
відеокасету, після чого студенти разом із тьюторами обговорюють їх. При необхідності студенти проводять додаткові мікроуроки.

У Великобританії велика увага приділяється професійно-методичній підготовці вчителів англійської мови, вдосконаленню змісту навчальних програм, запровадженню нових методів та форм активного навчання. У процесі підготовки майбутніх вчителів чільне місце займає педагогічна практика. Вся система роботи спрямована на подолання розриву між потребами суспільства у висококваліфікованих спеціалістах та недостатнім рівнем підготовки педагогічних кадрів.

Вважаємо, що вивчений нами і висвітлений у даній статті досвід професійно-методичної підготовки вчителів англійської мови у Великобританії може представляти інтерес для спеціалістів, що займаються підготовкою педагогів у нашій країні.

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The Problem of Choice of the Basic Model of Pronunciation for English Language Teaching

It is quite clear that a foreign learner who requires an adequate performance in the language for the practical purposes of everyday communication should pay most attention to performance and the level of it necessary for efficient communication. However, the teaching of pronunciation presents particular difficulties. While grammatical structures can be taught in sequence, vocabulary compiled on the basis of frequency of occurrence and used for the presentation of grammatical structures, with the addition of special sets of lexical units in the specified situations. Pronunciation itself is taught from the very first lesson, and the teacher must deal systematically with it, even though he may be forced to postpone the correction of some mistakes which occur in the early stages.

While beginning the teaching process the teacher and the learner should decide what final result they are expecting to achieve.

A.C. Gimson in his *Pronunciation of English* [5, 270–271] suggests the main questions the teacher and the learner should give answers to before starting the teaching process are:

1. What form of pronunciation is to be taken as a model?
2. What level of performance is to be aimed at?

Because of the great diversity of English accents the foreign learner faces a great difficulty of choosing a basic model for pronunciation. A “neutral all-purpose international pronunciation of English”, as A.C. Gimson put it [5, 271], does not exist, so the learners are to make their choice from the existing.

The situation with the English language is still further complicated by the fact that one language is represented by two basic linguistic subsystems used for teaching English as a foreign language — British English and American English. On the one hand there exists “a need for separate identity”, which means that it is very important for Britons and Americans not to be confused with each other and this keeps the variants apart. On the other hand, there is a pressure to communicate. There is what might be called “a centripetal force” that pushes them apart. The result is a kind of balance that keeps the varieties distinct [1, 10–11]. These two main diatropic variants of English have been studied very thoroughly by a number of scholars both in this country and abroad.

Usually it is a representative form of British and American pronunciation that is chosen as a studying model. The decisive criteria in the choice of any teaching model must be that it is widely

understood, is adequately described in textbooks, and has ample recorded material available for the learner. It is clear that, if these criteria are admitted, British RP is an important candidate as a basic model which is already taught throughout the world [6, 9]. Although some learners, for regional reasons might choose the General American pronunciation model, in our country British Received Pronunciation is “widely regarded as a model for correct pronunciation, particularly for educated formal speech” [3, 36].

One of the favourable features of RP as a model for English language teaching is the fact that it is genuinely regionless accent within Britain;

i.e. if speakers have it you cannot tell which area of Britain they come from; which is not the case for any other type of British accents [8, 214].

It is fair to mention, however, that only 3–5 per cent of the British population speak RP. This causes the biggest difficulty for foreign learners if they find themselves in the foreign surroundings. Supposing they understand the radio broadcasting where RP is encouraged. But for sure they are more likely to communicate with the people who represent the middle class rather than a member of the Royal family or highly educated citizens of the older generation.

The non-regional accent is so encouraged in Great Britain because it does not generally excite in the minds of listeners the strong prejudices associated with other, more local, accents [8, 214]. Yet British people are very much concerned with the fact where they are from.

P. Trudgill says [9, 1] that nearly all of them have regional features in the way they speak English, and are happy that this should be so. They speak like people they grew up with, and in a way that is different from people who grew somewhere else.

A.C. Gimson claims that RP is merely the style of pronunciation which has had currency and acceptance in England for a long time; yet it cannot be called a “standard” in the sense that it has been consciously accepted as such or has had its features defined by an official body (Gimson 1978:307–309). Nor it can be called simply “educated” or “cultured” English pronunciation, since many highly educated people do not use it — and not all of those who use it give evidence of any degree of culture.

Besides British phoneticians (Ch.Barber, A. Huges and P. Trudgill, A.C. Gimson) estimate that nowadays the very RP is not homogeneous. A.C.Gimson suggested that it is convenient to distinguish three main types within it: “*the conservative RP* forms used by the older generation, and traditionally, by certain profession or social groups; *the general RP* forms, most commonly in use and typified by the pronunciation adopted by the BBC, and *the advanced RP* forms, mainly used by young people of exclusive social groups — mostly of the upper classes, but also for prestige value, in certain professional circles” [4, 88].

