

RESEARCH ARTICLE



LOW PERFORMANCE OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE SKILLS AMONG THE TRIBAL STUDENTS OF ODISHA: A BRIEF OVERVIEW

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ABSTRACT

India serves to be the receptacle for diversity and ethnicity. The aborigine tradition and inheritance serves as a rich cultural heritage and backbone of Indian society. The state holds 3rd and 11th rank among the States/UTs in terms of ST population and the proportion of ST population to total population of the State respectively, some of the different tribes of Odisha are, Santal, Kolha, Munda, Saora, Shabar and Bhattada along with Khond. This paper studies the reasons for the low level proficiency of English among the tribal students of Odisha. The facts are substantiated by surveys and questionnaires. Graphical and statistical representation of the data, followed by analysis and suggestions for improvement are incorporated for the better scope of the paper.

Keywords:

Tribal Competence. L2, English, Low efficiency, Error analysis.

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INTRODUCTION

India serves to be the receptacle for diversity and ethnicity. The aborigine tradition and inheritance serves as a rich cultural heritage and backbone of Indian society. Sorokin has rightly pointed that stratification is the primary feature of a permanently organised society. term "Tribe" suggests naive folk living in hills and forests; to some more conscious people ,it signifies a colourful person famous for their dance and song. Odisha a rich tribal state in India nestles as many as per 2001 Census, the Scheduled Tribe (ST) population of the State of Orissa is 8,145,081. This constitutes 22.1 percent of the total population of the State and 9.7 per cent of the total tribal population of the country. The state holds 3rd and 11th rank among the States/UTs in

terms of ST population and the proportion of ST population to total population of the State respectively, some of the different tribes of Odisha are, Santal, Kolha, Munda, Saora, Shabar and Bhattada along with Khond

2. Present status of English Language among the school goers:

As Per (Nandwana and Joshi, 2010) Adolescence is the most susceptible age with varying emotional states and turmoils. Guiding them emotionally with love and concern and teaching them about emotional intelligence can help them to face the challenges of society and language better. But looking at the tribal population, which is also a major part of Indian population, the conditions are lamentable. The tribes are economically inferior,

uneducated at times and are less exposed to the modern world. Being the earliest inhabitant of the country, they have maintained a distinctive life style for centuries. Unfortunately the isolation has kept them out of the mainstream and made them easy prey to exploitation (Talesara 1994) and when they are forced to get along with the mainstream culture, they don't get adjusted easily. Kundu (1984) stated that lack of education and deprivation that these tribes face due to poverty may result in frustration both in personal as well as social relationships thereby resulting in poor self concept and low self-esteem.

The major areas of the drawback of the tribal students in terms of English are their phobia for the use of the language. To help the students to overcome the shortfalls of teaching learning methods of English Language which are reflected in ineffective communication, incorrect pronunciations and inability to comprehend native accents and idioms, very poor forms of grammatical competence, high level of MTI, a phobia instilled in the heart to use this language.

3. Survey: Taking a survey of the popularity of pedagogical skills among the young tribal learners, the following were the responses of fifty students

Table.1.students responses on Teachers Pedagogical Skills

Questions(Pedagogy based)	Agree (in %)	Disagree (in %)	Dont know (in %)
I love my English teachers teaching Method	67	32	1
I understand more in Translation method	95	5	0
My classes are Learner centric	34	56	10
The objectives of each lesson are clearly stated in the beginning of the lesson	23	65	12
I am clear why i am learning a particular lesson	15	75	10
I do a lot of language practice in the classrooms	37	61	2
My language activities relate to my real life experiences	23	74	3
A lot of drilling activities are undertaken in the language classroom	38	45	17
My teacher motivates me a lot	13	42	45

4. Analysis.

From the above responses, it can be well opined that, the method which 95% of the students prefer and follow is the grammar translation method. They love the subject, but at the same time they are also afraid of it, as they are unable to generate sentences on their own .Some students are also of the opinion that the language learning outcomes of their classes are not well identified by the teacher at the beginning of the class and many of the students are unaware of the real utility of the purpose that why are they learning a particular lesson. Another major finding was that the students don't feel motivated in the classroom due to the absence of motivation factors in their teachers, so somehow they can never make this language their own.

5. Error Analysis of writing:

Given below are some sample writings of intermediate level tribal students:

5.1. Situation1. The students were asked to write in English that their classes began/commenced from Friday.

Selected Responses:

1. Our new class start Friday.
2. Friday our new class stating.
3. We are starts our new class on Friday.
4. Our classes starting to the Friday.

5.2. Situation2. The students were asked to write in English that 15th August is celebrated as Independence day of India in the college premises.

Selected Responses:

1.15 August is Independence day of the celebrat our college.

2. Our college independance Celebrat August 15

3. Celibret August15 Indipindince day Coleg.

5.3.Situation3. The students were asked to write in English that Owing to the fact of heavy rain outside, the student attendance is poor.

