

EFFECTIVENESS OF LANGUAGE LABORATORY IN LEARNING ENGLISH

J. Augustus Richard

Assistant Professor, PPG College of Education, Coimbatore

S. Ramprabhu

Assistant Professor, PPG College of Education, Coimbatore

Abstract

The importance of English as a language for communication in business, industry, education, medicine, fashion, sports, travel, hospitality, service sector (as a matter of fact in most aspects of life) has now been established beyond doubt. English may not be the only language, but it is clearly the best suited language for communicating with people from different countries and in the Indian context from different states. The

investigator performed the present study to identify the effectiveness of language laboratory in learning English. The study was conducted using teacher made tools that was standardised by procedure. The sample size of the study was 122 students studying in XI standard in Coimbatore district. The results of this experimental study were carefully analysed for interpretation and finding were made based on the interpretation.

Introduction

The extensive use of English as the only means of communication in business and industry often makes the skill critical for professional success. The World Trade Organization (WTO) and Multi-National Companies (MNCs) have made it even more compelling. The Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) and especially the internet have brought the world together as never before. The distances have shrunk dramatically. Knowledge and information can be spread and shared in no time. The world as such is transformed into a Global Village. According to NCTE report, "English is in India today a symbol of people's aspiration for quality in education and a fuller participation in national and international life. Its colonial origin was forgotten or irrelevant, its initial role in independent India, tailored to higher education (as a 'library language', a 'window on the word'), now felt to be insufficiently inclusive, socially and linguistically, the current status of English stems from its overwhelming presence on the world stage and the reflection of this in the national arena". The pressure for early introduction of English in the school system in India is mentioned in the NCERT report 2003. It states that English is introduced in Class I or Class III by 26 states or union territories out of 35. The alphabetic principle of English spelling is that the letters are used to represent speech sounds i.e., phonemes. A typical classroom in India uses textbooks for teaching English. They are rather deficient in providing any systematic information on phonemes. The beginners are expected to memorize the whole word. Most of the teachers have learnt the English skills the same way.

The teaching methodology of this project is based on the principle of Synthetic Phonics. This method is appropriate when used at the very beginning of learning of the English language. Even though most teachers use lectures as a major approach to teach English, a variety of innovative tools are being attempted by a few. They are yet to receive due attention for wider dissemination among their fraternity. Also important to examine is - which strategy works best and why. For instance, a few researchers found that problem based learning (PBL) or problem solving - posing students a variety of problems and seeking answers through students' exploration can enhance students' learning. One of the best innovative method for learning English is a computer assisted learning. English language laboratory provides much software to enhance the student's linguistic skills. Considering the importance of English language in school curriculum the investigator took immense care to study the same.

English Phonology

The phonetics and phonology of English differ between dialects, usually without interfering with mutual communication. Phonological variation affects the inventory of phonemes (speech sounds that distinguish meaning), and phonetic variation is differences in pronunciation of the phonemes. This overview mainly describes the standard pronunciations of the United Kingdom and the United States: Received Pronunciation (RP) and General American (GA).

Most English dialects share the same 24 consonant phonemes. The pronunciation of vowels varies a great deal between dialects and is one of the most detectable aspects of a speaker's accent. An English syllable includes a syllable nucleus consisting of a vowel sound. Stress plays an important role in English. Certain syllables are stressed, while others are unstressed. Stress is a combination of duration, intensity, vowel quality, and sometimes changes in pitch. Stressed syllables are pronounced longer and louder than unstressed syllables, and vowels in unstressed syllables are frequently reduced while vowels in stressed syllables are not. Some words, primarily short function words but also some modal verbs such as *can*, have weak and strong forms depending on whether they occur in stressed or non-stressed position within a sentence.

Digital Language Lab

In the 1990s new digital, hybrid PC based systems allowed extended functionality, in terms of better 'management' of student / teacher audio with some levels of internet and video formats. Media is 'managed' on these hybrid systems by language lab providers creating a supplementary network over and above the existing PC network for audio connections and communications in fixed locations.

Functionality of Language Lab

The levels of functionality of current language labs vary from manufacturer to manufacturer. All labs will have a level of teacher control to manage student licenses / desktops. The more sophisticated 'software only' labs have a higher level of teacher management and control over the student desktop. One of the key differences with the 'high end' 'software only' products is their ability to work 'live' with the students as they record and work with media. So instead of waiting to correct student recordings after they have been recorded and collected back it is now possible for a teacher to work synchronously and 'live' with students on their own, in pairs and in groups, thus enhancing the immediacy of the teaching and learning experience.

The next generation digital language labs allow teachers to monitor, control, deliver, group, display, review and collect, audio, video and web based multimedia content. The student player is linked to the teacher console and can play audio, video and web based formats. Students can rewind, stop, start, go back to last silence, record, fast forward, repeat phrase and bookmark.

