



AN EVALUATION OF THE ENGLISH SPEAKING SKILL AMONG THE HIGHER SECONDARY STUDENTS OF METTUR TALUK AT SALEM DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

English language plays a major role in all the schools across the country. It is seen that each parent wishes, their children should be able to speak English fluently. Schools or Colleges and language teaching institutions are taking various measures for teaching English. English language is more important in the school level because in the present day scenario working knowledge of English has become an unavoidable necessity. On the other hand they may have some inhibitions in using the second language in real life situation. The goal of language learning lies in using the language in different social contexts. So this study concentrates on the evaluation of English Speaking Skill of learners who are treated as second language learners to find out the problems and evaluate the spoken English of the first year higher secondary school students with Tamil as regional medium of instruction at the rural area taluk of Mettur at salem district Tamil Nadu State, India.

Review of the Literature

Bailey (1983) shows that students having low confidence in relation to English language use is most obvious. Students have low frequency of using English in the secondary school level and it leads to students' low self-esteem because they seldom use English outside the classroom. They feel at ease speaking in their first language so when it comes to their usage of English for communication they experience language anxiety.

Chajradev. D.K. (2009) in her article titled "Use of Extempore Speech Practices Planning Remedial Teaching" used novelty term called SWOT analysis as a tool to measure the individual's strengths weakness, opportunities and threats in particular fields. She said that this methodology helped the students to shed this inhibition.



Fernanda Patricia Capraro (2002) had done research on “**A Journal study of the spoken English Learning Experience of Prospective International Teaching Assistance**”, His findings explained that the second language learners are poor in linguistics components, they are in need of instrumental motivation, and attitude and thinking towards learning is less.

Premila Bhasker (2010) worked a paper on “**Oral Communication Skills for Students from Rural India: A Practical Approach**”; and unearthed good findings. She strongly suggested that involving the Second language learners in activities will certainly promote the oral efficiency of less proficient students and enable the intermediate proficient students to an advanced level. The activities she selected were word game, twenty questions game, dumb charades, just a minute, and role play.

Ramanathan. S (2011) in his paper “**Development of Speaking Skills among Learners of ESL: Problems and Perspectives**” clearly focuses on the problems faced by the language learners. His findings showed that learners are bound by fear and nervousness. She recommended the activity based learning and preferred role play, saying that it simulates the learners’ learning thirst.

Research Gap

Many scholars have taken only the LSRW skills on Communication strategies among the students level. A few research works touch the communication strategies on English language teaching. So the present research tries to analyze and evaluate the school students’ presence of mind through their performance level.

Statement of the problem

The present study mainly focuses on spoken English among the higher secondary students, to test and evaluate the school students especially the native speakers among the second language learners. This study is to evaluate the students’ presence of mind and how they build sentences and it is very challenging in the placement recruitments. The result showed that the inability of using English knowledge during the higher studies, job interviews and at workplace is due to their failure to grab the opportunities and identifying the knowledge level and comprehension level in linguistic point of view.

Aim and scope of the study

The aim of the research is to identify the learning problems in the speaking skills encountered by the first year higher secondary students of English and other major subjects in Mettur Taluk Salem District. It is to identify the learning problems of the students indicating the oral problems to commit in relation to communication. This research is mainly done to find out

the problems and to provide remedial measures/strategies to overcome the problems faced by the second language learners in skills particular with speaking skill.

Significance of the study

The present research is significant since this may provide some guidelines for speaking skills to the students in schools. For the past few decades many efforts have been carried out for improving the performance of the students in English language. But still there exists some linguistic impairment in the process of English language learning. The state of English use is very poor that even after graduation many students are not competent enough to communicate in the language. Many of them are unable to comprehend and speak grammatically in English. This has given rise to the present study to identify the performance of first year higher secondary school students in skills.

Objectives of the study

The objectives of this study are described below to focus on the assessment of First year higher secondary school students.

To identify the problems of Tamil medium higher secondary students in speaking English

To identify the gender variation of the performance level and compare the oral proficiency of participants.

To identify the variation in the sounds, addition and deletion of English of second language learners.

To identify how effective speech can be achieved.

To identify the phonological problems of the students including stress, pitch, intonation etc.

To identify the Morphological problems of the students.

To identify the use of various conjunction, and other connecting linguistic properties and lexical problems

To identify the needs and the expectations of second language learning

To analyze the problems involved in framing sentences and their transformations.



To identify the reasons for the mistakes committed by the students and suggest remedial measures to overcome the problems.

Background of the study

The data is collected from Mettur taluk of Salem District, Tamil Nadu in India. There are two reasons for that: first the researcher belongs to the same district, second, it is undeveloped area and the infra structure is poor compared to other districts. There are many students who are studying in schools and colleges hailing from rural and urban area but the researcher will take, only rural area that are economically (related to their family background) poor. The researcher has chosen speaking skill as the testing tool because most of the students do not have the interest to speak English comparing to their mother tongue.

