A REVIEW OF TYPICAL PRONUNCIATION PROBLEMS EXPERIENCED BY XHOSA SPEAKERS LEARNING ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

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DECLARATION

I, Adventia Nontsikelelo Sipamla, declare that this mini-dissertation is my own original effort and that all sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

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SUMMARY

Key Words: Pronunciation, stress, vowels, consonants, words, sentences, second language, deviances, English, Xhosa.

The purpose of this study is to attempt to identify the typical pronunciation problems experienced by specifically Xhosa-speakers of English as a second language, to determine the form of pronunciation to be taken as model, and to discuss various principles that should underly the teaching of pronunciation.

A review of the literature indicates that individuals tend to transfer the forms of their native language to the second language when attempting to speak the language. The accent and degree of accentedness with which a person speaks, influence a person's comprehensibility and intelligibility.

The choice of a model of pronunciation seems to be between the British (RP) and American forms. The advantage of such choices is that these forms are without difficulty mutually intelligible. In South Africa, RP remains the most important candidate. However, the second language learner of English should be permitted some latitude in the phonetic realisation of the RP phonemes, especially as far as vowel articulation is concerned. The extent of permitted phonetic and phonemic latitude will depend upon the level of performance at which learners, with their different needs, will be aiming.

The results of this indicate that Xhosa-speakers of English experience considerable difficulty with vowels, consonants and stress placement, specifically [e, æ, ʊ, ʌ, ɜ:, k, θ, ð].

The teaching of pronunciation at both primary and secondary schools is a priority if learners want to remain comprehensible and intelligible.

OPSOMMING

Sleutelwoorde: uitspraak, klem, vokale, konsonante, woorde, sinne, tweede taal, afwykings, Engels, Xhosa.

Die doel van hierdie studie is om te poog om die tipiese uitspraakprobleme te identifiseer soos dit ervaar word deur Xhosa-sprekers wat Engels as 'n tweede taal gebruik. Tweedens, word daar gepoog om die uitspraak wat as model sal funk sioneer te identifiseer en derdens om die verskeie beginsels te identifiseer wat die onderrig van uitspraak bepaal.

'n Oorsig van die literatuur oor hierdie onderwerp dui op 'n tendens waar individue die vorm en kenmerke van hul moedertaal na die tweede taal transponeer. Die aksent en artikulasie wat deur 'n persoon gebruik word, beinvloed die duidelikheid en verstaanbaarheid van daardie persoon.

Dit blyk of die keuse van 'n model 'n kombinasie van Britse (RP) en Amerikaanse vorme is. Die voordeel hiervan is dat hierdie vorme sonder veel probleme wedersyds verstaanbaar is. In Suid-Afrika is die Britse model steeds die model wat die meeste steun geniet. Die leerder wat Engels as tweede taal aanleer, moet egter 'n mate van beweegruimte gelaat word ten opsigte van die fonetiese realisering van foneme, veral waar die artikulasie van vokale te sprake is. Die mate van fonetiese en fonemiese vryheid wat die individu toegelaat word, hang af van die graad van uitvoering waarna hy/sy, met hul verskeie behoeftes, streef.

Die studie bevind dat Xhosa-sprekers van Engels dit besonder moeilik vind om sekere vokale, konsonante en die korrekte klem ten opsige van Engels te bemeester. Spesifieke probleemgevalle is [e, ɑ:, ʊ , ʌ , ɜ: , k, ɸ , ə].

Die onderrig van uitspraak op beide primere en sekondere vlak, is 'n belangrike rolspeler indien leerders verstaanbaar en duidelik wil kommunikeer.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1. 1 Problem statement

In the process of acquiring the pronunciation of a second/foreign language, learners are confronted with a number of obstacles such as the inherent difficulty of the second language and the spelling system. Another obstacle is the interference of the pronunciation of the native language, thus learners will be inclined to interpret the sounds of the target language as the sounds of their variety of the mother tongue and to use the sounds of this variant of the mother tongue in the attempt to produce the sounds of the target language. According to Koet (1996), speakers of some languages have an advantage over speakers of other languages in acquiring the sounds of certain target languages.

In the assessment of the pronunciation of the second language, assessors often refer to the extent to which learners have overcome the interference of the native language and approximated the pronunciation of the native speakers of the target language. However, second language learners, specifically Xhosa speakers, display great variability in the level of achievement they attain in the target language and this very often influences intelligibility and comprehensibility (Ludwig, 1982).

According to Pongweni (1990), African languages have a wide range of consonants, but a relatively small range of vowel sounds, and the English vowel system is produced in speech by Africans with a significantly smaller range of vowel phonemes. Another complicating factor is the fact that most African languages are tone languages in which stress and intonation play different and lesser roles than in English (Strevens, 1956). Lanham (1984) points out that, in the first place, vowel reduction in unstressed syllables, common in English, is not a feature of African languages.

This must necessarily cause problems for an African speaker listening to rapid English speech. In fact the large amount of contraction, elision and assimilation that characterizes fluent spoken English is extremely confusing to a listener whose contact with English has been largely restricted to a classroom situation in which the teacher was a second language speaker herself, pronouncing English carefully and retaining all syllables according to the pattern of African languages (Fromkin & Rodman, 1993). Conversely, parallel complications must arise when the speech of a Black user of English is heard by listeners who are not familiar with the rhythms of a variety of English which gives weight to all syllables.

Branford (1978) points out that, in spite of social stigmatisation and efforts to contain the salient features of extreme South African English, such features persist tenaciously. Similarly, Black South African English will maintain its character, since it is perpetuated by the speech of, for example, Black Xhosa-speaking teachers.

In the light of the above statements the following questions need to be addressed:

- What are the typical pronunciation problems experienced by specifically Xhosa-speakers of English as a second language?

- What form of pronunciation is to be taken as model?

- What general principles should underlie the teaching of pronunciation?

1.2 Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study is to determine:

- the typical pronunciation problems of Xhosa-speakers of ESL, and
- the general principle which should underlie the teaching of pronunciation.

1.3 Central theoretical statement

Xhosa-speakers of English as a Second Language experience pronunciation problems which may influence their intelligibility and comprehensibility.

1.4 Method of research

A review of the literature has indicated that pronunciation seems to be a major problem for Xhosa L2-speakers. Literature on models of pronunciation, and the teaching of pronunciation were reviewed and analysed in detail. A descriptive design was used in this study. The accessible population included students in a teacher training college in the Transkei region. The speech samples were analysed and transcribed phonetically.

1.5 Chapter outline

Chapter 2 focuses on the British model of pronunciation, namely Received Pronunciation.

Chapter 3 discusses the pronunciation of English and Xhosa vowels, consonants and stress placement.

Chapter 4 gives an outline of the method of research employed in this study.

In chapter 5 the results are presented and discussed.

In chapter 6 guidelines for the teaching of pronunciation are given.

Chapter 7 contains the conclusion and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 2

THE BRITISH MODEL OF PRONUNCIATION

2.1 Introduction

According to Kenworthy (1989: 3), many people view the pronunciation of English as being full of perplexities. Teachers observe their learners trying to pronounce English and realize that something is wrong. Faced with a great variety of English accents, the learner might wish that there existed a neutral, all-purpose international pronunciation of English.

Lado (1957:2) states that "individuals tend to transfer the forms and the distribution of forms of their native language to the foreign language when attempting to speak the language". It seems clear, therefore, that the student who comes in contact with a second language will find some features of it quite easy and others extremely difficult. Those elements that are similar to his/her native language will be simple for him, and those elements that are different will be difficult.

In order to ascertain what features of Xhosa are similar to and what features are different from English (RP), it is necessary to discuss Received Pronunciation in more detail. When people speak English, their pronunciation can be judged against a norm, i.e. Received Pronunciation (RP). The norm is, in fact, a British accent, but it is accepted worldwide as the norm against which to judge English pronunciation (Cruttenden, 1994:78). This chapter focuses on the concept of accent as well as a discussion of the varieties of English pronunciation in South Africa.

2.2 Dialect and accent

A dialect can be defined as a form of language, which differs perceptibly from other forms of the same language in grammar, lexis and (often) accent (Trudgill, 1975:17). The term accent refers to a form of pronunciation. It is the characteristic mode of pronunciation of a person or group, and betrays social or geographical origin. An accent can only be detected in spoken language (Trudgill, 1975:20).

Dialects of English, according to Lanham (1967:1), are phonetically diverse, but phonemically very similar. The basic system of the English language universally remains the same, even though an enormous diversity in speech sounds in English dialects exists. Lanham (1967:1) contends that, "...there is a high degree of mutual intelligibility, even between dialects which are markedly different, i.e. the system remains the same but points in the system are represented differently in speech".

A form of English spoken or written by anyone, anywhere in the world, can, therefore, be identified as one dialect or another, and if spoken as one accent or another (Strevens, 1977:134). It is also possible to trace the geographical origin and to determine the social educational standard of a person if a well-informed person analyses the speech of the subject. Strevens (1977:135) maintains that, "the geographical information a person supplies about himself is conveyed either by regional dialect and associated accent; or by regional accent, the dialect is of a non-regional kind; or geographical information can be absent, as when a non-regional accent is used".

The social and educational information that is conveyed by a person's accent and dialect is no longer associated with membership of any particular social class and as a result social attitudes towards dialect and accent have altered radically. In the early 20th century a superior education was only available to the upper class in society. Since education has become available to all members of the community this is no longer a valid interpretation.

The dialect that marked a person as "upper-class" in the earlier period is that of Standard English and the accent that is known as Received Pronunciation, or RP. With regard to Standard English, Strevens (1977:136) states that:

- it is used by educated people who make use of English all over the world, not solely in Britain;
- wherever it is used, it displays virtually no geographical or social variation;
- it has been universally accepted in the English-speaking world as the appropriate model for educational use (and hence for educated use) whether we are thinking of English as the mother tongue or as a foreign or second language and;
- it is the dialect of literature, with exceptions only for works that deliberately introduce and emphasize local features of language.

It is important to note that Standard English is not a dialect that is superior to any other dialect. It means simply that it is the dialect that is used most frequently.

People differ in the way in which they use a language and the way in which they pronounce it. In South Africa there are many people who speak English as a second language. Among them there are vast differences in pronunciation, so much so that in some instances two people both speaking English can be unintelligible to each other, because they speak English with different accents. This influences the relationship between people and the way people judge each other.

According to MacCarthy (1978:89), the accent of a speaker is typically characterised by a description of the pronunciation of individual sounds, the placement of stress and rhythm and intonation. Trudgill (1975:18) defines accent as being inherently merely differences in pronunciation. He explains that this means that absolutely everybody speaks with an accent; an accent is not something odd or peculiar, but something we all have.

2.3 Comprehensibility and intelligibility

The accent and degree of accentedness with which a person speaks, influences that person's comprehensibility and intelligibility. Comprehensibility can be described as "the degree to which the interlocutor understands what is said or written" (Ludwig, 1982:275).

