

Tips to Improve Pronunciation in English

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Abstract

Communicative skills are the cumulative outcome of the four-fold language skills. A good speaker, synthesizes this array of skills and knowledge to succeed in his or her speech. Manuel A., Florez author of the essay "Improving Adult English Language Learners' Speaking Skills," considers that improving one's speaking- are the skills to use pronunciation with accuracy and the ability to adjust components of speech such as vocabulary, rate of speech, and complexity of grammar structures to maximize, grammatic structures and lexical units to maximize the listener's comprehension and involvement. A critical concept among them is pronunciation. I have elaborated on where students usually go wrong and provided easy tips to correct their pronunciation (explaining the reason for the rule) [1]. The seven tips one can put into practice to improve pronunciation are the knowledge of silent letters, phonetics, listening skills, pace of speech, use of the Dictionary and practicing through different ways, and above all, the awareness of the original language and the different accents. To be more explicit, we are trying to learn the language itself purely, and accent can be attained by consistent practice.

Keywords: Phonetics, sounds, pronunciation, silent letters, tips, articulators, standard errors, rules, English language, communication.

Introduction:

Pronunciation is how a term or a language is said. This may refer to commonly agreed-upon sounds used in expressing a given word or language in a specific dialect or simply how a particular individual speaks a word or language [2]. Improve your life by improving your language. Pronunciation counts a lot. Despite good grammar accuracy and language power, speaking will only be helpful if your accent is precise and correct. Below, I have detailed the rules for standard, miss-enunciated words or letters that will help you avoid typical pronunciation errors.

Phonetics is a branch of linguistics, and it is the scientific analysis of the display, transmission, and reception of address sounds. It studies the medium of verbal language. It touches upon physiology and physics. Phonetics is now a pure science that analyzes speech functions, including the anatomy, neurology, and pathology of address, which, according to the Dictionary, means a study of the structure or internal workings of something, the analysis of internal functioning, and

the study of structural and functional changes produced accordingly [3]. The study of phonetics can be divided into three main branches:

1. **Acoustic Phonetics** is the study of the physical properties of speech sounds, such as frequency and amplitude, in their transmission. Acoustic phonetics analyzes speech waves with the help of instruments, describing the physical properties of the stream of sound issuing forth from the speaker's mouth.
2. **Auditory Phonetics** is the study of hearing mechanisms and perception of speech sounds. It studies different auditory impressions of sound quality, pitch, and loudness.
3. **Articulatory Phonetics** recognizes that speech is produced by a unique sound-making apparatus inside the human body and that specific sounds may be related to specific movements of the apparatus. Hence, it studies the concerted movements of the passive and active speech organs, such as the lungs, vocal cords, tongue, soft palates, lips, and teeth, in speech articulation [3].

• **Practice the rules for Silent Letters:**

Silent letters in English result from the difference between the number of sounds and several letters. These are a few places where we silence certain letters while pronouncing [4].

1. **'h' is silent in the sequence 'gh' after 'w' and in the word-final position.**

Spelling Pronunciation

Ghost /gəʊst/

What /wət/

2. **'b' is always silent in the sequence 'mb' and 'bt' in the final position of the word.**

Spelling Pronunciation

Lamb /læm/

Doubt /daʊt/

3. **'k' is silent in the sequence 'kn' when this comes in the initial position in words.**

Spelling Pronunciation

Knee /kni:t/

Knife /naɪf/

4. **When 'lk' and 'lm' come at the end of a word, the letter 'l' is silent.**

Spelling Pronunciation

Talk /tɔ:k/

Calm /kɑ:m/

5. **In the spelling sequence, 'DJ,' 'd' is silent.**

Spelling Pronunciation

Adjust /ədʒʌst/

Adjective /ædʒɪktɪv/

6. **'n' is silent in the word-final sequence 'mn.'**

Spelling Pronunciation

Column /kələm/

Hymn /hɪm/

7. **'g' is silent in the 'gm' or 'gn' spelling.**

Spelgun.' Pronunciation

Sign /sain/

Gnaw /nɔ:/

8. **The sequence 'w' is silent in the final position of words, and the sequence 'wr' is silent in the word-initial position.**