Plan of the Study

The researcher have to plan an evaluation of the spoken English among the higher secondary students and how to use the presence of mind to communicate the oral skills because they don't know to speak English in correct context and fails during the higher studies to communicate in the interviews, workplace etc., and it is very challenging during job recruitments. This study is to find out the reason how and why the second language learners fail to speak English, to acquire the use of English and how can it be developed to enable the students to face the challenges of the world. So this study involves the government and government approved higher secondary school students from Mettur taluk in Salem district.

Research Methodology

The study is mainly based on descriptive method. The data was collected from the students having formal education in Mettur Taluk of Salem District. Total sample of three hundred students of XI standard who study Tamil medium were selected as informants, among them 150 students are boys and 150 students are girls.

The questionnaire prepared to evaluate their present state of speaking skills.

The questionnaire would comprise questions to test and evaluate the production of speaking skills.

The questionnaire would be framed based on the existing general task based on speaking skills.

The filled-in questionnaire is then analyzed to identify the problematic areas.

The solutions to the problems would then be framed.

Data analysis and processing

Language structure and language used to speak in English

Omission

The elements omitted from different kinds sounds

1. **phone** /fəʊn/ → /pɔ:nu/ /pɔ:n/ /fɔ:nu/

The students used Place and manner of articulation function as dental voiceless consonant fricative sound /fəʊn/ instead of labial dental /f/ students have used bilabial plosive stop sound initial position /p/ and it is also noticed that a vowel sound /u/ has been added to the final /n/ which is a nasal consonant sound to pronounce /pɔ:nu/.

The students used Place and manner of articulation function as dental voiceless consonant fricative /f/ sound students have been used that bilabial voiceless stop sound /p/ sound have to change initial position /fəʊn/ instead of /pɔ:n/. They do not know the correct position of /fəʊn/ as /pɔ:n/

Students used Place and manner of articulation function as dental voiceless consonant fricative sound /fəʊn/ as /fɔ:nu/, Final sound of alveolar voiced nasal consonant /n/ + back vowel /u/ it becomes /nu/ then they pronounce /fɔ:nu/.

The students used the dental voiceless consonant fricative sound /f/ instead of bilabial voiceless stop sound /p/. So /f/ sound is absent in Tamil language.

v) The Dravidian language Tamil has words that end with vowel sounds, hence the students use the same even when they use English, hence all the words, have vowel endings and not consonant endings.

2. **Hospital** - /hɒspɪtəl/ → /a:spetelu/ / haspetalu/
/a:spetelu/

The students used Place and manner of articulation function as velar voiced fricative consonant sound /hɒspɪtəl/ /h/ instead of /a/ sound. Students have used central open vowel /a/ sound. Then they pronounced /a:spetalu/. which is absent in Tamil language /h/ sound, so they are said as Tamil vowel sound /a/

/ haspetalu/

(i)The students used Place and manner of articulation function as velar voiced fricative consonant sound /hɒspɪtl/. Students have used that /haspitalu/ final consonant sound ‘+u’ half open vowel has been changed /u/. The students said as /haspetalu/.

(ii)Where as boys 12% girls 47% Moreover students said as worku, subjetu, jabjetu, consonant + vowel add to produce a new sound /u/ is available in Tamil language, moreover Mother Tongue influence of speaking.

3) Biology - /bʌɪɔləʒi/ → / pa-ya-le-ji/ /bai-ya-la-ji/

Pa-ya-la-ji

(i)The students used Place and manner of articulation function as bilabial voiced stop sound /b/ students have used that /p/ to change bilabial voiceless stop sound ‘pa’.

ii) Whereas boys 21 % and girls 18 % this could be effect of mother tongue ‘p’ sound.

/ba-ya-la-ji/

i)The students used Place and manner of articulation function as bilabial voiced stop sound /b/ students have been used that /p/ to change bilabial voiceless stop sound ‘pa’.

ii)Whereas boys 21 % and girls 18 % this could be effect of mother tongue ‘p’ ‘b’ sound variation

4) Zoology - /zʊ¹ɔləʒi/ → /śu-va-la-ji/ /ji-va-la-ji/

/śu-va-lae-ji/

The students used Place and manner of articulation function as retroflex voiced fricative consonant sound /z/ students have used that /ś/ it can changed initial position of ‘śu’ then the students said as /śu-va-lae-ji/ the students used Place and manner of articulation function as retroflex voiced fricative consonant sound /z/ students have been used that /j/ palatal voiced stop sound instead of initial position ‘ji’. Then the students said as /ji-va-la-ji/, /j/ sound which is the absent of Tamil language

