

Pronunciation for French-speaking African ATCOs

Let's look first at the ICAO descriptors for the category: pronunciation:

Level	Pronunciation
OACI 4	Même s'ils sont influencés par la langue première ou par une variante régionale, la prononciation, l'accent tonique, le rythme et l'intonation nuisent rarement à la facilité de compréhension
OACI 3	La prononciation, l'accent tonique, le rythme et l'intonation sont influencés par la langue première ou par une variante régionale, mais ne nuisent que parfois à la facilité de compréhension.

How to improve pronunciation:

Firstly, don't be shy! Speak loudly and clearly. Some controllers tend to be a little timid with their English because they know their pronunciation is not the best! It's better, however, to pronounce loudly than to timidly mumble the syllables whose pronunciation you are not sure of.

Awareness of the following aspects of English pronunciation may help you to improve:

The schwa

Understanding of this sound, found everywhere in spoken English, will not only improve your pronunciation, but really help your listening skills, too!

[click here for explanation of the schwa sound, and syllable-stress exercises](#)

Pronouncing the "ed" endings of regular verbs (past tenses)

The pronunciation of "ed" endings (pasts of regular verbs) is reduced to a short "d" sound for most of the verbs. ([Listen to Roger's recording of this sound](#))

If the end of the word ends in one of the following sounds, the shortened "d" sound becomes a short "t" sound (this is understandable, as it is simply more difficult to add the "d" sound to these endings):

K, S, Ch, Sh, F, P

examples:

brake → braked
miss → missed
attach → attached
push → pushed
stuff → stuffed

example: "soak" tremper, saturer
so, practically all "ed" regular verb endings are pronounced "t"

It's OK to pronounce all of these endings with the "t" sound, as the difference will have no influence on ease of understanding.

If the last pronounced consonant of the verb is a **T** sound or a **D** sound, we must pronounce the past "ed" ending as "**id**"

examples:

want → wanted
sight → sighted
spot → spotted
add → added
head → headed
collide → collided

Other areas of pronunciation improvement:

- "t" pronounced as "d" – or simply not pronounced at all -. Example: "twenty" = "twenny" continental = *cont nenall*

- Glottal Stops: when "t" is pronounced by abruptly stopping the flow air coming out of your mouth, resulting in a momentaneous "braking" of sound: "spent" = "spen__" -y
Be__y (Betty) won the ba__le (battle).

(it's neither correct nor incorrect to glottalize – it is just a question of accent. Your job is mainly to recognize it and to understand a word or phrase that you would otherwise have missed!)

this video is very good to describe the glottal stop:

<https://www.youtube.com/embed/sHaN4jHBGVk>

for roger _ embed code:

```
<iframe width="741" height="417"
src="https://www.youtube.com/embed/sHaN4jHBGVk" frameborder="0"
allow="accelerometer; autoplay; encrypted-media; gyroscope; picture-in-picture"
allowfullscreen></iframe>
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