

# REMEDIAL PROGRAMME FOR PRONUNCIATION OF ENGLISH VOWELS

Dr. Preeti Singh, PDF, IASE, Jamia Millia Islamia, Delhi.

**ABSTRACT-** *The main purpose of this paper is to provide practical knowledge of the pronunciation of English vowels. 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 phonetic sounds of English vowels, consonants and diphthongs. 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 vowels, consonants and diphthongs.*

*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.

## The sounds of English Vowels-

There are twenty vowels of English language- twelve are pure vowels. (monophthongs ) and eight are (diphthongs).Pure vowels (monophthongs) can be divided into two categories-short sound vowels and long sound vowels.

## Phonetic Sounds of Vowels

As per the part of the tongue used during their articulation pure vowels are classified into three categories-

Front vowels- /i:/, /i/, /e/, /æ/

These vowels are articulated with the front of the tongue raised towards the hard palate. There is wide enough gap for the air to escape freely between the front of the tongue and the hard palate. Air is released without any friction.

Back vowels- /ɔ:/, /u:/, /ɑ:/, /ɒ/, /o/

These vowels are articulated with the back of the tongue raised towards the soft palate. Mouth opens wide enough to release air freely without any friction.

Central vowels - /ʌ/, /ɜ:/, /ə/

These vowels are articulated with the centre of the tongue raised towards the place between the hard palate and the soft palate. There must be wide enough gap between them for air to escape freely without friction.

There are five vowels in English language a, e, i, o, u. These vowels give different sounds in different words. Some common sounds of these vowels are given below but these words in combination with one another may give different sounds.

## SHORT SOUND VOWELS-

The sound of phonetic vowel / I /- To produce this sound the back part of the tongue is raised just above the half close position, the lips are loosely spread and tongue is lax(without any stress and effort).Like- ill, impact, ship, effect.

The sound of phonetic vowel / e /- To produce this sound the front of the tongue is raised to a point about half open and half close, the lips are loosely spread. Like- egg , elephant, pen, mess.

The sound of phonetic vowel /æ/ - This vowel is produced by raising the front of the tongue in the direction of the hard palate to a height slightly below the half open position, the lips are neutral. Like-act, dam that, hand.

The sound of phonetic vowel /ʌ/ - When this sound is produced, lips remain neutrally opened and the centre of the tongue is raised to a point nearly half way between open and half open positions because this sound is pronounced with vocal cords in throat only. Like- up, oven, cup, rush.

The sound of phonetic vowel /ɒ/ - It is a short vowel so to produce this sound the back of the tongue is raised slightly above the open position, mouth is open and lips are slightly rounded. like-of, on, opt, honour.

The sound of phonetic vowel /ɔ:/ - This sound is articulated by raising the back part of the tongue nearer the soft palate just above the half close position. the lips are closely but loosely rounded tongue is lax. Soft palate is that part which is at the back of hard palate. like-bull, book, wood, should.

The sound of phonetic vowel /ə/ - This phonetic sound can be used for all vowels like-for 'a'-allow, for 'e'-problem, for 'i'-possible, for 'o'-solution, for 'u'-succeed. For pronouncing this sound vocal cords become more tensed. Like-ago, above, affect, alone.

#### LONG SOUND VOWELS-

The sound of phonetic vowel /i:/ - This vowel sound is a long sound so to produce this sound the tongue is raised up to the hard palate to a height just below the close position, the lips are spread and the tongue is tense. Hard palate is a part just at rear position from the root of teeth of upper part. Like- each, eager, knee, keep.

The sound of phonetic vowel /ɑ:/ - This is a long vowel sound. to produce this sound mouth must be wide opened so the jaws are kept considerably separated, the lips are neutrally open and the tongue between the centre and the back part is in the fully open position. like-arm aunt, bath, dance.

The sound of phonetic vowel /ɔ:/ - This is a long vowel sound. This sound is articulated with the back of the tongue raised towards the soft palate between the half open and half close position, lips are rounded. like- all, organ, august, ball.

The sound of phonetic vowel /u:/ - During the production of this sound the back part of the tongue is raised near up to the soft palate and in close position, the lips are closely rounded and the tongue is tense, it is a long vowel. like- too, shoe, food, fool.