In their study, Smith and Bisazza (1982) found that a non-native speaker of English is more comprehensible to people who have had active exposure to the particular accent with which the person speaks. In today's world with English being used frequently by non-native speakers to communicate with other non-native speakers, their study gives evidence of a need for students of English to have greater exposure to non-native varieties of English. The assumption that non-native students of English will be able to comprehend fluent non-native speakers if they understand native speakers is clearly not correct. They need exposure to both native and non-native varieties in order to improve understanding and communication (Smith & Bisazza, 1982).

An ESL student may succeed in merely speaking English with the phonemic and phonological system of his own language, in which case he is likely to be totally unintelligible to most native English listeners or, at best, comprehensible only to the extent that a small number of information points can be decoded as a result of the general context of the situation (cf. Cruttenden, 1994). If an attempt is made to approximate to native English speech forms, the achievement may lie somewhere between two extremes. The lowest requirement can be described as one of minimum *general intelligibility*. This implies the possession of a set of distinctive elements which correspond in some measure to the inventory of the RP phonemic system and which are capable of conveying a message efficiently from a native English listener's standpoint, given that the context of the message is known, and that the listener has had time to "tune in" to the speaker's pronunciation. At the other extreme the learner may be said to achieve a performance of high *acceptability*. This is a form of speech which the native listener may not identify as

non-native, which conveys information as readily as would a native speaker's and which arrives at this result through precision in the phonetic realisation of phonemes and by confident handling of accentual and intonational patterns (Gimson, 1980:303).

2.4 Received Pronunciation

The term **accent** refers to the characteristics of speech that convey information about the speaker's dialect, which may reveal in what country or, in what part of the country the speaker grew up or to which sociolinguistic group the speaker belongs. The term accent is also used to refer to the speech of someone who speaks a language nonnatively; for example, an Afrikaans person speaking English is described as having an Afrikaans accent. In this sense, accent refers to phonological differences or interference from a different language spoken elsewhere

The British are today particularly sensitive to variations in the pronunciation of their language. The "wrong accent" may still be an impediment to social intercourse or to advancement or entry in certain professions. It is clear that the controversy does not centre around the written language, the spelling of English was largely fixed in the 18th century. But there has always existed a great diversity in the spoken realisations of our language, in terms of the sounds used in different parts of the country and by different sections of the community. In England there existed the notion that one kind of pronunciation of English was socially preferable to others; one regional accent began to acquire social prestige. For reasons of politics, commerce and the presence of the court, it was the pronunciation of the south-east of England and, more particularly, to that of the London region. Pronunciation became, therefore, a marker of position in society (Gimson, 1980; Cruttenden, 1994).

The term, Received Pronunciation, suggests that it is the result of a social judgement rather than of an official decision as to what is "correct" or "wrong". It has become more widely known and accepted through the advent of radio and television. Thus, RP often

became identified in the public mind with "BBC English". Nevertheless, it cannot be said that RP is any longer the exclusive property of a particular social stratum. Just as the sharp divisions between classes have disappeared, so the more marked characteristics of regional speech and, in the London region, the popular forms of pronunciation are tending to be modified in the direction of RP, which is equated, with the "correct" pronunciation of English. This tendency does not mean that regional forms of pronunciation show signs of disappearing. Many members of the present younger generation reject RP because of its association with the "Establishment" (cf. Cruttenden, 1994).

Within RP, those habits of pronunciation that are most firmly established tend to be regarded as "correct", while innovation tends to be stigmitised. Thus, conservative forms tend to be most generally accepted. However, even within RP alternative pronunciations are possible: General RP, Refined RP, and regional RP. **Refined RP** reflects a class distinction and describes a type of pronunciation which is relatively homogeneous, **Regional RP** reflects regional rather than class variation. The concept of regional RP reflects the fact that there is nowadays a far greater tolerance of dialectal variation in all walks of life, although, where RP is the norm, only certain types of regional dilution of RP are acceptable.

Over 300 million people speak English as a first language, and of this number native RP speakers form only a minute proportion; the majority of English speakers use some form of American pronunciation. However, despite this discrepancy in number, RP continues for historical reasons to serve as a model in many parts of the world, and, if a model is used at all, the choice is still effectively between RP and the American pronunciation. When it is a question of teaching English as a second language, there is even greater adherence to one of the two models.

2.5 Varieties of English

The present varieties of English spoken in South Africa can be subdivided into L1 and L2 varieties. The former are mainly spoken by White South Africans of British descent and the latter - due to the historical development - can be classed with specific population groups, or more precisely, ethnolinguistic groups. It should be emphasised that these varieties do not form homogeneous units. Each in its turn consists of a number of subvarieties that show differences on all levels of linguistic description.

2.5.1 L1 varieties

Similar to other types of English in the Southern Hemisphere, the L1 English spoken by White South Africans can be described as comprising three major varieties, which are characterised by an increase in typically local features and a corresponding decrease in status. In accordance with the first thorough sociolinguistic description (cf. Lanham & MacDonald, 1979) these three varieties are usually referred to as *Conservative SAE, Respectable SAE and Extreme SAE*, a terminology which has been criticised as being judgemental in character. Mesthrie (1992:10) suggests the use of "White SAE" instead of "SAE" as the latter should be reserved as cover term of all the varieties of English in South Africa. For the three types he proposed to take over the more neutral terms used for the subvarieties of Australian English, namely *Cultivated, General and Broad.*
From a sociolinguistic point of view *Cultivated SAE* is "externally focused" on Standard British English and accepted RP (Received Pronunciation) as model of Pronunciation. Lanham and MacDonald (1979:36-37) identified the typical social correlates as older than 45 at the time of their study, strongly associated with Britain, of the high socio-economic status, and resident in Natal or the "English" cities - Johannesburg, Cape Town, Port Elizabeth, Grahamstown, Durban. As can be gleaned from the age group, the majority of Cultivated SAE speakers was born and socialised pre-World War II, when the links to Britain were still much closer than nowadays. Since 1945 and, even more so, since the foundation of the independent republic in 1961, the sense of South African identity has been growing among the English L1 speakers. This is reflected in the social status of

General SAE, which, despite it being recognisably local, seems to have become accepted as a new standard (cf. Lass, 1995:93). In contrast to the first two types, *Broad SAE*, which is linguistically the most "South African" of all, is socially stigmatised as lower class English and tends to be corrected at school (cf. Lass, 1995: 94), with the exception of some areas in the Cape Province where it is still experienced as a regional dialect. Most of the linguistic accounts of these varieties take Standard British English and Received Pronunciation as their models.

The second population group that uses English as L1 are the South Africans of Indian descent. From a phonological point of view, their English overlaps largely with the English of India and in Indian immigrant communities elsewhere. Within the Indian community Indian SAE - especially the more educated subvarieties - carries some prestige, which becomes evident in the fact that ingroup members whose English is too close to White SAE tend to be despised rather than respected.

2.5.2 L2 varieties

Of all the L2 varieties Afrikaans SAE, i.e. the English spoken by White L1 speakers of Afrikaans, is the one that has received the least interest. This is partly due to its closeness to Broad SAE, in status as well as pronunciation. Afrikaans and Broad SAE are so close that many South Afrikaans cannot tell the difference. The phonological features are thus some extreme variants of Broad SAE, such as:

- Trilled or obstruent [r];
- Low schwa, e.g. *pin* [pən];
- High, raised /*I*/, e.g. *kiss;*
- Raised /ae/, e.g. *had.*

The main phonological features typical of Black SAE are:

- tense basis of articulation;
- diphthongs tend to be monophthongised;
- /e/ : /ae/ opposition is lost;
- full vowel quality instead of schwa in unstressed positions, e.g. *teacher;*
- contrast of long and short vowels is not kept up, e.g. tick = teak, head = haired;
- /ɜ:/ = /e/ , e.g. bird = bed; and
- Stress contrast is obscured.

Although Black SAE is not the high status variety of English among its speakers; it is accepted as group marker to some degree, so that attempts to "out - English the English in English" are frowned upon.

English has been used in coloured communities for a long time. Phonologically, Coloured SAE is marked by advanced variants of Afrikaans English (including, especially, the use of [j] initially in *judge* and the devoicing of word - final stops in such words as *hand*). Most characteristical of this variety is the intonation pattern with its tendencies to use rising pitch in statements and final accented syllables. Coloured SAE has been investigated for its internal variation by Wood (1987:99-102), who, following the terminology of White SAE used by Lanham and MacDonald (1979), describes the subvarieties of Coloured SAE as ranging on a continuum from "extreme" to "respectable" according to the degree of Afrikaans influence. This gradation also reflects the status hierarchy these subvarieties fall into. Similar to White SAE, the subvarieties of Coloured SAE at the extreme end of the continuum have overt, but little covert prestige.

2.6 Choice of model of pronunciation

This a matter of special importance as far as English is concerned because of the world-wide use of the language and because of the profusion of differing spoken forms existing not only in such mother-tongue areas as Britain, North America and Australia but also in those vast regions of India and Africa where English is used as an adopted *lingua franca* (Gimson, 1980: 300).

The immediate solution seems to lie in the choice of one of the main natural forms of English as a basic model, for example, a representative form of British or American pronunciation, with the possibility of the selection for geographical reasons of such other forms as Australian or South African. The advantage of such choices is that these forms are without difficulty mutually intelligible. The decisive criteria in the choice of any teaching model must be that it has wide currency, is widely and readily 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 has considerable prestige and is already taught throughout the world (Gimson, 1980:302).

2.7 Factors that affect the acquisition of native-like pronunciation

Several studies (e.g. Scovel, 1969; Selinker, 1972; Oyama, 1976; Fathman, 1982; Thompson, 1991) have investigated different factors that have an influence on the acquisition of native-like pronunciation. These studies can be synthesised as follows:

2.7.1 Exposure

Scovel (1969) and Selinker (1972) support the widely held belief that adults are incapable of making the fine neuromuscular adjustments necessary to reproduce the sounds of another language. This has led researchers to the idea of a critical period in human linguistic development, the Critical Period Hypothesis (Penfield & Roberts, 1959; Lenneberg, 1967)- a period during which the learning of a new sound system happens automatically and leads to perfect results (Scovel, 1969; Selinker, 1972). Studies of accent retention among learners who acquired English in a naturalistic setting seem to support the existence of such a period (Oyama, 1976; Fathman, 1982).

Studies involving formal exposure to the L2, on the other hand, indicate that youth confers no immediate advantage in learning to pronounce foreign sounds. Olsson and Samuels (1973) report that under formal training conditions, older children and adults were superior to younger children in learning to imitate German words that were meaningless to them. Snow and Hoefnagel-Hohle (1982) found that under controlled input conditions, the ability to imitate meaningless Dutch words that contained sounds difficult for English speakers to pronounce, was easier for adults than for children. Thus, Cummins (1981) postulates that adults display an advantage over children if phonetic training is a cognitively based operation involving conscious manipulation of sounds.

