



This is a graded discussion: 10 points possible

due Feb 21

## Week 4 Questions and Graded Discussion

41 74

### Week 4 Questions

Choose two questions and post your answers in Week 4 this discussion forum:

1. If you are a proficient speaker of another language (or have studied another language), describe what would be typical difficulties in pronouncing English sounds for the speakers of that language.
2. The sound and spelling of English do not match exactly. For example the **sound /sh/** like the one in the word **shirt** can be spelled 14 different ways. What are these fourteen different ways? Challenge yourself, don't google it!
3. If you are working on your answers later in the week, the spelling of /sh/ may be exhausted, so you can work on finding out **five (or more ways) the sound /k/ is spelled.**
4. What are the best strategies to teach English pronunciation to English learners? What are some factors to keep in mind?

Due date: Feb.21, 2021

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<https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/130203>

Feb 15, 2021



1. *If you are a proficient speaker of another language (or have studied another language), describe what would be typical difficulties in pronouncing English sounds for the speakers of that language.*

I'm not by any stretch of the imagination a fluent speaker of Korean, but the sounds that gave me the most trouble were the two g/k consonants, ㄱ vs. ㅋ. I know someone who actually speaks Korean will be able to better break this down, but one is more like g (thought

sometimes more like k?) and the other is a more aspirated k, but it comes from further back in your throat (can you tell I still don't really grasp the phoneme?). I can never quite hear the difference, so, as this week's reading from Robertson points out, I could never quite produce the difference, and in turn I got very self-conscious about it. I have the same problem, though it's not quite as bad, with ㅃ vs. ㅅ vs. ㅆ - again, sort of like b, then a b that's even more, then a p, but not quite the same. These are the four sounds my wife will, to this day, try to drill me on when I mess them up.

I've noticed that there are a few sounds in Portuguese that are tricky for English speakers, mostly those that require some nasalization, which we don't really do much of in English except at the end of words (i.e., -ng). So, for example, the word julho (July) requires you to put your tongue into something like the English "l" position in July, but instead of pressing off like you're jumping into a pool, your tongue glides just off the surface. I don't imagine that's helpful, is it? It requires you to make the sound in that upper-mouth/nose region that we don't use much in English. The -em and -ão sound also require some nasalization, so they are tricky as well - I know this because these are the sounds I'll correct my wife on ;-).

\*I completely misread the question, so let me add: the English "r" is tricky both for Korean speakers (Russell broke that down below, so I won't rehash it) and Portuguese speakers - the Portuguese "r" makes different sounds depending on its location in the word. Adding to the confusion in the diaspora, Mass/Rhode Island English is non-rhotic. The result is that (Azorean) Portuguese speakers turn a word like "more," which sounds like "maaw" for Mass/RI natives, into something like "moawa." The beginning-of-word "r" in Portuguese is guttural and h-ey, so that often lingers too. The capital of the Portuguese diaspora in America, Fall River, thus becomes something like "Fall Hriv."

*2. The sound and spelling of English do not match exactly. For example the sound /sh/ like the one in the word shirt can be spelled 14 different ways. What are these fourteen different ways? Challenge yourself, don't google it!*

This is tough. I could not get fourteen, but I did manage a not very inspiring eight:

1. sh: shirt
2. sch: schwa
3. sc: fascia
4. c: social
5. ch: sachet
6. t: position
7. ss: permission
8. s: sure

I remember hearing that, for non-speakers, one of the most distinct features of English is all of its s and sh sounds. This activity is making me realize just how common the "sh" sound

really is.

I hope you're all able to come up with more than me. I'm resisting the urge to Google this but man, I really want to know what the other seven are.

Edited by [Christian Aguiar \(He/Him/His\)](https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/130203) on Feb 17 at 7:13am

[← Reply](#)



[Chiaki](https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/112607)

Feb 16, 2021

Hi Christian,

I took a beginning level Korean class more than 10 years ago, and I remember having a hard time pronouncing the two sounds, /k/ and /g/ as you mentioned. The reason I couldn't pronounce the two sounds correctly was that I couldn't tell the difference between the two sounds. They sound almost the same to me. I listened to "Julho" and tried pronouncing it as you described, but it was hard.

[← Reply](#)



[Christian Aguiar \(He/Him/His\)](https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/130203)

Feb 17, 2021

Exactly! I was frustrated that I couldn't tell the difference because there really didn't seem to *be* a difference, so reading the linguistic explanation for that has been a relief.

[← Reply](#)



[Viktorija Lejko-Lacan](https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/731)

Feb 21, 2021

Christian, Your answer to #1 is a great analysis of struggle with sounds in other languages. First, we don't hear the difference, then we are trying hard to notice the difference, analyze the sounds, and try, try again. But if we don't hear the difference, it'll be impossible to pronounce the sounds.

[← Reply](#)



(https://

[Lisa Bradbury \(https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/146949\)](https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/146949)

Feb 16, 2021

- 1. If you are a proficient speaker of another language (or have studied another language), describe what would be typical difficulties in pronouncing English sounds for the speakers of that language.**

The language that I studied was Arabic. After teaching English to Arabic adults, I realized they have pronunciation problems with the sounds for 'b'/p', and 'f'/v'. For example, for pencil, they would say 'bencil'. Since there is no 'v' sound in Arabic, they use the 'f' sound instead. So, for the word very, they say 'fery'. Their intonation and word stress is another problem and it is usually very monotone. For example, questions sound like statements. Pronunciation is a problem because they use the rules of Arabic. It is important to help Arabic ESL students exaggerate the stresses and intonations, to learn all the new English rules, and how words are pronounced properly. Lots of practice and listening exercises help.

- 4. What are the best strategies to teach English pronunciation to English learners? What are some factors to keep in mind?**

The factors to keep in mind when it comes to English pronunciation is to know the linguistic differences between the two languages. If you know the common pronunciation struggles of your students you can better prepare and teach them the proper English pronunciation. Exaggerating the sounds and having them emulate the formation of your mouth and where your tongue is placed helps tremendously. Repetition is the key and the more practice they have, the better. Making recordings and teaching them songs in English help a lot. Their accent may never leave but as long as they are understood, that is the goal. I like to use pronunciation games like Word Bingo. I make up cards with nine words on it and they have to find a word with the sound that I pronounce. They work extra hard if there is a prize for the first to cross out all of their words.

← [Reply](#)



(http

[Chiaki \(https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/112607\)](https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/112607)

Feb 16, 2021

Hi Lisa,

English is my second language and I have a hard time pronouncing /f/ and /v/ as well. I didn't know Arabic speakers have the same pronunciation problem as Japanese speakers. As you mentioned, exaggerating the sounds and having them emulate the formation of

your mouth is very helpful. Thinking back now, I realized that I never received that kind of explicit instruction on how to pronounce English when I first started learning English.

I like your idea of Word Bingo. I have played bingo in my class for vocab recognition but never used it for pronunciation activity. Great idea!

← Reply



**Raquel Armendariz (She/Her/Hers)** (<https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/129028>)

Feb 21, 2021



Thank you for those wonderful suggestions, Lisa!

