

Phonetics and Language Teaching

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With the gradual demise of the audio-lingual approach to foreign language teaching and the corresponding emphasis on accuracy in favor of fluency, the role ascribed to phonetics has been also consistently decreasing in language teaching.

This outcome is paradoxical given the accelerating steady progress in the sciences of phonetics, phonology, and psycholinguistic: all generating research findings pointing out to the importance of phonetic accuracy both in language perception and production. Such importance is not only relevant to understanding, but also to the status, the image of the learner both by himself and the others, and to designing and developing textbooks and other relevant teaching materials.

The goal of this paper is to delineate the procedures enhancing the role of phonetic findings in language learning, especially in the case of uncommonly taught languages. Teaching for proficiency and advocating fluency should not come at the expense of accuracy and comprehensibility. It is perhaps time, we reach a balance between these two of opposing trends.