



SUGGESTIONS FOR TEACHING STRESS, RHYTHM AND INTONATION PATTERN AT THE UNDERGRADUATE LEVEL IN INDIA

NEELAM SHAHWAR

Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh (U.P)



ABSTRACT

This paper is mainly concerned with the suggestions of teaching stress, rhythm and intonation patterns at undergraduate level in India. It is hoped that the learners and the teachers of English will be benefited by the materials provided in this paper.

As the India is multilingual country and English is either second language or third language for the learners. Which create problems to acquire the structure of English. In India the learners have to force themselves to acquire neutral pronunciation neither too American nor too British and which should be universally acceptable.

Mainly Indian learners have been facing many difficulties in learning English pronunciation particularly in learning the appropriate use of stress, rhythm and intonation of normal English. The reason seems to be quite obvious. No Indian language is stress timed language. All Indian language appears to be syllable-timed.

Indian learner wants to speak English fluently with an acceptable pronunciation which should be easily understood by the native as well as non-native speakers of English. In India English is spoken for academic, professional, political, social and general communication.

The Skill of speech becomes important as an end in itself for those undergraduates who acquire English for social purpose when conversing with their friends and relatives. Students often regret that they are not able to communicate effectively with their friends and classmates from English medium background. The most obvious reason behind this situation is that they have been taught English by the teachers who have had no knowledge of the sound system of English. Hence they speak English with inappropriate word stress and sentence stress, broken rhythm with unusual pauses and faulty intonation patterns. As a result, their speech is normally unintelligible and unacceptable at the international as well as national level.

Teaching of English stress, rhythm and intonation cannot be avoided unless an exclusively written approach is adopted in English classrooms. When a teacher speaks English in the class, he pronounces English words and sentences; consequently pronunciation of those words and sentences taught unconsciously. The negligence towards teaching of English pronunciation sometimes leads to teaching bad pronunciation. In fact, spoken English has an important role to play even in teaching literature. Due to the complete neglect of teaching spoken English in India, serious mistakes in word and sentence stressing, spelling pronunciation, broken rhythm and other faults spoil these students' speech to a considerable degree. Indian students cannot read English verse if they are not familiar with the stress patterns in English.



Indian students, scholars and teachers should possess a standard of spoken English, which must be pan-Indian and also an efficient means of international communication. A need for an internationally acceptable standard of spoken English is felt in India since one cannot afford to have as many forms of spoken English as there are language groups in the country.

Choice of a Model

Students need some model to imitate, some form of Standard English which they say should be systematically trained to aim at. Whatever model is chosen, it will be unreasonable to expect of students anything beyond a fairly close approximation because these students learn English exclusively by instruction in Indian Colleges and Universities from Indian teachers. Since Received Pronunciation of English (R.P) is well-documented and standard descriptions, dictionaries, teaching materials, etc., of R.P, are easily available and India has a long association with the teaching of English based on R.P model, it appears fairly reasonable to suggest that R.P should be model of spoken English in India. The model chosen for the present study is therefore R.P.

It is hoped that if these suggestions are implemented with careful planning in an organized manner, Indian learner will speak English fluently and effectively with an accent which is socially acceptable and intelligible not only in India but all over the world.

Suggestion for Teachers

For effective teaching of spoken English, particularly stress, rhythm and intonation patterns English, the teachers are advised to follow the following measures:

- Word stress should be taught by the use of stress marks and constant reference to a dictionary and word stress rules.
- The patterns are of stress, rhythm and intonation should be taught by the use of stress and tone marks in the sentences, chosen for practice.
- The division of sentences into tone groups and the location of the tonic syllables should be taught by analyzing longer sentences.
- The pitch movements at the end of most English sentences are important for meaning. The teacher should break the sentence down into bits and build up towards the complete sentence. It is better to use the technique of back chaining for effective teaching of intonation. Beginning at the end, because the end remains consistent, the intermediate stages are relatively easy, and contribute towards the ability to produce a complete sequence.

Example- Listen to me carefully could be back chained as following:

Teacher - carefully

Students – carefully

Teacher – to me carefully.

Students – to me carefully.

Teacher- Listen to me carefully.

Students- Listen to me carefully.

- The teacher should say some words or sentences and ask the class to perceive intonation, stress and juncture for the sake of ear training. To be able to detect finer stress and intonation pattern in English is a must for Indian students.
- The teacher should describe the high and low pitch being shown on the blackboard through arrows, lines, dots, scales, etc.
- The teacher should ask the class to imitate her.
- The teacher should teach the class how to vary the sentences in order to suit various situations. This variation can be taught through substitution, transformation, expansion, reduction, combination, etc. Examples:



I need a book



Pen



I need a pen



book



I need a book

- The teacher should be a variety of assignment, e.g. a topic, a picture or set of pictures, a story, some combination of these as stimulus to his students for their oral exercises.
- The teacher should make use of the ear-training techniques.

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