

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Vol. 4. Issue.4., 2017 (Oct-Dec)

ISSN

INTERNATIONAL  
STANDARD  
SERIAL  
NUMBER  
INDIA

2395-2628(Print):2349-9451(online)

PRONUNCIATION SKILLS AT SECONDARY LEVEL OF EDUCATION: A GATEWAY TO  
EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION SKILLS

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ABSTRACT

English is an international language. It has become a part and parcel of our life. In every field of occupation, it is essential to have knowledge of communication skills. Every competitive exam too has English language as a part of their testing. Basically English language links us to the whole world. India is a developing country and moving towards maintaining relationship with foreign countries. We need some source of communication that is provided by English Language only. But we somehow lack good pronunciation. Good communication skills are not possible until and unless we have a command on pronunciation. It even enhances our personality. We all come across educational institutions and if this knowledge is made a part of our early education than we can come across all the problems. The young generation could be blessed with what is lacking in us. The secondary school education plays an important role in the life of a person. It is the stage when you can remember things at a good pace and with an everlasting memory. It is not that students should be overburdened with this single skill only but the basic part should be introduced at this stage that could be done with the knowledge of Phonetic Transcription and knowledge of varieties of English language.

1. INTRODUCTION

Secondary Education takes place after primary education, when the budding minds are brought on the track of learning and before higher education or vocational training, when one needs to set target for lifetime. So, this is the high time for a new and everlasting skill to be introduced to the students. They are fond of learning new concepts and try to use them at their level best. It is not that a professional understanding of any skill can take place at this stage but the basics could be well established that could reach the zenith of knowledge by the passage of time. Their mind is ready to except the versatile tasks at this level. Though Communication skills are made a part of the syllabus but majority of the curriculum lacks a proper binding of sources to be included in it. We can focus on the basic details of the pronunciation system and some prevailing varieties of English language as all the varieties is a hard nut to crack for everyone. Basically it is only two varieties that can meet our end. Audio visual methods can be used by teachers in schools. Tours and excursions should be made a part of students' curriculum where they play and enjoy using communication skills. The only drawback of our Indian students is that they hesitate to speak English. They should be taught the importance of communication skills in their career and should never be discouraged under any circumstances.

## 2. PRESENT STATUS OF STUDENTS

Sometimes we have noticed that even a well versed student or a person is unable to use correct pronunciation skills .Some people boast of the best of their communication skills but they really laugh or find out the symbols used in the dictionaries complex to understand. If we look at the Indian system of education there are majority of cases in which a student passes out the tough examination but is unable to go through his interview. Out of such students even many are such who do not even know why they get rejected instead of good communication skills. The actual thing that they are devoid of is pronunciation, yes communication skills being the important element. To improve the present status the answer to the following questions should be Yes.

Q.1 Is my English easy to understand?

Q.2 Is my English good to listen to?

Q3. Am I getting feedback for what I say?

Q4. Are people interested to communicate with me or participate in discussions with me?

Till the time you achieve Yes for these question, by that time you cannot say that you have a good grasp of English Communication Skills. This does not mean that you follow the foreign accent as that can make things difficult for the people who listen to you. If such unpleasant thing takes place people will escape or avoid talking to you. On the other hand if you have clear communication skills people would love to talk to you.

At present, we can find people using slangs and short forms in English Language but they need to understand that there are some varieties in English language and each variety should be used according to the demands of the surroundings.

## 3. KNOWLEDGE TO BE IMPARTED

First of all it should be made clear that to clear endless number of varieties of English is a difficult task. To make our task easy and useful, only two types of English can be gone through:

1. British English (Received Pronunciation)

2. American English

Understanding of these two varieties can help us communicate effectively around the globe. Indian Government follows British English and we being Indians have to follow what our government accepts. American English is also used in India but for computer usage like for chatting or talking unofficially to someone. The study of these two varieties is must. Sometimes in Indian classrooms students ask the correct spellings of some words which in both of the ways they say are correct but we finally fail to make them understand the difference. The logic is that the spellings used under British English are appropriate whereas those used as American English are inappropriate. But, both ways they are in no sense wrong. For this students can go through the following chart:

**FAMILY CHART**

Family Name	u-family	Re/er family	Ae/e family	Li/I family	Lyse/lyze family	Logue/log family
B.E	Colour,favour,honour...	Centre,fi bre.....	Aesthetic,anaemia, encyclopaedia....	Fulfill,instill,c olourfull.....	Paralyse,analys e,catalyse..	Catalogue,analogu e,monologue...
A.E	Color,favor ,honor...	Center,fi ber...	esthetic,anemia,enc yclopedia..	Fulfil,instil,col orful...	Paralyze,analyz e,catalyze....	Catalog,analog,mo nolog...

