



Teaching Pronunciation to Undergraduate Students: An Application of Questionnaires in Phonetic Studies

Dr S J Nikam, Associate Professor in English, Arts, Commerce and Science College, Nashik, Affiliated to S P P U Pune.

Abstract - The present paper reviews a very recent studies on the phonology of English and the application of questionnaires in phonetic studies. A survey was done to review the scope of pronunciation in different groups of learners, so with respect to urban students and rural students. The research also aimed to examine the students' beliefs and attitudes toward their English Pronunciation and whether computer-assisted language learning (CALL) activities improve their pronunciation. The survey was also intended to get some opinions on whether it is logical to use different accents in the pronunciation of phonetic instructions. The learners were from different colleges of urban and rural areas. The study was conducted at urban colleges and rural colleges. The data collected in the survey was by using questionnaires on pronunciation. The questionnaires will have different questions. The questionnaire contains the questions on the students' beliefs and attitudes toward their English Pronunciation and whether computer-assisted language learning (CALL). The main concern will be based on issues with pronunciation so that teachers can know where they need to bid when they are teaching. The questionnaire had ten questions, which were open-ended and closed-ended. One hundred and fifty students from different colleges took part in the survey, where 56% of the participants were the urban students, while the remaining 44% were the student from rural colleges.

Key Words: pronunciation, survey, speech recognition and computer-assisted language learning (CALL)

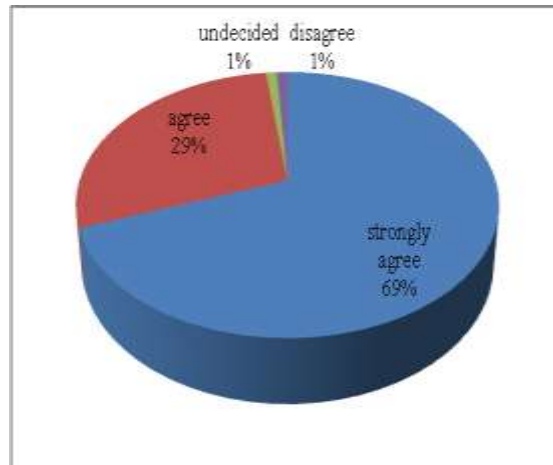
I. INTRODUCTION

The persons having good communication skills with intelligible pronunciation will get more opportunities in securing a place either in employment or other different fields that need excellent communication skills and where intelligible pronunciation is desirable. A standard method of knowing various students' judgments on numerous language aspects is through teaching and learning through questionnaires. Several questionnaires are based on the language pronunciation that can be used. Levis(2007) is of the opinion that CALL activities are known to offer learners a chance to practice and receive personalized feedback. Recent research shows that CALL has some measurable impact on the learners' study, especially they are quite helpful improving one's pronunciation.

II. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:

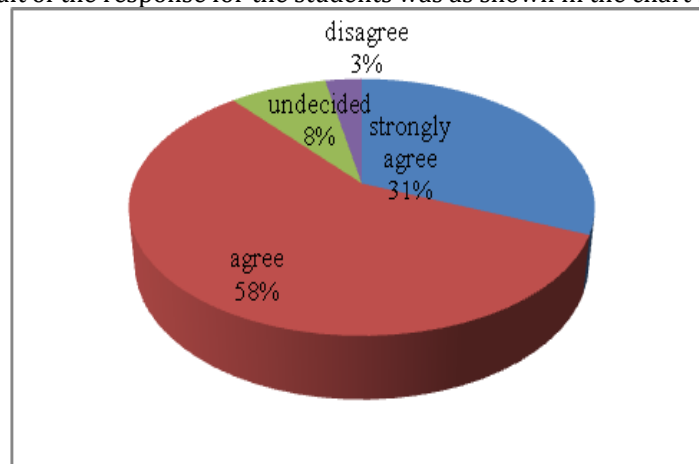
Significance of proper English pronunciation

The first thing that the respondents were asked to do was find the problem in the following sentence "it is important for me to have proper and good English pronunciation." These respondents were to score the importance of the statement on a scale of five points. They were supposed to state whether they agreed strongly, agreed, undecided, disagreed, or strongly disagreed. The result found are shown in the chart below



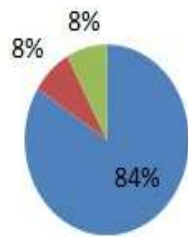
Almost everybody who responded believes that it is essential to speak English with good pronunciation. Some of them argued that speaking good English with proper pronunciation can sound like the native speaker of the language i.e., intelligible pronunciation, for clear communication, and to avoid misunderstanding. This survey can be able to help the teacher of a specific class know what perspective do the students have on the topic of pronunciation, therefore, knowing where to start their lesson

The second question aimed to find the respondent's opinion on whether they should aim for intelligible pronunciation. The result of the response for the students was as shown in the chart below.