I think it's important to know as much as we can about pronunciation struggles our students may have, due to their first language and lack of use of equivalent sounds. While we have the letter V and W in Spanish, W is often pronounced as a V for some reason. My mother, for example, will say "voud" for the word "wood". Or sometimes replace it with a G sound, such as "Güeeliam" for William. Your mention of the common struggles made me realize that.

← Reply



**MaryAnn Wilson** (<https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/94764>)

Feb 16, 2021



**3. If you are working on your answers later in the week, the spelling of /sh/ may be exhausted, so you can work on finding out five (or more ways) the sound /k/ is spelled.**

I started working on the sh sound but I cheated, so I did the k sound instead:

k: kill

qu: quiche, question

ck: frack

c: cannon, client

ch: chrysanthemum

x: fixture

#### 4. What are the best strategies to teach English pronunciation to English learners? What are some factors to keep in mind?

According to the class notes, students look at reading aloud as a possibility to sound out words and practice pronunciation. Choral reading, in which the whole class reads after the teacher, is also encouraged; as well as reading in pairs after the teacher has modeled reading. In "Reading 101," it states: "Be careful to use only words that students know in English." Thus, when introducing new vocabulary it's best to teach meaning before pronunciation, which could include discussing why those words are pronounced the way they are, using the guidelines suggested by the article, "How to Teach Pronunciation," such as syllable stress, voiced and voiceless consonants, silent letters, and silent final 'e' for beginning ELLs. I like the suggestion of using games to help students learn and practice pronunciation. Students could learn a jazz chant or even make up their own.

I believe that newly learned words should be used over and over again from that point on, so that each new text contains old as well as new vocabulary words. I would limit the number of new vocabulary words to about five at a time, in order to increase the chances that new vocabulary isn't lost after a test, but transferred to long-term memory.

← [Reply](#)



[Chiaki \(https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/112607\)](https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/112607)

Feb 16, 2021

Hi Mary Ann,

I was taking an ESL class before taking classes for my teaching credential. I used to feel uncomfortable when people try to correct my pronunciation in public other than my English teachers. I think it would have been easier if it was through games or music, and in a welcoming classroom atmosphere. Therefore, I think it's a great idea to use games to help students learn pronunciation as you mentioned. I teach Japanese to high school students. I have my students listen and sing along to songs sometimes, and encourage them to make a song or rap as one of the options for a final project, but very few students choose to do so. I may have assign group work to create a song together next time. Thank you for sharing great ideas.

Edited by [Chiaki \(https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/112607\)](https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/112607) on Feb 16 at 7:30pm

← [Reply](#)



[Christian Aguiar \(He/Him/His\)](https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/130203) (https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/130203)

Feb 17, 2021

I found the emphasis on reading aloud and choral reading interesting too, Mary Ann. I've been trying to do more reading work in my classes, and I always felt that (with adult learners) reading aloud was too basic and was just a mask for students who hadn't done the reading. I found that the students *love* doing it, but I didn't trust their enjoyment was indicative of any real value. It seems like they don't just like it - it truly helps!

[← Reply](#)



[MaryAnn Wilson](https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/94764) (https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/94764)

Feb 17, 2021

Thanks, Christian. What made you realize that reading aloud really did help your students? Is there a difference between adult learners and younger learners in terms of its effectiveness?

[← Reply](#)



[Christian Aguiar \(He/Him/His\)](https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/130203) (https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/130203)

Feb 18, 2021

I realized it just this week when I read the material you point to in your post. My assumption was always that read-aloud was good for little children, but not helpful for adults. However, the explanation in the readings makes me think that it might be good for adults learning to read in a second language, too. Perhaps Prof. Lejko-Lacan can help us out with that?

[← Reply](#)



[Viktorija Lejko-Lacan](https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/731) (https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/731)

Feb 21, 2021

Christian and Mary Ann, Yes, reading aloud works for adults second language learners (and even native speakers). Students get an opportunity to sound out (new) words and get their correct pronunciation confirmed. They

also get to practice stress and intonation which they may not be able otherwise. Also, don't forget that many students have very few opportunities to speak English outside class regardless of where they live. What is important is to always give student the option of PASS if they don't want to read. Also, don't forget that some students may have been asked by their supervisor to read something aloud at a meeting. There is no safer place to practice reading aloud than a classroom.

← [Reply](#)



[Lisa Bradbury](https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/146949) (https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/146949)

Feb 19, 2021

Hi Mary Ann,

I love your idea of using jazz chants. I remember using them with my kindergarten class and, wow, they were so effective. The students have so much fun, they don't even realize they are learning. One that they really loved for past tense verbs is, "I Went Walking". The teacher repeats, "I went walking, walking", students chant back, "Where did you go?" Then, the teacher says, "I walked all the way to Mexico." The chant continues with the teacher changing the verbs to swim, hike, run, etc... Students love to eventually do the teacher part and lead the class.

← [Reply](#)



[Viktorija Lejko-Lacan](https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/731) (https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/731)

Feb 21, 2021

Lisa and Mary Ann, Carolyn Graham is the author of several books of Jazz Chants. Many of the short chants are available on youtube, too.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5UMFa5NcSol&list=PLauwxQ-VGyUvLfp5Ckk\\_ajLSmH0fluibj&index=1](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5UMFa5NcSol&list=PLauwxQ-VGyUvLfp5Ckk_ajLSmH0fluibj&index=1) (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5UMFa5NcSol&list=PLauwxQ-VGyUvLfp5Ckk\_ajLSmH0fluibj&index=1)



[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5UMFa5NcSol&list=PLauwxQ-VGyUvLfp5Ckk\\_ajLSmH0fluibj&index=1](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5UMFa5NcSol&list=PLauwxQ-VGyUvLfp5Ckk_ajLSmH0fluibj&index=1)

[Jazz Chant 1](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5UMFa5NcSol&list=PLauwxQ-VGyUvLp5Ckk_ajLSmH0fluibj&index=1) [\\_ \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5UMFa5NcSol&list=PLauwxQ-VGyUvLp5Ckk\\_ajLSmH0fluibj&index=1\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5UMFa5NcSol&list=PLauwxQ-VGyUvLp5Ckk_ajLSmH0fluibj&index=1)

← [Reply](#)



[Valeria Barrera](https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/160473)  [\(https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/160473\)](https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/160473)

Feb 21, 2021

Hi Mary Ann,

I cheated too and started reading other student's posts! So I decided I would give the /k/ sound a try.

Would you have guessed some of the /sh/ sounds on your own? As I started reading the examples, I realized I would have gone as far as guessing 5 MAX.

I'm glad you mentioned choral reading as a way to improve pronunciation. My students really enjoy reading out loud in class. I've also received feedback from them that reading out loud helps better understand what they're reading.

← [Reply](#)



[Chiaki](https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/112607)  [\(https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/112607\)](https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/112607)

Feb 16, 2021

1. If you are a proficient speaker of another language (or have studied another language), describe what would be typical difficulties in pronouncing English sounds for the speakers of that language.

My first language is Japanese, so I'm explaining the sounds of English that are typically hard for Japanese speakers to pronounce. There are many sounds that exist in English but not in Japanese, such as /f/, /v/, /θ/, and /ð/. Therefore, speakers of Japanese generally experience difficulties pronouncing those sounds. Pronouncing /r/ and /l/ are hard as well.

