

The Importance of Pronunciation: Considerations for the Classroom Teacher

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INTRODUCTION

Pronunciation is one of the most fundamental elements that a language teacher teaches. The second language (L2) speaker must be able to organize his ideas and then clearly communicate them. Vocabulary and grammatical structures are equally important, however they are of little use if they are not presented in a comprehensible manner. It is also important to differentiate between what is comprehensible and what is perfect -- the latter being a rarity, and therefore an unrealistic expectation of the learner and the teacher.

Pronunciation is the production of sounds in words and sentences and the proper placement of rhythm in stress and intonation patterns. Effective pronunciation places stress on ideas and facts that the speaker wishes to highlight and it helps convey the speaker's attitude. Correct pronunciation can easily be understood by a native speaker.

When teaching pronunciation, the teacher is providing the student with a model for producing a new sound system, which may be partially unfamiliar, and the techniques for mastering it. A large part of correct pronunciation will come naturally with time and exposure to the spoken language, however it is also effective to approach it directly. Correct pronunciation requires the ability to recognize new sounds, reproduce them, and remember them. This is easier for some students than others, thus different students will need to devote various amounts of attention to pronunciation practice.

This paper will discuss considerations for the teacher of pronunciation, with emphasis on the objectives for both student and teacher, student attitudes and their effect on pronunciation, errors and correction. In the first section, current thoughts on pronunciation teaching and how they have evolved during the past 50 years will be looked at, followed by a discussion of objectives and how to attain those goals.

AN OVERVIEW OF THE EVOLUTION OF PRONUNCIATION TEACHING DURING THE PAST 50 YEARS

Focus on pronunciation was an accepted and strong feature in the foreign language learning curriculum in the 1940s, 1950s and into the 1960s. In the late 1960s however, some basic changes in pedagogical philosophies started to occur. Into the 1970s, as the focus moved toward student-centered learning, so moved the focus away from pronunciation. Educators began to question, in general, the value of the direct-teach method, and whether you could learn anything about pronunciation in this way. Thus, as ideas continued to change through the 1970s and 1980s, pronunciation was often dropped from the curriculum. The traditional teaching of pronunciation (and most aspects of language teaching) seemed inappropriate as pedagogical ideas switched to communicative competence, task-based learning and authenticity. Both the process and the product of pronunciation work seemed inferior -- the process involved meaningless material, and the product was usually not up to a level wherein the time and energy spent were justified. Interest began to return in the 1980s and 1990s, as more and more articles and textbooks on pronunciation were written. Being a crucial part of language learning and worth attention, pronunciation was once again brought into focus, but the methods and perspectives on its teaching were reexamined and revised. What was needed was the inclusion of communication, meaningful material and a more learner-centered approach to the teaching of pronunciation.

OBJECTIVES FOR TEACHING PRONUNCIATION

The main goal for the pronunciation teacher should not be to produce perfect pronouncers. Most people will never have native-like pronunciation, particularly if they began learning the L2 after puberty. Therefore, it seems pointless to torture the teacher and the student by aiming for perfection. However, it is necessary to aim for the student being intelligible and communicative. It is important to differentiate between being incomprehensible and having a "foreign accent." It is also necessary for the teacher to instill in the students a sense of being in a partnership with the teacher, who, even more so than with other areas of L2 learning, facilitates in their mastery. Thus, students may need guidance adapting to this partnership, or viewing the teacher as a "coach."

The following list of objectives for the pronunciation teacher is based on helping the students develop self-monitoring skills and to promote positive attitudes, rather than aiming for perfect pronunciation.

Objectives:

1. To become aware of speech performance and production.

2. To develop skills for pronunciation practice and self-monitoring.
3. To overcome any anxiety involved in pronunciation practice and develop a positive attitude vis-a-vis pronunciation and correction.
4. To provide practice and techniques necessary to produce phonemes which do not exist in the L1.
5. To develop an awareness of the importance of stress and intonation in English.
6. To build confidence and develop an understanding that communication is possible without perfect pronunciation.

To achieve these objectives, the teacher must first create a supportive, comfortable environment. This environment must develop not only a supportive teacher-student relationship, but a supportive student-student relationship as well, so that students feel relaxed and unselfconscious. Having the students work in pairs or small groups can give students moral support, as well as keep the teacher in the background, and therefore resisting the temptation to over-correct. The teacher should be supportive and encouraging when the students are successful. It is often too easy for a teacher to point out mistakes and make corrections, forgetting praise at other times.

