

WEIGHTAGE TO ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE GIVEN BY +2 STUDENTS

By

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ABSTRACT

The study focuses on the significance of the English language and the inevitability to have proficiency in English in order to bloom in the modern world. It analyses the weightage given by the +2 students to ESL. The objectives of the study were to find out the level of weightage to English subject given by the students; to find out whether there is any significant difference in weightage to English subject given by the students on with regard to the selected attributive variables such as sex, age, nature of the school, type of the school and location of the school. The methodology employed in gathering information was a survey method. Scale on Weightage to English Subject (SWES), prepared by the authors, consisting of 34 statements, was used as tool. The sample comprised 290 students covering 131 boys and 159 girls. The collected data were treated using Mean, Standard Deviation, Pearson product moment correlation, t test, Analysis of variance and Scheffe test. The result of this study indicated that the students gave moderate level of weightage to English subject. Comparing to boys, girl students gave more weightage to study English subject. The government school students gave more weightage compared to the aided school students. Educational implications to the findings are also portrayed.

Keywords: Weightage, +2 Students, ESL.

INTRODUCTION

Language is an extremely complex and abstract system that sharpens people's thoughts and guides and controls their entire activity. It plays a vital role in the development of mind, the processes of thinking and the growth of knowledge (Hans, 2008). It is the most valuable possession of man, species-specific and uniquely human traits that distinguishes him from other animals (Bolinger, 1968). English is an international language, spoken in many countries both as a native and as a second or foreign language (Sahu, 2011). English is being learnt and used all over the world not out of any imposition but through the realization that it has certain inherent advantages. Today the compulsions of learning English are no longer merely political but scientific and technological. It is the language required by the world for greater understanding, "it is the most international of languages" (Quirk, 1962). For interpersonal interaction and mutual enrichment, and in order to join the mainstream of national life, it is obligatory for every Indian to learn a language other than his own mother tongue, a language that is commonly shared by a majority of people. Today, no language other than English is

in a position to serve this purpose (Vargese, 2009).

English language has a significant continuing role in India. Durent (1987) has estimated that roughly one fifth of Indian newspapers and one third of all books published in India are in English. The most striking indication of the continuing role of English is the scale of its everyday use (Gupta, 2004). In educational institutions, it was not only a compulsory subject, but the medium of instruction as well. Even after Independence English remained an associate official language of the union. English cannot be really done away within the modern times. University Education Commission (1948) suggested English as the medium of instruction and teaching of English should be continued to high schools and universities. The Secondary Education Commission (1952-53) recommended compulsory teaching of English in the secondary school curriculum. The Central Advisory Board of Education (1956) included English in the three language formula and the Education Commission (1964-66) in its modified version of the formula. The National Policy of Education (1986) and its revised versions (1990, 1992) have emphasized the need for an effective instruction in the language (Gupta, 2010).

Learning the mother tongue is a spontaneous flow of any human being. In the case of learning a second language, there is hardly any natural and biological need as the one for learning the mother tongue. The learner has to make conscious effort to learn it (Bose, 2007). Here the authors took up a study on examining the significant endeavor to learn ESL by the +2 students under four dimensions such as time, involvement, interest and importance.

The reviewed studies indicate that boys and girls differed significantly in respect of their interest in English (Sankarappan, 1992); Students studying in Arts and Science colleges were just average in their English language proficiency (Snekalatha, 2011); and Students from secondary schools had more favourable study habits than higher secondary school students (Kale, 2011).

Significance of the Study

English is a global language that serves as a common language for communication among various nations. In India, English is not merely a language, it means much more than that. It is a matter of great social status and recognition. People have the belief that if we like it or not a person speaking good English considered to be a scholarly person and on the contrary a person who does not speak English considered to be a lay man. Generally in India especially in Tamil Nadu, people consider an ordinary thought conveyed in English to be great where noble or supreme thought conveyed in their mother tongue to be inferior. Thus, the society gives a lot of weightage to English. In Indian education system, English as a second language (ESL) aims at improving the ability of the students to understand English and to write and speak English. English is the part of students' meaningful and successful existence in the world today. It plays a crucial role in improving the standard of the students in the society. It is observed that many students in schools do not give enough importance to ESL. Compared to science subjects like Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, etc., they give less importance to studying English subject. Because by scoring good marks in these science subjects, they could get admission for professional courses like Medical or Engineering. But they do not realise that the attitude of ignoring English subject at school will have serious consequences in their life. This

affects the students in a long run. The students are not aware of the fact that they are giving less importance to the subject English. They ignore the English subject unconsciously.

With all these factors in mind, the investigator analyses the weightage given to ESL at school level. Moreover the investigator tries to create awareness among the teachers, parents and students about the fact that they are ignoring the English subject unconsciously. The investigator wants the teacher, parents and students to give enough importance to the ESL, so that the students have a prosperous life and hence this piece of research work emerged out.

Objectives

The objectives of the present study are

- To find out the level of weightage to ESL given by +2 students.
- To find out the significant difference, if any, in weightage to ESL given by +2 students with regard to sex, age, nature of the school, type of the school and location of the school.

Method

The research aims at studying the level of weightage to ESL given by +2 students. Hence this study involved data collection through survey method.

Population and Sample

The population for the present study consisted of students studying in +2 in Tamil Nadu. The population was drawn from government, aided and private schools in Tirunelveli district. From the population, the investigator selected 290 students comprised of 131 boys and 159 girls from 12 schools as the representative sample. The investigator handled the stratified random sampling technique to select the sample for the investigation. The selected sample was from rural and urban areas of Tirunelveli district.

