

# Effect of Instructions in the Language Laboratory on English Pronunciation of Pupil Teachers

Rekha

K.C College of Education, Nawanshahr, House no.8, opposite Jassi Shuttering store, Kulam Road, Nawanshahr-144514,Punjab,India

Email: rekha.teji09@gmail.com

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## Abstract

Good communication in English depends upon proper pronunciation. Proper pronunciation means reproducing the sound of the word through speech in such a way that any fluent speaker of the language would effortlessly know and understand the message. Improper pronunciation causes a breakdown in communication and requires more effort to understand. Poor pronunciation can cause a negative first impression. People who cannot pronounce English properly are often thought of as less literate or intelligent. Therefore teachers and learners of any language must not neglect the spoken aspect of language while teaching and learning various skills. They should neither underestimate nor neglect the importance of correct pronunciation in development of language skills. But in our schools, we teach English as a knowledge subject and not as a skill. As a result, even after learning English for so many years students are not able to speak it properly. They don't find themselves confident enough to use it in day to day life. Even our future English teachers are not good communicators in English language. In this study an attempt was made to study the effect of instructions in the language laboratory on English Pronunciation of Pupil teachers. The sample of the study was comprised of 33 pupil teachers of K.C. College of Education; Nawanshahr. Self prepared English Pronunciation Test was used in this study. The students of experimental group were given instructions in Language Laboratory. On the other hand, the students of the Control Group continued with their Routine Activities of the classroom. This continued for 30 working days. The results of the study indicated that Instructions in the Language Laboratory were found to be superior to routine activities of classroom in improving English Pronunciation of pupil teachers.

**Keywords:** Language laboratory, english pronunciation, pupil teachers

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Language is a means of communication in everyday life. Common people do not consider the speaking ability as significant as linguists do. They just take it for granted and think that speaking and understanding is as natural as breathing. So many learners prefer learning "Dumb English" to paying attention on studying English pronunciation, the results being that learners are shocked whenever they meet difficulties in oral communication. Madden *et. al.*, (1997) surveyed a group of university students to determine an opinion about error correction in Pronunciation. Overall, students valued pronunciation as an important part of their instruction, and wanted more correction both within and outside the classroom, and demanding more emphasis be placed on the pronunciation component within the course. A person's worth is known by the

Language he speaks, how effectively he Communicate, his vocabulary, his Diction and his Confidence level. Chamot (1992) says, "To develop classroom speaking skills, children need opportunities to participate in small group discussion, to present oral reports, and to respond adequately to teacher questioning...". Language teachers have been much more concerned with grammar and vocabulary than with pronunciation. Morley's premise (1991) that, "Intelligible pronunciation is an essential component of communication competence,..." teachers should ideally include components of pronunciation in their courses. The teacher also has a specific role to play in the communicative learning program, a role that Morley describes as one of 'speech coach' or 'pronunciation coach' and supported by Otlowski (1998). Rather

