

I NOW PRONOUNCE YOU...

Master Pronunciation In Any Language
With 5 Simple Steps



www.linguistixpro.com

Ruben Adery

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LIVE THE DREAM!

What if every time you started speaking in a foreign language...

- ✓ people assumed you were a talented speaker?
- ✓ no one ever asked you where you were from or switched to your native language?
- ✓ you were never misunderstood or asked to repeat yourself?

What if this all came down to thinking about pronunciation in a different way?

You have probably been through a lot since beginning your studies as a language student: Countless hours of class, thousands of dollars on tuition, class fees, books, private lessons, and much, much more.

For all your hard work and dedication to memorizing, studying, and traveling abroad, you DESERVE the self-assurance to go into any conversation knowing that how you are speaking is beyond just understandable.

After spending years devoted to language study, too many people short themselves on the most important daily showcase of their language ability – Pronunciation.

Nobody enjoys the feeling of frustration or anxiety when entering a conversation with someone new.

Nobody wants to feel inferior with colleagues or clients because of a spoken language barrier.

It's time to build confidence and show off your true ability with the language, no matter what level you are at!

WHAT IS 'ACCENT MODIFICATION'?

Accent modification analyzes differences in sounds from your native language to the language you are studying. Throughout the process, the ultimate goal is to make the foreign sounds accessible, even automatic, as you learn to speak naturally in this new language.

Ideally, you will change the way you use the muscles of your mouth and face to form these unique sounds, however, there are many ways to go about the acquisition process, and it can be a lot of fun!

The key is finding something familiar to relate the sounds to.

There are other factors such as rhythm, stress patterns, and even intonation that make your speech resemble the accent of a native speaker, making your pronunciation clear and enhancing your ability to communicate with people from all around the world!

You may also hear this analysis called accent neutralization, elocution, accent reduction, or my favorite... accent addition.

What is it not? →

Remember, you're not removing anything from your cultural identity, necessarily. You are merely acquiring a new skill to help with effective communication.

While there are many ways to learn this process, be aware that this also has little to do with learning the rules of grammar, building vocabulary, reading or writing skills. Though there may be surprising side-effects...

What is it for? →

Most people who decide to improve their pronunciation feel the urgency due to frustration or insecurity when speaking or being frequently misunderstood.

You will also see many professionals engaging in this study to attain a higher status in the workplace as well as actors (or anyone who works with a script) and singers aiming to perfect their lines or lyrics. However, by understanding these simple concepts, any language learner could really benefit by building self-confidence with their foreign language skills in general.



MY SURPRISING RESULTS

In this e-book, you will learn the steps I took from being a language student in the United States with a pretty typical American accent to speaking 5 languages with near-perfect pronunciation in only a few years. More importantly, you'll see how easy it is to apply the same principles and do the same thing yourself in a lot less time!

If you're an aspiring polyglot, you'll see how each of the foreign languages I acquired helped the next, both in theory and in physical practice, and how eventually I had to convince most new acquaintances that I was not from the country whose language I was speaking.

It all came down to 5 simple steps.

Together, we will walk through each one, carefully explaining its importance and practicality, providing you with the proper framework to implement in your daily speech.

You can apply this valuable advice immediately after reading!

Ever since I discovered the path, I have been dedicated to instructing hun-

dreds of students learning English, Spanish, Portuguese, and Hebrew on how to adopt the same thought process when going about speaking a foreign language. The best thing is that this general strategy works for any spoken language in the world!

I've enthusiastically taught pronunciation at private English language institutes around the United States, at an elementary school in Israel, at a private high school in the suburbs of Buenos Aires, Argentina, and even at the university level in Brazil.

Through diligent observation, I have been able to outline and focus on the most common problems that specific language groups face, which ultimately has made the acquisition process a lot more efficient.

My students come away with a completely new outlook on the spoken language and have a better sense of how natives are speaking without having to move to a different country or really studying hard at all.

It's way more simple than that.

DON'T BE DETERRED BY POTENTIAL ROADBLOCKS!

It is **rare** to find non-native speakers with near-native pronunciation.

Mostly because the majority of language learners face many similar problems. Perhaps you are like many people who fall into one of these categories. Maybe you're thinking...