The results of these studies suggest that future investigations should take into account the type of environment in which the second language was acquired. The reason for this is that predictors of success in acquiring a new sound system differ in accordance with the type of primary exposure to the second language.

2.7.2 Sex

Asher and Garcia (1969) found Spanish-speaking girls to be more successful in acquiring native-like pronunciation in English than boys, especially in the beginning stages of learning. Snow and Hoefnagel-Hohle (1982), on the other hand, found no significant

difference between boys and girls in the ability to imitate unfamiliar Dutch words. Suter (1976) did not find any influence of sex on pronunciation. According to Thompson (1991), women reported significantly greater concern for pronunciation and rated

themselves to be better mimics than did the men. Women in Thompson's study were judged to have better accents and higher oral speaking proficiency ratings than men. This study points to continued superiority of women even after prolonged residence in America.

Research results on this topic seem to be equally divided between superiority of boys and superiority of girls. More research is needed to settle this matter.

2.7.3 Motivation and affect

Is authenticity of pronunciation related to the way an individual feels compelled to make an effort to modify previously established patterns of pronunciation to sound like a native speaker of the target language? The answer depends on the type of primary exposure to the target language. On the one hand, the extent to which students of English as a second language feel that having good pronunciation is important for them is one of the predictors of their pronunciation accuracy in English (Suter, 1976; Purcell & Suter, 1980). On the other hand, Oyama (1976) found no evidence that motivation to improve English had any relationship to mastery of its phonological system by Italian-speaking immigrants in the US.

The role of integrative vs instrumental motivation has long been the focus of debate among language researchers. Whereas many studies show that positive attitudes toward members of the target language community and the desire to integrate into that community generally have a facilitating effect on language learning, other studies show integrative motivation either to be a weak predictor of second-language achievement or

instrumental motivation to be a better predictor of success (Gardener & Lambert, 1972; Bialystok & Frohlich, 1977; Morris & Gerstman, 1986). Studies of the relationship between pronunciation accuracy and L2 learners' identification with the L2 community and its culture, report mixed results. Oyama (1976) found that pro-American orientation

and identification had no significant effect on pronunciation scores of Italian speakers of English in the US. However, Gatbonton (1975) reported that French Canadians produced difficult English sounds better if they identified with the English-speaking Canadians. On the other hand, Suter (1976) found a negative correlation between ESL students' desire to integrate into the American speech community and the quality of their pronunciation in English.

The above discussion indicates that no fully conclusive research results on this topic are available yet.

2.7.4 Ability to mimic

Ability to mimic emerged as one of the predictors of pronunciation accuracy. This was measured in a test where a speaker was told to mimic the investigator in the pronunciation of specific speech sounds. Suter (1976) and Purcell and Suter (1980) found a tendency for superior mimics to be more accurate in their pronunciation of English. Thus, the ability to mimic has an influence on successful pronunciation.

2.7.5 Communicative strategies and paralanguage

The success of the communicative act depends on the attitudes of both the interlocutor and the L2 user (Ludwig, 1982). L2 users employ certain devices to enhance communication, maintain an interlocutor's continued attention, and eventually overcome the linguistic barriers posed by an incomplete knowledge of the L2.

Lacking appropriate vocabulary and grammar items, L2 speakers often resort to communicative strategies. Linguistically these strategies include approximation, word coinage, circumlocution, translation and/or language switch, and an appeal for assistance. Non-verbally they may resort to mime, simply avoiding specific topics, or abandoning the message entirely (Ludwig, 1982).

Research points to the use of communicative strategies in a specific hierarchy: topic avoidance, approximation, circumlocution and description, coinage and misuse. Albrechtsen, Henriksen and Faerch (1980) postulate that the four most important communicative strategies are: literal translation, language switch, self-correcting and restructuring.

Making a fair number of errors when using the target language together with moderate use of communicative strategies give a negative impression, but not using communicative strategies at all also give a negative result. Galloway (1980) found that a visible effort to communicate on the part of the students elicited a favourable response from the evaluators. Gestures, facial and body movements (smiling, moving closer) evoked positive feelings towards the speakers who used them. Conversations between native speakers and L2 learners are facilitated by eye contact, proxemics and related physical phenomena.

From the above it is clear that using communicative strategies can facilitate communication to a great extent.

2.8 Conclusion

In South Africa a person's pronunciation is judged against the norm of RP. However,one of the main arguments against the acceptance of RP as the norm for English in South Africa is that there is a proliferation of varieties of English spoken in South Africa and the acceptance of one over the others results in a dichotomy between the native speakers and the non-native speakers of English. The varieties of English spoken in South Africa differ

mainly in terms of pronunciation. Black English is a very prominent variety in the new South Africa. The decisive criteria in the choice of any model must be that it has a wide currency, is widely and readily understood, is adequately described in textbooks and has ample recorded material available for the learner.

CHAPTER 3

THE PRONUNCIATION OF ENGLISH AND XHOSA VOWELS AND CONSONANTS

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter the focus is on English and Xhosa vowels and consonants, the aim being to compare and contrast these languages with regard to their vowels and consonants. The purpose is to attempt to explain why Xhosa-learners pronounce English in the way they do.

3.2 English consonants, vowels and stress placement

From a practical phonetic standpoint it is convenient to distinguish two types of speech sounds, simply because the majority of sounds may be described and classified most appropriately according to one of two techniques

1. The type of sound, which is most easily described in terms of articulation, since one can generally feel the contrasts and movements, involved. These sounds can be with or without voice and are known as consonants.

2. The type of sound depending largely on very slight variations of tongue position. Such sounds are generally voiced and are known as the vowels (Gimson, 1980:32)

3.2.1 Consonants

Different authors distinguish different numbers of consonant classes. For the purpose of this mini-dissertation, a combination of Kreidler's (1989) and Gimson's (1980) classification are used.

3.2.1.1 The six classes

According to Kreidler (1989), stops, fricatives, nasals and liquids are all consonantal. This means that in their articulation both lips, the lower lip or some part of the tongue impede the flow of air in some way, in some part of the mouth. Gimson (1980) adds plosives (stops) and affricates to the consonantal group. These six classes together are called consonants. Vowels and glides are articulated without impedance of the flow of air, therefore, they are [-consonantal]. For vowels and glides it is the shape of the oral cavity (determined by the position of the tongue and lips) in which air is flowing freely that determines the quality of the

sound produced. Glides are like certain vowels in the production, but they are like consonants in the positions they occupy in syllables and larger units (Kreidler, 1989).

Kreidler (1989) distinguishes between the different classes of consonants according to their manner of articulation, specifically in whether or not the articulation is characterised by periodic vibration of air particles and in whether or not the airstream is escaping from the mouth during the articulation.

3.2.1.2 Place of articulation

The place of articulation refers to where in the mouth the obstruction is formed. According to Cruttenden (1994:29-30), the chief points of articulation are:

Bilabial: The two lips are the primary articulators, e.g. [p, b, m].

Labio-dental The lower lip articulates with upper teeth, e.g. [f,v].

Dental: the tongue tip with the rims articulate with the upper teeth, e.g. [ð, θ] as in **then** and **think.**

Alveolar: The tip or blade of the tongue articulates with the alveolar ridge, e.g. [t, d, l, n, s, z].

Palato-alveolar: The blade, or tip of the blade, articulates with the alveolar ridge and there is at the same time a raising of the front of the tongue towards palate, e.g. [ʃ, ʒ, tʃ, dʒ] as in English **ship, measure, beach, edge.**

Palatal: The front tongue articulates with the hard palate, e.g. [k, g].

Velar: The back of the tongue articulates with the soft palate, e.g. [k, g, ŋ], the last as in **sing.**

Glottal: An obstruction, or a narrowing causing friction but not vibration, between the vocal folds, e.g. [h].

3.2.1.3 Manner of articulation

The obstruction made by the organs may be total, intermittent, partial or may merely constitute a narrowing sufficient enough to cause friction. There is controversy regarding the manner of articulation of consonants. As Gimson is regarded as an authority on this matter, his classification is used for the purposes of this study. Gimson (1980:34-35) identifies the following chief types of articulation in decreasing degrees of closure:

Complete closure - **Plosives:** a complete closure at some point in the vocal tract, behind which the air pressure builds up and can be released explosively, e.g. [p, b, t, d, k, g], **affricates:** a complete closure at some point in the mouth, behind which the air pressure builds up; the separation of the organs is, however, slow compared with that of a plosive, so that friction is a characteristic second element of the sound, e.g. [ʧ, ʤ] and **nasals:** a complete closure at some point in the mouth but, the soft palate being lowered, the air escapes through the nose. These sounds are continuants and, in the voiced form, have no noise component, they are, to this extent, vowel-like, e.g. [m, n, ŋ]. Partial closure - **laterals:** a partial, but firm closure is made at some point in the mouth, the airstream is being allowed to escape on one or both sides of the contact, e.g. [l]. Narrowing - **fricatives:** two organs approximate to such an extent that the airstream passes between them with friction, e.g. [f, v, ð, θ, s, z, ʒ].

According to Kreidler (1989:35), **liquids** (laterals and trills) and **nasals** are 'musical' like vowels. Although the airstream is obstructed in some way, the vocal tract still acts like a resonance chamber in which air particles flow in periodic waves. **Fricatives** and **stops** - obstruent consonants - are articulated with total or near total obstruction of the airstream so that resonance is minimal or absent. For **liquids** and **fricatives** air flows out of the mouth during articulation, thus any of these consonants can be held - continued - as long as the lungs provide air. **Nasals** can be prolonged since air escapes during their articulation, but through the nasal cavity alone. A **stop,** since it involves complete obstruction of the breath stream, is essentially an instant of silence. A stop can be prolonged only in the sense that the period of silence is maintained for a longer period of time (Kreidler, 1989; Cruttenden, 1994).

3.2.1.4 Articulatory features

To describe the articulation of a consonant is to tell what articulatory features are relevant. In general, three kinds of features can be distinguished:

3.2.1.4.1 Differences in vocal cord action or voicing

At any place of articulation, a consonantal articulation may be **voiceless or voiced** (Cruttenden, 1994:29). Kreidler (1989) explains that the vocal cords vibrate during some articulations and not during other articulations. Articulations with such vibrations are **voiced,** [+ voice].

Consonants without vocal cord vibration are **voiceless** [- voice]. Where English stops or fricatives exist in pairs like /t, d/ or /s, z/ the two members of the pairs are alike in all respects except that one is [- voice] and one is [+ voice]. Therefore, the feature (voice) is distinctive for stops and fricatives. On the other hand, all liquids and nasals are [+ voice], and voicing is not distinctive in these classes - it is not relevant for telling how one liquid differs from the other or one nasal from the other nasals.