Spelling Pronunciation

Blow /bləʊ/

Flow /fləʊ/

Write /rait/

Wrap /ræp/

9. **'t' is silent when it occurs between 's' and 'l' or 's' and 'en.'**

Spelling Pronunciation

Castle /ka:səl/

Listen /lisən/

II. **Gain knowledge of the Phonetics/ Sound system of the English language:**

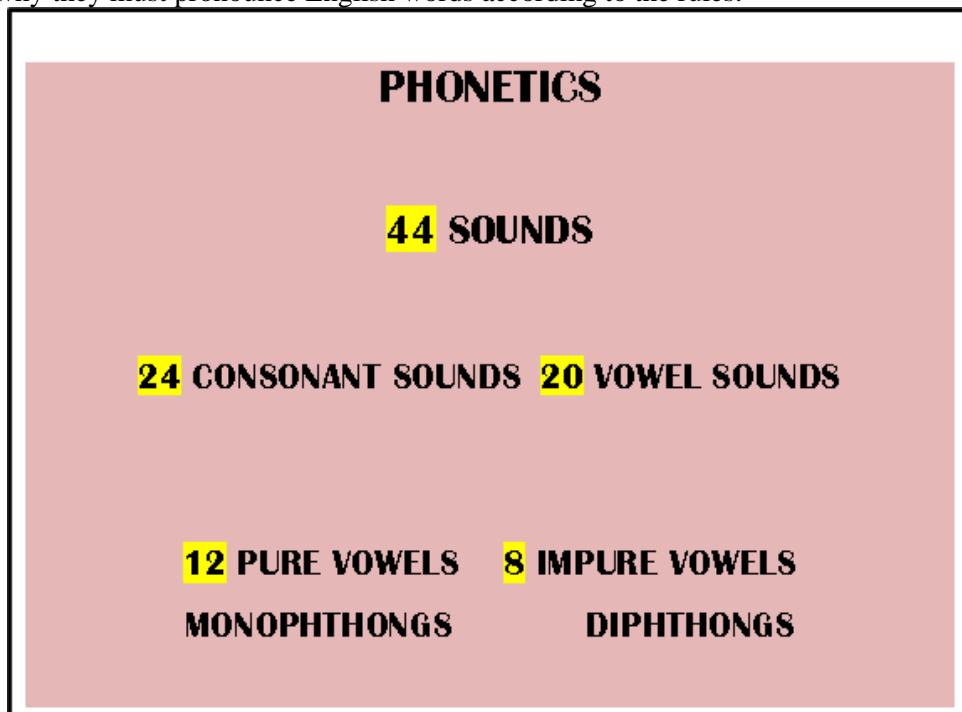
III. **Practice the movement of articulators to improve your pronunciation:**

We use a system of written symbols called the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) to identify sounds. While some of the IPA symbols are the letters of the English alphabet, there are also special symbols. Dictionaries use phonetic symbols to give the pronunciation of words [4].

Phonetics is the science of speech. We need phonetics to improve our pronunciation. The Dictionary is the best place to learn phonetics. The science of phonetics seeks to represent all the sounds of all the world's languages. We will see the Acoustic, Auditory, and Articulatory Phonetics, which focus on written sounds, listening sounds, and the process of making sounds with the help of various organs. In 1888, the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) was invented to have a system in which there was a one-to-one correspondence between each sound in language and each phonetic symbol. Someone who knows the IPA knows how to pronounce any word in any language. Here is the original chart released in 2020 by linguists. The authors of textbooks or equivalent journals often make modified versions of the IPA chart to express their tastes or needs. The image shows one such version. All pulmonic consonants are transferred to the consonant chart. Only black symbols are on the official IPA chart; additional symbols are in grey [5].

- b) the same letter makes different sounds:
Ex: Use the letter in the following words: 'a, 'art,' apple,' and 'among.'
- c) confusion with the silent letters
For example, 'r' in a car is pronounced, whereas 'r' in a car is not.
- d) Stress and intonation
For example, the same word is pronounced differently in different situations.
- e) All Plural forms are not pronounced the same way.
For example, caps and roses are differently pronounced.
- f) All past Forms are not pronounced the same way.
Ex: called, looked are quite differently pronounced.
- g) All double consonant letters except 'cc' are pronounced as single-consonant sounds.

The reason for all this is that there is no one-to-one correspondence between spellings and sounds in English. Hence, there needs to be more clarity in pronouncing English words. We must become more aware of English to become more transparent about this. Here, I have attempted to give information to ensure the students know why they must pronounce English words according to the rules.



Sound: The Word' sound' means something you can hear or hear, but the meaning that is implacable for us is the sound we make using our vocal organs [6]. The speech sounds are phonemes. A phoneme is a minimal significant sound unit of a language and can be blended to form words.

Syllable: A unit of pronunciation having one vowel sound, with or without surrounding consonants, forming the whole or a part of a word.

For example, there are two syllables in *water* and three in *inferno*.

VOICELESS SOUNDS:

When the vocal cords are apart (as is typical for breathing), a few sounds are produced. These are called voiceless sounds.

