

DIFFICULTIES OF HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS' LEARNING TOWARDS SUBJECT – VERB AGREEMENT, CONDITIONAL CLAUSE AND REPORTED SPEECH - THE BASIC ENGLISH GRAMMARS IN AND AROUND VILLUPURAM DISTRICT, TAMILNADU

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Abstract

The language of English is being treated as a world language because it is vastly presented all over the world. At this juncture, learning English gains currency. Majority of Indian students, particularly from rural pockets consider these seven-letter words 'English and grammar' as the magical and mystical words. The moment they hear something in English they start feel uneasiness. As a result of this, the teachers who handle English classes especially in teaching Grammar face insurmountable difficulties. Students too find it difficult to listen and to understand the grammar classes. What are the reasons for this? What are the remedial measures to be taken to alleviate these problems? This paper critically evaluates the problems faced by students in learning Concord, Conditionals and Reported Speech - the Basic English grammars at high school level. Appropriate and adequate remedial measures are cited for the successful rectification of these problems too.

Key words: Subject-verb, Agreement, Conditionals, Speech, Difficulties, Learning and Grammar.

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this study is to explore the difficulties in the English grammar faced by second language learners and investigates factors that become student's obstacles to learn English Basic Grammar especially in learning Parts of speech. This project is concerning difficulties faced by high school level students in learning English Basic Grammar of Parts of speech. It highlights those points where students are facing difficulties in learning Concord, Conditionals and Reported Speech - the Basic English grammars. Sometimes they undergo many difficulties in learning Tense, Sentence Pattern and Question Tags and so they never show interest in the grammar classes. It does not happen only with Tamil medium students where as it happens with even CBSC as well as Matriculation (English medium) students.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

"Difficulties of High School Students' learning towards Subject – Verb agreement, Conditional Clause and Reported Speech -the Basic English Grammars in and around Villupuram District, Tamil Nadu"

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To create awareness about the importance of English Basic Grammar.
- To assess the Difficulties in learning English Basic Grammar especially on Concord, Conditionals and Reported Speech among the high school students.
- To measure the difficulties of learning Concord, Conditionals and Reported Speech among Tamil Medium, English Medium and CBSE Students.

HYPOTHESES

1. There is no significant difference in the mean scores of Difficulties in learning English Basic Grammar among the high School students.

- Between boys and girls
- Among types of schools
- Among Tamil medium , English medium and CBSE Students

METHOD OF STUDY

In the present study normative survey research method is adopted. It involves describing, recording, analyzing and interpreting the data which are all directed towards a better understanding of the educational problem and finding solutions for them.

LOCATION OF THE STUDY

The present study investigation is made in and around Villupuram, Villupuram Education District in Tamil Nadu State.

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

A research design is the arrangement of conditions for collection and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance of the research purpose with economic in procedure. As such the design includes an outline of what the researcher will do from writing the hypothesis and its operational implication to the final analysis of the data.

SAMPLE SIZE

A sample is a representative proportion selected for observation and analysis. From the total population the researcher has selected high school students (X Standard) from three schools. The researcher has selected 50 students from self financed schools (English medium), 50 students from CBSE Schools and 50 students from Govt. Schools (Tamil medium).

SAMPLE DISTRIBUTION OF STUDY

The Investigator has selected cluster sampling technique. He has selected 150 high school students of various schools in VILLUPURAM district. The sample study is "The Students at high school level". The investigator employed normative survey method.

SCHOOLS TAKEN FOR THE STUDY

1. Aditya' Vivekananda Matric Higher Secondary School- Villupuram, Tamilnadu.
2. Government Higher Secondary School- Ananthapuram (Villupuram Dist), Tamilnadu.
3. Nahar Public School (CBSE)- Villupuram, Tamilnadu.

DESCRIPTION OF THE TOOL

Tool – 1 Difficulty in Learning Concord, Conditionals and Reported Speech -the English Basic Grammars. The Questionnaire has been constructed by the researcher to assess the awareness about Difficulties in Basic English Grammar among X standard students. The same has been standardized after conducting the pilot study

GENERAL DATA SHEET

Here the students are required to give background details such as name of the student, name of the school, age, gender, medium of instruction, type of school, locality of school, type of family, parent's educational qualification, occupation and their monthly income.

