

Effect of Remedial Programme on Odd and Peculiar Pronunciation in English Language

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Abstract

Education has great importance in everybody's life. It is as old as human race. In the era of science, technology, and above all in the age of globalization, priorities have been changed and the importance of such languages as are spoken around in every corner of the world is also multiplied. Fluency in language and qualitative knowledge of society, politics, religion and surroundings make the child a perfect student. But the biggest hurdle that hinders the path of students today is the problem of learning language. The pronunciation, that they pick up by themselves is quite odd and peculiar and generally influenced by the mother tongue or the dialectical variants. Thus, sometimes it put them in embarrassing situations as the meaning is swayed to a totally different one as what was really intended by the speaker. In this paper the researcher tried to provide some remedial programme to bring some improvement in the pronunciation. In this study the results were significantly different after remedial treatment which shows that if we prepare some remedial programmes to improve the pronunciation of the students it will be very much helpful in solving the problems of wrong pronunciation as well as in developing the effective communication skill.

KEYWORDS: Remedial Programme, Odd Pronunciation and Peculiar Pronunciation.

Introduction

The pronunciation of English words is really problematic at least for the foreign learners. This is because the sounds of spoken by educated people in India does not differ radically from native English in grammar and vocabulary, but in pronunciation, it is different from both British and American English. Even within India there are a large number of regional varieties each different from the other in certain ways, and retaining to some extent the phonetic patterns of the Indian languages spoken in that particular region. These regional varieties of English are sometimes not even mutually intelligent. In every region, however, there are people who have shaken off the gross features of regional accent and speak a more 'neutral' form of Indian English. It is also true that in every region there are good speakers of English and bad speakers of English. The terms 'good' and 'bad' are referring to the degrees of approximation to native English and Standard Indian English.

The study of English in India began with the onset of the present educational setup in India under British Rule in the 19th century when Lord Macaulay in 1835 presented the minute on favour of English. This trend was further strengthened when in 1844 Lord Harding declared that for service, preference would be given by the company to those who were educated in English schools. But ever since the exit of the British from India;

the issue of teaching English in India is swinging from no status to restored status. No one can deny that English is a highly developed language and its vast literature is great store-house of rich ideas and thoughts. Moreover, it will be generally agreed that the study of English in free India also, is not only desirable but essential too. Indians can neglect its study only at their own cost. This is not merely a saying but has firm grounds in the present era of rapid scientific and technological advancement. One must acquire sufficient mastery of English in order to access the treasure of knowledge.

But it is rather sad to note that there is something wrong with the teaching of English in India schools. Prof. V.K. Gokak says, "The study of English in our schools is in a chaotic state today. Learners are taught English for about six periods a week for six years. But it has been estimated that they hardly know 1500 words by the time they join a university." This means that they have hardly been able to learn English words at the rate of one word per period. They do not know how to use the commonest structures of English.

Justification of the study

Linguists and language teachers are aware to the need of exact and proper pronunciation in a language. Due to lessening of geographical distances among the continents and increased migration of people, culture and highly developed, means of communications have reduced the world to a global village. Today more and more people are learning other languages like especially English and French etc. and we have entered the era of multilingualism.

In such a scenario and milieu; if we tend to study the position of English in Haryana, it becomes obvious that the interference of mother tongues has marred the growth of English language to a great extent. This interference is evident on both; speech as well as writing. We see that the children have got a habit to learn, speak and express everything in their mother tongue. That is why a class of a small duration of 40 minutes on a foreign language like English is not enough to give them ample practice to express themselves properly.

As not much work has been done to improve the pronunciation of the students in English language; the investigator tried to provide some remedial programme to bring some improvement in the pronunciation of the students at secondary school level.

Objectives of study

1. To trace out the reasons behind odd and peculiar pronunciation in English.
2. To develop a remedial programme to improve the pronunciation in English.
3. To Study the effect of remedial programme on the pronunciation of the students.

