

## **The Efficiency of Audio - Cassettes in Developing The English Pronunciation of Socially Handicapped Women – Slow Learners**

**\*P. Krishnamoorthy**

\*Asst. Professor, RDB College of Education, Papanasam – 614205 Thanjavur District

### **Abstract**

The present study aims to find out the effectiveness of audio-cassettes in developing the English pronunciation of socially handicapped women – slow learners and to find out whether there are significant differences in the pronunciation of English among the above slow learners with reference to their categories-orphans, deserted and destitute women. The cluster sampling technique was followed to select forty (40) socially handicapped women slow learners studying in Government Service Home in Thanjavur.

### **Statement of the Problem**

India is one of the emerging super powers in the world. But there are social evils and problems of unemployment. The women are the worst affected because of these problems. Some of them have become orphans, deserted and destitute women. The Government of Tamilnadu have started Service Homes to uplift the above oppressed women to fulfill their basic needs such as food, dress and secured shelter with formal education. The socially handicapped women belong to the various social categories-orphans, destitute widows, deserted wives, physically handicapped women and women under poverty line between the age group of 19 to 40 years old.

### **Objectives of the Study:**

1. To study the effectiveness audio-cassettes in developing the English Pronunciation of the socially handicapped women – the slow learners.
2. To find out whether there is any significant difference in the pronunciation of English after the exposure of audio-cassettes at the post test level with reference to the variable destitute widow's deserted wives, the orphan women and the destitute women, the physically handicapped and the orphans.
3. To find out whether there is any significant difference in the pronunciation of English at the post-test level with reference to the variable, the socially handicapped women with the children and without the children.

### **Hypothesis of the Study:**

1. There is no significant difference between the means scores of the pre-test and post-test of the socially handicapped women – the slow learners in English pronunciation, after the exposure of audio-cassettes.
2. There is no significant difference between the destitute widows and deserted wives, the orphan women and the women under poverty line, the physically handicapped and the orphan women, the socially handicapped women with children and the socially handicapped women without children in the pronunciation of English at the post-test level.
3. There is no significant relationship between the achievement of the women inmates in English pronunciation of words in isolation and that of in sentences, including the English sounds-vowels diphthongs and consonants in words and that of sentences.

**Method of Study:**

**1. Population of the Study**

The Higher Secondary Course inmates-the socially handicapped women with English as a second language at the first year level in Tamilnadu formed the universe of the present study.

**2. Sample of the Study**

The first year inmates of higher secondary course at Government Service Home, Thanjavur were taken as the sample.

**3. Sampling Technique**

The cluster technique was followed for the selection of the sample, for the present study. Forty socially handicapped women inmates of higher secondary course from different groups-destitute widows and deserted wives, orphans and the physically handicapped women, orphans and the destitute women (Women under below poverty line and secondary school 10<sup>th</sup> Standard as their basic educational qualification studying first year of the Government Service Home, Thanjavur formed the sample for the studying. All these inmates (students) have English as one of their compulsory subjects at HSC level and they have been studying English in part II of their higher secondary course.

The sample consists of destitute widows, deserted wives orphans, physically handicapped women and destitute (Women under poverty line), and their ages range from 19-40 years.

**4. Design of the Study**

**Experimental Design:**

As Best and Kahn (1992) pointed out, “Experimental Design is the Blueprint of the procedures that enable the researcher to test hypotheses by reaching valid conclusion about relationships between independent and dependent variables. Selection of a particular design is based upon the purpose of the Experiment, the type of variables to be manipulated and the conditions of limiting factors under which it is conducted.”

The Experimental design selected for the present study refers to “Before-and-after control design”. In this design a single group is selected and the dependent variable, that is, the proficiency of the higher secondary inmates in English pronunciation is measured before the production of treatment. Then the treatment is introduced and the dependent variable is measured again after the treatment.

“The effect of the treatment would be equal to the level of the phenomenon after the treatment minus the level of the phenomenon before treatment.”

**Before-and-after control design:**

X	Treatment	Y		Treatment	effect	
	Introduced		=	(Y)	-	(X)
				Before		After
				Treatment		Treatment

**6. Size of the sample:**

The first year women inmates Higher Secondary course Higher Secondary school, Thanjavur were taken as the sample. Forty inmates were taken for this experimental study.

## 7. De-Limitations of the study:

1. The present study is confined to the women inmates of Government Service Home, Thanjavur only.
2. Women students alone were studied.
3. The samples of the study consists of 40 women inmates only.
4. Audio – cassettes have been used for group instruction and not used as individualized instruction technique.
5. No supra – segmental features of the language is considered for the present study.