- ✓ "I think I've reached that point in my life where I can't learn new sounds anymore."
- ✓ "But I don't have an 'ear' for the language, so it's not easy for me."
- ✓ "I'm not sure where to begin with improving pronunciation. I don't even really know what I'm pronouncing wrong!"
- ✓ "I don't know the language well enough to focus on pronunciation. I got verbs and vocabulary to memorize!"
- ✓ "I'm a busy person, and I don't have a ton of time to spend practicing and studying."
- ✓ "I get by just fine with my language ability. There's no advantage to improving my pronunciation if people already get the idea."



THESE FINE PEOPLE DIDN'T LET ANY OF THOSE PROBLEMS GET IN THEIR WAY!

"I feel that my lyrics and my speech sound like a native speaker."



As the singer of DREP I really have to make myself understood in every moment. Ruben is the voice of my confidence! After a few weeks of work, I feel that my lyrics and my speech sound like a native speaker. The lessons are the perfect combination of fun and learning at the same time.

— Marta, Vocal Artist DREP (Spain)

<http://drepmusic.com/>

"Ruben is the voice of my confidence!"

"My pronunciation and vocabulary have improved... enjoyable and fun..."



Ruben's class enhanced many aspects of my knowledge of the English language. My pronunciation and vocabulary have improved thanks to his enjoyable and fun teaching lessons. I highly recommend his course!

— Kevin, Student (Argentina)

“Ruben customizes his teaching techniques to suit the needs and abilities of each student.”



For more than a year, on a weekly basis, I worked with Ruben via teleconference on accent pronunciation. Ruben’s multicultural experience and in-depth understanding of languages from various language families gives him unique understanding of cultural nuances and language mechanics. With much patience and dedication, Ruben customizes his teaching techniques to suit the needs and abilities of each student. Combined with his genuine passion for linguistics, these qualities make Ruben an excellent choice for improving your accent.

— Yonatan, Legal Counsel (Israel)

“...such an inspiring teacher to learn pronunciation from.”



Ruben has been such an inspiring teacher to learn pronunciation from. He is very knowledgeable and enthusiastic about pronunciation. The best part is that he has an ability to transfer his passion for learning languages and pronunciation to his students. He always found a way to relate to me and adjust to my learning style. If you like to learn languages, and want a completely different approach and deeper understanding of a language, he is a great person to learn from!

— Amia, English Teacher (United States)

MOST LANGUAGE TEACHERS DON'T FOCUS ON PRONUNCIATION

I probably had horrible pronunciation in my Spanish classes – not to mention I wasn't fluent with the language. And of course, there were always one or two people in the class who would answer most every question and just wouldn't stop speaking.

But what bothered me the most wasn't that other students were talking so much, and I was too embarrassed to say anything.

I knew, by that time, what an American accent sounded like and what a native accent sounded like.

The problem was that in my high-level language classes, where we were talking about poetry or literature – pretty complex topics – very few people were communicating with halfway decent pronunciation.

Isn't that the basis of the spoken language?

Granted they weren't pronunciation classes, but still...

It bothered me that the teachers and professors didn't take a few minutes to just explain the most problematic errors we were making.

Did they even know how to explain it to me?

Did they not want to offend me?

I was not a shy person, but when it came to speaking a foreign language, it was like all my confidence was just shot down.

Some of the teachers were not native speakers, so they didn't have perfect pronunciation themselves, but what about the professor from Uruguay? The nice woman from Spain? Old mustache guy from Chile?

Did those professors have trouble understanding what we were saying? Did they even notice? Did they make fun of us with the other professors after class? Maybe they were all just used to our American accents and couldn't tell the difference.

I don't even know why I cared so much, but I didn't feel like speaking just to speak was worth it if I wasn't going to get proper feedback.

...plus that girl whose mom was from Mexico kept talking the whole time.

THERE'S GOTTA BE A BETTER WAY!

Effective Pronunciation! Efficient Communication!

Like many people before or after their studies, I took some time to travel a bit, and for me it was for one main purpose:

Perfect. This. Language.

I bought a one-way ticket to Buenos Aires and simply talked to as many people as I could. I probably made so many mistakes, and on top of that, I was faced with the challenge of learning the extremely distinct dialect of 'Castellano' – Argentine Spanish.



I eventually decided to let go of those classroom anxieties – really pay attention to what I was doing wrong... and I even took notes!

I decided I didn't care about memorizing "all the animals" or worry about every verb I was conjugating.