SCORING KEY

The questionnaire was done by counting the responses given by the students that agree on the 2 point scale. Point Assigned

- For the Correct response --- 1
- Incorrect response ---0

COLLECTION OF DATA

The researcher in person administered the copies of the tools to collect the responses after obtaining necessary permission from the Head of the Institution. The respondents were given the instruction before they started filling the questionnaire. Thus the data were collected from 3 schools at Villupuram dist.,

ANALYSIS OF DIFFICULTIES

DIFFICULTIES OF ENTIRE SAMPLE IN LEARNING OF SUBJECT – VERB AGREEMENT, CONDITIONAL CLAUSE AND REPORTED SPEECH – THE BASIC ENGLISH GRAMMARS

The variables, number of cases, Mean and Standard Deviations of Students' Difficulties towards learning Concord, Conditionals and Reported Speech - the Basic English Grammars have been explained in detail.

The test - consists of 30 questions, from each topic 10 questions were framed and the marks were converted into 50 marks for calculating Mean and Standard Deviation. Each questions expressed weather the students have difficulties towards learning Concord, Conditionals and Reported Speech – the Basic English Grammars. It was distributed to the population to write their interest towards learning Basic English Grammar. It helped the researcher to identify the students' Difficulties through the way they attempted the questions and also the researcher enquired and discussed with the students regarding the Difficulties they faces while answering the questions.

A) GENDER

BOYS

The following marks are secured by the entire boys (75) from both Tamil and English medium students (Matriculation & CBSE). 26 Students scored marks between 1-10, 16 Students secured marks between 11-20, 10 Students scored marks between 21-30, 11 Students scored marks between 31-40 and only 12 Students scored marks between 41-50.

The Researcher identified the following status of the Students from the given entire boys. The Mean and Standard Deviation of the Difficulties towards learning basic Grammar of the entire sample is 13.20 and 1478. As Mean Deviation (MD) is the less then Standard Deviation (SD), It is concluded that High School Students have Difficulties in learning Concord, Conditionals and Reported Speech – the Basic English Grammars.

GIRLS

The following marks are secured by the entire girls (75) from both Tamil and English medium students (Matriculation & CBSE). 15 Students scored marks between 1-10, 13 Students secured marks between 11-20, 14 Students scored marks between 21-30, 17 Students scored marks between 31-40 and only 16 Students scored marks between 41-50.

The Researcher identified the following status of the Students from the given entire girls. The Mean and Standard Deviation of the Difficulties towards learning basic Grammar of the entire sample is 8.31 and 14.29. As Mean Deviation (MD) is the less then Standard Deviation (SD), It is concluded that High School Students have Difficulties in learning Concord, Conditionals and Reported Speech – the Basic English Grammars.

B) MEDIUM

TAMIL MEDIUM STUDENTS

The following marks are secured by the entire Tamil medium Students (50). 18 Students scored marks between 1-10, 10 Students secured marks between 11-20, 09 Students scored marks between 21-30, 07 Students scored marks between 31-40 and only 06 Students scored marks between 41-50.

The Researcher identified the following status of the Students from the given entire samples. The Mean and Standard Deviation of the Difficulties towards learning basic Grammar of the entire sample is 11.81 and 14.93. As Mean Deviation (MD) is the less then Standard Deviation (SD), It is concluded that High School Students have Difficulties in learning Concord, Conditionals and Reported Speech – the Basic English Grammars.

ENGLISH MEDIUM STUDENTS

The following marks are secured by the entire English medium (100). 23 Students scored marks between 1-10, 19 Students secured marks between 11-20, 15 Students scored marks between 21-30, 21 Students scored marks between 31-40 and only 22 Students scored marks between 41-50.

The Researcher identified the following status of the Students from the given entire samples. The Mean and Standard Deviation of the Difficulties towards learning basic Grammar of the entire sample is 13 and 14.83. As Mean Deviation (MD) is the less then Standard Deviation (SD), It is concluded that High School Students have Difficulties in learning Concord, Conditionals and Reported Speech – the Basic English Grammars.

