

## ***The Pronunciation Component in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages***

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This paper reviews the nature of changing patterns in pronunciation teaching over the last 25 years.<sup>1</sup> It then describes in detail six instructional features of a multidimensional teaching process: a dual-focus communicative program philosophy, learner goals, instructional objectives, the role of the learner, the role of the teacher, and a framework of three instructional practice modes.

Recent discussions of “pronunciation”<sup>2</sup> teaching principles have examined a number of important rationale issues including: questions of whether pronunciation should (or can) be taught and, if so, what should be taught and how; expressions of the need for more controlled studies of changes in learner pronunciation patterns as the result of specific instructional procedures; views on whether and how research in second language phonology can inform classroom practices. These and many other pertinent concerns have been ably discussed in thorough and insightful state-of-the-art papers by Leather (1983) and Pennington and Richards (1986). When it comes to classroom practice, however, as Yule (1990) has observed, it may have appeared to novice teachers that the only classroom choice available is one between teaching pronunciation as articulatory phonetics or not teaching pronunciation at all. But could this limited choice of options be more apparent than real? Clearly, on the positive side of the picture, some creative and principled contributions to alternatives have come on the scene in recent years, with a small but steady movement toward some “new looks” in pronunciation teaching. This does not mean that there are not many remaining questions about a number of issues, and more

<sup>1</sup> The focus of this discussion is pronunciation teaching and is not intended to include a review of research in areas of second language phonology.

<sup>2</sup> The term *pronunciation* means different things to different people. In this paper, I refer to a range of pronunciation teaching practices.

than a few leaps of faith in mounting classroom practices without a clear theory of pronunciation teaching. Nonetheless, it does seem that there is reason for optimism.

It is the intent of this paper to approach the topic of pronunciation teaching with this spirit of optimism, devoting one section to a search for signs of changing patterns and agents of change over time, and a second section to summary descriptions of some of the major instructional strands found in many innovative programs, with a multidimensional look at the pronunciation teaching process. A final section considers some continuing needs. Specifically, Part 1 presents a short background introduction focused on the broad sweep of growth and development in TESOL, the profession. This is followed by a review of changing patterns of emphasis in the teaching of the pronunciation component in ESL/EFL<sup>3</sup>, concluding with a look at two important catalysts of change: the urgent needs of adult (and near-adult) learners and the emergence of a number of shifts in instructional focus, ones that are formulated here as programming principles, Part 2 describes six important instructional features in detail. Part 3 considers some present/future needs.

## **PART 1: CHANGING PATTERNS**

### **TESOL AT TWENTY-FIVE: EXTENSIVE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT**

The first observation that must be made in any reflection on the ESL profession today is one that recognizes at the outset its extensive growth and development—in size, in diversity, in complexity of learner clientele and of professional substance.

In the last quarter century we have witnessed an enormous “population explosion” in student numbers the world over, and especially in adult and near-adult learner groups. Strevens (1988) reported that estimates of the number of people in the world who use English for some purpose range between 750 million and a billion and a half. But, and of special interest to us, only approximately 300 million of them are native speakers (NSs), leaving a staggering number of nonnative speakers (NNSs). With this turn of events has come new instructional demands in new situations and we have needed to turn our attention more and more to carefully focused assessments of specific student needs and subsequent design of effective instructional programs. This has

<sup>3</sup> The designation “English as a second language” (ESL) is used throughout and is taken to include both “second” and “foreign” settings.

proved a special challenge for the planning of effective pronunciation programs.

As for professional substance, a second explosion, a veritable knowledge explosion in both our own field and in resource disciplines, presents changing perspectives on the nature of language, language learning, and language teaching and provides a multiplicity of options for setting our pedagogical, assessment, and research agenda. This last quarter century also has produced an instructional technology revolution, one that has been especially advantageous to pronunciation work, with a variety of audio, video, and computer capabilities applicable to classroom and learning center laboratories.

### CHANGING PERSPECTIVES ON LANGUAGE AND LANGUAGE LEARNING

As perspectives on language learning and language teaching have changed, there has been a gradual shift from an emphasis on teaching and a teaching-centered classroom to an emphasis on learning and a learning-centered classroom, with special attention to the individual learner as well as the group of learners. At the same time, there has been a shift from a narrow focus on linguistic competencies to a broader focus on communicative competencies, within which linguistic competencies (i. e., grammar, pronunciation, etc.) remain an essential component albeit only one of several critical competencies (Canale & Swain, 1980).

The following significant changes in theoretical paradigms—in learning models, in linguistic models, in instructional models—inform much of the state-of-the-art work in the field today (including current directions in the principles and practices of pronunciation work).

1. From a language learning perspective of outside-in, to one of inside-out; that is, a changed concept of language acquisition that views the learner as the active prime mover in the learning process (Corder, 1967), and an emerging paradigm shift in which learners are seen as active creators, not as passive recipients, in a process which is cognitively driven.
2. Following from this altered conceptualization of the learning process, a movement from a focus on the group, to an increasing focus on individual learner differences and individual learning styles and strategies (Naiman, Fröhlich, Stern, Todesco, 1978; O'Malley & Chamot, 1989; Oxford, 1990; Rubin, 1975; Stern, 1975; Wenden & Rubin, 1987).

3. From a focus on language as simply a formal system, to a focus on language as both a formal system and a functional system, one that exists to satisfy the communicative needs of its users (Halliday, 1970,1973, 1978).
4. From linguistic preoccupation with sentence-level grammar to widening interest in semantics, pragmatics, discourse, and speech act theory (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1970).
5. From an instructional focus on linguistic form and correct usage to one on function and communicatively appropriate use (Widdowson, 1978, 1983).
6. From an orientation of linguistic competence to one of communicative competence (Hymes, 1972).
7. From a global competence concept to detailed competency specifications and the introduction of an especially useful model that brings together a number of viewpoints in one linguistically oriented and pedagogically useful framework: grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, and strategic competence (Canale & Swain, 1980).

These developments and others have led to a wide variety of changes in virtually all aspects of ESL including the area of pronunciation teaching.

## **PRONUNCIATION TEACHING PAST AND PRESENT**

### **The 1940s, 1950s, and into the 1960s**

Not much question about it: In the 1940s, 1950s, and into the 1960s pronunciation was viewed as an important component of English language teaching curricula in both the audiolingual methodology developed in the U.S. and the British system of situational language teaching. In fact, along with correct grammar, accuracy of pronunciation was a high-priority goal in both systems.

Although these two schools of language teaching developed from different traditions, as Richards and Rodgers (1986) point out, they reflected quite similar views on the nature of both language and language learning. In general, language was viewed as consisting of hierarchies of structurally related items for encoding meaning. Language learning was viewed as mastering these forms, the building blocks of the language, along with the combining rules for phonemes, morphemes, words, phrases, sentences. The pronunciation class in this view was one that gave primary attention to phonemes and their meaningful contrasts, environmental allophonic variations, and combinatory phonotactic rules, along with

structurally based attention to stress, rhythm, and intonation. Instruction featured articulatory explanations, imitation, and memorization of patterns through drills and dialogues, with extensive attention to correction. One text that was very widely used and served as a source of much imitation in the preparation of pronunciation teaching materials was an oral approach volume produced under the supervision of Robinett (Lado, Fries, & Robinett, 1954).

Actually, the use of the past tense here is misleading since both audiolingual and situational language teaching continue to flourish in programs throughout the world, and many make use of the traditional approach described above. The major change that has occurred today in many innovative programs is one that abandons the notion of an articulatory phonetics approach as the conceptual basis for teaching pronunciation, but integrates attention to the sound system into an expanded and more comprehensive framework, one that focuses on communicative interactions and functional language use.

