

Pronunciation as an integral part of ESP

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Abstract: This article discusses specific peculiarities of teaching pronunciation in technical institutions, which has always been one of the most essential matters of methodology of foreign languages. The main aim of the given research is to analyze and suggest the effective methods and ways of teaching pronunciation in technical institutions. Participants of the study were groups of learners of Turin Polytechnic University in Tashkent at intermediate level.

Key words: EFL, ESP, teaching pronunciation, sound system, effective methods of teaching English, drill, methodology, foreign language classes, level, learners

Introduction

Teaching foreign languages, specifically the English language has become one of the most actual issues in our country recent years as the state government of the Republic of Uzbekistan has been paying a special attention at the development of educational system at present time. The most vital example for this statement can be the decree “On measures to further improvement of foreign language teaching system” from the 10th of December, 2012. This law is a cause of deep reformatations in the education system, particularly secondary education system of the Republic of Uzbekistan as teaching English began with the 1st grades beginning with September 2013.

A lot of reforms have been performed in higher educational system as well as the place for teaching English has been increased. One of the frequent requirements for the university graduates of each institution is to know a foreign language, namely the English language at present time. That is why English as a foreign language is being taught at all institutions, specifically non-philological ones to meet the requirements put forward by the present government of our country.

A number of great linguists such as V. Vassilyev, A. Abduazizov, D. Jones, A. Gimson and many others have fruitfully investigated different features of English pronunciation from linguistic point. Many scholars on teaching foreign languages such as L. Akhmedova, B. Normuratova, A. Johns, J. Crofts, A. Waters, T. Hutchinson, J. Anderson-Hsieh, A. Baldry, M. Beckman, B. Bradford, M. Celce-Murcia have investigated different features of teaching foreign languages, namely teaching pronunciation and teaching ESP. Their works are taken as the base of our research. The main material is taken from different books related to teaching pronunciation and certain websites connected to teaching English as a foreign language.

First of all, we would like to give a brief general information about teaching English for specific purpose (ESP). The authors like Johns¹, Crofts², and especially Hutchinson and Waters³ are devoted to the study of different features of teaching English for specific purpose. According to Johns in “English for Specific Purposes (ESP): Its History and Contributions,” there are two major subcategories of ESP: English for Occupational Purposes, which includes VESL and Professional English (EOP), and English for Academic Purposes (EAP), which encompasses English for Academic Purposes (other than EST) and English for Science and Technology (EST). Like many composition classes for native speakers, ESP classrooms characteristically

¹ Johns, A. M. (1991). English for specific purposes (ESP): its history and contributions. In M. Celce-Murcia (Ed.), Teaching English as a second or foreign language (pp. 67-77). New York: Newbury House.

² Crofts, J.N. (1981). Subjects and objects in ESP teaching materials. In L. Selinker, E. Tarone, & V. Hanzeli (Eds.), English for academic and technical purposes: Studies in honor of Louis Trimble (pp. 147-153). MA: Newbury House Publishers.

³ Hutchinson, T. & Waters, A. (1987). English for specific purposes: A learning-centered approach. London: Cambridge UP.

include students with a wide variety of language backgrounds, mixed English skills, and a need to be taught quickly either through self-instruction or in limited classroom time.

It is common knowledge that English became an important language of science and business after World War II, which was one of the first reasons for the necessity of ESP. Radical changes were observed in teaching English. Teaching methodology changed from teacher-centered approach to a learner-centered, and teaching on the basis of communication, i.e. communicative approach became as main technique in EFL classes. Language material about the specialty of learners began to motivate the language learners which also caused the growth and development of ESP.

Methods

There are three main layers in every language such as grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation. Grammar is a structure of a language, whereas vocabulary includes words and phrases without which language cannot exist. As for pronunciation, it should be mentioned that these both language layers cannot be fully realized without it. So, pronunciation is one of the most important parts of language. Teaching pronunciation plays an essential in teaching English as a foreign language.

According to L. Akhmedova and V. Normuratova, the concept of “pronunciation” may be said to include¹:

- the sounds of the language, or phonology;
- stress and rhythm;
- intonation.

The first of these, according to authors, is perhaps the most obvious and clearly defined of the three. The sound system of any language, specifically English has its own peculiarities. It is concerned with the linguistic expression represented in the speech sounds, syllables, stress and intonation. Phonetics mainly deals with oral speech.

As we know phonetics is the science of speech sounds. But sounds may be considered from two opposite points of view as such the organic and the acoustic. From the organic point of view a sound is a result of certain actions and positions of the organs of speech, as when we define [f] as a lip teeth (labio-dental) consonant. This is the point of view of the speaker of a language. To the hearer, on the other hand, [f] is not a lip tooth, but a fricative consonant similar to that denoted by **th**. This is the acoustic point view. Theoretically, the organic study of phonetics is a branch of anatomy and physiology: that part of these sciences which deals with the organs of speech and their functions; while, from the opposite point of view, the study of phonetics is based on that branch of physical science known as acoustics, together with the anatomy and physiology of the organs of hearing.

