Regional Language Influence on English Speaking Ability of Class VIth Students of Government Schools of Delhi

Pooja Shukla*

*Assistant Professor , Global Institute of Education, Gr. Noida

Abstract

The importance of English language has grown so rapidly over the years. However the quality of English in terms of the four skills has not kept pace with this development. This present study attempted to study the Regional influence on English speaking ability of class VI students of Delhi Government Schools. Regional influence on English language is observed on many grounds viz. Regional variation, pronunciation, accent. Intonation and stress of the words. It was observed that majority of students do have Regional influence on their spoken English. It is imperative at the primary stage itself that maximum efforts should be put by the child and the teacher to pronounce the words accurately. The sounds of the letters of the words should be clearly understood and learnt. There are various socio-cultural consideration, lack of awareness of correct pronunciation style, lack of practice and many more which become the cause of Regional language influence on spoken English.

Key words:- *Regional language, Spoken English, Government School, Sociocultural influence.*

1. Introduction

1.1 Introduction of Language

India is a multilingual and multiethnic country so we Indians are not native speakers of English; to us English is a second language so, learning it is not as natural to us as it is to the native speaker. The native speaker of English has imbided the language with his mother's milk; he has become familiar with the components of English in the natural process of growing up. This cannot be so with us. For Indians learning English is essentially a deliberate effort at developing a command and control of different components of the language, its phonology (the sound system), its morphology (the pattern and parts of words and its syntax the pattern of phrases and sentences)

In the words of Balasubramanian (2002) "The child learns to speak first, then only does he learn to write, and that too when formally taught speaking he does without being formally trained". On the analogy of the child's language acquisition, should the second language learner be taught speech first and writing next? In other words, is it psychologically necessary or beneficial for speech to be learnt before writing?

The history of human language shows that it came to be spoken first and written afterwards this primacy of speech makes linguists argue that the language learner should be trained in listening and speaking first and reading and writing next but we should forget that the second language learner has already learnt his mother tongue and has reached an age at which he can learn what he sees and hears.

Khan(2005) states that Every second language teacher has a serious problem to cope with in the student's bilingualism. In India this problem is more linguistic than social or cultural actually, the social and cultural context is in favor of English learning, for a command of English, not a smattering of it, is regarding as the hallmark of an educated person in India but it is a linguistic problem in so far as the habit of speech in the first language, its syntactical structures

its phonological system etc can become impediments to the learning of English.

According to NCF 2005 Language education should not be confined to the language classroom. A science, social science or mathematics class is 'ipso facto' a language class.

In addition, language as a constellation of skills, thought encoders and markers of identity cut across school subjects and disciplines.

Speech and listening, reading and writing are all generalized skills and children's mastery over them becomes the key factor affecting success at school. In different situations and circumstances, all these skills need to be used in day today life. This is why it is important to view language education as every body's concern and not as a responsibility of the language teacher alone."

Language plays a very constitutive role in development of life skills. Such as critical thinking, inter personal communication, negotiation skill, decision making, problem solving and self management skills which are so critical in dealing with the demands and challenges in everyday life.

2. Review of Related Literature

The following are the researches that are related to the present study and provide a background for the present research. They may also broaden the horizon and help the investigator in bringing clarity and focus to the present research problem.

a. Dey (1991) conducted a research with an objective to evaluate the proficiency of the students of class X of West Bengal. The areas studied included, vocabulary, spelling, stylistic Transformation and alternation derivational structure, applied grammar and contextual meaning.

b. Chattopadhyaya, R.(1999) conducted a research with an attempt with an objective to investigate second language learner beliefs about language learning and to explore factors contributing to influence of mother tongue.

c. (Sixth Survey of Educational Research. NCERT) India is a multilingual country with two types of multilingualism. These are the grass root bilingualism and the schooled bilingualism. The wide prevalence of first and second language learning necessities the distinction between strategies of first and second language.

The above related researches focus on english speaking skills, different strategies to develop english speaking skills, phonological and morphological variation in university students, and regional language education in formal and non formal settings. The present study deals with two major aspects that of mother tongue and speaking ability.