There are several kinds of pronunciation work helpful in the achievement of these objectives -- imitative, controlled, and free (yet guided) use. Imitating unfamiliar sounds can give students the skills or techniques needed to produce a sound that may not exist in the L1. Imitation is also used to give students the opportunity to practice various intonation and stress patterns that may also be unfamiliar. Controlled practice allows students a bit more freedom, but is focused on a particular pattern or sound, while putting it in a larger context, e.g. conversation form. Finally, free use allows the students to continue practicing the form, but what they are saying is not strictly written out. This could be done by visual cues such as pictures, but no words. Hopefully this will be a stepping stone towards carrying over the sound/s practiced into natural speech. It is quite often the case that a student may produce something correctly in class when focusing on it, but not when removed from the classroom setting.

The risk involved in such controlled practice and/or drilling is that it can become tedious, and detrimental if it increases inhibitions. Therefore, one must always remember that the goal is intelligibility and not perfection. There is a fine line between effective drilling/repetition, and over-drilling. The teacher must be sensitive to that and know when to stop, being attuned to the students' saturation point. It is difficult to know how much practice is necessary for changes to carry over into other speech outside of the class. Knowing when the students have reached the saturation point is generally an

easier matter -- it shows in their faces, and often the classroom noise level winds down as the students' enthusiasm for a certain task does. But it is also crucial to allow students enough time to manipulate or play with the new sounds, and not move on too quickly. As with any classroom situation, there is a concern with various levels and the fact that students work at different speeds. With a large group, perhaps it is best for the teacher to move on when the majority seems to be finished and encourage the slower students to continue to practice on their own, or to offer individual help while students are working alone or in smaller groups.

STUDENTS' ATTITUDES AND THEIR EFFECT ON PRONUNCIATION

As with any learning process, the affective domain plays a crucial role in the student's learning success. Although the affective factors to be discussed in this section generally hold true in any learning process, there are certain ones which are particularly important in pronunciation work. The two factors which seem to have the greatest effect on the student's ability to pronounce correctly are motivation and attitudes related to self-image. Motivation is a very broad area which is comprised of attitudes, but will be discussed separately. The attitudes related to personality or self include frustration, tolerance of ambiguity, positive self-image and confidence, and receptivity to new material.

Motivation

H. Douglas Brown (1987, p.114) states that, "Motivation is commonly thought of as an inner drive, impulse, emotion, or desire that moves one to a particular action." Each student comes into the class with his own level of motivation and individual reasons for wanting to improve his English. In this sense, motivation is not much in the teacher's control. However, if motivation is constructed of attitudes, the teacher can promote positive attitudes, which will increase motivation. Because it is ultimately the students' will and decision to put forth effort in learning, the teacher is truly a facilitator in this realm of language learning. The teacher can create an inviting and rewarding learning environment to increase motivation, however it is not information that can be "taught."

Attitudes

The student's attitude, or the affective domain of language learning, involves the emotional side of the learning process. It is all related to one's self-image, or knowledge and feelings about oneself. Any learning activity involves a certain awareness of this and the following attitudes are closely related to one's self-image: frustration, self-confidence, self-esteem, tolerance

of ambiguity, receptivity to new material and risk-taking. The following pages will define each of these attitudes, and describe how they are manifest in the pronunciation class and how they are interrelated.

Frustration

Because the pronunciation class focuses on producing unfamiliar sounds correctly, frustration is frequently and easily experienced. The endless repetition of sounds that the teacher hears but the student does not, can be very frustrating for the student.

Frustration can have a very adverse effect on learning, thus the teacher needs to be aware of its presence and control it. The teacher must recognize if a student is frustrated, or trying hard to master something. Should the student become too frustrated, they may decide they cannot succeed and give up. One way of alleviating a frustrating moment is by changing tasks, or another would be to add an element of humor to the situation.

Many Japanese students feel frustrated with their pronunciation, which is understandable after years of English education not focused on oral communication. Somewhere during their past learning experiences, many of them developed the concept that their pronunciation is inferior to other EFL learners. They tend to focus on what they produce incorrectly, rather than correctly. A certain level of dissatisfaction is necessary to have the motivation to improve. If the student feels too comfortable and confident with his pronunciation, he has no reason to better it. Simply the fact that the student feels frustrated should be viewed positively, as it shows that the student is aware of the errors, which is the first step towards correction. If one has the confidence or trust in oneself that the new material can be mastered, one is less likely to be overly frustrated in the early stages of learning.