Note: B.E is used for British English and A.E for America English

Moving towards the pronunciation, if the following 3 points are kept into consideration, then also the level of pronunciation can be improved up to a great extent. The only point to take into consideration is that the secondary level student must at least be aware of basic spoken English. One should not look at the alphabet written below rather consider its sound for its usage.

1. In B.E , 'R' sound should be kept silent until and unless it is followed by any vowel sound( a,e,i,o,u) it means sound should be kept silent in words like duster, flower, power, shower, clever etc. if it is followed by any vowel sound like rotate, rest, scrap, roar, random, scrub, fruit etc then only the r

sound should be audible. But, on other hand in A.E, 'r' sound is not at all kept silent. Remember one should not pay attention to what comes before r rather what comes after r.

2. In B.E 'A' sound is lengthened and elasticized, it is spoken with a stretch where as in A.E the 'a' sound is kept short with no stretch at all in fact it is sometimes made too compressed to speak.
3. In B.E, there is a difference between p,t,k,ph,th and kh sounds like pot, tap, kite, phosphorous, thank and khamsin but in A.E p, k, t sounds do not exist at all rather in place of these sounds ph, th, kh are used respectively like they speak phot, thap, khith etc.

This was the basic and easy tips to remember and next to it can be the basics of Phonetic transcription where the student should be told about the symbols only through which if they need help can be supported by the good dictionaries. The symbols can be learnt in a easy way by dividing them into 2 groups i.e., Vowels and Consonants

Generally up to such level of education students consider only this meaning in mind that out of 26 alphabets of English language a, e, i, o, u are vowels and rest of them are consonants. So, this much knowledge is enough at their part as they just need to understand the symbols and should be given help of their mother tongue.

#### SYMBOLS RELATED TO VOWELS.

SYMBOL	VOWEL WORD	HINDI TRANSLATION
I	kit	किट
e	set	सेट
æ	cat	कैट
ɒ	dot	डोट
ʌ	but	बट
ʊ	look	लुक
ə	brother	ब्रदर
i:	bean	बीन
ɜ:	burn	बन
ɑ:	warn	वान
ɔ:	horn	हॉर्न
U:	moon	मून
eɪ	gait	गयिट
ɔɪ	boy	बाय
əʊ	toe	टो
au	mouse	माउस
ʊə	poor	पूआ
ɪə	ear	ईयर
aɪ	bite	बाईट
eə	air	एयर

#### SYMBOLS RELATED TO CONSONANTS

SYMBOLS	CONSONANT WORD	HINDI TRANSLATION
p	pat	पैट
b	bat	बैट
t	top	टॉप
d	dog	डॉग
k	cat	कैट
g	got	गोट
f	fan	फैन
v	van	वैन
s	sad	सेड
z	zoo	जु
m	man	मैन
n	no	नो
h	hot	हॉट
l	lot	लोट
r	rat	रैट
w	wed	वेड
θ	think	थिंक
ð	them	दैम
ʃ	shy	शाई
ʒ	measure	मेय्यर

ʃ	chime	चाइम
dʒ	jam	जैम
j	yum	यम
ŋ	king	किंग

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Students constitute our future generation and whatever knowledge is imparted to them and through whichever mode, generations are going to follow that. Moving towards progress is the major issue nowadays and to achieve something we need to build up contacts as nothing can be done in isolation. This task of having good tie ups need our communication to be very effective and the scenario demands English as our medium of communication. As asserted good pronunciation should be a part of communication skills. Government of India should try to add it to the curriculum especially for practical knowledge of students. Well equipped laboratories should be there in secondary schools and should really be brought into use rather than just having it for the name sake. If computers are made a part of their study, practical communication skills can also be added up. Schools should motivate the parents as to help their kids in this context as parents play positive role along with teachers in shaping the career of students. Well-qualified teachers are mandatory for this task. Further, this kind of knowledge should be given to the teachers of different subjects also. Pronunciation can be made a part of practical exams in schools. Audio video arrangements should also be there so that students can avail the facility of watching animated sensible English movies within the campus as they can learn a lot through watching. There is really a need of an hour to pay attention on this aspect.

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