Not only consonants, but some vowel sounds that are hard to pronounce are /æ/ and /ɑ/. For example, hat and hot are difficult. This is because there are only five vowel sounds in Japanese, while approximately 20 vowel sounds in English.

Moreover, all Japanese alphabets have a vowel sound, either solely vowel or a combination of a consonant and a vowel, except for the sound /N/. There's no word that ends in a consonant

other than /N/. Due to this, it is hard to pronounce words that end with a consonant such as cap, month, cat, etc.

One example sentence that is challenging for them to pronounce is, “Elizabeth and Thorvald purchase their favorite popular thousand islands dressing in a rural area every month regularly, meanwhile, Valerie temporarily prefers ventriloquial activities. “

2. The sound and spelling of English do not match exactly. For example, the sound /sh/ like the one in the word *shirt* can be spelled 14 different ways. What are these fourteen different ways? Try not to google the answer!

Some of the ways to spell the sound /sh/ are “sh” as in she, “s” as in sugar, “che” as in cache, “ch” as in choux, “ti” as in motion, “sch” as in schwa, “ss” as in discussion, “ci” as in musician, “ce” as in ocean, “se” as in Sean, and xi as in “ President Xi.” I can only think of the above 11 different ways.

Edited by [Chiaki \(https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/112607\)](https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/112607) on Feb 16 at 5:04pm

[← Reply](#)



[Melinda Cavalletto \(https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/150435\)](https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/150435)

Feb 17, 2021

Hi Chiaki,

Since English is my one and only language I cannot imagine how difficult learning English would be for native-speaking Japanese. I am curious about how difficult the transition from Kangi characters to the English alphabet was. What type of challenges did you find?

[← Reply](#)



[Chiaki \(https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/112607\)](https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/112607)

Feb 20, 2021

Hi Melinda,

Thank you for your response.

It's challenging as you can imagine, but learning English is like a long, never-ending journey for me, so I'm trying to enjoy the learning process as well.

I'm surprised that you know about kanji. The Japanese writing system is very different from English, so writing is the hardest. However, speaking and listening are not easy either. I can understand people in California relatively easily but have a hard time understanding different accents. Also, to be able to communicate well in English, EL learners have to know the cultural differences and social norms as well. I came to the U.S. in my late 20s, so it was hard to learn expected behaviors, manners, and etiquette in this country. It would be helpful if ESL teachers could include them in their lessons for adult EL learners.

Have a wonderful week!

Best,

← [Reply](#)



[Viktorija Lejko-Lacan \(https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/731\)](https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/731)

Feb 22, 2021

Chiaki, Good point about ELs having to learn cultural differences and pragmatics (how to use the language in different situations). Fortunately, we are far from the experience of Eliza Doolittle from *My Fair Lady*. Her tutor was an egocentric misogynist and a terrible snob.

[My Fair Lady](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uKxd30IQ1f0) [\\_ \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uKxd30IQ1f0\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uKxd30IQ1f0)

← [Reply](#)



[Chiaki \(https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/112607\)](https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/112607)

Feb 24, 2021

Hello Professor Lejko-Lacan,

Thank you for sharing the link. I heard about the movie and the famous line "the rain in Spain..." but I've never seen the scene. The way her tutor teaches is very outdated and not culturally responsive. It's not an appropriate way to teach in 2021, but it may have been OK back then or it is fine only in a movie.

← [Reply](#)



[Lisa Bradbury \(https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/146949\)](https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/146949)

Feb 20, 2021

Hi Chiaki,

That sentence is a challenge for me too, and I'm a native speaker. :) I have had some Japanese language classes that I took while living in Tokyo. It was fun and I fell in love with Japan and the Japanese people. Where is your home town?

I lived in Okinawa, Japan for two months and taught Japanese kindergarteners at Okinawa Christian School. Prior to that I had learned the hiragana and katakana through a workbook study. I loved it! I still remember lots of the alphabet and can write my name in Japanese. Japanese is a very difficult language so I applaud you for knowing both English and Japanese so well.

[← Reply](#)



[Chiaki \(https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/112607\)](https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/112607)

Feb 21, 2021

Hi Lisa,

Thank you for trying saying the sentence! I'm from Kobe, but I've never been to Okinawa. I'd like to go there someday.

I'm glad that you had a great time there and that you still remember katakana and hiragana. Thank you for your kind words:)

[← Reply](#)



[Russell Fung \(He/Him/His\) \(https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/147480\)](https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/147480)

Feb 16, 2021

As someone who grew up in both a Chinese-speaking and English-speaking household, I noticed that "R" sounds are hard to pronounce. The L and R sounds in the English language are actually combined in East Asian languages such as Mandarin and Japanese. As an English speaker, I have a hard time saying the Chinese "R/L" sound. For example, there is a dish called Lu Rou. In order to say this, I had to train my tongue to curl to the back of my mouth while my lips form a puckered shape. The opposite is also true, that I also have a hard

time saying the "R" sounds in American English. The word, "brother" often comes out as "bwatha." I had to train myself to use the "R" sounds properly for both Chinese and English languages. Then I learned French in high school and their "R" sounds are different too.

14 ways to spell the "sh" sound:

1. sch (mustasche)
2. che (cache)
3. sche (mustasche)
4. tze (nietzsche)
5. ti (station)
6. zhe
7. je
8. sze (Szechuan)
9. xi
10. xse
11. ce (cent)
12. cze
13. zhi
14. geois (bourgeoisie)

Those are my guesses.

Edited by [Russell Fung](https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/147480) on Feb 16 at 5:26pm

[← Reply](#)



[Christian Aguiar \(He/Him/His\)](https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/130203)

Feb 17, 2021

You did a much better job than I did, Russell. I notice that a lot of the "sh" sounds come in loan words from Chinese, German, and French. I guess that's one of the things that makes English spelling varied - it keeps a lot of words from other alphabetical languages intact, and then uses a mishmash of Romanization systems for non-alphabetic languages.

[← Reply](#)



[Michelle Akamine \(https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/153411\)](https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/153411)

Feb 17, 2021

Hi Russell,

This had me thinking about how a lot of the East Asian languages have similarities in their phonology. I also remember having to train my tongue to distinguish Japanese /r/ and English /r/. I would say "ramen" with a Japanese /r/ and my friends thought I was saying "namen" (whatever that means). Now when I'm with them I have to remember to say ramen the American way and I usually put a large emphasis on /r/ out of spite.

[← Reply](#)



[Diana Burga \(https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/118042\)](https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/118042)

Feb 18, 2021

Russell-- You're a master at this! It was so hard for me to come up with the list of "sh" sounds and made it to about half! I have also noticed that the r sound can be tricky for many students but many from Asia. It reminds me of how English speakers have a hard time in Spanish when words end in d-- they think its a T! Every language has its struggles.

[← Reply](#)



[Valeria Barrera \(https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/160473\)](https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/160473)

Feb 17, 2021

**1. If you are a proficient speaker of another language (or have studied another language), describe what would be typical difficulties in pronouncing English sounds for the speakers of that language.**

I grew up speaking Spanish and you'll still hear me chuckle when my parents mix up the words "beach" with "bitch" and "sheet" and "shit". At first, I thought it was due to a difficulty in pronunciation. However, after this week, I understand how the /i/ phoneme in Spanish stays the same in any word, but in English, we can find different pronunciations for it -this can be very confusing for any English learner.

