

Teaching Pronunciation: Revisited

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Abstract

This work investigates a controversial subject, viz. the teaching of pronunciation. Numerous works have been written about the subject with various views, objectives and theoretical stands. This work takes into consideration the conceptions of both English language teachers and students at college levels. Thirty-two subjects from three universities: Mosul, Duhok and Salahddin were asked whether pronunciation is teachable and at which level; whether to be taught separately as a subject, or in conjunction with other oral skills, and whether the objective behind teaching it is fluency, or accuracy or intelligibility and finally who is a good pronunciation teacher. The study hypothesizes that pronunciation is teachable, separately and in conjunction with other skills for at least two years for the sake of fluency, accuracy and intelligibility by qualified and experienced teachers. The results of the analysis validated these hypotheses in varying degrees. Teaching pronunciation is of paramount important in English language teaching; it could be taught separately but also integrated with listening , speaking skills , oral comprehension and grammar. Also it has been found that pronunciation should be taught at college level at one or more than one level; teachers of pronunciation should relate to the notions of fluency and accuracy achieving a balance of form and function. They are better qualified if they have majored in phonetics and English phonology.

Keywords: Applied Linguistics; ELT; English phonetics and phonology; fluency and accuracy; Iraqi universities; teaching of pronunciation; TESOL

Introduction:

One of the most complicated aspects of EFL teaching is the teaching of pronunciation. It is a central challenge in EFL teaching because in teaching pronunciation one has to strike the right balance between form and meaning. It is a challenge because repetitive practice, which enhances phonological learning and promotes fluency, is viewed as being incompatible with communicative principles (Isaacs, 2009). For that reason it has been considered the “Cinderella” of language teaching (Kelly, 1969). It is very important to realize that in the process of communication, pronunciation (both segmental and suprasegmental) is very significant since appropriate pronunciation cannot take place without accurate and fluent or correct pronunciation (Celce-Murcia, Brinton, & Goodwin, 1996). Correctness here does not mean adherence to native speaker norms or to BBC pronunciation in particular but to the dialect or accent that is common in this or that area or region.

Pronunciation has an important social value (Gelvanovsky, 2002). There have been studies involving speakers of various English accents in order to find out what values are generally associated with Received Pronunciation, or this or that dialect. According to the findings, those values were the same as the values perceived as indispensable for socio-economic, intelligence professional competence, persuasiveness or social privilege and so on (Dalton & Seidlhofer, 1994).

Definition of Pronunciation:

According to Nunan (2003, p. 113), pronunciation is the way certain sounds are pronounced that speakers of a language make while speaking and perceived by the hearer to be able to understand each other with relative ease. It is a filter through which others see learners and discriminate against them (Goodwin, 2001, p. 117, Rahimi, 2008, p. 55).

The Importance of Teaching Pronunciation:

Pronunciation is essential to the completeness of not only oral language development, but also for the skills of listening, reading and writing. Teaching pronunciation of a foreign language is a challenging task but it can also be a successful and enjoyable experience. Various authors among them Harmer (2004) and Kelly (2004) point out that there are two key problems with pronunciation teaching. Firstly, it tends to be neglected. And secondly when it is not neglected, it tends to be reactive to a particular problem that has arisen in the classroom rather than being planned. Hearing a foreign language does not result automatically in good pronunciation (Lado, 1964, p. 71). Thus it is important to teach it. Pronunciation is important for full communication, as a model by a language teacher (Lado, 1964, p. 73). Learners of language face many difficulties in recognizing certain sounds and complain that they do not know how to get it right.

Greenwood (2002, p. 1-2) points out that pronunciation teaching should be an essential component in EFL classroom and in English language teacher education. The vowels and consonants of the target language have to be used correctly, because the lack of control over them makes some non-native English speakers be incomprehensible by anyone’s standard and leads to total communication breakdown.

Psychologists and linguists have felt that language practice is more motivating for learners. Examination of categories like (1) establishing and maintaining social relations,

(2) expressing one's reactions, (3) hiding one's intentions, (4) seeking and giving information, (5) teaching others to do or make something, etc., helps to show why the oral approach is probably the most satisfactory in the teaching of English to adults. These categories have close affinity with spoken language or more broadly communicating.