Software packages in language lab (SPLL) are basically learner-centered materials. This is having open, distance and flexible for learners and have to learn on their own, at a time, pace and place of their own choice. They are different from other learning materials. The different forms of self-learning materials are digital books, worksheets, digitalized audio lessons, digitalized video lessons, web based packages, variety of software packages for phonetics and grammar, etc., Although a student may be responding to the material that is presented, they do not receive immediate information about the correctness of his response nor is he able to proceed at his own rate. The investigator keeps all these in mind and selected the effectiveness of language laboratory in learning English for this present study.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the present study are,

- To Prepare Computerized phonetic accent audio material for selected topic in English Subject of XI standard.
- To find out the effectiveness of traditional teaching method and language laboratory teaching method on academic achievement of the XI standard students in context to subject English language.
- To find out whether any significant mean difference in academic achievement in learning English language exists with relation to the secondary variable viz. gender.

Hypothesis

On basis of the objectives the following null hypotheses are framed by the investigator.

1. There is no significant difference between the control group and experimental group with regards to their post test score.
2. There is no significant difference between the male students of control group and experimental group with regards to their post test score.
3. There is no significant difference between the female students of control group and experimental group with regards to their post test score.
4. There is no significant difference between the male group and female group of experimental group with regards to their post test score.

Delimitation of the Study

It is necessary to delimit the study to carry out the research work successfully. The following were the delimitations of the study.

- In XI Standard English subject the “basic phonetic accent” was selected for the present study.
- XI Standard Students of GRG Matric Hr Sec School in Coimbatore District alone was selected.

Tools Used for the Study

The investigator developed a computerised phonetic study material with the help of experts and technocrats. The investigator approached the experts in English language and recorded the phonetic accents for digital language lab. The developed tool was standardised with content validity and ensured its reliability. The term achievement is often naively understood in terms of pupil's scores on a certain school test. Achievement tests constitute an important tool in school evaluation programme. An achievement tool was developed by the investigator for the study. The initial draft of the tool contained 81 questions under three dimensions. After pilot study the final tool was finalised with 60 objective type questions. The questionnaire is tested for content validation by the experts from the various colleges of Education. The reliability of the tool is calculated as 0.87. This score shows that the tool is highly reliable.

Research Methodology

In the present study the investigator attempts to study the cause and effect of relationship between the dependent and independent variable. Hence the investigator adopted experimental study in order to find the effectiveness of language lab as it suits appropriately. Out of various experimental designs, the investigator adopted after only with control design, as it is which is time consuming and suitable for this study. The investigator attempted to study the effectiveness of learning English through the Traditional Method of teaching and the computerized audio phonetic accent material at XI Standard Level. Though many variables are commonly used in educational research, the investigator selected the gender (male, female) and type of treatment (teaching through

Traditional Method and the computerized audio phonetic accent material) as the independent variables of the study. The achievement in English was considered as dependent variable. The investigator used simple random sampling technique to select the study samples for the experimental study. A total sample of 122 students studying in XI standard at GRG Matric Hr. Sec School, Coimbatore was taken for the study. The students in the experiment group received treatment using language lab whereas the control group student received traditional lecture method of teaching English. The post test score are were carefully analysed and tabulated for further interpretation.

Table showing Mean, Standard Deviation and t-value of post test score

	Groups	Sample N	Mean	SD	t-Value
Teaching Method	Experimental Group	61	52.35	2.12	8.28*
	Control Group	61	48.25	3.23	
Male students	Experimental Group	30	51.45	2.10	11.26*
	Control Group	30	42.10	4.03	
Female Students	Experimental Group	31	52.19	2.95	6.28*
	Control Group	31	46.74	3.82	
Experimental group	Male students	30	51.45	2.10	1.13
	Female students	31	52.19	2.95	

* Significant at 0.01 level.

Major Findings

The major findings of the study are given below.

- From the post-test score of control group and experimental group, it is cleared that the calculated t-value (8.28) is greater than the table value (2.71) at 1% level. So the null hypothesis "There is no significant difference between control group and experimental group with regards to their post-test score" is rejected. Therefore there is a significant difference between the control group and experimental group with regards to their post-test score.
- From the post-test score of male student of control group and experimental group the calculated t-value (11.26) is greater than the table (2.71) at 1% level. So the null hypothesis "There is no significant difference between the male students of control group and experimental group with regards to their post test score" is rejected. Therefore there is a significant difference between the male student of control group and experimental group with regards to their post-test score.
- From the post-test score of female student of control group and experimental group the calculated t-value (6.28) is greater than the table value (2.71) at 1% level. So the null hypothesis "There is no significant difference between the female students of control group and experimental group with regard to their post-test score" is

rejected. Therefore there is a significant difference between the female student of control group and experimental group with regards to their post-test score.

- From the post-test score of male and female students of experimental group calculated the t-value (1.13) is less than the table value (1.69) at 5% level. So the null hypothesis “There is no significant difference between the male and female students of experimental group with regard to their post test score” is accepted. Therefore there is no significant difference between the male and female students of experimental group with regards to their post-test score.
- The result shows that the achievement of the experimental group is highly influenced by the treatment alone. Hence the Computerized phonetic accent audio material is found to be effective.

References

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