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Challenges in Teaching Pronunciation at Tertiary Level in Bangladesh

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ABSTRACT

Teaching pronunciation is one the most challenging parts of ELT in Bangladesh. Very few research and least attention on pronunciation teaching has instigated those challenges more. Moreover, setting an ambitious target to achieve native like pronunciation and teaching without considering the Bangladeshi context are more specific reasons for creating those problems. Therefore, this paper concentrates on the discussion of the existing condition of teaching pronunciation in Bangladesh. Consequently, it starts with presenting existing circumstances of pronunciation teaching in Bangladesh, and showing what the achievable and realistic goal should be for this situation. Then, it talks about the challenges that the teachers face while teaching pronunciation in ELT classroom. This discussion provides deep insight into those challenges which are only applicable to Bangladeshi students. Finally, the paper suggests some contextual and practical solutions to those specific problems.

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1. Introduction

Pronunciation is considered as an integrated and integral component of second/foreign language learning, as it influences learners' communicative competence and performance (Maniruzzaman, 2008). Though there is a lot of controversy regarding the inclusion of explicit pronunciation teaching in the curriculum, the significance of teaching pronunciation for teaching effective communicative skills is undoubtedly accepted everywhere. Due to this controversy, pronunciation is a less practised skill inside and outside the classroom in many countries. This negligence is prominently observed in second language and foreign language context because of some reasons: lower possibility of achieving native like pronunciation, less opportunity of interacting with native speakers (Fraser, 1999), and very little chance in classrooms to teach pronunciation. The reluctance among teachers to teach pronunciation is also a reason for this negligence. However, these reasons do not rationalize the negligence for teaching pronunciation, as teaching itself is obligatory for achieving intelligible and comprehensible speech production (Fraser, 1999). Teaching pronunciation is not important here for achieving a perfect pronunciation model; but rather it is significant for developing better communicative skills.

English is an international language; it is not restricted to any specific boundary. It is not feasible to expect that a non-native speaker will achieve the native like English. Rather, they should be expected to communicate appropriately by producing comprehensible and intelligible pronunciation sounds (Howlader, 2011).

Though in Bangladesh, English is considered as the foreign language, the skills in English are exceedingly significant here. In every sector, people with good English communication skills are considered better. Therefore, teaching and learning English has a great demand in EFL context. Knowledge in English, especially speaking, has a great demand in the competitive job market. However, among the four skills: speaking, listening, writing, and reading, speaking English is the most neglected area in Bangladesh. As a result, learners' ability to speak in English remains very poor. In spite of being the students of higher institutions, they feel shy to speak in English (Azizul, 2010).

Teaching pronunciation, at tertiary level in Bangladesh, is not less complicated than teaching grammar and comprehensions. As it is neglected at every level of education system, the teaching scenario exists with a lot of difficulties at tertiary level. At primary (class1-5), secondary (class 6-10) and higher secondary level (class11-12), speaking and listening have never been the focus to be taught and tested. Therefore, emphasis on pronunciation never comes explicitly or implicitly at these levels. Consequently, teachers at tertiary level find it challenging while dealing with these students who have no experience in practicing speaking and listening inside and outside the classroom.

So, this paper mainly deals with the classroom situation at tertiary level where teachers have to face a lot of challenges to teach pronunciation. The problems that teachers in Bangladesh face while teaching the adult students are discussed in this paper. Afterwards, some attainable solutions are proposed through the reference of various suggested models suitable to Bangladeshi EFL contexts.

2. Condition of Teaching Pronunciation in Bangladesh

Though in Bangladesh students start learning English as a foreign language from the very beginning of their education, their struggle with learning the language still prevails in every context to its full subsequent extent. Teachers at tertiary level have to endeavor for making their students' conversation communicative, comprehensible, and intelligible, as most of them never accomplish the language skills successfully even after the twelve years of secondary education in English language learning. The question 'who should be blamed for this situation' invites a lot of issues, and these are not the focus of this paper. Teaching pronunciation was never into the focus in "grammar translation era" (Howlader, 2011) in Bangladesh, and so speaking was not included in the curriculum. In 1960, with the advent of Communicative Language Teaching Approach (CLTA), speaking and listening received the importance in the curriculum and in the syllabus, but practically these were observed neither in the classroom practices nor in the assessments. Still, the scenario is same in secondary and higher secondary level. Most of the students are found to use the wrong pronunciation, and they are never corrected. Pronunciation has an indissoluble connection to communication through listening and speaking (Gilbert; Celce-Muria; as cited in Maniruzzaman, 2008), it is ignored in the syllabus and even in the classroom activities.