### **The 1960s, 1970s, and into the 1980s**

Beginning in the late 1960s and continuing through the 1970s and into the 1980s, and in quite sharp contrast to the previous period, a lot of questions were raised about pronunciation in the ESL curriculum. There were questions about the importance of pronunciation as an instructional focus, questions about whether or not it could be taught directly at all, questions about the assumption it could be learned at all under direct instruction. The effect was that more and more programs gave less and less time and explicit attention to pronunciation; many programs dropped it entirely. While the number of textbook and teacher reference publications in other segments of the ESL curriculum increased dramatically, very little new material on pronunciation appeared.

The elimination or reduction of the pronunciation component developed amid growing dissatisfaction with many of the principles and practices of the traditional approach to pronunciation. Factors involved included changing models of second language learning, changing foci in second language teaching, and changing models of linguistic description. The familiar ways and means of teaching pronunciation no longer seemed appropriate as new pedagogical sights were set on language functions, communicative competencies, task-based methodologies, and realism and authenticity in learning activities and materials. Moreover, both the process and

the product were seen as flawed. The process, viewed as meaningless noncommunicative drill-and-exercise gambits, lost its appeal; likewise, the product, that is the success ratio for the time and energy expended, was found wanting.

Through the decade of the 1970s, however, there were some indications of change. The agents of change were a number of ESL professionals who began to raise issues and suggest expansions and changes of emphasis in classroom practices. In retrospect, many of these perspectives foreshadowed things to come: Prator (1971) examined issues relating to phonetics versus phonemics in pronunciation teaching; Allen (1971) wrote on intonation, providing practice suggestions that continue to be cited today; Bowen (1972) focused on contextualizing practice in the classroom, with a classic format that is still recommended, for example, by Celce-Murcia and Goodwin (1991) who refer to it as "Bowen's Technique"; Kriedler (1972), W. Dickerson (1975), and Dickerson and Finney (1978) stressed the importance of the spelling/pronunciation link for learners; Morley (1975) emphasized the need for learner-involvement and speech self-monitoring; Robinett (1975) suggested ways to present information in a manner that appeals to students' cognitive involvement; Stevick (1975) turned attention to a view of the learner's feelings and the importance of the affective dimension in learning; L. Dickerson (1975) and W. Dickerson (1976) looked at aspects of variability in L2 pronunciation performance; Cathcart and Olsen (1976) reported on teachers' and students' preferences for correction; Parrish (1977) and Stevick (1978) presented viewpoints on a practical philosophy of pronunciation with attention to issues involving linguistic, affective, social, and methodological considerations; G. Brown (1977, 1978) underscored the importance of focusing listening attention on prosodic patterning; Beebe (1978) provided some sociolinguistic perspectives on "teaching pronunciation, why we should be"; Smith and Rafiqzad (1979) investigated mutual intelligibility among speakers from different cultures.

These articles all addressed topics that were to be issues of continuing concern into the 1980s: (a) basic philosophical considerations for teaching pronunciation; (b) the importance of meaning and contextualized practice; (c) learner involvement, self-monitoring, and learners' feelings; (d) learner cognitive involvement; (e) intelligibility issues; (f) variability issues; (g) correction issues; (h) increasing attention to stress, rhythm, intonation, reductions, assimilations, etc.; (i) expanded perspectives on listening/pronunciation focus; (j) attention to the sound-spelling link.

### Through the 1980s and into the 1990s

Beginning in the mid-1980s and continuing into the 1990s there has been a growing interest in revisiting the pronunciation component of the ESL curriculum for adults and young adults. An important part of this movement has been pronunciation developments in several ESP areas: that is, programming for specific-purpose attention to pronunciation (i.e., academic, occupational, etc.).

The modest number of pronunciation-focused papers of the 1970s was followed in the 1980s by a significant increase in both journal articles and teacher resource books, clearly a reflection of renewed interest in pronunciation teaching principles and practices. First of all, a number of insightful review articles were published in the eighties, including: Leather in *Language Teaching* (1983), with a thorough state-of-the-art article on second language pronunciation learning and teaching, one that raised pertinent issues that a rationale for L2 pronunciation teaching ought to address, then reviewed the status of each; Pennington and Richards (1986), in the *TESOL Quarterly*, with a careful reexamination of the status of pronunciation in language teaching and a call for a broader focus on pronunciation within the context of discourse in both second language acquisition (SLA) research and ESL teaching von Schon (1987) in the 25th-anniversary edition of the *English Teaching Forum*, with a close look at pronunciation in the international context of English as a foreign language (EFL), and an examination of the roles of English and the issue of what models should be taught; Grant (1988) in *TESOL in Action*, a Georgia TESOL publication, with a discussion of the problems and the possibilities for innovative pronunciation planning for the adult learner; Anderson-Hsieh (1989) in *Cross Currents*, with a succinct history of approaches toward teaching pronunciation with special reference to Japan, but with useful applicability to other EFL contexts; Yule (1989) and Riggensbach (1990) in *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics (ARAL)* with reviews of a number of aspects of teaching the spoken language, including pronunciation.

A number of teacher resource books on teaching pronunciation and/or speaking skills appeared during the 1980s as well: Brown and Yule (1983), a broad "armoury of strategies and tools" (p. ix), with a concentration on the communicative use of language by speakers; Bygate (1987), a useful source of ideas on teaching speaking, with both practical and theoretical perspectives; Morley (1987) a variety of "current perspectives on pronunciation teaching: practices anchored in theory"; Kenworthy (1987), solid information on pronunciation teaching, including a section reviewing the main

problems experienced by speakers of nine selected languages; Avery and Ehrlich (1987) (a TESL Canada *Talk* volume), papers on classroom methodology and a section on problems of eight language groups; Wong (1987b), focus on English rhythm and intonation in pronunciation teaching Swan and Smith (1987), 24 contributors provide a comprehensive teachers' guide to "learner English" in terms of typical interlanguages of speakers of several dozen different languages: A. Brown (1991), a collection of 29 papers published between 1956 and 1986; Celce-Murcia, Brinton, and Goodwin (in press), a reference book on English pronunciation for ESL/EFL teachers; Comrie (1987), linguists provide descriptions of "the world's major languages," including sections on phonology.

In addition, a number of excellent English language reference books were published during the 1980s: Wells (1982), three volumes that contain detailed descriptions of a wide variety of the English dialects found around the world; Ladefoged (1982), a course in phonetics with substantial information on English sounds, patterns, and suprasegmentals; Bauer, Dienhart, Hartvigson, and Jakobsen (1980), a careful description of "American English," with very useful comparative notes on "British English" as well; Brazil, Coulthard, and Johns (1980), a British discourse intonation and language teaching text which stresses the "learnability" (p. 118) of four intonational categories and their associated meaning; Brown, Currie, and Kenworthy (1980), a challenge to previous assumptions and models of sentence-level intonation, using data from interactive discourse; Wolfram and Johnson (1982), a volume on phonological analysis, with a "focus on American English"; Kriedler (1989), a phonology course with comprehensive presentation of the pronunciation of English.

Taken together, the reviews and the teacher references reveal a number of important developments and many continuing questions. An especially significant trend is an increasing number of programs engaged in developing new looks in pronunciation teaching, ones that are concerned with an expanded pronunciation/speech/oral communication component of the ESL curriculum.