There are nine voiceless sounds

/p/ /t/ /k/

/f/ /θ/ /s/

/ʃ/ /tʃ/ /h/

VOICED SOUNDS:

Sounds produced when the vocal cords vibrate are called voiced sounds.

/b/ /d/ /g/

/ð/ /v/ /n/

/m/ /l/ /r/

SIBILANTS:

All the hissing sounds are called sibilants.

/s/ /ʃ/ /tʃ/ /ʒ/

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CONSONANT SOUNDS AND VOWEL SOUNDS:

Consonant sounds	Vowel sounds
There is a coming together of two articulations thereby obstructing the free flow of air. Ex: ‘p’ in pet.	There is a free flow of air without any obstruction. Ex: ‘a’ in ark.

Plural marker (-s) rule

/s/	/z/	/ɪz/
Voiceless sounds	Voiced sounds	Sibilants
Caps-/kæps/	Tubs-/tʌbz/	Badges-/bædʒɪz/
Books-/bʊks/	Bags-/bægz/	Boxes-/bɒksɪz/
Bats-/bæts/	Wells-/welz/	Wishes-/wɪʃɪz/
	Rooms-/rʊ:mz/	Roses-/rɒsɪz/

Past tense marker (-ed) rules

/t/	/d/	/ɪd/
Voiceless sounds	Voiced sounds	/t/ or /d/
Picked-/pɪkt/	Dined-/dɪnd/	Fitted-/fɪtɪd/
Coughed-/kɒft/	Boiled-/bɔɪld/	Funded-/fʌndɪd/
Latched-/lætʃt/	Bathed-/beɪðd/	Guarded-/gɑ:dɪd/
Snatched-/snætʃt/	Called-/kɔ:ld/	

Difference between /v/ and /w/

/v/ and /w/ are pronounced in the same way by many people.

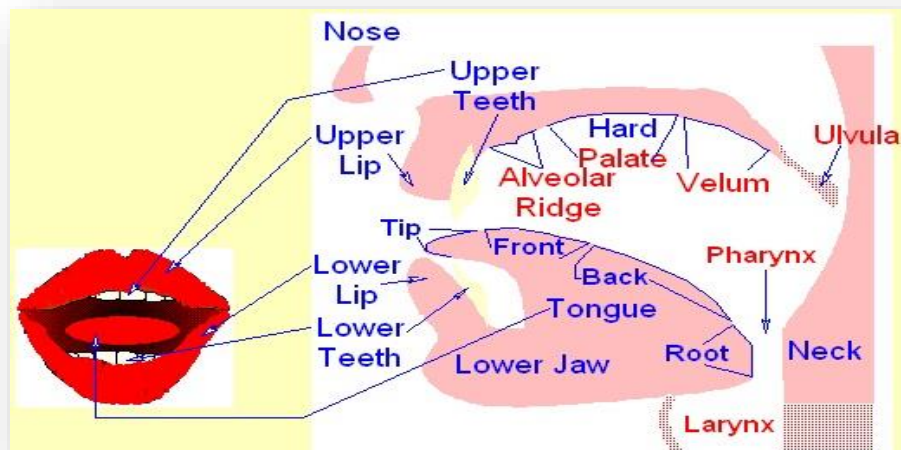
/v/--- labio-dental sound

/w/---bilabial sound

/v/-violet, vacancy, vehicle...

/w/-water, what, when, why...

The knowledge of these differences makes you more confident when you move forward to learn all the sounds.



Pronunciation depends on the movement of the mouth and other parts. Observing the above diagram will give you knowledge of all the parts in the body that help us produce sounds. The diagrams referenced under 7 and 9 show pictures of organs in different positions to produce different sounds.

Consonant sounds:

Plosives → consonants are made by stopping air flowing out of the mouth and suddenly releasing it.

/p/ as in pen, apple, tip

/b/ as in bin, rubber, cub

/t/ as in tin, kettle, kit

/d/ as in dog, today, bad

/k/ as in king, pickle, sick

/g/ as in-game, luggage, bag

Affricates → These sounds consist of a plosive and a fricative made in the same place in the mouth.

/tʃ/ as in chain, in charge, catch

/dʒ/ as in joy, jump, journey

Fricatives → sound is created by forcing air through a narrow space.

/f/- fun, tough

/v/-van, vain

/θ/-think, both

/ð/-then, that

/s/-sip, see, lace

/z/-zoo, zebra, gaze

/ʃ/-ship, shirt, wash

/ʒ/-measure, pleasure

/h/-hot, hall, half

Nasals → for these sounds, air escapes only through the nose.