Improving pronunciation can improve learners' confidence and motivation. Adults stand to improve their fluency and comprehension levels as well as learn to self-monitor and self-correct to improve their pronunciation (Thompson & Gaddes, 2005, p. 1). Both sound and meaning are important to be handled in the pursuit of the linguistic goals of students (Thompson & Gaddes, 2005, p. 2). By teaching phonological rules, teachers can help students become better equipped to listen to their own speech and catch their own mistakes (Thompson & Gaddes, 2005, p. 6). EFL pronunciation should be viewed in the same light as the other skills of the English language, such as grammar, reading, writing, vocabulary and so on, since it is a crucial part of communication (Lado, 1964, p. 170). People need to use English for social, educational and professional reasons, locally and internationally. Thus it is essential for them to have a high level of intelligibility to communicate (Greenwood, 2002, p. 1). Intelligible pronunciation is an essential component of communicative competence that can be achieved by exposing learners to a model.

Greenwood (2002, p. 6) argues that since the primary purpose of language is communication, using language to communicate should be central in all classroom language instruction. This brings renewed urgency to the teaching of pronunciation. He adds that learners are very unlikely to attain a native-like accent, but their intelligibility can be greatly improved by effective pronunciation teaching. Their pronunciation improves most through the gradual intuitive changes brought about by real interaction with native speakers.

Baker (1992) says that learners should pay attention to pronunciation from the beginning to avoid eradication from mistakes that may be repeated for years. Morley (1991, p. 263) says that "the question is not whether pronunciation should be taught but instead what should be taught in a pronunciation class and how it should be taught".

The Aims of Teaching Pronunciation:

Morley (1991, p. 296) advocated that the goal of teaching pronunciation should be changed from the attainment of 'perfect' pronunciation to the more realistic goals of developing functional intelligibility, development of speech monitoring abilities, and speech modification strategies for use beyond the classroom. The overall aim of these goals is for the learner to develop awareness and monitoring skills that will allow learning opportunities outside the classroom environment.

In teaching pronunciation, the goal is threefold: to enable students to understand and be understood, to build their confidence when engaged in communicative situation, and to enable them to monitor their speech based on input from the environment (Goodwin, 2001, p. 117).

Morely (1999) cited in Goodwin (2001, p. 118) has outlined four important goals for pronunciation instruction: functional intelligibility, functional communicability, increased self-confidence, and speech minority abilities. To gain confidence in speaking communicative skills,

teachers can design their materials around the situations learners will actually face, more carefully from controlled to free production in their practice activities, and provide consistent targeted feedback. By teaching learners to pay attention to their own speech as well as that of others, teachers help them make better use of the input they receive. Speech monitoring activities help to focus learners' attention to features in their courses and beyond them.

Theoretical Background of Teaching Pronunciation:

Nunan (2003, p. 112-114) says that the pronunciation teaching in the ESL/EFL classroom has witnessed periods of dramatic change over the past 50 years. Thus, three primary orientations can be identified:

- First orientation: 1940s-1950s – “Listen carefully and repeat what I say.”
- Second orientation: 1960s-1970s – “Let’s analyze these sounds closely to figure out how to pronounce them more clearly.”
- Third orientation: 1980s and beyond (communicative and task-based language teaching) – “Let’s start using these sound in activities as soon as we can while I provide cues and feedback on how well you’re doing.”

Recently, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and Task-based Approaches have become the best ways of teaching pronunciation for being sensitive to learner’s real world needs (Nunan , 2003, p. 126). Teaching English pronunciation is founded upon the combination of fluency with accuracy-focused tasks. For a long time, from the literature, pronunciation teachers were using conventional methodology for teaching English pronunciation rooted in drills and automatic exercises. The outcome of these divulges that many learners retain some critical deviant phonological forms which prove highly detrimental to successful communication in English (Luchini, 2005, p. 191).

Conventional approaches to teaching pronunciation emphasize studying phonemes and their meaningful contrasts, along with some structurally based interest in stress, rhythm, and intonation. From the pedagogic perspective, instruction mainly consisted in articulatory descriptions, imitations and memorization of patterns through drills and set scripts, with overall attention to correction, for learners to pronounce like a British native speaker. This concern for perfect pronunciation aimed at enabling learners to come to native-like accent – Received Pronunciation (RP). Under the notional-functional approach, the focus was placed mostly on meaning and not on form, to get learners to use the language for communication purpose (Luchini, 2005, p. 192).