## Tools Selected for the Study:

1. Audio-cassettes on English Pronunciation lessons prepared by the Department of Phonetics, CIEFL, Hyderabad.
2. A list of 100 Words containing the 44 phonemes in different positions and ten sentences for the pre and post – test.
3. A questionnaire to collect information necessary for the study.

## Description of Tools

For each of the 24 consonant phonemes - / p,b,t,d,k,g,m,n,j,s,z,ʒ,t,f,h,dʒ, Ø, ð, l, r, f, v, j, and w/ the manner of articulation, the place of articulation and its classification as voiced or voiceless are explained, presenting them in words in all its positions. (Initial/medial/final). Brief pauses after sounds and words are given to enable the listener to imitate phonetic contrasts like /s/ and /z// /f/ and /v/ are given to discriminate the sounds in isolation and in words.

For each vowel /i:, ex, ^, a:, θ, u, u:, 3:, and or diphthong sounds/ ei, ai, ði, ðu, au, ið, eð and u / three words are pronounced in its different positions. Pauses between words facilitate repetition after the speaker.

Though the main focus is on words ten sentences containing phonemes were also included because the ultimate step in pronunciation practice is the use of sound feature in normal speech. According to Geoffrey, sounds in isolation “will not be the same as the characteristics they have in the context of neighboring sound and the overall structure of the utterance”. Hence the investigator has included also the sentences.

There were 100 words for the representation of 44 phonemes in the various positions like initial, medial and final were selected from the audio text and used for the present study. A word for each position of the 44 phonemes was selected.

A questionnaire was prepared to know the background information of the inmates-the slow learners.

The investigator introduced the lesson using audio-cassette at the first instance and the students were asked to repeat the same after the speaker in the record. During this process there was better performance than the expected. The entire class was lively with more attention and response from the students.

An achievement test was conducted. The Students were asked to read aloud the words. It was evaluated with utmost care and found that there was considerable development in the pronunciation of the trainees, in this method.

### **Reliability:**

The reliability co-efficient was estimated for the achievement test by split – half method was found to be 0.79 which shows that the achievement test was found to be highly reliable.

### **Validity:**

In this study, the test items used for the pre-test were selected from CIEFL texts entitled “Consonants” and “Vowels” and were got the opinion of several experts in the subject. This ensures content validity.

### **Procedure**

The test materials consist of all 44 phonemes in different positions of their occurrence like the initial medial and final. The words have been selected from CIEFL texts entitled ‘Consonants’ and ‘Vowels’. A total of 100 words have been chosen and these words are up to the level of the trainees and are used in our day today communication. They are mostly content words and they do not change their pronunciation in the sentence also. The study is mainly concerned with pronunciation of words in isolation; ten sentences were also given in the test item to see the efficacy of the trainees in articulating the same in contexts.

### **The Pre-Test:**

The Pre-test item consisted of 100 words and 10 sentences were read by the testes individually in the presence of the investigator alone, at moderate speed. The readings of the individuals were recorded, confidentially so as to enable the other testes not to aware of the items and not to get influence of others’ pronunciation.

### **The treatment:**

After the pre-test, the treatment in the form of audio lessons consisted of production an exercise was given to the inmates. They were divided into five groups in order to listen and repeat the audio lessons conveniently. They were supplied with cassette players and cassette containing the lessons on consonants, vowels and diphthongs. The audio lessons consisted of production exercises have pauses after each word that enabled the listeners the trainees to repeat the sounds word after word, followed the speaker. Precaution was taken up to ensure that every trainee received the audio lessons and the lessons were listened to and repeated individually and in groups. The imitation of each student was recorded to ensure that every trainee received the audio lessons and the lessons were listened to and repeated individually and in groups. The choice of freedom to play replay-record and play any number of times, was given. The imitation of each student was recorded to ensure their production with the speaker in the audio-lesson. The trainees thus got the feedback from self and peer group was obtained by every individual – thus the treatment was given to all the trainees for 20 hours including the time spent for recognition, reproduction and obtaining feedback. The above duration would be sufficient enough to test the development in their pronunciation.

### **The Post-Test:**

The socially handicapped women – the slow learners were administered a post-test at the end of twenty hours. The same test item used for the pre-test was administered for the post-test also. It was administered confidentially in a recording room to the individuals so as to make the other trainees not to aware of the test items until the moment they were called into read. Thus the readings of the individuals were recorded by the investigator personally. But this time the order or trainees was changed from the pre-test, to maintain the anominimity of the students. Both the order in the pre-test and post-test was maintained by the investigator. The subjects were finally administered a

questionnaire about their background data necessary for the study, and the same was collected.

