
Common pronunciation mistakes of uzbek learners in speaking english

MAVLONOVA GULNIGOR

Termez, Uzbekistan

Millions of foreign students want to learn English as well as they can. For instance, it is only a matter of reading and writing it, and they will find no help here. However, many learners want to be able to speak English well, with a pronunciation, which can be easily understood by both other learners and English people. Language starts with the ear. When a baby starts to talk he does it by hearing the sounds his mother makes and imitating them. If a baby is born deaf he cannot hear these sounds and therefore cannot imitate them and will not speak.

But normal babies can hear and can imitate. They are wonderful imitators, and this gift of imitation, which gives us the gift of speech, lasts for a number of years. It is well known that a child of ten years old or less can learn any language perfectly, if it is brought up surrounded by that language, no matter where it was born or who its parents were. But after this age the ability to imitate perfectly becomes less, and we all know only too well that adults have great difficulty in mastering the pronunciation of foreign languages. Some learners are more talented than others, they find pronouncing other languages less difficult, but they never find them easy. Why is it so? Why should this gift that we all have as children disappear later in our life? Why cannot grown-up people pick up the characteristic sound of a foreign language as a child can? The answer to this is that our native language won't let us.

By the time we are grown up the habits of our own language are so strong that they are very difficult to break. In our own language we have a fairly small number of sound-units which we put together in many different combinations to form the words and sentences we use every day. And as we get older we are dominated by this small number of units. It is as if we had in our heads a certain fixed number of boxes for sounds. When we listen to our own language we hear the sounds and we put each into the right box, and when we speak we go to the boxes and take out the sounds we want in the order we want them [1]. And as we do this over the years the boxes get stronger and stronger until everything we hear, whether it is our own language or another, has to be put into one of these boxes, and everything we say comes out of English boxes contain the sounds at the beginning of the words fin, thin, and sin, that is f, th and s. As children progress through the discovery of language in their first three years, there are predictable patterns in the emergence and development of many features of the language they are learning. For example, children do not use temporal adverbs such as "tomorrow" or "last week" until they develop some understanding of time. [2]

Learners of English often expect to be able to speak that language like a native speaker. However, they encounter many factors to gain their desire. One of the common factors that they find difficult is the pronunciation of another sound system. Learners find that their mother tongue influences their pronunciation of English. And also we can see some problems on consonant sounds. Especially Uzbek learners of English will have some difficulties in the pronunciation of sounds which do not exist in the native language. For instance, /s/ and /z/ is considered confusable in usage.

The learners pronounce /s/ instead of /z/, so that a word such as peas is pronounced as peace. Consequently, the meaning will also be changed. And some consonants are written but not pronounced. This is either because they were once pronounced (knock) or come from a foreign language (psychology). [3] Initial position — kn — knock, knee, knife — ps — psychology, psychiatry End position — mb — lamb, climb, thumb — mn — condemn, autumn, column Besides, we have a lot of pronunciation mistakes in the

consonant sounds /θ/ and /ð/. Differing these sounds are very difficult for Uzbek learners too. Speakers often create a heavily voiceless stop /t/ instead of a voiceless fricative /θ/ in a word like thank. Apparently, they vocalize the sound /t/ based on their language since in elementary level learners the letter th is combined by a heavily aspirated /t/. So, the word three can be pronounced exactly like tree.

Elementary level learners of English commonly produce /d/ or /z/ for /ð/ sounds, so the word than may sound like /dæn/ or /zæn/. In the Uzbek language, the voiceless stop /p/ does not occur in initial position of words. And our speakers can substitute a voiced stop /b/ or a voiceless fricative /f/ for /p/. As a result, the word pool may sound like fool, and pop may sound like bop. [4] In contrast, in the final positions, these consonants often provoke confusion for learners. For example, lab might sound like lap. Except that there is a problem with grammatical ending s. When words end in s in forms of consonant-vowel-consonant, the /s/ sound is frequently omitted. For examples, sits may turn to /sit/ and wants may become /wan/. Sometimes, our speakers tend to omit both /t/ and /s/ sound in the word wants. Some other final consonant clusters such as /kt/ as in walked, /t/ as in washed, /d/ as in judged, and /ld/ as in filled are very difficult for our elementary level learners to pronounce. To clarify, the words world may be pronounced as /w/, myself may be pronounced as /mayse/. These mistakes can be very difficult for our learners to overcome.

The results of experiment held among beginners in the English language learning show that process of pronouncing phonemes correctly should be accomplished in three steps: 1) to pronounce consonant and vowel sounds which do not exist in the Uzbek language separately. For example, consonants [ð, θ, r, w, f, v] and vowels [u, ou, ai, ue]. 2) to pronounce the words with voiced consonant at the end [b, d, g, v,]. 3) To pronounce “similar” consonants (consonants which exist in both English and Uzbek languages) in phrases [m, g, b, s, z, n. d, p, t, k,]. [6]

Learning the pronunciation of some words are combined with the degree of easy and difficult sounds. That means some English sounds are difficult to pronounce. The teacher utters one sound and this way is named “saying speech sounds” and “listening sounds by elementary level learners” level. The learners should pay attention to the content of phrase and should understand its meaning of that new word or phrase. Elementary level learners must listen and then perceive those sounds. In conclusion, the mistakes made by Uzbek learners in pronouncing English sounds may be corrected by teacher step by step based on some well known theories and practices. The lessons of English will be more productive if the teachers take into account the above given proposals in making curriculum and lesson plans.

References:

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