In French, the phonemes /r/, /θ/, and /h/ can make any head hurt. My boyfriend struggles to pronounce words like ready, happy, and third. I remember the day I asked him if I could find an

equivalent of a "thesaurus" in French and we spent close to a minute practicing the pronunciation of the word "thesaurus". While the /r/ phoneme sounds completely different in the French language and can be hard to match, the /th/ and /h/ phoneme simply cannot be found.

**3. If you are working on your answers later in the week, the spelling of /sh/ may be exhausted, so you can work on finding out *five (or more ways) the sound /k/ is spelled.***

Ok, here we go:

1. kite
2. cake (does this one count for two?)
3. queue
4. sick
5. ax
6. schedule (the American way to pronounce it!)
7. respect

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**Michelle Akamine** (<https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/153411>)

Feb 17, 2021

Hi Valeria,

It's so funny how mispronouncing certain words can make the meaning so different. It reminds me of when I was working in Hawaii and when tourists would say how they enjoyed the "lua" (bathroom) when they meant to say "luau" (feast). Also, wow I didn't get as many /k/ spellings as you! Those are some great examples.

← [Reply](#)



**Valeria Barrera** (<https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/160473>)

Feb 21, 2021

Hi Michelle,

Most of these mistakes are just another excuse for a good laugh! Do you speak Hawaiian fluently?

Thanks for your comment.

[← Reply](#)



**Michelle Akamine** (<https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/153411>)

Feb 21, 2021

I don't speak Hawaiian but I am pretty familiar with Hawaii Creole English, which uses a lot of Hawaiian words. There are also a lot of signs and announcements around the islands that incorporate the Hawaiian language. If I have free time, I think it would be nice to learn the language though.

[← Reply](#)



**Diana Burga** (<https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/118042>)

Feb 18, 2021

Hi Valeria,

The beach vs bitch mistake is classic lol! I have heard it many of times and sometimes wondered how much of it was a mistake and on purpose ;) I agree that the pronunciation of I can be hard. Short vowels vs long vowels can be especially tricky for our Spanish speakers!

[← Reply](#)



**Valeria Barrera** (<https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/160473>)

Feb 21, 2021

You're right! Long vowels and short vowels. I never thought of them in those terms. I always had a hard time with them, too.

My common mistake was always mispronouncing the word 'book'. I would pronounce it like the Spanish 'buk'.

Thanks for your input!

Edited by **Valeria Barrera** (<https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/160473>) on Feb 21 at 12:05pm

[← Reply](#)



**Russell Fung (He/Him/His)** (<https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/147480>)

Feb 21, 2021

Hi Valeria,

As someone who didn't learn Spanish in high school, I found your anecdotes with the Spanish "i" to be enlightening. I did hear those jokes with "beach" and "sheet" from classmates, and I just thought it was a pronunciation joke. I didn't know it was specifically Spanish.

As someone who learned French in high school, it also didn't occur to me that French speakers don't know the sound "th." Your anecdotes with your boyfriend definitely gave a more personalized feel to this knowledge, so thank you for sharing!

← [Reply](#)

○



[https://](https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/153411)

[Michelle Akamine \(https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/153411\)](https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/153411)

⋮

Feb 17, 2021

If you are a proficient speaker of another language (or have studied another language), describe what would be typical difficulties in pronouncing English sounds for the speakers of that language.

Japanese does not have any labiodental or interdental sounds like English, so /f/, /v/, /θ/, and /ð/ would be difficult to pronounce. For loanwords and pseudo-anglicisms (*gairaigo* and *wasei-eigo*), /v/ sounds are usually replaced with /b/. So, when first learning English, many students will hear and use /b/. The only exception that I am aware of, might be for speakers familiar with Yaeyama Okinawa dialect since there is a /v/ sound (there are probably not that many people like that though). Voiced and voiceless "th" sound does not exist in Japanese either, usually getting replaced with /s/, /t/, or /d/. Although Japanese has a /r/, there is no /l/, which causes difficulties in distinguishing the two sounds. I would have to look into this more, but I think that the Japanese /r/ is different from the English /r/.

If you are working on your answers later in the week, the spelling of /sh/ may be exhausted, so you can work on finding out **five (or more ways) the sound /k/ is spelled**.

1. k: kale
2. c: camera
3. ck: lucky
4. qu: plaque
5. ch: echo

← [Reply](#)

○



[Russell Fung \(He/Him/His\)](https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/147480) (<https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/147480>)

Feb 21, 2021

Hi Michelle,

As I mentioned to Valeria, I didn't know that French speakers can't pronounce the "th" sound. Now thanks to you, I learned that Japanese speakers also do not have the "th" sound in their language. It's so interesting that English has that specific sound. Now it makes sense why there were kids who had to take speech classes to pronounce "th" and "s" sounds they couldn't distinguish. As for the "l" and "r" sound in Japanese, that one I can relate to personally. Thanks for sharing all of that!

-Russell

← [Reply](#)



[Simiry Cuadra](https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/123594) (<https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/123594>)

Feb 17, 2021

1. If you are a proficient speaker of another language (or have studied another language), describe what would be typical difficulties in pronouncing English sounds for the speakers of that language.

A language I am proficient in is Spanish. Growing up, I had difficulty pronouncing the sound "ch". It was challenging for me to distinguish the difference between their sounds. For example, when I would pronounce teacher, I would verbalize it as "teasher". I eventually learned the difference between both of them, but it made me understand and identify this same issue with students who speak Spanish and are trying to learn English. I have encountered various students who also share the challenge with the sound "th". When trying to pronounce "the", it sounds like "da". These are typical difficulties that are found when trying to learn English because their vocabulary does not have them.

1. If you are working on your answers later in the week, the spelling of /sh/ may be exhausted, so you can work on finding out **five (or more ways) the sound /k/ is spelled**.
  1. Racquet
  2. Duck
  3. King
  4. Chrysalis
  5. Cop

← [Reply](#)



[Valeria Barrera \(https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/160473\)](https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/160473)

Feb 21, 2021

Hi Simiry,

Nice catch on racquet!

I grew up speaking Spanish and I remember having a wonderful English teacher that focused many hours on pronunciation. I remember so well when she was teaching us how to pronounce "th". I agree with you, it's a hard one to get. I can picture her now in my head showing us with her tongue pressed against her front teeth "th". Her determination paid off!

[← Reply](#)



[Simiry Cuadra \(https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/123594\)](https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/123594)

Feb 21, 2021

Hi Valeria,

Wow! That sounds like an amazing teacher! I don't recall any of my teachers focusing on pronunciation, I wish they did. Emphasizing the sound with her tongue and teeth is a great strategy. I have a student at the time, that is having this issue. He also doesn't have any of his front teeth, so I am wondering if this can be a reason he can't pronounce it.