3. Rationale of the Study

The need to study the Regional Language influence on English speaking ability mainly arose due to the following reasons:

a. Oral expression is of great consequence because the spoken medium is undoubtedly of great immediate significance.

b. Mostly, Regional dialect is found in individuals which inhibit them to speak in standard English

c. From childhood onwards, if necessary knowledge of phonetics is not provided to the child, he/she may deviate from speaking the Standard English.

d. The structure of English is different than that of the Indian languages. For example, the structure of English is subject-verb-object and that of Hindi is subject-object-verb. Therefore, most of the time students are confused in the usage of second language/foreign language.

e. It is imperative for a teacher of English to be familiar with the phonetic symbol so that he/she can articulate the proper sounds represented by the symbols set and standardized by international phonetic association.

4. Statement of the Problem

"Regional Language influence on English speaking ability of class VIth students of government schools of Delhi."

5. Objectives of the Study

a. To identify the Regional language influence in class VIth students in there spoken English

b. To examine the socio cultural influence on the speech patterns of the students

c. To identify the factors responsible for the interference of Regional language in spoken English

d. To identify the ways, to rectify the Regional language interference in spoken English.

6. Design of the Study

The present research is descriptive in nature. The nature of this study is exploratory. It attempts to analyze the data both qualitatively and quantitatively.

6.1 Methodology

The present study shall employ the survey method to describe the Regional language Influence in English Speaking Ability of students as well as their spoken English proficiency.

6.2 Sampling technique

The technique was a probability sampling in which stratified random sampling technique was used. This was to ensure that the selection of data was purely objective and bias-free.

6.3 Sample

The students of class VI were selected as samples for collection of data. The study was conducted on one hundred students of two Government senior Secondary schools. Eight teachers from Delhi Government Schools were also taken.

6.4 Sampling Unit

The sample was taken from two Delhi government Senior Secondary schools.

6.5 Tools for Data Collection

The data gathering devices were constructed by the researcher herself. The following data gathering devices were used.

a. Interview of Students

b. Interview of Teachers

c. Observation

d. Open-ended Questionnaire for Teachers

e. Task based activity

7. Data Analysis and Interpretation

7.1 Collection of Data

The data was collected from 100 students and eight teachers from two Government Senior Secondary Schools of Delhi. Both the students and teachers were interviewed and teachers were asked to fill the Questionnaires. Task-based activities were conducted and overall observation of the concerned classes was done. For task based activities five point rating scale was used and the responses from interview were analyzed in accordance with the questions asked regarding the problem of the present study.

The collected data was analyzed and the interpretation was done in the following ways:

7.2 Interview of Students

The students were asked about various problems faced by them in speaking English and the level of their confidence while speaking English.

Through the interview of the students, it was found that the students faced some problems while speaking English. The problems were in correct pronunciation of words, fluency and intonation of words.

7.3 Interview of Teachers

English teachers were requested to give their views on certain question asked by researcher. Through t he interview of the students.

It was found that the students faced problem while speaking English. The ratio of students

who are fluent and those who are not fluent is 25:50.Moreover teachers are of the opinion that students are of first generation, so less help is provided to them from their home. There is also language anxiety in speaking English; therefore students tend to get nervous while speaking English.

8. Observation

It was observed in the classroom that majority of students did have Regional language influence in their spoken English

The students were not confident while speaking English and they were having problems of pronunciation, intonation and stress on words while speaking English. Students were not having much hold on the language. The overall decorum of the classroom was not very enthused with a spirit of studying English. The students were hard working but owing to socio cultural background, they required more support in learning to speak English accurately and with minimum flaws.

8.1 Open-Ended Questionnaire for Teacher

The teachers are of the opinion that there are many variations when the students speak English in class.

The problems that students face in acquiring proficiency were that they do not understand the meaning of the words, and the way to pronounce the words correctly. Moreover they have low speed while reading.