### **Evaluation:**

The pre-test and post-test materials thus collected through recorded cassettes were given to a panel of three judges – a lecturer in English from Regional Institute of English, a professor of English Language teaching in a college of Education and the English language teacher from a higher secondary school, who were experts in the subjects. The judges were asked to score the inmates readings by marking words 'correct' or 'incorrect' against the items in the list, individually. This was done with the given sentences also. The efficacy of the pronunciation of the trainees was assessed to the maximum acceptability in their pronunciation. Thus the correct responses for each sound in different position in words and sentences were scored. The average correct response for each sound from the three judges was taken for calculation. Thus, the data collected were scored and analysed and the abstract is given in tables.

### **The Pilot Study**

The pilot study was conducted for ten students from a Government Service Home, Cuddalore.

### **Collection of Data for Final Study:**

Achievement Tests (pre-test, post-test) were administered to the socially handicapped women inmates. They were evaluated by a panel of three experts in the subject.

### **Statistical Techniques Employed:**

The 't' test was used to find out the significance between the means.

Karl Pearson's product Moment co-efficient of correlation (r) was calculated to know the relationship between the achievement of the women inmates-the slow learners in English pronunciation of words in isolation and in sentences.

To know the effectiveness of the method (audio-cassettes) followed, G-Ratio was calculated.

Effect size was calculated to compare the effectiveness of the method followed. Also retention scores of the inmates or the slow learners in English Pronunciation of words in isolation and in sentences were calculated to compare the retention power of pronunciation.

### **Analysis of Data**

The collected data for the final study was analyzed and tabulated with suitable statistical techniques.

### **The Findings of the Study:**

1. The post-test performance of the socially handicapped women-slow learners with reference to pronunciation is significantly higher after the exposure of audio-cassettes than their performance in the pre-test without the above strategy.

2. It is noted that the pronunciation lessons imparted by using audio-cassettes have benefited all irrespective of the social category they belong.

3. The achievement of the socially handicapped women differ significantly between the pre-test and post-test with reference to their pronunciation of English words in sentences. The analysis of sentences reveals a significant progress made by the trainees after the audio mode of instruction.

4. A positive relationship exists between the socially handicapped women's pronunciation of English words in isolation and in Sentences.

5. Out of the three categories of sounds, consonants were found to be easier for production than their vowels or diphthongs.

6. The obtained G-ratio is 0.5 and so the instructional strategy (Audio-Cassette method) adopted for this experimental study to be very effective.

7. The obtained Effect Size is 1.98. Therefore the instructional strategy adopted in the experimental study is found to be more effective.

#### **Educational Implications of the Study:**

1. The socially handicapped students the slow learners in schools may be taught through audio-Cassettes to impart correct pronunciation.

2. The teachers of service Home schools and orphanage schools may be given training in using audio-cassette effectively in the class rooms.

3. The English language teaching Resource persons may be directed to give effective training programmes to the teachers in audio – method once in three years.

4. The teachers of socially handicapped school or special school may be given training to produce audio – cassettes in teaching English, to suit their class rooms.

#### **Conclusion:**

In this area of science and technology, advancement in Educational technology should be brought into all the class rooms. In this context, the audio – cassettes lessons have significantly contributed in developing English pronunciation to the secondary grade teacher trainees, when it is carefully and effectively planned. Success of any technology though the improvement is proved, will depend on two major considerations: One is its economic viability and the other is popularity. No doubt the audio-cassettes enjoy the requisite popularity in Tamil Nadu, India and is cost effective too. It will be beneficial to all those who are involved in the system of education-the learners, the teachers and the educational institutions.

#### **References**

1. Adeyoyin, F. A. and Igbokwe K. O. (1978). Integrating marginally handicapped children into the regular classroom: A source book for teachers Lagos: Nigeria Educational Research Council.
2. Ashcroft S. C. (1976). NCEMMH: A network of media/material resources. Audiovisual Instruction 21(10), 46 and 47
3. Deshler. D. And Graham S. (1980). Tape recording educational materials for secondary handicapped students. Teaching Exceptional children 12, 52, 54.
4. Bansal, R.K. "The Role of phonetics in the Teaching of English in India: Studies in phonetics and spoken English," Monograph 10, Hyderabad: CIEFL, 1992 p.18.
5. Best and Khan, J.V. (1992) "Research in Education" (Sixth Edition), New Delhi, prentice Hall of India Limited.
6. Charles, D.I. (1981) Developing Language skills in Adults Attending English Improvement Classes. In M.B. Buch (Ed.) Third Survey of Research in Education. 1978-83 New Delhi: NCERT.