However, the real application of communicative language teaching can be observed at tertiary level in Bangladesh. In most of the universities, both private and public, students have to undertake some language courses (two or three courses), apart from the major courses they are pursuing for their graduation. Therefore, the duration of these language courses is very short lasting from 6 months to 9 months. Within this very short span of time, teachers have the chance to teach speaking and listening in classroom where they have to integrate pronunciation. As CLTA is followed both pedagogically and practically at this level, there is a shift observed in setting objectives for both teachers and learners from specific linguistic competencies to broader communicative competencies (Morley, 1991). Therefore, the necessity of integrating pronunciation with oral communication is clearly felt (Maniruzzaman, 2008).

Amin (2006) and Azizul (2010) have explained some 'inherent problems' of Bangladeshi speakers who speak English. First, Bangladeshi learners do not have the chance to interact in English with others. Second, they only focus on the structure of language, and do not emphasize on comprehensibility, stress and intonation for pronunciation. Third, they do not have enough exposure to English inside and outside the classroom. Fourth, learners do not have enough instrumental or integrative drive to learn this language. Moreover, Sultana & Arif have said that Bangladeshi learners are not aware of the difference between sound and letter, connection between sound and spelling, and knowledge of the syllabic or phonological divisions of words. They have also added that the influence of local dialect has a great impact on the use of English (as cited in Azizul, 2010, p 199).

2.1 What is to Achieve: Perfection or Intelligibility?

Which model of pronunciation should be followed, if learners have to follow one? The British pronunciation or RP (Received Pronunciation) and the American pronunciation or GAm (General American Pronunciation) have been the prevailing

models for pronunciation for long (Hawlader, 2011) though mixing or confusing two systems of pronunciation is a common problem of the learners in Bangladesh. English is now prominently used in many other parts of the world apart from UK and USA. English, in present world, has a great amount of accents or varieties. Though in the past, many linguists have tried to prescribe some specific models of pronunciation, at present much focus is given on comprehensibility and intelligibility rather than "perfect pronunciation". The fact is that the near native pronunciation is practically unachievable for many ESL learners around the world. According to Scovel (1969), learners who start learning second language after their puberty will not be able to attain native like pronunciation (as cited in Moreley, 1991). It is an impractical hope to have the notion to achieve native like pronunciation (Moreley, 1991). "Notions of perfection and native-like pronunciation" are kind of "imposing and perpetuating false standards" (Moreley, 1991, p 499). Rather, "the native speaker was always found to be among the least intelligible speakers" when everybody uses English in their own accent (Smith and Rafiqzad, as cited in Moreley, 1991, p 499).

Walker has not emphasized on any specific model of pronunciation, rather he emphasized on comprehensibility (as cited in Hawlader, 2011, p 274). Moreover, Marianne, Donna and Janet have argued for establishing intelligible pronunciation. Learners are expected to achieve the skills which enable them to communicate effectively with others. In other words, they aim to achieve intelligible pronunciation so that at least others can understand them easily (as cited in Hawlader, 2011, p 275). Though having "high goal of achieving perfection in pronunciation" (Hawlader, 2011, p. 275) should be appreciated, very few learners can achieve such perfection. So, both teachers and learners should concentrate more on making their speech intelligible to others, rather than sounding like native speakers.

According to Fraser,

> "Being able to speak English of course includes a number of sub-skills, involving vocabulary, grammar, pragmatics, etc. However, by far, the most important of these skills pronunciation; with good pronunciation, a speaker is intelligible despite other errors; with poor pronunciation, a speaker can be very difficult to understand despite accuracy in other areas. Pronunciation is the aspect that most affects how the speaker is judged by others, and how they are formally assessed in other skills. (as cited in Nikbakht, 2011, p.147, 148)

Moreover, Kenworthy (1987) notes "Intelligibility is the most sensible goal" (p. 13). He has said, "Intelligibility is being understood by a listener at a given time in a given situation" (p 13). According to him, intelligibility means understandability. Moreover, he has added, "The issue of intelligibility is very complex and the notions of efficiency, effectiveness, and speakers; intentions are crucial issues" (Kenworthy, 1987, p 14). Therefore, Pennington and Richard have also suggested teaching comprehensible pronunciation (as cited in Kenworthy, 1987).

