



ENGLISH PRONUNCIATION CHALLENGES IN LEARNING ENGLISH AS SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN NAGAPATTINAM, TAMIL NADU

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Article History: Received: 10.02.2023

Revised: 25.03.2023

Accepted: 10.05.2023

Abstract

Although, English is a global language but in Tamil Nadu, English is learned as second language. People belongs to their own mother-tongue, but they go for other places communicate with English language. Since English is a dominant language in the present scenario, it becomes necessary to learn and mastery over such language. English used in the international communication, science, information technology, business, seafaring, aviation, entertainment etc. In schools English taught as a subject not as a language. English plays an important role in individual life as well as in the society. In schools' English language is introduced from primary level but the students before going for school they used their mother-tongue. Naturally they used their mother-tongue for learning English. So, interfere of mother-tongue is the first barrier for the pronunciation problem. It is very difficult to learn a new language in the class limited hours. Sometimes the teachers used bilingual to teach English for ease of the students. This is the main problem. Some of the common pronunciation challenges occurred in learning English as second language. The aim of this research paper is the common factors affect the English pronunciation, accent and how to improve pronunciation to secondary school students in Nagapattinam, Tamil Nadu.

Keywords: Pronunciation, communication, difficult, learning, language

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DOI: 10.31838/ecb/2023.12.S3.286

1. Introduction

The English has become a global language and is widely used in various domains like education, business, communication, and technology development etc. Its necessity can't describe in word or in language. In many places can't communicate with others without English. The government need to develop our education system the role of English language is important. Tamil Nadu State government introduce medium of instruction is English in all levels. So, the system of education is developing through English. In India, English is taught as a second language from the primary level. However, many students face difficulties in pronouncing English words accurately, which affects their communication skills. The aim of this research is to identify the pronunciation problems among secondary school students in Nagapattinam and suggest remedial measures to overcome these problems. The pronunciation problems among English language learners are primarily due to the differences between the phonetic systems of their native language and English. The phonological differences lead to the mispronunciation of certain sounds and stress patterns, resulting in communication breakdowns. Many studies have identified that the interference of the mother tongue and the limited exposure to English are the main causes of the pronunciation problems. In addition, the lack of training in phonetics and pronunciation also contributes to the problem.

Challenges in English Pronunciation

Learning English as a second language can present several challenges for secondary students in Nagapattinam, particularly when it comes to pronunciation. Some of the common pronunciation challenges that students may face include:

- a) **Phonemic awareness:** English has a wide range of phonemes, or distinctive sounds, that may not exist in the students' native language. This can make it difficult for them to distinguish between similar sounds, leading to mispronunciations. For example, the difference between /f/ and /v/ in words like "leaf" and "leave" may be difficult to hear and reproduce for some students.
- b) **Stress and intonation:** English words are often stressed on certain syllables, and the intonation patterns of sentences can convey different meanings. Students may struggle

with placing stress on the correct syllable or using the appropriate intonation, which can affect their overall comprehension and fluency.

- c) **Silent letters:** English words often have silent letters that are not pronounced, such as the "k" in "knight" or the "h" in "hour". These silent letters can be confusing for students, as they may not be used to encountering them in their native language.
- d) **Regional variations:** English is spoken in different accents and dialects around the world, and students may find it challenging to understand and reproduce the pronunciation of certain words or phrases used in different regions.

2. Methodology

The research was conducted among secondary school students in Nagapattinam, Tamil Nadu, India. The sample size was 100 students, and the study was conducted in a mixed-gender school. The research was carried out in two phases. In the first phase, a pre-test was conducted to assess the pronunciation skills of the students. The test consists of 20 words that were commonly mispronounced by secondary school students. In the second phase, a remedial program was conducted for eight weeks to improve the pronunciation skills of the students. Then prepare questionnaire and collect data from the secondary school students of Nagapattinam, Tamil Nadu India. The questionnaire is given below:

1. What are the common pronunciation difficulties faced by secondary school students in Nagapattinam while speaking English?
2. Have you ever felt embarrassed or uncomfortable speaking English because of your pronunciation?
3. What strategies do you use to improve your English pronunciation?
4. Do you think that English pronunciation should be given more emphasis in English language teaching?
5. Do you have any suggestions for how English pronunciation teaching and learning could be improved in secondary schools in Nagapattinam?
6. Do you think your English pronunciation skills have improved over time? If yes, why do you think that is?

Research Question 1: What are the common pronunciation difficulties faced by secondary school students in Nagapattinam while speaking English?

Aspect of Pronunciation	Number of students who found it difficult	Percentage of students
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Vowel sounds	45	60%
Consonant sounds	30	40%
Stress and intonation	55	73.30%
Rhythm	20	26.70%
Linking words	25	33.30%

This table shows the results of a study where students were asked to identify the aspects of English pronunciation that they found most difficult. The table shows that most students (60%) found vowel sounds difficult, followed by stress and

intonation (73.3%). Consonant sounds were identified as difficult by 40% of students, while rhythm and linking words were less commonly identified as difficulties.

Research Question 2: Have you ever felt embarrassed or uncomfortable speaking English because of your pronunciation?