3.2.1.4.2 Differences in tongue shape

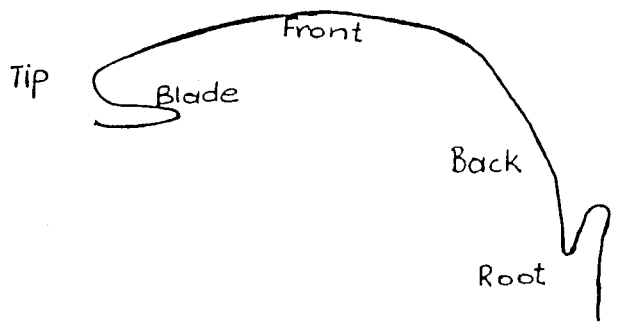
According to Cruttenden (1994: 15), the tongue is, "by far the most flexible of all the movable organs within the mouth and is capable of assuming a great variety of positions in the articulation of both vowels and consonants". Kreidler (1989) explains that the surface of the tongue may be relatively flat, unshaped or it may be uttered so that it has a groove along the centre line of the top surface, or it may be drawn in at the sides, or drawn back at the tip. To deal with these differences two features are recognised [sibilant] and [lateral] The feature [+ sibilant] indicates the presence of a groove, or slight trough, along the centre line, and [- sibilant] means that there is no such groove. The feature [+ lateral] means that the tongue sides are centred inward, and, [- lateral] indicates the absence of such a curl. The feature [sibilant] is common among fricatives and stops; the feature [lateral] indicates differences in the class of liquids. All nasal consonants are articulated with a flat tongue, so that these features are not distinctive for nasals (Kreidler, 1989).

3.2.1.4.3 Different articulators

According to Kreidler (1989:37), in English the air the lower lip or any one of the three parts of the tongue may obstruct stream, wholly or partially. Cruttenden (1994:15) explains that a tongue is a complex muscular structure that does not show obvious sections; yet, since its position must often be described in considerable detail, certain arbitrary divisions are made. When the tongue is at rest, with its tip lying behind the lower teeth, the party which lies opposite the hard palate is called the front and that which faces the soft palate is called the back, with the region where the front and the back meet known as the centre. These areas together with the roof are sometimes called the body of the tongue. The tapering section facing the teeth ridge is called the blade and its extremity the tip. The edges of the tongue are known

as the rims. The three parts of the tongue that can then, according to Kreidler (1989), obstruct the airstream are: **the tip of the tongue, the front of the tongue** and **the back of the tongue** (cf. Diagram 1).

Diagram 1: The parts of the tongue



(Roach, 1991:9)

The above articulators may be said to lie along the lower edge of the oral cavity. Along the upper edge are the areas in which the articulators make contact or near contact:

- the upper lip;
- the upper front teeth;
- the alveolar ridge (the "terraced" hump behind the upper teeth);
- the hard palate (the area which is separated from the nasal cavity by a bony structure); and
- the velum (soft palate), (the posterior area of the roof of the mouth with no bone above it) (Kreidler, 1989; Cruttenden, 1994).

The main difference between consonants and vowels lies in the way they are pronounced. Simplistically it can be said that there is always an obstruction of the airflow when the consonant is pronounced, whereas vowels are pronounced without such an obstruction.

3.2.2 Vowels

The differences between consonants is fairly trivial compared to the differences between vowels. There are several different analyses that linguists have made of English vowels.

According to Gimson (1980), the description of vowel sounds has always presented considerable difficulty. He postulates that a description of vowel-like sounds must note "the position of the soft palate, the kind of aperture formed by the lips and the part of the tongue which is raised"(Gimson, 1980:39). A description of the English vowels in terms of spelling, tongue tensity and position, lip position and vowel position is given in Table 1.

TABLE 1: The articulatory features of vowels

Symbol	Spelling	Tongue Tensity & Position	Lip Position	Vowel Position
/i: /	e-complete ea – leave i- police ie – piece ei – seize ee – tree	Tense, firm contact upper molars	Spread	The front of the tongue is raised to a height slightly below and behind the close front position
/ I /	a- village e – pretty i- sit ie – ladies y – city	Tongue is lax in comparison with /i/ light contact with upper molars	Loosely spread	The sound is pronounced with the part of the tongue nearer to the centre than to the front, raised just above the close mid position.
/ e /	e- set a – many ea – dead	Slightly more tension than for /i/ and there is a light touch with the upper molars	Loosely spread	The front of the tongue is raised between the close mid and open-mid positions.
/ ae /	a- sat ai – plait	Tongue more tense than for /e/ very slight contact back upper molars	Neutrally open	The front of the tongue is raised to a position midway between open and open-mid.

/ʌ/	o- son u – cut oo – blood ou – country oe – does	Considerable separation of jaws no contact with the upper molars	Neutrally open	The centre of the tongue (or a part slightly in advance of centre) is raised just above the fully open position.
/a: /	a- pass ar – part ear – heart er – clerk al – calm au – aunt	Considerable separation of jaws no contact with the upper molars	Neutrally open	A part of the tongue between the centre and back in the fully open position.
/ɒ/	a- was o – dock ou – cough au – because	Wide open jaws no contact with upper molars	Slight open lip rounding	Back of the tongue in the fully open position
/ɔ:/	a- talk aw – saw or – cord ore – before ou – bought	No contact between tongue and upper molars	Medium lip rounding	Back of the tongue is raised between the open-mid and the close-mid positions.
/ʊ/	o- wolf u - put oo – good ou – could	Tongue lax no firm contact with upper molars	Closely, but loosely rounded	Part of the tongue nearer to centre than to back, raised just above the close-mid position.
/ u: /	o- do u – rude oo – food ou – group ew – chew	Articulation more tense than that of /ʊ/ no firm contact with upper molars	Closely rounded	The tongue is moved from a close back position to between back and centre.
/ɜ:/	- bird er – her ur – turn w + or – word our – journey	No firm contact with upper molars	Neutrally spread	Centre of the tongue raised between close-mid open and open-mid position.

/ə/	- possible e – gentleman a – woman u – suppose	Tongue is lax in most instances	Neutral	In vicinity of velar consonants - /k,g/ the centre of the tongue just above close-mid position, tongue more raised and retracted, in non-final position tongue between open-mid and close-mid.

(Cruttenden, 1994:97-119).

3.2.3 Stress placement

Stress and rhythm may both directly influence pronunciation, and stress itself is significant in English speech. There are four phonemes of stress. Three of these are associated with words and phrases, and they are identified as primary, secondary and weak; the fourth stress phoneme is sentence stress, which tie specific parts of sequence sentences and response sentences that have been uttered previously (Lado: 1957:30). Primary, secondary and weak stresses are fixed in their position in any particular word or phrase that falls into the same stress and rhythm pattern. For example, the word "insufficient" in deliberate speech. For purposes of illustration the symbols /+-/ are used for primary stress /+/ for secondary stress and /-/ for weak stress The pattern for 'insufficient' would normally be:

i n s u f f i c i e n t
/ + / / - / / + + / / - /

This pattern is frequent in English, other examples being **'intermingle', 'observation', 'on a Sunday'** etc.

Under the influence of rapid conversational speech secondary stress may be reduced to weak stress; and in precise or "high flown" style it may be increased to primary stress. It should be noted that secondary stress is far less frequent in English than primary and weak stresses. In such a sentence as "What did you hear"? The sentence stress may be any one of the four words:

WHAT did you hear?
What DID you hear?
What did YOU hear?
What did you HEAR?

For purposes of this mini-dissertation it is important to note that in short sentences the sentence stress normally coincides with the final primary stress: e.g. **"He said he would come on SUNday'; The children come out at cLEVen".** There may be more than one sentence stress in a sentence; **"I obJECted to the way he SAID it".**

3.3 Xhosa consonants, vowels and stress placement

This section gives the analysis of the sound system of Xhosa. This discussion does not focus on a complete list of phonemes of Xhosa, but is limited to those linguistic features (a) which can be carried over to the target language and "pass" as accepted English pronunciation, (b) and those which are carried over and influence the pronunciation of Xhosa-English, consequently giving rise to the major and minor divergences which this mini-dissertation sets out to classify and examine.

Xhosa pronunciation has its own unique variations from English, but there are certain characteristics that are pre-eminent in contributing to this individuality. These specific characteristics are to be found in the allophones associated with the vowel phonemes. There is rarely, if ever, such a divergence in the production of consonant allophones that there is resulting phonemic confusion, but such confusion is frequent where vowel allophones are concerned. Phonemic transcription is recorded between slant lines, e.g. / ae /, / d /. Phonetic transcripts are between square brackets e.g. [a], [u:]

3.3.1 The consonants

The Xhosa consonants are basically the same as those of English, although some differences might be indicated. Xhosa consonants are indicated below.

1. Stops (Plosives)

/p/ [p] bilabial, voiceless, often ejected: (found chiefly in borrowed words and ideophonic derivatives) /ukupenapena/ to wringle).

/t/ [t] apico-alveolar, as for [p] above; /ukutotoba/ (to totter).

/k/ [k] [k] dorso-velar; [k] in slow deliberate speech; [k] normal: /isibakabaka/ (the sky).

/ph/ [ph] strongly aspirated, voiceless; /phupha/ (dream).

/ʰ/ [th] strongly aspirated, voiceless; /ukuthetha/ (to speak)

/kh/ [kh] strong aspiration /ukukhangela/ (to look).

/ɓ/ [b] fortis release, voiceless up to stop, strongly voiced upon release of closure; /ukubhubha/ (to die).

/ɗ/ [d] character as for /b/; /isidudu/ (porridge).

/ɠ/ [g] character as for /b/; /igogogo/ (a paraffin tin).

2. Spirants (Fricatives)

/f/ [f] voiceless denti-labial /ifutha/ (fat).

/v/ [v] voiced denti-labial /ukuvuthuza/ (to blow).

/s/ [s] voiceless apico-alveolar /isisu/ (stomach)

/z/ [z] voiced apico-alveolar /ukuzuza/ (to get)

/ʃ/ [ʃ] voiceless surface spirant: fronted, fortis /kushushu/ (it is hot).

3. Laryngeals

/h/ [h] voiceless: only example / uhili/ (dwarf)

/ɦ/ [h] voiced /hamba/ (go)

/m/ [m] bilabial: may be syllabic /ukumema/ (to invite)

/n/ [n] apico-alveolar: /umnini/ (the owner)

/n/ [n] dorso-velar /ingangane/ (the blue ibis)

4. Laterals

/l/ [l] clear 'l': apico-alveolar /ukulila/ (to cry).

5. Affricates

/tʃ / [tʃ] well fronted: usually glottalised; lamino-domal; voiceless; of low frequency in Xhosa: ukuthsixa/ (to lock)

/ʧh/ [ʧh] aspirated; high frequency in Xhosa; /isitshetshe/ (a knife)

/dz/ [dz] voiced apico-alveolar; /indzwana/ (a good looking person)

/d / [d] /indza/ (dog).

