

## **Pronunciation and Its Importance**

**S. ShunmugaSundari and B. Gowsalya**

=====

### **Language and Pronunciation**

Language is something that people use for communication. It is a tool of communication. There are a number of situations in our daily lives in which we communicate with each other. They used two different mediums of communication. One is medium of speech which is also called as aural medium since people use their ears to understand such communication. And the other is medium of writing which is also called visual medium since people use their eyes to interpret such communication. Of the two mediums of communication (spoken and written), the former is more important than the latter.

Pronunciation is the most important and difficult problem that non-native speakers have to face when studying English. Improper pronunciation can lead to negative impression, misunderstanding and ineffective communication. English continues to change and develop with hundreds of new words arriving every year. Knowing a lot of vocabularies is meaningless if you cannot pronounce those words correctly and no one can understand the words that are trying to use. Even worse, pronunciation mistakes can lead to some serious misunderstanding.

### **Pronunciation Could Be Affected**

Pronunciation is occasionally affected by the way in which a word is spelt and spelling may gradually be modified in accordance with changes in the phonological system. It is a big problem for English language learners, because the English language does not have fixed phonetic rule. An important point to note about the above sentence is that the English language has borrowed words and expression extensively from many language throughout its history. That, in fact, is the main reason for pronunciation of those words which naturally

sound different from the spelling, since they were borrowed from other language into the English language.

### **Learner's Errors of Pronunciation**

Learner's errors of pronunciation derived from various factors such as

1. A particular sound may not exist in the mother tongue, so that the learner is not used to forming it and therefore tends to substitute the nearest equivalent he or she knows.
2. A sound does exist in the mother tongue but not as a separate phoneme: that is to say, the learner does not perceive it as a distinct sound that makes a difference in meaning.

### **Five Kinds**

There are five kinds in the matter of pronunciation as follows:

1. A language learner must learn to recognize readily and with certainty the various speech sounds occurring in the language, when the language learner hears them pronounced; he or she must moreover learn to remember the acoustic qualities of those sounds.
2. A language learner must learn to make the foreign sounds with his or her own organs of speech.
3. A language learner must learn to use those sounds in their proper place in connected speech.
4. A language learner must learn the proper usage in the matter of the sound-attributes or prosodies as they are often called especially length, stress and voice-pitch.
5. A language learner must learn to link sounds, for example, to join each sound of a sequence on to the next, and to pronounce complete sequence rapidly and without stumbling.

### **Role of Phonetics in Pronunciation**

Phonetics is a component of linguistics that deals with speech sounds. The English word 'spoon' is made up of four speech sounds. There is [s], [p], [u:] and [n]. The example given above is an interesting one because in this word there is no correspondence between the number of letters in the written form of the word and the number of sounds in its spoken

form. We shouldn't count the number of letters in the written form of a word and say there are so many sounds in that word. In English in which the number of sounds in their spoken form is the same as the number of letters in their written form ex: - Bat – [b], [æ] and [t]. Phonology is a component of linguistics which deals with the way in which sounds function in a language.

### Pay Attention to Pronunciation

Many people learning English language often do not pay any attention to their pronunciation. Even worse, some of them underestimate it. They think that pronunciation is less important than grammar and vocabulary. In fact, pronunciation is extremely important. Many cases of misunderstanding in communication were caused by the mispronouncing of words.

Knowing grammar and vocabulary are important but useless if you are unable to pronounce those structures or words correctly. Also, native speakers are more likely to understand you, even if you make grammatical mistakes in pronunciation.

Even the simple words misspoken will keep you from effectively communicating with native English speakers. Achieving good pronunciation should be your main goal. It is not so easy to overcome these mispronunciation problems in students. So as a social being, it is our duty to make them aware of the mispronunciation and by that we can increase our skills and attitudes towards the language and pronunciation.

Words	Phonetic Transcription	Correct pronunciation	Wrong pronunciation
1. Aegis	/iːdʒɪs/	ee - jis	ay – jis
2. Asterisk	/astərɪsk/	as-ter-isk	as-ter-ik
3. Alumnae	/ə'ɪlumnə /	a-lum-nee	a-lum-nay
4. Archipelago	/a:'Kɪpələgəʊ/	ar-ki-pel-a-go	arch-i-pel-a-go
5. Athlete	/ˈæθli:t/	ath-leet	ath-aleet
6. Candidate	/kændɪdət/	kan-di-dayt	Kan-i-dayt
7. Chimera	/kɪmɪərə/	kiy-meer-a	Chim-er-a
8. Disastrous	/dɪzɑːstrəs/	di-zas-tres	di-zas-ter-es
9. Electoral	/ɪlɛkt(ə)r(ə)l/	e-lek-tor-al	e-lak-tor-al
10. Etcetera	/ɛt 'sɛt(ə)rə/	et-set-er-a	ek-set-er-a