/m/-mouth, damn, comb

/n/-nose, nun, fun

/ŋ/-sing, ring, bring

Frictionless continuant → produced without any friction.

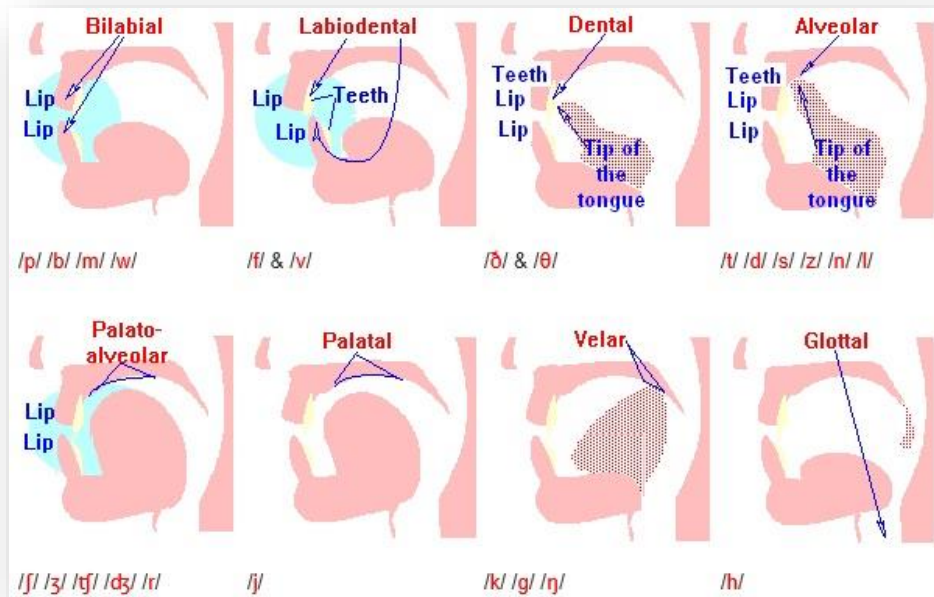
/l/-love, lost, load

/r/-rose, rank, ramp

Semi vowels → are produced like a vowel but function as a consonant.

/j/-yet, yellow, yawns

/w/-wet, water, waist [8]



[7]

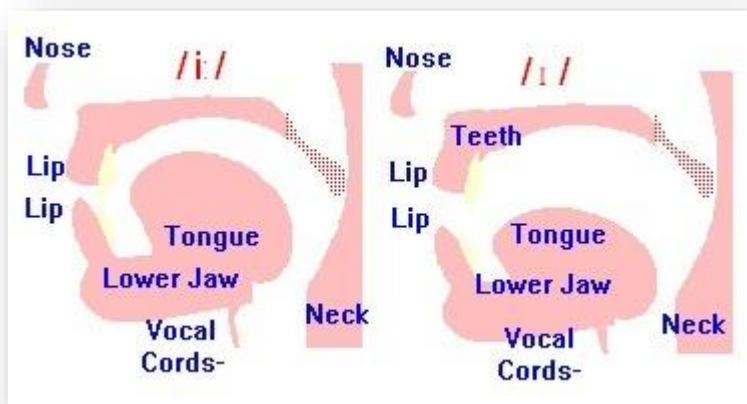
The above picture provides information about the different sounds produced by different movements of vocal organs.

VOWEL SOUNDS:

They are also called monophthongs.