C) ENGLISH MEDIUM

MATRICULATION (ENGLISH MEDIUM)

The following marks are secured by the entire Matriculation Students from English medium (50). 13 Students scored marks between 1-10, 10 Students secured marks between 11-20, 08 Students scored marks between 21-30, 10 Students scored marks between 31-40 and only 09 Students scored marks between 41-50.

The Researcher identified the following status of the Students from the given entire samples. The Mean and Standard Deviation of the Difficulties towards learning basic Grammar of the entire sample is 12.92 and 14.60. As Mean Deviation (MD) is the less then Standard Deviation (SD), It is concluded that High School Students have Difficulties in learning Concord, Conditionals and Reported Speech – the Basic English Grammars.

CBSE (ENGLISH MEDIUM)

The following marks are secured by the entire CBSE Students from English medium (50). 10 Students scored marks between 1-10, 09 Students secured marks between 11-20, 07 Students scored marks between 21-30, 11 Students scored marks between 31-40 and only 13 Students scored marks between 41-50.

The Researcher identified the following status of the Students from the given entire samples. The Mean and Standard Deviation of the Difficulties towards learning basic Grammar of the entire sample is 13.32 and 15.53. As Mean Deviation (MD) is the less then Standard Deviation (SD), It is concluded that High School Students have Difficulties in learning Concord, Conditionals and Reported Speech – the Basic English Grammars.

TESTING OF HYPOTHESIS

DIFFICULTIES TOWARDS LEARNING TENSE, SENTENCE PATTERN AND QUESTION TAGS – THE BASIC ENGLISH GRAMMARS.

- 1) There is no any significance difference between entire boys and girl
Since the 't' value (0.22) is lesser than the calculated value (2.576), we reject the null hypothesis. Therefore there is significance difference between boys and girls towards learning Concord, Conditionals and Reported Speech – the Basic English Grammars in Difficulties.
- 2) There is no any significance difference between Tamil Medium and English Medium.
Since the 't' value (0.74) is lesser than the calculated value (2.576), we reject the null hypothesis. Therefore there is significance difference between Tamil and English Medium boys and girls towards learning Concord, Conditionals and Reported Speech – the Basic English Grammars in Difficulties.
- 3) There is no any significance difference between English Medium Matriculation and CBSE Students
Since the 't' value (0.35) is lesser than the calculated value (2.660), we reject the null hypothesis. Therefore there is significance difference between English Medium (Matriculation and CBSE) towards learning Concord, Conditionals and Reported Speech – the Basic English Grammars in Difficulties.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The investigator has collected the necessary answers from questinarrie and noted the difficulties of the students from their individual written statements and oral discussion with the students directly. The analysis of the data has revealed the following findings.

1. The girls scored more marks than boys at three schools [Tamil medium and English medium (Matriculation & CBSE)].
2. The investigator found that the number of mistakes is committed by boys while finding and changing word forms. At three modes of Schools, the investigator could find very few students who were able give correct answers.
3. The Government School Students were not interested on listening the class comparing to English Medium and CBSE School Students.
4. Matriculation and CBSE School (English medium) Students were able to write the words and their forms but they were unable to use them in sentences in both spoken and written forms. It was due lack of knowledge in tenses.
5. They also were lacking in inter changing one form of a word into another form.

IN LEARNING SUBJECT-VERB AGREEMENT (CONCORD)

From the findings of the study, majority of the students have problems in applying the rules of cord. It could be inferred from the data analysis that the pupils made concord errors of different types and few of them were able to give error free answers.

i) Errors in Number and person

Most of the errors committed were under subject verb concord of number and person. The findings based on the test written by entire samples from Government, Matriculation and CBSE pupils revealed that all pupils committed the following errors: the use of subject- verb concord of number, subject- verb concord of person, pronoun - antecedent concord, concord involving indefinite pronouns, subject-complement concord, subject-object concord, subject- object concord, concord involving the use of auxiliaries and concord involving the use of past tense and infinitive.