Overall, with today's renewed professional commitment to empowering students to become effective, fully participating members of the English-speaking community in which they communicate, it is clear that there is a persistent, if small, groundswell of movement to write pronunciation back into the instructional equation but with a new look and a basic premise: *Intelligible pronunciation is an essential component of communicative competence.*



As Beebe (1978) observed, in this era of emphasis on meaningful communication, it is important for ESL professionals to take note of the fact that “pronunciation—like grammar, syntax, and discourse organization—*communicates* [italics added] . . . the very act of pronouncing, not just the words we transmit, are an essential part of what we communicate about ourselves as people” (p. 121). She reported that NSs often label NNS pronunciation errors derisively, as sounding comical, cute, incompetent, not serious, childish, etc.

In this review, it becomes clear that the decades of the seventies and eighties were important periods of development. A number of changing views on pronunciation learning and teaching emerged. Coincidentally, some of the need to rethink both principles and practices came about as the result of the pressing urgency of student needs. In the following section, student needs and principles guiding changes in pronunciation learning/teaching practices will be discussed.

### MAJOR INFLUENCES ON CHANGING PATTERNS OF PRONUNCIATION TEACHING

As noted earlier, changes in perspectives on second language learning and teaching over the past two and a half decades have impacted every facet of second language study. In the case of pronunciation, an early and rather wholesale movement in TESOL toward eliminating or reducing attention to pronunciation instruction presently seems to be undergoing something of a trend reversal. Part of the reason for this may lie in the fact that it has become increasingly clear in recent years that ignoring students’ pronunciation needs is an abrogation of professional responsibility. In programs for adult (and near-adult) ESL learners in particular, it is imperative that students’ educational, occupational, and personal/social language needs, *including reasonably intelligible pronunciation*, be served with instruction that will give them communicative empowerment—effective language use that will help them not just to survive, but to succeed. Moreover, with an increasing focus on communication, has come a growing premium on oral comprehensibility, making it of critical importance to provide instruction that enables students to become, not “perfect pronouncers” of English (which, as we shall see later is neither reasonable or necessary), but intelligible, communicative, confident users of spoken English for whatever purposes they need.

Two developments have been catalysts in bringing about changes in pronunciation teaching in recent years. One is the increasing pressure of the urgent needs of special groups of ESL learners.

Second, there are a number of emerging principles that seem to reflect an underlying belief system shared by many new pronunciation programs.

### **Groups of Learners in Special Need of Attention to Pronunciation**

Wong (1986), Morley (1987, 1988), Anderson-Hsieh (1989), Celce-Murcia (1991), and others have expressed concerns about particular groups whose pronunciation difficulties may place them at a professional or social disadvantage. In response to this need, a number of accent reduction programs have appeared, especially in the United States; some are run by solidly trained language professionals, some by less well-informed instructors. For all groups of learners profiled below, a broadly-constructed communicative approach to teaching pronunciation/speech is likely to be much more effective than a narrowly constructed articulatory phonetics approach.

#### ***In ESL Settings***

1. Adult and teenage refugees in vocational and language training programs. For this clientele of ESL learners, not only the initial stage of developing survival language skills (including reasonably intelligible speech), but continuing oral communicative development is crucial for education and employment, for conducting personal business, and for personal/social interactions.
2. Immigrant residents who have been in an English-speaking country for 5 to 15 years. This refers to those residents who have passed through the educational system and graduated into the workplace, only to find that their spoken language, and particularly their intelligibility, prohibits them from taking advantage of employment opportunities or from advancing educationally. Helping these ESL learners work to modify their pronunciation/speech patterns toward increased intelligibility is especially challenging—for both student and teacher—for the patterns are likely to be well entrenched and resistant to change. As Wong (1986) observed “the long-term effects of neglecting pronunciation are most dramatically exemplified by the accountants, programmers, police officers, telephone operators, and engineers enrolled in accent improvement and effective communication courses” (pp. 232-233). She goes on to note that

these long-term residents who demonstrate so well that pronunciation is not simply picked up through interaction with English speakers have to pay a high price to untangle the linguistic morass that is strangling their ability to communicate at the level demanded by their jobs.

3. A growing population of nonnative speakers of English in technology, business, industry, and the professions in English-speaking countries. Each year increasing numbers of NNSs are employed by both large corporations and small companies in English-speaking settings. Indeed, the United States Congress in 1991 passed legislation that raised the immigration quota for skilled foreign professionals from 55,000 to 140,000 a year. And more and more, employers and employees in business and industry are finding that job-related oral use of English is a must, with a premium on intelligible speech and good communication skills.
4. College and university faculty members and research scholars in virtually every field of higher education. Along with skilled professionals in business and industry, there are growing numbers of NNSs among the ranks of college and university faculty members and research associates, not only in science and engineering fields but in the social sciences and humanities as well. Significant oral language demands (including requirements of reasonably intelligible pronunciation) are placed on NNS faculty members including possessing not only the requisite language skills for lectures, seminars, and interactions with students and colleagues, but also the speaking skills needed in public presentation contexts on campus and at national and international conferences.
5. Graduate and undergraduate students in higher education in English-speaking countries. These include international teaching assistants and NNSs who are pursuing a master's degree in teaching English as a second language (MATESL). Achieving the proficiency score required for admission to an institution of higher education gains NNS students admission and may reflect sufficient command of English to enable them to survive, but growing college and university demands on both oral and written English skills may make it more and more difficult for many to really succeed without special English for academic purposes (EAP) attention to language skills. In addition, some of the NNS graduate students who become teaching assistants (TAs) may have difficulties due to significant language

deficiencies, including pronunciation intelligibility problems, that need special instructional attention. NNSs in MATESL programs are a special group of learners who need attention to speech intelligibility.

### ***In EFL Settings***

1. International business personnel, scientists, technologists, and other professionals whose careers demand the use of both effective written and spoken English as a lingua franca. More and more today, in countries throughout the world, careers in commerce and trade, banking, science and technology, health care, transportation, industry, manufacturing, and many other fields place high English language demands on employees, both in their home country and in assignments around the world. In fact, these professionals may find that their families need to become English students as well, in the case of long-term overseas assignments. Many international companies have found it necessary to mount English language programs in both the home country and in the English-speaking country.
2. College and university professors and academic research scholars in many disciplines in higher education. The increasing role of English as the world's international language of scholarship and research is well documented (Swales, 1991). In fact, English is today the dominant language of international conferences and of scholarly and research publications in a significant number of the major professional journals that circulate worldwide.
3. Students who ultimately wish to enter English-speaking colleges and universities to pursue undergraduate and/or graduate degrees. The better prepared NNS students are with effective written and oral skills (including reasonably intelligible speech) before they enter English-speaking colleges and universities, the better their chances not just for survival but for success. In particular NNSs whose career goals include teaching English as a second/foreign language need special attention paid to communicative skills in general and to pronunciation intelligibility in particular.

### **Programming Principles**

A survey of the pronunciation literature of the past several years—teacher reference books, articles in journals and collections,

conference papers, student texts—reveals a number of shifts in instructional focus. Taken together, the themes found in new programs seem to reflect a shared underlying belief system. Some of the principles guiding current directions in pedagogy are the following. (See Morley, 1987, preface.)