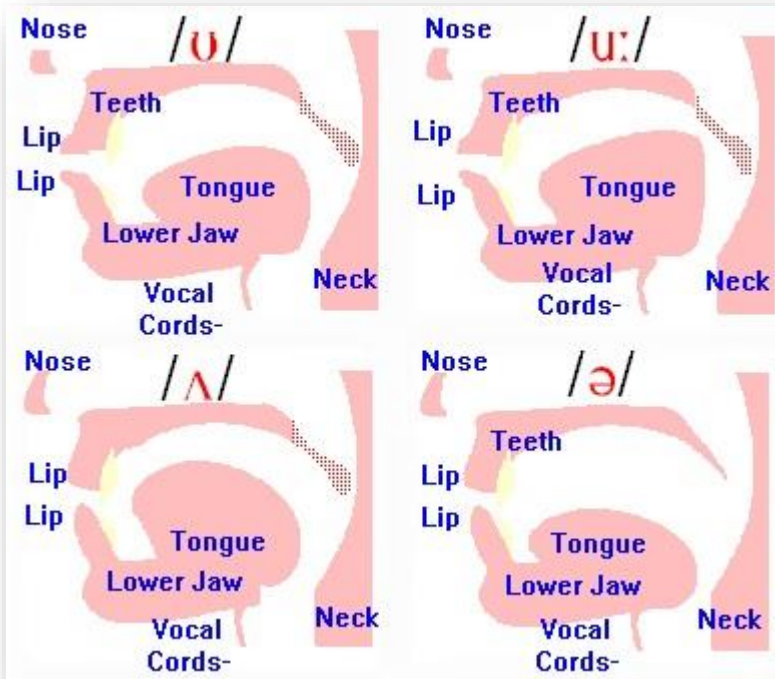
/i/-ink, tea, see

/i:/-eat, peep, flee



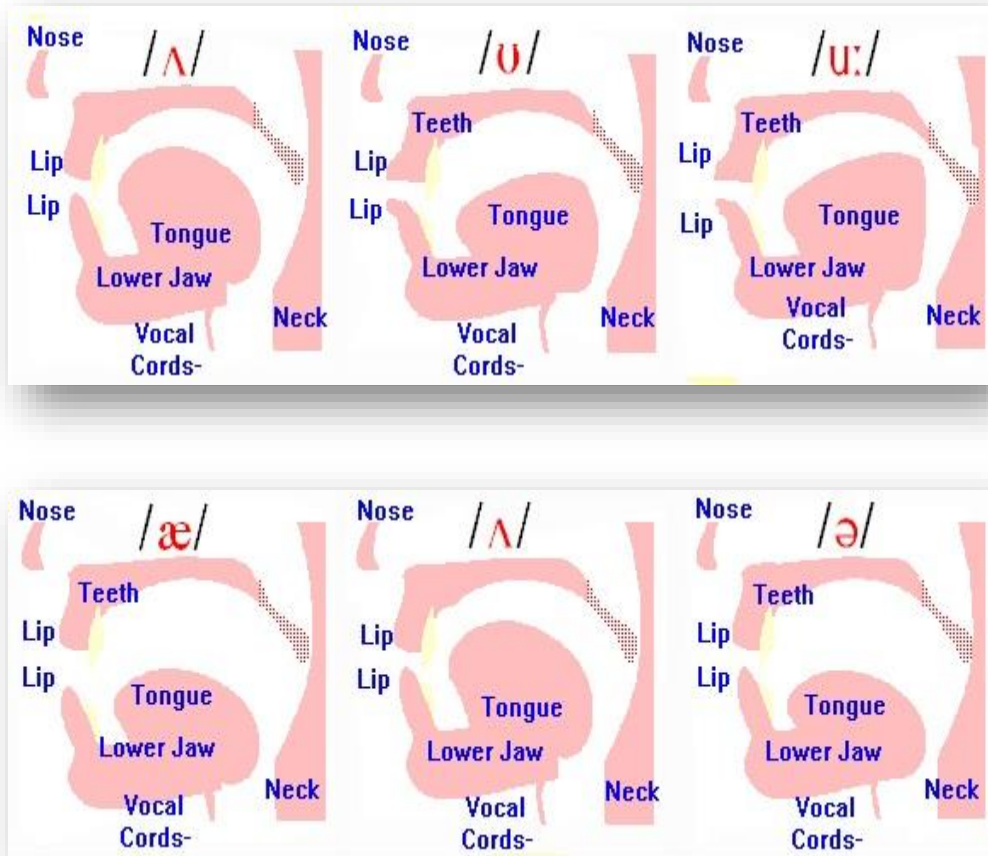
[7]

/e/-pen, ten, age
/æ/-ant, mat, apple
/a:-barn, art, car
/ɔ/-pot, go, dot
/ɔ:-lord, thought, bought
/ʊ/-put, foot
/ʊ:-cool, fool [8]



[7]

/ə/- ago, among, across
/ɜ:-earth, bird, third
/ʌ/-uncle, cut, unknown [8]



[7]

DIPHTHONGS:

The vowel sounds in which the tongue glides from one vowel to another in the same syllable.