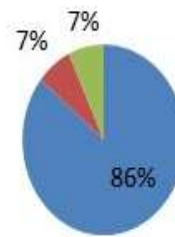


The majority of the students agreed with the statement. A small percentage of the student were undecided whether the native language should be among the topics to be taught in schools and colleges or not. With this statistic, we can conclude that many of the students support the subject being taught in schools and colleges since they admire to be native speakers with intelligible pronunciation. The statement was also rephrased to know how many of the students use the English pronunciation. The statement given to them was, "*I attempt speaking the native language with the English pronunciation*" majority of the students of both the first and the second language wish to have a good pronunciation of the English language, they want to reach to the level of intelligible pronunciation.

■ YES ■ NO ■ I don't care



■ YES ■ NO ■ I don't care



We can note that most of the students in different colleges and universities have the desire to study and learn about the pronunciation of the native English (RP). Therefore, it should be the teacher's primary target to ensure that the student gets to learn and understand Received Pronunciation (RP).

The fourth question asked if the students had ever worked on improving their pronunciation when they were outside the classes. This question was to determine if the student have ever made an effort to improve their pronunciation. Three-quarters of the student stated that they have been working on their pronunciation on their own way from the class. When they were asked why they did so and what strategy they used. An analysis of their study showed that they did so as part of revision on what they learned in class. The strategy that they used was the listen and repeat strategy. This was by listening to the English songs and programs on both television and radio.

When the students were asked, they believed that CALL pronunciation activities helped them improve their pronunciation, 95% believed so. When they were asked about the features available, most of them stated that they used a lower attempt than they were provided. On the question about the potential difference between age groups and the L1s belief about the pronunciation item, there was a significant difference where the older people would have less confidence in acquiring pronunciation skills. When the students were asked what were the factors that contributed to them improving their English pronunciation.

When the students were asked whether it is important to have good English pronunciation, most of them stated that it is vital for them to communicate and not be understood. The last question that the students were asked was for them to give a final remark on the pronunciation. Most of them stated that they need to have good pronunciation, which will be significant whenever they are communicating since there are words that they will not give the desired meaning when they are not pronounced well.

III. CONCLUSION

The main reason for doing this survey was to investigate the preferences of different groups of students from various colleges. From the survey, I gathered that most students are very eager to know good English pronunciation. They have a desire to sound like native English speakers. The reason behind having a good pronunciation is so that whenever they are communicating, they should be understood well and also so that they could be perceived as those people who are competent in using English. Students stated that apart from being taught pronunciation during the phonetic lesson in class, their pronunciation was also a result of listening to authentic English, interacting with the native speakers, and trying so much to imitate them. It has also been noted that the students are very positive about CALL abilities in improving their English pronunciation (Golonka et al., 2012). However, using different features in learning is related to other learning beliefs.

With the help of the present research, I have gathered that most students usually like the pronunciation lessons that are involving them, more practical activities that provide opportunities to them. Therefore, teachers are supposed to develop methods and techniques that will be able to engage their students more. Some teachers are known to just Go in class, dictate their notes, and leave. This will never bring any positive

results to the students' work. The teacher needs to be very creative and find means of engaging their students. They should be able to engage them by making the pronunciation lesson as practical as possible, where students are given time to practice what they are learning. They should also engage them when they go home by giving them audios that they can listen to and imitate the speaker.

REFERENCES:

1. Almaqrn, Riam., & Alshabeb, A. (2017). EFL Learners' Attitudes towards the Proper Pronunciation of English and Podcasts as a Facilitator of Proper Pronunciation. *Arab World English Journal*, 8(1), 208–219. <https://doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol8no1.15>
2. Golonka, E. M., Bowles, A. R., Frank, V. M., Richardson, D. L., & Freynik, S. (2012). Technologies for foreign language learning: a review of technology types and their effectiveness. *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, 27(1), 70–105. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09588221.2012.700315>
3. Levis, J. (2007). Computer Technology in Teaching and Researching Pronunciation. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 27. <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0267190508070098>
4. O'Daniel, M., & Rosenstein, A. H. (2008, April). *Professional Communication and Team Collaboration*. Nih.Gov; Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (US). <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK2637/>