Ok... I still worried, but just not as much.

I focused on the WAY I was speaking and my fluency in general.

I met people who spoke multiple languages. And they spoke really well. What an inspiration!

I would repeat things I learned that day out loud.

To be honest, I would even repeat them in the moment, mid-conversation, under my breath, in my own little world.

I made lists of words I had trouble with, and I commented on sound patterns I struggled with.

I was truly becoming the quintessential language NERD!

With a little diligence and really not that much time – I'm talking like a month – people would start asking me where in Argentina I was from.

Uh... what?

It didn't hurt to have the 'Argie' look,

but it was unbelievable! It happened so frequently it would turn into a party trick.

I could probably script every first interaction I had with a new Argentinian. It was extremely flattering, and I was hooked.

Not only did my pronunciation improve exponentially, I was extremely more confident with Spanish in general – and then came Italian and then Portuguese and Hebrew...

The pronunciation level was the fuel

to the general competence level in the overall language. My listening skills even improved.

The best part was – I didn't even worry about being fluent anymore. It was the first impression I gave off – literally the first 10 seconds where someone would just be like – "Whoa! Yea, this guy speaks well."

It became a part of who I was – it was almost like I was on stage playing the role of 'bearded Argentine man'.

And once I learned the sound system,

I never had to update or maintain my pronunciation. It became part of my language IDENTITY.

Anxiety GONE!

SPEAK MYTHOLOGY!

Myth #1

“If I just move to a new country, my pronunciation will improve with time.”

Too many people have this perception that pronunciation is something that will come naturally if they just wait it out – without any awareness or observation. I bet you know someone who has lived or studied in a foreign country for at least a year and still has a pretty thick accent.

Does this mean that everyone is supposed to adopt a 100% perfect accent in a year? Of course not, but how long until it just sinks in? 2 years? 10?

Unfortunately, just like many other skills, the more you use the language on a daily basis, the harder it becomes to modify bad habits.

You’d be surprised how many of my students (after learning the proper pronunciation) tell me they have been pronouncing a word incorrectly for YEARS, and nobody has ever corrected them!

Myth #2

“I do practice pronunciation. I speak with my friends all the time!”

Pronunciation like many skills that involve muscle memory (playing an instrument, driving a car, exercising, etc.) is best improved when you are by yourself or individually with a coach or teacher.

The reason being that when you speak with other people, the main goal is fast, effective communication. You don't want to have to stop to ask language questions or try out new sounds when making plans for the weekend or meeting with a new client.

The conversation is the time for you to PERFORM.

Just like you don't rehearse during a concert, you don't learn to drive on a busy highway, and you don't change your serve in the middle of a big tennis match.

Myth #3

“Mastering pronunciation is only for those ‘talented’ language speakers.”

The thing that constitutes a speaker with a good ‘ear’ for language is their ability to hear certain nuances of the language and apply them to how they speak on a regular basis.

This doesn't mean that those nuances can't be learned; You just need the proper environment and the right mentor to clearly explain what they are and how they can easily be applied to how you speak.

(If you're looking for such a person... I might know a guy)

It's simply a matter of making certain sounds more familiar to you by relating them to sounds you already know. You can do this! And I can teach you how!

Myth #4

“Using ‘good’ pronunciation makes you sound pretentious.”

Some people feel weird pronouncing a foreign language natively, especially with friends or peers from the same country, because they think it makes you sound like you think you’re better than everyone.

This may be the reason why I had so many problems with those language classes in school. No one wants to sound ‘better’ than other people or like they are ‘trying’. It’s not cool!

On the other hand, if you are with native speakers, where it counts, using your cool, bad accent gives off a poor impression of your abilities and will most likely be difficult to understand.

When you have already acquired native-like pronunciation, and that is your identity when you speak, you will have the confidence to own it.

Additionally, acquiring an accent in the right way gives you a choice of when to use it. You just have to know when to turn it on or off.

It only sounds pretentious if you pronounce, for example, a foreign word with its original accent... Don’t do that.



5 SIMPLE STEPS TO MASTER PRONUNCIATION IN ANY LANGUAGE

The following framework will give you the proper mindset and allow you to focus on improving the way you speak no matter which language you are studying – no matter your level with the language.