1. A focus that views the proper place of pronunciation in the second language curriculum as an integral part of communication, not as an isolated drills-and-exercises component set aside from the mainstream; in short, a growing trend toward communicative approaches to teaching pronunciation.
2. A redirection of priorities within the sound system to a focus on the critical importance of suprasegmentals (i.e., stress, rhythm, intonation, etc.) and how they are used to communicate meaning in the context of discourse, as well as the importance of vowel and consonant sounds (segmental) and their combinations. (Yule, 1989, has observed that perhaps this direction is best described as the prosodic (or suprasegmental) approach, and that it has its intellectual roots in the intonation work of Bolinger, 1964, and the extensive treatment of paralinguistic features by G. Brown, 1977.)
3. A focus on an expanded concept of what constitutes the domain of pronunciation, one that incorporates not only attention to (a) segmental and (b) suprasegmentals, but also (c) voice quality features such as the phenomena referred to as *voice-setting features* by Pennington and Richards (1986); as *voice quality settings* by Laver (1980), Esling and Wong (1983) and Esling (1986); as *paralinguistic features* by G. Brown (1977) (as a rubric for certain vocal features); and as *articulatory settings* by Honikman (1964), and (d) elements of body language used in oral communication (e. g., facial expressions and gestures; eye contact; head, arm, and hand gestures; body stance, posturing, and use of space; and upper body movements, which Acton, 1984, discusses in detail in connection with teaching rhythm).
4. A focus on some revised expectations in both learner involvement and teacher involvement. Current perspectives on learner involvement in the pronunciation learning/teaching process include an emphasis on speech awareness and self-monitoring, while a revised characterization of teacher involvement is drawn along the lines of facilitator-coach and organizer of instructional activities.

Learner involvement through overtly labeled self-monitoring is not a new focus in pronunciation (Acton, 1984; Morley, 1975,

1979). Acton stresses giving constant attention to the individual's own resources and puts the responsibility for success in the course on the student. Wong (1986) notes that by giving students specific means to develop independently, the responsibility falls on those who have the actual power to make the necessary changes. Firth (1987) presents a variety of techniques for developing self-correcting and self-monitoring strategies as a way of dealing with the serious problem of "carry-over" (p. 48). Crawford (1987) examines a number of pronunciation learning/teaching issues including perspectives on monitoring. Kenworthy (1987) emphasizes sensitizing learners to their own potential as active participants in the process and describes the teacher's role as primarily supportive of the learner's own efforts. Yule, Hoffman, and Damico (1987) point out the need for patience and support of learners who, as they are engaged in developing their L2 pronunciation skills, may go through a period of deteriorating performance as they give up old ways and have not yet become fluent with new ways. W. Dickerson (1989) makes the case for a natural ability for self-monitoring of language and the importance of activating it systematically in pronunciation teaching. Riggenbach (1990), in a section on self-monitoring of speaking activities, reviews a number of techniques for self- and peer analysis.

5. A focus on meaningful practice and especially speech-activity experiences suited to the communication styles and needs of the learners' real-life situations. Suggestions for contextualized work with segmental and suprasegmentals are found in Bowen (1972, 1975), Celce-Murcia (1983, 1987), English (1988), Celce-Murcia and Goodwin (1991), and Morley (1991a). Meaningful practice activities, of course, go hand in hand with the focus on communicative approaches to teaching pronunciation. Suggested speaking activities that can be adapted for special pronunciation focus as well are found in Ur (1980), Rooks (1987), Brown and Yule (1983), Porter, Grant, and Draper (1985), Bygate (1987), Riggenbach and Lazaraton (1991).
6. A focus on the link between listening and pronouncing/speaking and a need to expand the nature and the range of pronunciation-oriented listening activities. Attention to pronunciation-oriented listening instruction was an important component of traditional pronunciation teaching with a primary focus on sound discrimination and identification exercises. Many of today's texts and teaching references continue to include this focus among a wider range of listening/teaching foci. Gilbert (1984), who stresses a

dual focus on pronunciation and listening comprehension apprises students that, "How you *hear* English is closely connected with how you *speak* English" (p. 3). Wong (1987a) focuses on ways to make a language-rich pronunciation classroom in which students hear a variety of speakers engaged in diverse real-world communicative events in order to develop active listening skills and a comfortable level of fluency. Mendelson-Burns (1987) advocates teaching pronunciation through listening and suggests a variety of activities.

7. A focus on a range of important sound/spelling relationships. Substantial attention to the utilization of spelling information in adult ESL pronunciation teaching was slow to appear in course books until relatively recently, although Kriedler (1972) and W. Dickerson (1975) had emphasized its importance, and some attention to spelling was included in student texts by Bowen (1975), Morley (1979), and Prator and Robinett (1985). More recently W. Dickerson (1989) presents an extensive treatment of English orthography as a key tool in teaching pronunciation, especially in stress and rhythm instruction, and a number of new texts have included a spelling section in lessons on segmental. Recent teacher reference materials on spelling include papers by Temperley (1983, 1987) and a chapter in Kenworthy (1987) on spelling, including how the morphological regularity of English spelling can be exploited for pronunciation purposes.
8. A focus on the uniqueness of each ESL learner. Each has created his or her own personal pattern of spoken English, which is unlike that of anyone else and the product of influences from both the L1 and the L2, the student's personal learning and communicability strategies, as well as the impact of input and instruction. And Eckman (1991) has provided convincing evidence over the years to show that L2 pronunciation is going to be subject to universal forces quite distinct from rules of the L1 or the L2. This unique pattern now needs to be modified in some way(s) in order to reach goals of intelligibility, communicability, and self-confidence.

Flege (1980) noted that L2 learners produce sounds that are not typically found in either their native or the second language. Beebe (1984), reporting on a study of variability, noted that her results suggested that there is a high level of inherent variation in interlanguages, just as there is in native languages, as indeed was revealed in earlier variability work done by L. Dickerson (1975) and W. Dickerson (1976). And Prator (1971) suggested that the safest solution for teachers is to regard *unintelligibility* not as a result of *phonemic* substitution but as the cumulative effect of many little departures from the *phonetic* norms of the language.

## **PART 2: PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER: SOME INSTRUCTIONAL FEATURES OF A MULTIDIMENSIONAL PRONUNCIATION TEACHING PROCESS**

This section will look at some of the intersecting strands of a process—the teaching of pronunciation—which often is rather narrowly regarded as one dimensional. As discussed in Part 1, current developments demonstrate the contrary, that in fact the pronunciation teaching process is a multifaceted domain. With urgent needs of learners and the principles summarized in Part 1 as key considerations, six features will be discussed. Information has been drawn from published accounts and from personal communications about current practices in a variety of developing programs.<sup>4</sup>

### **A FOCUS ON PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY**

The basis for planning in many new programs has been to take the pronunciation class out of isolation, conceptually speaking as well as practically speaking, where it often has been set aside out of the mainstream, and to reconstitute it in both learning/teaching form and function as an *integral part of oral communication*. A variety of communicative pronunciation teaching practices of a general nature are included in Celce-Murcia (1983, 1987), Pica (1984), Kenworthy (1987), Naiman (1987), English (1988), Celce-Murcia and Goodwin (1991), and Celce-Murcia, Brinton, and Goodwin (in press). In addition, publications available with an English for specific purposes (ESP) focus include international teaching assistant (ITA) and English for science and technology (EST) work. Byrd, Constantinides, and Pennington (1989) present five specialized chapters of ITA pronunciation teaching materials, and Schwabe (1988), Wennerstrom (1991, in press), Stevens (1989), and Anderson-Hsieh (1990) report on specialized pronunciation-focused ITA activities and methods. Huckin and Olsen (1983) include a special section on pronunciation in their EST handbook for nonnative speakers; Browne and Huckin (1987), and Browne (in press) discuss corporate-level communicative ESP pronunciation training for NNS scientists and engineers; Imber and Parker (1991) present a program framework and communicative teaching ideas for “milieu-specific” pronunciation teaching which can be applied to a wide variety of ESP situations.

<sup>4</sup> Portions of this section have appeared in Morley (1988)



## Outlining a Dual-Focus Program: Speech Production and Speech Performance

From a philosophy of pronunciation teaching as an integral part of communication it is possible to construct a dual-focus framework as shown in Figure 1. The dual framework combines a *microlevel* focus on *speech production* (i.e., a focus on discrete elements of pronunciation in a bottom-up sense) and a *macrolevel* focus on *speech performance* (i. e., a focus on general elements of communicability in a top-down sense). Either the microlevel or the macrolevel can be given priority attention at a given time, or they can share the classroom focus.

