

A Study on English Fluency Challenges among Indian Youth given its Significance over Native Languages

Dr. C. N. Baby Maheswari

Assistant Professor,
College of Education, University of Hafr Al Batin,
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Ms. Ummal Faleela

Lecturer,
College of Education, University of Hafr Al Batin,
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Received Dec. 29, 2015

Accepted Jan. 25, 2016

ABSTRACT

Though India is a diversified linguistic-cultured country, English has become the priority among the youth of India. This is quite a surprise and challenge as the urgency to excel in business and jobs is quite essential for a better living. Moreover, the proficiency in English has become a prestigious issue and is considered a symbol of status no matter what the knowledge of the individual may be- all dues to the competitive world! The Indian youth from different backgrounds not only show interest to learn English as a language but also to pick up the accent of the native speakers. Still, they lack the fluency which is the basic necessity to speak English. Therefore, this research paper analyses the challenges met by the Indian youth to speak English, its importance and the ways to improvise it. The summarization is from various literature reviews thus adding another brick to the edifice.

Key words: English fluency among Indian youths, significance over native language, challenges of speaking fluent English, English proficiency.

1. Introduction

Indians seem to possess linguistic skills as if they had the patent rights and particularly when it comes to the passion for learning English, Indians outnumber other Asian countries. But, most of them are not able to achieve it completely. Instead, they pick up a 'vernacular' native-tinted accent for their English speech. Though English has become the lingua-franca of India paving way to more advantages for the English speaking youngsters from politics to business and though many English-medium school students have increased in recent years, the youth of India still struggle to overcome the obstacle for fluency in English thus leading to their unemployment, a failure in their social

status and lack of self-confidence. Unless and until the very basic requirement of the language - the fluency is corrected, Indians would still be a step down in the economic world, whatever be the number of opportunities that pour in. Only few studies have been conducted pertaining to the study taken up by the researchers. So, it is stated that this study would be of help to sort out the challenges faced by the Indian youth regarding fluency in English, which will help to enhance their career and life in a more precise manner.

2. Literature review

As English acts as a bridge between India and other countries in the world, for the

purpose of business, education, career, politics etc., many educated Indians prefer English as their first language. Yet, they lack in fluency and accent .It is evident from various sources that many English medium schools have emerged over years and today it counts to at least 36 crores, Crystal (1995.101). David Crystal (2004) stated among other countries where there are native and non-native speakers, India ranks number one- whether people are educated or uneducated, they speak and understand English. Moreover, Graddol (1997) has stated that, in India, English plays a vital role in the cultural, political, or economic life of the Indian youth.

Schütz, (2005) and Dieu (2005) state that, English has become a compulsory language of the modern world. Though there are a number of studies stating the priority of English among Indian youth over their native language, it is evident that the students of English-medium are still poor in their fluency irrespective of their capability in understanding the language. This can be sorted out by helping to improve their linguistic skills. Reyner & Davidson (1993). Hazita, Azman (2009) conclude that it is essential to develop linguistic skills from the primary school itself. Only then youth of India would get their fluency in English. Framed in this paradigm, challenges in English fluency can be attained only if initiative is taken right from the beginning stage of speaking the language. This would result in the upliftment of Indian youngsters to conquer the global market.

3. Objective

- To find out the challenges met by Indians to speak English fluently
- To study the ways to overcome the obstacles for fluency in English among Indian youth.

4. Research question

How to improve the English fluency among Indian youths given its significance over native languages.

5. Significance of the study

This paper is an analytic study of the challenges in English fluency among Indian youth who give more significance to this language rather than their native language. It aims at exploring the obstacles for fluency in English though the scope of learning the language is spread over the country. The study also suggests ways to improve the fluency among Indians.

6. Purpose of the Research

The very purpose of any research is to provide widened view on different subjects to satisfy the researchers' curiosity and thirst for in depth understanding and knowledge. Thus, it is hoped that this study would eventually pave way for an extensive feasibility and subsequent research works in forthcoming days on the given topic.

7. Literature Gap

Numerous studies have been conducted on English language and its fluency but this research is first of its kind particularly in a diversified country like India where each part of India has its own language unlike any other parts of the world. It's a difficult task for Indians to speak English with an accent of the native speakers as they have their own slang of native language, it is therefore hoped that this study throws light for future researchers to analyze this topic and take it to next level thus making youngsters strive for success by speaking English with good native accent for them to reach the peak in this global era with the global language.

8. Data collection

The data collection is secondary as the data presented in this study is going to be

from various research, case studies, observations and so on.

9. Discussion.

Bernaus (2005) exemplifies that English language has gained significant importance across the globe because each country has their own language and to compete with each other in globalization, it is necessary to adapt a single language to facilitate the countries' economies. Therefore English has been accepted as second language to ease communication. In this context it has become essential for every youth in India to develop the linguistic skill over their native language. De Beaugrande, Grosman, & Seidlhofer, (1998) state that many high standard schools has emerged since 1900s that has made English as a spoken language within their premises as this would help the youngsters to cultivate the language right from their young age. In spite of all, such practices even educated youth tend to lack the accent of the language and fluency because still they need motivation from their own circle and self-confidence.