Selected Responses:

1. Rain heavily, no student come
2. Havy rein, no students come college
3. No student comes big rain.

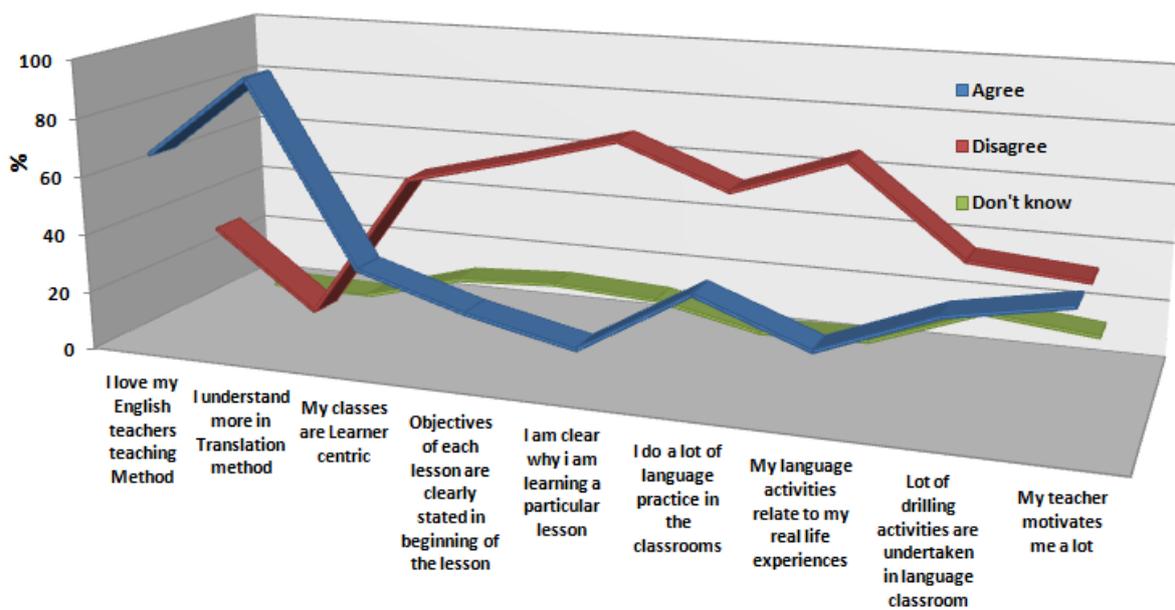


Figure.1. Representation of Motivation by the Teachers

5.4. Analysis: From the above selected responses we can summarise that:

- This is not an individual error but group error committed by all the students.
- There is a severe problem in tense pattern, no past tense used.
- Inappropriate usage of the main verb as well the auxiliary verb.
- Severe words mis-spelt.
- Tendency to drop the auxiliaries.
- Tendency not to use the conditionals
- Structure of the sentence pattern not logical and inappropriate/
- Tendency to drop the infinitives
- Tendency to drop the articles.
- Inappropriate prepositional sentences
- Inability to produce compound sentences.

statistics among these students, it can be concluded as:

- 1st= Reading (26%)
- 2nd= Writing (19%),
- 3rd= Listening (12%)
- 4th= Speaking (07%).

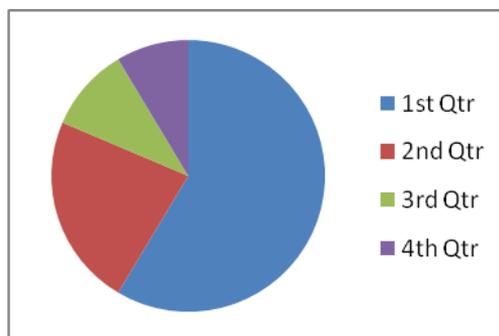


Figure.2.LSRW Skill Chart.

6. Major Reasons for the drawback in the English Subject:

- i. Alien language outlook: They treat English as a foreign and alien language

- ii. Faulty sentence structures=SVO becomes OSV: I eat rice becomes, Rice I eat.
- iii. Miserable Spellings-cat becomes kat
- iv. Lack of Exposure to the language
- v. Lack of usage of the language
- vi. Using the vernacular for management.
- vii. Phobia and inhibition for the language
- viii. Dearth of Compassionate trained teachers
- ix. Pronunciation problems
- x. Problems of intelligibility
- xi. Problems of comprehension-Bilingual method more effective
- xii. Rustic impoverished status
- xiii. Genetic problems
- xiv. Objective of learning unclear
- xv. No relevance in day to day real life
- xvi. High amount of Mother Tongue Interference
- xvii. Highly faulty grammatical usage.

7. Suggestions for improvement.

- They should be given equal preference as the mainstream learner.
- They should be given ample motivation and guidance by the teachers.
- Every learner has his own pace of learning, so being slow learners; they should be given little extra time.
- The lectures should be well substantiated by real life examples
- They should be given plenty of remedial exercises.
- Drilling in grammar should be practised.
- Mother tongue interference should be identified, and accent neutralisation should be carried out
- Plenty of activities in the LSWR skill should be practiced
- They should be given pronunciation and comprehension practice
- Mother tongue used should be sparingly used
- Grammar should be taught in a prescriptive and deductive manner
- Error correction and remedial exercise should be practiced.

- English should be taught as a second language and not as an alien foreign language.
- The teacher should make the classroom more student centric than teacher centric.
- More focus should be given on communication rather than on language.
- The students should know why they are learning something and what the relevance of it is.
- The teacher should create a love for the student in the student's heart.
- They should try to eradicate the phobia from their heart

8. CONCLUSION

Language learning is a skill. It is more difficult to teach because language is taught by the use of language itself. Every section of the society has his/her own idiosyncrasies. Due to the nomadic, agrarian lifestyle, the tribal's are somehow cut off from the mainstream students. They have their own pace and ideologies of learning. Nurturing thousands of tribal students of different sections, Odisha has its own share of language problems to share. The students have their own language problems, and the paper has tried its best to offer some pragmatic solutions to the problems. If it can be given a thought upon and worked on, these so called backward sections of the society can acquire the centre than the occupying periphery.

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