



A Study on the Feasibility of Teaching Intonation to the ESL Learners through George Bernard Shaw's Play Pygmalion

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Abstract

This paper aims to project the importance of Intonation in pronunciation and teaching Intonation to ESL learners through George Bernard Shaw's play Pygmalion. Since English Language plays an important role in communication and Information technology, the acquisition of the exact pronunciation of this lingua franca is a complicated task. So the learners and teachers must be aware of the different types teaching and learning strategies to acquire the apt skills in pronunciation. Clear pronunciation helps to convey both objective and subjective ideas of the speaker. In pronunciation, much importance is given to the segmental part of language than the suprasegmental. Suprasegmental helps to understand and to speak the language in a proper way. Intonation is one of the features of suprasegmental aspects and it is the rising and falling of a pitch in spoken language. Intonation plays a crucial role in expressing emotional content and speakers' intended message in a speech by changing pitch according to it. Learning any skills is greatly enhanced when appropriate tools are employed. Play as a medium, can foster language learning, boost creativity and enhance communication skills of the learners. In this paper, a theoretical analysis of intonation within the context of the play Pygmalion has been undergone and explains how this play serves as a valuable tool for developing the pronunciation skills. Only selected dialogues from Pygmalion are utilized in this paper to illustrate the concept of intonation. This paper offers insightful information to ESL learners on how play aids in learning Intonation can effectively.

I. INTRODUCTION

Communication is the fundamental aspect of human interaction and enables individuals to transmit their ideas. Language learning becomes profitable when they are spoken with accurate pronunciation. Pronunciation is how the language is spoken, it impacts the content that is interpreted, explained and understood in a conversation. In the ESL context, learners' communication and proper

pronunciation are necessary for efficient language acquisition. Phonetics is closely associated with pronunciation and dealing with how human speech sounds are produced transmitted and perceived. Segmental and suprasegmental are the phonetic aspects of pronunciation. Segmental includes syllable, vowel and consonant sounds and suprasegmental are intonation, sentence stress, word accent and rhythm which are essential for expressing proper emotion and accurate pronunciation. Grammar and

vocabulary are the segmental aspects of pronunciation and much more importance is given in ESL curricula than suprasegmental aspects. Suprasegmental is essential for expressing pronunciation. On examining socio-cultural and psychological trends in the phonological model it is found that students felt the importance of suprasegmental features and their necessity in social interaction (Zhang, 2004).

Intonation

Native speakers of English do not speak monotone, the sounds they produce are varying like their voices rising and falling and hearer get a variety of melodies (Kreidler, 1989). Intonation is a change in pitch according to the speaker's attitude, and emotions or to control the flow of speech. Pitch is the relative frequency of vibration of the vocal cords. High pitch means rapid vibration whereas low pitch refers to slow vibration of the vocal cords; raising and falling indicate increasing and decreasing velocity respectively (Kreidler, 1989). It helps in the illocutionary act performed by a phrase and to emphasize a sentence. Intonation helps in differentiating the types of sentences such as exclamation, questions and statements; placing correct intonation in a sentence helps in understanding the grammatical interpretation of the sentence which helps to express emotions and attitudes.

Learning and Teaching Intonation

Teaching intonation is essential for language learning and communication skills. It promotes clear and engaging discourse and improves pronunciation. It effectively equips learners to express themselves clearly and confidently in a variety of social and professional contexts and to reduce miscommunication. Learners gain confidence and actively participate in conversations and presentations. Each language has its significant intonation. Learning intonation helps learners to the language and culture. British style system of intonation consists of holistic nuclear tone or contour which is the primary unit of analysis. The contours are falling, raising, falling-raising, raising-falling and level (Wichman, 2000).

Types of Tunes in intonation with examples:

The falling tune is sometimes referred to as glide down, the voice of the pitch falling from high level to low level. The tone falls on the final stressed syllable of a phrase. In this paper falling tune is marked as \searrow . This tune is normally used in

Wh-questions: when the school \searrow reopen?

Statements: have a nice \searrow day.

Commands: note down the \searrow point

Question tag: It was a good play, \searrow wasn't it?

Exclamation: \searrow marvellous!