/eɪ/- eight, weight

/əɪ/-eye, high, lies

/ɔɪ/-oil, toy, boy

/əʊ/-owl, out, now

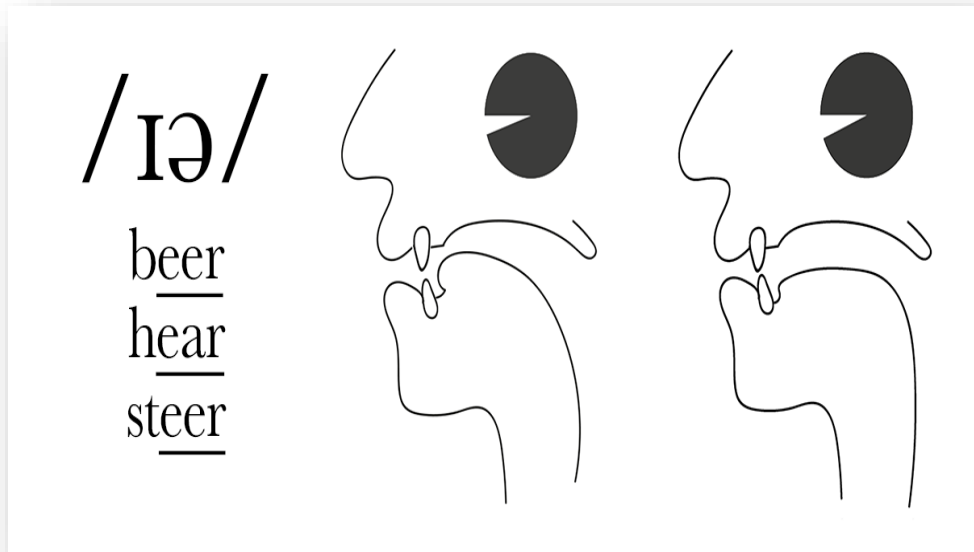
/iə/-ear, tear, hear

/eə/-air, hair, pair

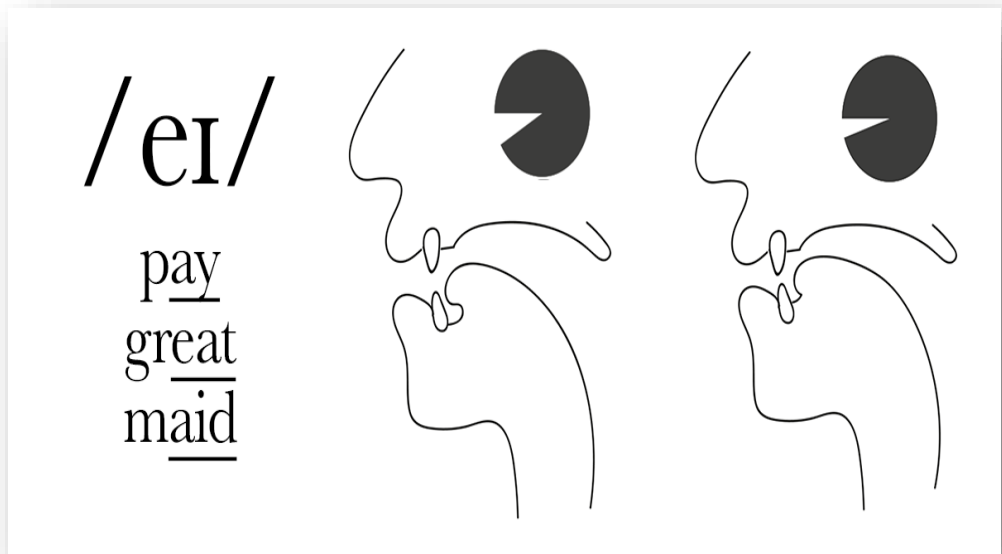
/ʊə/-poor, tour

/əʊ/-oak, coke, clove [8]

Note: The first position in the diphthongs is stronger than the 2nd.



