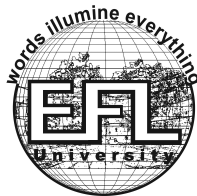

Post-Graduate Certificate in the
Teaching of English

PHONETICS AND SPOKEN ENGLISH

BLOCK I

General Introduction



School of Distance Education
The English and Foreign Languages University
Hyderabad - 500 605, India

Written by

Priya Hosali
S V Parasher

Course editors

V Prakasam
S V Parasher

Format and language editor

Lakshmi Chandra

Course team

Priya Hosali	Tapas S Ray
V Prakasam	Lakshmi Chandra
S V Parasher	Mahasweta Sengupta
T Sriraman	Surabhi Bharati
Mukta Prahlad	Julu Sen
R Lalitha Eapen	R Kishore Kumar

Cover design by

G Siva Ramaiah
G Prem Raj

Printed at

Publications Unit, The English and Foreign Languages University
Hyderabad - 500 605, India

Published by

The English and Foreign Languages University
Hyderabad - 500 605, India

Copyright © 2012

The English and Foreign Languages University
Hyderabad - 500 605, India

Not for sale. Strictly for educational use. For limited circulation, only among students of the PGCTE (The EFL University) Programme.
--

PHONETICS AND SPOKEN ENGLISH

BLOCK I

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Contents

Introduction to the course	i
Unit 1	
Introduction	1
Unit 2	
Organs of speech	6
Unit 3	
Spelling and pronunciation	17

INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE

As you already know, as teachers of English, we use the spoken language more often than the written language. Our students learn to speak the language by imitating our speech. Just as we insist on *correct* grammar and usage in our students' use of English, we should pay attention to their pronunciation too. We can serve as good *models* for our students, if we pay attention to our own pronunciation. Therefore, in this course we will try to help you improve your own pronunciation of English.

Although there is general consensus about what is considered standard English in terms of the rules of grammar and usage, there isn't just one form of *correct* or *standard* English pronunciation. There are great differences in the way English is spoken in countries where it is the first language, for example, the U.K., the USA, Canada, Australia or New Zealand, let alone countries where it is spoken as a second language, for example, India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan or Nigeria.

We have, therefore, to select a model which will generally be intelligible within India and abroad. One such model is a variety of English spoken by educated British speakers in the south of England called the Received Pronunciation (R.P.). In addition to being generally intelligible, this variety is described in various textbooks and pronouncing dictionaries. We will use this variety as a descriptive model for purposes of this course. As a word of caution, we must clearly mention here that it is not our aim to turn you into speakers of R.P. Far from it. What we intend to do in this course on **Phonetics and Spoken English** is to make you aware of certain important characteristics of R.P. and help you use them in your own speech. For this purpose we propose to describe this variety in some detail.

The course is organized in five blocks. Block I gives you a general introduction to the need for teaching pronunciation and discusses how speech is produced. It also draws your attention to the fact that unlike Indian languages, there is no one-to-one correspondence between spelling and pronunciation in English. This makes the conscious learning and teaching of English pronunciation all the more necessary.

Block II begins by identifying the intonation patterns of spoken English and discusses its characteristic rhythm. Since word stress is a very important feature of spoken English we devote some units to this feature. We give a set of rules to guide you on the placement of stress in English words.

In Block III we get down to a detailed analysis of the English syllable and its structure. We also list a few possible consonant clusters.

In Block IV we consider certain criteria for describing English segments - consonants and vowels. We describe and classify the segments in detail in terms of their articulatory features.

In Block V we discuss how sounds change as a result of interaction between phonology and morphology. This area is called morphophonemics.

Along with the five blocks on **Phonetics and Spoken English** you will receive a practice-book *Exercises in Spoken English: Stress, Rhythm and Intonation* and two audio-cassettes separately published by the CIEFL. We advise you to listen to these materials and do the exercises as often as you can.

Unit 1

INTRODUCTION

Contents

1.0	Introduction	2
1.1	Language skills	2
1.2	Spoken language	2
1.3	Language variety	2
1.4	Accent	3
1.5	Model in a non-native situation	3
1.6	The need for teaching pronunciation	3
1.7	Summary	5
1.8	Sources and recommended reading	5

Unit 1

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

Our objective in this unit is to enable you to recognise the need for the teaching of pronunciation to non-native speakers of English. As you know English is spoken as a first or second language by a very large number of people throughout the world. In some countries like the United Kingdom, the United States of America, Canada and Australia, English is a native or first language. In other countries such as India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nigeria and Tanzania, English is spoken as a non-native or second language. In these countries (i.e. where it is spoken as a second language) English is used for various purposes: official, educational, social and interpersonal. In still other countries such as Russia, Japan, Germany, France and Italy, English is used as a foreign language. (We are making a distinction between a second language and a foreign language. A second language is one which is used for various purposes within the country while a foreign language is used for international purposes).