8.2 Tasks Based Activities

Assessment of the Tasks: The activities were conducted to see the influence of Regional language on spoken English of students on the parameter of regional variation. Speaking proficiency was marked on certain parameters via accurate pronunciation, accurate intonation, accurate stress and accurate fluency. Every parameter was rated on five point scale: very high, high, average, low and very low.

The researcher made them write first and then speak from it or read as they wish. The tasks passed through various developmental stages which in turn laid down the criteria to administer the next task.

Task 1: "Speak about yourself"

Purpose: In this tasks students had to speak about themselves by giving general information about themselves like their name, age, class, parents name and any other general information.

Analysis of Task 1: In task 1, majority of the student's i.e.56% of students were categorized under very High Regional Variation and 39% under High while a very low of i.e.5% was in Average Regional Variation and nil in low and very low Regional Variation. In terms of accurate pronunciation 44% students were under average % of pronunciation and 43q under low pronunciation. Only 1% students were under high pronunciation whereas 12q come under low pronunciation. In terms of intonation majority of student i.e.63% of students had low intonation on words while speaking English and 26% of students were under average intonation and 11% of students had very low intonation. Stress one word while speaking English was low as about 70% of students had low stress on words whereas only 22% students did stress on words while speaking English. In terms of fluency, in majority/maximum number of students had low fluency in speaking English i.e.43% of students.38% of students had average fluency in speaking English. Only 7% of students had high fluency who were efficient in speaking English. Whereas 12% of students were having very low fluency in their spoken English.

In task 1, students had a very high regional variation in their spoken English. The pronunciation level of students in their spoken English was average and not high. A small percentage of students had high pronunciation. It was between low and average.

The intonation of words was low and only few students had an average intonation. Similarity for stress onwards while speaking English, students had low stress on words and again few students had an average stress on words. Lastly, fluency level of students was mainly low and fewer students had an average fluency.

Task 2: "Dialogue Chain"

Purpose: This task was to assess the spoken English of students in continuance with other students i.e. dialogue with their partner. The topic on which dialogue was based was given i.e. the topic was to dialogue with their partners regarding their hobbies.

Analysis of Task 2: In task 2, maximum number of students had high regional variation i.e. 56% of students and 39% of students made to having a high regional variation while 5% of students were under average regional variation. In terms of pronunciation 44% of students had average pronunciation while speaking English and slight difference of 1% i.e.43% had low pronunciation level. Only 1% of students had high pronunciation while speaking English whereas 12% of students had very low pronunciation .A majority of students i.e.60% of students had low intonation while speaking English and 27% had average intonation. Students with very low intonation made 13% out of 100% of sample. In this task 45% of students had low fluency and 37% had average fluency while speaking English. Students who had very low fluency were 11% of the total sample whereas 6% of students had fluency in speaking English in this task.

In this task majority of students had very high regional variation while speaking English. About maximum of students had average pronunciation and with a slight difference of 1%, student had low pronunciation. In terms of intonation and stress on words majority of students had low proficiency. Moreover the level of fluency was also low majority of students.

Task 3: "Reading a book Extract"

Purpose: This task was conducted to see the regional variation of students when they read in a continuous manner. Also other parameters like fluency, stress on words and sentences and pronunciation of words was also seen to an extent the regional variation in their spoken English.

Analysis of Task 3: In third task majority of students had very high regional variation i.e.56% of total sample of 100 and 39% of students had high regional variation. 5% of students had average regional variation. In terms of pronunciation, 44% of students had low pronunciation while speaking English and 43% of students had average pronunciation. About 1% of students made it having high pronunciation while 12% of students had very low pronunciation. About 1% of students made it having high pronunciation while speaking English.

61% of students were having low intonation whereas 28% of students had average intonation in their spoken English and 11% of students had very low intonation.

68% of students had low stress on words while speaking English whereas 23% of students had average stress on words in their spoken English. 9% of students had very low stress on words. In terms of fluency 45% of students had low fluency whereas only 6% of students had high fluency while speaking English. 37% of students had average fluency whereas 12% of students have very low fluency in their spoken English.

In this task, majority of students had very high regional variation while speaking English. About majority of students had average pronunciation, intonation and stress on words was mainly low by students. The level of fluency was low as they were not reading continuously from the book rather stopping after every fifth or sixth word in the sentence.