At the microlevel (or discrete level) the focus is on contextualized modification of vowel and consonant sounds (and their reductions,

FIGURE 1

### Dual Focus Speech Production and Speech Performance

From *Rapid Review of English Vowels and Selected Prosodic Features* by Joan Morley, in press, Ann Arbor The University of Michigan Press. Copyright by The University of Michigan Press. Adapted by permission.

<i>SPOKEN ENGLISH</i>	
<p style="text-align: center;">SPEECH PRODUCTION</p> <p>[A focus on specific elements of pronunciation<sup>a</sup>]</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Pronunciation: Microfocus</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Clarity and precision in articulation of consonant and vowel sounds</li> <li>● Consonant combinations both within and across word boundaries, elisions, assimilations, etc.</li> <li>● Neutral vowel use, reductions, contractions, etc.</li> <li>● Syllable structure and linking words across word boundaries, phrase groups, and pause points</li> <li>● Features of stress, rhythm, and intonation</li> <li>● Features of rate, volume, and vocal qualities</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;">SPEECH PERFORMANCE</p> <p>[A focus on general elements of oral communicability<sup>b</sup>]</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Oral Communication: Macrofocus</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Overall clarity of speech, both segmentals and suprasegmentals</li> <li>● Voice quality effectiveness for discourse-level communication</li> <li>● Overall fluency and ongoing planning and structuring of speech, as it proceeds</li> <li>● Speech intelligibility level</li> <li>● General communicative command of grammar</li> <li>● General communicative command of vocabulary words/phrases</li> <li>● Overall use of appropriate and expressive nonverbal behaviors</li> </ul>

<sup>a</sup> A focus on *discrete features* of voice and articulation.

<sup>b</sup> A focus on *global patterns* of spoken English.

combinations, elisions and assimilations, etc.); on the specific features subsumed under the rubric of stress, rhythm, and intonation; and on features of rate, volume, and vocal qualities. Within communicative activities, specific attention is given to stabilizing a student's emerging abilities to adjust vowel and consonant pronunciation and to manipulate prosodic and vocal features *at will* with ease and accuracy, to express intended meaning, and to increase intelligibility,

At the macrolevel (or global level) the focus is on the synthesis of many components of communicative oral discourse. This encompasses a variety of elements including appropriate and expressive nonverbal behaviors, increasingly facile communicative command of grammar and appropriate vocabulary, enhanced ability to sustain speech (i.e., for fluent ongoing structuring and planning of speech as it proceeds), as well as developing aspects of overall intelligibility, discourse-level vocal effectiveness, and overall clarity of speech.

#### **A FOCUS ON LEARNER GOALS, STANDARDS, AND OUTCOMES**

Traditional pronunciation goals, by and large, exhort ESL students to strive for "perfect pronunciation," and/or near-native pronunciation, and/or mastery of pronunciation. While these aspirations sound attractive to many students (and their teachers), the path to these high levels of performance is a tortuous one, on both sides. The truth is that they are virtually unattainable for the vast majority of ESL learners. In fact, there is a widely held consensus that few persons, especially those who learn to speak a second language after the age of puberty, can ever achieve native-like pronunciation in that second language; Scovel (1969) and others believe *never*. The factors involved in answering the question of why this is so are many and varied—neurological, psychomotor, cognitive, affective—but clearly, the current consensus is that this is the case for most learners. (But see Hill, 1970, and Neufeld, 1978).

At best, perfectionistic performance goals turn out to be unrealistic; at worst, they can be devastating: They can defeat students who feel that they cannot measure up, and they can frustrate teachers who feel they have failed in their job. How fortunate it is that perfect or native-like pronunciation is *not* a necessary condition for comprehensible communicative output. In fact, it may not always even be desirable. As Leather (1983) observed, in some situations learners who do well in acquiring a very good L2 accent may get mixed responses from NSs. He reports Christophersen's (1973)

description of one possible NS reaction to too-perfect pronunciation in an L2 speaker may be that of “a host who sees an uninvited guest making free with his possessions” (p. 199). In another dimension, perfect L2 pronunciation is not desired by some learners who wish—consciously or unconsciously—to retain accent features to mark their L1 identity and to insure that they are not perceived as betraying their loyalty to their L1 community.

Pushing perfection issues a hit further, in addition to the fact that it is not a realistic expectation, nor a necessary condition for effective NNS communication with NSs or other NNSs, nor necessarily a desirable goal for everyone, there is a further concern here. Notions of perfection and native-like pronunciation may be imposing and perpetuating false standards, standards difficult to define, let alone uphold, because these are slippery concepts with basic questions of, What is perfect? and Which native speaker are we talking about? since everyone speaks their language with an accent. This is particularly significant today with many serviceable and respected Englishes existing throughout the world. In fact, in a cross-cultural communication intelligibility study involving 1,383 people from 11 countries, Smith and Rafiqzad (1979) report that a most important result is that “the native speaker was always found to be among the least intelligible speakers” (p. 375). Nakayama (1982) reports that in the business sector in Japan, some language training programs actively seek and employ NNSs as well as NSs as instructors in order to help the students become accustomed to English dialects other than British and U.S.

What, then, are reasonable and desirable goals? In view of the preceding considerations, four learner goals have been formulated (see Figure 2).

Perhaps a few further notes on intelligibility are in order, as it is a key ingredient in goal setting in new programs and a bit of a shift from traditional views. Like perfection and native-like pronunciation, the notion of intelligibility is a slippery concept. Judgments about intelligibility are strongly influenced by the listener’s preconceived ideas about NNSs in general (including their accent) and the personality and accent of any individual NNS in particular. Moreover, it is undoubtedly the case that an individual listener’s norms for what makes attractive L1 speech also have a core involvement here. Indeed, intelligibility may be as much in the mind of the listener as in the mouth of the speaker.

Chastain (1980), in looking at the general concept of comprehension judgments of NNSs by NSs, made some interesting discoveries.

**FIGURE 2**  
**Learner Goals**

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*Goal 1: Functional intelligibility*

The intent is to help learners develop spoken English that is (at least) reasonably easy to understand and not distracting to listeners. (See Figure 3, Speech Intelligibility Index.)

*Goal 2: Functional communicability*

The intent here is to help the learner develop spoken English that serves his or her individual communicative needs effectively for a feeling of communicative competence.

*Goal 3: Increased self-confidence*

The intent here is to help learners become more comfortable and confident in using spoken English, and to help them develop a positive self-image as a competent nonnative speaker of English and a growing feeling of empowerment in oral communication.

*Goal 4: Speech monitoring abilities and speech modification strategies for use beyond the classroom*

The intent here is to help learners develop speech awareness, personal speech monitoring skills, and speech adjustment strategies that will enable them to continue to develop intelligibility, communicability, and confidence outside class as well as inside.

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He found that depending upon NS factors such as the NS's linguistic tolerance, insight, interest, and patience, student language errors will be viewed as (a) comprehensible and acceptable, (b) comprehensible but not acceptable, or (c) incomprehensible (in the case of failure to comprehend). Chastain noted that while these reactions will vary from person to person and situation to situation, this does not diminish the importance of the contribution made by the listener in the communicative process.

An example of this is found in elements of the so-called ITA problem, that is, teaching difficulties experienced by some international teaching assistants in colleges and universities. The reported "foreign accent" or "unintelligible speech" of the ITAs is often the first complaint of their students, but pronunciation per se may be a problem that is more apparent than real: Consider Chastain's observations about the role of the listener as well as the subtle (and sometimes not so subtle) elements of prejudice and xenophobia (Hofer, 1990) known to impinge on the judgments of some of the NS undergraduate population. (Recall the derisive speech labels reported by Beebe, 1978.)

