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ACCENT AND PRONUNCIATION ARE COROLLARY TO THE VOICE OF THE SPEAKER:  
A BRIEF STUDY

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ABSTRACT

This paper is focusing on the accent and pronunciation which are very important in making an effective speech through a continuous practice. English is extensively spoken in the fields of education, research, administration, industry and business. It is also used in interviews, group discussions, panel discussions, debates and social interactions among the educated elite. The ability to speak English fluently and effectively ensures success in life and career. To be able to speak well, one must master the art of pronunciation and presentation. For this constant practice and guidance are necessary. Accent and pronunciation are corollary to the voice of the speaker. A man's personality and character may be indicated by his voice which is unique to every individual. One must modulate one's voice and utter sounds correctly to impress the listeners. This can be trained through practice.

**Key words:** Accent, Pronunciation, rising and falling tone, pitch

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A Turkish proverb affirms that speech is silver but silence is golden. However, English is extensively spoken in the fields of education, research, administration, industry and business. English is also used in interviews, group discussions, panel discussions, debates and social interactions among the educated elite. The ability to speak English fluently and effectively ensures success in life and career. There is no gainsaying the fact that to be able to speak well, one must master the art of pronunciation and presentation. To acquire the mastery of this art or skill one needs constant practice and guidance.

For instance, the falling tone before a final stressed syllable is presented as follows:

The boy 'passed. The rising tone before a final stressed syllable is presented as follows: Did the boy, pass?

Similarly, the primary stress indicated by a vertical line before the syllable to be stressed is presented as, **EXAMI'NATION**

The secondary stress is also indicated by a vertical line below the syllable to be stressed as **E,XAMINATION**. With both the primary stress and the secondary stress, the word looks as, **E,XAMI'NATION**. However, unstressed syllables do not have stress or accent marks.

In any given sentence some specific words are uttered louder than the others. This is due to the mood of the speaker. If wrong words are stressed the message or emphasis will change. For instance, we may consider the following sentences according to the stress employed in each sentence:

- I. 'Hamlet was not mad. (Others may be mad, but not Hamlet)

II. Hamlet was 'not mad. (Hamlet could be anything else, but not mad.)

III. Hamlet was not 'mad (Hamlet could be something else.)

Usually, the classes of words that are stressed are nouns, adjectives, verbs, demonstratives, interrogatives, interjections, negatives, articles, prepositions and conjunctions in different contexts. Similarly, the rise and fall of voice in a speech is called intonation. It occurs on the last stressed syllable of a sentence. This syllable is called the nucleus. Intonation performs different functions, as follows: different types of utterances such as statements, requests, questions, commands, politeness, friendliness, firmness, doubt, curiosity and any important item of speech. Though there are no definite rules of pronouncing a word, the speaker may follow the practices as given below:

The end 'r' in a word is not pronounced unless it is followed by a word that starts with a vowel sound.

- (i) 'r' before a consonant is silent.
- (ii) Normally, 'r' is silent when it occurs between two vowels.
- (iii) The inflexional suffixes used for making plurals and possessives of nouns and simple present tense third person singular forms of verbs, are pronounced /s /, / z/ and /iz/ , though these suffixes are always represented by the letter – s or the letters -es. The rules are as follows:

(a) The suffixes mentioned above are pronounced /-s/ after Voiceless Consonants other than /s/ , /j/ and /tʃ/

**For example,**

Cats / kæts/ Cooks / kuks/ Cups /kʌps/ Coughs / kɒfs/ Months /mʌnθs/

(b) They are pronounced /-z/ after Voiced Consonants including vowels , other than /z// ʒ/ and /dʒ /

**For example,**

Bags /bægz/

Boards /bɔ:dz/ Calls /kɔ:lz/

Cities /siti:z/

Comes /kʌmz/ Cows /kauz/

Ears /iəz/ Goes /gəuz/

Loathes /ləuðz/ Loves /lʌvz/

Plays /pleiz/ Rubs /rʌbz/

(c) They are pronounced /-iz/ when the root, that is , the singular noun or the infinitive form of the verb ends in /s/ /z/ /ʃ/ / ʒ / tʃ/ and / dʒ /

**For example,**

Buses /bʌsɪz/ Bushes /bʊʃɪz/

Catches /kætʃɪz/

Edges /edʒɪz/ Garages /gærɑ:ʒɪz/

Roses /rəʊzɪz/

(d) The pronunciation of the inflexional endings, **-ed** or **-d** in the past and past participle forms of the verb is given below:

(i) **-id** example:

Fainted : *faintid* Belated : *belatid* Painted; *painted*

(ii) **-d** after voiced sounds, for example:

Tagged : *tagd*

Lagged : *lagd*

Robbed : *robd*

iii) **-t**, after voiceless sounds, for example:

Packed : *packt*

Rocked: *rockt*

Blessed: *blest*

In the matter of word stress or accent there are some widely followed practices. English words have one or more syllables. A syllable is a complete sound unit. In words containing more than one syllable, one or sometimes two syllables sound prominent, that is, they receive the stress or accent. The more prominent of the two syllables receives the primary accent and the other receives the secondary accent. While the primary accent mark comes above the syllable (**'HANDSOME**), the secondary accent mark comes below the syllable (**,EVALUATION**).