2.2 Challenges That Teachers Face while Teaching Pronunciation

The challenges teachers face throughout the whole world while teaching pronunciation are not the same. These vary from context to context. Among many difficulties, some unique challenges should be addressed. The challenges are discussed below:

Interference of Native Language

According to Kenworthy (1991), the more differences there will be between the target language and the native language, the more difficulties the learners will face in achieving the correct pronunciation. Though there are some similar sounds in Bangla and English, a lot of delicate differences exist between them which create problem for Bangla speakers to learn English pronunciation.

Hai and Ball have observed some similarities and dissimilarities in both segmental phonemes and supra segmental issues of these two languages (as cited in Azizul, 2010, p 200). They show that there are 7 vowels in Bangla and 12 in English. The chart (Appendix 1 & 2) that they present shows there are only two common vowels in both of the languages (/e/, /æ/) though /o/ is very close to English one. Therefore, the Bangla speakers usually become confused with 4 English sounds, and these are /u:/, /^/, /ɜ:/, and /ə/. Moreover, Bangla speakers also cannot differentiate between English short and long vowels; for example, they pronounce feet (/fi:t/) as (/fit/), half (/ha:f/) as (/haf) (as cited in Azizul, 2010, p 202).

Bangla has 18 diphthongs where there are only 8 diphthongs in English. But, they are not similar in characteristics. The common mistake that Bangla speakers make with English diphthongs is that they pronounce diphthong as monophthong. They often miss the last part of the diphthong or substitute the first or last sound with some other sounds. For example, they pronounce make (/meik/) as/ mek/, boat (/bəut/) as /bɔt/, here / hɪə / as /hear/, and go (gəu/) as /gɔ/.

The main difficulty that Bangla speakers face is to pronounce and differentiate between /ə/ and /ɜ:/. They just pronounce them as /a/ or /ɔ/. For example, they pronounce 'bird' (/bɜ:d/) as /bard/, 'occur'/ əkə/ as /ɔkar/.

With respect to consonants, there are 20 plosives in Bangla whereas in English there are only 6. Bangla plosives can be categorized into five sub groups based on place of articulation. Each group has aspirated and unaspirated sounds. Bangla speakers become confused with English aspirated plosives sounds though there are some aspirated plosives in Bangla. The aspirated /p/ is often pronounced as fricative /f/ or Bangla /ph/. The aspirated plosives in Bangla are /kh/ /gh/ /ch/ jh/ /th/ dh/, and they are phonemic, whereas in English aspirated plosives are not phonemic (Hai & Ball, as cited in Azizul, 2010, p 202). In addition, there is no fricative in Bangla. Though Bangla /ph/, /bh/, and /n/ are considered similar to English /f/, /v/ and /n/ respectively, they are not same. In Bangla, /ph/ and /bh/ are bilabial plosives, and /n/ is dental nasal. However, in English, /f/ and /v/ are labio-dental fricative, and /n/ is alveolar nasal. As a result, Bangla speakers find it difficult to pronounce these English sounds correctly. They pronounce 'full' (/ful/) as /phul/ and 'vote'(/vəut/) as /bhɔ:t/.

Another area of difficulty arises with /z/ and /ʤ/ sounds. In Bangla, there is only one sound /ja/ which is similar to English /ʤ/ though there are two letters for Bangla 'ja' sound. Bangla speakers often confuse English three sounds /z/, /ʤ/, and /ʒ/. They often pronounce 'zoo' (/zu:/) as /ʤu /, 'zero' (/zi:rou/) as /zɪərəʊ/ (Hai & Ball, as cited in Azizul, 2010, p 203). There is no /ʒ /sound in Bangla.

Little Exposure to English

According to Kenworthy (1991), if the learners have continuous access to

English and enough intakes in English, this would create a positive impact on learners' pronunciation. He has added if the learners live in the English speaking country, their development of pronunciation will rapidly move towards perfection. Moreover, CLTA also promotes the concept of having a lot of input in the target language, and it leads the learners to have the acquisition and learning done naturally and rapidly.

