

Research Paper

PROBLEMS OF THE 10TH CLASS STUDENTS IN THE USE OF ARTICLES

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ABSTRACT

English language is a legacy of the British rule in India. While, being the language of rulers, it was but natural for English to enjoy the topmost position during the British rule over India, it is interesting to note that the prestige of this language continues to have an upward sweep even after the attainment of independence by country from the British rule – so much so that this language has come to occupy the dignified status of being queen of all language in India.

English is introduced at 1st Std. but before it was at 5th Std. Though students learn English from 5th Std. and when they reach at 10th Std., they are unable to use proper articles at proper places. They still make some mistakes while using articles. So through this study an attempt is made to study the performance and to see the problems of using articles and find some remedies to use proper articles. This study aims at the following.

- Finding the problems of the 10th Class Marathi Medium students in the use of the articles.
- Locating the main areas of weaknesses of the pupils in the particular usage.
- Finding out reasons of these errors.
- Making an analysis of them.

Purposes of the Study:

Following are the purposes of this study:

- Attempting to make the Marathi Medium students more confident in the use of articles.
- Eliminating their errors concerning these items.
- Bridging the gap, to some extent, between the achievement of Marathi medium students and that of English medium ones about these particular items.

Limitation of the Study:

Following points are to be noted in connection with limitation of this study.

- Only Marathi medium students are taken into consideration.
- Hindi, English and Urdu medium students are not tested.
- The Group of students belong to one particular school.
- All belong to Loha city and are learning in city high school but they have different backgrounds.
- The pre-test and the achievement test both the conducted.

The present research work attempts to study the performance of the 10th class students in the use of articles at Shri Sant Gadge Maharaj High-School Loha Tq.Loha Dist.Nanded. This work covers the 25 students from 10th class of the school regarding their performance in the use of articles.

Design of the Study:

Procedure Used:

- For the purpose of this study a pre-test paper is designed and administered to the students.
- Valuation of the performance of the students is done.
- A remedial course has been prepared for the Improvement of the performance.
- The remedial course was taught to the same group of students.
- After that a post test too was managed.
- The performance of the pupils in the post test was recorded.
- It was compared with their performance in the Pre-test.

Sources of Data:

The actual answer sheets of the students have been the main sources of data. Hence a few points about them to be noted are as under:

- No separate answer books were supplied to the students.
- As the test paper is of objective type, they were instructed to write the answers on the question paper itself.
- Since they were not given separate answer sheets, they could fully concentrate only on the use of articles.
- While answering they were not worried about spellings and allied things which have to be paid attention to when there is a need of rewriting.

Methods of Data Collection:

- A test was administered to the students in order to gather data.
- Only Marathi Medium students who learn English as a third language were tested.
- The group of students, which was tested, was belonging to the same high school in Loha City.
- It was a group of 25 students.
- The time allotted for the test was one hour.
- The group of students which was tested was not taught any rules about the use of articles prior to the test.
- The test was aimed at knowing their performance based on their previous knowledge.

- A one day notice was given to them about the test.
- Invigilation work was carefully and sincerely done.
- The question cum answer papers of those who participated in the test were valued.
- Areas of weaknesses in the use of articles were located.
- Analysis of the errors is made.
- Causes of the errors have been traced out.
- A specially prepared remedial course was taught of the same group.
- A post test of Achievement test too was held.
- Performance of the students in the post test is noted.
- A comparative study of the two types of performance is made.

**Analysis and Interpretation and Conclusion of Data:
Analysis of Data:**

While valuing the objective type question papers of the pre-test in which the students were expected to use articles wherever necessary, it is observed that great number of the pupils commit mistakes in using the articles. Some of the main reasons of the errors can be pointed out as under. Difference between the structures of English and the Indian languages:

English language makes an extensive use of articles. There is hardly a sentence which does not have an article, contrary to this most of the Indian Languages don't have articles and hence Indian learners face a lot of difficulties.