The rising tune is referred to as the glide-up. It consists of a rise in the pitch of the voice from low level to high level the tone falls on the final stressed syllable. It is marked as \nearrow . This tune is normally used in

Incomplete statements: I'll buy you a \nearrow watch (if I go there)

Polarity type of question which demands a yes or no answer: are they \nearrow going?

Non-polarity wh question when said in warm/friendly way: how's your \nearrow mother?

Polite requests: go and open the \nearrow door.

Question tag when the response is in opposition to the speaker: you're a watchman, aren't \nearrow you?

Repetition question: who told \nearrow you? (He told me to do that)

Expected responses: \nearrow Thank you. (Raising tune which expresses casual acknowledgement which is not important. To express real gratitude, we must express a particular word with real gratitude, the falling tune is used)

Greeting, parting, apologies, and encouragement: I'm \nearrow sorry.

The falling raising tune is also known as "dipping intonation", the tone falls and then rises indicating uncertainty and when we have more to say. Fall-rise intonation describes how the voice falls and then rises. If the fall is on one syllable and the rise is on the later syllable it is called a divided fall rise. In this paper, it is marked as \vee . It can be used in

Politeness: perhaps could we \vee go there?

Hesitation: I am not supposed to \vee go out

Uncertainty: do you think were \vee allowed?

Doubt: should I \vee do it?

Correcting what someone has said as warning: (he is forty-nine) \vee forty eight

The rise fall tune is called as peaking tune. In this paper it is marked as \wedge . They are used in

Lists: I would like to get some vegetables fruits and \wedge bread

Choices: do you want pen or \wedge marker?

Conditional statements: if he comes, ask him to wait at \wedge office

Benefits of using drama texts to teach intonation

In many ESL materials, artificial dialogues are used in place of real-life conversations which made it difficult for students to learn intonation. Instead, students can learn intonation based on the text. Drama is derived from the Greek word meaning "deed" or "act". Drama is a form of literature that uses dialogue, action and interaction to portray a character and its experience. For language

learners drama texts provide realistic situations within engaging and realistic scenarios. It helps in better articulation, improved diction and clearer pronunciation. Drama texts promote a learner-centered classroom practice, which enables learners to perceive, think, act and interact during the learning process instead of being passive receivers of knowledge (Fleming, 2006). When learners take a role and speak the dialogue they are more likely to use a language authentically and naturally. Through drama, learners gain a heightened awareness of phonetic elements such as segmental and suprasegmental features. George Bernard Shaw (1856-1950) was an Irish dramatist, critic, social propagandist and recipient and winner of the Nobel Prize in 1925. He has scripted sixty plays during his career as a playwright which makes him as a prominent Victorian playwright. George Bernard Shaw's plays continue to captivate the hearts and minds of contemporary readers and literature students alike with their profound emotional depth and astute reasoning. Readers are enticed by his expertly crafted character dialogue. Surprisingly, despite the centuries that have passed, Shaw's works continue to be studied in universities all over the world, attesting to their enduring relevance. Shaw uses his unparalleled mastery of language to convey a range of human experiences in "Pygmalion," including the lowest points of frustration and failure as well as the highest points of humour and success against the backdrop of that era's middle-class society in England. His meticulous word choice serves as a means of expressing feelings and emotions. Nalliveetil gave linguistic analysis on the play Pygmalion applied to create intended communicative effect to appreciate dialogic language and its relevance in the teaching learning of English in ESL classroom (Nalliveetil, 2020). Curz in his article states literature enhances ELT through elements such as authentic material, language in use and aesthetic representation of the spoken language and cultural enrichment (Curz 2010).

Research Questions

This study analyses how George Bernard Shaw play Pygmalion is used to learn intonation among the ESL learners. The research questions state that the following:

What are the benefits of using dialogues from the play to learn intonation?

How to integrate play and intonation to aid pronunciation acquisition among the ESL learners?

How to mark various tunes of intonation in dialogues depending upon the emotional intensity and general rules?

How intonation marks in a dialogue helps ESL learners to pronounce the dialogues with correct intonation?

II. METHODOLOGY

This research constitutes descriptive method. Text of George Bernard Shaw's play "Pygmalion" is selected for in-depth analysis to teach intonation. Specific dialogues from the first act of the play are selected for intonation. This paper encompasses four primary tones of intonation utilizing raising, falling, raising-falling, and falling-raising. In this analysis, we carefully apply intonation marks to the chosen dialogues based on general rules of intonation tunes and emotional intensity in context.

III. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The learner should be aware of the general rules of intonation by learning and listening to the instructor. When the dialogues in the play do not get along with the rules of intonation, the mark of intonation can be made based on the emotions of the character with the guidance of the instructor. In the given dialogues speakers are the flower girl, the note taker, the bystander and group of people around them. Intonation in the given dialogues is marked with general rules and emotional content among the characters.

The Bystander: [to the gir] You be \careful: give him a \flower for it. There's a bloke here /behind taking down every blessed word youre \saying. [All turn to the man who is taking notes]

The Flower Girl: [springing up terrified] I ain't done nothing wrong by speaking to the \gentleman. I've a right to sell \flowers if I keep off the /kerb. [Hysterically] I'm a respectable /girl: so \help me, I never spoke to him expect to ask him to buy a \flower off me.

[General hubbub, mostly sympathetic to the flower girl, but deprecating her excessive sensibility. Cries of don't start hollerin. Who's \hurting you? Nobody's going touch you what's the good of \fussing? /Steady on. /Easy /easy, etc., come from the elderly said spectators, who pat her comfortingly. Less patient ones bid her shut her head, or ask her roughly what is wrong with her. A remoter group, not knowing what the matter is, crowd in and increase the noise with question and answer: Whats the \row? What-she \do? What is \he? A tec taking her down. What! \him? Yes: him /over there: Took money off the /gentleman, etc. The flower girl, distraught and mobbed, breaks through them to the gentleman, crying milgily] Oh, sir, don't let him charge me. You dunno ^what it means to me. They'll take away my \character and drive me on the streets for speaking to the \gentleman. /They---

The Note Taker: [coming forward on her right the rest crowding after him] /There /there \there! Who's hurting you, you silly \girl? what do you take \me for?

The Bystander: It's all \right: he's a \gentleman look at his \boots. [Explaining to the note taker] she thought you was a \copper's mark, sir.

The Note Taker: [with the quick interest] What's a \copper's mark?

The Bystander: [inept at definition] It's a --- well, it's a \copper's mark, as you might \say. What else would you \call it? A sort of \informer.

The Flower Girl: [still hysterically] I take my \Bible oath I never said a \word---

The Note Taker: [overbearing but good humoured] Oh, \shut up, \shut up. Do I look like a \policeman?

The Flower Girl: [far from reassured] Then what did you take down my \words for? How do I know whether you took me down \right? You just \show me what you've wrote about \me. [The note taker opens his book and hold its steadily under her nose, though the pressure of the mob trying to read it over his shoulders would upset a weaker man]. What's \that? That aint proper \writing. I can't read \that.

The Note Taker: I \can. [Read, reproducing her pronunciation exactly], "Cheer ap, \keptin; n' haw ya flar orf a pore \gel."

The Flower Girl: [much distressed] It's because I call him \Captain. I meant no \harm. [To the gentleman] Oh, sir, don't let him lay a charge agen me for a \word like that. \You---

Learning intonation through play helps learners to understand the rise and fall in the dialogues between characters, rather using it in fragmented sentences. Learning through fragmented sentence will not give complete essence to understand intonation. Using dialogues from the play is like people expressing emotions in continuous speech in real life. When instructor reads out the passage according to intonation in dialogues, learners repeat after the instructor. When moving to the next dialogue learners tend to forget because of the lack of understanding. In the initial level, learning intonation just by listening is difficult. In order to solve this problem intonation marking is used which represents the kind of tunes involved in particular sentence. When students learn with proper usage of intonation by clear understanding of general rules and on the basis of emotional context of intonation through proper dialogues, there is no necessity to memorize and lead to proper understanding.

IV. CONCLUSION

Learning intonation through the play Pygmalion is more effective in a classroom. By learning intonation in

such a way, ESL learners avoid the monotonous tone use of second language and start to speak with pitch. Teaching play in literature and language classroom is inevitable because they possess literary value to first and LSRW skills to later. This aids ESL learners in proper learning of language. It helps ESL learners for practical application in real life situation. ESL learner should learn to speak with right intonation and aids in active participation in classroom and creates supportive relation between teacher and the learner during the learning experience, this kind of learning helps in learner centeredness where both learner and teachers become co learners.

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