

## Syllabus Design for Teaching Pronunciation in Korean EFL Classroom

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### <국문초록>

한국인을 위한 영어 발음지도안 개발

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이 연구의 목적은 의사소통 능력 중심의 영어교육을 하기 위하여 특별히 한국인들이 영어를 발음할 때 나타나는 문제점들을 살펴보고 보다 정확한 영어발음을 낼 수 있도록 교육할 수 있는 지도안을 작성해 보고자하는 것이다. 먼저 한국인을 위한 영어발음교육의 특성과 제문제를 살펴보고, 보다 효과적인 발음지도를 위해 구체적인 발음지도 목표와 그 목표에 맞는 발음지도법을 알아보았다. 발음지도 목표로는 우선, 영어를 모국어로 하는 사람들이 알아듣고 이해할 수 있는 정도의 발음을 갖추도록 하며, 이를 위해 (1)영어자,모음 식별 청취 및 발음, (2)올바른 강세와 억양 식별 및 구사, (3)연음 및 기타 주요 발음 현상 식별 및 구사 등을 지도하되, (1)보다 (2)와 (3)을 보다 집중적으로 지도할 것을 제시하였다. 아울러 이들 각각의 내용을 보다 효과적으로 지도하기 위하여 의사소통 능력을 중심으로 한 여러가지 지도법과 학습활동을 소개하였다. 또한 교육한 내용에 대한 평가의 중요성을 강조하고 그 방법을 제시하였고, 보다 실용적인 발음지도안을 작성하기위한 교사교육과 작성된 발음지도안의 활용이 필요함을 강조하였다.

### 1. Introduction

As communicative competence has emerged as a new primary goal in language teaching/learning in 1980's, teaching pronunciation began to take more attention from language teaching theorists and practitioners than ever before, with a belief that intelligible pronunciation is an essential component of communicative competence. There has been a big change in expectations and goals of teaching pronunciation: from producing near-native like pronunciation to acquiring intelligible and communicable proficiency.

However, in Korean EFL classrooms, teaching English pronunciation has not been alive. Many teachers and learners are often demotivated to reinforce their teaching

and learning pronunciation as they do not have any observable effect. Some even conclude that they rather devote their time and energy to some other aspects of the language.

In Korean EFL classrooms, teaching pronunciation has posed one of the most difficult problems to Korean teachers of English more than any other areas of English teaching such as vocabulary, grammar, and translation. The problems resulted from different aspects of teaching EFL in Korea: First, the extreme difference and the nature of difference between the sound systems of Korean and English; Second, insufficient opportunities for the teacher and students to be exposed to and use the natural sounds of the target language in real situations; Third, lack of English competence for the teacher to be a good role model for her/his students and lack of professional knowledge and strategies for her/him to teach with; Last but not the least, lack of confidence in teacher's own linguistic and pedagogical competence.

The purpose of this paper is to probe into what aspects of pronunciation should be included in the syllabus for teaching English pronunciation in order to foster our students' English pronunciation at the level of intelligibility and communicability.

The following are the factors that should be included in the syllabus for teaching pronunciation:

- 1) teaching objectives
- 2) level of students' background knowledge and language competence
- 3) teaching methods
- 4) textbook, resources, equipment, and facilities available
- 5) evaluation methods

## 2. Goals for teaching English pronunciation

Our teaching goal should be realistic and obtainable for general students, i.e., student-oriented goals: not to produce accent-free, native-like speakers, but to produce communicatively competent speakers whose pronunciation is somewhat comprehensible and acceptable to the native-speakers of English.

The major areas of pronunciation include the following:

- 1) consonant/vowel discrimination
- 2) word/sentence stress
- 3) intonation,
- 4) strong/reduced speech patterns
- 5) syllable structure and

6) voice quality.

Students need to be taught for perception and production of each area, with more focus on suprasegmentals rather than segmentals. Studies on the relationship between native speaker judgments of nonnative pronunciation and deviance in segmentals, suprasegmentals, and syllable structure have shown that suprasegmentals rather than segmentals affect intelligibility of nonnative pronunciation more significantly. (Anderson-Hsieh, Johnson, and Koehler, 1992)

### 3. Pronunciation Teaching Approaches

The differences in age and maturity will involve different techniques and varying emphases. No one method benefits all the learners equally. Teachers need to use several techniques or a combination of techniques to teach or reinforce abilities to perceive and produce features chosen for the curriculum.

New perspectives on teaching pronunciation require teaching approaches that focus on fostering natural learning environment through teacher-student and student-student interactions. The following are some instructional approaches. In these pronunciation teaching approaches, the teaching materials are presented in such a way that involves students with imitative practice, rehearsed speaking practice, and extemporaneous speech practice in order.

#### 1) Articulatory approach

The place and manner of making sounds need to be taught with the specific sounds in words and sentences. The names of speech organ need to be taught including top (bottom) lip, top (bottom, back) teeth, behind the top teeth, the tip (front, center, back, sides) of the tongue, the hard (soft) roof of the mouth, and nose. Instructional activities for involving students with some kinesthetic movements are effective to reinforce the sound features. Visual aids including pictures and charts facilitate students' understanding and memory of the place and manner of articulation.