[← Reply](#)



[Juan Ochoa \(https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/163772\)](https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/163772)

Feb 17, 2021

1) Spanish speakers have a hard time with consonant clusters at the beginning of a word. For example an e- is added in the word "special" to create especial. The challenge when teaching the sounds of a new language is that the speaker will bring all of their knowledge from the L1 into the L2 and even though they are aware of the differences their muscle memory will still make the speakers speak in the form of the L1. Reading could also be a challenge to Spanish speakers share many cognates with English. Words such as Error, Factor and Judicial are spelled the same but have different meanings to them. That is why the teacher should be

aware of this and use cognates to their advantage to show the differences in the pronunciation.

4) In my opinion listening to music in the target L2 is the best way to get accustomed to the sounds. Music is a great way to aid with sound learning because it makes it more fun to repeat what is being said. Reading is another great way to boost vocabulary and practice speech. However, a certain level of understanding should be achieved before reading. Both of these could complement each other by letting the student practice listening and then producing the sounds with reading. A good way to complement reading is to use cognates if the language shares any, That is how I got familiar with Russian when I started learning.

← [Reply](#)



[Yoko Matsubara \(https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/161025\)](https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/161025)

Feb 17, 2021

Hi Juan,

I like how you mentioned listening to music in the target L2. That was how I started speaking English, Spanish, and Portuguese- because I liked many music genres that happened to be in those languages. As you said, if you like music, not only is it fun to do, you also repeat it to the level of perfection so it is a very effective way to condition yourself to the native sound of the target language. I would add singing! :)

← [Reply](#)



[Silver Park \(https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/147686\)](https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/147686)

Feb 18, 2021

Hello Juan, I really appreciate your point of bringing the muscle memory of L1 into L2 learning acquisition. People tend to use what they are used to in their habits, in like manner, they could be aware of the difference in sounds but still make the sounds in the form of L1. I agree that the teachers should be aware of this and show the differences in the pronunciation and keep making them practice in in the correct form.

← [Reply](#)



[MaryAnn Wilson \(https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/94764\)](https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/94764)

Feb 18, 2021

Hi Juan,

Funny you should mention listening to music in the target L2. It's been a long time since I've tried to learn Russian, but recently a friend of mine (who studied Russian as well) sent me this song: [Конец Электроники | The End of Electronics - Ночь | Night](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LbtEqdcSkD0) (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LbtEqdcSkD0>) and I liked it so much I tried learning the words and [translating them](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LbtEqdcSkD0) (<https://lyricstranslate.com/en/%D0%BD%D0%BE%D1%87%D1%8C-noch-night.html-0>) so I could sing along. My friend and I discussed the translation on email. Nothing like fun music to motivate!

← [Reply](#)



[Juan Ochoa \(https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/163772\)](https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/163772)

Feb 21, 2021

Hi Mary, Thank you for sharing this song! Im also a Russian Language learner and finding songs that I really enjoyed really helped me learn confusing sounds like [ы]

← [Reply](#)



[Christian Aguiar \(He/Him/His\) \(https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/130203\)](https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/130203)

Feb 18, 2021

Your post helped me realize something I'd never considered, Juan: several of my students, including one whose paper I was commenting on this morning, struggle with the word "especially" - they turn it into "specially." I never got it, because I thought, well, in Portuguese we would write "especial"; surely it's same in Spanish, so this should be easy, right? But "especially" is a special case in English, isn't it? Usually you need to drop the e, but here you keep it.

← [Reply](#)



[Juan Ochoa \(https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/163772\)](https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/163772)

Feb 21, 2021

Hi Christian, maybe your students are getting the words "special" and "especially" confused. perhaps when constructing the word "especially" your students know that "special" is the root word and to turn it into an adverb you just have to add an [-ly] at the end. I can see this being a problem in writing but maybe not so in speech.

← [Reply](#)



<https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/129028>

Feb 17, 2021



1. **If you are a proficient speaker of another language (or have studied another language), describe what would be typical difficulties in pronouncing English sounds for the speakers of that language.**

I am a proficient speaker of another language. I grew up speaking Spanish until my family moved to the U.S. when I was 12-years old. Although my siblings and I didn't encounter any major obstacles that we weren't able to overcome by the time we were out of High School, my older relatives had and STILL have a difficult time not adding a vowel sound to words that start with a double consonant blend. for example, it is typical to hear:

"Stop" pronounced: "ehStop"

"Space" pronounced: "esPace"

and that's because Spanish words never start with an **s + consonant** sound and most words like *Space*, are directly translated as *Espacio*, or *School* for *Escuela* -very similar-sounding words!

Another common or typical difficulty are words with long/short sounding vowels:

"Bit" pronounced: "Beet"

"Her" pronounced: like "Hair"

"Chips" pronounced: "Cheeps"

and that can be attributed to the fact that the Spanish language does not make a distinction between **short and long vowels**. A-E-I-O-U will have the same sound regardless of how a word is spelled (*Mad* vs. *Made* in English, for example, both vowels sound differently in each word even though their spelling is almost identical).

2. **The sound and spelling of English do not match exactly. For example, the sound /sh/ like the one in the word *shirt* can be spelled 14 different ways. If you are working on your answers later in the week, the spelling of /sh/ may be exhausted, so you can work on finding out five (or more ways) the sound /k/ is spelled.**

mechanic

mosquito

attack

doctor or cat

kiss

But that reminds me of one word that completely threw me off when I was learning English: *knife* - "what do you mean the K is silent?! Why?" I remember asking.

Edited by [Raquel Armendariz \(https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/129028\)](https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/129028) on Feb 21 at 10:25pm

← [Reply](#)



[Simiry Cuadra \(https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/123594\)](https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/123594)

Feb 21, 2021



Hi Raquel,

I enjoyed reading your examples of challenges that English language learners face. I wonder if some of these challenges have to do with Spanish only having one sound for the vowels, as English has different sounds. I also speak Spanish, so when someone speaks to me in English, I am able to understand what they are saying, but I wonder how difficult it is for others to understand. For example, in the past, I've taught Mandarin-speaking students, and it has been extremely difficult for me to understand them. From their facial expression, I was able to see that they were frustrated because I didn't understand them. I had to have them show me many times.

← [Reply](#)



[Raquel Armendariz \(She/Her/Hers\) \(https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/129028\)](https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/129028)

Feb 21, 2021



Simiry,

yes, I absolutely believe that the challenges come when you're used to knowing how a letter sounds (or what sound a letter makes, rather) and knowing that it doesn't matter

if it's at the beginning of a word or at the end, etc. it always makes the same sound, and then in L2, there are ALL KINDS of rules and breaking of rules, like...

← Reply



**Juan Ochoa** (<https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/163772>)

Feb 21, 2021



Hi Raquel, adding a vowel to break a consonant cluster at the beginning is one of the biggest mistakes that I hear native Spanish speakers make. My mom who has lived here in this country for 20 plus years still makes this mistake. She has even taken college ESL classes to improve her English pronunciation and still she will make these mistakes if she isn't careful.

← Reply



**Raquel Armendariz (She/Her/Hers)** (<https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/129028>)

Feb 21, 2021



Juan-

Right? My mother as well. But I've noticed that for double consonant words like:

Classes, Try, Cry, Problem, Dress, etc. a vowel at the beginning of the word is not usually added. But almost ALWAYS at right before the SP, ST, SC clusters. AND my mother is from the northern part of Mexico (as am I) so she's hopeless with the CH/SH pronunciation.

