

On Teaching Foreign Language (English) Pronunciation – Some Useful Ideas

Magdalena Pospieszynska –Wojtkowiak

State School of Higher Professional Education (Poland)

pos.woj@gmail.com

Abstract

There is no question that teaching foreign language pronunciation is an important matter. For some people this may sound as a kind of truism, so the author is not going to platitudinise about how important explicit FL pronunciation is or whether we should teach it explicitly or not. Unfortunately, pronunciation is the aspect of EFL that still receives little attention.

Pronunciation is a skill to be acquired. It cannot be perceived only as a part of declarative knowledge but primarily as a part of procedural knowledge, which is acquired gradually and must be exercised a lot. Whether we believe pronunciation should be taught explicitly or allowed to develop without any explicit instruction, the question of phonetics in language teaching should, inevitably, receive some consideration.

Listening activities constitute a vital part of all practical phonetics lessons conducted at school. However, they are not the only ones. It is doubtful whether activities based entirely on listening to the model, or listening and repeating sessions, may contribute to students' phonetic development, namely better pronunciation. The aim of this paper is to present a sample of exercises in which the learners have to make use of their theoretical knowledge about English descriptive phonetics in order to do the exercises properly. The activities have already been used as a didactic tool by the author and they appeared to be both efficient and useful in the course of students' pronunciation betterment. The presented tasks comprise activities and techniques that the author employs with her first-year students. The samples of exercises cover – mainly – vowels and stress, since they pose serious problems to the learners.