6. Glides

/w/ [w] high back rounded (labio-velar) glide vocoid: /wena/ (you)

/y/ [j] /ukuyala/ (to warn)

7. Trills

/r/ [r] apical voiced trill: only occurs in imported words and cannot be regarded as an intergral component of Xhosa phonology: /irayisi/ (rice).

(Hundleby, 1964:39-41).

3.3.2 The vowels

Xhosa has five basic vowels which are found in words listed below. The symbol used to represent the first vowel in each word is given in the left hand column.

/ a / [a] as in / abafundi / (learners)

/ e / [ɛ] as in / bekani / (put it down)

/ i / [i] as in /imifuno/ (vegetables)

/ o / [o] as in /bonani/ (look there)

/ u / [u] as in /buzani/ (ask)

(Hundleby, 1964:38)

In Xhosa the /i/ is realised by [i:] as in /zisa/ and [i] as in /imifuno/, both allophones being members of the same Xhosa phoneme /i/. The phoneme /e/ is realised by two distinct allophones. These allophones are open 'e' [e] or close 'ɛ' [ɛ], the articulation point of the latter being very near indeed to cardinal vowel [æ], infact, almost identical. In Xhosa the phoneme /a/ is realised by the allophone [a] as in /abafundi/ and [a] in /ukubala/ (the first /a/). The articulatory area of the vowel allophone is lower and retracted in relation to the English allophone of /æ/. When the Xhosa allophone [a] associated with the Xhosa phoneme /a/ is substituted, no phonemic confusion arises, but when allophones realised by Xhosa phoneme /e/ are used, the word may be given a completely different identity, e.g. /kæt / is heard as /ket / 'cattle' becomes 'kettle'. The phoneme /o/ is realised by the allophones [ɔ] in /bonani/; [ɔ:] in /bona/; [o] in /obukhulu/ and [o:] in /andiboni/. The Xhosa phoneme /u/ is realised by the allophones [u] and [u:]. These have precisely the same articulatory position, the only difference being one of quantity.

3.3.3 Stress placement

Variations in prominence between syllables are detectable in Xhosa, but this relative loudness has a narrower scale of variation than in English. Although stronger stress is a contributory factor in prominence in Xhosa, it interlocks with other features such as length and sometimes pitch. In the linguistic structure of Xhosa, stress is of no basic significance, though strong stress as an expressive feature is important. In an utterance, long vocoids are normally associated with greater prominence, the greater the degree of length attached to the vocoid the greater the stress propositionally. Relatively high pitch in relation to adjacent pitches is identified by the English ear with stronger stress. The most prominent syllables in utterances are those which combine the terminal / (+) / juncture with intonational length and high pitch (Hundleby,1964:41)

Stress would, therefore, appear to be non-phonemic in Xhosa, but the unpredictable occurrence of final syllable stress in adverbs and copulatives formed from mono-syllabic first positional demonstratives, e g. **/yile/, /nalo/,** present a problem of phonemic analysis.

3.4 A comparison of the Xhosa and English sound systems

The purpose of this section is to highlight significant features that are similar as well as different in the two languages.

According to Strevens(1956:32), African languages have a wide range of consonants, but a relatively small range of vowel sounds. The English vowel system is produced in speech by Africans with a significantly smaller range of vowel phonemes. According to Ufomata (1990:214), Nigerian languages generally have fewer vowels than English, and one finds, therefore, that several phonological distinctions in native speaker accents are neutralized. Vowels tend to have equal duration and the reduced vowel [ə], is hardly used, so that many syllables appear to be accented in an utterance.

Pongweni (1990:231) states that the complexity and "multiplicity" of the consonantal phoneme systems of Bantu languages, while placing the first language speakers of Shona, for example, at an obvious advantage vis a vis the English consonants system, contrasts sharply with its

comparable vowel system. Ufomata and Pongweni's overview of the vowels in the Nigerian languages and Shona English coincides with the pronunciation of English by Xhosa speakers.

The features of similarity and divergence that emerge from this comparison will enable the identification and explaination of vowel, consonant and stress placement patterning of Xhosa English pronunciation in chapter 5.

3.4.1 Consonants

Wells (1982) points out that African languages tend to have relatively large consonant systems but the consonants tend to be subject to severe phonotactic constraints. Hence, in Xhosa English syllable final consonants and consonant clusters suffer more first language interference than do single initial and intervocalic consonants.

Difficulty with the dental fricatives [ð] and [θ] is widespread. It is very common for alveolar plosives to be used, thus **thick = tick [tik], their = dare [d]** (Wells, 1982:640) Generally, it is not the articulation of particular consonants in themselves, which suffers severe first language interference in Xhosa - English phonetics, but their combination in clusters and unfamiliar syllabic positions.

3.4.1.1 Consonantal variation

Jacobs (1994) conducted a very meaningful study in which the following conclusions regarding consonantal variation in Xhosa English phonetic descriptions were reached:

Group 1: Fricatives - stops

Voiced and voiceless interdental fricatives [ð] and [θ] were in free variation with alveolar stops [d] and [t]. Instead of having the tongue apex extended out between the upper and lower teeth in such a way that friction is created by the air flowing between the teeth, the airstream is stopped by raising the tongue blade toward the alveolar ridge and producing a plosive, e.g. **there** pronounced as **[de]**, and **think** pronounced as **[tink]**.

Group 2: [+voiced] - [-voiced]

The data offered evidence of a tendency to devoice certain obstruents. Five consonant classes particularly affected by this form of free variation are bilabial, alveolar, and velar plosives, the palatial affricate [dʒ] and the central alveolar fricate [z]. The position of the consonant in the word is also important - final [+voiced] consonants tend to devoice very frequently, e.g. **judge** pronounced as **[dʒʌts]**.

Group 3: Affricate to fricative

An interesting free variation in many Xhosa English idiolects is the modification of the vioceless palatal affricate [tʃ] into the voiceless alveopalatal fricative [ʃ]. Instead of producing a palatal stop closure followed immediately by a slow release of the closure, friction is created in the alveopalatal region from the beginning of the phone to its end, producing a spirant, e.g. pronouncing **Charles** as [ʃɑ:lz]

3.4.2 Vowels

Merely to tabulate the simple peak vocoids of RP and Xhosa would not provide the data we need for subsequent examination of Xhosa English Pronunciation. A phoneme realised by one of the RP allophones may be transcribed in approximately the same way as a phoneme realised by the Xhosa allophone, but it should be understood that these allophones might, in actual fact, be two completely different vocoids. For example: the /i/ realised by the Xhosa allophone [i̇] appears from its transcription to be much the same as [i̇], the allophone of RP phoneme /ɪ/ . These vocoids, Xhosa [i̇] and RP [i̇] are actually widely divergent.

There are few Africans who can make the distinction between **fleece** and **kit** RP [i̇:] vs [ɪ] without special training. Absence of this distinction is one of the most charecteristic features of African English (Dreyer, Wissing & Wissing, 1996) with homophones such as **leave –live, beat – bit, seen – sin, Don't sleep on the floor – Don't slip on the floor.** A word such as **ticket** is usually **[tikit]** (Wells, 1982:637).

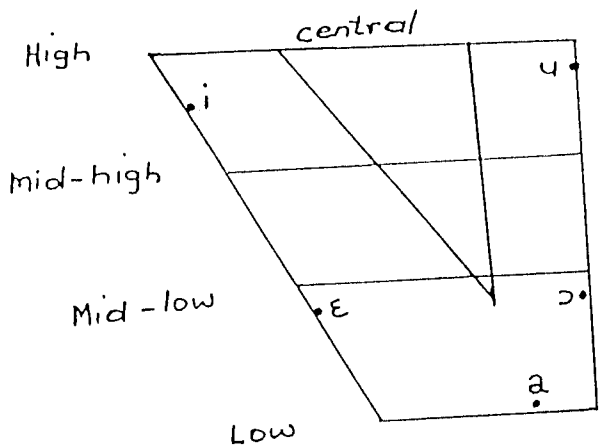
South African speakers of English merge the vowels of **dress** and **face**, using a simple [e] – type vowel for both **red** and **raid, get** and **gate, pepper** and **paper**. In South Africa the mergers are slightly different from those found further north, in that **strut** and **start, bath** and **palm** are merged as [a], **and trap, dress, nurse** and **square** as [ɛ]. As elsewhere, [ɒ] covers

lot and **though – north – force**, [*i*] covers **fleece** and **kit** (meaning that Black English **sister** [sista] sounds very different from the RP [sɪstə]), and [u] covers **foot** and **goose.** Although both Zulu and Xhosa have five vowel systems, they include allophonic [e] and [o], used in English for **face** and **goat** respectively (Wells, 1982:639). Lanham (1984:342) identifies certain salient Black English variables in pronunciation:

- No long – short contrasts appear in vowel nuclei (a highly functional opposition in South African English): **tick = teak, heard = haired, pull = pool**. This was also found by Dreyer et al. (1996);
- No schwa quality vocoids exist; thus bird = [bed], teacher = [tiʃa];
- [e] : [ae] opposition is lost;
- Stress contrasts are obscured.

The Xhosa vowels can be plotted on the vowel chart (Diagram 2) according to their articulation.

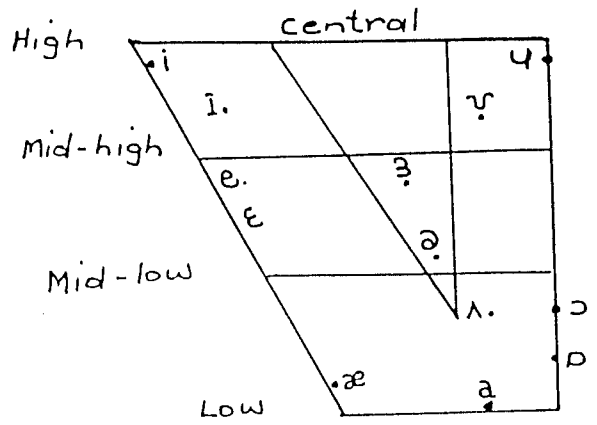
Diagram 2: Vowel chart of Xhosa vowels



(Adendorff & Savini-Beck, 1993:234).

English vowels can be plotted according to their articulation on the vowel chart in Diagram 3.

Diagram 3: Vowel chart of English vowels



(Adendorff & Savini-Beck, 1993:236).

The differences between English and Xhosa vowels can be summarised as follows:

1. The English language has many more vowels than the Xhosa language has.
2. English vowels are spread throughout the vowel chart with clusters of vowels where Xhosa has only one.
3. Xhosa has no mid-central vowels, i.e. vowels that are articulated with the tongue midway between the roof and the floor of the mouth and in the central part of the mouth.