Beesh for Beach

Bleesh for Bleach

Sheeken for Chicken...

but, to be fair, she does say

*Shango* instead of Chango

and *Shamacos* instead of Chamacos in her NATIVE language.

And she's been here over 30 years.

Edited by [Raquel Armendariz \(https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/129028\)](https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/129028) on Feb 21 at 10:07pm

← [Reply](#)



[Yoko Matsubara \(https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/161025\)](https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/161025)

Feb 21, 2021

Hi Raquel,

So true with Spanish speakers adding "e" ("eh") to the beginning of the word that starts with an "s." At least it is still pretty easy for English speakers to understand what is meant with just an "e" :)

I would also add English "y" as a difficult one for Spanish speakers to pronounce when a word starts with these. "Yellow" becomes "jello" and my name, "Yoko" is called "Joco" all the time even by those who have been living in the U.S. for a long time!

← [Reply](#)



[Yoko Matsubara \(https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/161025\)](https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/161025)

Feb 17, 2021

1. If you are a proficient speaker of another language (or have studied another language), describe what would be typical difficulties in pronouncing English sounds for the speakers of that language.

I am a native speaker of Japanese.

Japanese is very syllabic, and each syllable is very short, which is almost the opposite of English. The basic units of the Japanese writing system are syllables, and unlike English, each syllable normally has only one or two letters (occasionally three, which is the maximum).

Those syllables are either one of the 5 single vowels (a, i, u, e, o), “n” (at the end of a word or sentence), or mostly single (only occasionally double) consonant letter combined with a single vowel at the end. As such, any English word or syllable that has two or more consonants together, or any word that ends in a consonant is hard for native Japanese speakers to pronounce. Unfortunately, this means most English words.

Japanese speakers tend to automatically add a single vowel at the end of an English word, in a similar way Spanish, Portuguese, and Italian speakers may do. When I first studied Spanish after English, I was so happy to find how easy the pronunciation was. Japanese also does not have diphthong, so two vowels together are not pronounced together but are chopped up into two separate single vowels.

For instance, the single-syllable English name “Tom” becomes “to-mu” (“toh-moo”) in Japanese, and “Kate” becomes “ke-i-to” (“kay-ee-toh”). The single-syllable word “speak” would become a four-syllable word in Japanese (“su-pi-i-ku” or “soo-pee-ee-koo”).

ESL teachers teaching Japanese students may want to first explain to them that English words are not chopped up like that, as they wouldn’t even understand the concept of longer words having fewer syllables unless specifically pointed out. Phonetically speaking, in Romanized letters, Japanese words are spelled exactly the way they are pronounced, so they tend to pronounce English in the same way. This of course leads to confusion as English spelling and pronunciation don’t work that way.

Japanese also has fewer distinct sounds than most other major languages of the world, and the buccal movements are limited. Native Japanese speakers don’t even open their mouth much, let alone move their lips, tongue, or teeth around or bite the lower lip and voice sounds or vibrate the throat when speaking their own language, so when they try to speak English, they may sound like they’re just mumbling. Any English sound which is fricative and requires movements of different parts of the mouth is hard for Japanese speakers to pronounce (/f/, /v/, /b/, /th/, /l/, /z/, and pretty much all the other consonants and any diphthongs).

Furthermore, because letters such as “j” and “r” exist in the Romanized Japanese but are not pronounced the same way as the English “j” or “r” sounds, Japanese speakers pronounce them in the Japanese way without realizing that the English sounds are pronounced differently. They tend to pronounce English names “John” or “Jenn” very flatly without the rounded and protruding lips and friction, but they simply do not notice the difference as that’s how the Japanese “j” is pronounced and they can’t hear the difference with the English “j.”

ESL teachers may want to coach Japanese students on how the mouth is moved for English sounds, though I think this is a little challenging in the classroom and may work better one on one in person.

← [Reply](#)



[Christian Aguiar \(He/Him/His\)](https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/130203)

Feb 18, 2021

This is fascinating, Yoko. Would Japanese speakers fully voice the added vowels? Would you hear four vowel sounds in speak, or would any of them tend to disappear a bit in practice? I'm curious because you mention the vowel sounds in Portuguese, and I know a lot of those vowels get swallowed up.

← [Reply](#)



[Yoko Matsubara](https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/161025)

Feb 21, 2021

Hi Christian,

Japanese speakers do fully voice the added vowels, though some can disappear just a tiny bit with words that end in -su ("i/ki/ma/su" can also be heard as "i/ki/mas").

Mentioning Portuguese in my post was probably not good, as (unlike Spanish and Italian whose relationships between spelling and pronunciation are quite similar to Japanese) Portuguese is actually difficult for Japanese speakers to pronounce (with all the "w" and "aw" sounds while there's no "w" spelling unless it's a borrowed word from another language, and lots of "zh" sounds, etc.). I had included it only because (like Spanish and Italian) the end of Portuguese words often end in a vowel too (compared to English), but not as often as the others- bad example!

Since Portuguese traders were one of the first Westerners to arrive in Japan in the 16th century, some of the Western words that were adopted in Japan are of Portuguese origin- for instance, we call bread "pan" in Japanese (just like Spanish) but it didn't come from Spanish, it came from Portuguese "pão" and since we don't have the "ão" sound it became "pan." Newer "foreign" concepts in the 19th century and on came from the English-speaking countries, for instance there was no concept of "privacy" in Japan, so the English word "privacy" was phonetically adopted as "pu rai ba shi" in the Japanese syllabic way.

← [Reply](#)



[Christian Aguiar \(He/Him/His\)](https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/130203) (https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/130203)

Feb 22, 2021

Thanks for clarifying, Yoko. The "-masu" example was super helpful - I have a good sense of what itadakimasu sounds like from watching lots of Midnight Diner and food shows, so I can imagine how one of those added vowels might slip. Portuguese is tricky because many of the dialects swallow vowels within words or at the end (like the word for little boy, rapazinho, loses the second "a" completely while the final "o" gets elided a bit like the -masu example).

Speaking of loan words/things, I have come to love (via Japanese-inspired Korean bakeries) kasutera, which if I'm not mistaken is taken from pão de castela, which is an older term for pão de ló, which is just sponge cake. I much prefer the Japanese version, if I'm being honest.

How did you end up studying Portuguese and other Romance languages so widely?

[← Reply](#)



[Yoko Matsubara](https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/161025) (https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/161025)

Mar 1, 2021

Hi Christian,

Yes, kasutera comes from pão de castela!

I LOVE Midnight Diner and grew up a 10 min train ride from that area of Tokyo. I always take my guests to that area (truly for all walks of life- a few hundred tiny, tiny bars where only 3 or 4 people can fit at a time). For Portuguese language cinema, I like Cidade de Deus movie from Brazil- have you seen it?

I am simply a travel freak and also love various music genres in Spanish and Portuguese, so I picked up Romance languages sort of naturally. However, other than Spanish which I'm pretty fluent in, I'm only at a lower-intermediate to intermediate level in the others. I live and work in the U.S. but also lead small group adventure trips in Japan out of love for that side job, so I meet lots of travelers from around the world who speak French, Spanish, Portuguese, German and Chinese, who join my groups. A group of 10 or so of us spend 2 weeks together and travel all over Japan by public

transportation the way the locals do, so we have a lot of downtime and teach each other languages, which makes me a perpetual learner!

