10 Teaching pronunciation

A Warm-up

1 What impact might pronunciation have on each of these areas of learners' English?

- Speaking
- Listening
- Reading
- Writing
- Grammar
- Vocabulary

2 Work in pairs. Discuss these statements and decide to what extent you agree.

a It is important for teachers to use only standard British or American English in the classroom.
b Intelligibility (i.e. being understood) is more important than sounding like a native speaker.
c When working on pronunciation, the priority is for students to be able to say things correctly themselves.
d Problems with pronunciation are unlikely to cause communication breakdowns.

B Pronunciation exercises

1 Study the pronunciation activities (A–D) below and answer the questions.

- What aspect of pronunciation is each activity targeting? Is it a 'small' feature (such as individual sounds) or a 'big' feature (such as sentence stress or intonation)?
- Is the objective of the activity *reception* or *production* (or both)?
- Is the feature used in context or is it decontextualized?
- How communicative is the activity? Could non-communicative activities be adapted to make them more communicative?

A	The teacher demonstrates the difference in pronunciation of the *-ed* ending on *worked*, *lived* and *started*. She then asks learners to make three columns in their books, headed by /t/, /d/, and /ɪd/ respectively. She reads out a list of past tense words, e.g. *opened, walked, moved, lifted, missed, waited,* etc.; the students write each one in the appropriate column.
B	Learners have cards made up of pairs of rhyming words, e.g. *steak, make; do, true*, etc. In groups, learners take turns to show the cards; if a card rhymes with the preceding card, the player keeps the pair. The winner is the player with the most pairs.
C	Learners prepare cards with different types of gift, e.g. a bunch of flowers; a broken pencil; a house, etc. Learners hand each other cards, saying 'Here's a present for you.' . The receiver should respond by saying 'Thank you' in a way that is proportionate to their gratitude for the gift.
D	The teacher sets up a speaking activity, e.g. dialogue, role play, chat, etc, then rotates around the groups. When students make a mistake in their pronunciation which the teacher hears, she/he says, or indicates, 'I'm sorry, I don't understand.'. The student attempts to repair the error.

2 Work in groups. Evaluate the activities in B1. For example, discuss whether you would like to do them as a learner. Decide how they might help learners with one of the areas you discussed in A1. Give reasons.

https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009091602.011 Published online by Cambridge University Press

C Techniques for teaching pronunciation

1 The table shows a variety of techniques which a teacher can use in any lesson to draw learners' attention to pronunciation or to provide pronunciation practice.

Work with a partner. Read the technique. Suggest an aim or stages in a lesson when a teacher might use each of these techniques. There may be multiple answers.

Technique	**Aim**	**When a teacher might use it**
Showing learners the shape of your mouth and position of your tongue when producing a specific phoneme (sound).	For learners to notice the physical changes in the mouth necessary to produce specific sounds.	
Displaying a word in both the written form and phonemic script, e.g. *comb* /kəʊm/		When introducing a new vocabulary item with an unusual sound-spelling relationship, for example silent letters. As part of error correction after a speaking or writing activity.
Writing out a word in normal script, putting dots between the syllables, and underlining the stressed syllable, e.g. *e·mer·gen·cy*.	To show learners how many syllables a word has and which syllable carries the stress.	
Indicating on your fingers how many words there are in a sentence, then putting your fingers together to show where there are contractions. Learners repeat the sentence with the contracted form.		After a speaking activity, as a way of helping learners to produce spoken language more fluently. When modelling a sentence to introduce a new grammar pattern, e.g. present perfect: *She's been to China*.
Substitution drill, i.e. T: *I'm going shopping. We* SS: *We're going shopping.* T: *not* SS: *We aren't going shopping.*, etc.	For learners to verbally manipulate the form of a grammar structure they have just been introduced to, including features such as contractions.	
Writing out a sentence from a listening transcript and highlighting features of connected speech on it.		Before a listening activity, to draw attention to potentially problematic features. After a listening activity, particularly if learners have misheard something in the audio – this can be used to focus on an individual answer.

https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009091602.011 Published online by Cambridge University Press

2 Have you observed teachers using any of these techniques during your course so far? What other techniques or activities have you observed for working on pronunciation?

D Anticipating problems

1 Work in pairs. Discuss the pronunciation problems learners might have with these syllabus areas.

a *can/can't* (to talk about ability)
(Possible problem: failure to discriminate between weak and strong forms, so that *can* sounds like *can't* …)
b ordinal numbers, i.e. *first, second, third, fourth,* etc.
c *used to* (to talk about past habits)
d present simple questions, e.g. *Where does she live? What do you do?*
e polite requests using *Would you mind …-ing?*
f clothing vocabulary, e.g. *shirt, shorts, suit, shoes, jacket, overcoat, scarf, pullover*, etc.

2 Your trainer will assign you one of the above areas. Think of classroom solutions to the problems that learners might have. Consider both recognition and production of the language. For example:

a *can/can't*
Possible solution: the teacher repeats one of the words several times and then changes to the other word. Learners have to stop the teacher when they hear the change – *can can can can can't can't can't can't can*, etc. (learners could then do this in pairs).

E Planning pronunciation work

Here is a section from a coursebook. The learners have completed some comprehension work based on a photostory, then moved on to these activities to focus on the language. No explicit pronunciation work has been included. Decide where you think it would be appropriate to include some work on pronunciation in this lesson and what form this could take.

https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009091602.011 Published online by Cambridge University Press

WordWise

Expressions with *good*

1 Use the phrases in the list to complete these sentences from the unit so far.

~~for good~~ | So far, so good | not very good at
It's no good | It's a good thing | it's all good

0 The lights have stopped animals coming to the farm *for good* .
1 I'm _____ creative thinking.
2 That's five words. _____.
3 She gave me an A minus, best I've ever got! So _____.
4 _____. I just can't get the keys out.
5 _____ Emma's such a nice person.

2 Which phrase means:

1 for ever
2 It's not successful.
3 Everything is all right.
4 We have started but not finished, but everything has been OK until now.
5 not talented at
6 I'm/We're/You're lucky that …

Workbook page 38

FUNCTIONS

Expressing frustration

1 Read the photostory again. Which of these things does Emma not say? What do all the sentences have in common?

1 I can't (do that).
2 I'm hopeless (at …)
3 This is hopeless!
4 No chance.
5 I give up.
6 I'll never (come up with anything).
7 This is pointless.

2 Think about the woman who loses her keys. Write three things she might have thought using the expressions in Exercise 1.

I'll never get the keys out.

Think 4

https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009091602.011 Published online by Cambridge University Press

KEY WORDS FOR TEACHERS

Check you know the meanings of these terms.

- *phonemic script*
- *intelligibility*
- *connected speech*
- *receptive skills*
- *productive skills*
- *accent*
- *standard (British/American/etc.) English*
- *English as a Lingua Franca (ELF), English as an International Language (EIL)*

REFLECTION

1 List three reasons why it could be important or useful for you to include pronunciation work in lessons.
2 List three problems learners in your current TP group might have with pronunciation. Say what you could do to help your learners improve.

Compare your ideas with a partner.

https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009091602.011 Published online by Cambridge University Press