Hypothesis of the Study

There is no significant difference in the pronunciation of the students before and after the remedial programme

Delimitations

Due to the limited time and limited financial resources, the study is delimited by the investigator in terms of area, level and scope etc. In the present study sample is restricted to the Senior Secondary Schools of Sonapat City only. A convenient sample of 30 students was taken and the remedial programme was constructed mainly to aim at providing a remedy to the odd and peculiar pronunciation in English language only.

- ❖ The study was confined to the secondary school level.
- ❖ The study was confined to Sonapat city only.
- ❖ The data collection was confined to only one school of the urban area.
- ❖ The research was confined to pronunciation of the selected English words only.

Sample

There are many schools in the 'Sonapat' city out of which only one School was chosen purposively. Students of 9th Class were selected for testing the pronunciation and to provide remedial programme through systematic sampling for the present study. Out of 120 students every 3rd student was selected.

Tools

The following tools were used for data collection by the investigator.

1. A list prepared by the investigator containing difficult words.

The investigator prepared a list of English words that are commonly mispronounced at the secondary level. Then he personally visited the schools to collect samples in order to trace the problems and errors in the pronunciation of the learners.

2. A remedial programme prepared by the investigator:

After tracing the errors in the pronunciation of learners, the investigator prepared a remedial programme which includes the explanation of rules and some audio tapes for listening practice

Remedial Programme

In order to overcome the faulty pronunciation and to check the efficacy of the Remedial Programme, general rules of pronunciation of English words were taught to the students for a period of four weeks so that they may be able to understand the pronunciation patterns of different types of consonant clusters. The investigator painstakingly, divided the whole remedial programme in four parts and each of them was given to the students on the first working day of the week in the presence of their teacher. The teacher was also asked to help the students in their areas of difficulty and after the completion of the remedial programme, the students were again asked to pronounce the words and the same was recorded carefully by the investigator.

Part (I) of Remedial Programme (First Week):

Pronunciation of Double Consonant Letters:

- (i) The double *c*. The double *c* is pronounced /k/ in some words and /ks/ in others:

K	k	k
acclaim	occasion	accede
ecclesiastic	accusative	eccentric

- (ii) Other double consonants: All other double consonants are pronounced as single consonant sounds.

abbot	fall	arrest
rubber	ballistic	porridge

Occurrence of Silent Consonants:

- (i) *b* in the sequence *bt* and *mb*

debt	comb	womb
doubt	lamb	plumb

- (ii) *d* before *j*

adjective	adjunct	adjoin
adjudge	adjust	adjutant
adjoin	adjacent	adjudicate

- (iii) *g* before *m* and *n*

gnarl	poignant	gnat
sign	gnaw	malign

- (iv) *h* after *g* and word finally

ghost	aghast	ghastly
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Part (II) of Remedial Programme (Second Week):

For the pronunciation of the sequences *ch*, *gh*, *ph*, *rh*, *sh*, *th*, and *wh* let us analyse these words:

- (i) *k* before *n*

knack	kneel	knob
knave	knife	knot

- (ii) *l* before *k* and *m*

walk	balm
talk	palm

- (iii) *n* after *m*

autumn	damn
column	hymn

- (iv) *p* in the word-initial sequences *pn*, *ps*, *pt*

psalm	psychology
pseudonym	pneumatic

- (v) *s* before *l* in the following words:

aisle	island	isle
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- (vi) *t* between (a) *s* and *l*; (b) *s* and *en*

castle	thistle
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	apostle	hustle	
	listen	listen	
	fasten	hasten	
(vii)	<i>w</i> before <i>r</i> and, in some cases, before <i>h</i> in the word initial position		
	write	whom	
	wrest	whose	
	wrestle	whole	
	wrist	whoop	

Non – insertion of /j/

/j/ is never inserted

(i)	after /t, dz, r/		
	Chew	rude	grew
	Juice	rule	shrewd
(ii)	after // preceded by a consonant		
	blue	glue	
	blew	flu	