1 IMMERSE

Immersion is the easiest way to get an idea of how different people are speaking. What you are doing is completely surrounding yourself with the sounds and images of the language. The goal is to get a nice mix of everyone: young people and old, rich and poor, educated and not-so-much... just lots of different accents.

This allows you to observe in the same way you did as a baby acquiring your first language. And this is not only limited to sounds.

Of course, no one picks up on a second language as easily as a child does his first. This is why we have to make an extra effort to follow these easy steps.

The best way to think of this process is to compare yourself to an actor or actress preparing for a big role. The closer your observation, the more intensely you can adopt everything from sound patterns to facial expressions – even hand gestures. All of these will help in the delivery of your speech.

Plus, you only need to do whatever is required for you to achieve what you want to achieve. We all have different goals.



You don't have to move to a foreign country to immerse yourself!

In fact, you can very easily move to a foreign country and still speak your native language almost exclusively. I've seen it happen. Too often.

It may take a little more effort to locate the proper resources, but it doesn't matter where you are in the world when you do this.

Nowadays you can bring the country to you! You probably have just as many materials and just as much support using the Internet and all its glory. If you're not sure how to do so, I've outlined some simple habits to form and accessible resources for your individual immersion needs.

Day-Lewis spent a year
studying Lincoln to prepare
for his performance



Resources

Millions of people around the world use music, movies, podcasts, Internet radio, and television to supplement their language learning.

Some even use those media to teach them the language entirely!

Because of the fact that you are likely interested in learning a language different from other readers, I will keep these online resources general (and legal), but if you're still struggling to find the right aid to help with your immersion, please send me a quick message, and I'll do my best to help you out!

Podcasts

If you're not familiar, a Podcast is a digital audio or video broadcast that you can download online and listen to or watch on your computer, tablet, or phone.

The easiest way to obtain these is through music platforms like Apple Music or Spotify, where you can find series of recordings on various topics in almost any language, and most of them are available absolutely FREE.

Online Radio Stations

Another free option is to Google 'Online Radio [your language]' and you'll find a ton of results, without a doubt. You get the modern, daily use of the language at the natural rate of speech and a combination of talking with some good music (hopefully). Put it on while you clean or while you're having breakfast and just see what happens.

I guarantee you'll have success no matter what language you are studying...

Streaming Sites

Unless you have an extensive foreign DVD collection, watching full movies and shows through Netflix, Hulu, HBO (and other sites like it) might be the cheapest option. Though they don't always have the most impressive foreign selection, it's perfect for English immersion!

YouTube / YouGlish

Maybe this one is obvious, but I mentioned Netflix so why not. YouTube is surely the best place for free samples of music, movie clips, TV shows, and personal videos from people in most countries of the world. Lots of educational resources as well.

The key is listening and watching – A LOT

BONUS TIP

If you haven't heard of www.youglish.com – you're missing out on a valuable resource! This site lets you search for a word (or even a short phrase), then generates a YouTube PLAYLIST of the numerous videos that contain your word.

Not only that, it cues the video up right before the word or phrase is about to be said. Shuffle through the videos and find all types of native speakers saying your word in a natural context. Slow down or ramp up the playback speed for extra control during this 'targeted listening' practice.

Suggested Habits to Form

At home

Pick a day of the week and exclusively listen to music / watch TV or movies in your target language. Maybe you do it for an hour instead. Or maybe two. You set your own limits!

It doesn't even have to be scheduled. Sometimes it's best to immerse yourself when you most feel like learning. Remember, it's better to be tuned into what you're listening to or watching.

On the go

Whether you drive a car, ride a bike, take the bus or train, rollerblade, or have a private chauffeur, your commute is an excellent time to take advantage of a little extra immersion. Pop in the headphones and playback your downloaded podcasts and fa-

vorite foreign tunes while you get to where you need to be.

While traveling abroad

Assuming you are visiting a country whose language you are learning:

Watch local TV – You're the one who thought you had to visit a foreign country to get better at this language! Well, why not use the available resources to your advantage?

Try to limit yourself here though and get away from too much TV. After all, you're on vacation! Better use your time wisely with the public...

Eavesdrop – If this is a new term for you, eavesdropping is the wonderful activity of listening to other people's private conversations! Cafés, bars, subways – really anywhere people



are naturally close together is good. Just don't get too close; You don't want someone to immerse their fist in your face.