Numerous researches have proved that communicating in second language is a difficult task due to its native accent. This can be over looked with motivation as its primary step. Pan and colleagues (2010), examined that one can be successful in his/her second language with favorable environment around them. Apart from schools, many English coaching centers have evolved, but still something is lacking. And that is, even though there are lots of learning materials and teaching models available, youngsters are still struggling to speak fluently because, from the cultural society they get pressurized to give importance to their own native language over English. Moreover, all focus is only on the language and not its accent. Oxford (2006) states that English learners are

forced to take the subject for commercial purposes, its necessities and not as a passion. This attitude towards the language proves to be an obstacle for the youth to learn the language in right way.

Barry et al. (1993), conclude that as learning English first starts from the classroom the teachers should educate the students on socio -economic knowledge and make sure they learn the language with interest and not as a criterion for survival. These teachers should initiate their students to speak English with proper vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation and accent.

10. Recommendation and suggestions

According to August & Hakuta (1997), August & Shanahan (2006), providing students with strong base in the native language would lay a good foundation to their English linguistic skills. First of all, students should have a sound knowledge of their native language which would lead to learn the foreign language skillfully. Hepburn, (2004) and Shin, (2005), state that not only schools even families should encourage the children to read, write and speak the second language with utmost care.

According to Peregoy & Boyle, (2001) English learners can enhance their vocabulary through continuous exposure to reading and listening to the media available. Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, (2004) conclude that providing space for social interaction lays the platform for English learners to speak fluently. The following suggestions can be adapted to meet the challenges faced by Indian youth to speak fluently in English:

- Realizing the importance of speaking in English and to overcome the fear of learning a foreign language
- Grabbing the opportunity to speak in English whenever possible

- Continuous exposure in learning the language, e.g: reading.
- Using the technology around to gain sound knowledge on the language.
- Practice makes a man perfect, so practicing the language as much as possible.

Thus the youngsters by adapting themselves to the instructions provided here, can definitely achieve what they want, overcome the obstacles and meet the challenges around them with fluent English in this competitive world, which has English as its foremost and highly preferable language.

11. Conclusion:

To summarize, in order to enrich our fluency in English the first thing we need to do is to achieve expertise in our native language which would serve as a strong foundation to skillfully learning a foreign language. In addition to listening and reading English, practicing speaking on what we listen and read is more essential. Also, it is the duty of the family, friends and faculty to render their support in all ways in this regard. Last but not least, it is the actualization of English fluency by the self, which plays a pivotal role in the realization of objectives.

Reference

1. August, D. and Hakuta, K. (s.). (1997), "Improving schooling for language-minority children: A research agenda". Washington, DC: National Academy Press.
2. August, D. and Shanahan, T. (Eds.). (2006), "Developing literacy in second language learners: Report of the National Literacy Panel on language-minority children and youth". Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum
3. Bernaus, M.(2005), What keeps teaching going? Motivation and Attitudes. Spain: Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona
4. Crystal, David. (1995), *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of the English Language*. Cambridge: CUP. pp 101.
5. Crystal, David (2004b). "Subcontinent Raises Its Voice". *The Guardian*. Retrieved 4 , pp 201.
6. De Beaugrande, R., Grosman, M., & Seidlhofer, B. (1998), "Language Policy and Language Education in Emerging Nations: Focus on Slovenia and Croatia and with Contributions from Britain, Austria, Spain, and Italy". Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group
7. Dieu, B. (2005), "Some facts and figures about the English language". Retrieved December 15, 2006, from http://the_english_dept.tripod.com/esc.html
8. Echevarria, J.M., Vogt, M.J., & Short, D.J. (2004), "Making content comprehensible for English learners": *The SIOP Model* (2nd ed.). Boston: Pearson.
9. Graddol, D. (1997), "The future of English". London: The British Council.
10. Hazita Azman. (2009), "English in Malaysia: A paradox in rural pluri-literacy practices". *Akademika*, Vol.76, pp 27-41.
11. Hepburn, K. S. (2004), Building culturally and linguistically competent services to support young children, their families and school readiness—A report to Annie E. Casey Foundation. Baltimore, MD: Annie E. Casey Foundation.
12. Oxford, R. (2006), *Language Learning Motivation: Pathways to the New Century*. Honolulu, Hawaii: National Foreign Learning Resource Center.
13. Pan, G., Zang, Y., & Wu, D. (2010), *A Survey on English Learning Motivation of Students in Qingdao Agricultural University*. China: Qingdao Agricultural University.
14. Peregoy, S. F., & Boyle, O.F. (2001), *Reading, writing & learning in ESL: A resource book for K-12 teachers* (3rd ed.). New York: Longman.
15. Reyhner, Jon.(1992), "American Indians out of school: A review of school-based causes

-
- and solutions", *Journal of American Indian Education*, 31(3), 37-56.
16. Schütz, R. (2005), English — The international language. Retrieved December 20, 2006, from <http://www.sk.com.br/sk-incl.htm>
17. Shin, S. J. (2005). *Developing in two languages: Korean children in America*. Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters

Never leave that till tomorrow which you can do today.
Benjamin Franklin