Task 4: "Discrimination of sounds"

Purpose: This task was conducted to see the regional variation of the students. Basically this activity used to train students ears to discriminate sounds, intonation, stress on words and pronunciation.

Analysis of Task 4: In task 4, majority of the student's i.e.56% of students were categorized under very High Regional Variation and 39% under High while a very low of i.e.5% was in Average Regional Variation and nil in low and very low Regional Variation. In terms of accurate pronunciation 44% students were under average % of pronunciation and 43q under low pronunciation. Only 1% students were under high pronunciation whereas 12q come under low pronunciation. In terms of intonation majority of student i.e.63% of students had low intonation on words while speaking English and 26% of students were under average intonation and 11% of students had very low intonation. Stress one word while speaking English was low as about 70% of students had low stress on words whereas only 22% students did stress on words while speaking English. In terms of fluency, in majority/maximum number of students had low fluency in speaking English i.e.43% of students.38% of students had average fluency in speaking English. Only 7% of students had high fluency who were efficient in speaking English. Whereas 12% of students were having very low fluency in their spoken English.

In task 4, students had a very high regional variation in their spoken English. The pronunciation level of students in their spoken English was average and not high. A small percentage of students had high pronunciation. It was between low and average.

The intonation of works was low and only few students had an average intonation. Similarity for stress onwards while speaking English, students had low stress on words and again few students had an average stress on words. Lastly,

fluency level of students was mainly low and less students had an average fluency.

Task 5: "Showing a picture or chart"

Purpose: This task was to assess the spoken English of students in continuance. Parameters like fluency, vocabulary, stress on words and sentences and pronunciation of words was also seen.

Analysis of Task 5: In task 2, maximum number of students had high regional variation i.e. 56% of students and 39% of students made to having a high regional variation while 5% of students were under average regional variation. In terms of pronunciation 44% of students had average pronunciation while speaking English and slight difference of 1% i.e.43% had low pronunciation level. Only 1% of students had high pronunciation while speaking English whereas 12% of students had very low pronunciation .A majority of students i.e.60% of students had low intonation while speaking English and 27% had average intonation. Students with very low intonation made 13% out of 100% of sample. In this task 45% of students had low fluency and 37% had average fluency while speaking English. Students who had very low fluency were 11% of the total sample whereas 6% of students had fluency in speaking English in this task.

In this task majority of students had very high regional variation while speaking English. About maximum of students had average pronunciation and with a slight difference of 1%, student had low pronunciation. In terms of intonation and stress on words majority of students had low proficiency. Moreover the level of fluency was also low majority of students.

9. Findings

a. Students have a high Regional language influences in their spoken English.

b. Students do not possess much proficiency in their English speaking skills i.e. Pronunciation, intonation, stress, fluency etc

c. English speaking skills are not emphasized during the primary stage by the teachers.

d. Students do not possess much knowledge of what ought to be accurate proficiency, putting stress on words and having different intonation and fluency while speaking English.

e. English speaking sessions are not conducted by teachers in the school.

f. Whenever require extra/remedial classes of spoken English are not taken.

g. Aspect of Regional language influence in spoken English is often ignored my teachers.

h. No specific efforts are conducted to rectify the Regional language influence on spoken English of students.

i. Less emphasis is on English speaking skills; instead other skills of reading and writing are emphasized.

j. Audio- visual aids like lingua phone, CDs and so on are not used by the school to enhance student's spoken English.

k. The socio cultural background of students does influence their way of speaking English and as they do have their regional influence while speaking English.

10. Discussion

This dissertation attempts to study the Regional language influence on English speaking ability of students. By the survey of two different government schools of Delhi, it was found that majority of students do have high influence of Regional language in their spoken English. By an overall analysis of data collected, it was found that students do not have much proficiency in English speaking skills, because they do not practice every day, little emphasis is on speaking skill in classes as there are no extra classes for English speaking or no use of audio visual aids or any workshops for students that are given. Even other subject teachers do not teach in English as such, so students do not get English enriched environment in their classrooms. Moreover the socio-economic cultural

environment also influences students' English speaking skills. They are not in habit of speaking English and this is the reason that they are not very confident in speaking English. Regional language influence should be rectified gradually through primary stage as it is an important stage where students can easily learn second language. This is because once the speech pattern is formed. It becomes difficult to change or alter it at later stage.

