

PRONUNCIATION PROBLEMS OF ENGLISH LEARNERS AND THEIR SOLUTIONS

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Abstract. This article deals with the core problems of English pronunciation for its language learners and they are illustrated with solid examples. Also, various approved and beneficial ways are suggested in order to address this language skill problem in this article.

Key words: English pronunciation, word stress, intonation, native speaker, mispronunciation, sound, shadowing.

Проблемы с произношением у изучающих английский язык и пути их решения

Аннотация. В этой статье рассматриваются основные проблемы английского произношения для изучающих этот язык, и они иллюстрируются убедительными примерами. Кроме того, в этой статье предлагаются различные одобренные и полезные способы решения этой проблемы с языковыми навыками.

Ключевые слова: Английское произношение, словесное ударение, интонация, носитель языка, неправильное произношение, звук, слежка.

Introduction

In our contemporary world, English language is considered as an international language and for this reason it is becoming very common among people day by day. It is evident that, this language is being learned and used not only in European countries, but also it has already been considered as the second language by the residents of some Asian countries. Take our country Uzbekistan as an example, today in order to apply for Master’s degree, one should have at least CEFR B2 or 7 band from IELTS. This is causing people to do their best to be fluent in this language. But there are several difficulties in language acquiring process for non-native speakers. Here, the most important one will be analyzed in a detailed way: it is associated with pronunciation of English.

Main body: Problems

It is true that the pronunciation is a key factor of communication in every language. The reason why is that, speakers can express their intentions, feelings and their circumstances with the help of clear pronunciation. Not only English, but also every language around the world has strict pronunciation characteristics. However, English learners are encountering different kinds of issues while learning to pronounce. Let’s revise them one by one:

1. Stressing incorrectly

The word stress is considered as a vital part of the English pronunciation. Because in English, we do not say each syllable with the same strength and in one word, we accentuate one syllable. We can take 3 words as the examples:

- I.PHO-to-graph (there are three syllables and stress on the first part)
- II.Pho-TO-graph-er (there are four syllables and stress on the second part)
- III.Pho-to-GRAPH-ic (there are four syllables and stress on the third part)

As we can see, stressed syllables are pronounced stronger, while others are weak and quiet. Many language learners, however, are not informed about this rule and so they are facing with difficulties related to this.

2. Incorrect intonation

Intonation in English conveys many meanings to the speakers and in this case we need to revise this type of problem to reach efficacy in pronunciation. In most cases, questions in English have a rising pitch at the end, but ninety percent language learners end their sentences with low intonation, which cause misunderstandings in some cases. Additionally, using the right pitch for conveying feelings is another debatable issue in the speech of non-natives. For example:

- “Really” – when this word is said with a raising intonation, it can express *happiness or surprise*
- “Really” – when this word is pronounced with a falling pitch, it can express *disbelief/feeling*

To be specific, putting wrong intonation to our words can lead different meanings and then results wrong understandings.

3. Mispronouncing of some English words

The last significant issue is mispronouncing some words which are difficult to pronounce. The main reason for this problem is a lack of knowledge about each sound’s pronunciation or a lack of daily practice for the improvement of pronunciation. Here, I’ll provide five the most mispronounced words:

- i.Wednesday – proper pronunciation is ['wenzdɪ]
- ii.Stomach – proper pronunciation is ['stomək]
- iii.Mayonnaise – proper pronunciation is [meɪəneɪz]
- iv.Mischievous – proper pronunciation is ['mɪʃɪvəs]
- v.Meme – proper pronunciation is [mi:m]

Pronouncing incorrectly causes misunderstandings and misperceptions. Also, in the speaking exams it can influence negatively on the score.

Main body: Solutions

1. The most reasonable way for solving the stress issue is knowing the rules of it in a detail. There are two crucial strict rules associated with word stress:

- I. One word has one stress, as one word may not have two stresses ever.
- II. The stress is always put on a vowel sound, as the constant sounds cannot take word stress.

After being informed about these rules, one must use them in the practice. Language learners ought to listen each individual word in English on the radio and in the films. The first thing they should do is to hear those words carefully and take into consideration of their word stress. The next step should be using it in the practice: while having conversations with friends in English or in the language classes.

2. For addressing the intonation difficulty, in the first place, students ought to be natural and feel free. The next principal solution is to learn all intonation rules:

- I. Yes/No questions end with rising intonation/pitch
- II. As for question tags, it really depends on the situation. When it is connected with comments, it must have a falling pitch. On the other hand, when it expresses uncertainty, we must use a rising pitch.

Finally, we must practice our intonation on a daily basis by observing native speakers through Ted Talk programs or by imitating natives through watching English movies.

3. To improve the ability of pronouncing like natives, I researched and found many feasible ways. The most beneficial, which I used and took advantage, is “shadowing” strategy. How it works? Here, its instructions:

- I. The video in English should be played in combination with its script;
- II. In the first time, language learner ought to listen it carefully and must pay attention to each word’s pronunciation;
- III. In the second time, video should be played one more time and at this time listener must repeat (shadow) after the audio is played;
- IV. Finally, student ought to read video’s script without listening audio and should record their voice;

If these 4 steps are done on a daily basis, there will be a great and noticeable enhancement in the ability of pronunciation.

Conclusion

In conclusion, every foreign language is influential with its own pronunciation features. Without being fluent, it is difficult to reach efficacy in language learning. In English pronunciation, three mentioned problems in pronouncing words are common and they can be mitigated with the proper use of all these provided practical solutions.

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