

A STUDY OF STRESS IN ENGLISH PRONUNCIATION FACED BY ENGLISH AS SECOND LANGUAGE (ESL) LEARNERS IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

Language is a means to communicate one's thoughts, ideas, and feelings with one's surroundings through speech, writing, gestures, symbols, signals, objects, sounds, pictures, etc. According to A. C. Gimson "A language is a system of conventional signals used for communication by a whole community". Speaking and understanding are as natural as breathing. English is a foreign language so people are comparatively quiet shy and they feel uncomfortable in their speech. The ability of speaking English depends on the correctness of pronunciation with proper word stress and sentence stress which directly affects the appropriate communication in conversation. According to George, (2002), "foreign-language learning is basically a mechanical process of habit formation." Although there are more than two hundred local languages spoken in the Indian subcontinent but very few of them are considered the official language. English along with Hindi is the most official languages widely used all over the subcontinent of India. English is spoken in almost all educational, public and governmental settings, media, etc. It is also used as the written medium in many newspapers. A study was conducted to know the stress in English pronunciation by the English as second language learners. The Investigator collected data from 500 students and 60 teachers from 20 educational institutions situated in the area of NCR Delhi in order to know their knowledge of stress in Pronunciation English as Second Language (ESL) Learners in India.

The findings of the study show that more than 86% students read monosyllabic words with proper stress about 84% students read the bisyllabic words with proper stress an average of 72% students read three-syllable words with proper stress and the number of students who read the polysyllable words were least. Only 67% of students from the sample were able to read the given sentences with proper stress. Majority of the students were found at the moderate level of speaking ability and below average speaking ability test in English. There existed a mixture of Indian language accent among sample students in speaking ability test in English. Most of the students mispronounced the English consonants that do not exist in Indian language and other consonants. Most of the students were found at the moderate level of writing ability and below average writing ability test in English. Majority of teachers (78.33%) liked speaking English, 86.67% teachers favoured that regularly using a foreign language influence their native language. About 80% of teachers' used English for communication regularly in the classroom and 85% of teachers try to answer the questions in English whenever they got a chance.

About 80% of teachers give special emphasis to teaching English pronunciation along with other skills. 40% of teachers make their students practices how to pick the odd word out while only 26.67% teachers used to teach syllable stress pattern in words.

KEYWORDS: Language, Stress, ESLs, Phonetics, Pronunciation