In Bangladesh, Bangla learners have limited exposure to English. Though CLTA has been introduced long before, the practical application of CLTA is hardly noticed in secondary and higher secondary level. Both teachers and students are accustomed to memorization. The medium of instruction is Bangla. Before tertiary level, most of them do not have any experience in receiving instruction in English. The access to English that they receive is from the amount of reading for the courses on English. They are hardly instructed and assessed for their pronunciation. So, teachers at tertiary level find it challenging to continue their pronunciation lesson with such inexperienced adult students.

English Spelling System

"English spelling system is an alphabetic one" (Kenworthy, 1991, p 94). Kenworthy has added that there is no specific convention for spelling. At one hand, it maintains sound letter correspondence. On the other hand, it does not follow one-to one correspondence between sound and letter. Unlike some other alphabetic languages, there are some letters in English which have more than one sound value. This feature is termed as GPC (Grapheme Phoneme Correspondence). Some letters have more than two values. For example, /c/ can be sounded as /s/ and /k/. So, there are 'single valued' and 'multi valued' words. These multi valued features create confusion among Bangladeshi students. They find it difficult to pronounce unfamiliar words and even some familiar words as well. Words, such as 'enjoy' (/ɪn´dʒɔɪ/) and 'enough' (/ɪ´nʌf/), are pronounced as /en´dʒoɪ/ and /e´nʌf/, and learners continue their speaking with such biased pronunciation for a long time. Equally, they have difficulties with understanding those words when they are pronounced properly.

Moreover, Bangla and English share very little similarities in their spelling systems. Though the spelling system of English is less complex than that of Bangla, learners find it difficult to pronounce. Furthermore, though Bangla has joint word spelling system which combines two or three sounds together, Bangla speakers often become puzzled with the composite sound system of English. For example, '-gh' can represent /g/ in 'ghost' or 'ghoul', /f/ in 'cough' and can be silent in 'thorough'. Bangla speakers often use only /g/ for '-gh' in all these words.

Lack of Concern and Awareness for Pronunciation

As pronunciation has never been the focus of assessment and classroom practices, learners in Bangladesh do not develop any concern and awareness for pronunciation. Learners' awareness is very important in developing good pronunciation. Teaching and learning pronunciation is not only connected to the sound system but also to some other supra segmental factors like stress, intonation, rhythm, pitch etc. In Bangladesh, students lack the knowledge of these factors. They just have the superficial knowledge about the sounds, but they do not have any kind of knowledge of these factors which are equally important for achieving intelligible pronunciation.

Influence of Local Accent

In Bangladesh, there are varieties of local accents which really collide with English pronunciation. This interference is really challenging for some students who struggle to achieve intelligible pronunciation. Generally, classrooms in universities consist of students from different regions of Bangladesh. So, in a classroom at tertiary level, teachers find 30 to 50 students having minimum 10 different accents. Some of their accents are so inflexible that teachers themselves find it difficult to understand them. For example, learners from Chittagong, Sylhet, and Noakhali confuse between /e/ and /æ/. They use /æ/ in place of /e/ in the initial level of a syllable or word. They pronounce /æbuv/ instead of /əbuv/ (Hai and Ball, 1960). Moreover, speakers of Noakhali pronounce /fut/ instead of /put/ as they have difficulties with /p/ (Hai & Ball, 1960). The voicing and aspiration also change in different regions. For example, the unvoiced velar aspirated plosive /kh/ is a fricative sound in the accent of Chittagongian and Sylheti. In south-east Bangladesh, bilabial plosive /p/ becomes alveolar fricative /f/, and /c/, /ch/, /j/, and / jh / are fricatives. However, they are affricates in Kutti dialect of Dhaka. (Hai & Ball, 1960). Furthermore, the consonant clusters also become challenging for many regions. Noakhali speakers add /ɪ/ sound before the words staring with /sp/ /sk/ sl/ st/ etc.

Fossilisation in Certain Pronunciation

Some ESL learners become relatively fluent, but their pronunciation often becomes 'fossilized' (Action, 1984) and quite resistant to change. It is almost axiomatic that after puberty, learners start losing their capacity to achieve the native like pronunciation (Action, 1984). Furthermore, it is also believed that after achieving a specific level of competence in target language in which the adults are functionally active, their pronunciation level also becomes permanently fossilized (Action, 1984). It is undoubtedly difficult to bring any change to the existing permanent state of someone's pronunciation. Altering intonation, rhythm, and stress patterns can be an imposing task-let alone ferreting out all the inaccurate vowels and consonants in one's vocabulary. Because of the influence of the native language, local accents and lack of concern for the pronunciation, they develop wrong pronunciation which they practice for years after years. Teachers are rarely able to solve this problem in few semesters of language skill courses in universities.