While having all these things going on just in the background isn't ideal, I still say do it. Even though your mind may be somewhere else, our brains work in mysterious ways sometimes. Even if you pick up on one thing – one subtle difference – it's worth it.

And again, it doesn't have to be on all the time. Set your own limits!

The Downside

Think about someone learning to play basketball by constantly watching the NBA, learning how to sing by regularly attending concerts, or becoming a chef by always having the cooking channel on.

All these examples give you a great opportunity to see and hear what others are doing, at the very least, and hopefully provide you with many new ideas to try that you may have never thought of before.

But unfortunately, while it is a wonderfully powerful tool, immersion will not necessarily work to perfect your pronunciation completely on its own.

You may need to combine your efforts with these next four steps:

2 INDULGE

In order for your pronunciation to sound natural, you need to embrace the new language – even if that means sounding a little strange at first. It's important to accept that a foreign language contains sounds that are... well, foreign to our ears and also mouths, so being able to try out new things without feeling like an idiot is important.

I like to refer to this step as the stepping out of one's 'Comfort Zone' in order to grow as a speaker. The most gratifying feelings in life involve taking risks and exploring areas that are unfamiliar, and mastering pronunciation is no exception!

Now, I hate to use the words good and bad to describe people's pronunciation, but I hope you understand that when I say good, I'm referring to clear, understandable, natural speech, and when I say bad, I'm simply describing non-native sounding, difficult-to-understand pronunciation. Nothing right or wrong here – we all have accents.

The indulge step is most important for two particular groups:

1. Students who hold on to their non-native accents because they are afraid of sounding funny or strange
2. Students who have studied with mostly non-native teachers and have immersed in their country's variation of the target language

The result of both is typically a standard foreign accent, and in order to properly give into this new sound system, both groups need to first understand how their pronunciation sounds compared to that of a native speaker and, more importantly, have enough motivation and dedication to make the necessary adjustments.

So ask yourself...

How much do you want this?

One fun thing I like to do in my English pronunciation classes is imitate foreign accents. I have created 'characters' from a few different regions of the world, and often they just naturally come out.

The students seem to enjoy it, and I'm pretty sure they know that I'm not making fun of them. In fact, I'm proving a very important point:

If I can imitate their accents in English, and I can speak with my own native accent, maybe I can explain how to go from one to the other.

THE PRONUNCIATION PARADOX: A BAD ACCENT IS A GOOD ACCENT

But the craziest thing happens when I switch into a French accent, for example. All the French-speaking students understand me better!

For them, my bad accent is very good.

It makes sense since most people can identify their own accent a lot more easily. But the point is to transition from the group mentality to the individual mindset in order to thrive in this new language.

If you think about anyone you know who speaks well in a foreign language, most likely they have made some individual effort to engage with native speakers. That is why Step 2 is often the most valuable...

...and also the most difficult.

The best advice when it comes to rising to the challenge and indulging in this new sound system is to practice the art of imitation.

Imitation lets you try out for yourself all those new and different sounds you immersed yourself in during the first step. Now you get to feel the difference. This is how you grow as a speaker.

When you're a kid, it's almost automatic to imitate other people. It's funny! Kids pick up on sounds and words, even entire languages like sponges, and for some unlucky reason, that ability slows as we grow up. But that doesn't mean that adults completely lose the ability to imitate, of course. The good thing is that changing pronunciation has very little to do with acquiring an entire language.

Your mouth is an instrument of communication, and just like any instrument, it takes practice to be played right. No rules, just muscles. Think back to your music lessons and language classes. The technique is easy: "Do what I do." "Play what I just played." "Repeat after me." Once you get past the initial obstacle of producing and connecting sounds, you realize how much effort it's going to take you.

For some, speaking well without instruction just clicks after a short period

of time, much like musicians who play by ear. If that's not you, well then your artistic style will develop fastest if you have someone nearby to copy off of.

I have 'wise guy' students who, on occasion, will 'mock' me by repeating a word I said exactly as I said it, employing a perfect American accent. And I laugh, but I don't mean to encourage it as a joke. That guy just showed me that he was able to sound just like me for a second.

That wasn't the 'funny' part, though.

What made me laugh was that he has the power to really sound like a native speaker, yet he ironically chooses to speak in his comfortable, natural accent, which for me is sometimes harder to understand.

What's even crazier is that I know that many like him have the ability to imitate me, but the majority remains comfy in their own phonological system. (Hey, I used to do the exact same thing!)

