

A STUDY ON THE ACCENTUAL COMPETENCY OF GRADUATE TEACHER TRAINEES IN ENGLISH WORDS

Research
Paper

ABSTRACT

An attempt is made through the present study to examine how the fresh teacher trainees in B.Ed Course fare in giving stress to the prominent syllables of the content words in English. They were given marks for correctly stressing words while reading aloud in the Pre-test and in the Post test after sufficient drills. Of the stratified sample of 32 students, 20 were girls and 12 were boys. There is a highly significant improvement in their pronunciation of words with stress after the training.

INTRODUCTION

English has the stress-timed rhythm but the Indian languages have syllable-timed rhythm. Prominent syllables in words receive stress in English. All the content words such as Nouns, Main Verbs, Adjectives and Adverbs receive stress in the nucleus of the words. In this study, it was found how the teacher trainees who joined the B.Ed course stressed the wrong syllables in disyllabic, tri-syllabic and polysyllabic words. Indian languages too have certain suprasegmental features but they are not marked with symbols as it is done in English.

As the present Syllabus for the Teaching of English in B.Ed Course enforces a deep study of the English language as a system of systems, a study was made to find out the entry status (behaviour) of the Teacher Trainees in stressing English words in pronunciation.

REVIEW OF RELATED STUDIES

Doughty and Long (2003) have found that the acquisition of English Lexical Stress is very important in EAL instruction since it is closely associated with Learners' listening comprehension accuracy. Misperception of stressed syllables in English may lead to inaccurate comprehension, thereby resulting in ineffective communication.

Archibald (1997) has said that all stress Languages belong to accentual languages and tone languages are all non-accentual languages. The primary difference between English and Mandarin in lexical stress is that English is an accentual language with movable stress assignment while Mandarin uses tone lexically to differentiate word meanings.

Studying 90 Thai Learners' English Pronunciation Competence, Khamkhien (2010) found it limited and suggested focusing on the importance of teaching word stress in particular.

Senel (2006) has asserted that interference or negative transfer from the first language is likely to cause errors in aspiration, intonation, rhythm and melody in the target language.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

To study the mistakes committed by the Graduate Teacher Trainees in word when reading aloud at entry level and remedy those errors after drilling and teaching them the correct pronunciation of difficult words in English.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

As English is the linking language of this globe, if the prominent syllables are not given stress while chatting, people in the other end will not understand what is communicated. In schools, English is taught and spoken with a levelled tone as it is done with the native tongues and the people are satisfied with good written English. But the time has changed. From class IX onwards, students are given drills to pronounce the English speech sounds and they are taught the differences between British and American spelling, pronunciation and meaning of words. Students joining B.Ed course are from different streams of study. There is a strong influence of mother tongue affecting their pronunciation of words in English.

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There is a lot of urge to learn but they are often in dread of articulating. So it was decided to diagnose their mistakes and plan the right way of teaching to remedy their errors in pronunciation.

OBJECTIVES

1. To identify the defects in pronunciation of English sounds and words in the graduate teacher trainees.
2. To remedy their errors in pronunciation and stressing the right syllables in words, by giving chorus and individual drills.

HYPOTHESIS

There is no significant improvement in pronunciation of English words with correct stress in the Teacher Trainees after undergoing the pronunciation drills.

METHOD SELECTED

Experimental Study

POPULATION OF THE STUDY

Teacher Trainees in B.Ed Course of SRM University.

SAMPLE

Stratified Sampling Technique was used to select the sample. Of the 170 teacher trainees, 102 trainee teachers who had studied English as one of the subjects were selected. From these students, 68 who had studied English as the Main Subject in their Degree were chosen. Out of these 68 students, 32 sighted students (Non Visually Challenged) were separated. Of these 32, there were 12 boys and 20 girls.

DESIGN

ONE GROUP DESIGN

X1

T1 ————— T2 ——— T2—T1 (Gain

(Treatment)

TOOLS

A sheet containing 16 words, 2 phrases and 2 Short Sentences to be read by the pupils

1. A Scoring Sheet containing all the twenty words/phrases/sentences on the left side of the double sheet vertically. Names of pupils were written horizontally.

STATISTICS

Pearson's Product Moment Co-efficient of Correlation was found and 't' value calculated using one-tailed test.