3. Suggested Solutions

Teaching pronunciation in EFL context includes "axiomatic, procedural and implementational issues related to pronunciation teaching: teaching approaches and classroom techniques/activities" (Maniruzzaman, 2008, p 7). Considering the EFL scenario in Bangladesh at tertiary level, some effective and practical approaches and techniques should be applied in order to receive the maximum output. Though the possibility of achieving 100% successes is very low, the achievement of highest intelligibility and comprehensibility of learners' pronunciation should be the target.

All the suggestions which are mentioned below are categorized into three different segments:

a) Determining the focus, objectives, goals;
b) Theoretical Approach;
c) Classroom Techniques/Activities;

3.1 Determining the Focus, Objectives, Goals

A focus on intelligibility & understandability: Teachers in Bangladesh

should not focus on achieving learners' perfect accent and pronunciation, especially, when students are at tertiary level and heading towards the higher studies. Most of them develop their own speaking style through their twelve years of learning experience. So, dealing with adult learners and teaching perfect pronunciation do not go along when the learning period is very short. The teachers should focus on teaching the intelligibility and understandability of pronunciation. They should be expected to produce intelligible speech and to understand speech produced by others. Moreover, students should be aware of the variety of accents existing around the world, so that they can develop their understandings of the native speakers' speech. As a result, students should be familiarized with the different kinds of accents of different areas. If anybody aspires to practice those correct accents, s/he should be encouraged.

3.2 Theoretical Approach

Integrated pronunciation teaching approach: According to Moreley, pronunciation teaching should not be done in isolation. For adult learners, it should be considered "an integral part of oral communication" (1991, p 496). The integration of pronunciation teaching can be a very effective idea to teach pronunciation for a short period of time. Moreover, teaching supra-segmental factors of pronunciation is time consuming and does not offer students to apply that knowledge in the broader context of language usage. "Whenever learners hear English or try to speak themselves, they are 'doing pronunciation work'; every lesson is a pronunciation lesson; every time the speaker speaks he or she is presenting spoken model" (Kenworthy, 1987, p 113). However, integration of pronunciation into language class should address two major factors. There should be the consistency and planning associated with integration, and there should be the learners' role of self-monitoring. Otherwise, integration would not be a successful idea. Kenworthy (1987) has suggested some ways of integrating pronunciation. He has said that pronunciation should be integrated with vocabulary tasks, such as word formation, stress patterns of word, GPC rules, word simplification, and syllable patterns.

A dual focus program: Moreley has constructed a "Dual Focus Framework" based on the philosophy of pronunciation teaching as an integral part of oral communication. The Dual Focus Framework combines "a micro level focus on speech production (i.e., a focus on discrete elements of pronunciation in a bottom-up sense) and a macro level focus on speech performance (i.e., a focus on general elements of communicability in a top-down sense)", (Moreley, 1991, p 497). At micro level (discrete level), the bottom up approach works. That means the main focus is on "contextualized modification of vowel consonant sounds (their reduction, combinations, elision, and assimilation); on the specific features subsumed under the rubric of stress, rhythm, and intonation; and on features of rate, volume, and vocal qualities" (p 498). On the other hand, at macro level (global level) top down approach works. This approach concentrates on the "the synthesis of many components of communicative oral discourse" (Moreley, 1991, p 498). This includes non-verbal behavior, facile communicative command of grammar and vocabulary, ability to continue speech, aspects of intelligibility, clarity of speech etc. The bottoms up and top down approaches correspond respectively to the traditional and research based approach

(Scarcella & Oxford, as cited in Morely, 1991, p 498). Based on the existing research, the top down research approach which works at global level is more effective in EFL context in Bangladesh (Maniruzzaman, 2008). Maniruzzaman has added that teaching EFL pronunciation should start from the supra segmentals which are obligatory as these contribute more to intelligibility than segmentals do (2008).

3.3 Teaching Techniques and Classroom Activities

Based on the exploration and critical analysis of the different approaches to teaching pronunciation, and what seems to be teachable and learnable for EFL classroom settings, I will now propose ten techniques and activities that, according to influential pronunciation researchers (e.g. Morley, 1991, Scarcella and Oxford, 1994, Fraser, 1999, Thompson, Taylor and Gray, 2001) and my own experience, appear to be useful for learners and teachers alike.

