

An Understanding of English IPA Symbols of Undergraduate Students of Select Colleges in Nanded City: A Study

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Abstract: Language learning is quite different from learning any other subjects like Physics or Mathematics. While teaching and learning both teachers and learners have to remember the fact that a practical approach is needed to be applied while learning a language. Language proficiency can be attained through practicing language skills regularly. In order to test the language proficiency of undergraduate students of professional courses in Nanded city, a survey has been conducted by administering a questionnaire. The major objectives are to find the language skills especially the pronunciation of English of undergraduate students. The nature of design of this research is descriptive for which google form is used as a statistical tool. Random samplings of 150 responses have been recorded of undergraduate students of professional courses like BBA & BCA. The paper attempts to study the English language proficiency among the undergraduate students in Nanded city as the Nanded city lies in underdeveloped region of Maharashtra State. In this area it is observed that most of the students are weak in English language. The researcher has identified this problem for conducting the survey among the undergraduate students.

Keywords: Proficiency, Language Skills, Phonology, Pronunciation, Competency

1. Introduction

David Crystal the eminent linguist cites evidences that English is a global language and believes future potential of English as the international language of communication. English is the easy access to knowledge of the world. Education is incomplete without knowledge. So, knowing English and communicating is indispensable to each individual. In Maharashtra, India English is introduced right from the 1st standard. It is a compulsory subject taught at schools and colleges. It is expected that students should be able to communicate in English at undergraduate level. Language proficiency especially in pronunciation is what is expected from undergraduate students. Hence, an attempt has been made to find out the language competency and proficiency in pronunciation of undergraduate students of professional courses like BBA, BCA and B. Sc. (HS).

2. Objectives of Study

The following are the objectives identified by the researcher:

- 1) To find English language competency of undergraduate students of professional courses in Nanded city
- 2) To find undergraduate students' proficiency in English Phonology

3. Research Methodology

Table 1: Research Methodology

Research Design	The nature of Design is Descriptive
Sampling Unit	Language Competence of UG students in Nanded District.
Sampling Size	Sampling size is 150
Sampling method	Random Sampling

Nature of Data	Primary data was collected form respondents and secondary data was collected through various reports.
Method of data collection	Response of the Undergraduate students from Nanded district.
Type of Questionnaire	Structure questionnaire with suitable scaling
Statistical Tools Used	Percentage (%) Google Form

3.1 Data Analysis and Interpretation/ Results & Discussion

A well organized and framed questionnaire was circulated through Google Form to the respondents of Nanded city to find out the language competency of undergraduate students of professional courses. The primary data collected and analyzed as below:

Table 2: Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Gender	Male	Female	Total
No. of Respondents	90 (60%)	60 (40%)	150 (100%)
Education	Up to Graduation	Up to Graduation	
Age	18-22	18-22	
Government/ Private	90.7 Private and 9.3 Govt.		

The researcher has sought the forgoing responses through Google Form (Responses). From the Demographic Profile of the respondents, it is evident that 90% of the respondents are studying in Private Colleges where as 9.3% respondents are studying in Government Colleges. 60% respondents are male and 40% respondents are female. 100% respondents have their education up to Graduation. The information of age shows that almost all respondents are millennial aging 18-22.

3.2 Factors Affecting English Proficiency

There are other factors affecting the proficiency and competency of English language. This is discussed as below:

Table 3: Factors Affecting English Proficiency

Sr. No.	Particulars	Results			
		Urban	Semi Urban	Rural	Total
1	Location of the College				
	Number of Respondents	102 (68%)	25 (16.7%)	23 (15.3%)	150 (100%)
2	Nature of College	Private (Unaided)	Govt. (Aided)	---	---
	Number of Respondents	136 (90.7%)	14 (9.3%)	---	150 (100%)
3	Medium of Instructions	English	Marathi	Hindi	---
	Number of Respondents	128 (85.3%)	8(5.3%)	14(9.3%)	150 (100%)
4	Mother Tongue	Marathi	Hindi	Urdu & Others	---
	Number of Respondents	115 (76.7%)	19 (12.7%)	16(10.6%)	150 (100%)
5	Medium of School Education	Marathi	English	Others	---
	Number of Respondents	71 (47.3%)	54 (36%)	25 (16.7%)	150 (100%)
6	Attending Spoken English Class	Yes	No	---	---
	Number of Respondents	47 (31.3%)	103(68.7%)	---	---
7	Communicative Ability	Good	Average	Poor	---
	Number of Respondents	64 (42.7%)	81 (54%)	5 (3.3%)	150 (100%)
8	Reading English Newspaper	Daily	Sometimes	Never	---
	Number of Respondents	16 (10.7%)	121 (80.7%)	13(8.7%)	150 (100%)