3.4.3 Stress placement

In comparing the relative characteristics of stress patterns in English and Xhosa the following significant features emerge. As was noticed in section 3.3.3 the prominence between syllables in Xhosa has a narrower scale of variation than in English. In Xhosa, we are only able to distinguish "stressed" in normal speech.

Stonger stress is a factor of prominence in Xhosa, but this prominence also includes a feature of length and occassionally high pitch. Stress is significant in English, whereas in Xhosa it is inconsequential in the linguistic structure. Stress is, therefore, phonemic in English but not in Xhosa, though strong stress in Xhosa has significance as an expressive feature.

In English, primary, secondary and weak stresses are fixed in their position in any particular word or phrase that fall into the same stress and rhythm pattern. The syllable carrying the heaviest stress has greater length. In Xhosa, greater prominence is associated with long vocoids and relatively high pitch, the greatest prominence coincides with the length feature of terminal plus juncture combined with intonational length and high pitch.

The terminal of strong stress plus juncture in Xhosa is associated with the penultimate syllable of the word, or utterance. It is pertinent to note that in English over short utterances the sentence stress normally coincides with the final primary stress. This feature in Xhosa and English gives rise to similar patterning and is a feature of similarity in respect of prominence distribution in the two languages (Hundley, 1964)

The distribution of stresses gives to an English speech continuum a stress rhythm, and normally the utterance follows a pattern where each phrase has a primary stress which is accompanied by weak stresses - the secondary stresses being usually reduced to weak or increased to primary. Each constituent phrase, no matter how extended, is more or less equal in utterance time, and this tendency to uniformity in phrase time and the spacing of stresses imparts a characteristic rhythm to English speech. If by rhythm the definitions "metrical flow" or "regular recurrence of quantities or accents" are accepted, these can be applied exactly to a series of related utterances in English. A detailed study has not been made of this feature in Xhosa speech. My observations suggest that there is no comparative feature in Xhosa speech. In practice, the secondary plus stresses on penult syllables of words in a speech continuum are reduced to secondary stresses and only the final stress on the penultimate syllable of the final word has distinctive prominence.

3.5 Conclusion

Vowels play a very important role in the sound system of a language. Therefore, the learner of English must know all the English vowels in order to pronounce the language accurately. The description based on the contrast between the sound systems of Xhosa and English reflects only certain points of the difference between the two languages that could cause problems for second language learners of English.

This discussion shows that Xhosa has a wide range of consonants, whereas English has a complicated vowel system that a second language learner should know. Some aspects of pronunciation seem to be difficult such as vowel length and stress placement. These aspects also need to be learnt by second language speakers. This brief explanation helps one to understand how speech sounds differ between English and Xhosa. The question which teachers will probably be asking is: what are they to make of these differences? Guidelines for teaching pronunciation are given in chapter six.

CHAPTER 4

METHOD OF RESEARCH

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to given an outline of the methodology used in this study in an attempt to structure the study and to allow other researchers to replicate the study or similar studies using the same methodology. The methodology is discussed under the following headings:

- Design
- Subjects
- Instrumentation
- Data collection procedure
- Analysis

4.2 Design

A descriptive design (survey) was used in this study to show the nature of second language pronunciation by the Xhosa learners.

4.3 Subjects

The accessible population included a total number of 100 first year students in a teacher training college in the Transkei region. A total number of 50 students were randomly selected to participate in the study. All the students are mother tongue speakers of Xhosa.

4.4 Instrumentation

The researcher made use of a tape recorder to record the speech samples of the selected subjects. The oral reading passage from Pronunciation Tasks (Baker,1981) was given to the subjects to read (cf. Appendix 1). This was selected to ensure that pronunciation and not grammar was evaluated. The subjects were also given a word list to read in which words occur

that highlights the pronunciation deviancies of ESL speakers (cf. Appendix 2). The word list was judged to be suitable for highlighting the typical pronuncial deviancies of speakers with an African mother tongue.

The speech samples were transcribed phonetically in order to identify any deviancies. The researcher did the transcription. Deviancies were determined by comparing the transcriptions of the speech samples with the phonetically transcribed Received Pronunciation as found in the English Pronunciation Dictionary (Jones, 1981).

4.5 Data collection procedure

The subjects were tested in classes at the college. Each student was given a chance to read the words and the passage during the scheduled time arranged with the identified students. Speech samples were collected during these periods. These represent all the Xhosa speakers learning English as a second language in the mentioned area.

4.6 Analysis

The speech samples were transcribed phonetically and phonemically in order to identify typical pronunciation problems (deviancies). Phonemic transcription is recorded between slant lines, e.g. /ae/, /d/, while phonetic transcripts are between square brackets, e.g. [a], [u:]. Descriptive statistics (e.g. frequency counts) were used to calculate and represent the data.

4.7 Conclusion

In this chapter the method of research used in this study was discussed in an attempt to structure the empirical part of the study.

CHAPTER 5

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter is devoted to the presentation and discussion of the analysed data. The aim of this chapter is to attempt to answer the questions posed in chapter 1:

- What are the typical pronunciation problems (e.g. devoicing of consonants, vowel elision and assimilation, and stress placement) experienced by specifically Xhosa-speakers of English as a second language?

5.2 Problems identified with data analysis

The problem in analysing the speech of second language learners of English arises when the pronunciation reveals diversity from one speaker to another and even inconsistency in the same speaker's use of English. Moreover, since English is used as a second language and the speakers have in fact fused nglish phonological patterns and the patterns of their own language, the resulting system may not be sufficiently well organised or stable to be analysed in precise phonetic terms. It was, however, possible to describe the general patterns by adopting the technique of phonetic analysis (i.e. transcribing into phonetic script).

5.3 Pronunciation problems

5.3.1 Vowels

In Table 2 examples of errors made by the subjects in the speech samples are given. It was interesting to note that subjects made fewer consonant errors than vowel errors. Vowel errors were spread, especially in the word list. This can be explained by the nature of the word list, being specially designed for speakers of Black English and, therefore, containing words that they are likely to mispronounce. Of the 30 words in the word list, only 6 were pronounced correctly by all subjects. A total of 32 words from the reading passage were pronounced correctly by the subjects in the study.

Of the vowel errors, the most common error in the word list was the mispronunciation of /e/ as in **ten,** the attempt sounded closer to [æ] as in **tan** (cf. Table 2). This is probably because the tongue is too far away from the roof of the mouth and needs to be brought closer. Another error

was in the difference between the long and the short vowel [i: ɪ]. The long /i:/ sound had 70% incorrect production by the sample group. People who are not used to this difference in their own languages are apt to ignore it when speaking English. Xhosa does not have the long vowel [i:] found in the word **seat**. According to the survey, the /æ/ sound proved to be almost as difficult to articulate as the short /ɪ/ sound. As Table 2 below shows, 70% of the students tested failed to produce it correctly.

The vowel [ʊ] is used in the word **good** and is a short vowel. This is a reduced vowel and like the /ə/ and /ʌ/ sounds it does not occur in the Xhosa sound system. The survey revealed that Xhosa – speaking students found this sound difficult. In the findings both [ʊ] and [u:] in **good** and **food** were pronounced as long vowels by the students tested.

According to Christophersen (1981:55), many African speakers of English use a half open back vowel, namely their [o] or [ɔ] sound for the English [ʌ] and so they pronounce **hut** rather like **hot.** Xhosa-speakers tend to pronounce the vowel with rounded lips instead of unrounding the vowel and so the vowel sounds like a back vowel [o] or [ɔ]. The central vowel sound /ɜ:/ is not paralleled in Xhosa. Possibly as a result of this, many Xhosa-speaking students find this vowel sound extremely difficult to produce. They follow the method of substituting one of their own sounds generally [ɛ] or [ə] or [ɔ]. For example, the word **bird** [ɜ:] was made to sound rather like **bed** [ɛ]. According to the survey, 90% of students tested produced this sound incorrectly (cf. Table 2). According to the sample study the sound was almost the same in terms of difficulty of production as /ʌ/.

5.3.2 Consonants

The main features that are likely to cause problems in the pronunciation of English by Xhosa-speakers are:

i) Replacement of RP / θ /, / ð / by / t /, / d /.

ii) Replacement of RP / v /, / z / by / f /, / s /.

iii) Lack of aspiration in / p, t, k / at the beginning of accented syllables.

To a Xhosa speaker of English, [θ] is a foreign sound, and consequently it presents a major learning problem. The written symbol **'th'** which represents orthographically the English voiceless [θ] is found in written Xhosa, but in the latter its phonemic and allophonic identity are quite different from /θ / and [θ].The Xhosa speaker may substitute or approximate to the closest sounds / t, d / in Xhosa. The substitution of the Xhosa allophone [th] for English [θ] gives rise to considerable phonemic confusion, **'three'** becomes **'tree'; 'think'** becomes **'tink'; 'faith'** becomes **'fate'** etc.

Xhosa has no /ð/ phoneme, and the acquiring of the English allophone [ð] presents a major learning problem in Xhosa English speakers. This learning problem, as in the case of [θ], is further complicated by the fact that written **'th'** represents the Xhosa phoneme /th/ with its related allophone [th],but **'th'** represents two distinct and different phonemes with their associated allophones in English, /θ / [θ] and /ð/ [ð] Very considerable divergence may be noted in Xhosa English pronunciation of [ð] . A variety of substitute phones for [ð], ranging from [θ] to [d], **'hither'** ['hiðə] may be [hiθə],[hiðə], [hidə], [hiɖə], [hiɖə], [hˈiɖə]

A major learning problem always arises in acquiring a foreign language where there are common orthographic symbols which signal different phonemes; where there is a written symbolin the language to be learnt which represents a completely different phoneme from that of the mother tongue; and when this problem is further complicated by the fact that the written symbol, in this case 'th', stands for two completely different phonemes with their distinctive allophones, /θ / [θ] and /ð / [ð] in the target language, it is not surprising that the learner is confused.

Gimson (1980:311) suggests that it is essential that the aspiration of / p, t, k / in accented positions should be maintained so that phonemes / b, d, g / should be distinguished. Learners whose mother tongue relies on voicing as a prime feature of opposition (e.g. Xhosa-speakers) have problems. If there is no aspiration, the English listeners will probably hear / p, t, k / as / b, d, g / e.g., **pat** as **bat**. The degree of aspiration is affected

by the amount of stress placed on a syllable of which / p / is the first element: in RP [pʰ] is the allophone used when / p / is the initial element of a syllable of strong stress, e.g. **'appeal'** [əpʰi:l], in Xhosa English pronunciation the allophone is [ph] [əphi:l].

