

Teaching Pronunciation Skills

Making pronunciation enjoyable and successful

5th November 2015



Every lesson is a pronunciation lesson...

We use Pronunciation when we Read, Write, Speak, Listen, Think, Remember....

Or when we learn, think or practise Grammar and Vocabulary.

So learners are *always* practising a pronunciation, even when the teacher doesn't teach one.

The question is “Which pronunciation are they practising?”

Two problems ... and two solutions

Problem 1: Pronunciation seems mysterious, endless. What does it consist of? How much is there? Is there a 'map' of the territory?

Problem 2: Pronunciation, like grammar and vocabulary, tends to be *cognitively* taught. But pronunciation is a *physical, muscular* activity. It's about *muscular coordination* - more like teaching dance.

Solution 1: The pronunciation chart

The Sound Foundations **pronunciation chart** provides a 'geographic' map, a visible, kinesthetic thinking tool, everything in one glance

It shows:

- All the sounds needed for words and connected speech,
- How and where the sounds are made,
- How sounds help shape and define each other,
- That *all* sounds are needed at the start. There can be no syllabus.

í	I	U	u:	Iə	eI	!X	
e	ə	3:	ɔ:	Uə	ɔI	əU	
æ	ʌ	a:	b	eə	aI	aU	
P	b	t	d	ts	dʒ	k	g
f	v	θ	ð	s	z	ʃ	ʒ
m	n	ŋ	h	l	r	w	j

Solution 2: Teach the Physicality

Connect with the muscles that make the pronunciation difference.

This requires *physical* knowledge from muscular experience, not *theoretical* knowledge from a book or lecture.

There are two routes to making new sounds: 1) Through the ear, 2) Through the muscles. Not as simple as “Listen then speak”

The teacher must know what she is doing in her mouth, muscles, and breath. Then she can help the learner.

Otherwise she can only say : *‘Repeat after me’*.

The four core muscle buttons:

1. *Tongue* (moving forward and back)
2. *Lips* (spreading + back, or rounding + forward)
3. *Jaw + tongue* (moving up and down).
4. *Voice* (on/off to make voiced or unvoiced sounds)

Proprioception: the inner knowing or sensing of what the muscles are doing, and how much pressure is being applied.

Vowels have *no restriction* to the air flow, just a shape in the mouth, made with tongue, lips and jaw.

Consonants (mostly) have *a restriction* to the air flow, made by two surfaces that come together.

Integrating pronunciation and vocabulary teaching

Three simple route maps. Starting from:

- 1) Hearing the new word
- 2) Seeing the new word
- 3) Saying the new word

Use all three. Once you can *say* a word you can *hear* it better, and once you can *hear* it you can *say* it better.....

Using vocab from the course book:

I once saw a magician who did an incredible trick. He took a long knife and put it into his mouth. He acted as if it was really painful. I was sure that the knife was not real, but then he took it out of his mouth and used it to cut an apple in half. Then he ate the apple.

saw, magician, incredible, knife, mouth, painful, in half

Text: *New Straightforward Intermediate*, Kerr & Jones, Macmillan

New Vocabulary 1: Start with *HEARING the word*

1. T says *magician* once, Sts listen *internally* several times
2. Sts say it aloud. Class listen to each other (+ maybe rpt steps 1, 2)
3. T asks “How many sounds?” Sts count internally, call number
4. Class counts sounds onto teachers fingers
5. Do any repairs, and join up sounds
6. Now “In English!”
7. Teacher asks a St to point out the sounds on chart
8. The St does so *silently*, while Class says whatever sound is pointed
9. Once correct ask the St to point it out faster.
10. Have the class say it “In English!”
11. Then ask another St to *spell* the word on board
12. Ask “How many sounds?” ... “How many letters?”

New Vocabulary 2: Start with *SEEING* the spelling

1. T writes *magician* on the board
2. T asks Sts to say it
3. Class listen to a few individuals (“listen to the differences”)
4. Select a temporary model, or offer one yourself
5. T asks “How many sounds?” Sts count internally, call number
6. Class counts sounds onto teachers fingers
7. Do any repairs, and join up sounds
8. Now “In English!”
9. Teacher asks a St to point out the sounds on chart
10. The St points silently, while Class says whatever sound is pointed
11. When correct ask St to point it faster.
12. Ask: How many sounds? / How many letters?

New Vocabulary 3: Start with *SEEING* the Sounds

1. T points out /mædʒɪʃən/ on the chart
2. Ask Sts to say the word, connect the sounds, find stress, assist as needed
3. Do any repairs, and join up sounds. Now “In English!”
4. Check “How many sounds?” Sts count internally, call number
5. Class counts sounds onto teachers fingers
6. The ask another St to spell the word on board
7. Ask “How many sounds?” ... “How many letters?”

í	I	U	u:	Iə	eI	!X	
e	ə	3:	ɔ:	Uə	ɔI	əU	
æ	ʌ	a:	b	eə	aI	aU	
P	b	t	d	ts	dʒ	k	g
f	v	θ	ð	s	z	ʃ	ʒ
m	n	ŋ	h	l	r	w	j

Slick moves for integrating pron:

1. Get quick and easy at these three sequences. Don't do it for every word, but be able to do it for any word
2. The person pointing at the chart does so *silently*. The Class *says aloud* whatever sound is pointed at.
3. "In English!" Always require this after a word/phrase has been assembled.
4. We are learning sound/muscular coordinations.... NOT symbols!
5. Deal with the *meaning* in your usual way, but get the **sound, rhythm, energy, stress** of the word in circulation as early as possible. The brain makes physical/cognitive connections immediately.
6. Inhabit the new pron *at the point of purchase!*



Sounds: The Pronunciation App

Choose the **BrE** or **AmE chart**. Touch for sounds and words

Choose **BrE** or **AmE Wordlist**. Listen to model, record your own voice, listen and compare. Also check word meanings.

Practice

Listen – Select phonemes for practice. Hear words and tap phonemes on the chart

Read = Select sounds for practice. See the phonemic spelling. supply alphabetic spelling on key board.

Write = Select sounds for practice. See the spelling and find the phonemes (phonetic keyboard)

Further pronunciation teaching information

Blog:	adrianpronchart.wordpress.com
Classroom pron charts:	Available from Macmillan ELT
Demo lessons videos:	Macmillan Education, Onestop, Youtube
Videos (35 x 3 min):	www.macmillanenglish.com/pronunciation-skills/
App for teachers/students:	SOUNDS: The pronunciation app v3
Teachers handook:	Sound Foundations (Macmillan ELT)
In-depth training:	1 & 2-week teacher training intensives

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