Pronunciation instruction, historically, emphasized the mastery of individual sounds. With the advent of CLT, the focus shifted to fluency rather than accuracy, encouraging an almost exclusive emphasis on supra-segmentals. However, just as EFL teachers have acknowledged that an emphasis on meaning and communicative intent alone would not suffice to achieve grammatical accuracy, pronunciation has emerged from the segmental/supra-segmental debate to a more balanced view (Goodwin, 2001, p. 117). Also that the more teachers try to control the language that students produce, the more learners are likely to be concerned with form rather than meaning, and the less task-like the activity becomes (Willis & Willis, 2007, p. 14).

Aims of the Study:

The aim of this study is to explore university teachers' and students' conceptions of teaching pronunciation. Experience has shown that the departments of English do not seem to have paid due attention to the issue of teaching pronunciation. Their main concern has been to teach segmental phonology (the sounds) and little attention to supra-segmental phonology (stress and intonation). As a matter of fact, the normal practice in most English departments has been to talk ABOUT English phonology rather than talking phonology proper. There has not been enough effort to transfer the classroom pronunciation teaching materials into natural spontaneous communicative everyday practice. Pronunciation has been taught mostly as a separate subject and not connected to other language skills like speaking and listening and at times it tends to be reactive to a particular problem that has arisen in the classroom rather than being planned.

Hearing a foreign language like English does not result automatically in good pronunciation. Thus, it is important to teach it. Overall, a key problem with pronunciation is that it tends to be neglected.

Hypotheses:

This study hypothesizes the following:

1. Teaching pronunciation is as significant as teaching any other skill in ELT courses at departments of English at college level.
2. Besides teaching it as a planned subject, pronunciation should be related to other subjects in classroom such as speaking, conversation, oral comprehension, grammar, spelling, etc.
3. Pronunciation should be taught at least at first and second years of study at college level, if not at more levels.
4. The criteria for good pronunciation are not only accuracy but fluency and legibility as well.
5. A good pronunciation teacher is one who is qualified in English phonology, fluent and has experience in teaching it.

The Subjects:

In order to explore teacher's and student's conceptions, twenty-four English language teachers and eight graduate English students from three universities: Mosul, Duhok and Salahddin, Iraq answered a questionnaire of five questions related to the teaching of pronunciation. The questions are:

1. Is pronunciation teachable at college level?
2. Should it be taught separately or in conjunction with other subjects such as speaking/conversation, comprehension, spelling,
3. Which level(s) should it be taught at? First year, second or third year?
4. What are the criteria for good pronunciation? Are they fluency, accuracy, legibility or what?
5. Who is a good pronunciation teacher? What is his background?

Analysis of the Data:

An examination of the five answers to the questionnaire above by teachers and students reveals a variety of attitudes and conceptions. With regard to the first question of whether pronunciation is teachable, all the subjects, teachers and students agreed that it is teachable. The majority answered with definiteness stating that it is "essential" and "of utmost importance".

Seven teachers suggested that teaching it systematically should start at pre-college level and at early school years since non-natives have had very little of it in earlier stages. Nine students expressed similar views stating that at pre-college level they were given long lists of words or some rules to memorize or “listen and repeat” practices.

Is Pronunciation Teachable?

There are some researchers (Suter, 1976, Purcell & Suter, 1980) who have cast doubt on the importance of pronunciation in EFL teaching. According to them, pronunciation practice in class has little, if any, effect on learners’ pronunciation skills. In other words, the attainment of accurate pronunciation in a second language is a matter substantially beyond the control of educators. Pennington (1989), though, believed that teachers with formal training in pronunciation teaching, especially supra-segmental can make a difference.

Between these opposing views, Stern (1992, p. 112) says: “There is no convincing empirical evidence that could help us sort out the various positions on the merits of pronunciation training”.

Experience has revealed that a great number of the EFL teachers at college level do not favour the teaching of pronunciation courses. They feel it is a waste of time. Perhaps this is related to changes in the concepts of language teaching and language learning in the past three decades or so with regard to concepts, materials and methodologies.

On the one hand, pronunciation should be taught if the desired objective behind teaching it is accuracy. On the other hand, if the desired objective is for the student to use spoken English for the sake of intelligible communication then it is more of learning English on the part of the student than only teaching it.