#### 2) Minimal Pairs

The sound contrasts that cause difficulty distinguishing perceptually and productively to many Korean learners can be introduced using the following minimal pairs:

ban/van, b/v, boat/vote, cabs/calves

peel/feel, fan/pan

see (or sea)/she, sit/shit, sign/shine

right/light, rice/lice, read/lead  
live/leave, sit/seat, shit/sheet  
set/sat. bread/brad, blend/bland, den/Dan  
mess/mass, met/mat, pest/passed, said/sad  
New International Version(NIV)/Like a Virgin

### 3) Korean/English comparative sound practice

In order to overcome the natural tendency of the student to hear and make sounds in the categories made familiar by the native language, the teacher will need to give aural/oral-discrimination exercises in which near-equivalents in the native and in the foreign language are clearly demonstrated and in which near-equivalents in the foreign language are distinctly differentiated. English borrowing words used widely in Korean language can be used as effective devices to show the sound difference to the students. It also needs to be reinforced that even the same English words cannot be understood by the native English speakers when they are spoken with some Korean sounds or in the Korean syllable structure. For example, *빠쓰* for 'bus', or *밀크* for 'milk' will not be acceptable when it is said in English utterance because the use of the inappropriate consonant and unnecessary additional vowel at the final position of each word.

### 4) Rhymes and poems

One of the good devices for pronunciation practice is the learning by heart of rhymes and poems, carefully chosen so that the vocabulary, thought content, and structures are appropriated to the level of the students. Many nursery rhymes and counting rhymes are suitable.

### 5) Jazz chants

Jazz chants is an innovative and exciting new approach to language learning which link the rhythm, stresses, and intonation pattern of the spoken language and the expression of feelings and the intent of the speaker. The natural rhythms and humor of the chants are highly motivating and may be used effectively for both classroom practice and individual home study.

### 6) Songs and games

Songs and games are very effective teaching device depending on how to use them. In order to use them effectively, the teacher needs to keep in mind the

followings: (1) Set your teaching objective clearly, (2) Choose songs and games to teach or reinforce your teaching focus, (3) Get familiar with the songs and games of your choice and the procedure to use them, (4) Be flexible with the time limit, (5) Plan to evaluate your students' achievement of teaching objectives while or after you use songs and games. Otherwise, they might have some fun but not necessarily know what they are supposed to learn.

#### 7) Role plays and drama

Celce-Murcia and Goodwin (1991) suggests that role plays and drama scenes are always fun and are an ideal vehicle for practicing pronunciation. They are fully contextualized, include gestures and body language, and provide a multitude of opportunities for practicing natural speech. However, these activities work better for those students who have certain level of communicative competence rather than for the very beginners, particularly when those activities are to be original and creative. For the beginners, the teacher can provide them with a ready-made script written in a simple language and have them memorize it and act it out.

#### 8) Tape recorder and language laboratory

Tape recorder and language laboratory can play a very effective role. Even more so in Korean classroom settings where most of teachers are not confident in their command of English pronunciation as well as overall language competence.

If the laboratory is to be effective in the developing of acceptable articulation and intonation, the way in which it is to be used must be carefully studied.

Students must be given instruction and practice under supervision particularly in some laboratory tasks that require a certain controlled guideline.

### 4. Pronunciation evaluation

There are three main types of pronunciation evaluation: diagnostic evaluation, ongoing evaluation with feedback, and classroom achievement test. These tests are administered formally as well as informally.

1) Diagnostic evaluation: This is for the teacher to identify the learner's background knowledge and proficiency level in pronunciation and to analyze the learner's needs. The students can be placed at the appropriate level of class and the instructional goals and methods can be planned based on the result of this assessment. Diagnostic evaluation consists of 2 major areas including perception test and production test, both

testing abilities in consonant-vowel discrimination, word and sentence stress, intonation, strong and reduced speech.

2) Ongoing evaluation: In this area of test, the teacher evaluates student progress and provides feedback in a diverse fashion: self-correction, peer-correction and teacher correction. Corrections are made informally.

3) Achievement evaluation: This is to determine the learner's level of achievement on specific, course-related areas. As in diagnostic tests, both perception and production abilities are tested. The result of this test can serve as a basis for promotion decision on individual learner.

## 5. Discussion

So far, I have discussed the major areas that should be included in the syllabus for teaching English pronunciation: First, major characteristics of teaching English pronunciation in Korean classrooms; Second, goals and objectives of teaching pronunciation; Third, pronunciation teaching approaches. Last, Pronunciation evaluation.

In conclusion, good teachers are the key to the successful education. A good syllabus provides a clear guideline to follow but the effectiveness of the class depends on the teachers and the students. Good teachers need to have a solid understanding of the learners' needs, a thorough knowledge of teaching approaches and willingness to use them, a thorough knowledge of assessment tools and strategies and the ability to apply them appropriately in the areas needed such as placing students, giving feedback and measuring achievement. It is vital for teacher-training programs to develop communicative pronunciation component and educate teachers. It is even more important for teachers to pursue their own teaching effectiveness by continuous self-study and efforts to fulfill their own needs.

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