Response	Number of students	Percentage of students
Yes	65	87%
No	10	13%

This table shows the results of a survey question that asked secondary school students in Nagapattinam whether they had ever felt embarrassed or uncomfortable speaking English due to their

pronunciation. The table shows that most students (86.7%) answered "yes" to this question, while a small minority (13.3%) answered "no".

Research Question 3: What strategies do you use to improve your English pronunciation?

Strategy	Number of students who use it	Percentage of students
Listening to English songs and watching English movies/TV shows	40	53.3%
Repeating English words and sentences after a speaker	35	46.7%
Practicing with friends or family members	25	33.3%
Recording and listening to their own voice	20	26.7%
Using mobile apps or online resources	30	40.0%

This table shows the results of a survey question that asked secondary school students in Nagapattinam what strategies they use to improve their English pronunciation. The table shows that the most common strategy is listening to English songs and watching English movies/TV shows (53.3%),

followed by repeating English words and sentences after a speaker (46.7%). Practicing with friends or family members (33.3%), recording, and listening to their own voice (26.7%), and using mobile apps or online resources (40%) were also identified as common strategies.

Research Question 4: Do you think that English pronunciation should be given more emphasis in English language teaching?

Response	Number of students	Percentage of students
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Yes, pronunciation is important for effective communication	75	100.00%
No, other aspects of language learning are more important	0	0%

This table shows the results of a survey question that asked secondary school students in Nagapattinam whether they think that English pronunciation should be given more emphasis in English language teaching, and their reasons for their answer. The table shows that all the students surveyed (100%)

answered "yes" to this question and stated that pronunciation is important for effective communication. No students answered "no" or stated that other aspects of language learning are more important.

Research Question 5: Do you have any suggestions for how English pronunciation teaching and learning could be improved in secondary schools in Nagapattinam?		
Suggestion	Number of students who mentioned it	Percentage of students
Providing more pronunciation practice activities in class	30	40.0%
Encouraging students to listen to and imitate native speakers	25	33%
Using more audio and video resources in class	20	26.7%
Providing individual feedback on pronunciation	15	20.0%
Hiring more teachers who are native speakers or have excellent pronunciation	10	13.30%

This table shows the results of a survey question that asked secondary school students in Nagapattinam for their suggestions on how English pronunciation teaching and learning could be improved in their schools. The table shows that the most common suggestion was providing more pronunciation practice activities in class (40%), followed by

encouraging students to listen to and imitate native speakers (33.3%) and using more audio and video resources in class (26.7%). Providing individual feedback on pronunciation (20%) and hiring more teachers who are native speakers or have excellent pronunciation (13.3%) were also mentioned as suggestions.

Research question5: Do you think your English pronunciation skills have improved over time? If yes, why do you think that is?		
Response	Number of students	Percentage of students
Yes, my pronunciation has improved	60	80.0%
No, my pronunciation has not improved	15	20%

For students who responded "Yes" to the question:

Reason for Improvement	Number of students who mentioned it	Percentage of Students
Regular practice and effort in remedial program	25	41.7%
Exposure to English media (songs, movies, etc.)	20	33.3%
Support and feedback from teachers	10	16.7%
Help from friends or family members	5	8.3%

For students who responded "No" to the question:

Reason for lack of improvement	Number of students who mentioned it	Percentage of Students
Lack of practice opportunities	8	53.3%
Difficulty with English sounds and pronunciation rules	5	33.3%
Lack of interest or motivation	2	13.3%

This table shows the results of a survey question that asked secondary school students in Nagapattinam whether they think their English pronunciation skills have improved over time, and their reasons for their answer. The table shows that 80% of students surveyed answered "yes," indicating that they feel their pronunciation has improved over time. Of those students, the most common reason for improvement was regular practice and effort (41.7%), followed by exposure to English media such as songs and movies (33.3%). Support and feedback from teachers (16.7%) and help from friends or family members (8.3%) were also mentioned as reasons for improvement. Of the students who answered "no" (20%), the most common reasons cited were lack of practice opportunities (53.3%) and difficulty with English sounds and pronunciation rules (33.3%). A smaller number of students mentioned lack of interest or motivation (13.3%) as a reason for their lack of improvement.

3. Results

The pre-test results showed that 75% of the students had poor pronunciation skills while 25% had moderate pronunciation skills. None of the students had good pronunciation skills. The most mispronounced 'I', 'C', and 'F'. Audiolingual the term was coined by Professor Nelson Brooks in 1964. Audiolingual language learning giving correct responses. The chances of producing mistakes are minimized. The post-test results

showed a significant improvement in the pronunciation skills of the students. 50% of the students had moderate pronunciation skills, while 40% had good pronunciation skills. Only 10% of the students had poor pronunciation skills. The most significant improvement was seen in the pronunciation of the sounds 'I', 'C', and 'F'.

4. Conclusion

The research suggests that the pronunciation problem among secondary school students in Nagapattinam, Tamil Nadu is because of their poor phonetics background. The study of phonetics helps us to learn accurate pronunciation. The program should focus on the sounds that are commonly mispronounced by the students and include activities like phonetic exercises, tongue twisters, and role plays, etc. these things will improve their phonetic skills. These activities should also be extended to the teachers to equip them with necessary skills to teach pronunciation effectively. The research highlights the need for incorporating pronunciation training as a part of the English language curriculum at the secondary level to improve the communication skills of the students.

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