INNOVATIVE METHODS IN TEACHING ENGLISH PRONUNCIATION

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Abstract. This study explores innovative methods in teaching English pronunciation and their impact on learners' speaking skills. In recent years, traditional pronunciation teaching techniques have been supplemented by modern approaches that focus on interaction, technology, and learner engagement. The use of digital tools, such as mobile applications and speech recognition software, provides learners with immediate feedback and opportunities for self-practice. Additionally, communicative activities, including role-plays and discussions, help students apply correct pronunciation in real-life contexts. Visual and auditory aids, such as phonetic charts and audio materials, further support learners in understanding sound production. Gamification techniques also increase motivation and reduce anxiety in the learning process. The findings suggest that innovative methods significantly enhance learners' pronunciation, fluency, and confidence, making the teaching process more effective and engaging.

Keywords: English pronunciation, innovative methods, language teaching, communicative competence, technology in education, speech recognition, phonetics, learner engagement, gamification, speaking skills

Teaching English pronunciation has become an increasingly important component of language education, particularly in the context of global communication. In earlier approaches, pronunciation was often neglected or limited to mechanical drills and repetition exercises. However, contemporary research highlights that intelligibility, rather than native-like perfection, is the primary goal of pronunciation instruction. As Joanne Kenworthy states, achieving clear and understandable speech is more important than eliminating a foreign accent.

One of the most significant developments in pronunciation teaching is the integration of modern technology. Digital tools such as mobile applications, online platforms, and speech recognition software provide learners with immediate and individualized feedback. These technologies allow students to monitor their own progress and practice autonomously. According to Mark Hancock, exposure to authentic audio through technological tools helps learners develop better listening discrimination and pronunciation accuracy. Furthermore, artificial intelligence-based tools are increasingly being used to analyze learners' speech patterns and suggest improvements.

Another key aspect of innovative pronunciation teaching is the communicative approach. Unlike traditional methods that isolate sounds, this approach integrates pronunciation into meaningful communication. Activities such as role-plays, simulations, group discussions, and presentations encourage learners to use pronunciation in real-life contexts. Joan Morley emphasizes

that pronunciation should be taught as an integral part of communication, not as a separate skill. This approach helps learners develop fluency, confidence, and the ability to convey meaning effectively.

In addition, the role of phonetics and phonology cannot be overlooked. A solid understanding of sound systems, including stress, rhythm, intonation, and connected speech, enables learners to produce more natural and comprehensible speech. Peter Roach argues that knowledge of phonological rules is essential for both perception and production of spoken language. Teaching features such as weak forms, linking, and assimilation further enhances learners' ability to understand and participate in natural conversations.

Visual and auditory aids also play a crucial role in facilitating pronunciation learning. Tools such as phonemic charts, articulation diagrams, and instructional videos help learners visualize how sounds are produced. According to Adrian Underhill, the use of the phonemic chart encourages learners to become more aware of their own pronunciation and take an active role in correcting it. Listening activities, including minimal pair discrimination tasks, also improve learners' ability to distinguish similar sounds.

Moreover, the incorporation of gamification and interactive learning strategies has proven to be highly effective. Games, quizzes, and collaborative activities create a positive and engaging learning environment. Zoltán Dörnyei highlights that motivation plays a central role in language acquisition, and enjoyable learning experiences significantly enhance student participation and retention.

Another important factor is individualized instruction. Learners come from diverse linguistic backgrounds, and their pronunciation difficulties often vary depending on their native language. Therefore, teachers should adopt a differentiated approach, focusing on specific problem areas for each learner. Peer feedback, self-assessment, and reflective learning strategies also contribute to greater learner autonomy and responsibility.

Finally, the integration of pronunciation with other language skills such as listening and speaking ensures a more holistic approach to language learning. Pronunciation should not be taught in isolation but rather embedded within meaningful communication and interaction. This integrated approach leads to better overall communicative competence.

In summary, innovative methods in teaching English pronunciation—supported by technology, communicative practices, phonetic awareness, visual tools, gamification, and individualized instruction—create a dynamic and effective learning environment. These approaches not only improve learners' pronunciation but also enhance their confidence, fluency, and ability to communicate successfully in real-life situations.

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