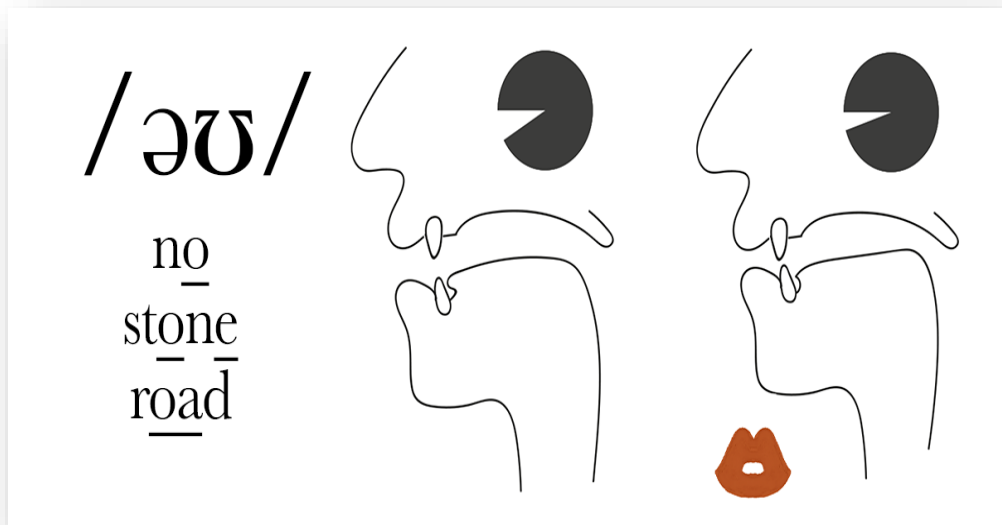
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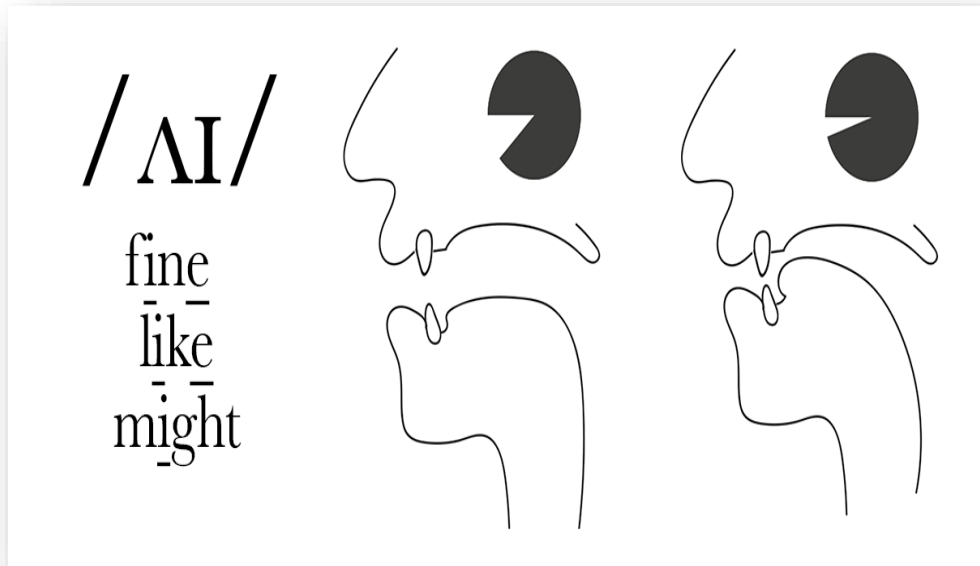
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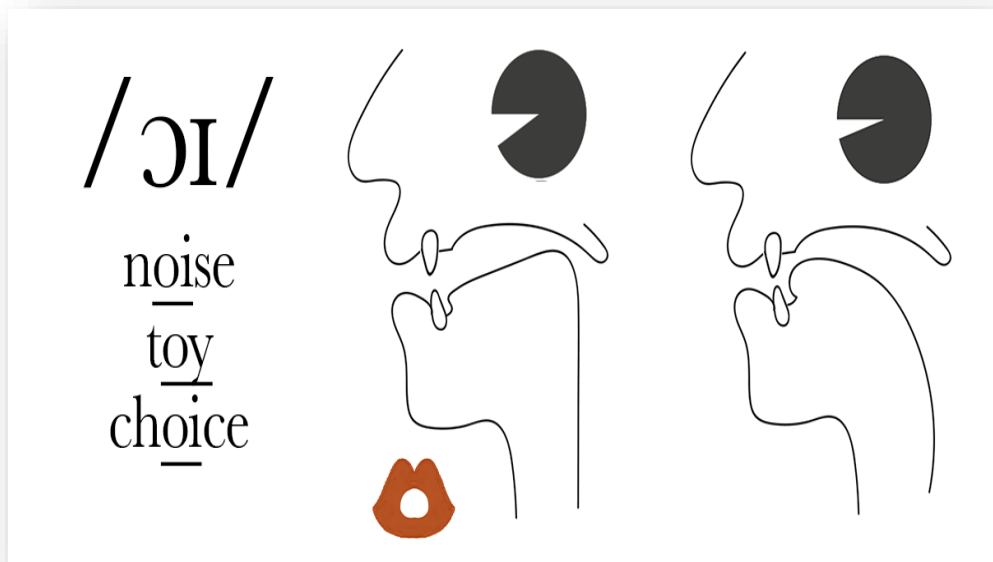
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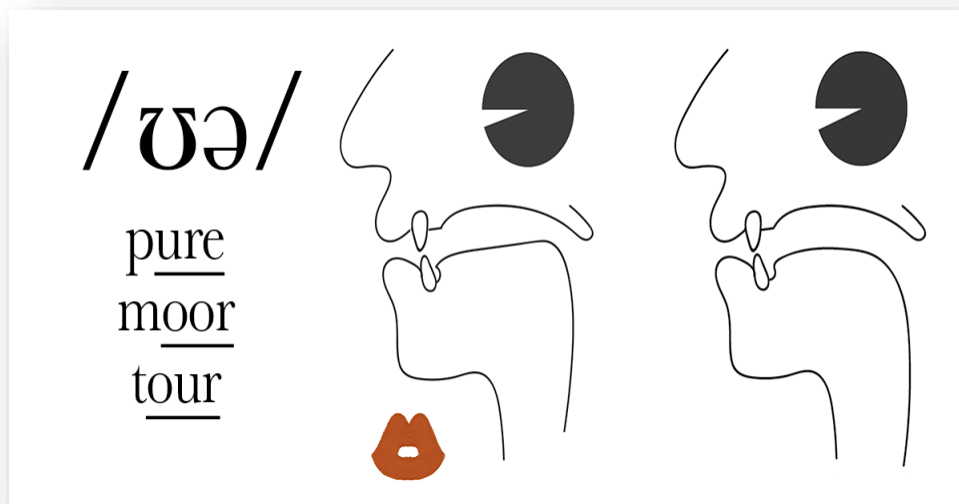
[9]