ii) Errors in using Auxiliaries

With regard to the use of auxiliaries, all pupils had the tendency of either omitting or over generalising the rule in the use of auxiliaries. Concerning the tense formation the findings revealed that pupils were not sure about tense formation. This was seen when they mixed tenses in their tests.

iii) Problems in Subject-Object Complement

With regard to the subject- complement concord, subject- object concord and subject- object concord revealed that they had problems with the subject, object and the verb agreement.

iv) Errors due to Mother Tongue influence

Findings also revealed a lot of mother tongue interference. Some sentences showed direct translation from mother tongue. Again all pupils had a tendency of using the infinitives and the auxiliaries with the past tense. They again tended to use both the noun and the pronoun simultaneously.

v) Confusion with Collective Nouns

There is a certain type of noun such as 'staff' or 'family' which represents a group or collective, and these nouns can cause problems for learners of English when attempting agrees subjects with verbs. Ultimately, these collective nouns may be either singular or plural depending on what they're referring to (as well as the writer or speaker's intention). This is shown in the following examples:

Ex: one of the staff is absent today-----1

Staff needs to obey the rules-----2

In these examples, we can see that the first sentence uses the collective noun plural to indicate the members within the group, whereas in the second example that noun is singular to indicate the same group but as a collective.

vi) Confusion with verb and object in beginning of sentences with ' here and there' (Expletive Constructions)

The following two examples are expletive constructions, which are structures that begin with words such as 'there' or 'here'. Although 'there' and 'here' might look like the subjects of the clause because of their fronted position, they are in fact not:

Ex: There are few questions unanswered in the research-----1

Here is a suitable answer for this question. -----2

As can be seen in these examples, the subject of the clause follows the verb in these constructions. To determine agreement you must therefore first determine the correct subject before forming the agreement for person or number.

vii) Confusion with Intervening Words

Certain phrases such as 'together with', 'along with' and 'as well as' may be used to join two noun phrases together in what appears to be one subject:

Set-1

Ex: Either the students or teacher is willing -----1 (correct)

Either the students or teacher are willing-----2 (incorrect)

Set-2

Ex: Teacher with his students has presented the project. -----1(correct)

Teacher with his students have presented the project. ----2 (incorect)

viii) Confusion between subject-verb in using Numbers and Units

When writing or speaking about amounts of money, lengths of time, or distances as units, and when the main noun is preceded by a number, you should always use a singular form of the verb if you wish to maintain correct agreement. This is true even though the subject may appear to be plural:

IN LEARNING CONDITIONAL CLAUSE

We use a conditional sentence to say that one event depends on another event, i.e. that something can only happen if something else happens first. Conditionals sentences have two parts: the if-clause and the main clause. The main clause depends on the if-clause.

COMMON MISTAKES

i) Difficulties in the zero conditional

In the zero conditional, both clauses are in the present tense. A common mistake is to use 'will' in the main clause:

Ex: If people eat too much, they get fat. (Correct)

If people eat too much, they will get fat (incorrect)

ii) Difficulties in the first conditional

In the first conditional, we use the present simple in the if-clause and 'will' in the main clause. A very common error is to put 'will' in the if-clause:

Ex: If you study more, your English will get better. (Correct)

If you will study more, your English will get better. (incorrect)

iii) Difficulties in the second conditional

This is used for hypothetical or improbable situations. We use the past simple in the if-clause and 'would' in the main clause. Learners often make the mistake of putting 'would' in the if-clause*. In fact, this is one of the most common grammatical mistakes made by non-native speakers.:

SET-1

Ex: If you studied more, your English would get better. (Correct)

If you would study more, your English would get better. (Incorrect)

SET-2

Ex: If I had more time, I would take up golf. (Correct)

I would have more time, I would take up golf. (Incorrect)

iv) Difficulties in the third conditional

This is the most difficult conditional to master, probably as there are more auxiliary verbs to remember and the structure is therefore quite long. Again, 'would' should not be used in the if-clause:

Ex: If you had studied more, your English would have improved.

If you would have studied more, your English would have improved.

Another thing worth mentioning about the third conditional is the number of times native English speakers make mistakes with its construction. These examples show us how some people incorrectly insert 'have' into the if-clause:

Ex: If I'd known earlier, I wouldn't have done it. ('d = had)

I'd have known earlier, I wouldn't have done it.

v) Difficulties in combining two independent Clauses using 'if'

The most common difficulties faced by the students is combining two independent sentences using 'if'.