than just correcting the learner's mistakes, the speech coach supplies information, gives models, offers cues, suggestions and constructive feedback about the performance, sets high standards, provides a wide variety of practice opportunities, and overall supports and encourages the learner. But many teachers admit that their neglect of pronunciation is not due to their lack of interest in the subject but rather to lack of confidence in teaching it. They feel they need more knowledge about, and skills relating to the teaching of pronunciation. Brown (1991) says that "pronunciation has sometimes been referred to as the 'poor relation aspect of the English language which is often given little attention, if completely ignored, by the teacher in the classroom'". Among many other factors, the most prominent is phonetics, which, to a large extent, weakens the learner's confidence both in speaking and listening. In the case of English pupil teachers, a reasonable accuracy in the pronunciation of individual sounds should certainly have been achieved, however, still many fail to attain this perfection. The ability of speaking English embodies the correctness of pronunciation and intonation and directly affects the appropriate communication in conversation. Pronunciation instruction tends to be linked to the instructional method being used. In the grammar-translation method of the past, pronunciation was almost irrelevant and therefore seldom taught. In the audio-lingual method, learners spent hours in the language lab listening to and repeating sounds and sound combinations. It became popular in the 1950s. This involved a systematic presentation of the structures of the second language, moving from the simple to the more complex. This approach was strongly influenced by a belief using of a lot of practice mechanically and repeatedly. Richards *et. al.*, (1999) language laboratories have customarily been understood as a room that contains desks or individual booths with tape or cassette recorders and a control booth for teacher or observer and which is used for language teaching students can practice recorded exercises and follow language programmes either individually or in groups, and the teacher can listen to each student's performance. A Language Laboratory is a room in a school, college, training institute, university or academy that contains special equipment to help students learn foreign languages by listening to tapes or CDs, watching videos, recording themselves, etc. The language laboratory is an audio or audio-visual installation used as an aid in modern language teaching. It was also called Speech and Writing Lab. All the four language learning skills (LSRW) are given importance and learners are provided with ample opportunities to practice by listening to the audio programmes and watching the video clips. Technically, a language lab is an instructional technology tool consisting of a source unit that can disseminate audio, audio-visual, and/or written materials to any number of students at individual seats or carrels, with a wide variety of potential feedback mechanisms to the student, teacher, or other students. Thus language Lab. provides opportunity to the students to practice listening, speaking, reading and writing skills

at their own pace and thus improve their pronunciation. **Robertson (2002)** conducted experiments in a language laboratory in Korea in 2003, on 300 students aged 12-14 (Korean age) and 60 adults aged 24-55, results showed that those in both groups who undertook six hours of pronunciation training recorded noticeably higher computer analyzed results of pronunciation than those whose training omitted the pronunciation program. **Godeo(2003)** presented the experience of setting up a resource centre as a self-access tool for B.A. students undertaken in the Modern Languages Department, University of Castilla-La Mancha (Spain). He found that multimedia language laboratory had improved linguistic proficiency in English of university students. **Brenes (2006)** examined the role of the audio language laboratory in language teaching and found that language laboratory is a helping tool in improving English proficiency of students as they get an opportunity to reinforce those areas in which they found difficulty.

### Objectives of the Study

Following were objectives of the study

1. To compare the English pronunciation of pupil teachers having studied compulsory English in graduation, Elective English in graduation and Masters in English
2. To compare the adjusted mean scores of English pronunciation of pupil teachers of experimental and control groups by considering Pre- English pronunciation scores as covariate

### Hypotheses of the Study

Following were hypotheses of the study

1. There is no significant difference in the English pronunciation of pupil teachers having studied compulsory English in graduation, Elective English in graduation and Masters in English
2. There is no significant difference in the adjusted mean scores of English pronunciation of pupil teachers of experimental and control groups by considering Pre- English pronunciation scores as covariate

### Sample

Purposive Sampling technique was used in this study. The sample of the study was comprised of 33 pupil teachers of K.C. College of Education, Nawanshahr, who had taken teaching of English as a teaching subject in their B.Ed course.

**Tools:** Self prepared English Pronunciation Test was used to test the pronunciation of the pupil teachers.

**Method/Procedure:** Pupil teachers studying teaching of English as a teaching subject in their B.Ed course at K.C. College of

Education, Nawanshahr were randomly assigned to experimental and control group. Experimental group was comprised of seventeen pupil teachers where as control group was comprised of sixteen pupil teachers. Self prepared English Pronunciation Test was administered on both these groups to assess the level of their pronunciation in English. Then the students of experimental group were given instructions in Language Laboratory, where they were provided with ample opportunities to practice all the four language skills i.e. Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing. They were allowed to practice at their own pace. Their problem areas were stressed by providing ample practice sessions with proper reinforcement and Feedbacks. Every day, 35 minutes' period was devoted for this purpose. This continued for 30 working days. On the other hand, the students of the Control Group continued with their Routine Activities of the classroom. At the end, the English Pronunciation Test was administered again on the students in the same way as done at the start of the experiment.

