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RP/BBC Pronunciation and Rural Students

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Abstract

English language skills have been focused by the academy due to the demand of professional English speaker. The field of education has been changing drastically especially the use of English language. English medium schools, professional development courses relate to the language have been given the due importance in education process. In this scenario, the rural students are lacking behind in professional skills of English language. The present paper throws light upon the some issues of the pronunciation skill of English language. It provides an overview to some facts and solutions for rural teachers and students to enhance the pronunciation skill.

Key words: RP/BBC Pronunciation, Teaching English, Tone, Intonation, Rural Students, Language Skills

Due to globalization and use of Internet, English Language plays a pivotal role for communication. English language has been using for social media like twitter, face book, WhatsApp, and so on. Teaching English language to the rural students has been a major concern for the English teachers. In fact, the teacher is caught in a dilemma whether to teach Literature or language. Hence, the teachers of rural colleges have to pay more attention to language skills. When it is a matter of rural students, teaching language skills are more important than that of literary skills especially to UG students. At the UG level, the students are unable to acquire the language skills owing to background of the rural students, syllabus, and teaching learning process. The English teachers at primary and secondary level schools do not pay attention to the



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pronunciation skill of language while teaching English in the classroom. When it comes to teaching learning process, the teachers have to use different techniques as well as inculcate good habits with competence in the learner to overcome all the problems mentioned above.

The most important thing for rural students is to acquire spoken skills through various means like media-TV News, The English Newspaper, watching English language movies, dramas, serials, and English programmes. Being a rural student, he/she has to rely upon the teaching learning process carried out in the classroom. Taking into account the situation of rural students, it is prior duty of the English teachers to develop interest and linguistic habits among the students to acquire the skills of English Language. Teaching English, using Received Pronunciation, is not considered as an important practice by the English teachers. Received Pronunciation is 'the standard accent of English as spoken in the south of England'. Teaching Received Pronunciation/ BBC English (RP/BBC) pronunciation is one of the basic skills of English language. The English teacher needs to have more patience and skills as well as use various ways, means, and techniques to develop language skills among the students. The students should learn the sound structure with proper combination and articulation. Language is a beauty if it is used effectively with proper pronunciation, tone, and intonation.

The pronunciation is a way of articulating each consonant and vowel sound of a word. "Vowels are the speech sounds in the production of which is, in the pharynx and the mouth, no obstruction or narrowing of a degree that would cause audible friction. All other sounds are regarded as consonants." Here, the skills of the English teacher come into play. The teacher can attract the attention of the students towards the proper pronunciation of words by using his mastery over pronunciation or using different tools like language Laboratory or various internet sources. To arouse interest among the students for RP/BBC pronunciation, one has to teach them to distinguish between their local pronunciations of daily used words to that of RP/BBC pronunciation by drilling. In doing so, the students develop their interest to pronounce the daily routine words as per RP/BBC pronunciation and become conscious of the RP/BBC pronunciation of each word they use. After learning consonants and vowels sounds of English



language, the students as well as teachers should refer the English dictionary (or Pronouncing Dictionary by Daniel Jones) regularly to know the exact pronunciation of the word. Another hurdle to the rural students is that they are detached from the English language owing to the environment they live in. They are not able to listen the English language in day today life. Hence, they have to take extra efforts to be in contact with English language.

The main feature of any language is to be learnt naturally. No one teaches anyone any language, it has to be learnt. The teacher has his own limitations in the classroom, whatever the teacher teaches in the classroom, he/she never teaches the language but teaches about the language. Hence, the language has to be learnt as per need of a person. Therefore, the students must be aware about the need of English language. While teaching pronunciation, the teacher should use accurate pronunciation with correct accent so that the students can understand and speak with the correct pronunciation with accent at least similar to that of international English language. The teaching of English pronunciation is encountered many issues regarding varieties of pronunciation like American, Australian, or many other but the BBC world sets its own standard, it should be followed by the teachers and students. Once we should have mastery over the RP/BBC pronunciation, we can learn and use other standard pronunciation like American pronunciation as per need or situation.

It is commonly observed that the UG level students have problems of pronunciation about certain suffixes of words. For instance, the suffixes like '-ment' and past participle form of the verbs i.e. '-ed' are pronounced as /ment/ instead of /mant/ , and /kd/ instead of /Id/ or /d/ respectively. There are many other issues as well like strong and weak form of auxiliary and modal auxiliary verbs. Other major issues about tone (use of pitch in language) and intonation (raise and fall of pitch), the pronunciation skills can be mastered by practice but when it is a matter of intonation, it needs to take serious efforts by the teachers. Mastering tone and intonation of English language is never ending process for the English teachers of South Asian countries. Only drilling and practicing the same cannot give desired result. It needs serious training, continuous practice, and unending interest in the pronunciation skill of the language.



Another issue of teaching pronunciation is the unavailability of resources at rural places. The teachers and the students are not computer literate or never use internet facilities. In such cases, the training programmes should be organized for the teachers and students. The teachers should spend more time in the classroom for practice of pronunciation drill. Special courses should be organized for the English teachers (of primary, secondary, higher secondary school). Over all, the English pronunciation skill is one of the important components of professional English; it is a need of hour for the rural students to acquire the skill for jobs in various sectors at national and international level. Here are some facts and solutions that help the learner of pronunciation skill.

Facts:

- The English teachers (Primary, Secondary, Higher Secondary, and UG) do not pay attention to pronunciation skill with due consideration.
- Unavailability of electronic resource like Language Lab., internet facility, computers, etc.
- No special training programme for the teachers.
- Absentee in UG classroom
- Lack of proper environment for the students
- Teaching process at school level
- Untrained teachers at various educational level

Solutions:

- The teaching of English pronunciation has to be given due importance at primary, secondary school, and UG level.
- Audio-visual teaching Aids should be used for teaching pronunciation.
- Use of language laboratory and Pronunciation Dictionary
- Recording option must be used (smart phone)
- Smart phone can be used as teaching aid in the classroom.
- Listening TV news (BBC world) and reading English Newspaper



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► Refresher or training courses of pronunciation

Because of international truism, travel, trade and use of internet, the spoken form of English is on a high demand in all fields. It is expected that the academy provide professional speaker of the language. It is the huge responsibility of the teachers to enhance the teaching learning process with due consideration of BBC pronunciation.

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