Ex: He attended the interview. He did not get the job. (Given sentence)

If he attended the interview, he would get the job. (Incorrect)

If he had not attended the interview, he would have gotten the job. (Correct)

IN LEARNING DIRECT AND INDIRECT SPEECH

In English sentence structure, revealed discourse is one of numerous syntactic classes which is imperative to be educated by understudies. It is should have been scholarly on the grounds that it is one of three different ways for understudies to report or offer their announcements or musings to others particularly when they convey between one another.

Announced discourse is regularly used to report what others have said or thought without revealing the specific word. With aberrant revealed discourse, one wishes to report the substance of the first source without fundamentally rehashing sentences precisely as they were initially articulated.

To report individuals word's, considerations, and convictions there are two primary ways: immediate and aberrant discourse. Announced discourse is likewise utilized when individuals are intrigued not in the words that somebody has picked, yet in the fundamental data they passed on.

Announced discourse is found in paper reports, fiction, talking or expounding on discussion, reports, articles or addresses people groups have heard or perused. By learning revealed discourse certainly understudies will be ready to cite someone's words or musings, regardless of whether in immediate or aberrant discourse and furthermore the understudies will learn and comprehend the best approach to report talks, for example, explanations, questions and orders.

There are numerous troubles will be looked by understudies when they learn language structure. As the essayist found in his examination, there are numerous understudies despite everything experience issues in learning revealed discourse. The students often do mistake when they quote the direct into indirect form.

i) Some students still confuse with certain grammatical changes that have to be made by them.

ii) Sometimes they feel so hard to decide what kind of tenses and pronoun that should be used when they quote the word.

- iii) Many students confused between simple past tense and present perfect tense because both are changed in same tense in Indirect Speech.
- iv) Few of the students do make errors in changing the reported speech in Conversation form.
- v) The students do face difficulties in using the proper reporting verb and suitable conjunction.
- vi) They too have difficulties in words changes.

Ex:

DIRECT SPEECH	INDIRECT SPEECH
Now	Then
Yesterday	The previous day
Can	Could

- viii) The same difficulties are faced by the students while interchanging the Indirect Speech into Direct Speech.

SUGGESTIONS

The accompanying proposal can be utilized to correct the challenges looked by the understudies in showing grammatical features.

- The understudies ought to be shown the essential valuable words from the outset.
- They ought to be gifted with the confining sentences (is, am are for current state and was and were for past tense) as per subjects.
- Teachers need to pay more fixation on the understudies in recognizing distinctive word structures.
- They ought to be clarified that action words and Adjectives have unpredictable action word structures and a similar word type of a Noun can be utilized both in Nominative case (Subject of a sentence) and Accusative case (Object of a sentence).
- They additionally ought to be supported and spurred with employments of various types of words in surrounding sentences so the understudies will show their enthusiasm for learning.
- The educators should utilize the circumstance word shapes on the spot. This will assist the understudies with learning with utilization.

RECOMMENTATIONS AND SUGGESTION FOR FURTHER STUDY

- ❖ This study can be led to the understudies of higher auxiliary classes
- ❖ The same examination can be directed for a wide range of Grammar subjects.
- ❖ The same examination can be directed in different conditions of India
- ❖ This study can be additionally led for different subjects
- ❖ The same investigation can be led in the Arts and Science school of first year understudies
- ❖ This study can be additionally led in the Teacher Training Institutions.
- ❖ This concentrate additionally can be utilized for testing the Teachers' enthusiasm on Grammar and their degree of Grammar Knowledge.

CONCLUSION

The study has brought out the importance of the learning English Basic Grammar among the High School students. It has highlighted that low attitude towards learning English Basic Grammar among high school students especially in learning Concord, Conditionals and Reported Speech – the Basic English Grammars. It is due to the fact that the pupils do not know the importance of English language and the importance of the hidden values in learning Basic English Grammar. It is the duty of the teachers and parents to help the students to develop Basic English Grammar

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