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[9]

Note: You can always use your mother tongue or L1 to understand and learn these sounds, but do not depend on it for longer.

IV. Learn to Listen and imitate to speak better [10]

For some students, learning English is only a matter of reading and writing it. But many students want to be able to speak English well, with a pronunciation that can be readily understood by their fellow students and by English people.

Written English and spoken English are very different things. Letters are written, and sounds are spoken. It is beneficial to have letters to remind us of related sounds, but this is all they do; they cannot make us pronounce sounds that we do not already know; they remind us. Speaking is organized sound, taken in by the ear, where your listening skill becomes essential to become a good communicator [10].

Language starts with the ear. When a baby starts to talk, he does it by hearing the sounds his mother makes and imitating them. They are excellent imitators, and this gift of imitation, which gives us the gift of speech, lasts several years. It is well known that a child of ten years old or less can learn any language perfectly if surrounded by that language, no matter where it was born or who its parents were. However, after this age, the ability to imitate ideally becomes less, and we all know only too well that adults need help mastering the pronunciation of foreign languages.

Listening to samples of authentic addresses is the most obvious way to improve your pronunciation. Listening to a short sentence or phrase and then repeating it afterward, trying to imitate the sounds, intonation, and word stress, and noticing how your mouth and tongue move when you speak will immediately show improvement in pronunciation[11].

The only problem with English pronunciation is establishing new ways of hearing, using our speech organs, and developing new speech habits [5].

Listening to the target language carefully will help you imitate and use the language effectively, understand the meaning clearly, give appropriate responses, and make the conversation good. Above all, you can use the same expressions to speak again.

V. Pace: slow down to speak

Pronunciation is an atypical aspect of language learning. First, it involves control over many tiny muscles in the speech tract, making it more practical and physiological than other linguistic skills.

Slow down when you speak, especially when you are a beginner. You can speed up only when you think the listener understands your specific English Pronunciation habits.

One of the most important things to remember is that everyone can improve, even if they have no great talent for language. You may never sound like a native English speaker, but at least you will have got as close to it as you can [5].

VI. Use a Dictionary

There are two different ways to use a Dictionary. People mainly refer to the Dictionary to get the meanings, but it can do much more. A dictionary can give you a long list of words, meanings, parts of speech, example sentences, and the pronunciation of those words in Phonetic transcription. You can use a Dictionary to improve your vocabulary and pronunciation. You can even use the more handy and comfortable online Dictionary on your mobile, where you will be exposed to the word, synonyms, antonyms, and pronunciation through phonetic transcription and voice options in your mobile additionally [11].

VII. Practice in different ways

Once you have learned to speak slowly and clearly by listening, you can start practicing small sentences/ phrases. There are many ways to practice, like **Recording yourself**. Once you record, listen back, focusing on the pronunciation part. Note changes and repeat the process; speak **with a friend**: practice with a friend, taking turns to speak where both of you can correct each other and improve. **Practice through movies and songs**: watch movies or listen to songs in the target language, focus on the speaking part, and try to imitate the same dialogues and lyrics, which are super easy ways to learn any language [11].

Conclusion:

Therefore, higher education students must realize that effective communication is only possible with the core elements of active skills, such as grammar, vocabulary, and phonetics. It might be uncomfortable for us to speak according to the pronunciation rules at the beginning. However, you will be an effective and accurate speaker in the target language if you practice the proper methods to pronounce the sounds, words, sentences, and speech.

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