Introducing IPA symbols & knowledge of articulatory phonetics: Though the IPA symbols and knowledge of articulatory phonetics may frighten students at the very beginning at tertiary level, this introductory knowledge will eventually help them to understand every individual sound. Moreover, articulatory phonetics helps them to know the place of articulation of every sound that helps to pronounce sounds correctly. At first, this may seem time consuming and difficult, but once they know them, practice can transform their knowledge into skills.

Comparison with Bangla sounds: As the interference of Bangla language into English pronunciation is severe, students should know about the similarities and dissimilarities between these two languages. This comparison surely helps them to differentiate between the two languages and acquire the correct pronunciation.

Communicative activities: Due to limitations of time at the tertiary period, some communicative activities should be designed so that learners can target to achieve some other skills along with pronunciation skills simultaneously. At tertiary level, this can be appropriate as students are adult. Otherwise, correcting their pronunciation solely may frustrate them at this level of education. Maniruzzaman has suggested designing some dialogues or mini conversations addressing the common pronunciation problems of the adult learners (2008). Using drama and debate can be a very effective integrated activity. Through these, learners can learn some communication strategies, such as retrieval strategies, rehearsal strategies, cover strategies (Oxford, 2000, cited in Maniruzzaman, 2008). Rehearsal for drama may provide them with a wide scope of practicing and correcting their pronunciation positively.

Using dictionaries and smart phones: Dictionaries can be used in the class whenever it is necessary. Learners often tend to ask the correct pronunciation to the teacher while participating in various activities. Dictionary can be used in such case. If learners check out the pronunciation on their own, their knowledge will be more enduring as visuals in the dictionaries can properly shape the pronunciation. “For most learners, the visual image developed in such dictionary work seems to be remembered more readily than simple auditory feedback” (Dickenson, 1975 cited in Moreley, 1991). Moreover, students can be allowed to use their smart phone in the class in order to hear and check the pronunciation through downloading various softwares in their phones. Most of the learners in universities

use smart phones in Bangladesh. Teachers can use this strategy for the adult learners where logistics supports are not always available. However, they should also monitor the use of smart phone applications so that students do not lose their attention in the class.

Oral presentation on self speech production: Learners can be asked for recording their own speech based on a written script provided by the teachers and for being critical about their own pronunciations. Then, they can be asked for giving an oral presentation providing feedback on their own speech production and pronunciation. In that presentation, they can mention both their developments and errors, and provide corrections. This is how they can develop self awareness of their speech education. Maniruzzaman (2008) mentions the "modeling and individual correction" (p. 20) where teachers give feedback on the results of students' self correction and analysis.

Tutorial sessions and individual counseling: Tutorial sessions and individual counseling can be arranged for the students where teachers will talk about their individual problems and assign some practice works to develop their pronunciation.

Incorporation of novel element: The instructor should teach novel pronunciation elements, such as sounds, stress placement, tones to adult learners with the use of directions (Maniruzzaman, 2008). This can be very helpful to the adult learners. While teaching these supra-segmental factors of pronunciation, teachers should start "with names of person, places and books and movies, and then headlines of the news paper, and various expressions" (Kenworthy, 1987, p 499). These are very helpful for developing the sense of stress and intonation.

Computer-assisted language learning: Computer-assisted language learning or CALL can be applied for encouraging autonomous learning. In this way, learners will be able to find out their own errors and mistakes, and check the segmental and supra segmental graphic representations (Maniruzzaman, 2008). Teachers can use this method for showing the visual image of the sounds and symbols which can be very motivating. Teachers can also suggest pronunciation checking software which students can use inside and outside the classroom where computers and internet are available.

Read aloud: This is a very common and easy strategy for both the learners and teachers to follow in class in order to develop intelligible pronunciation. A selected piece of writing which includes the difficult sounds for Bangla learners can be used in the class as a material. Students can read them aloud in front of the teachers. In this way, both teachers and students will be able to identify their limitations in pronunciation. Here, teachers can use some signs for showing the right direction of pronunciation while the student will be reading.