3.2.1 Location of College

From the foregoing table, it is observed that majority of the respondents are located in the Urban areas. Total 102 respondents are from urban areas. The percentage is 68% of the total respondents. Only 23 respondents are from Rural areas that comes to a total percentage is 15.3%.

3.2.2 Nature of College

From the graph no 4.2 the researcher observes that 136 (90.7%) respondents are studying in Private college whereas respondents studying in Government college are 14 (9.3%). It brings to notice that most of the respondents are studying and learning in Private College.

3.2.3 Medium of Instructions

From the graph no 4.3 the researcher observes that 128 (85.3%) respondents have English as their medium of instruction. Only 8 (5.3%) have Marathi as their medium of instruction.

3.2.4 Mother Tongue

From the above graph no 4.4 the researcher observes that there are respondents having Marathi, Hindi, Urdu, Marwari, Telugu and Gujrati as their mother tongue. Out of which 115 (i.e. 76.7%) respondents have Marathi as their Mother tongue. Gujrati speaking student is 1 (0.7%) the lowest from the respondents.

3.2.5 Medium of School Education

From the above graph no 4.5 the researcher observes that there are respondents having Medium of school education in Marathi Medium, Hindi Medium, Urdu Medium, and English Medium as their mother tongue. Out of which 71 (i.e. 47.3%) respondents have learnt from Marathi Medium schools. Respondents from English Medium are 54 (i.e. 36%) the second largest from the respondents whereas 11 (i.e. 7.3%) respondents are from Hindi Medium schools.

3.2.6 Attending Spoken English Classes

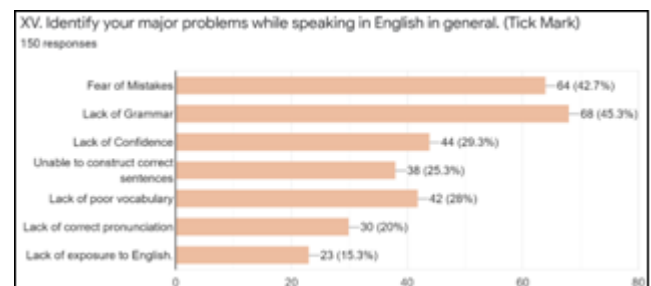
From the table researcher observes that there are respondents 103 (i.e. 68.7%) who have not attended any spoken English classes whereas 47 (i.e. 31.3%) respondents who have attended the Spoken English Classes.

3.2.7 Comfortable & Confident in Communicating in English

From the above graph no 4.7 the researcher observes that 81 (i.e. 54%) respondents replies that they are less confident and 64 (i.e. 42.7%) respondents replies that they are very confident in having communication in English in general. 5 (3.3%) respondents replies that they are not at all confident in communication in English.

3.2.8 Reading English Newspaper

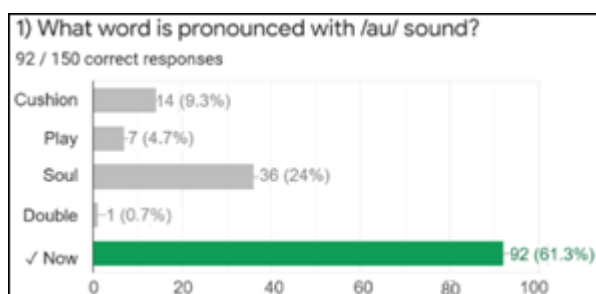
From the above graph no 4.8 the researcher observes that 121 (i.e. 80.7%) respondents reads English newspaper sometimes and not regularly. Whereas 16 (i.e. 10.7%) respondents replies that they read English newspaper very regularly. 13 (8.7%) respondents candidly agrees that they do not read English newspaper at all.