← [Reply](#)



[MaryAnn Wilson \(https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/94764\)](https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/94764)

Feb 19, 2021

Thanks, Yoko. I always wondered why Japanese speakers usually add a vowel at the end of an English word. Now I realize it's because English words that end in a consonant is hard for native Japanese speakers to pronounce. I haven't noticed that as much with Spanish, Portuguese, and Italian speakers.

Are Japanese words that are not in Romanized letters still phonetic?

I agree that learning pronunciation is best taught one-on-one, which brings to mind that article by Alison Mackey's article, in which she describes software that exaggerates each sound so that the distinction between "r" and "l" is more easily learned by Japanese speakers.

← [Reply](#)



[Yoko Matsubara \(https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/161025\)](https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/161025)

Feb 21, 2021

Hi Mary Ann,

You're right, Spanish, Portuguese and Italian speakers don't necessarily add an extra vowel to English words. Although they have many words ending in one of the a-e-i-o-u vowels, their words also end in consonants such as l, s, n, r, and also within each word various syllables end in consonants as well. In the case of Japanese, it's really the end of all phonemes, in both syllables and words.

Also, when foreign words make an official entry into the standard English vocabulary, they retain the original spelling (chauffer, hors d'oeuvres, sushi, etc.) even if the pronunciation may or may not be perfectly reproduced. However, in Japanese, because it only has those vowel- or n-ending syllables only, "business" is written as "bi ji ne su" with the existing Japanese sounds, so it's hard for Japanese speakers to guess the correct original spelling of the borrowed foreign words, which in turn makes it hard for them to pronounce them correctly!

To your question about the non-Romanized letters, Japanese has three systems of writing (four if Romanized letters are included :) that are all used in the same sentence together, but phonetically speaking, they're all the same. It's an easy language to learn how to pronounce as the relationship between the written script and pronunciation is really regular, and is very similar to Spanish and Italian except for a few sounds. However, the written system is difficult as it mixes phonograms and ideograms, and each ideogram, unlike the Chinese counterpart which not all but the vast majority has only one pronunciation per character, has normally two or more ways to pronounce in Japanese, depending on the context!

← [Reply](#)



[Simiry Cuadra \(https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/123594\)](https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/123594)

Feb 21, 2021

Hello Yoko,

This is great advice: "ESL teachers teaching Japanese students may want to first explain to them that English words are not chopped up" and "ESL teachers may want to coach Japanese students on how the mouth is moved for English sounds". If I were to teach in Japan, I would not know where to start! I think for many reasons the English language is challenging to be learned by many. For starters, as you mentioned, the Japanese language has a different sound for the letter "r". In Spanish, we pronounce our "r" using our tongue. It is kind of a harsh-sounding "r", for English speakers learning Spanish, they often have a difficult time learning it because of its different sound.

← [Reply](#)



[Yoko Matsubara \(https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/161025\)](https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/161025)

Feb 22, 2021

Thank you, Simiry. Yes, it does throw English learners off when the same letters do exist in their L1 but are pronounced differently in English, especially when they are not *totally* different but are still different enough, because they don't even realize they're supposed to be making different sounds for the same letters :)

← [Reply](#)



[Silver Park \(https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/147686\)](https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/147686)

Feb 17, 2021



1. If you are a proficient speaker of another language (or have studied another language), describe what would be typical difficulties in pronouncing English sounds for the speakers of that language.

I know how to speak Korean fluently and for most Koreans, they struggle with the sound s,r, and th. Korean don't have their tongues outside the mouth area when speaking Korean. English words have a lot of "sticking out your tongue" sounds but Koreans are not used to using their tongues in that form. To me, pronunciation is like building your muscles and working out. If you are learning a new language, you are using the muscle parts of your mouth that you have never used before. The more you practice and use it, the better you become at it. Of course learning and building up the unused muscle parts are easier when your brain and body are younger but there is no limitation of acquiring a new element in any age though it might take a little more time than others.

2. If you are working on your answers later in the week, the spelling of /sh/ may be exhausted, so you can work on finding out five (or more ways) the sound /k/ is spelled.
  - o K: Kilometers
  - o Ch: Chronology
  - o Cc: Occurrence
  - o Q: Sequence
  - o Ck: Mickey
  - o C: College

[← Reply](#)



[Yoko Matsubara \(https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/161025\)](https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/161025)

Feb 18, 2021



Hi Silver,

Yes, language learning is also such a physical activity. I couldn't agree with you more on what you said about pronunciation being like building your muscles and working out. This is so true, and is also something you often can't figure out yourself, so ESL teachers can be like personal gym trainers showing how to train those muscles you had never used before!

[← Reply](#)



[Yoon-Jung Cho \(https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/151222\)](https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/151222)

Feb 21, 2021

Hi Silver, as a Korean, I totally agree with you. Especially your muscle theory sounds interesting. English always frustrates me as an adult ESL learner, and I used to think I'll never pronounce perfect English because I missed the right time. But your simple muscle theory, "the more you practice and use it, the better you become at it", teaches me a lot. Thank you for your encouraging post!

← [Reply](#)



[Melinda Cavalletto \(https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/150435\)](https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/150435)

Feb 21, 2021

Hi Silver,

You are so right about building muscle memory for learning a new language. I never thought of English speakers sticking their tongues out as they speak. As I am writing this, I am saying the words out loud, and you are correct; I am placing my tongue toward the front of my mouth!

← [Reply](#)



[Diana Burga \(https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/118042\)](https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/118042)

Feb 18, 2021

1. If you are a proficient speaker of another language (or have studied another language), describe what would be typical difficulties in pronouncing English sounds for the speakers of that language.

I think understanding how to pronounce short vowels vs long vowels is very difficult for Spanish speakers. The W and V sounds are also tricky. And "ed" can be pronounced way too strong.

1. The sound and spelling of English do not match exactly. For example **the sound /sh/ like the one in the word *shirt* can be spelled 14 different ways. What are these fourteen different ways?** Try not to google the answer!

This is kinda tricky to be honest because English is sooo tricky! I am thinking of different words with these sounds. The **ci** in vicious, the **ch** in machine, **ti** in patient, **s** in sugar, **ss** in passion, **sh** in ship, **che** in mustache and **c** in ocean. That's all that comes to mind!

← [Reply](#)



[Yoon-Jung Cho \(https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/151222\)](https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/151222)

Feb 21, 2021

Hi Diana, thank you for sharing your thoughts! Can you share the reason "short vowels vs. long vowels" is difficult for Spanish speakers? I am interested in learning Spanish, so I am wondering why. Thanks a lot! :)

← [Reply](#)



[Yoon-Jung Cho \(https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/151222\)](https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/151222)

Feb 21, 2021

1. If you are a proficient speaker of another language (or have studied another language), describe what would be typical difficulties in pronouncing English sounds for the speakers of that language.

There are some typical difficulties in pronouncing English sounds for native Korean speakers. Above all things, the Korean language does not have some English sounds like /f/ /v/, /r/, /θ/, / ð/, so many Koreans especially adult ESL or EFL learners pronounce /f/ like /p/, /v/ like /b/, /r/ like /l/, and /θ/, /ð/ like /s/. That is, most Koreans have trouble pronouncing 'coffee', 'victory', 'real', 'thank' correctly, including me.