It is not a secret that many English teachers try to avoid teaching pronunciation thinking that the learners may acquire all speech sounds and the way of uttering sentences in connected speech. This may be because of the absence of certain sounds existing in learned language in mother tongue, because of difference of accentual structure of words between mother tongue and foreign language. In teaching pronunciation there are at least two methodological problems the teacher faces:

- 1) to determine the cases where conscious manipulation of speech organs is required, and the cases where simple imitation can be used;
- 2) to decide on types of exercises and techniques of using them.

Teaching English pronunciation should be based on methodological principles – this means to instruct pupils in a way they would lead them to conscious assimilation of the phonic aspect of teaching a foreign language.

Some teachers suggest three big barriers like anxiety, learned helplessness and cultural identity to good English pronunciation. Not every student will have all of these problems, but it is a sure thing that all of them will have at least one of these problems to a greater or lesser extent. As English teachers we have to find ways to bring these problems to our students’ attention in non-threatening ways, as well as suggest tools and strategies for dealing with them. Fun activities, tape scripts and video materials can help language learners to

¹ Akhmedova L. T. , Normuratova V.I. (2011) Teaching English Practicum, T., p.52

deal with difficulties of English pronunciation. Teaching pronunciation properly by means of audiolingual and visual ways can be fun, easy, and useful learning experience for teachers and their pupils.

There are a number of strategies of teaching pronunciation. One of them is suggested by F. Cheng who recommended the following strategies to teach pronunciation¹:

- 1) Providing meaningful materials: Teachers choose several articles of various styles from the student textbooks to use as models for practicing linking, rhythm, stress or intonation. Students feel that the pronunciation class is relevant to their regular course work. Thus, they become active participants in their pair or group work.
- 2) Using songs, games and tongue twisters: Using songs, games, and tongue twisters can increase student motivation in a pronunciation class: motivation is a highly significant factor in pronunciation.
- 3) Assessing students' progress: Assessing progress is a crucial factor in maintaining students' motivation.

It is clear that not all of the learners have the same abilities, experience, skills and interests. Some of the learners understand and learn better visually, others by aural, while others learn better by feeling or physically involved. Therefore, it is important to choose the correct and appropriate method to match the learners' age, mentality, abilities and interests. Moreover, the scientific sphere the students studying plays an essential role in teaching English as a foreign language.

Majority of scientists believe that learning any foreign language requires to learn a large vocabulary, sufficient grammar and correct pronunciation as according to many outstanding linguists a language consists of three main layers, namely vocabulary (lexicology), grammar and pronunciation (phonetics). At present time all language skills are being taught at the same time, and a syllabus includes enough hours for each skill. It goes without saying that teaching pronunciation, in general plays an essential role in practical English lessons. Teaching ESP has always been and is an inseparable part of the present-day methodology of teaching English as a foreign language.

Results and Analysis

The main objective of the researchers is to determine the role of teaching pronunciation to the students of non-philological faculties. The researchers got acquaintance with the syllabus of the institute which was based on the book "Technical English 2 Course Book" – the book where all language skills are found. Besides that, there is "Work book". While leaning the use of the book in practice the researcher picked up necessary information about the role of pronunciation in teaching English at technical institution. Moreover, observation and experiments attained the researcher has found the answer to the put forward question beforehand. In general, it is possible to state that teaching pronunciation at non-philological faculties is important as any other language skills such as vocabulary, grammar, speaking, listening, reading and writing.

Most of the learners believe that to speak English is mostly based on the way of pronunciation as if one makes a pronunciation mistake the person who is listening may misunderstand them. In order to find an answer to the above stated question, the researcher made an observation and prepared a questionnaire for the teachers of non-philological institution and analyzed "Technical English teacher's book" in-detail. It became obvious that different methods of teaching pronunciation are used in practical lessons to make the lesson easier and more interesting. In teaching pronunciation, a special attention is paid at teaching sounds- vowels and consonants, word stress, syllable and intonation. In addition to that, the teachers use reviews after the end of every two units where a special attention is paid to revise all passed material.

First of all, teachers should motivate learners as they feel confident observing their improvement in speaking English. Besides that, correct pronunciation of English words will be helpful in communication with native English speakers and all other foreigners. Moreover, to be well aware of the right English pronunciation will be useful in their future personal and professional life. In general, using different methods makes the lesson more interesting.

¹ Cheng, F. (1998). The Teaching of Pronunciation to Chinese Students of English. English Teaching Forum, Jan-Mar, 1998, 37-39.

According to the experiment carried out it would be possible to single out more effective using different methods at the same time to increase a learners' pronunciation skills. For instance, using the audio-lingual method with role play. Here the teacher plays a script which is a dialogue between two technicians about solving a certain problem. Then a teacher asks the pupils to perform the dialogue.

Conclusion

Teaching English as a foreign language is one of the most essential problems of the present-day educational process. Although there are not many difference between EFL and ESL, there should be pointed certain features of teaching English for specific purpose taught in non-philological institutions. Teaching pronunciation is very important aspect of teaching English as a foreign language as it is pronunciation that demonstrates the speaker language level. There are a number effective ways and methods of teaching pronunciation in English lesson such as audiolingual, audiovisual and communicative methods which make the foreign language learning process easy and useful. By means of these methods the students of technical institutions can learn English easily. Summarizing all above mentioned it is possible to draw a conclusion that teaching pronunciation in ESP classes is one of the most important and interesting issues of methodology of foreign languages at present time.

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