This last type of RP reflects the tendencies typical of changes in pronunciation. It is the most “effected and exaggerated variety” of the accent. Some of its features may be results of temporary fashion, some are adopted as norm and described in later textbooks. Therefore, it is very important for a teacher and learner to distinguish between the two. RP speakers make up a very small percentage of the English population. Many native speakers, especially teachers of English and professors of colleges and universities (particularly from the South and South-East of England have accents closely resembling RP but not identical to it [8, 214]. P.Trudgill and J.Hannah call it Near-RP southern.

Besides that the social dialects and accents appear to be of great importance. Originally RP was the standard spoken by the educated people who constituted the upper class of the English society, it was taught on the public schools. Later it faced some negative attitude based on the social oppositions from the people of the lower strata. With the formation and increasing the role of the middle class some special features of the pronunciation of these people began to form a separate model already noticed and described by the linguists [7; 2]. This social non-regional pattern of pronunciation is rather an accent than a dialect yet spreading with an unexpected speed.

It is quite clear that for the purpose of teaching English as a second language it is necessary to make some simplifications in the natural model. A.C. Gimson suggests that this model should have three requisites:

- 1) It should be at least as easy and preferably easier, for the foreign student to learn as any

natural model.

2) It should be intelligible to most English native speakers.

3) It should provide a base for the learner who has acquired it to understand the major natural varieties of English [5, 283].

Given that the accentual features common to all natural forms of English must be retained, it is in the segmental phonemes that simplification may be expected. An amalgam of British RP and a generally accepted form of American pronunciation would seem an ideal solution, representing the great majority of native speakers. The result would also show a more obvious affinity to the orthography of the language than does RP [5, 283]. In many countries people studying English for mere communication are learning something similar to that called "*International English*". Unfortunately, very often this variation is nothing more than just a mixture of basic pronunciation and orthographic models.

It is necessary to point out that just as no two RP speakers of the same generation speak in precisely the same way, the learner may be permitted certain tolerances in his pronunciation, provided that his speech retains an internal consistency, i. e. avoids the mixture of regional or generation styles. Some native speakers consciously adopt unusual speech forms, e.g. by attempting to use an American pronunciation, when they hope to create a special effect in a particular situation. The foreign learner is advised not to attempt such an effect, in the same way he should be careful in his use of slang and non-standard grammar. What he requires is guidance as to the acceptable tolerances within the form.

In other words the choice of a teaching norm is not limited by setting up as such one of the standard types of pronunciation. No single type of pronunciation is absolutely uniform: there are always variations, within certain limits permitted by orthoepic norms, in the pronunciation of both individual phonemes and whole words and sentences i. e. variations in the allophones of phonemes and their distribution as well as variation in intonation.

Among the several types of the above listed variations we should distinguish, according to V.A. Vassilyev, idiolectal variations [10, 62] characterizing the speech of one individual and thus cannot be considered as a teaching norm.

The learner's performance targets greatly depend on his age and natural ability, his motivation and the use to which he intends to put the language. He may succeed merely in speaking English with the phonetic and phonological system of his own language, in which case he is likely to be unintelligible to the most of the native speakers. Besides he might be unable to understand the native speakers which results in the failure to communicate. If an attempt is made to approximate to native English speech forms, the achievement may lie somewhere between two extremes.

The lowest requirement is described as ability of the speaker to use a set of distinctive elements which correspond to some measure of inventory of the RP phonemic system and which is capable of conveying a message efficiently from a native speaker's standpoint. At the other extreme the learner may achieve the highest level of speech performance which the native listener may not identify as non-native.

It must be admitted that the great majority of foreign learners will have a severely practical purpose for acquiring English and will perceive no important benefit in approaching the performance of the native speaker. On the other hand for many learners a mastery of English pronunciation and a ready understanding of a variety of English accents will not be enough; they must also expect to have a comprehensive command of syntax, including everyday elliptical structures, a wide-ranging vocabulary and a deep acquaintance with English culture. The foreign teacher of English constitutes a special case. A.C. Gimson says, the teacher has the obligation to present his students with a faithful model of English pronunciation. In the first place, and particularly if he is dealing with young pupils, his students will imitate a bad pronunciation as exactly as they will a good one; and secondly, if he is using illustrative recorded material, his own pronunciation must not diverge markedly from the native material [5, 272].

For a long time in our country the presupposed level of performance depended to the great extent on the time available for English language studying. What the teachers and students aimed to achieve was *approximate correctness*, i.e. the type of performance that preserves the chief elements of the RP system and is capable of conveying a message with some ease (in a given context) to a native listener. It was not necessarily related specifically to any one form of English. What is regarded as

essential is the fact that the accentual characteristics of English (including rhythmic features and the associated reduction of the unaccented syllables) should be retained, as well as the ability to produce the common consonant clusters. But as the scientists consider, it is possible to reduce the segmental inventory of English very considerably and still retain a good level of intelligibility [5, 273].

The most deplorable result of the approximate correctness in English language studying is the learner's failure to understand native speakers. This fact suggests increasing demands to the listening comprehension. Today the international links becoming closer, the students are able to listen to a greater variety of speech samples than presented by the educational cassettes. They may face the unexpected for them regional or social dialect pronunciation which will result in complete misunderstanding of the message. It is the teacher's task to define the percentage of occurrence of the variation forms in the studying material presentation.

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