11. Lambaste	/lam'beɪst/	lam-bayst	lam-bast
12. Larvae	/lɑ:və/	lar-vee	lar-vay
13. Library	/'laɪbrəri, 'laɪbri/	li-brar-y	li-bar-y
14. Mischievous	/mɪstʃɪvəs/	mis-che-vus	mis-chee-vee-us
15. Triathlon	/trɪ'æθlən/, /trɪ'æθlən/	try-ath-lon	try-ath-a-lon
16. Ticklish	/'tɪklɪʃ/	tik-lish	tik-i-lish
17. Tenet	/'tɛnɪt, 'ti:nɛt/	ten-it	ten-unt
18. Cache	/kæʃ/	cash	cash-ay
19. Hyperbole	/hɪ'pɜ:bəli/	hahy-pur-bah-lee	hyper-bowl
20. Meme	/mi:m/	meem	mee-mee/mem
21. February	/'fɛbrʊəri/, /'fɛbjʊəri/	feb-roo-a-ree	feb-yoo-a-ree
22. Pronunciation	/prə,nʌnsɪ'eɪʃ(ə)n/	pro-nun-si-ay-shun	pro-noun-si-ay-shun
23. Almond	/'ɑ:mənd/	ah-mund	aal-mund
24. Bury	/'bɛri/	be-ri	beu-ri
25. Dengue	/'dɛŋgi/	den-gee	den-geu
26. Women	/'wɪmɪn/	wih-men	woo-men
27. Heart	/hɑ:t/	haa-rt	hurt
28. Tomb	/tu:m/	toom-	tom-b
29. Rendezvous	/'rɒndɪvu: /, /'rɒndɛɪvu: /	ron-day-voov	ren-des-voos
30. Asthma	/'asmə/	az-ma	as-tha-ma
31. Wednesday	/'wɛnzdeɪ /, /'wɛnzdi /	wenz-day	wed-nes-day
32. Gauge	/geɪdʒ/	gaje	gow-je
33. Bowl	/bəʊl/	Bo-hl	Ba-ool
34. Epitome	/'ɪpɪtəmi /, /ɛ'pɪtəmi /	Ep-i-tummy	Epi-tome
35. Gnaw	/nɔ:/	naw	g-naw
36. Pizza	/'pi:tʃə /, /'pɪtʃə /	peet-zuh	pi-za
37. Monk	/mʌŋk/	muhngk	maunk
38. Genre	/'ʒɛnrə /, /'dʒɒnrə /	zhon-ruh	jen-ner
39. Sour	/saʊə/	sower	saar
40. Police	/pə'li:s/	puh-leece	poo-leece
41. Suite	/swi:t/	sweet	suit
42. Dessert	/dɪ'zɜ:t/	dizz-urt	des-ert
43. Schedule	/'ʃɛdju:l /, /'skɛdju:l /	sked-jule	shed-yool
44. Zebra	/'zɛbrə /, /'zi:brə /	zee-bra	zeb-ra
45. Nuclear	/'nju:klɪə/	noo-kee-ur	noo-kyu-lur
46. Nuptial	/'nʌpʃl/	nup-shul	nup-shial
47. Primer	/'praɪmə(r) /	prim-mer	pry-mer
48. Picture	/'pɪktʃə(r) /	pik-cher	pit-cher
49. Prescription	/prɪ'skrɪpʃn /	prih-skrip-shun	per-skrip-shun

50. Prerogative	/prɪ'rɒgətɪv/	Pre-rog-a-tive	per-rog-a-tive
51. Peremptory	/pə'remptəri/	per-emp-tuh-ree	pre-emp-tuh-rae
52. Probably	/'prɒbəbli/	prob-a-blee	pra-beely/prob-lee
53. Realtor	/'ri:əltə(r)/	reel-tot	ree-la-ter
54. Supposedly	/sə'pəʊzɪdli/	su-pos-ed-lee	su-pos-ab-blee
55. Spurious	/'spjʊəriəs/	spyoor-ee-us	spur-ee-us

Hence if a student typically mispronounces a word, or fails to fully enunciate each syllable in everyday speech; it can make it difficult for him to correctly spell the word. The pronunciation cannot be underestimated. It must become one's priority. We should provide a practical knowledge on pronunciation and it will avoid mispronunciation.

### Sources

Balasubramanian, T. A Textbook of English Phonetics for Indian Students. Trinity Press, New Delhi, 2014. ISBN Number: 978-93-80644-94-3

<http://www.languageindia.com> ISSN 1930-2940 Vol. 15:12 December 2015.

S. ShunmugaSundari and B. Gowsalya  
 Final Year B.A. Students  
 Sri S.R.N.M College  
 Sattur 626 203  
 Tamilnadu  
 India