PROCEDURE

The words were read by 20 girls and twelve boys. The researcher gave marks for their right answers. After the pretest was over, the teacher taught groups of words of the same suffix/ prefix including the twenty items.

After teaching and reteaching for more than fifteen days, they were asked to read again and were given marks for correct answers on the same sheet by the teacher. The given words are:

1. Damage 2. Effect 3. Calculate 4. Good afternoon 5. Vegetables are imported 6. My object is to become rich 7. Attend 8. Imagination 9. Patriotic 10. Grammatical words 11. Politically 12. Originality 13. Artificial 14. Cultivate 15. Librarian 16. Victorious 17. Career 18. Fundamental 19. Confidentially 20. Physique.

In a quiet cabin of the Language Laboratory, every student was called in, asked to sit on a chair and a sheet containing the computer typed items was given to her/him. Everyone was asked to read aloud the words one by one normally as they do in their speech. Mispronunciation of a part of some words was ignored. Where the student was giving stress in each word was particularly noted. If he read correctly, a mark in the form of a slash was given in the scoring sheet. This procedure was carried out before the pre-test and post-test. When the College was over by 3.20 p.m., these 32 students attended the 40 minutes drilling in pronouncing the words with correct stress. For 15 working days in September 2013, the students were drilled besides their listening to the Class Teacher in the class.

The students were drilled in pronunciation of the following groups of words. Only primary stress was given importance.

Ad'vance	ca'reer	ex'cuse	'alternate	'mother	monu'mental
Attend	confirm	effect	cultivate	damage	fundamental
Agree	complete	exalt	calculate	country	accidental
Abuse	concede	enlarge	indicate	college	detrimental
Affirm	conceive	refer	concentrate	student	segmental

Appeal concern observe separate woman physique
Award command prefer hesitate habit removal
Depart divorce embark moderate money

Good 'Morning. Good 'after noon How 'beautiful!

Read the pairs of sentence:

1. The 'escort was drunk. 2.He was es'corted by the police.
1. The 'export increases. 2.We im'port softwares.
1. I give you 'progress reports 2.He pro'gresses steadily.
1. My 'object is to become rich 2.I ob'ject to what you say.

REMEDIAL MEASURES

1. A copy of the Advanced Learners' Dictionary was given to each student and the students were asked to read the words alone with correct pronunciation and stress by looking at the Phonetic transcription given against each word. Every day in the Class also, five students were asked to read five pages.

2. A set of two audio cassettes attached to the third edition of English Phonetics and Phonology by Peter Roach were used in the Language Laboratory and 35 students could listen to the native pronunciation of English words using headphones.

3. When the teacher was transcribing the words and writing them on the blackboard, the students were asked to check them by looking at their Cell Phones where they have got the Dictionary saved.

4. The students were asked to write five words and their transcriptions in their diary daily by collecting the words from an English newspaper

Table 1

DIFFERENCE IN PRONUNCIATION OF WORDS WITH STRESS BY THE TEACHER TRAINEES

Test	N	Mean	S.D	r	Calculated t-value
Pre-test	32	12.53	2.98	0.92	15.05
Post-test	32	15.84	2.67		

For $df = N - 1$, that is, $df = 31$, the table value of 't' at 0.05 level is 1.70 and at 0.01 level, One tailed test of

significance is used. As there is highly significant difference in pronouncing words with stress, the null hypothesis is rejected.

DISCUSSION

Our students do easily in stressing the initial syllable of the words as it has become habitual due to the influence of first language. Continuous drills make them pronounce the English words correctly. They find it easier to pronounce the native English words than the words borrowed from other European Languages. For example, the word 'physique' was mispronounced by 29 students out of 32 even after sufficient drills. Students pick up the correct pronunciation of words with same spelling but with different functions as Nouns and Verbs with ease. If we train our students in word-stress, they will do it correctly in sentences.

CONCLUSION

1. Repeated drills bring about improvement in pronunciation of words with stress on the right syllables.
2. As practice makes one perfect in any skill like dancing, singing, playing and so on, constant and conscious practice in pronouncing English words alone will make one fit to converse in this skill-oriented subject.
3. When the students speak English sentences, the place of giving stress will vary. But they will pronounce the Nouns and Adjectives differently from Verbs. That is the importance gained by these drills.

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