### Analysis

**Comparison of the English pronunciation of pupil teachers having studied compulsory English in graduation, Elective English in graduation and Masters in English:** First objective of the study was to compare the English pronunciation of pupil teachers having studied compulsory English in graduation, Elective English in graduation and Masters in English. Data related to this objective was analyzed with the help of ANOVA. The results are given in the Table 1.

**Table 1:** Summary of ANOVA of English pronunciation of pupil teachers having studied compulsory English in graduation, Elective English in graduation and Masters in English

Source of Variance	SS	df	MSS	F
English Pronunciation	1827.885	2	913.943	39.831**
Error	688.357	30	22.945	
Total		32		

\*\*Significant at 0.01 levels

From the Table 1, it can be seen that F-Value is 39.831, which is significant at 0.01 levels with  $df = 2/30$ . It indicates that the mean scores of the English pronunciation of pupil teachers having studied compulsory English in graduation, Elective English in graduation and Masters in English differ significantly. In this context, the null hypothesis, namely, "There is no significant difference in the English pronunciation of pupil teachers having studied compulsory English in graduation, Elective English in graduation and Masters in English", is rejected. In order to analyse further, post hoc comparisons (LSD) were made. The results are given in Table 2.

**Table 2:** Group Wise Mean Differences and Standard Error of pupil teachers having studied compulsory English in graduation, Elective English in graduation and Masters in English

Group	Mean difference	Standard error
Masters in English – Elective English	18.35714**	2.36060
Masters in English – Compulsory English	18.10714**	2.17071
Elective English – Compulsory English	.25000	1.93096

\*\* Significant at 0.01 level

### Comparison of pupil teachers having studied Masters in English and Elective English in graduation

From the table 2, it is evident that significant mean difference exists among pupil teachers having studied Masters in English and Elective English in graduation. In this context, the null hypotheses, namely, "there is no significant difference in the mean scores of English pronunciation of pupil teachers having studied Masters in English and Elective English in graduation", is rejected. Further, the mean score of pupil teachers having studied Masters in English (74.85) was significantly higher than those pupil teachers having studied Elective English in graduation (56.50). It may, therefore, be said that English pronunciation of pupil teachers having studied Masters in English is significantly superior to pupil teachers having studied Elective English in graduation.

### Comparison of pupil teachers having studied Masters in English and Compulsory English in graduation

From the table 2, it is evident that significant mean difference exists among pupil teachers having studied Masters in English and compulsory English in graduation. In this context, the null hypotheses, namely, "there is no significant difference in the mean scores of English pronunciation of pupil teachers having studied Masters in English and compulsory English in graduation", is rejected. Further, the mean score of pupil teachers having studied Masters in English (74.85) was significantly higher than those pupil teachers having studied compulsory English in graduation (56.75). It may, therefore, be said that English pronunciation of pupil teachers having studied Masters in English is significantly superior to pupil teachers having studied compulsory English in graduation.

### Comparison of pupil teachers having studied Elective English in graduation and Compulsory English in graduation

From the table 2, it is evident that no significant mean difference exists among pupil teachers having studied Elective English in graduation and compulsory English in graduation. In this context, the null hypotheses, namely, "there is no significant difference in the mean scores of English pronunciation of pupil teachers having studied Elective English in graduation and compulsory English in graduation", is not rejected.

graduation”, is not rejected. It may, therefore, be said that pupil teachers having studied Elective English in graduation and compulsory English in graduation were not significantly different in respect to English pronunciation.