Mispronunciation of / s / is sometimes to be heard in Xhosa speakers learning English due to orthographic reasons. No difference may be heard in the pronunciation of **'use'** as a noun and **'use'** as a verb, both being pronounced [ju:s], similarly with **'close'** (verb) and **'close'** (adjective); **'please'** may frequently be heard as [phli:s]. Mistakes occur occasionally in Xhosa English speakers where the written symbol 's' represents phoneme /z/ as in **'houses'**, **'rose'**, **'choose'**,**'please'**, **'wise'** etc. In such cases a spelling pronunciation [s] is normally sustituted

In this study the following consonant errors were observed. The mispronunciation of **'duck'** as [dʌg] instead of [dʌk], **'eyes'** as [aɪs] instead of [aɪz], **' cease'** as [si:z] instead of [si:s], **'newspaper'** as [nju:speipə] instead of [nju:zpeipə], while the mispronunciation of **'nothing'** as [nʌtiŋ] instead of [nʌθiŋ], **'three'** as [tri:] instead of [θri:], **'breathe'** as [bri:d] instead of [bri:ð], **'used'** as [ju:st] instead of [ju:zd] were the most prevalent consonant errors.The survey revealed that between 50% and 80% of the students tested produced these sounds incorrectly (cf. Table 2).

5.3.3 Stress placement

Stress placement is another problem among the Xhosa learners of English. For example, the learners pronounce the word **'written'** ['rɪtn] as [rɪ'ten]. When pronounced with stress on the second syllable instead of the first, it will sound as **'retain'** to the listener (Kenworthy, 1987:18). The prevalent stress placement errors were the pronunciation of **written** as [rɪ'ten] instead of ['rɪtn], **comfortable** as [kʌmfɔ'tebl] instead of ['kʌmfətəbl], **computer** as ['kɔmpjʊ'tə] instead of [kəm'pju:tə], **examination** as [egzæmɪneiʃɪn] instead of [ɪg,zæmɪ'neiʃən] and **photograph** as [fəʊtəgraf] instead of ['fəʊtəgra:f]. According to the sample study 70% - 80% of the students produced the sounds incorrectly (cf. Table 2).

TABLE 2: Vowel, consonant and stress placement problems

Sound	Words in which error occurred	Error	Phonetic transcription	Percentage incorrect
Vowels	Ten	e → æ	[tæn]	80%
	Seat	i: → ɪ	[sɪt]	70%
	Bad	æ → e	[bed]	95%
	Card	ɑ: → ɑ	[kad]	90%
	Cot	ɒ → o	[kot]	55%
	Good	ʊ → u:	[gu:d]	95%
	Hut	ʌ → o	[hot]	90%
	Bird	ɜ: → e	[bed]	90%
Consonants	Duck	k → g	[dʌg]	50%
	South	θ → t	[sɑut]	65%
	Brothers	ð → d	[brʌdaz]	70%
	Three	θr → tr	[tri:]	70%
	New	nj → nu	[nu]	80%
	Used	zd → st	[ju:st]	75%
Stress Placement	Written	['ri:'ten]	['ritn]	70%
	Comfortable	['kʌm'fɔ't ebl]	['kʌmfətə bl]	80%
	Computer	['kɔmpju't ɑ]	['kəm'pju:tə]	75%
	Examination	['egzæmi'neiʃin]	[ig,zæmi'neiʃən]	80%
	Photograph	['fəʊ't ɔgrɑ:f]	['fəʊtəgrɑ:f]	70%

5.4 Conclusion

From the above findings it is clear that the problems leading to these discrepancies are from phonological differences between the first language and the second language. If the problems are to be succesfully addressed, a thorough knowledge of the two sound systems is a prerequisite. Some of the problems are to be given priority because they are vital for intelligibility. Others do not affect intelligibility and can be given what Kenworthy (1987), terms low priority.

CHAPTER 6

TEACHING PRONUNCIATION

6.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to provide ESL teachers with guidelines for the teaching of pronunciation. The principles that should underlie the teaching of pronunciation are also discussed.

6.2 Factors affecting pronunciation teaching

6.2.1 The native language

The native language is an important factor in learning to pronounce English. It presents some problems and difficulties to learners. The more differences there are, the more difficulties the learner will have in pronouncing English (Kenworthy, 1987:4). The student's immediate problem in learning a new language is to gain automatic control of those aspects of the language that are habitual for the native speaker. According to Kenworthy (1987:4), researchers of pronunciation must be careful not to over-simplify the situation and think too much in terms of handicap and barriers to learning. People from many different backgrounds can and do acquire a near-native pronunciation in English.

6.2.2 The age factor

Gimson (1984:321) states that, it is generally the case that the acquisition of a second language's pronunciation becomes increasingly difficult after early adolescence. It is, therefore, desirable to teach pronunciation as soon as possible. Von Schon (1987:24) states that the reason for the low level of pronunciation skill in some who study English as a foreign language is no doubt the difficulty of acquiring a new pronunciation after childhood. Kenworthy (1987:4) assumes that, if someone pronounces a second language like a native, they probably started learning it as a child. Kinross (1961:36) states that: "Accurate fluent English can never be achieved unless a model of good English is set before young children at a very early age. Speech habits learnt in childhood are perhaps the most profoundly impressed of all." These assumptions are based on the fact that younger children enjoy mimicry and may frequently be engaged in activities that are

largely repetitive. Older students may experience some problems with second language pronunciation because the native language sounds will creep back in.

Xhosa children do not learn English at a very early age. They begin to attend school at the age of seven, and it is at this stage that they first receive instruction in English. Their teachers are members of their own race, and for the next eight years at least the child learns English from these teachers. If a pupil continues his education beyond the primary school stage, he has usually an additional three years of instruction in English from teachers from his own ethnic group. All these teachers, to a greater or lesser degree, speak Xhosa English of the type analysed in previous chapters, and are not competent to set before their pupils the model of good English mentioned above.

6.2.3 The teacher's pronunciation

The second language teacher of English has the obligation to present his students with as faithful a model of English pronunciation as is possible. According to Gimson (1984:304), students will imitate a bad pronunciation as precisely as they will a good one and if the teacher is using illustrative recorded material, his own pronunciation must not diverge markedly from the native model.

The problem of English pronunciation by Xhosa speakers would be solved if teachers who were well equipped for the task of teaching English could be produced. In this connection it is assumed that Xhosa-speaking teachers, if they were adequately trained for this work, could rapidly and effectively put an end to the downward spiral in Xhosa English already noted, and ultimately achieve a vastly improved standard. These teachers do not need longer training in this work, but correct training. They do not require increased hours for instruction in the primary or secondary schools, but a skilled technique.

We must look, therefore, to teacher training as a solution to this problem, and we must pay special attention to the teachers in the lower primary school, in order that the learner, during the crucial years of seven to ten, may acquire a strongly co-ordinated and

automatic set of language habits in Xhosa English associated with the structural tune of English.

Rivers (1981:130) states that unless tapes or records of the production of native speakers are being used extensively, students cannot advance in articulation and intonation beyond the stage their teacher has reached. It is essential that teachers work at the improvement of their own pronunciation. Tapes and records of native speech with which they can practise very profitably are necessary, even if they do not wish to use such aids in class.

6.3 Pronunciation goal

If intelligibility is set as the goal, rather than native-like pronunciation, this means something close enough is aimed at. Kenworthy (1987:39) states that while native-like pronunciation may be a goal for particular learners, and while one should never actively discourage learners from setting themselves high goals, for the majority of learners a far more reasonable goal is to be comfortably intelligible. Morley (1991:489) suggests that in oral communication an instruction should be provided that enables pupils to become, not perfect pronouncers of English, but intelligible, communicative, confident users of spoken English for whatever purpose they need. Gimson (1989:303) describes the lowest requirement to approximate to native English speech as minimum general intelligibility.

6.4 Teaching Method

Helping students to acquire an articulation and intonation which is comprehensible and acceptable to native speakers poses a difficult problem for teachers of languages. The seriousness of the problem depends on the degree of the differences and the nature of the differences between the sound systems of the first and second languages.
Dalton and Seidlhofer (1994:70) state that pronunciation teaching will, as a matter of priority, be concerned with possible first language interference, and teaching will tend to concentrate on those aspects of pronunciation that are likely to present difficulties for particular groups of learners, given their linguistic background.

In second language teaching, pronunciation is the one area where it is generally agreed that imitation is the essence of the learning process. Broughton et al. (1990:49) state that in order to imitate correctly one must have heard correctly what is to be imitated. That means imitation goes hand in hand with listening skills. Unfortunately, there is not much the teacher can do to help the students to hear accurately. He can direct their attention to sound differences, and give them plenty of opportunity to listen.

6.4.1 Teaching of the sound system

As students listen to the teacher or model, their ears become attuned to the overall system of sounds of the language and its characteristics, rhythm, stress, and intonation. Strevens (1983:57) states that every word, every syllable, and every phoneme uttered by the teacher may contribute to the learner's learning of pronunciation. Problem sounds are singled out at intervals and practiced with attention to acceptable and comprehensible production. Rivers and Temperley (1978:169) suggest the following methods for teaching the sound system:

1. The teacher begins with short phrases from current work, then isolates a specific sound. Students may be asked to produce the sound in isolation a few times if they are having trouble with it, but not for long.
2. Sounds should be practised in various positions in the phrase so that students become familiar with the effects of phrase stress on certain classes of words (consonant loss, vowel reduction).
3. When the teacher senses that students would profit from intensive practice in specific pronunciation problems, the training should move from the identification of the sound, to imitate production. The goal must be the autonomous production of the correct sound in non-structured contexts.

Various exercises can be used in introducing possible difficult features of the English consonantal system. Dalton and Seidlhofer (1994:71) distinguish three kinds of procedure

with reference to presentation: **exposure, exercise and explanation.** Stern (1992:120) talks about the implicit- explicit range of procedures for teaching pronunciation.

In the **exposure** procedure, spoken language occurs contingently in the context of some task or activity which motivates the use of language. No explicit attention is paid to the specific features of pronunciation; segmental or suprasegmental. The assumption is that because the use of language is motivated by some motivated communicative purpose, sounds will be heard as significant and will be learnt as such.

By **exercise** is meant the traditional procedure of identifying specific sound features and providing practice in perception and production. Both exposure and exercise procedures are based on the belief that students will be able to use the input for intake and learn the distinctions presented to them, either by inference or imitation. With **explanation,** the assumption is that this will not necessarily happen unaided, and that it can be helpful to make students consciously aware of phonetic, and phonological facts.

These different procedures can combine in various ways: one does not preclude the other. What is important is to establish which procedures, in which combinations are appropriate for particular features of pronunciation, particular purposes, and particular students (Dalton & Seidlhofer, 1994:72).