1.1 Language skills

Whatever be the status of English - first, second or foreign - a knowledge of the four skills i.e. LISTENING, SPEAKING, READING and WRITING is essential for communication. In a native or first language situation children learn from a very early age to respond to sounds and tunes which their elders habitually use in talking to them. In due course from a need to communicate they themselves begin to imitate recurrent sound patterns with which they have become familiar. In other words the children begin to make use of speech. This natural acquisition of language is lacking in a non-native situation.

1.2 Spoken language

In a first language learning situation the child's constant exposure to the spoken form of his/her language leads to a rapid acquisition of the framework of the spoken language. But the learning of a second language (often in a classroom situation) entails a great deal of conscious analytical effort. Hence we have to teach pronunciation consciously. This conscious teaching of pronunciation becomes all the more necessary as a second language is generally learnt later in life and the adult learner lacks the child's ready and facile imitation. Also, as the second language is learnt after the child has mastered the first language, his/her learning of the second language is influenced by the first language.

Of the four skills of language we mentioned earlier we are going to concentrate on two skills i.e., listening and speaking, as they are interdependent. That is to say your ability to speak well depends on your ability to listen well.

1.3 Language variety

There is usually a standard form of written English all over the world. But even in countries where English is spoken as a native language there are variations in speech. For example in the UK there are variations between the speech of England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland and again within each of these areas there will be a wide variety of accents (i.e. ways of pronunciation). Similarly, in India where English is spoken as a second language it has developed a variety of accents. For example, the speech of a Bengali speaker of English will differ markedly from that of a Punjabi or Tamil or Gujarati speaker.

1.4 Accent

As there is such a wide range of variation in accent (both native and non-native), it is essential that for teaching spoken English we follow a standard. One native regional accent that has gained social prestige is the Received Pronunciation of England (R.P. for short). It is the pronunciation of the South-east of England and is used by educated English speakers. It is also characteristic of "elite" society. R.P. today is generally equated with the "correct" pronunciation of English.

1.5 Model in a non-native situation

In many non-English-speaking countries R.P. is chosen as a model mainly for historical reasons. It is also well-documented in dictionaries and books. R.P. is generally used by BBC news readers and serves as a model for Indian news readers too.

The teaching and learning of pronunciation concern the following:

- the sound system (i.e. the segmental features -- consonants and vowels)
 - word accent
 - rhythm, and
 - intonation
- } (i.e. the supra-segmental features)

1.6 The need for teaching pronunciation

Let's, however, remember that the teaching and learning of pronunciation constitute only a part of the whole business of teaching and learning a language. To get a complete picture of language we have to understand the other systems and sub-systems that comprise language: morphology (the way in which the shape of words varies according to their function), syntax (the conventions according to which words may be combined to form sentences), semantics (the meaningful concepts which are related to words) and lexicon (the total number of words in the language.) Some of these will be dealt with in your Linguistics or Grammar courses. In this course we will be concerned with only the phonology of English (i.e. the sound system, word accent, rhythm and intonation).

Activity A

Monitor your own speech in a day and list the situations in which you used spoken language and the situations in which you used written language.

Spoken language

Written language

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Discussion

You will notice that you use speech more often than writing. There are certain situations in which only speech can be used and there are others in which only written language tends to be used. However, if you reflect on the time you spend using speech during a day and the time you spend using written language, you will notice that writing occupies just a fraction of your language activity.

Activity B

Now try and list the situations in which you used spoken English and the situations in which you used written English.

Spoken English

Written English

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Discussion

In this activity we would like you to reflect on your use of English in specific situations, e.g. talking to the members of your family, to colleagues and friends, to people who you meet outside the home and work sphere, to people with whom you wish to make social/professional contact and so on. You will notice that you use English for a number of purposes in a number of situations and your choice of the medium (spoken or written) will depend on the purpose of communication and the people with whom you wish to communicate.

Activity C

If you find yourself using Spoken English, can you list your reasons for learning/teaching English pronunciation?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Discussion

Here we would like you to mention a few reasons for the learning and teaching of English pronunciation. The reasons could be social or personal. Reflect on the question: Why should we learn to speak English with a good accent? You may like to ask your students and/or friends and find out why they are (or are not) interested in acquiring a good pronunciation of English.

1.7 Summary

In this unit we have attempted to make you aware of the need for teaching English pronunciation in the context of a second language teaching-learning situation in India. We have also drawn your attention to the fact that there are a number of varieties and accents of English. For the purpose of this course we have selected one variety of educated English i.e. R.P. for description.

1.8 Sources and recommended reading

Abercrombie, D. (1967). *Elements of General Phonetics*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, Chapter 2.

Gimson, A.C. (1989). *An Introduction to the Pronunciation of English*. 4th revised edition, London: Edward Arnold, Chapter 1.

O'Connor, J.D. (1970). *Better English Pronunciation*. London: ELBS, Chapter 1.

Quirk, R et. al. (1985). *A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language*. London: Longman, Chapter 1.