Tolerance of Ambiguity and Receptivity to New Material

Being open to new material requires a certain tolerance of ambiguity. When learning new, unfamiliar sounds or pronunciation patterns, the student is dealing with things that are outside of his present realm of knowledge, and must be willing to accept this, particularly in the beginning stages.

Again, this is all related to one's self-image, and a sense of security and confidence that the ambiguous will eventually become understandable. The teacher can help the student tolerate ambiguity by not expecting too much too quickly, and by accepting the time and errors that are necessary before mastery of new material. By sufficiently covering new material and reviewing it in different ways over a period of time, the student will see that positive results do eventually occur, thus giving him a sense of security. In this respect, it takes time for the student to learn that results occur, and thus be more toler-

ant of ambiguity. It should then have a snowball effect -- the student will feel confident that he will succeed, feel motivated to continue, accept new material and ambiguity, and so on.

Self-Image/Self-Esteem

It is difficult to separate attitudes neatly under different headings, as illustrated in the previous paragraphs, they are all interrelated and based on one's self-image. Frustration, tolerance of ambiguity, receptivity to new material, risk-taking, inhibition, confidence -- the list can go on --all come down to how one views oneself and trusts that one can master the unknown. It is necessary in a way, for a student to take on a new identity when learning a new language (or specifically a new sound system). One must have the self-esteem and confidence to put aside certain aspects of their self identity and accept this new self that is not in total control.

In regards to self-confidence, one effective way of increasing it is simply by understanding what the student says. It is always rewarding for the student to be understood by a native speaker, or someone competent in the L1. It reassures the student that while he is correcting pronunciation errors, he is still capable of communicating and producing comprehensible speech. This usually encourages him to speak more, which will allow the practice necessary for improving pronunciation.

Another way of raising a student's self-esteem is to allow him to self-correct. If the student spots and corrects the error, rather than the teacher, he is less likely to take it personally; he also feels more in control of his learning. In addition, it gives him a sense of accomplishment, as he has discovered his own error. This will be discussed in further detail in the section on error correction.

There is a fine line between allowing frustration and self-criticism to have a positive effect and allowing them to have an adverse affect. The students should view their awareness of errors as a positive step towards correction, and not be frustrated by the errors. By realizing they are making mistakes, they should be motivated to improve and will have the ability to do so. If a student seems frustrated about a mistake, the teacher can praise the fact that he knew it was wrong. This way, he feels some sense of accomplishment and does not feel inhibited about making mistakes.

COMMON PRONUNCIATION ERRORS

Pronunciation errors can be categorized under three headings -- phonemic substitution, stress and intonation, and unfamiliar usage of sounds. The following section will briefly define each of these categories and discuss some of the reasons they are made and the students' reaction when confronting

the problems.

When working with these problems, it will be helpful for both the teacher and the student if some specialized vocabulary is taught first, as well as some advice on practice. Technical descriptions of speech production and phonetic symbols can seem overwhelming to an elementary student. However, some simplified, basic vocabulary is worthwhile. The organs of speech can be taught with a simple diagram of the mouth, upper and lower teeth, tongue, lips, roof of the mouth, throat and vocal cords. Other vocabulary that students should be familiar with are -- vowel, consonant, stress, rhythm and intonation. (An advanced class may be interested in more terminology, but this is sufficient for the lower level class.)

Another aid for students working on pronunciation would be a list of suggestions for studying outside of class. This will help students develop self-sufficiency in their learning, through self-monitoring. The following are possible suggestions to include.

1. Practice aloud and listen to yourself. If possible, record your voice and listen afterwards.
2. Practice what was covered in class the same night at home.
3. Practice in front of a mirror when working on a new sound.
4. Have patience. It takes time and practice to learn a new way of speaking.

Phonemic Substitution

One of the most challenging aspects of mastering pronunciation results from the difference between two languages phonemic systems. If a sound does not exist in the other language, it will naturally be a source of errors. In the production of any language, one must have the ability to distinguish a sound before having the ability to produce it. For example, a Japanese student may have difficulty recognizing the difference between the English /r/ and /l/, as they are not part of the Japanese sound system. The process of correct production cannot begin until the student can perceive the sound aurally. If an English phoneme has an L2 counterpart, the student will have less difficulty with its production.

When confronting an unfamiliar sound, the reaction of the student will be to replace it with a familiar sound that is similar. (An example of this would be the Japanese student substituting /b/ for /v/.) Phonemic substitution not only occurs with the replacement of an unfamiliar phoneme with a familiar one, it also occurs in the process of over-correction.