6.4.2 Useful aids

Tapes are available to give students excellent, clear native models to listen to and imitate. The teacher can do the explaining. If the school has no language laboratory, the teacher can play tapes in the classroom. The teacher could form an after school English club, and take the students to see American or British films, listen to English language radio broadcasts, watch English-language television programs. Innovative teaching methods can also open up some avenues for improvement. These may include the following: reduce the emphasis on reading and writing and devote more time to listening and speaking. Speaking drills and exercises are very important, but one area even more overlooked is that of

listening drills and exercises. Let the students listen to tapes and see if they can discriminate minimal pairs, fill in blanks on an answer sheet, and answer questions (Von Schon, 1987:26).

6.5 Guidelines for effective pronunciation teaching

Adendorff and Savigny (1993:13) list the following aspects that the ESL teacher should keep in mind:

1. In keeping with the principles of communicative language teaching, teachers need to teach pronunciation as an integral part of communication, not as an isolated drill and exercise.
2. Teachers need to show pupils that clear pronunciation of individual sound segments in communication, i.e. vowels and consonants, will greatly improve the communicability and intelligibility of the message that they are trying to communicate to others. However, it is also necessary to point out that clear pronunciation of vowels and consonants alone will not guarantee that their message is understood. Attention also needs to be paid to other aspects of pronunciation, e.g. stress, rhythm, and intonation.
3. Teachers need to facilitate their pupil's acquisition of additional styles of spoken English to the ones they currently command i.e. they need to expand their pupil's repertoire of ways of speaking English.
4. Teachers need to play an active role in the teaching of pronunciation activities and then carefully monitor and guide pupils in their pronunciation of English.
5. Teachers need to involve their students in the learning process and teach them self-monitoring skills.
6. The development of pronunciation skills is dependent on pupils also developing active listening skills. If pupils are taught how to listen they will be in a better position to hear differences between different varieties of English and to monitor their own pronunciation.

6.6 Practical recommendations

I am well aware of the implications inherent in the suggestions which follow. I have taught English to students whose mother tongue is Xhosa for almost twenty years I know well the demands made on the time of students in teacher training schools, the relatively low standard of English speech of students when they first enter those schools. It was previously mentioned how badly equipped many lecturers are to teach English pronunciation. Any suggestions made must be practical, they must work. The radio tape recorders and other expensive material is easily recommended, but in effect, such aids are at present not easily available at our schools, invaluable as they may be.

The use of a tape recorder is highly recommended. All training colleges would find it possible to obtain such a piece of equipment, in fact they may have such an instrument already. The tape recorder is easily portable and comparatively cheap. A co-ordinated series of records which are designed to bring into the lecture room a correct model of English pronunciation(e.g. The Living Language Course).

It is interesting to note the methods which the compilers use, and their avowed aims and objectives. "The Living Language Course" uses the natural method of language learning. "You learn French the way you learned English – by hearing the language and repeating what you heard ..... . Play the record, listen carefully ..... then play it again, and this time say the words aloud. Keep repeating until you know the lesson."

This series contains forty graded lessons. These lessons concern themselves with pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar. My special interest is the manner in which pronunciation is taught by the oral-aural method in order to achieve skill in a signaling system. This pre-supposes a relationship to receiving and conveying meaning, and not, as is so often the case in our teacher education, the correct production of sounds in isolation and very little more. The meaning of language structure is indeed bound up with sound, a Xhosa speaker of English may use the right words in the right order, but he may be

difficult or even impossible to understand, because he is not composing these words into the inherent tune to which we are accustomed.

These points are mentioned specifically here as there is a problem of devising a series of oral-aural aids to enable a Xhosa teacher in training to acquire such skill in the English tune of structures that he can serve as a model of English speech to the Xhosa pupil from the very beginning of his school life. This is of very special importance, as the child from infancy to about the age of ten has a remarkable capacity for, and flexibility in, acquiring language.

6.7 Outline of lessons

In each lesson the suggested procedure is:

(a) The sound to be taught is clearly enunciated, first in isolation and then in a simple word repeated three times.

(b) Special attention is given to the interlocking linguistic features such a relative pitch and stress.

(c) Other words containing the same sound are then given slowly and distinctly.

(d) The words previously used as illustrations are used in simple statements or questions.

(e) The speech manual which will accompany the records will show the words and sentences in print, the key word being underlined.

(f) The sequence (a), (b), (c) and (d) is repeated with pauses for practice by the listener.

(g) Where necessary, the attention of the listener is directed to special features, e.g. of length, pitch, stress etc. This means that the recording should be made by an expert who is aware of the learning problems involved, and of the errors that the listener might be expected to make.

Each lesson should introduce a new phone or a series of related phones, but as the lessons develop, opportunity should provided for a revision of phones previously illustrated, in order to practise and consolidate that material, and further, to construct gradually the whole inter-related sound constituents of English.

The lessons should so arranged that Xhosa allophones which, when transferred to the target language, are acceptable, or will pass, are illustrated first. Examples of these are: [ɛ], [ʳu], [ɳ], [m].

Special attention should be given to Xhosa English features which are divergent from English pronunciation, e.g. the correct pronunciation of [θ], [ʒ], [ɑɹ], [ŋgs] etc., and to phonemes of pitch and stress. This material will have to be revised again and again so that it will be necessary to include many examples for hearing and for practice in subsequent lessons.

6.8 Conclusion

The English teachers in the new South Africa will need to be more actively involved in the learning and teaching of English pronunciation than they have been in the past. By taking cognisance of and implementing the principles mentioned above, teachers can go a long way in assisting themselves and their learners in becoming "communicatively competent" ESL speakers.

CHAPTER 7
CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

7.1 Conclusion

The main purpose of this study was to establish empirically some of the main pronunciation problems in the English of a group of Xhosa-speaking students, and to determine whether RP would still be a viable model of pronunciation.

The findings of the study, based on a contrast between the sound systems of Xhosa and English, reflect only certain points of difference between English and Xhosa which could cause problems for second language learners. In this study certain sounds were isolated which Xhosa-speaking students find difficult to produce, for example, the central vowels [ʌ], [ɜ], [ə] and the reduced vowel [ʊ]. Stress placement was also problematic to the students.

It is recognised that more detailed analyses of the differences between Xhosa and English may reveal other more subtle nuances than those which have been identified here. Furthermore, as pointed out in the guidelines for pronunciation teaching, the pronunciation of vowels and consonants is only one aspect of the pronunciation of English that needs attention if teachers are to succeed in producing communicative, intelligible speakers of English.

It can be expected that the results of this study can probably also be generalised to other schools in the same region (Transkei). These schools also have speakers of Black English as students and have the same problem with comprehensibility and intelligibility. They will benefit from knowing that deviance in the pronunciation of English sounds has a big influence on the comprehensibility of such students. But, just knowing about it would not rectify the problem. Teachers of English need to teach these students not to make such errors.

To a lesser extent, the results may even be meaningful to all South African schools with students speaking Black English. But, because the study was performed with a small study group, the results can't be generalised.

7.2 Recommendations for future research

Although this mini-dissertation brought forth valuable findings in terms of those sounds that Xhosa-speaking students find most difficult to produce, it should be seen as a pioneering project that must still be supported by similar projects conducted by other researchers. Much research is still needed to standardize methods of sampling, analysing and scoring oral data under circumstances similar to the ones obtained in this mini-dissertation. If this can be done successfully, it will open-up a new field of preparing standardized teaching material specifically designed to meet the needs of Xhosa-speaking students.

It is quite clear from this project that future research projects should be directed towards the teaching of pronunciation to Xhosa-speaking students. In spite of the shortage of teachers to teach English as a second language the existing teacher-training programmes could be made to include as part and parcel of the training of all teachers, a carefully graded course that would enable trainees to teach English effectively even without any academic courses in English.

A systematic in-service training course for teachers of English as a second language could be instituted at the different formerly disadvantaged universities or at specially established in-service centres to be erected in rural areas. The purpose of such centres would be to improve the level of performance of teachers currently engaged in the teaching of English as a second language. If the level of teacher-competency could be raised, the level of pupil-performance may also rise.

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APPENDIX 1

Reading passage

Barbara spent Saturday afternoon looking at a beautiful book about South America. " I want to go to South America", she said to herself. The next morning, when Barbara woke it was six o'clock, and her brothers and sisters were still asleep. Barbara looked at them and closed her eyes again. Then she quietly got out of bed and started to pack her suitcase. She took some comfortable clothes out of the cupboard. She packed a pair of binoculars and her sister's camera. She packed a photograph of herself and one of her mother and father. " I mustn't forget to have some breakfast", she said to herself.But then she looked at the clock. It was a quarter to seven. "I'll just drink a glass of water", she said. "A glass of water", she said. "Water", she said, and opened her eyes.

[ˈbɑ:bərə spent ˈsætədei ˈɑ:ftəˈnu:n ˈlukiŋ ət ə ˈbju:təful buk əˈbaut ˈsauθ əˈmerikə.
"ai wɔnt tu gəu tu ˈsauθ əˈmerikə", ʃi: sed tu hə:ˈself ðə nekst mɔ:niŋ, wen ˈbɑ:bərə wəuk ʌp it wɔz siks əˈklɔk, and hə: ˈbrʌðəz and ˈsistəz wə: stil əˈsli:p. ˈbɑ:bərə ˈlukt ət ðem and kləuzd hə: aiz əˈgen. ðen ʃi: kwaiətli gɔt aut əv bed ən stɑ:tid tu pæk hə: ˈsju:tkeis ʃi: tuk sʌm ˈkʌmfətəbl kləuðz aut əv ðə ˈkʌbəd. ʃi: pækt ə pɛə əv biˈnɔkjuləz and hə: sistəˈz kæmərə. ʃi: pækt ə ˈfəutəgrɑ:f əv hə:ˈself and wʌn əv hə: ˈmʌðə and ˈfɑ:ðə. "ai mʌsnt fəˈget tu hæv sʌm ˈbrekfəst", ʃi: sed tu hə:ˈself. bʌt ðen ʃi: ˈlukt ət ðə klɔk. it wɔz əˈkwɔ:tə tu ʂevn. ail dʒʌst driŋk ə glɑ:s əv ˈwɔ:tə, ʃi: sed. ə glɑ:s əv ˈwɔ:tə, ʃi: sed. ˈwɔtə ʃi: sed, and ˈaupənd hə: aiz.]

APPENDIX 2

Word list

Ten	[ten]
Good	[gʊd]
Duck	[dʌk]
Potato	[pə'teɪtəʊ]
Watch	[wɒtʃ]
Bird	[bɜ:d]
Law	[lɔ:]
Heart	[ha:t]
Dog	[dɔg]
Food	[fu:d]
Ice	[aɪs]
Cat	[kæt]
Teacher	[ti:tʃə]
Dark	[da:k]
Man	[mæn]
Seat	[si:t]
Tan	[tæn]
Breathe	[bri:ð]
Think	[θiŋk]
Three	[θri:]
Tree	[tri:]
Nothing	['nʌθiŋ]
Computer	[kəm'pju:tə]
Eyes	[aɪz]
Cease	[si:s]
Examination	[ig,zæmi'neiʃən]