The sound of phonetic vowel /ɜ:/ - This is a long vowel. To produce this sound lips are spread and the tongue or the centre of the tongue is raised between half close and half open position. Like- earn, earth, girl, world.

#### DIPHTHONGS-

They are made up of two vowels sounds. During the articulation of diphthongs, the tongue quickly moves or glides from the sound of the first vowel towards the sound of second vowels of the diphthong. Such glide must occur within a single syllable.

The sound of phonetic diphthong /eɪ/ - It is a diphthong sound. To produce this sound lips are spread. This sound can be describe as a glide (movement with smoothness) from a front open unrounded vowel with a point just behind the front open position and moves towards the lower jaws. Like- age, eight, they, grey.

The sound of phonetic diphthong /aɪ/ - To produce this diphthong the glide starts from a point just behind the front open position and moves towards the closing movement of the lower jaws. The lips have a neutral position at the beginning but gradually they change in a loosely spread position. like- eye, iron, shy sky.

The sound of phonetic diphthong /ɔɪ/ - To articulate this diphthong the glide starts from a point between the back half open and open positions. The movement of jaws is not as considerable as for the diphthong, the lips are open rounded at the beginning but gradually they change to neutral towards the end. like- joy, join, voice, loyal.

The sound of phonetic diphthong /əʊ/ - The production of this sound the jaw movement is very slight and the lips which are neutral at the beginning become rounded towards the end. The glide of this diphthong begins at a central position almost between half close and half open. It means at the beginning we pronounce /ə/ and after it /ʊ/ like- own, echo, nose, coal.

The sound of phonetic diphthong /aʊ/ - To produce this diphthong sound lips are neutral at the beginning of the glide but become rounded towards the end. We can say that the glide starts between the pronunciation of /a:/ and /ʊ/ sounds. Like- owl, pouch, mouth, around.

The sound of phonetic diphthong /ɪə/ - To produce this diphthong sound the lips are neutral throughout the glide. In this sound the glide starts between /ɪ/ and /ə/ the first element /ɪ/ is more prominent than second element /ə/. like-ear, near, year, clear.

The sounds of phonetic diphthong /eə/ - In the articulation of this vowel the lips are neutrally open throughout the glide. The glide starts from the position of the sound /e/ and moves towards the central unrounded vowel between half close and half open position. Like- air, share, stair, pair.

The sounds of phonetic diphthong /ʊə/ - In the articulation of this diphthong the lips are loosely rounded at the beginning of the glide and neutral at the end. The glide starts from the sound /ʊ/ and moves in the position and direction of /ə/ sound. like- cure, pure, assure, tour.

#### Sounds of "A"-

/æ/-Pan, cash, dam, gap, lack, jam, pack, acid.

/eɪ/-Pane, able, aim, day, bake, cane, fate, name

/ɑ:/-Bask, fast, pass, master, argue, artist, art

/ɒ/-Wash, wallet, want, watch, quality, wander

/ɔ:/-Call, mall, talk, cause, fault, always, sauce

/ə/-Ago, afford, alert, aloud, apart, accept, canal

/ɪ/-Usage, baggage, cottage cabbage, damage, bondage

/eə/-Care, fare, hair, chair, air, pair

"A" When followed by "r"-Arm, bark, card, harm, march

"A" When followed by "re"-Bare, fare, mare, care, rare.

**Sounds of “E”**

/e/-Pen, egg, end, extra, beg, mess, tell, well

/i:/Reject, email, evil, decent, legal, media, refund

/ɪ/-Bucket, economy, effect, escape, example, explain

/ə /-Agent, hello, enemy, her, petition, velocity.

“E” When followed by “r”-Err, germ, nerve, serve, verge

“E” When in combination with “A” i.e. “EA”-Eagle, easy, beak, cheat, leaf

“EA” When followed by “r”-Ear, dear, near, hear, beard

“EE” Pronounced as /i:/-Bee, deep, keep, seed, weep.

“EE” When followed by “r”-Beer, cheer, deer, veer

“EA” Pronounced as /e/- Dead, deaf, health, weapon, ready.