Maybe I can simplify the process for you.



3 Tips for Effective Imitation

① Imitate people you actually want to sound like

Finding the right people to imitate is vital to the way you develop speaking ability. When we talked about immersion, I invited you to listen to everyone. All different kinds of people. But that was mainly to see and hear the differences to prepare you for this step.

You're looking for people you admire as speakers, people with the abilities you would like to show off and anyone whom you have access to on a consistent basis (a friend/ colleague, actor or TV personality, etc.)

This also means finding a regional accent that you can relate to, especially if your target language is spoken in many places around the world. There are a ton of subtle features in our speech that convey gender, race, ethnicity, age, social class, sexuality, religiousness, etc. I would recommend adopting overall pronunciation that suits YOU.

Even when I visit other Spanish-speaking countries today, I still use my Porteño (Buenos Aires) accent because that's the accent I most identify with. People still understand me... for the most part; they just think I'm from Argentina.

② Don't limit your imitation to sounds

We communicate with more than just our mouths, so when imitating others, focus on the way the language sounds AND how it looks. Mouth shapes, facial expressions, and even hand gestures are all things that are KEY to sounding a lot closer to the real deal. Watching people who tend to be overly dramatic is a great idea!



③ Take advantage of what you already know

Start small by making fun of accents or dialects of YOUR language. Think of a different region within your country or another country that speaks the same language. Which sounds do they say differently? What do you hear when they speak? It may be only a few sounds that separate the accents.

This not only reinforces your listening skills, but it keeps your mind on the very few sounds that you're trying to improve. If you think about it consistently, with practice you will ultimately acquire the sounds, and it will become part of your identity instead of something that always gets in the way.

Never will you be so rewarded for making fun of people!

3 IDENTIFY

You might be noticing a trend here...

The **Identify** step goes hand in hand with **Indulge** since you will find it necessary to use these skills at the same time, or at least one right after the other. When we use the term **Identify**, we are mainly talking about three specific areas. Each will help you clarify your plan and help give you clear direction as you move quickly toward your objective.

You may also find that Step 3 is the most strategic of all the steps.

Identify Your Goals

Some people feel that learning to master pronunciation means completely eradicating any sign of a foreign accent. Others aim to avoid mispronunciations and just be understandable – even if they still have evidence of where they come from. Using these 5 steps can very well help you get to any level, but it's very important to ask yourself...

'What kind of speaker do I want to be?'

We mentioned previously (in Effective Imitation Tip #1), that deciding **whom** you want to sound like and which regional accent you relate to most is

necessary to then **identify** what it is that makes up that particular style. What are the unique qualities of that accent and how can we exaggerate them to stand out as a confident speaker?

One common example, in English at least, is choosing between UK or American English. But although there is a 'standard' of each dialect, even within those categories you will surely find plenty of variations to focus on (not to mention a handful of other native English-speaking countries with their own distinct accents).

Once you have figured that out, you can then zoom in a little bit on what it is that makes this variety special.

Identify Language Patterns

Eventually you'll come across words that contain sounds that you just don't have natively. Similarly, you may find that you cannot pronounce new words just by the spelling. In this case, it is vital to decipher common sound patterns and spelling patterns within the language, and often this takes a little extra effort.

Based on your experience and your research online, make a note of which sounds in general don't seem to appear in your native language. You will likely find there are more than you think and that similar spellings aren't **exactly** the same as your native language. Don't let that discourage you. You're already very close!

It's probable that your target language has a set structure, even though there may be a few exceptions. Make those exceptions a part of the structure in your head. In fact, why not make a list of the most common trends. Keeping these in your mind consistently is the difference between the average and the polished speaker. It's game time! How well have you prepared?

These don't have to be individual sounds like the 'th' in English, for example. Identify any phrases or natural, everyday variations that you hadn't noticed before. For example **wanna, gonna, or hafta** (have to) in

English. Finally, single out filler words and sounds that people make when they are thinking or listening to other people talk like the English 'mmhm' and 'ya know'.

Make sure your identification is authentic and you hear a variety of people using the same accent before making any big changes. Also, be careful of stereotypes and try not to go too over the top. People speak like they speak, not like other regions say they do or like the movies necessarily portray. Not all Australians sound like Steve Irwin.