Part (III) of Remedial Programme (Third Week)

Pronunciation of the Consonant r:

In RP, the consonant *r* is silent unless it is followed by a vowel. Thus it is silent in the following words, for example, where no vowel follows it.

art	car	airport
occur	charm	hear

and it is not silent in the following words, for example, where a vowel follows it:

radio	hearing
charisma	storing

Pronunciation of the ‘Plural’ Suffix:

The suffixes *-(e)s*, *'s*, and *s'*, which perform various functions, have all been labeled here, for convenience, as the ‘plural’ suffix. The ‘plural’ suffix is pronounced in three different ways:

(i)	/iz/ after the consonants /s, z, t, dz/		
	horses	crosses	lass's
	horses	chooses	Dickens's
	bushes	rushes	witch's
			Alice's
			Roach's
			George's
(ii)	/s/ after the consonants /p, t, k, f/		
	taps	stops	chap's
	map's	cats	hates
(iii)	/z/ after all other consonants and all vowels		

boys	goes	man's
tom's	girls	stands

Pronunciation of the 'Past' Suffix:

The label 'past suffix' has been used here for the suffix *-(e)d*, which turns the regular verbs into their past and past participle forms (smiled, played). Like the plural' suffix, this suffix is also pronounced in three different ways:

- (i) */id/* after the consonants */t, d/*

hated	headed	inflated
guarded	batted	sided
- (ii) */t/* after the consonants */p, k t, f, s,/*

heaped	earthed	looked
passed	reached	rushed
- (iii) */d/* after all other consonants and vowels

rubbed	hinged	tagged
prayed	lived	praised

Part (IV) of remedial programme (Fourth Week)

Pronunciation of Some Other Common Word – endings:

- (i) The endings *-cial, -sial, and -tial* are all pronounced */əl/*, not */I/*

Commercial	confidential	
residential	referential	
- (ii) The ending *-cian* is pronounced */n/*, not */I/ n/*

electrician	physician	politician
academician	magician	musician
- (iii) The endings *-cious* and *-tious* are pronounced */s/* not */I/ s/*

delicious	suspicious	
ambitious	supersituous	
- (iv) The ending *-age* is pronounced */idz/* not */eidz/*.

cartage	village	carriage
hostage	marriage	postage
- (v) The ending *-ate* is, in adjectives, pronounced */et/* not */eit/*.

delicate	ultimate	
temperate	fortunate	
consummate	deliberate	

In verbs, however, the same ending is pronounced */eit/*.

educate	sublimate	cultivate
hesitate	consummate	deliberate
- (vi) The ending *-tain* is pronounced */tin/* in some words and */tn/* or */t ð n/* in others, but not */tein/*.

captain	mountain	curtain
fountain	certain	

- (vii) The ending *-stion* is pronounced /st/ ∂ n/ not/ ∂ n/.
 suggestion digestion question
- (viii) The endings *-ance/ence*, *-ant/-ent* are pronounced with the vowel / ∂ / not/ ∂ / or/ æ /
 distance hesitant resistance reluctant
 difference instant reverence distant
 preference different reference deterrent
- (ix) The endings *-est* and *-et*, when they occur in unaccented syllabus, are pronounced with the vowel /i/, not /e/.
 hardest farthest darkest

Pronunciation of *-ng*:

- (i) In the word-final position *-ng* is always pronounced /ŋ /, never /ŋg / for example:
 rang sing song dung
 reading sitting running seeing
- (ii) In the medial position, *-ng* is pronounced in two different ways:
 (a) /ŋ/ only in the words formed verbs ending in /ŋ/, for example:
 singer hanger ringing
 hangman hangnail sings
- and also /ŋ/ only when the plural marker 's' is suffixed to nouns ending in /ŋ/, for example:
 rings songs wrongs
- (b) /ŋg / in all other cases, for example:
 stronger strongest finger anger

Aspiration of p, t, k:

If the consonants /p, t, k/ occur at the beginning of an accented syllable of a word they are aspirated, that is, they are produced more like the Hindi 'फ, ठ, ख' than like the Hindi 'फ़, ठ़, ख़' respectively. For international intelligibility, it is important to aspirate them in that position, for otherwise native speakers of English can mishear them as /b, d, g/, respectively. Thus, if the /p, t, k/ at the beginning of the words pat, tense, and class are not aspirated, then these words are likely to be heard by native speakers of English as bat, dense, and glass, respectively.