Inappropriate teaching at the secondary stage:

In secondary schools some rules regarding the use of the articles are taught in a wrong manner. "If a noun begins with a consonant, use article 'a' before it; if a noun begins with a vowel, use article 'an' before it." As a result when students come across nouns like 'University', 'European', 'hour', etc. they use incorrect articles.

Over generalization of some rules:

When students learn a rule like 'Definite articles 'the' is used for particular things' They over generalize it and come up with sentences like:

He is the Gopal
She is the Sita

Analogy:

When students read, listen and practice sentence like 'I go to school every day', 'She goes to School every day'. 'They go to school regularly' they drop definite article 'the' from the sentences like:

- 1) Yesterday I went to the school to speak to the headmaster.
- 2) She went to the hospital to see her sick friend.

Examination orientedness in studies:

Almost all students in their studies give importance to those structural and linguistic items which carry more marks in the Public Examination.

In the question paper in the S.S.C. Exam, 2 marks are allotted to articles. This is why they do not pay much attention to this topic, and the area remains neglected.

The pre-test established that students generally commit the following errors in the area of articles.

- They don't use definite article 'the' when a noun is referred to again. This is because in the mother tongue of the students (i.e. Marathi) such a practice doesn't exist.
- They don't use definite article 'the' for a noun which is specified by a qualifying word, phrase or a clause. It is again, because of mother tongue influence.

- They don't use definite article 'the' in sentences like: Yesterday, I went to the Hospital to see my friend. Here, again, mother tongue influence is there.
- They use article 'an' before nouns like 'University', 'European' and they use articles 'a' before nouns like 'hour', 'Heir'; etc. This is result of inappropriate teaching at the secondary stage.
- They don't use definite article 'the' before the names of rivers, seas, oceans, and mountains etc. This is also because of mother tongue influence.
- They use a, an, the in phrases like by bus, by train, by plane.
- They use definite article 'the' before proper nouns of persons. This is because of over-generalization.

Significance and Recommendation:

In Maharashtra state the students who opt for non-English medium schools learn English as a third language. They appear for the S.S.C. Public Examination at the end of their 10th Class. Though they have been learning English for six years, they do not generally use appropriate articles at appropriate places. Similarly a majority of the students use some articles or prepositions or the other where it is not required. These observations are the outcome of practical teaching experience. In addition to this they are also based on the results of a sample of students selected for this study. The difficulty faced by the students in the use of articles not only spoils their marks in examination but also becomes a stumbling block in expression as well as in their written work. All these facts speak a lot about the significance of the problem.

Recommendations for the Improvement of the Performance:

Different teachers may have different recommendations for the improvement of the performance. Gradation of the errors according to difficulty level and a Remedial course based on this gradation can serve the purpose in an effective manner.

As Marathi does not have any articles, the gradation beginning with the non-use of articles (i.e. 'No article' or Zero article) will be convenient. By taking into consideration this, an attempt of gradation of errors is made in this study which is as under:

- The use of 'the' before proper nouns of persons.
- The use of some article or the other in phrases like by us, by train, by plane etc.
- The use of 'An' before words like 'University' 'European' and the use of 'a' before words like 'hour' 'heir' etc.
- The non-use of any articles before words like Ganga, Himalayas, Bay of Bengal etc.
- The non-use of definite article 'the' before nouns which are referred to again.
- The non-use of definite article 'the' before nouns which are specified by qualifying word, phrases of clause.
- The non-use of definite article 'the' in sentences like: Yesterday I went to the school to speak to the Headmaster.

Recommendations for Further Research:

Following recommendations are made in connection with further research:

- A group of girls of the tenth class (Marathi Medium) can be tested by means of a pre-test and an achievement test and their final performance can be compared with those of the boys and further investigations can be made if the difference is significant.
- A group of boys and girls of the tenth class (of the English

Medium) who learn English as the first language can be treated as above.

•A comparative study of the performance of the students belonging to rural area and urban area can also be interesting.

References

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