Graph 1: Major problems while speaking in English

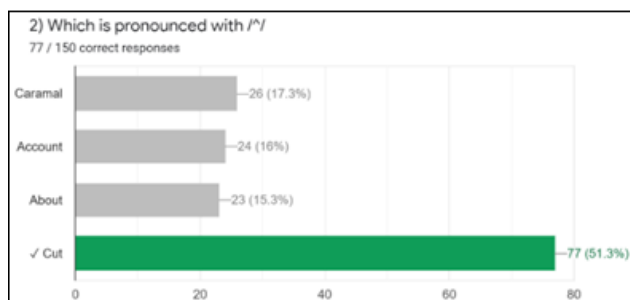
From the above graph researcher observes that 68 (i.e. 45.3%) respondents agree that they lack in Grammar. Next to lack of grammar is Fear of Mistake and almost 64 (42.7%) respondents admit the fact that they are afraid of mistakes. The third major problem respondents face is Lack of Confidence. Total 44 (29.3%) respondents agree to this

fact. The Least problem faced by respondents is lack of exposure to English which is counted in number as 23 (15.3%).



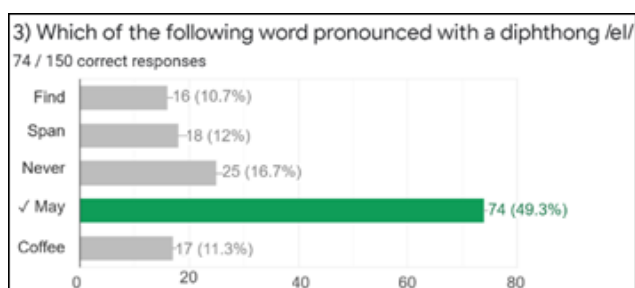
Graph 2 What word is pronounced with /au / sound?

From the above graph the researcher observes that the word pronounced with / au / sound was 'now' and this has been correctly answered by 92 (i.e. 61.3%) respondents whereas 58 (38.7%) respondents have attempted the question wrongly.



Graph 3: Which of the following is pronounced with /ʌ / sound?

From the above graph researcher finds that the word pronounced with / ʌ / sound was 'Cut' and this has been correctly answered by 77 (i.e. 51.3%) respondents whereas 73 (48.7%) respondents have attempted the question incorrectly.



Graph 4: Which of the following word pronounced with a diphthong /eɪ /

From the above graph the researcher finds that the word pronounced with / eɪ / sound was 'May' and this has been correctly answered by 74 (i.e.49.3%) respondents whereas 76 (50.7%) respondents have attempted the question incorrectly.

4. Findings

The present study is undertaken by the researcher to find English language competency among the undergraduate

students of BBA and BCA course in various colleges Nanded city. After analysing the data, the researcher has got the following findings:

- 1) Researcher finds that majority of undergraduate students are studying in urban area and they are studying in a private college.
- 2) Researcher finds that medium of instruction used in the college is majorly English.
- 3) Majority of the respondents' mother tongue is Marathi.
- 4) The researcher finds respondents have performed quite well as far as knowing the IPA symbols of English.

5. Suggestions

Based on the analysis the researcher suggests as following measures:

- 1) Undergraduate students should read the English newspapers, journals, magazines, story books etc. regularly. Generally, newspaper, magazines etc. cover a wide range of subject and variety of subjects. Students will get familiar with unfamiliar words. They will get to know different sentence structures. They should also read loudly. Loud reading promotes fluency in speaking and improves pronunciation.
- 2) While attempting questions on Phonology most of the students have done well but there are some areas where they need to improve. Diphthongs must be practised by undergraduate. They should be aware of all the 44 sounds of English language. They must refer to the dictionaries. Now a days, online dictionaries provide oral pronunciation tab and by clicking this tab they can know the correct pronunciation.

6. Conclusion

It is important to note that English language proficiency is essential to be known by students in this connected world of 21st Century. Being the teacher and researcher, it is curious to know whether the undergraduate students have got the Basic English language competency or not and hence this attempt has been made to exhibit the current scenario of undergraduates of a professional course like BBA, BCA etc. Undergraduate students have not been performing well and they lack in standard pronunciation. This research also projects that there is a greater sense of responsibility of English teachers to motivate students and build confidence in them.

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