Over-correction is a common pattern in many learning situations, however it is useful to understand what role it plays in pronunciation practice. As the student's production of the new sound becomes more accurate and auto-

matic, he will have the tendency to over-use the newly learned phoneme and incorrectly substitute it for other sounds. Phonemic substitution is a critical pronunciation error, as it can result in the speaker being unintelligible.

One of the main objectives of any language learning situation is to work with meaningful and/or authentic material, however some specific work on an unfamiliar sound can be effective in giving the student the necessary practice to distinguish the sound aurally, as well as exercising the speech organs needed. Allowing the students ample opportunity to repeat and mimic a new sound will abet in their remembering and over-learning it, thus it is more likely to carry into their natural speech. This can be done through minimal pairs (e.g. rock-lock) and phoneme discrimination drills, being careful to avoid over-drilling, as discussed previously. Including a diagram of the organs of speech when introducing a new sound can be a great aid to the students if it involves a different technique than they are accustomed to. The amount of time spent on minimal pair drills should be limited, as it not only becomes tedious, it can cause frustration in the students if they are not successfully hearing or producing the sound.

Stress and Intonation

Correct stress and intonation is an extremely important element of English pronunciation, as it can affect the meaning of what is being said and conveys the speaker's attitude. In individual words, incorrect stress will cause the speaker to be difficult or impossible to understand. In longer utterances, incorrect stress and intonation may cause the speaker's feeling or attitude to be misunderstood. It will affect the intelligibility of the L2 speaker even more so than incorrect individual sounds. Working on individual sounds has its place in the pronunciation classroom, however, it will be more efficient to work on them in an L2 rhythm context. Producing L2 sounds produced with an L1 rhythm can be very difficult to understand.

Differences between Japanese and English stress and intonation patterns frequently pose problems for the Japanese learner of English. One of the main differences is that Japanese syllables generally receive equal stress, which is not the case in English. The lengthening or shortening of sounds, stress and changing pitch all work together to create the rhythm and melody of English and cannot be separated.

Stress

Stress is the degree of force in production. In English, stress is placed on syllables (e.g. atTACK), words, phrases or sentences by an increase in volume, length or by using a higher pitch. (e.g. They're in the HOUSE.) Thus, stressed syllables or words will be more prominent and may be used for

emphasis or contrast. Stressed syllables in words are not changeable, however stressed words in phrases or sentences may vary with the intended meaning. For, example, in the sentence, "I like the blue shirt," the speaker may convey four different meanings by placing the stress on different words. If the stress is on the "I" it suggests that no one else likes the shirt. If "like" is stressed, the emphasis is on the speaker's feeling about the shirt. Stress on "blue" indicates a contrast -- not any other color shirt. If the stress is placed on "shirt" it may indicate another contrast -- the shirt, not the pants, for example.

English speakers also use stress to link words together to form phrases, each phrase having a stressed word. (e.g. "Go to **BED** and stop **CRYing**.") In general, words that are stressed in a sentence are nouns, main verbs, adjectives and adverbs. Words that are generally unstressed are articles, prepositions, pronouns and conjunctions. (Of course this will vary with the speaker's purpose.) The syllable stress on individual words must be learned with each new word, as there is no general rule.

English uses stress and intonation to highlight words, whereas in Japanese particles such as "wa" and "ga" can perform that function. Because Japanese syllables receive equal stress, the learner may have difficulty with English stress patterns. The most difficult area of stress for the Japanese student is the use of reduced syllables in individual words, as this does not occur in Japanese, but occurs frequently in English. (e.g. tonight /tənaɪt/; roses /rozɪz/). Take for example the English pronunciation of "banana," /bə nə na/ and the Japanese version, /ba na na/. This shortening and lengthening of sounds and use of reduced sounds (the schwa /ə/) is an important difference. A teacher working in Japan may easily understand the Japanese pronunciation from experience, however someone unfamiliar with the Japanese language probably will not. If the student does not use proper stress while speaking, his speech will sound monotonous and mechanical, but more importantly, it may be incomprehensible.

Intonation

Intonation is the pattern of pitch, and combined with stress, gives the language melody. The most important function of intonation is grammatical. Like punctuation in writing, intonation is used to indicate a question or a statement. Rising intonation is used at the end of yes/no and tag questions. (e.g. "Is he coming?" and "It's raining, isn't it?"). Falling intonation indicates the end of a statement or wh-question. In alternative questions, rising and falling intonation indicates that the listener is expected to make a choice, not answer yes or no: e.g. "Are you going to night or tomorrow?"