Pronunciation of “ Eu”-Europe, euro, eureka, eulogy

Pronunciation of “Eu” Chew, dew, few, new, sewage

**Sounds of “I”**

/ɪ// -Fit, ink, bill, fish, give, kill, sick

/aɪ/-Ice, idea, bite, life, pipe, rise, find.

/ə/-Cavity, authority, charity, scrutiny

/ɜ:/Bird, birth, girl, circle, virtual

“I” in combination with “e” pronounced as-field, yield, piece, wield

“I” in combination with “e” is also pronounced as-lie, diet, society, science, exception

“I” in combination with “a” pronounced as-dial, diary, giant, diamond, viable

“I” in combination with “o” pronounced as-pious, riot, violet, violent, violin

“I” When followed by “r” pronounced as- sir, bird, girl, circle, skirt and also pronounced as-iron, fire, wire, irony

**Sounds of “O”**

/əʊ/-Old, ocean, old, over, bold, bonus

/ɒ/-Off, odd, office, olive, option, coffee

/ə/-Oblige, collect, commit, confess, police

/ɔ:/-Or, organ, form, lord, more, order

/ɜ:/-Word, work, world, worse, worth, worst

/ʌ/-Other, onion, oven, company, money, month

/ʌ/-Come, does, some, none

/u:/Move, boom, food, roof, soon

/ʊ/- Cool, book, good, look, wool

“OO” Pronounced as/ʊ “Oe” combination is pronounced as-poem, coerce

“Oa” combination is pronounced as –road, board and also coach, goat, soap

“Oa” combination when followed by “r” is pronounced as board, roar, hoard

“Oi” combination is pronounced as –oil, boil, join, noise, voice

“Oy” combination is pronounced as-boy, joy, toy, coy and also as loyal, royal

“Ou” is pronounced in many ways-hour, bound, house, mouth, and town

**Sounds of “U”**

/ʌ/-Up, ugly, under, butter, duck, judge

/u:/Rude, jute, rule, rupee, lucid

/ʊ/-Put, jury, rural, bull, pull, pushes

/ju:/-Cute, union, unity, cube, duty, fusion

/ə/-Unless, must, supply, support, surprise

/ɜ:/-Burn, nurse, urban, burst, hurt, surf.

**Rules for correct Accent**

When a word has more than one syllable, one of the syllables is always a little louder than the others. The syllable with the louder stress is the accented syllable. It may seem that the placement of accents in words is often random or accidental, but these are some rules that usually work.

1. Accents are often on the first syllable. Examples: ba'/sic, pro'/gram.
2. In words that have suffixes or prefixes, the accent is usually on the main root word. Examples: box'/es, un'/tie'.
3. If de-, re-, ex-, in-, po-, pro-, or a- is the first syllable in a word, it is usually not accented. Examples: de'/lay', ex'/plore'.
4. Two vowel letters together in the last syllable of a word often indicates an accented last syllable. Examples: com'/plain', con'/ceal'.
5. When there are two like consonant letters within a word, the syllable before the double consonants is usually accented. Examples: be'/gin'/ner, let'/ter.

6. The accent is usually on the syllable before the suffixes -ion, ity, -ic, -ical, -ian, -ial, or -ious, and on the second syllable before the suffix -ate. Examples: af/fec/ta'/tion, dif/fer/en'/ti/ate.

7. In words of three or more syllables, one of the first two syllables is usually accented. Examples: ac'/ci/dent, de/ter'/mine.

Teachers in school help students learn above sounds with the help of examples through various activities-They can

- Make up songs, chants, and rhymes to help students remember words or rules for correct pronunciation. Reciting these chants can help students have fun while they are learning.
- Develop memory aids and mnemonic devices to help students pronounce 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 practice under guidance of teacher with effective pronunciation and communication skills.
- Assign students reading materials for practicing pronunciation through group activities. Ask them to tell stories, recite poems in order to give them exposure for correct pronunciation.
- Time should be given to students for discussion and question answer sessions.

Other ways to help students develop their correct pronunciation and effective communication potential teacher can use the following approaches:

- Correcting reversals
- Computer games
- Making individualized pronunciation drills
- Learning how to self-correct
- Playing classroom games
- Positive reinforcement
- Auditory, visual, and kinesthetic activities
- Communication and discussion activities
- 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 which strategies are working.

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