Looking carefully at assessments of the "ITA problem," Hinofotis and Bailey (1980) reported that out of 12 subcategories of problems, pronunciation was ranked first by undergraduate student raters as

well as by TESL and TA-training raters. The two latter groups also pointed out that there seemed to be a threshold of intelligibility in the subjects' pronunciation. That is, beyond a certain point, as yet undetermined, pronunciation ceases to be a factor, but up to a given speaking proficiency level, the faulty pronunciation of the NNS can severely impair the communication process. This work points directly to the need for serious study of the intelligibility factor. The Speech Intelligibility Index in Figure 3 is part of a project exploring ways to identify both discrete and global features that impinge positively/negatively on an individual learner's communicability, with an additional focus on the role of compensatory communication strategies that may raise the perceived intelligibility level.

### **A FOCUS ON LEARNING DIMENSIONS AND INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES**

Within communicative approaches to pronunciation teaching it is important to focus on critical dimensions of learning and to formulate instructional objectives that include whole-person learner involvement. Three important dimensions of learning are an intellectual involvement, an affective involvement, and a physical or performative involvement.

#### **Information Objectives: Serving the Intellectual Component of Learning**

These objectives relate to an intellectual or cognitive component of learning. Adult and near-adult learners seem to be helped enormously by attention to intellectual frameworks. Information objectives are intended to contribute to the development of *speech-awareness* and *study-awareness* in order to engage the intellectual involvement of learners in their learning process.

#### ***Language Information***

Short, carefully selected pronunciation/speech descriptions and explanations help learners develop speech awareness and focus on modifications of specific features of (a) pronunciation/speech production, (b) pronunciation/speech performance, (c) intelligibility, and (d) communicability. Pronunciation/spelling information and analysis tasks help learners unlock some of the mysteries of sound/spelling interpretations and help them reduce inaccurate spelling-pronunciation infelicities.

**FIGURE 3**  
**Speech Intelligibility Index Evaluation of Student Communicability**  
 From *Rapid Review of English Vowels and Selected Prosodic Features* by Joan Morley, in press,  
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Level	Description	Impact on Communication
1	Speech is basically unintelligible; only an occasional word/phrase can be recognized.	Accent precludes functional oral communication.
2	Speech is largely unintelligible; great listener effort is required; constant repetitions and verifications are required.	Accent causes severe interference with oral communication.
Communicative Threshold A		
3	Speech is reasonably intelligible, but significant listener effort is required due to speaker's pronunciation/grammatical errors which impede communication and cause listener distraction; ongoing need for repetitions and verifications.	Accent causes frequent interference with communication through the combined effect of the individual features of mispronunciation and the global impact of the variant speech pattern.
4	Speech is largely intelligible; while sound and prosodic variances from NS norm are obvious, listeners can understand if they concentrate on the message.	Accent causes interference primarily at the distraction level; listener's attention is often diverted away from the content to focus instead on the novelty of the speech pattern.
Communicative Threshold B		
5	Speech is fully intelligible; occasional sound and prosodic variances from NS norm are present but not seriously distracting to listener.	Accent causes little interference; speech is fully functional for effective communication.
6	Speech is "near-native"; only minimal features of divergence from NS can be detected; near-native sound and prosodic patterning.	Accent is virtually nonexistent.

*Notes on speech evaluation:*

1. Elicit a speech sample of several minutes. The sample should be sustained impromptu speech, not just answers to simple questions or rehearsed biographical comments. The sample should be spontaneous speech, perhaps on a topic such as: (a) What are your career plans in the next 5 years? (b) What makes your life interesting? (c) What makes a happy family?
2. Try to listen to the speech sample as if you were an untrained language listener. Err on the conservative side, with consideration of the "lay" listeners whom the student will meet.
3. In a few descriptor phrases summarize the student's strengths and weaknesses in three areas: (a) use of vowel and consonant sound segments, their combinations, and reductions, contractions, elisions, assimilations, etc.; (b) use of features of stress, rhythm, and intonation, and vocal quality features, rate, volume, etc.; (c) features of general "communicability." (Use Figure 1 as a reference.) Comment on how each of these factors impacts communicative intelligibility, and assign a Speech Intelligibility Level (SIL), using [+] and [-] notations as necessary. Monitor student progress through periodic SIL reevaluation.

### ***Procedural Information***

Explicit directions and goal-related participatory guidelines help students develop study awareness; they help students understand what they will do, how, and why.

Students can develop a useful degree of speech awareness and study awareness in a surprisingly short time. Even very young students profit from a little information which can be presented in brief descriptions and simple charts and diagrams. *Simplicity*, *selectivity*, and *moderation* are the keys to effective use of both language information and procedural information.

### **Affective Objectives: Serving the Psychological Component of Learning**

These objectives relate to the powerful affective or psychological component of learning.

### ***Learner Self-Involvement***

Pronunciation/speech study is most profitable (and most pleasant) when students are actively involved in their own learning, not passively detached repeaters of drills. Research has shown that self-involvement is a primary characteristic of good language learners. However, learner self-involvement cannot be left to chance; it must be actively shaped, early and continually, throughout ESL course work. Teachers and materials can help students become involved in the following four areas.

1. Recognition of self-responsibility. Learners can be guided toward taking responsibility for their own work not just by exhorting them, but by providing ways and means: (a) clear directions and explicit participatory guidelines so that students know the what, the how, and the why of their work; (b) carefully defined tasks, outcomes, and responsibilities for class and small-group activities; (c) substantive and sharply focused cues for self-monitoring and pronunciation/speech modification.
2. Development of self-monitoring skills. Self-monitoring can begin as gentle consciousness-raising with the goal of helping students develop speech awareness, self-observation skills, and a positive attitude toward them: (a) by giving concrete suggestions for monitoring (i.e., observing) their own speech on one or two production or performance points at a time; (b) by helping them

develop a simple self-rehearsal technique—talking to yourself and listening to yourself—as the way to self-monitor; (c) by helping them shift gradually from the dependent mode of teacher-monitoring (in imitative practice and guided self-practice) to the independent mode of self-monitoring (in independent rehearsed practice and extemporaneous speaking practice).

3. Development of speech modification skills. Negative feelings about correction as a bad thing, a punishment, *need to be eliminated*. (Actually, I like to substitute the word *modification* for correction). And, of course, it is the learner, not the teacher, who modifies (i. e., corrects) pronunciation. It is important to help learners develop a positive understanding of roles: the student role is to modify (i. e., adjust, alter, correct) a microlevel or macrolevel feature of speech/pronunciation; the teacher role is to give cues to help the student identify what, where, and how to modify and to give support, encouragement, and constructive feedback. From the first, it is useful for teachers to shift from repeated modeling to cueing for student modification.
4. Recognition of self-accomplishment. Improvement is a gradual process with much variability, neither an overnight phenomenon, nor an overall development, and it may be difficult for learners to perceive changes in speech patterns. It is important for learners to become aware of small successes in modifying features of pronunciation/speech in a given task. Many teachers use audio and/or video recording and guide students in recognizing speech changes in themselves and in their classmates. Assessment of achievements should be based on degrees of change, not absolutes. The emphasis should be on self-comparisons over time, not on student-to-student comparisons.

### ***A Comfortable, Supportive Classroom Atmosphere***

In pronunciation/speech work, perhaps more than any other part of language study, a comfortable classroom atmosphere is essential for maximum achievement. Classroom interactions need to be enjoyable and supportive with a focus on strengths as well as weaknesses. The learning climate needs to be one where even the most retiring (and the most unintelligible) students can lose their self-consciousness and embarrassment about “sounding funny” as



they work to modify pronunciation/speech features of their oral communication skill.