The 2 Problems That EVERY Language Learner Faces

Chances are these two problems are working against you:

1. You are not 100% sure WHICH sounds / words you need to work on
2. There's no one to CONSISTENTLY offer you feedback or corrections

It seems pretty simple, but the most common problems I hear when I meet students for the first time are that they don't get enough feedback from other people when speaking, and they therefore are not 100% sure what they're pronouncing incorrectly.

It's important that you know which words or sounds people generally ask you to repeat so that you can isolate your practice and not worry about the sounds you **do** know very well.

How can you identify sounds that are difficult if it isn't obvious what sounds understandable and what doesn't? I mentioned before that it's rare for language teachers to comment or identify the problems of **individual** students, and it's difficult to get proper advice from friends or family members since...

1. Most people do not want to offend others by correcting their pronunciation even if in the end it would be beneficial. They feel it is not their place to be offering the suggestions.
2. Many people, including language instructors, do not feel confident in their abilities to explain pronunciation clearly, or they prioritize other aspects of the language (my initial problem in school).

As you can see, identifying these goals and specific sounds are important for shaping your path, however, because of the lack of general feedback, it is commonly the most difficult to do **alone**.

Which is why there is a Step 4...

4

INVITE

Once you've done a little bit of 'homework' on your own, listened to a bunch of different accents, given yourself a chance to practice and try things out, and figured out what your goals truly are, it's time for some outside assistance. Hopefully, by now, you have an open mind about what it takes to master a skill as complex as pronunciation in a foreign language, and you're willing to accept advice from people who can guide you even further.

Find a Mentor You Trust

You have encountered many people throughout your language acquisition process. Friends, colleagues, classmates, and teachers have all played a role in your development as a speaker. But think about which one you would ask if you were ever in doubt.

Maybe you haven't even met this person yet.

This process can be as easy as asking your language teacher a few specific questions here and there or as intense as taking a few weeks to focus on your pronunciation with a coach who can help you fill in the gaps once and for all. As long as, like we mentioned before, this is a person who you can relate to and trust as a speaker.

Remember it's not just someone to repeat a word a few times; now you're

looking for some legitimate insight and possible explanation.

The best thing that can happen is that you find an association that will allow you to never forget the correct pronunciation. It could be that it rhymes with another word in the same language or it just reminds you of a similar word in your own native language. The more creativity you can employ the better!

The worst thing is that you forget what your mentor said 5 mins earlier and revert back to the way you were saying it before.

But that's hardly a setback. Just make sure you have frequent access to talk to your mentor and make sure you're not slipping back into old habits.

Invite Friends

By this point, you may even be able to put things together just by asking random native-speaking friends.





After all, you do have the motivation to improve, and if you're dedicated enough to have made it this far in the book, you're probably looking for ways to figure things out on your own, if you know it will help.

Be aware that even though you've asked a friend to 'correct your mistakes', they may not feel comfortable interrupting every single time. Ask for verification when appropriate and allow some things to slide. Asking a series of different friends will help it all come together.

Be sure that the speaker is using the word or phrase naturally, though. Random friends, with little experience teaching their own language, tend to **overpronounce words** — To make them eXtra CleaR FoR You To uNDeR-sTanD — when actually they are going to sound a little different at a natural rate of speech.

Pro tip:

Have your friend use the word naturally in a short sentence as well as in isolation so you can hear the difference!

5 IMPLEMENT

I saved the most important step for last, mostly because in order to effectively accomplish it, you should really have the proper mindset to prepare yourself for this personal practice. I initially named this step **'Individual Implementation'** because of the urgency to apply by yourself all the information you've gathered, but the title wasn't consistent with the others, so just so you know, the focus here is to practice... on your own.

Reiterating Myth #2 of pronunciation mastery, many people feel that they are getting all the practice they need because, after all, they spend countless hours talking to friends, colleagues, and even strangers in the target language. This is not the practice I am talking about.

I just want to clarify that I agree with using conversation to practice pronunciation, however, at the beginning of this undertaking, it should be most utilized to strengthen the words and sounds that you've been working on alone or with your mentor. Unless the conversation is with a mentor whom you've asked to give you corrections and feedback!

Practicing alone or with a coach gives you time to concentrate on specific areas of your pronunciation and tells your brain that it's time to work and also time to retain this information. Repetition is key.