11. Conclusion

The overall conclusion of this study is that the majority of students do have regional language influence on their spoken English. There are various socio cultural considerations, lack of awareness of correct pronunciation style, lack of practice and many more which become the cause of regional language influence on spoken English. efforts should be put forth to enhance English speaking skill, this in turn would enable the students to understand correct pronunciation, avoid regional accent and speak in correct and beautiful way.

12. Limitations

a. More emphasis could be given on strategies to enhance English speaking skills.

b. Usage of Audio-Visual aids by the researcher to acquaint students with them, like lingua-phone, language laboratory etc.

c. The Researcher could not try out many other English speaking activities in the classroom.

d. The study is restricted to class VI students.

e. The sample is drawn from two government schools.

f. The study mainly focused on Regional Language influence on speaking English ability of students.

g. The study deals with only the skill of speaking English.

13. Recommendation & future Implications

A few suggestions are being offered by the researcher on the related field of the study:

a. Conducting English speaking activities in the classrooms.

b. Awareness of English speaking skills should be given to the student

c. Extra classes should be conducted on spoken English or public speaking.

d. Students should be told about the importance of English language in their career and personality development.

e. Peer group interaction in English should be enhanced and encouraged in classes.

f. Examination should also be on assessing English speaking ability of students

g. A study can be conducted on mother tongue influence on other English skills like reading and writing

h. A study can conducted on, teachers mother tongue influence on students usage of English language

i. A study can be conducted, the socio cultural background of students of government discipline

j. A study can conducted on, positive and negative inflection of L1 on L2

References

- Balasubramanian, T. A. (2002). *Textbook of English Phonetics for Indian Students*. Macmillan India Limited.
- Press, C. (1995) *English as a Second Language: Teacher Resource Handbook*. Thousand Oaks CA.
- Khan, I. A. (2005). *Teaching of English: The Bilingual Context*. India: Academic Excellence.
- (2005). Position Paper. *Teaching of English*. NCERT, NCF.
- (2005). Position Paper. *Teaching of Indian Languages*. NCERT, NCF.
- *Sixth Survey of Educational Research*. NCERT
- Wikipedia

APPENDIX-I

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS

Directions: Teachers are requested to give the following information.

1) Are there any variations that you find in students in their spoken English? If so please give at least five examples.
   _____

2) According to you, what are the problems that students face in acquiring proficiency in spoken English at this stage (class VI)?
   _____

3) How do you counter the errors made in spoken English by students in their speech?
   _____

4) What are the factors responsible for mother tongue influence in English speaking?
   _____

5) What are the common errors that are made by students in learning L2 phonological system?
   _____

6) What are the strategies that you employ in the class to rectify the influence of mother tongue in spoken English of students?
   _____

7) What are the extra efforts like extra speaking sessions etc. you take to rectify the mother tongue influence in English speaking ability of students?
   _____

8) What are the various literary activities that are conducted in your class to engage student in enhancing their spoken English?
   _____

9) Are there any special training session conducted in schools for English teacher? If so, what are they?
   _____

10) While teaching what are the persistent difficulties that you face in an English classroom?
   _____

11) What techniques do you find most suitable to rectify the mother tongue influence in English speaking ability of student?
   _____

12) Do you think age factor(class VI) and acculturation also play an important role in acquiring English speaking proficiency? If so, how?
   _____

13) In your teaching, what measures do you adopt to help students in acquiring correct pronunciation of English words?
   _____

14) How do you evaluate English textbooks of class VI? Do they include sufficient exercise covering all the four language skills?
   _____

15) Give your suggestions to improve spoken English of class VI students?
   _____

16) Give your suggestion to improve Spoken English of Class VI Students?
   _____