REMEDIAL PROGRAMME FOR PRONUNCIATION OF ENGLISH CONSONANTS

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ABSTRACT- The aim of this paper is to provide practical knowledge of the pronunciation of English consonants. This paper is based on International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA). There are specific symbols for each sound, shorter and longer counterparts of vowels, consonants and diphthongs. Each language has its own identity and independent nature and special qualities. Every language has its own sound system which is different from other languages. Therefore it is difficult to teach pronunciation of English language with the help of some other language. This paper will pave the way of government school teachers in providing practical knowledge of pronunciation to Hindi speakers and students of government schools. The correct pronunciation of the words is a major problem in teaching second language because the pronunciation is greatly influenced by the regional language and dialect. The sounds of words which are not used in the mother tongue, is difficult to pronounce correctly. The teacher should provide appropriate situation and opportunities to the students by imitating the words, by using lingua phone and language laboratory, drill technique in classroom .The skills of correct pronunciation can be developed among the students by developing basic knowledge regarding sound system. This paper will develop knowledge related to classification of Consonants and phonetic symbols of English Consonants. Various examples are provided so that students learn basic understanding regarding correct pronunciation of words in government schools of Rajasthan.

Instead of dealing with technical aspects , This paper deals with teaching simple rules and knowledge of International Phonetic Alphabets to teach correct pronunciation of English Consonants .

Language is the most unique faculty of mind human being is endowed with and the faculty with which he has been able to establish his superiority over other species. Language is a social institution and an instrument of society. It is the best and most developed means of communication through which a person can understand one another and can have all sorts of exchange of thoughts, feeling and ideas.

COMPONENTS OF LANGUAGE-

A language is a complex system of habits. The system as a whole can be divided into five principal sub-systems of which three are central and two peripheral. According to C.F. Hockett (1958) the three central sub-systems are -1.The grammatical system, 2.The phonological system, 3. The morphophonemic system. The two peripheral systems are- 1.The semantic system, 2.The phonetic system-The ways in which sequence of phonemes are converted into sound waves by the articulation of the speaker are decoded from the speech signal by a hearer.

PHONOLOGY-

In Phonology the phonemes of a language and their variant all phoned are described. It describes different sound of a language as well as the vowels, consonants and stress. Every language has its specific sound system .Sometimes certain sound seems to be similar .phonology helps in describing and discriminating them. The linguist checks each suspicious sound difference to determine whether it represents two different phonemes or two variants of the same phoneme. He thus determines the minimum number of distinctive points (phonemes) that constitute the sound system of the language. Having determined the phonemes, the linguist checks the permitted sequences and describes them linguistically.

CLASSIFICATION OF ENGLISH CONSONANTS

As per the manner of articulation the English consonants can be divided into the following groups-

Plosives (6)   /p,b,t,d,k,g/
Affricates (2)   /tʃ, dʒ/
Nasals (3)   /m,n,ŋ/
Lateral (1)   /I/
Fricatives (9)   /f,v,Ɵ,ŏ,s,z,ʃ, ʒ,h/
Frictionless continuant (1)   /r/
Semi-vowels (2) (approximates)   /w,j/

These consonants can be classified into the following groups as per the place of articulation.

Bilabial (4)   /p,b,m,w/
Labio-dental (2)   /f,v/
Dental (2)   / Ɵ,ŏ/
Post-alveolar (1)   /t,d,n,l,s,z/
Palato-alveolar (4)   /tʃ, dʒ, ʃ, ʒ/
Palatal (1)   /j/
Velar (3)   /k,g, ŋ/
Glottal (1)   /h/

9 consonants are voiceless/p,t,k, tʃ,f, Ɵ,s, ʃ,h/ and the remaining

15 consonants voiced /b,d,g,dʒ,m, ŋ,l,v, ŏ,z,r,w,j/
When we produce certain speech sounds,the vocal cords are drawn far away from each other and the air passes through the wide-open glottis, without affecting the vocal cords. Such sounds are called voiceless sounds.

When we articulate certain speech sounds, the vocal cords are kept close to each other, loosely.When the air from the lungs passes through them, the pressure of the air makes them open and close rapidly. This rapid opening and closing of the vocal cords is called the vibration of the vocal cords. Sounds articulated with the vocal cords vibrating are called voiced sounds.

Plosive-A speech sound made by stopping the flow of air coming out of the mouth and then suddenly releasing it. For example /t/ and /p/ in top.

Affricate-A speech sound that is made up of plosive followed immediately by a fricative, for example-/tʃ/and /dʒ/ in chair and jar.