Practice Anywhere (And Everywhere)

The wonderful thing about pronunciation practice is that it can be done virtually anywhere, unlike some other aspects of language acquisition. You don't need books, pens, or even a computer. All you need is your voice. You can even practice while walking down the street, waiting in line, sitting in traffic, relaxing in a park, on a camping trip... anywhere!

If you're worried about what people around you will think or being embarrassed in general, just take out your cell phone and pretend to be talking to someone else. No one will notice.

Plus, in most large cities around the world, especially around subway stations, if you're walking in circles and talking to yourself in a foreign language, you will fit right in!

I've met people who have mini conversations with themselves in the shower because there's a nice echo or in front of a mirror to be able to see the shape of their mouth, and they can practice what they would say in response to themselves. No one's watching you... but you.

I like to practice a new word immediately after learning it – just saying it a few extra times to myself, even mid-conversation. Adding hand gestures helps too. Maybe you write down a few words each day and take 5–10 minutes before you go to bed to work those mouth muscles.



It only takes as long as you want it to

Think of it in the same way you do physical exercise. How would your physical health change if you went on a 10 minute jog everyday? Or if you did 5 extra minutes of abdominal workouts before bed? 20 push-ups every morning before breakfast? I think you would see some serious results within just a few weeks. I bet you'd feel better too!

The only difference is that once you get your pronunciation down, that's it! There's no need to maintain or update your speech as long as you have found the pronunciation style that suits you. Once your ear is tuned in to this sound system, you can apply what you have learned to every new word you come across. This is your language identity!

Muscle memory, baby!!

Every new, successful conversation you engage in thereafter is a small boost in your confidence. Your attention to the details and clear pronunciation make you a talented speaker. You avoid misunderstandings, and you are taken seriously like a native speaker. Now you can really show the world how well you know the language!

Tips for Success

① Be open and willing to make mistakes – Learn from each

After studying for years, it's hard for our egos to admit that we've been pronouncing a word incorrectly. It only takes one mistake with the proper mentor to never experience it again. Throughout this whole process, you will learn a lot about yourself and your style of learning. Knowing what kind of mistakes you make is key to your development.

Again, let go of any inhibitions or fear of people judging you or fear of messing up. You know that's part of the process. You got this!

② Take advantage of opportunities to meet new people

The more people you meet in this foreign language, the more you experience new accents and get a chance to show off your new skills. Allow yourself to make deeper connections and new contacts. You never know who may take note of your abilities and be able to help you in the future.

Sometimes you meet people whose energy just makes you a great speaker – you feel confident, and words just come out right. Other times, it's like you forgot everything you've ever learned. Spend more time with those confidence-builders, and see where it takes you.

③ Don't focus on these 5 steps independently

Again, don't think of these steps as chronological necessarily, but rather 5 integrated actions to consider throughout the entire process. In other words, you don't need to complete Step 1 to move on to Step 2. The perfect combination of them all is what will bring you to the level of mastery. But, be prepared...

Your life is about to change!



WHERE DO I START?

Now that you have been loaded with valuable advice as to how you can change your whole mindset and master pronunciation in your language by applying these 5 steps, you may be thinking,

‘Ruben, this is all great, but... what do I do FIRST?’

Since you are likely at a different stage in the process than everyone reading this e-book, the first thing I want you think about is to imagine...

...what kind of speaker you are ready to become.

What do you say first in this language?

What are the questions you know you’ll be asked?

How can you become this speaker by anticipating some of the use of language?

I want you to be realistic with your expectations and think about what you want your language identity to be. Remember, this whole process can really be accomplished in weeks, but it’s up to you to get there. Use these steps, get yourself a mentor, practice hard, and you’re there.

I understand you are learning a specific language and this guide is explained in a more general way. If you have learned anything valuable from this book, just imagine how much you could learn in a few personalized sessions with the author. We work on your individual plan and get you where you want to be. Apply to work with me by visiting my site or sending a direct message, and we will take your spoken language skills to the next level. Let me give you the answers you’ve been looking for. I know I can serve you. Send me a message today.

Immerse • Indulge • Identify • Invite • Implement



I Now Pronounce You...
Master Pronunciation In Any Language With 5 Simple Steps

Ruben Adery

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Ruben Adery

ruben@linguistixpro.com

WWW.LINGUISTIXPRO.COM



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ACCENTS SPEAK LOUDER THAN WORDS