Awareness of aspects of connected speech: Though connected speech is not the feature of non-native speakers' pronunciation, students should be concerned about the aspects for developing their understanding of the native speakers. They are not expected to develop these features while talking; they have to have the knowledge so that they can develop their pronunciation. Assimilation, Linkage, Elision are the aspects which are found both in Bangla and English. So, a comparative study can be made for their quick understanding. In order

to quicken their learning, recording of various accents should be played in the class and should be suggested to listen to outside the class.

Using minimal pairs, tongue twisters: In order to develop speech production, creating sound awareness is very important. Learners have to develop the awareness of their own sound production and the perception of what they are hearing. Practice with minimal pairs and tongue twisters may help them in developing this perceptual awareness. Tongue twisters also help Bangla learners, especially the learners who have influence of local accents on their speech production.

Creating awareness of 'schewa' sound: In English 'schewa' is the most important sound. Students' attention should be drawn to this sound at the very beginning through imitation, correction and perception work (Kenworthy, 1987). Students should be introduced with all the letters and composite letters for which 'schewa' can be pronounced.

4. Conclusion

To summarize, it can be said that teaching pronunciation at tertiary level in Bangladesh is very exigent and strenuous. This area of English Language Teaching in Bangladesh has not been discussed a lot. Therefore, research and further studies are required in this specific arena of ELT to have effective pronunciation teaching in Bangladesh. Though there are lots of difficulties in pronunciation teaching at this level, achieving target level of pronunciation is not impracticable yet. Most of the difficulties in pronunciation teaching arise due to existing curriculum and syllabus of English in early years of education which result in limited teaching practices. Efforts on teachers' side can mitigate the distance between the target level and the achieving level of pronunciation of learners. Teachers may accomplish the objectives and goals of pronunciation teaching when they combine the above mentioned theoretical framework with the classroom activities. Appropriate selection of teaching materials, effective instructions, and awareness of the learners' regarding their speech production should be the main focus of teachers in teaching pronunciation. If all these components can align with each other, teachers can overcome most of the challenges in teaching pronunciation at tertiary level.

About the Author

Tanzina Tahereen did her honors in English and masters in Applied Linguistics and ELT from Dhaka University. She has been teaching in East West University, Bangladesh for more than three years. She teaches courses in language and linguistics. Her research interest lies in ELT and comparative linguistics.

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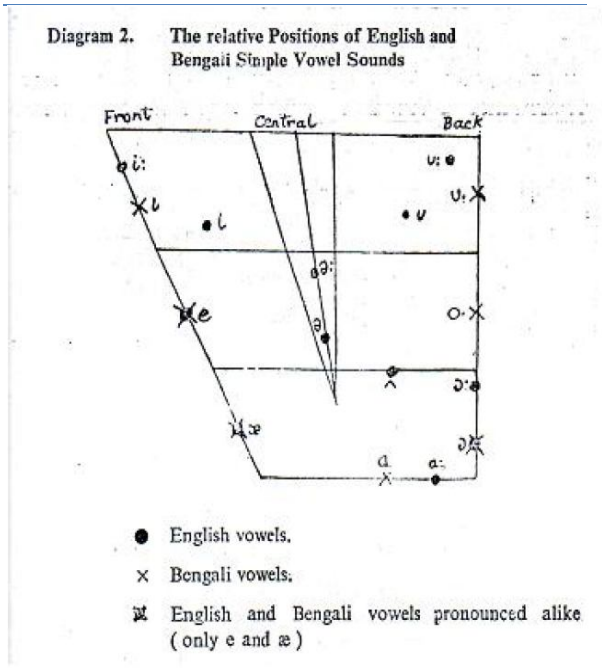
Appendix 1

Phonetic Symbol	Language in which it is used	Key word
iː	English	feel
'i' (between English iː and i)	Bengali	chi'l (kite)
i	English	fill
'e'	English and Bengali	bed
'æ'	English and Bengali	cat
'ɑ' (between English ʌ and ɑː)	Bengali	bhat (rice)
ɑː	English	part
'ɔ'	English and Bengali	hot
ɔː	English	walk
'o' (like the first part of English diphthong oʊ)	Bengali	go'l (round)
ʊ		
'u' (between English uː and ʊ)	English	full
uː	Bengali	chu'l (hair)
ʌ	English	fool
ə	English	but
ɜː	English	above
	English	shirt

(Hai & Ball, cited in Azizul, 2010, p 200)

Appendix 2:



(Hai & Ball, cited in Azizul, 2010, p 201)