Nasal-When a speech sound is produced by sending a stream of air through the nose, the nasal consonants in English are/m/,/n/ and / ŋ/ as in sum ,sun and sung.

Fricatives-A speech sound made by forcing breadth out through a narrow space in the mouth with the lips, teeth or tongue in a particular position, for example-/f/ and /ʃ/in fee and she.

Continuant- A consonant that is produced with the breath passing through the throat so that the sound to be continued,/f/,/l/ and /m/ are example of continuants.

Semivowel- A speech sound that sounds like a vowel but functions as a consonant, for example/w/ and /j/ in the English words wet and yet.

Bilabial- A speech sound made by using both lips, such as/b/,/p/ and /m/ in /buy//pie/and /my/.

Labio dental- A speech sound made by placing the top teeth against the bottom lips, for example/f/ and /v/ in fan and van.

Dental- This is produced with the tongue against the upper front teeth, for example /Ɵ/,/ŏ/ in thin and this.

Alveolar-A speech sound, made with the tongue touching the part of mouth behind the upper front teeth, for example /t/ and /d/ in tie and die.

Palatal- A speech sound made by placing the tongue against or near the hard palate of the mouth , for example /j/ at the beginning of yes.

Velar- A speech sound made by placing the back of the tongue against or near the hard palate of the mouth ,for example /k/ or /g/ in the English words Key and go.

Glottal-A speech sound produced by the glottis.

RULES FOR PRONOUNCING CONSONANTS

LETTER "B"- For pronouncing alphabet "B" generally phonetic alphabet "b" is used but it remains silent in the following two groups of words-
1. Before "t" as in debt and doubt
2. After "m" at the end of the words as in climb and comb.

LETTER "C"-The letter C in English can be pronounced in different ways like-
1. /c/ -If there is "e" or "i" immediately after "c", than phonetically it is pronounced as "s". For example-nice, face.
   When "y" is immediately used after "c" as vowel than phonetically it is pronounced as "c". For example- cycle, cyclone.
2. /k/- when "a, o, u" are immediately after "c" than c is phonetically pronounced as "k".for example cut, cat, cake, cup.
   Similarly when "c" is used as last alphabet in any word for example basic and traffic.
   Similarly when there is consonant immediately after "c" for example claim, clap.
   Exceptionally "c" remains silent in few words like muscle, indict.
3. /ʃ/-when suffix –cious, -cial,-cient,-ciate used at the end of any word than "c" phonetically pronounced as "ʃ" .for example special, precious, efficient, associate.
4. "C" in combination with other letters-
   "cc" in many words pronounced as /k/ example-accountant, accurate.
    But when "e,i,y" is followed by "cc" than its phonetic sound is /ks/.for example-accept and accent.
   "sc" in combination pronounced phonetically as /sk/ for example-prescribe, describe.
5. /tʃ/-The alphabets "ch" is pronounced differently at different places like phonetic sound of "ch" is pronounced as church, chance. Where as it becomes /ʃ/ in machine and it becomes /k/ in chemist and stomach.
6. Generally English words from Greek language, pronounced phonetically as /k/ for example-chaos and chorus whereas English words from French language pronounced phonetically as /ʃ/ example parachute, champagne. whereas words starting from "ch" in English language are phonetically pronounced as /tʃ/ like charge, coach. If there is "r" immediately after "ch" than it is phonetically pronounced as /k/ example-anachronism, Christmas. Similarly when there is "S" before "ch" than also its phonetic sound is /k/ like in school, scheme. There are few exceptions in this like Schedule which uses phonetic sound /ʃ/ instead of /k/.
7. The combination "ck" is phonetically pronounced as /k/ like rock, clock, duck and brick.

LETTER "D"- Generally alphabet "D" is phonetically pronounced as /d/,except few instances ,in few words its sound becomes /dʒ/like in soilder, gradual. In few words sound of "d" remains silent handkerchief, sandwich.

The verb ending with "ed" are phonetically pronounced as /Id/ example crowded,addicted.

When there is voiceless consonant at the end of the verb than "ed " is phonetically pronounced as /t/ example trapped, finished where as generally "ed" in other verbs is pronounced as/d/ like in played and closed.

LETTER "F"- For pronouncing alphabet "F" generally phonetic alphabet /f/ is used. If "ff" is used than also the phonetic sound remains /f/. like off, stuff, stiff, bluff etc. In English language "ph' is also pronounced as /f/ example pharmacy, photo, similarly "gh" is also pronounced as /f/ rough, cough.