Given below are some words for practice with the help of the tape.

pill	ton	cane
prepare	clue	reply
attest	character	reputed

Care must be taken not to aspirate /p, t, k/ in any other position, that is, not to aspirate them when they are preceded by /s/ as in spare, stick, and school or when they occur in an unaccented syllable as /p/ in prevent, /t/ in tomorrow, and /k/ in cremate.

As an extra caution, I would like to state here is that speakers who cannot pronounce the English consonant /f/, and therefore use [ph] φ in its place, should not aspirate /p/ in any position until they first acquire the consonant /f/. This is necessary in order to avoid confusion between /p/ and /f/.

The rules of pronunciation discussed above aim at further improvement in the learner's pronunciation of English. These have been divided into Part I, Part II, Part III and Part IV. The learners were advised to gain mastery through practice before proceeding to the next stage. In other words, they should first learn the pronunciation of double consonant letters, the occurrence of silent consonants, and the non-insertion of /j/ in certain positions, and only then, proceed to various other aspects of English pronunciation such as the aspiration of /p, t, k/ and the pronunciation of (i) the letter r, (ii) the 'plural' and 'past suffixes, (iii) other common endings, and (iv) the letters '-ng', and (v) the contracted forms.

Analysis and Interpretation

The students were asked to pronounce the given words and their pronunciation was recorded carefully. The L.P. was analysed qualitatively in the light of R.P. of England.

Table- Mean, S.D. and CR-value of the scores of students before and after remedial programme

Source	N	Mean	S. D.	S.E.	r-value	CR
Before Remedial Programme	40	12.6	3.97	0.69	0.62	27.05*
After Remedial Programme	40	31.27	5.54			

*significant at .01 level

Findings

- There is a significant difference in the mean score regarding pronunciation of the students after the remedial programme i.e. 18.67.
- A majority of the learners were not able to pronounce the test items properly before the remedial programme.
- Most of the learners succeeded in pronouncing the test items properly after the clarification of their doubts through Remedial Programme.
- Even the teachers teaching these learners had confusions regarding the apt pronunciation of some of the words. Hence, it becomes obvious that the learners were being taught faulty/ wrong pronunciation.
- Students have the ability of speaking apt pronunciation if they were taught properly in their schools by their teachers.

- Teachers of English don't have good and apt pronunciation themselves so they use to teach the students in wrong manner.
- Students mispronounce these words due to the absence of English speaking environment.
- The calculated value of CR i.e.27.05 is far greater than the table value i.e. 2.42 at .01 level and hence can be marked very significant. It seems certain that the students made substantial progress in correct pronunciation of the words after the remedial programme.

Conclusion

- Students should be given proper knowledge of rules of proper pronunciation while teaching English.
- Teachers must clear their doubts regarding apt pronunciation before teaching in the class.
- Typical words must be repeated time and again before students.
- Remedial Program must be given from time to time to reduce the habit of mispronouncing the words among students.
- The teacher must inculcate the habit of consulting dictionary for clearing their doubts regarding pronunciation.
- Good English Laboratory should be established and properly maintained according to the mantle level of the students.
- Students must be given proper listening as well as speaking practice.

Educational Implication

Such types of remedial programmes are needed for learners as well as for teachers also, if we want to bring improvement in pronunciation of the students. Teachers are the ideal for the students. If the teachers pronounce wrong then the students follow them and this habit prolongs throughout the life. So, in different states where there is impact of dialect on the pronunciation some remedial programmes should be prepared.

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