

TEACHING ENGLISH PRONUNCIATION: AN ESP CLASSROOM PRACTICE

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The paper focuses on the problem of teaching English pronunciation in the ESP classroom. The paper is an attempt to answer the question of how to make it an interesting and engaging way while keeping the general course on professionalization of study. Several ways of interesting pronunciation teaching are proposed: phonetic spelling, sounds recognition, mimicking, tongue twisters, and limericks. The ways of incorporating these methods into English for Professional Purposes lessons are suggested.

Key words: *ESP, teaching English pronunciation.*

The development and diversification of language teaching theory has led to the “Abbreviation Era” of language teaching with the introduction of such language branches as EGP (English for General Purposes), ESP (English for Specific Purposes), ESL (English as a Second language), EFL (English as a Foreign Language), EAP (English for Academic Purposes), etc. With such diversity of branches (which mainly focus on content specification), the challenges remain to effectively teach language basics, with pronunciation being one of the most important ones.

Phonetic competence is the ability to correctly articulate and use proper intonation in own speech and to understand speech of other people, which is based on complex and dynamic interaction of skills, knowledge and phonetic consciousness [1]. Being the basis of any language acquisition, pronunciation is often perceived as the first stage of teaching language which should be done in primary / secondary schools. Nevertheless, a Ukrainian student of technical university, who is actually studying EFL ESP, may still struggle with proper articulation of general words as, for example, “key” or “knowledge” due to the gaps in previous EGP EFL experience. Thus, of great importance is recapitulation and teaching pronunciation in ESP classroom. The question is how to teach in an interesting and engaging way while keeping the general course on professionalization of study. In this paper we will try to focus on some practical ways of incorporating pronunciation in teaching.

First of all, to remind (or teach) students **phonetic spelling** it is good to play a game in which you give students cards with phonetically spelled words and ask them to write and pronounce the word. The key point here is to choose the

vocabulary from the specialization sphere, like “engineering”, “tools” or “electricity”. This task may seem easy at first, but this impression disappears when students start to deal with /'sɜ:kɪt/, /'daɪəʊd/, or /'θɜ:m(ə)l/.

Another kind of phonetic activity is **sounds recognition**. The main idea is to teach students to differentiate between letters (26) and sounds (44). A good way to do this is by giving students a table consisting of rows with number of sounds “2”, “3”, “4”, “5”, etc. and empty lines and a set of words to be organized into the table. While checking the task one should stress the contradiction of spelling and sound form of the words. Thus, despite being a 4-letter word, “etch” has only 2 sounds, “circuit”, being a 7-letter word, has 5 sounds, etc.

Practice of pronunciation can add value to the lesson in general because it can be used as a good warm-up activity. **Mimicking** can help not only develop pronunciation skills, but also tune students in English language use. There are several ways of making mimicking fun. First of all, it is **sounds juggling**– when you use similar sounds in one collocation / sentence, or same sounds used in different words. It takes imagination to create the collocations, but the result may be vivid and memorable (for instance, “put raw bricks in a row”, “photon hits, light heats”, etc.) Make students explain the difference.

Tongue twisters are a nice way to develop articulation apparatus. The main problem is that most tongue twisters don’t have any topical marking, they are mostly sound-driven rather than content-driven. Nevertheless, there can be a place for Peter Piper and Betty Botter at the starting point of the ESP lesson.

Limericks, a special kind of rhyme that uses a specific rhythm pattern, can be easily incorporated into ESP lesson, because limericks are easy to compose and there are even resources which contain topically organized limericks (for example, www.oedilf.com). The following limerick was found in the category “Physics” [3]:

*“The flow rate, in soil, or filtration
Is found from a simple equation:
Darcy’s linear law—
There’s a single small flaw;
It must fail for increased permeation.”*

It can be great fun to create own limericks once students have understood their structure and rhythm.

Last, but not least tool in teaching pronunciation is **humor**. It is important to stress out that everyone makes mistakes, to create a good atmosphere without tension during lessons. In this case it is possible to make jokes of the mistakes most often made (not making it personal, of course), or to create funny anecdotes.

“It is not O.k. to say /key/” is useful for students struggling with the correct pronunciation of “key”. Humor is a powerful tool, which should be used carefully, but it can really add up to practicing pronunciation skills.

In conclusion, it should be noted that despite the fact that pronunciation is believed to play a secondary role in ESP lessons, it is a very important aspect of language acquisition. The proposed ways of teaching pronunciation are by no means exhaustive ones, they are just ways of making teaching more vivid. Teaching pronunciation can be interesting and engaging both for students and teachers and measures should be taken to incorporate it into ESP lessons.

Literature

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