The accent pattern of English words does not rigidly conform to any set of rules and one should learn to speak with the right accent by being exposed to the right models of speech. However, a few conventions for accent patterns are given below.

**1. TWO-SYLLABLE WORDS WITH ACCENT ON THE FIRST SYLLABLE:**

'ALWAYS 'BROTHER 'CITY 'DOCTOR 'ENGLISH

'FIGURE 'GOLDEN 'HONEST 'IDLE

'JUDGEMENT 'KITCHEN LETTER

'MOMENT 'NUMBER 'OPEN 'PAPER 'QUESTION

'SYSTEM 'TABLE 'UNIT 'VENTURE

**2. TWO –SYLLABLE WORDS WITH ACCENT ON THE SECOND SYLLABLE:**

A'BROAD BE'NIGN CON'NECT DE'LIGHT  
 EM'PLOY FOR'GET HO'TEL  
 IN'DUCT E' VENT FOR'GIVE  
 GEN'TEEL IN'TEND MA'CHINE  
 NEG'LECT OP'POSE  
 PRO'POSE RE'TIRE SUG'GEST  
 TO'DAY UP'ON

**3. THREE-SYLLABLE WORDS WITH ACCENT ON THE FIRST SYLLABLE:**

'ACCIDENT 'BICYCLE 'CAPITAL 'DELICATE  
 'GLORIOUS 'HOLIDAY 'INDUSTRY 'LIBRARY  
 'MEDICAL 'ORNAMENT 'POPULAR  
 'QUALITY 'RELATIVE 'SYMPATHY

**4. THREE-SYLLABLE WORDS WITH ACCENT ON THE SECOND SYLLABLE:**

AD'VANTAGE BE'HAVIOUR CON'FUSION  
 DIS'COVER EX'PENSIVE  
 FA'MILIAR IM'PORTANT PRO'DUCTION  
 RE'MEMBER SUS'PICION

**5. THREE SYLLABLE WORDS WITH ACCENT ON THE THIRD SYLLABLE:**

ENGI'NEER INTROD'UCE RECOM'MEND  
 UNDER'STAND

**ACCENTUATION OF WORDS IN TERMS OF SUFFIXES:**

(i) Words ending in **-ion** as in **-tion** , **-sion** , **-cion** and **-cean** have the accent on the last syllable but one.

APPLI'GATION CIVILI'ZATION DE'CISION  
 EDU'GATION IMAGI'NATION OC'GATION

(ii) Words ending in **-ian** , **-eous** and **-ious** are accented on the syllable preceding the suffix:

MU'SICIAN 'COURTEOUS  
 INJ'URIOUS 'RIGHTEOUS

(iii) Words ending in **-ic** , **-ical** and **-ically** , have the accent on the syllable preceding the suffix:

AR'TISTIC E'LECTRICAL 'BASICALLY

(iv) Words ending in **-ity** have the accent on the syllable preceding the suffix:

AC'TIVITY CURI'OSITY  
 NE'CESSITY RESPONSI'BILITY

(v) Words ending in **-ial** have the accent on the syllable preceding the suffix:

ARTI'FICIAL CONFID'ENTIAL ES'SENTIAL  
 OF'FICIAL PO'TTENTIAL

(vi) Words ending in **-ate** , **-ise** , **-ize** , **-fy** , **-cracy** , **-crat** , **-graph** , **-graphy** , **-meter** , and **-logy** are stressed on the third syllable from the end.

**-ATE -ISE /-IZE -FY**

'EDUCATE C'OLONISE 'JUSTIFY  
 'SEPARATE 'ENTERPRISE 'CERTIFY  
 'CULTIVATE 'REALIZE 'BEAUTIFY  
**-CRACY -CRAT -GRAPH**

BU'REAUCRACY 'BUREAUCRAT  
 'PARAGRAPH AU'TOCRACY  
 'AUTOCRAT 'PHOTOGRAPH

**GRAPHY METER**

PHO'TOGRAPHY THER'MOMETER  
 BI'OGRAPHY DI'AMETER  
 SPEC'TROGRAPHY PA'RAMETER

(vii) Words ending with the suffixes **-ain** , **-aire** , **-eer** , **-ental** , **-ential** , **-ette** , **-ese** , **-esce** , **-escence** , **-escent** , **-esque** , **-itis** , **-ee** , and **-ade** have the accent on the suffix:

**-AIN -AIRE -EER**  
 OB'TAIN MILLIO'NAIRE ENGI'NEER  
 MAIN'TAIN QUESTION'NAIRE CA'REER

**-ENTIAL -ESE -ESCE**  
 PRESI'DENTIA CHI'NESE COA'LESCE  
 PROVI'DENTIAL JAPA'NESE CONVA'LESCE  
 EXIS'TENTIAL ASSA'MESE ACQUI'ESCE

**-ESCENCE -ESCENT**  
 ADO'LESCENCE ADO'LESCENT  
 EFFER'VESCENCE EFFER'VESCENT  
 CONVA'LESCENCE CONVA'LESCENT

**-ETTE -ESQUE -ITIS**  
 CIGA'RETTE PICTU'RESQUE ARTH'RITIS  
 GA'ZETTE GRO'TESQUE NEU'RITIS

**-IQUE -ADE -ETE**  
 SILHOU'ETTE BU'RLESQUE BRON'CHITIS  
 PHY'SIQUE BARRI'CADE DE'LETE

U'NIQUE DE'GRADE DEP'LETE  
 CRI'TIQUE PER'SUADE CON'CRETE  
 TECHNIQUE DIS'SUADE COM'PLETE

(viii) Most compound words have the stress on the first element:

'BLACKBOARD 'BREAKFAST 'BLACKSMITH  
 'DINING ROOM 'TEA-PARTY

(ix) Certain compound words have the stress on 'ever' and 'self'.

HOW'EVER MY'SELF WHEN'EVER  
 YOUR'SELF WHER'EVER HER'SELF

(x) In words of three elements, the stress is on the second element:

HOT'WATER BOTTLE WASTE'PAPER BASKET  
 BLUE'COLOURED PEN WHITE'COLLARED GENTRY

(xi) Prefixes with negative connotations get stressed:

'DISLOYAL 'DISHONEST 'ILLOGICAL  
 I'NSINCERE 'UNKIND

(xii) Verbs of two syllables beginning with the prefix *-dis* are stressed on the last syllable:

DIS'ARM DIS'CARD DIS'BAND  
 DISPLAY DIS'COUNT DIS'MISS  
 DIS''CUSS

(xiii) Verbs of two syllables ending in *-ate, -ise, -ize* and *-ct* are stressed on the last syllable:

DE'BATE BAP'TIZE AT'TRACT  
 MIG'RATE CAP'SIZE CON'NECT  
 VI'BRATE COM'PRISE REJ'ECT  
 LO'CATE SUR'PRISE DE'TECT

Accent and pronunciation are corollary to the voice of the speaker. In fact, a man's personality and character may be indicated by his voice which is peculiar to every individual. We may try to understand the characteristic features of voice in general. Some people have a rich and resonant voice while some others have rough and gruff voice. While some have a soft and musical voice, others have a squeaky voice. It is obvious that no two persons have a similar voice. However, they must modulate their voice and utter sounds correctly to impress the listeners.

A modulated tone or voice has four features namely, quality, pitch, volume and rate. Speakers may have the same degree of the pitch, rate and volume, but the quality of voice of no two other speakers could be similar. However, with a strong will, determination and incessant practice one can improve the quality of one's voice by getting rid of harshness, hoarseness, breathiness, nasalization, throatiness and the muffled quality of the tone.

The pitch is the highness or the lowness of the voice. The pitch falls or rises according to a

particular situation. This can be trained through practice. The volume of the voice is achieved by an efficient use of one's breath. Since volume and pitch sometimes mix up, the voice croaks and squeaks resulting in a deafening sound. One must guard oneself against undesirable and unwanted possibility. The rate of speech depends upon one's emotions. One may speed up or slow down according to particular situations. In a speech, one should not be too fast. There must be pauses. The listeners must be given adequate time to settle down. They must also be given a little pause now and then. Since listening is an activity of the mind, too much speed is unproductive, unprofitable and counterproductive.

By nature all men are alike, but learning and practice make them distinct and different. As Mark Twain observed "Cauliflower is nothing but cabbage with college education. One's greatness and achievements are of one's own making. Practice and training make a man perfect. Thus accent and pronunciation are playing a vital role in making an effective speech. Pronunciation is an ornament to speech. The students must continuously practice to gain the mastery in it. The schools and colleges must provide the necessary equipment. Such a leader's secret of success is his gift of effective speech.

#### Recommendations

1. A department of English has to be established in every college with staff having sufficient training and experience.
2. The course must have a syllabus and a system of examinations and evaluation with weight age.
3. The course must have computer and communication laboratories with good soft ware.
4. In schools teachers must be trained properly
5. audio visual aids to be sufficiently provided in schools and colleges
6. Guest lectures by eminent specialists must be organized as often as possible.

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