1. Supportive teacher/student interactions. (See the section below on teacher involvement.)
2. Supportive student/student interactions. The Speech Intelligibility Index can be very useful in helping students assess their own strengths and weaknesses and those of others. Pair and small-group work with audio- or videotape analysis of *specified* speech production and/or speech performance features can be very effective, but it is essential that critiquing be constructive, not destructive, with an emphasis on positive features as well as features that need modification.

### **Practice Objectives: Serving the Physical or Performative Component of Learning**

These objectives relate to the *physical* or performative component of speech/pronunciation study.

#### ***Pronunciation/Speech Practice***

For maximum effect, pronunciation/speech instruction must go far beyond imitation; it calls for a mix of practice activities. Three kinds of speech practice can be included from the very beginning: imitative practice, as needed (dependent practice); rehearsed practice (guided self-practice and independent self-practice); extemporaneous speaking practice (guided and independent self-practice). (See also the section below on instructional planning.)

#### ***Pronunciation-Oriented Listening Practice***

Specialized speech-oriented listening tasks can help learners develop their auditory perception, their discriminative listening skills for dimensions of pronunciation/speech communicability, and their overall aural comprehension of English. Attention needs to be given to prosodic features and vocal features including the fast speech phenomena found in authentic speech patterns as well as vowel and consonant sounds and their combinations.

#### ***Spelling-Oriented Pronunciation Practice***

It is essential that ESL students learn to relate spoken English and written English quickly and accurately if they are to become truly

literate in English. A variety of kinds of sound/spelling work can prepare them to do this. Learner awareness of spelling patterns as cues to stress/rhythm patterning can be tremendously useful. (See W. Dickerson, 1989 and elsewhere, for extensive work in this area.)

### **A FOCUS ON THE LEARNER AND LEARNING INVOLVEMENT**

Research on learner strategies, that is those measures (either tutored or untutored) which a learner undertakes to facilitate his or her own language learning, has been reported by Stern (1975), Rubin (1975), Naiman et al. (1978), Wenden and Rubin (1987), O'Malley and Chamot (1989), and Oxford (1990). Among the strategies found to be most successful for learners is self-involvement in the learning process. How can a goal of learner self-involvement be reached in the pronunciation teaching process?

### **Learner Awarenesses and Attitudes**

Adult learners seem to benefit most when they are involved, consciously, in the speech modification process as they work to become intelligible, communicative, confident speakers of English. Teachers can assist learners in developing useful awarenesses and attitudes, including those listed in Figure 4.

**FIGURE 4**  
**Learner Awarenesses and Attitudes**

- 
1. Speech awareness
  2. Self-awareness of features of speech production and speech performance
  3. Self-observation skills and a positive attitude toward self-monitoring processes
  4. Speech-modification skills (i.e., self-"correction") and the elimination of negative feelings that correction is a punitive thing
  5. Awareness of the learner role as one of a "speech performer" modifying, adjusting, or altering a feature of speech/pronunciation, and the teacher role as one of assisting students as a "speech coach" who gives suggestions and cues for speech modification, support, encouragement, and constructive feedback
  6. A sense of personal responsibility for one's own learning, not only for immediate educational and occupational needs, but for future career, social, and personal goals
  7. A feeling of pride in one's own accomplishments
  8. Building a personal repertoire of speech monitoring and modification skills in order to continue to improve speaking effectiveness in English when the formal instructional program is finished
-

## **A FOCUS ON THE TEACHER AND TEACHER INVOLVEMENT**

Programs that are committed to helping learners modify pronunciation/speech patterns and develop effective communicable speech skill often reflect a philosophy of learner/teacher partnership. In pronunciation work, perhaps more than in any other facet of second language instruction, clearly the teacher doesn't "teach," but facilitates learning in a very special learner-centered way,

### **The Teacher as Pronunciation/Speech "Coach"**

In programs with the partnership philosophy, the role of the teacher is viewed as one of assisting learners something like a coach, a speech coach, a pronunciation coach. The work of a pronunciation/speech coach can be viewed as similar to that done by a debate coach, a drama coach, a voice coach, a music coach, or even a sports coach. A coach characteristically supplies information, gives models from time to time, offers cues, suggestions and constructive feedback about performance, sets high standards, provides a wide variety of practice opportunities, and overall supports and encourages the learner.

The pronunciation/speech coach has the critical role of monitoring and guiding modifications of spoken English at two levels, as noted earlier: (a) speech production (i.e., the microlevel) and (b) speech performance (i.e., the macrolevel). Note again that articulatory phonetics is not abandoned, but takes a place as one part in the larger communicative picture of getting the message across.

The teacher-as-coach has a challenging task made up of diverse responsibilities, including those listed in Figure 5.

## **A FOCUS ON THE INSTRUCTIONAL PLANNING**

This final portion will look at instructional planning for a pronunciation/speech curriculum that encompasses (a) a cognitive dimension, with attention to selected information about both language and study procedures, as appropriate; (b) an affective dimension, with encouragement of learner self-involvement and self-monitoring, and a classroom atmosphere which is positive and supportive; and (c) a practice dimension with speaking tasks and activities through which learners can work toward modifying pronunciation/speech patterns in spoken English. The discussion will focus on specifics of the practice objective.

**FIGURE 5**  
**Teacher-as-Coach Responsibilities**

- 
1. Conducting pronunciation/speech diagnostic analyses, and choosing and prioritizing those features that will make the most noticeable impact on modifying the speech of each learner toward increased intelligibility
  2. Helping students set both long-range and short-term goals
  3. Designing program scope and sequence for an entire group of learners; designing personalized programming for each individual learner in the group
  4. Developing a variety of instructional formats, modes, and modules (e.g., whole-class instruction, small-group work, individual one-on-one tutorial sessions; prerecorded audio and/or video self-study materials; both in-class and out-of-class self-study rehearsal recordings in audio and/or video formats; work with new computer program speech analysis systems, and more). Overall, providing genuine speech task activities for practice situated in real contexts and carefully chosen simulated contexts
  5. Planning out-of-class field-trip assignments in pairs or small groups for real-world extemporaneous speaking practice, with panel discussions as follow-up
  6. Structuring in-class speaking (and listening) activities with invited NS and NNS guests participating
  7. Providing models, cues, and suggestions for modifications of elements in the speech patterning for each student
  8. Monitoring learners' speech production and speech performance at all times, and assessing pattern changes, as an ongoing part of the program
  9. Encouraging student speech awareness and realistic self-monitoring
  10. *Always* supporting each learner in his or her efforts, be they wildly successful or not so successful
- 

### **The Challenge of Fulfilling the Practice/Performance Objective**

#### ***Some Questions About Practice***

The big challenge pronunciation/speech teachers face lies in fulfilling the practice objective by providing meaningful and productive speaking experiences within which learners can monitor and modify their speech patterns without disrupting communication. Questions of what to practice, how to practice, and how much to practice must be faced. Moreover, the question of why learners should practice needs to be examined through two related questions, Does practice work? and if so, How can we evaluate the impact of practice on changes or improvement?

#### ***A Carry-Over Consideration***

How can we determine how much practice will bring about modifications that will carry over into the learner's speaking experiences in myriad domains outside the classroom? How does practice relate to students' needs, especially those students who

clearly must have effective instructional assistance in order to alter speech patterns which are virtually unintelligible to speech patterns which are functionally intelligible? As a working guideline for the present, three modes of practice are presented here.