LETTER "G"- In English language G is generally pronounced as /g/ example ring, king, sing, swing etc. and give, get, gear, go and phonetic sound /dʒ/ example gel, ginger, gym general.

When "a,o,u" are used immediately after "g" than phonetically they use/g/ example game, gold ,goal.

In case there is "m and n" immediately after "g" than "g" remains silent. Example sign, foreign,paradigm.

"gg" is generally pronounced as /g/ like egg,rugged where as in few words it phonetic sound is /dʒ/ like suggest, exaggerate similarly edge and hedge.

The combination gh is generally pronounced as/f/ like rough and laugh. Whereas gh remains silent in few words like though, high, eight, and daughter.

When there is "gue" at the end of any word it is pronounced as /g/ like fatigue, catalogue tongue and colleague but there are few exceptions like argue.

LETTER "H"- For alphabet H the phonetic alphabet /h/ is used. Like harm, her.in few words h remains silent like honour ,honest.in English "wh" is also use phonetic sound of/h/ like who,whose.

LETTER "J"- In English phonetic alphabet /dʒ/ is used to pronounce "J". Example judge, journey, jungle and just. The phonetic alphabet /dʒ/ is also used for pronouncing "dg" and "ge" example edge, bridge and page, stage respectively.

LETTER "K"- In English phonetic alphabet /k/ is used for pronouncing "K" example-kind , kid, similarly "ck" is also pronounced as /k/ example kick, back.

If a word starts with "kn" than "k" remains silent in that word example know, knife, knowledge.

Phonetic alphabet /k/ is also pronounced as "c, ck, cc" For example come, kick, bike, account and trick.

LETTER "L"- For pronouncing letter "L" phonetic alphabet /l/ is used. For example leg, luck. For pronouncing words with "ll" phonetic alphabet /l/ is used example till, bill .When /l/ is used in words with "a, f, m and k" than L remains silent for example calm, calf, could and walk etc. In when words ending with "le" e remains silent they are pronounced with sound /l/ for example- battle, cattle.

LETTER "M"-For pronouncing English alphabet "M" phonetic sound /m/ is used. like madam , master. Words with "mm" are also pronounced as /m/,Example- hammer, jammer.

While pronouncing the letter "mn" "n" remain silent in most of the words example column, condemn, solemn etc. but when suffix is added in word with "mn" than "N" does not remain silent example- condemnation, solemnity.

LETTER "N"- Alphabet "N" is pronounced in two ways like /n/-nurse, nun, number, nose and /ŋ/-bank, think, conquer and anxious. When "N" is part of prefix in any word than it is pronounced as /n/example conclude and igneous.

When "NN" is used in a word it is pronounced as /n/ like funny, sunny. The letter "ng" in a word is pronounced as /ŋ/ example singing, ringing and /nɡ/ as finger, singer. When there is "ng" at the end of the word than it is pronounced as /ŋ/ example swing and cling but when "ng" is in the middle of the word it is pronounced as /nɡ/ example tongue. "nge" is pronounced as/ndʒ/ example change, challenge. Whereas if there is "I or Y" immediately after "ng" than phonetic alphabet /dʒ/ is used example engine, engineer etc.

LETTER "P"- The phonetic alphabet /P/ is used for pronouncing "P" Example- pet, parrot. If "pp" is used in a word than also /p/ is used example puppy, pepper. "P" remains silent in words with alphabet pn, ps, pt. Example pneumonia , pseudonym and cupboard.

Alphabet "ph" is pronounced as /f/ example photo, phobia, phone and phrase except few exception like shepherd where "ph" is pronounced as /p/.

LETTER "Q"- In English "Q" is always followed by "u" except few foreign words in English language. Alphabet "qu" is generally pronounced in two ways, i.e. /kw/ queen, quite and /k/ as antique, cheque.

LETTER "R"-In English language, for pronouncing "R" phonetic alphabet /r/ is used. Example rat , rose. For pronouncing "rr", phonetic alphabet /r/ is used, example merry, carry.

In British English, "R" when followed by a consonant,"r" remains silent example barber, surplus, park and surprise."R" is pronounced when followed by a vowel, example abstract, and moral but in American English,"R" is pronounced whether followed by vowel or consonant.

LETTER "S"-In English language, for pronouncing "S" four different phonetic alphabets are used, In the beginning of any sentence it is used as /s/ like in words sun and sound but few exceptions are with sound /ʃ/ as used in words sure and sugar. The sound /z/ is used in words rise and loses whereas sound /ʃ/ is used in words pension and tension. It is also used as /ʒ/ in words vision and pleasure.