The next most important function of intonation is to convey the speaker's attitude. By varying intonation patterns, the speaker may use the same words

to convey different feelings such as hesitation, anger, kindness, sarcasm, etc. For example, when saying, "thank you," a lower pitch for "you" generally expresses a sincere gratitude. If the pitch is lower on "thank" it is generally used as a casual acknowledgement, such as a store clerk may use. A speaker may use rising intonation to express uncertainty or falling intonation to express certainty. (e.g. I[↑]am? I[↓]am.) Another example of how intonation can project different attitudes is in the statement, "that's too bad." Rising intonation and stress on "too" will convey a harsher uncaring feeling, whereas stress and rising intonation on "bad" will express sincerity and sound soothing. Because of the abstract and cultural aspect that is involved, this is often difficult for the L2 student to understand.

Intonation as a grammatical function does not seem to pose a great deal of difficulty for the Japanese student. However, the other functions and patterns of stress and intonation are very different and thus problematic. As most of the students' past English learning experiences have been primarily written, their contact with the spoken language has been limited and they are not accustomed to the melody and rhythm of English and will need to have their attention called to it.

When practicing the melody of English, having students role play dialogues and exaggerate their gestures, stress and intonation usually helps them to relax and sound more natural than when they do a straightforward reading. Having the students "warm up" with short exclamations with a short exclamation in a variety of ways can also be a useful to relax students draw their attention to the melody and rhythm of English. (For example, reading something loudly, quietly, in an angry or happy tone, with excitement or sarcasm, etc.) This also allows the students to enjoy speaking in a totally different manner and helps put them in the mode of taking on a new identity, thus relaxing more and trying to imitate the voice more precisely. Carolyn Graham's Jazz Chants, which are chanted to a beat, are especially useful for drawing attention to the rhythm of English. Communicative activities such as an information searches can be done to practice rising intonation in questions. The questions can be written out initially for a controlled practice, moving into a freer use wherein the questions are stimulated by cues. Overall, practices that involve stress and intonation, rather than just specific sounds, will be more effective in the long run.

Unfamiliar Usages of Sounds

This category of frequently made errors includes sounds which exist in both Japanese (or the L1) and English, but have different patterns of occurrence. The principle difference between Japanese and English, which is the basis for most of these errors, is the phonemic system of Japanese, which is

based on a consonant-vowel syllable structure. A vowel may form a syllable by itself, however a consonant must always be followed by a vowel, except in the case of the Japanese /n/. Due to this difference in syllable formation, the most difficult structure for the Japanese student to pronounce in English are consonant clusters. Consonant clusters are sequences of consonants at the beginning and end of words and syllables, e.g. street, month. Consonant clusters occur frequently in English. The student will generally try to break up these clusters by adding a vowel between consonants. For example, the word "Christmas" sounds like "kurisumasu." If the cluster includes a sound which does not exist in Japanese, such as in the word "threw," obviously the problem is compounded and will be very difficult for the student to pronounce correctly. Very often, the student will substitute the unfamiliar sound with a familiar sound - e.g. "s" for "th." If the student does pronounce the cluster, he will frequently add an extra vowel sound after the final consonant of a final cluster - e.g. threw is pronounced "suruu" or "toast" as "tosuto."

The consonant clusters which are important because of their grammatical function occur in the final position and are used to form the plural (cups), regular simple past tense (typed, lived), and the possessive and third person singular (likes, leaves). These are ending with the phonemes /s/, /z/, /t/, /d/. The most frequent reaction of the student to these endings is to omit them, thus making pronunciation and grammatical errors.

Some students may never completely master consonant clusters, however they should be made aware of their spelling. Students should write the sounds correctly, regardless of whether or not they can produce them. By working on specific problem areas in pronunciation, the student learns which sounds are difficult for them, and that they may need to consult a dictionary when writing them.

ERROR CORRECTION

One important aspect of promoting positive attitudes is the manner in which the teacher approaches error correction. In an area as specialized as pronunciation, correction is a key issue. Too much correction can lead to frustration and a sense of failure. Allowing the student to self-correct whenever possible can help promote a positive self-image, as it provides the student with a sense of accomplishment during the learning process and protects the ego. This also allows the student to focus on his improvement rather than on his errors, as well as to take control of his learning, which is more profitable for the student. As this is not a common practice in Japan where the teacher is generally in control, it will take some practice on the part of the student. This can be done by the teacher pausing and/or asking a simple "Okay?" to allow the student time to correct himself after the student says the structure being

practiced, to let him decide if it was correct or not. After doing this for a while, the students develop a sense of how to critically listen to themselves -- by doing it themselves and by listening to their classmates do it. If this technique is difficult in the early stages of a course, peer-correction, or group-correction, can be a good way of initiating this critical listening skill in a non-threatening fashion.