### **Three Modes of Practice**

A pronunciation/speech syllabus can be planned to provide a variety of speaking and listening tasks and activities using an integration of three practice modes. The three modes can be characterized as follows.

#### ***Imitative Speaking Practice***

This kind of practice should be used only as necessary and, in fact, may be introduced as a short-term component within a rehearsed or extemporaneous practice context, especially with advanced or intermediate students. The purpose of the practice is to focus on controlled production of selected pronunciation/speech features. It includes contextualized practice (see Bowen, 1972, 1975; Celce-Murcia, 1983, 1987; Celce-Murcia & Goodwin, 1991; English, 1988; Gilbert, 1984; and Morley, 1991a). It can include self-access audio- and/or videotaped materials for individual use or for assigned pair and small-group study sessions outside of class as well as computer program speech-analysis systems that transform speech input into a visual display on the computer screen (see Browne, 1991, and Molholt, 1988); should *not* be used beyond the point where the learner can produce the given feature(s) easily at will, at which time the practice activity should shift immediately to rehearsed and extemporaneous speech practice modes.

#### ***Rehearsed Speaking Practice***

This kind of practice can be used in a variety of ways as a practice mode in its own right as well as an interim step between imitative and extemporaneous practice. The purpose of the practice is to work toward stabilization of modified pronunciation/speech patterns (i.e., discrete-point features, global features, etc.) so that the learner can manipulate them easily at will. Practice can include oral reading scripts of a wide variety, either teacher-selected or self-selected or composed by teachers and/or students (e. g., simulated radio or TV broadcast scripts of all kinds; excerpts from famous speeches, plays, narrative poems, novels, role-play skits and

playlets, etc.; preplanned (relatively short) oral presentations of a wide variety, with topics self-selected); in-class dress rehearsal and final performance with audio- and/or videotaping (and feedback critique sessions either immediately or later); out-of-class self-study rehearsals or paired/small-group rehearsal study sessions with audio- and/or videotaping; one-on-one individual speech work-out study sessions with the speaking teacher (i. e., speech coach). Practice can move into the next mode (extemporaneous speech practice) by adding audience-participation in the form of question-and-answer and discussion interactions. (In addition, see the following for materials which can be adapted for both imitative and rehearsed pronunciation focus: Archibald, 1987; Maley & Duff, 1978; Stevens, 1989; and Via, 1980, 1987), for drama techniques; Graham, 1978, for rhythmic chants; Maley, 1987, for poetry and song; Gilbert, 1984, and Morley, 1991a, 1991b, for oral reading materials. )

### ***Extemporaneous Speech Practice***

This kind of practice can be used with a wide variety of speaking tasks and activities, and is for the purpose of working toward integration of modified speech patterns into naturally occurring creative speech in both partially planned and unplanned talks (monologues). It can include small-group panel discussion presentations, both formal and informal (preplanned outside of class or planned relatively spontaneously during class time in small-group work sessions and presented immediately); audience-interaction follow-up dialogue sessions in a question-and-answer format; in-class presentations with audio- and/or videotaping; out-of-class self-study rehearsals individually, in pairs, or in small-group preparation sessions; one-on-one individual work-out speech sessions with the teacher with audio- and/or videotaping and feedback sessions. (Many speech activity texts cited earlier can be adapted for use with this pronunciation/speech practice mode including Brown & Yule, 1983; Bygate, 1987; Morley, 1991b; Porter, Grant, & Draper, 1985; Rooks, 1987; Ur, 1980.)

These practice modes move from dependent practice (with a model given) to guided practice (with self-initiated, rehearsed speech) to independent practice (with both partially planned and extemporaneous speech practice) with the content self-generated and developed by the learners to meet their personal educational or occupational needs.

## **PART 3: LOOKING AHEAD**

It was the intent of Part 1 of this presentation to look at pronunciation teaching over the past quarter century, to review some of the patterns of change, and to identify some of the agents of change—that is, a relatively small but committed cohort of pronunciation specialists who are dedicated to the development of new instructional alternatives that can be programmed into effective course work. Part 2 directed attention to multiple dimensions of the pronunciation teaching process with a discussion of six major instructional features. This final portion focuses on continuing needs.

### **THE FUTURE OF PRONUNCIATION TEACHING: THE 1990S AND INTO THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY**

Optimism and positive developments in teaching pronunciation were featured in the two preceding sections. In this final segment optimism prevails, but attention must be turned to perplexing issues and research and development needs. As observed by many colleagues in references already cited, the needs for future explorations are many. A few are listed here.

1. A need to equip ESL teachers (in both initial and in-service training) with a very specific kind of background in applied English phonetics and phonology, one that gives detailed attention to suprasegmentals and voice-quality features and their forms and their functions in interactive discourse (in addition to segmental information) and one that stresses application in communicative approaches to pronunciation teaching. (As urged by Gilbert, 1984, Wong, 1986, and others, this is an area where communication between language teachers and linguists is critical.)
2. A continuing need for development of pronunciation/speech activities, tasks, materials, methodologies and techniques across the spectrum of imitative, rehearsed, and extemporaneous speaking practice experiences—that is, more of the kinds of things now available in some of the references cited above. (One tool now becoming an economic and practical possibility is self-study computer programming both for student practice and for assessment through the use of visual displays of speech parameters. As laboratory speech analysis and synthesis capabilities have become more accessible for instructional uses, Leather (1983) notes the potential for creative uses—while

guarding against misuses—is great. (See Browne, 1991; de Bot, 1980; de Bot & Mailfert, 1982; Gilbert, 1980; Molholt, 1988.)

3. Together with the need for continuing development of creative and effective practice experiences is the need for more definitive evaluative measures and methods to quantify changes and improvements in the learner's intelligibility and communicability. (Celce-Murcia & Goodwin, 1991, stress student assessment as both formative, or ongoing, and summative, or final; Morley, 1991a, suggests the development of a Speech Intelligibility Index that makes use of behavioral descriptors correlated with impact on communication.)
4. A need for controlled studies of changes in learner pronunciation patterns as the result of specific instructional procedures. (This is a particularly difficult area for research because, as Pennington & Richards, 1986, have pointed out, there is not likely to be a one-to-one relationship between teaching and learning, since learning "is a gradual process involving successive approximations to the target language system over time in a progression from controlled to automatic processing" [pp. 218-219].)
5. Finally, a continuing need for research (as noted in the reviews by Leather, 1983, and Pennington & Richards, 1986) into aspects of second language phonology and the nature and course of development of an L2 phonological system. A review of these areas of research has not been the focus of this discussion. Information on a range of interlanguage phonology topics, and phonological theory and L2 phonological issues is available in the papers in Ioup and Weinberger (1987) and James and Leather (1986) and in articles in *Language Learning*, *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, *Applied Linguistics*, and other periodicals.

## CONCLUSION

Beginning slowly in the early 1980s and gathering momentum into the 1990s, there has been a growing movement of renewed concern for and excitement about the learning and teaching of pronunciation in the field of TESL. A major concern has been the urgent needs of several special groups of adult and near-adult learners who are seriously disadvantaged without effective second language oral skills, including intelligible communicative speech patterns. The excitement has been in the challenging work of expanding the horizons of pronunciation learning and teaching, redefining basic concepts (philosophy, learner goals, instructional objectives, roles of learner and teacher), and constructing communicative approaches



featuring creative classroom and self-study instructional activities and procedures.

An increasing number of ESL professionals are engaged in studying issues and developing programs grounded in new perspectives. Much has been accomplished but much more development is needed. It is clear that pronunciation can no longer be ignored; today intelligible pronunciation is seen as an essential component of communicative competence. The challenge to teachers and researchers is to develop an informed expertise directed toward facilitating learners' development of functional communicative speech/pronunciation patterns.

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