Not all teaching materials and methodologies that are available help students to be active. Actually they help them to be passive participants in the classroom. Often students are not to be involved in classroom activities because of the method of teaching followed and often because of their large numbers in the classroom. Often their involvement is monitored by the teacher (i.e. correcting the mistakes). Seldom does the teacher show them how to watch their own performance; and rarely are they evaluated systematically to give them an indication of their learning progress. Students often ask “Is my pronunciation good?” Teachers only impressionistically answer “Oh, yes, your pronunciation is much better” (Stern (1992, p. 84). This used to be the case in most pronunciation classrooms in departments of English at least in the universities mentioned earlier until recently. But times seem to be changing. Today, more and more teachers are encouraging active student involvement in the process of learning English as a foreign language. English teachers are involving students and also showing them what they are doing and how they are doing it. The students are made aware of how to observe their speech production and that of the others by giving first classes information about speech production using visual and auditory aids like CDs, computers and data shows to show video and audio segments of illustrations and conversational extracts. When a student demonstrates an ability to perform at a given level, the monitoring and correction, where necessary, shift back and forth between teacher and student in front of the students in the classroom.

Should it be taught separately or in conjunction with other subjects such as speaking, conversation, comprehension, spelling, ...?

With regard to the second question of whether pronunciation should be taught separately or in conjunction with other subjects such as speaking, conversation, comprehension, spelling, etc. Or whether pronunciation should be isolated from other aspects of language practice, the subjects' response to the question is as follows:

8 subjects: 5 teachers and 3 students stated it should be taught separately. 10 subjects, among them 3 students, suggested that it should be taught in conjunction with other subjects. 14 subjects, among them two student, suggested it should be taught both separately in the first year at college and in conjunction with other aspects of language practice in the following years.

These answers coincide with the literature on the subject as the main concern is with a broader scope of language teaching and learning. There has to be some periods/courses of work on isolated elements of pronunciation such as the sounds and the supra-segmental features of the language.

But as one is concerned with a broader scope of language learning, one has to integrate other language aspects of practice such as listening and speaking. The goal of the listening/speaking class is to enable students to increase their listening/speaking accuracy and fluency in a variety of listening and speaking activities. Meaningful practice in context is the primary concern throughout whether the focus of the task is accuracy, fluency or legibility (Stern (1992, p. 84). "Careful training in the dynamics of speech production and the fundamentals of articulatory phonetics, specifically related to English phonology, are necessary" (Stevick et al, 1995, p. 81).

In addition to the listening/speaking function, other aspects of language practice can be integrated such as grammar, vocabulary building, sound/symbol correspondences and work on spelling patterns, oral reading, sentence dictation, and writing original dialogues and responses. Students have to be taught the principles underlying English orthography as well: rules for predicting where the stress falls, the alternation between long and short vowels, between full and reduced vowels, what the consonant alternations are. By this they will be able to use words in their spoken English which they may never have heard before.

As everyone knows, English orthography is irregular. Consequently, at least for the adult and adolescent students, ... we often use some guide to pronunciation ... called broad transcription or special alphabet ... to provide a regular way of correlating graphic units with phonological units, so that ... every graphic unit has a consistent value and every phonological unit has a consistent representation (Kreidler, 1972, p. 4).

Eventually, however, the students will be on their own; they leave their classes and go out into the bigger English-speaking world. One hopes they have mastered the pronunciation and grammatical system of the language, though there is still a lot ahead of them to learn. But of course, it is hard to imagine that these students have learned from their teachers the pronunciation of all the words they need to know thereafter, or to suggest here that they will consult a dictionary to learn the pronunciation of every written word they encounter in the rest of

their lives. They will probably develop a skill, somehow or another of figuring out a pronunciation for new printed words they meet.

Which level(s) should it be taught at? First year, second or third year?

As regards the third question of which level(s) should pronunciation be taught at? First year, second year, third year ...? 14 subjects, among them 6 students chose first year. 8 subjects, among them 2 students suggested the second year level. 2 subjects suggested third year level. One subject suggested more than one level: 9 teachers suggested that pronunciation should be taught at all levels. There is almost nothing in the literature about the subject “teaching pronunciation” and about which level should it be taught at the college level. However, the figures above are in agreement that pronunciation should be taught at one or more than one levels.

What are the criteria for good pronunciation? Are they fluency, accuracy, legibility or what?