It is also important for the teacher to keep an "open ear" when listening to students' pronunciation, and consider what another listener not familiar with the L2 would understand. It is very easy for a teacher dealing regularly with a particular group of learners to automatically translate the errors and understand what was intended. Therefore, the teacher needs to step into the role of another English speaker who is unknowing of the learner's language, and decide whether certain errors can go uncorrected or not.

Adding a playful element to an activity can also help students get used to correction, without intimidation, while increasing their confidence and encouraging risk-taking. An example of this is to let students choose what they want to practice, say it out loud to the teacher (or a partner) who in turn writes down what they heard. This technique allows the student to visually see how he is being understood, as well as providing the student the opportunity to correct himself. If the teacher is writing the word on the board, he /she need not say anything, as the student will see the part that was mispronounced. This activity is generally enjoyable for the students, as they are anxious to try out different words and are often amused by what they see written. This gives the student a sense of control because they chose the item, and they are not embarrassed by their mistake, as other students are going to be making mistakes also, as they are choosing their problem area. This sort of self-correction will be more meaningful and long lasting than if the teacher has done it.

Finally, the teacher should make it evident to the student that he is producing correct speech. Too often teachers pounce on an error and neglect all the other elements that were produced correctly. The teacher must also consider if an error is worth correcting. If an error does not greatly diminish the student's intelligibility, perhaps it is not necessary to correct. To avoid making students overly self-conscious about pronunciation errors, it may be useful to note their errors and come back to them later with flash cards, writing them on the board, or providing them with a handout for the next class. This way the student is detached from the error, and the whole class can correct and practice the target structure together, not only the individual(s) who originally made the error. The teacher must be aware of how students deal with correction -- some will welcome it and others will be discouraged by it if not done in a manner sensitive to their feelings.

CONCLUSION

When teaching pronunciation, it is crucial for the teacher to be sensitive to frustration and the minimization thereof. The student must believe in his ability to master the unknown and have the confidence to speak and continue trying. If the teacher can create a relaxed atmosphere wherein the student feels free to take risks, then learning is possible. By allowing sufficient time for review, repetition, and seeing positive results, the teacher is able to promote the confidence and motivation necessary for improvement. Limiting frustration is a key element in this process.

Another foremost obligation of the pronunciation teacher is to speak naturally. This may sound quite simple and obvious, however it is often a challenge to not slow down one's speech and over-enunciate. It may help the students at the time, however in the long run it is a disservice, as they have difficulty understanding other native speakers speaking naturally. Speaking naturally includes not increasing volume, slowing down, or pronouncing letters that are not normally pronounced, or at least not clearly pronounced. The dropping and blending of sounds is an important part of speech. (For example, "gonna" for "going to" "meecha" for "meet you", etc.) This does not necessarily mean that beginning level students need to use those types of speech patterns, however, they should recognize them. Speaking naturally also means speaking one's own dialect. The students can hear other dialects of English through videos, radio, other speakers of English, and movies. One of the main reasons for speaking naturally is to be consistent. If the students hear the teacher pronouncing sounds or words during drills differently outside of class, this inconsistency may cause the student to feel insecure or frustrated when he discovers that his understanding of English in the classroom does not carry over into other situations.

The role of the teacher is to provide students with material and control for learning, as well as provide them with skills to be independent learners. Because pronunciation work lends itself to a great deal of control, (i.e., minimal pairs and sentences, dialogs, "Jazz Chants," etc.) it is necessary to allow enough time for less controlled and free practice. Very often, students will do well with the drills, but not as well outside of the structured setting. Therefore it is vital to include one or more activities with minimal structure in every session.

The challenge of pronunciation work is to use communicative approaches which focus on creativity and self-study. In summary, the teacher of pronunciation must create a positive environment wherein students feel confident and relaxed, provide them with ample opportunities to practice with varying levels of control, include meaningful material, and maintain realistic objectives on both the part of the teacher and the student. In addition, if the goal is to

produce a speaker who is easily understood and one who has the ability to self-monitor and take control of his own learning, then both teacher and student will succeed.

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