**Comparison of adjusted mean scores of English pronunciation of experimental and control group by considering pre- English pronunciation as covariate**

The Second objective was “To compare the adjusted mean scores of English pronunciation of pupil teachers of experimental and control groups by considering Pre- English pronunciation scores as covariate”. The data related to this objective was analyzed with the help of Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA).The results are given in the Table 3

**Table 3:** Summary of ANCOVA of English pronunciation by considering Pre- English pronunciation Scores as Covariate

Source of Variance	SS <sub>y,x</sub>	df	MSS <sub>y,x</sub>	F <sub>y,x</sub>
English Pronunciation	12777.670	1	12777.670	652.817
Error	587.194	30	19.573	
Total		31		

\*\*Significant at 0.01 levels

From the Table 3, it can be seen that adjusted F-Value is 652.817, which is significant at 0.01 levels with df=1/31. It indicates that the adjusted mean scores of English pronunciation of group given instructions in language laboratory and of group given instructions in Traditional classroom differ significantly when Pre- English pronunciation scores were considered as covariate. Thus, the Second null hypothesis, namely, “There is no significant difference in the adjusted mean scores of English pronunciation of pupil teachers of experimental and control groups by considering Pre-English pronunciation scores as covariate.”, is rejected. Further, the adjusted mean score of English pronunciation of Experimental Method Group was 102.94, which is significantly higher than that of Traditional Method Group whose adjusted mean score of English pronunciation was 63.25. It reflects that instructions in language laboratory were found to be significantly superior to the instructions in Traditional classroom in teaching English pronunciation when both groups were matched with respect to Pre- English pronunciation scores. It may, therefore, be concluded that instructions given in language laboratory were found to be significantly superior to the instructions given in Traditional classroom in teaching English pronunciation to pupil teachers.

**Results**

1. English pronunciation of pupil teachers having studied Masters in English is significantly superior to English pronunciation of pupil teachers having studied Elective English in graduation.

2. English pronunciation of pupil teachers having studied Masters in English is significantly superior to English pronunciation of pupil teachers having studied Compulsory English in graduation.
3. Pupil teachers having studied Elective English in graduation and Pupil teachers having studied compulsory English in graduation were not significantly different in respect to English pronunciation.
4. Instructions in the Language Laboratory were found to be superior to routine activities of classroom in improving English Pronunciation.

**Discussion**

The results of the study indicated that Instructions in the Language Laboratory were found to be superior to routine activities of classroom in improving English Pronunciation .These results are consistent with the findings of **Robertson (2002), Godeo(2003)** and **Brenes (2006)**. The probable reason behind superior performance of experimental group students is that Language Laboratory provides tools and content for interactive self-paced learning by students, as well as rich-media presentations for teacher-led classroom learning. Students get ample opportunities to practice all the four language skills i.e. Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing at their own pace and thus improve their pronunciation. Immediate feedback provided to them helps to reinforce correct pronunciation and eliminate incorrect responses. Researcher found that many learners were not aware of their pronunciation problems. Making these clear to learners is a very important first step to solving them .These problems can be clarified in the language laboratories. Many learners cannot hear the difference between their pronunciations and that of the target language. They need to learn to hear the language more like the way native speakers do. This requires a great deal of repetitive practice to help learners establish precisely where those phonological boundaries are. It also involves learners recording themselves and playing back this recording so they can compare their voices with the model. Language Laboratory provides ample opportunities to the learner in this direction. At the same time, students in the control group learned through routine activities of the classroom without the use of Language Laboratory. The lower achievement scores of the control group may be explained by this factor.

**Implications**

Pronunciation as an important part of Language Proficiency needs more correction both within and outside the classroom; therefore more emphasis should be placed on the pronunciation component within the course. The results of the study indicated that Instructions in the Language Laboratory were helpful in enhancing

English Pronunciation of students. Language Laboratory makes learners aware that there is a difference between what they say and what native speakers say. It helps them to hear the difference and practice it, find the right meta language, to discover useful patterns and rules, gives feedback and provides opportunities for further practice. Therefore the use of Language Laboratory should be promoted in schools, colleges and training institutes so that pronunciation of students can be improved.

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