"S" remains silent in few words like isle and island. "ss" is also pronounced differently in different words, like /s/ as lesson and miss whereas /z/ as dessert and possess, sound /ʃ/ as mission and pressure.

"SH" is pronounced as /ʃ/ like in sheep and fish but with few exceptions like mishap.

LETTER "T"-In English language, "t" is pronounced in different ways like with sound/t/ in words tent and table, with sound /tʃ/ in words culture and nature and with sound /ʃ/ in words nation and partial.

Generally when a word ends with "ture" than "t" is pronounced as /tʃ/ example adventure, departure, nature and structure. "tu" can also be pronounced in two ways example /tʃ/ in words actual and fortunate and also as /tju:/in words tune and attitude.In few words "t" remains silent example listen and soften.

The alphabet "th" is generally pronounced in two ways like-/Ɵ/ and /ð/ like in words thin, thick, method and with, bath and breath respectively. The alphabet "th" remains silent in words like asthma and aezma.

The suffix "th" when added to numbers is always pronounced as /Ɵ/ like in words sixth and seventh. It is also pronounced as /ð/ in words like that, them, though, weather and thus etc.

LETTER "V"-The letter "V" is pronounced with phonetic sound /v/like van and vicious.

LETTER "W"-For pronouncing "w" alphabet phonetic sound /w/ is used. Like wet, swim, weak and away.

If a word starts with"wr" than "w" remains silent in such words like wrong and write."w' remains silent in few more words like two and answer. When a word starts with "wh" than in few words it is pronounced as /w/ like what and white whereas in few other words it is pronounced as /h/ like in who and whole.

LETTER "X"-Three different phonetic sounds are used for pronouncing "X" ,like /ks/ in words axis, box etc. sound /gz/ in words exam ,exact etc. and sound /kʃ/ is used in words anxious and noxious.

When a word starts with alphabet "x" than it gives sound of "z" like in words Xerox and xylophone similarly there are words like luxury and anxiety.

LETTER "Y"- Consonant "Y" is used as vowel and consonant both. When a word starts with "Y" than it gives sound of /j/ like in words yes, you, young and beyond. When it is used as vowel it is pronounced in two ways like with sound /i/ and /ai/ like myth and type respectively. If there is vowel immediately after"y" than it is pronounced as /j/ but when "y" is used immediately after a consonant than it is pronounced as /i/.

LETTER "Z"- Consonant "Z" is pronounced with phonetic alphabet/z/. like in zeal, zoom and zone etc. but when there is "U" immediately after "Z" than it is pronounced as/ʒ/, like in seizure.

Sometimes "s" is also pronounced /z/ when a word ends with "se" and "s" like in words rose and size.

Teaching Strategies for correct pronunciations-

Classroom teachers and tutors can help students reach their potential by planning exercises and activities to reinforce correct pronunciation and effective communication. Practice and repetition of the words to emphasize concepts, patterns and rules regarding sound system, syllabication and word structure is helpful, but other tools can be used as well.

Teachers can:

- Make up songs, chants, and rhymes to help students remember words or rules for pronunciation
- . Reciting these chants can help students have fun while they are learning.
- Develop memory aids and mnemonic devices to help students spell and pronounce these words correctly. Individual learning tools can work wonders for helping students learn.
- Designate a portion of the day for students to quietly repeat the words out loud to themselves, and then participate in group activities.
- Assign students reading materials for the practice of correct pronunciation. Have them narrate their own stories if the vocabulary words are not commonly found in books or texts than help of teachers and peer group should be provided.

Other ways to help students reach their spelling potential include use of the following approaches:

- Correcting reversals
- Computer games
- Making individualized pronunciation list
- Learning how to self-correct
- Playing classroom games
- Positive reinforcement
- Auditory, visual, and kinesthetic activities
- Discussion and communication sessions
- Additional reading and speaking activities

Reviewing a student's progress is imperative to helping him/her learn. Seeing growth and progress is a motivational tool for the child and helps the teacher understand what strategies are working.

Practicing at Home

 Communication between schools and parent is imperative. Teachers should help students to practice sentences and word lists to practice with. Reading and speaking these words can help, but other activities will also make a difference.

Interactive computer games and websites can provide entertainment and reinforce pronunciation rules.

Talking to student about his/her progress can let the teacher know you are involved and are working on skills at home. The teacher may be able to suggest different activities and ways to approach pronunciation practice at home. Keeping the lines of communication open with the student is the best way to help your pronunciation-challenged student.

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