As for the criteria for good pronunciation, and whether they are fluency, accuracy or legibility or others, 16 subjects among them 5 students suggested that all three criteria are essential for good pronunciation. 6 subjects among them one student suggested accuracy, 8 subjects among them 2 students suggested fluency. 2 teachers suggested that both accuracy and fluency are essential and they, in turn, lead to intelligibility.

This question is related to question 2 above of whether pronunciation should be isolated from other courses of language practice like, for example, listening and speaking, or should it be taught in conjunction with them and other courses/subjects like grammar and spelling. It all depends on the goal behind teaching such courses. One presumes that the goal behind teaching listening and speaking is to “enable students to increase their listening/speaking accuracy (linguistic form) and fluency (communicative function) in a variety of listening and speaking activities along an entire continuum of listening/speaking experience”.

With regard to whether accuracy should precede fluency or the reverse, there has been two extreme positions which Rivers (1981, p. 25) has conveniently labeled “formalist” and “activist”. The first are concerned with the forms of language: the rules for combining sounds to words correctly. The activists, on the other hand, are concerned with language as activity, not as something people know but as something people do, or how to use a language. For the formalists, the sentence is the major unit which most schools of linguistics have been concerned with describing. The activists, on the other hand, consider the utterance as the major unit of language; it is a unit of discourse. The distinction between the two groups is very significant for foreign/second language teachers. If the major goal that teachers set for the students is the production of well-formed sentences, the course will be very different from one in which the goal is the production of effective utterances in discourse.

In the past forty years or so, ESL/EFL has witnessed a shift from formalist to activist position. The shift has been, from Chomsky’s grammatical competence (1965), a kind of competence which focuses on the forms and rules similar to the focus by the formalists to the notion of communicative competence which focuses on using language appropriately for genuine communicative purposes which is the view by the activists.

This shift brings to mind Brumfit's (1979) distinction between speaking or writing a language accurately and speaking or writing it fluently. Brumfit believes that any language teacher can relate to the notions of accuracy and fluency since they are practiced in the classroom, and they are part of classroom behaviour. Students get their meanings across or they do not, and when they do find the words, they either pronounce them and/or put them together correctly or they do not. Some students may make a few structural errors but they have trouble expressing themselves. Some students can go on and on but express themselves poorly. Language teachers must be equally concerned with both the fluency and the accuracy of their students' use of language. As an EL teacher, I feel that the shift has gone far in the direction of accuracy but not that far towards fluency in universities in Iraq, particularly the three universities under investigation in this work.

In relating form (accuracy) to function (fluency) teachers need better techniques and materials, but even without them a balance of form and function can be achieved by the following steps:

1. The forms for expressing basic notions in language must be introduced systematically.
2. These forms must be introduced in communicative contexts.
3. The students are expected to produce both appropriate discourse and well-formed sentences.

Who is a good pronunciation teacher? What is his background?

With regard to question no.5 in the questionnaire: Who is a good pronunciation teacher and what is his background? The subjects responses are varied. The main focus was on the teacher's qualification, i.e., he should have degree in phonetics and phonology. 14 subjects chose these characteristics for a good pronunciation teacher. 9 subjects chose "experience". 6 subjects chose methodology and 3 chose "a teacher with a native-like accent". Some subjects combined two or three characteristics together and some others combined fluency, accuracy with methodology, or with experience or with qualification.

What background knowledge about English phonology and pronunciation does an EFL teacher need most?

The most important concept a teacher needs to grasp is that of "system" (Stevick et al, 1975, p. 86); that phonological facts about English phonology and pronunciation are related and they are part of that system.

As one means of facilitating and understanding that system of English phonology, especially the segmental aspects of English phonology, the IPA chart is very helpful in teaching pronunciation. It provides useful contrasts about vowels, and other contrasts of voicing for the teacher when he explains pronunciations of, for example, the -s suffix and the -ed suffix. It is also useful when teaching the differences in the types of articulation, e.g. fricative vs. stop, or central vs. lateral. Points of articulation for all the segmental sounds can be easily added also. Several authors among them Ur (1997), Harmer (2004) and Kelly (2004) point out that there are three areas a language teacher should know about in the pronunciation of English:

1. Phonology or the sounds of the language.
2. Stress and rhythm.
3. Intonation.

It is useful to be able to list and define the sounds or the phonemes of English by writing them down using phonetic representation or transcription because there is no one to one correspondence between written letters and spoken sounds.

