

RELATION BETWEEN PRONUNCIATION AND SPELLING

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ABSTRACT

The main aim of this article is to investigate the relationship between spelling and pronunciation in English language. Learning to spell correctly is perhaps as important as learning grammar, vocabulary and phonology. Errors in spelling always create a bad impression of the writer. For English learners, one of the reasons that are very important for learning English language is the relationship between spelling and pronunciation, because they are closely connected to each other. Both spelling and pronunciation have a complicated connection between them and the connection is often inconsistent. In other words, most of the English language errors of spelling and pronunciation are due to the lack of connection between them. One of the best strategies to remove these kinds of errors in English language is for the English learners to use the English dictionary and they should also learn phonetic transcription.

Key words: spelling,pronunciation,connect,relation,language error,purpose of learning,phonemic representation.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this brief paper is to highlight the relationship between spelling and pronunciation in English language. We discuss briefly how the English language is the international language in the modern period. English language is used as a world language around the globe; it is used as a language of international business, science and medicine. People of the world prefer to learn English in order to communicate with other people.

Problems with English Spelling and Pronunciation

English language has words which are sometimes spelt quite differently from the way they are pronounced. In other words, English spelling and English pronunciation are hostile and strangers to each other; hostile, because neither accepts without a quarrel the usage of the other; strangers, because very often one does not recognize the other. Note that the learning of English spelling and English pronunciation are as important as learning English grammar and vocabulary to language learners. We look at the history of English spelling in the English language.

Today, no one would deny that in spite of English advantages, the writing system of modern English contains a number of deviations in its phonemic representation. In fact, many of these can be explained historically. It is important to remember that the phonological system of every language changes, but writing systems do so very slowly. There are many so-called silent letters in modern English spelling which originated at a time when they actually did represent sound segments. For example, the letters "gh" in fight, light, and night date back to the old English sound segment [x], a voiceless fricative produced at the position of articulation of either [k] or [c]. Just as English has borrowed words, morphemes, and phonological features, so it has also borrowed spellings from other languages. For example, in the Middle English period, many literate people knew French as well as English. Many French words were borrowed into English during this period, so many in fact, that the language gradually became quite different from Old English spoken in earlier days and it is not surprising that some characteristics of French writing were extended to English. (Falk, 1978)

Pronunciation always plays the key role in the recognition of a word in speech. Learning correct pronunciation of English words is the most important factor in learning and teaching a foreign and second language. In other words, this is a big problem for English language learners, because the English language does not have fixed phonetic rules. An important point to note about the above sentence is that the English language has borrowed words and expressions extensively from many languages throughout its history. That, in fact, is the main reason for the pronunciation of those words which naturally sound different from the spelling, since they were borrowed from other languages into the English language.

Spelling contains the rules which govern the way letters are used to write the words of speech; a particular sequence of letters in a word. The history of English spelling begins with the origins of English in the British Isles 1500 years ago. This long history has led to many oddities of English spelling. They are factors that have caused the complexity between and spelling in English Language: first factor is that the pronunciation of English Language has changed over the last 500 years and second one is the thousands of words English has taken from other languages such as India, Latin, and Greek.

Spelling is a linguistic unit of language which refers to writing skill directly. The learning of writing is one of the most important skills that second language learners need to develop their ability to communicate ideas and information effectively in target language. Writing can be recognized as an integral part of the language learning process in ELT classroom.

CONCLUSION

Languages change throughout their existence - new words get introduced, old words dropout of use, meanings shift and pronunciation alter. English language is no exception. Every word in English has a history. There are certain words in English which do not have the same spelling or even the pronunciation as in the period of Anglo Saxons, 2000 years ago. The written form of the English Language represents its spoken form. In English Language, sometimes one sound is represented by one single letter, sometimes one sound is represented by more than one letter and sometimes more than one sound represent only one letter.

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