experiment and innovate with the language, and create a supportive atmosphere that allows them to make mistakes without fear or embarrassment. This will contribute to their self-confidence which motivates to learn more. Then, they can learn to use that knowledge in their day to day life; not for mere examinations.

Of the three stages in training speech as suggested by Tickoo(2008),the first stage, controlled practice, provides intense language drills which help learners acquire four sub-skills of language. Though some applied linguists have questioned the efficacy of using

drills for developing the speaking skill, these drills help in focusing attention on an element of language (e.g. a contrast in sounds as i:and I). The second stage provides students spontaneous speech of real life situations. And in the third stage, the focus is on the use of English in true-to-life situations. What matters most at this stage is the provision of opportunities for communication in situations of genuine use. A good course on speaking with correct pronunciation must facilitate and encourage risk-taking to make communication natural and effective.

### **Teaching Learning Activities**

Apart from Tickoo stages, communicative output activities like role plays and discussions which allow students to practice pronunciation and speaking are of much more helpful to the learners. In role plays, students are assigned roles and put into situations that they may eventually encounter outside the learning place. Since role plays imitate life, the range of language functions which are used expands considerably. Also, the roles the students play develop their sociolinguistic competence. They have to use language that is appropriate to the situation and to the characters. Students usually find role playing enjoyable, but students who lack self-confidence or have lower proficiency levels may not be comfortable at first but later they will be good.

Lindsay and Knight say “Speaking activities that concentrate on getting learners to produce sounds, phrases or grammatical structures range from activities, which are controlled by the teacher to activities where the learners have more freedom to choose the language, they use. Controlled activities generally focus on the learners producing language accurately, while less controlled activities focus on developing the learner’s fluency”(93). To help students develop communicative efficiency in pronunciation and speaking, teachers can use activities like teacher’s talk, listening activities, reading passages, and the language heard and read on internet, loud practice of pronunciation, excerpts of great speeches, pause length, turn-taking, and other social aspects of language use. Traditional classroom speaking practice ‘one person asks a question and another gives an answer’ also demonstrates the ability to ask and answer the question.

The purpose of real communication is to accomplish a task such as conveying a message in face to face communication, conveying well a phone message, obtaining information, and expressing an opinion. In classroom to develop communicative competence, teachers need to incorporate a purpose and allow for multiple forms of expression. Teachers need to conduct activities, which allow for error correction and increased accuracy. Two common kinds of structured output activities are information gap and jigsaw activities. In both these type of activities students complete a task by obtaining missing information which is helpful in real communication. Arranging discussions or talks among students undoubtedly produces expected results. “It seems clear that pupils generally feel more at ease talking to each other than talking to a teacher or to some other adult” (brown et al 36)

### **Assessment**

One of the most important factors for possessing language skills is assessment which is usually conducted through teacher’s observation of student performance. “ A good

teacher is a person who assesses the needs and possibilities of a situation and creates and uses practices that have promise for that situation”.(Zahoric 22). Students should be evaluated primarily on the pronunciation of structure words and content words and later on the quality and appropriateness of speech. Peer Assessment is one of the ways in which students internalize the characteristics of quality work by evaluating the work of their peers. For peer evaluation the learning environment in the classroom must be supportive. Students must feel comfortable and trust one another in order to provide honest and constructive feedback. Teachers can help students develop trust and awareness of this kind of evaluation by giving practice session.

Self-Assessment is better than any other assessment in the language learning. Students can become better language learners when they engage in deliberate thought about what they are learning and how they are learning it. In this kind of reflection, students step back from the learning process to think about their language learning strategies and their progress as language learners. They compare with teacher evaluations, and peer opinions. This kind of practice helps students to be aware of their level of learning in pronunciation of English language and speaking efficiency.

### **Conclusion**

By keeping all the above mentioned ways of activities and practices teachers can do well in teaching pronunciation of basic words and also complex and difficult areas of English; So that the learners can possess attractive and influential speaking abilities of English language which can make the lives and careers of the learners successful and happy.

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