English is stress-timed; that is to say, stresses occur at regular intervals within connected speech and the duration of an utterance is more dependent upon the number of stresses than the number of syllables. As a result, English speech rhythm is characterized by tone-units: a word or group of words which carries one central stressed syllable, other syllables, if there are any, are lightened (Ur, 1997). In many long words, there is both a main stress and a secondary stress, for example, “interpretation” where “ter” has the secondary stress and “ta” has the main stress. In addition, different varieties of English can often stress words differently (Zepeda, 2010), for example the word “controversy” and “advertisement” which can have two different pronunciation in British and American English.

According to Davies & Fraenkel (2003) and Roach (2003) there are some general patterns of stress that can be taught to students depending on their grammatical category of whether they are nouns, adjectives or verbs or when they are compound words. These general patterns can be taught to the students. Sentence stress patterns can be taught too. According to Kenworthy (1992) correct word stress patterns are essential for learner’s production and perception of English. An English listener may have great difficulty in understanding words uttered by non-native speakers. So, stress can be important for intelligibility and comprehension. As for intonation, which refers to variations in pitch when we are speaking, it is a fundamental part of the way we express out own thoughts and it enables us to understand those of others (Kelly, 2004). The rises and falls in tone that make the “tune” of an utterance is an important aspect of English pronunciation, often making a difference to meaning or implication. A native speaker usually has little difficulty in hearing intonation changes in his own language; others, however, may not find it so easy. Intonation is often described as the music or melody of speech. Each language has its own melody or intonation; English intonation in English; Arabic intonation in Arabic; so a teacher of English pronunciation must teach English intonation to non-natives; in our case, Arab students.

According to Kenworthy (1992) rhythm is a product of word stress and the way in which important items are backgrounded by their occurrence on a weak beat. The rhythm of English is, then, mainly, a function of its stress patterns; these may also affect such aspects as speed of delivery, volume and the use of pause. The teacher has to take care of these aspects of English pronunciation.

Teaching experience shows that in speech not only sounds but supra-segmental features of stress, rhythm, intonation and pitch are equally important in achieving several communicative functions. Prosody or supra-segmental facilitates other dimensions of communication like focusing attention on important information, differentiating old from new information, signaling turns in discourse, etc. (Hargrove & McGarr, 1994).

A good pronunciation teacher also needs a background of practice in speech analysis, articulation analysis and error and contrastive analysis of both the phonotactics of English and Arabic. As for whether a pronunciation teacher should have native-like accent, it is hard to

decide on which model to teach. Today, English is increasingly being used as a medium of communication worldwide between speakers for whom it is not a first language. In the past, the preferred pronunciation model for teaching in Britain or among British teachers abroad, was Received Pronunciation (RP) or BBC English which is concerned with social status rather than geographical. However, the number of people who speak with an RP accent in Britain is currently estimated at about only 3% of the population and it is declining (Harmer, 2004).

Pronunciation language teachers are in disagreement over the model to use in the classroom. The best advice for them is to teach what they know and use and be informed as they can about the wide range of varieties and accents of English. They have to expose their students as much as they can about these varieties and allow them to choose their own target model as long as it is widely comprehensible and intelligible.

Conclusions:

The study has come up with the following:

1. Teaching pronunciation is of paramount importance in English language teaching. It is essential not only for the oral language development but also for the development of other language skills. It is a challenging task but can also be a very pleasant and successful experience. Pronunciation is definitely teachable. Teaching it is essential and of utmost importance. To ensure effective pronunciation teaching, there are certain factors that should be considered.
2. There has to be some periods/courses of work on isolated elements of pronunciation at college level such as the description and analysis of sounds and supra-segmental features of English, but one also has to integrate other language aspects of practice such as listening, speaking, oral comprehension and grammar.
3. Pronunciation should be taught at college level at one or more than one level.
4. Pronunciation teachers should relate to the notions of fluency and accuracy. They must be equally concerned with both. They should achieve a balance of form and function.
5. Good pronunciation teachers are better qualified if they have majored in phonetics and English phonology and if they have pursued a graduate course and obtained a degree in the subject. They should have background knowledge about English phonology and pronunciation, and have grasped the system behind English phonology, specifically with regard to English sounds, stress, rhythm and intonation among others. A background of practice and experience in speech analysis is combined with a pleasant, fluent and intelligible accent is what a good pronunciation teacher needs also.

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