5) Rose - /rəʊz/ → /ro:ja/ /ro:sa/ /ro:su/

/ro:ja/

i) The students used Place and manner of articulation function as retroflex voiceless fricative consonant sound /s/ students have been used that /j/ palatal voiced stop sound instead of end position /ja/. Then they pronounced /ro:ja/

ii) Whereas boys 19 % and girls 15 % . /s/ instead of palatal voiced stop sound /j/ /ro:sa/

i) The students used Place and manner of articulation function as retroflex voiceless fricative consonant sound /s/ students have used that /ʃ/ palatal voiced stop sound instead of end position /sa/. Then they pronounce /ro:sa/ and students have used that j sound could be absent of Tamil language. The students used Place and manner of articulation is functions as retroflex voiceless fricative consonant sound /s / + /u/ back half mid vowel to add to produce /u/ sound then they pronounced /ro:su//s+/u/→/su/ could be effect of Tamil language

**6) Officer -/ˈɒfɪsə(r)/ → /a-pi-sa-r/ /a-bi-sa-r/
/a-pi-sa-r/**

i) Students used Place and manner of articulation function as retroflex voiceless fricative sound /f/ students have been used that /p / + /i/ bilabial voiceless stop sound and to add high back vowel sound then the students said as /a-pi-sa-r/ to change medial position.
/a-bi-sa-r/

ii) The students used Place and manner of articulation function as retroflex voiceless fricative sound /f/ students have used that /b/ + /i/ bilabial voiced stop sound and too add high back vowel sound then the students said as /a-bi-sa-r/ to change medial position.

iii) /of/ instead of /op/, /ob/ bilabial voiceless voiced sound variation /f/ which is that absent in Tamil language

Mother tongue influence in the use of pronunciation

| Number | Correct word form | Mother tongue influence in the use of pronunciation |
|--------|-------------------|---|
| 1 | Smell | Sumellu /suməlu/ |
| 2 | Friend | Friendu /frəndu/ |
| 3 | Slowly | Suloli /sulɔɔly/ |
| 4 | Fan | Pannu /pənnu/ |
| 5 | Beautiful | Putiful /putiful/ |
| 6 | Favorite | Pavretu /pəvert/ |

| | | |
|---|-------|---------------|
| 7 | Often | Opten /aptən/ |
|---|-------|---------------|

In these words the students has added a vowel /u/ in between the consonant clusters. In Tamil language consonant clusters are not found in the initial position and final positions. Hence words with initial consonant-clusters are avoided by the introduction of a vowel. The influence has resulted in the miss pronunciation of words such as ‘smell’ and ‘slowly’.

In all the words students have used the retroflex voiced /d/ instead of voiceless /t/ In Tamil language the retroflex plosive followed by nasal is always voiced retroflex sounds in the place of voiceless.

Words showing modification of letters while speaking

1. Often - a:pten
2. Hour - havvar
3. Influence - influns
4. Thorough - Tharow
5. Genuine - jiu:nien; jinvəin; jenun
6. Nephew - nepi, nibar, nipo,

Students are listening and repeating then they omitted correct pronunciation they created new sound. The Dravidian language Tamil has words that end with vowel sounds, hence the students use the same ever when they use English, hence all the word, have vowel endings and not consonant endings.

Limitation of the study

The study of the researcher is confined to Four Government Schools and Two Government Approved Higher Secondary Schools learners in Mettur Taluk of Salem District. To study the student’s knowledge in Spoken English as Linguistic study, researcher has chosen Tamil medium students data collection with medium of instruction and gender variable.

This is only with spoken English as Linguistics study.

First Year Higher Secondary Students of Tamil Medium were taken for this study.

In school three hundred students were taken for collecting the data.

Prepared the questionnaire to evaluate their present state of the knowledge

To identify the social variables for personal information, family background etc.,



Rural schools were taken from Mettur Taluk, Salem district, namely:

Found problems of the Students

Student don't have an opinion on the subject

They have vocabulary problems to make the sentence.

The learners are not able to identify the grammatical rules and perceive the texts

They have problems of self-expressions and regional or mother tongue influence.

They don't have interest to speak English

They don't know the correct pronunciation, intonation, stress etc.

The learners don't know to use the language in the appropriate context.

They were difficult to communicate in the particular context but when they write the sentence it was better.

Improper and inefficient drilling of the spelling in the classroom.

Students have worries about speaking English, as what other students might say or think

Many students find it difficult to respond when the teacher asks them to share their opinion on something in the second language.

Conclusion

Many tend to point their fingers towards the teachers' performance and the teachers blame the learners for their lack of interest. But the fact is that teachers are teaching and learners are trying to learn, but learning doesn't take place, because the students are taught that English language is not much important and they are not interested to communicate in the class room. So the main purpose of this study is to look into what's happening in English class rooms in a rural school and how the English teachers are executing their duties of using English to teach English, their context and how they are performing. Whereas students from the rural schools have limited access to the second language and so they face great difficulties when they enter college for their higher education and this in turn affects their job profile too.

Recommendations

Teachers should more emphasize English as a medium of instruction in the English class

Teachers should promote interactive techniques while teaching English

For the enhancement of speaking skill in school environment teacher should cultivate English communication culture within schools

Students may be speaking English with fellow students and encouraged to respond in English

Refresher course for better teachers' training for the creation of English speaking environment within schools should be arranged.

Teachers training institution should restricted only for professional courses in English.

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