Another representative difficulty is word stress and intonation. The Korean language does not have them. There are some intonations in dialects, of course, but not in the standard Korean. Therefore, beginning EFL learners often ignore word stress and pronounce every sound evenly like the Korean language. The brand name McDonald's can be a typical example. English native speakers pronounce McDonald's as McDónald's, and 'Mc' part and 'nalds' part are weaker than 'Do' part. Koreans who do not understand this word stress in English pronunciation cannot hear English word right, as well as sound the right accent.

4. What are the best strategies to teach English pronunciation to English learners? What are some factors to keep in mind?

First, I would like to share my experience. Back then high school, my English teacher had the entire class say 'veto' in the pronunciation class. The teacher, then, said I was the only student who pronounced 'veto' correctly, thanks to the sitcom 'Friends'. All other students said 'veto' like /vito/. I am not talking about I was good or something (I am trying to fix my pronunciation) I just want to say how sitcoms are excellent resources to learn English pronunciation. Through sitcoms, people unconsciously 'acquire' the right accent while watching funny episodes. I think Friends is the best resource to learn English pronunciation because all the main casts use typical American English. (Also, it is STILL so funny!)

I would like to say one more strategy, which is 'speak and listen'. After listening to the right English pronunciation, one should say it and listen to one's own accent. Just listening to correct pronunciation is not enough. After the practice, one needs to find what to change by oneself.

Edited by [Yoon-Jung Cho \(https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/151222\)](https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/151222) on Feb 21 at 12:36am

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[Juan Ochoa \(https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/163772\)](https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/163772)

Feb 21, 2021

Hi Yoon, Thankyou for sharing your experience with pronunciation. I agree that speaking and hearing your own voice can be really helpful because it lets you hear any mistakes and lets you get comfortable with your own voice. Another thing that I have done in the past to become more comfortable with my voice is to give a speech or practice language lessons in front of a mirror. I'm really shy when it comes to speaking in front of the class or when I give speeches. Speaking in front of the mirror may seem very weird at first but I found that it actually helped me improve pronunciation and motivation.

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[Yoon-Jung Cho \(https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/151222\)](https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/151222)

Feb 23, 2021

Hi Juan, So do !!!! I have a fear of public speaking. I will definitely try your recommendation, speaking in front of a mirror, before teaching. Thanks a lot! :)

← [Reply](#)



[Melinda Cavalletto \(https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/150435\)](https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/150435)

Feb 21, 2021



3. If you are working on your answers later in the week, the spelling of /sh/ may be exhausted, so you can work on finding out **five (or more ways) the sound /k/ is spelled.**

I did not realize how many different sounds "k" made until now. In the past, I always thought about dual meanings for words such as 'park' or 'aunt' or 'to' which has three meanings.

1. C: cream
2. K: karma
3. Qu: question
4. CK: check
5. CC: ecco

4. What are the best strategies to teach English pronunciation to English learners? What are some factors to keep in mind?

Because I do not speak a second language and I have not taught English as a second language, I had to really think and do some research on the best strategies on how to teach correct pronunciation. I remember when I took a French class in high school, it helped me when my teacher would speak slowly while I had the time to watch expressions on her face as she pronounced specific words. This technique was especially helpful as I progressed into full sentences and conversational French. An important factor to keep in mind while teaching ESL students is the type of accent the educator has. I was taught French by a native Spanish speaker so I am not sure what kind of accent I ended up with after a year of French. My daughter was taught Spanish by a Colombian native and a Jamaican native. She has a very unique Spanish accent. Another example of having difficulty understanding accents is the time I first met my in-laws. They were born and raised in the deep South of the United States and I was born and raised in California. I believe my perspective father-in-law thought I was hard of hearing. His Southern accent was difficult for me to understand. I would consistently ask him to repeat himself.

[← Reply](#)



[Raquel Armendariz \(She/Her/Hers\) \(https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/129028\)](https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/129028)

Feb 21, 2021



Melinda,

That's so interesting that you bring up how difficult it is to understand different accents and your and your daughter's experiences with second languages. My son took Spanish in HS and the first year, it was taught by a teacher who had grown up in the South and had learned Spanish from Spain in his late 30s. My son grew up in a bilingual household (Sp/En) and he could not understand the teacher 80% of the time (Spanish OR English LOL). Year 2, he had a teacher who was a California native and had learned Spanish in Mexico by being a foreign exchange student in HS and some years in college. HUGE difference! My son gained his confidence back and got to learn about the culture as well. I remember one thing the teacher would let the kids do for extra credit, is listen to songs in Spanish and have them turn in not only a translation of the lyrics but explain what the lyrics meant.

:)

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<https://>

[Yoko Matsubara \(https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/161025\)](https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/161025)

Feb 21, 2021



Hi, this is my second one.

**4. *What are the best strategies to teach English pronunciation to English learners? What are some factors to keep in mind?***

Actually, this week's Question #1 ("If you are a proficient speaker of another language, describe what would be typical difficulties in pronouncing English sounds for the speakers of that language") was very helpful to answer this Question #4, as everyone's response served as a great resource to understand what to watch out for each language mentioned.

It illustrated how "every language allows different combinations of phonemes and this may make pronunciation difficult" (quote from the lecture notes), depending on how the language is analyzed.

English has more distinct phonemes (44) than many other major languages of the world (according to my own Google search, at least more than all of the United Nations' other official languages such as French, Spanish, Russian, Arabic, and Mandarin Chinese), and this fact alone calls for an awareness that ESL teachers need to be able to recognize and explain

better how those English sounds that do not exist in the students' L1 and are therefore difficult for them to pronounce are physically produced.

The other factors to keep in mind are how the pronunciation can vary depending on their position in a word and the sounds around them (allophones or variations of phonemes), and the irregularity of the relationships between pronunciation and spelling in English, as many other major languages have much more regular relationships between the two.

However, as the article "Implications from Phonology for Teaching Reading and Teaching a Second Language" by Jesse Danielle points out, while it is important to help students develop good pronunciation, ESL teachers would want to place more focus on helping them develop analytical thinking and understanding of the meaning of the language to enable meaningful communication, rather than encourage blind practice on perfect pronunciation alone.

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[Viktorija Lejko-Lacan \(https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/731\)](https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32476/users/731)

Feb 28, 2021

Fourteen ways to spell the sound /sh/

1. **sh**irt
2. **o**ce**an**
3. **s**ug**a**r
4. **i**ss**ue**
5. man**s**ion
6. mi**ss**ion
7. ra**t**ion
8. suspi**ci**on
9. nau**se**ous
10. con**sc**ious
11. **ch**ivalry
12. **sch**napps
13. fu**sch**ia
14. **psh**aw

Five (or more ways) ways to spell the sound /k/

1. k – kitten, sink
2. c – cat, fact
3. ch – chaos, chemistry
4. ck – lock, clock
5. cc – impeccable, soccer
6. cch – zucchini
7. qu – mosquito
8. que – plaque, mosque
9. q – queue
10. q -Qatar

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