Tool Used

The authors constructed a questionnaire on weightage to ESL. After constructing the questionnaire, it was consulted with teacher educators and language experts for establishing content validity. Based on the suggestions of teacher educators and English language experts, few

items were modified to avoid ambiguity. Thus content validity was established. The preliminary draft was administered to 60 students parallel to the proposed sample from both rural and urban areas in Tirunelveli district. The collected responses were scored with the help of the scoring key. For item whole analysis, the total scores obtained by each student were correlated with the total score for each item. The correlation was calculated using the Pearson's product moment correlation formula. The items with validity indices of 0.26 and more than that were selected for the final draft of SeWi's Scale on Weightage to English as a Second Language.

Statistics Employed

In the present study, the collected data were treated using Mean, Standard Deviation, Pearson product moment correlation, t test, Analysis of variance and Scheffe test.

Data Analysis

The analysed data are tabulated in three Tables. Table 1 deals with the level of weightage given by +2 students on ESL with regard to background variables, Table 2 deals with the t Test analysis and Table 3 deals with the F Test analysis to find out the significant difference in weightage to ESL given by +2 students.

In Table 2, since for the dimensions 'Time', 'Involvement', 'Interest' and 'Importance' there is significant result in ANOVA test, Scheffe test is attempted and the results are tabulated in the Tables 3 (a, b, c) 4 (a, b), 5 (a, b, c).

Variable		Level of Weightage					
		Low		Average		High	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
Sex	Male	16	12.2	96	73.3	19	14.5
	Female	24	15.1	103	64.8	32	20.1
Location of the School	Rural	14	9.7	109	75.7	21	14.6
	Urban	20	13.7	103	70.5	23	15.8
	Below 17	10	19.6	31	60.8	10	19.6
Age	17	20	11.5	122	70.1	32	18.4
	Above 17	11	16.9	45	69.2	9	13.8
	Boys	6	12.5	32	66.7	10	20.8
Nature of the School	Girls	7	14.0	35	70.0	8	16.0
	C-education	22	11.5	138	71.9	32	16.7
Type of the	Government	14	13.0	75	69.4	19	17.6
	Aided	9	9.5	70	73.7	16	16.8
	Private	12	13.8	61	70.1	14	16.1

Table 1. Level of Weightage given by +2 Students on ESL

Dimension	Sex	N	Mean	SD	t Value	P Value
Time	Male	131	19.88	4.708	3.746	.000**
	Female	159	21.81	3.895		
Involvement	Male	131	25.12	5.063	1.823	.063
	Female	159	26.11	3.910		
Interest	Male	131	30.10	5.684	2.407	.014*
	Female	159	31.52	4.042		
Importance	Male	131	21.53	4.004	2.096	.032*
	Female	159	22.42	3.082		

**Significant at 0.01 level*Significant at 0.05 level

Table 2. Difference in the Dimension of Weightage to ESL given by +2 Students with Regard to Sex

Dimension	Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	Mean of Squares	F Value	P Value
Time	Between	83.369	41.684	2.190	.114
	Within	5462.386	19.033		
Involvement	Between	81.349	40.674	2.035	.133
	Within	5735.534	19.984		
Interest	Between	195.967	97.984	4.178	.016*
	Within	6730.809	23.452		
Importance	Between	132.003	66.001	5.395	.005**
	Within	3510.911	12.233		

**Significant at 0.01level*Significant at 0.05level

Table 3 (a). Difference in the Dimensions of Weightage to English As a Second Language given by +2 Students with Regard to Age

	Age in Years			Mean Difference	C.I Value	Result at 5% Level
	Above 17	17	Below 17			
29.35	31.36	-	2.01	1.72	NS	
-	31.36	31.20	.16	1.89	S	
29.35	-	31.20	1.85	2.22	S	

Table 3 (b). Scheffe Test for the Dimension 'Interest' with Regard to Age

	Age in Years			Mean Difference	C.I Value	Result at 5% Level
	Above 17	17	Below 17			
20.77	22.33	-	1.56	1.25	NS	
-	22.33	22.53	.20	1.36	S	
20.77	-	22.53	1.76	1.60	S	

Table 3 (b). Scheffe Test for the Dimension 'Importance' with Regard to Age

Dimension	Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	Mean of Squares	F Value	P Value
Time	Between	165.039	82.520	4.401	.013*
	Within	5380.716	18.748		
Involvement	Between	52.174	26.087	1.299	.274
	Within	5764.709	20.086		
Interest	Between	137.236	68.618	2.901	.057
	Within	6789.540	23.657		
Importance	Between	12.978	6.489	.513	.599
	Within	3629.936	12.648		

*Significant at 0.05 level

Table 4 (a). Difference in the Dimension of Weightage to English As a Second Language given by +2 Students with Regard to Nature of the School

Results

It is inferred from the Table 1 that more than two third of the +2 students gave moderate level of weightage to ESL with regard to sex, age, nature of the school, type of the school and location of the school.

Nature of the School			Mean Difference	C.I. Value	Result at 5% Level
Boys	Girls	Co-education			
20.90	22.56	-	1.66	2.14	S
-	22.56	20.52	2.04	1.68	NS
20.90	-	20.52	.38	1.71	S

** Significant at 0.01 level * Significant at 0.05 level

Table 4 (b) - Difference in the dimension 'Time' of Weightage to ESL given by +2 Students with regard to Nature of the School

Dimension	Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	Mean of Squares	'F' Value	P Value
Time	Between	261.350	130.675	7.097	.001**
	Within	5284.405	18.413		
Involvement	Between	204.225	102.112	5.221	.006*
	Within	5612.658	19.556		
Interest	Between	15.085	7.543	.313	.731
	Within	6911.691	24.083		
Importance	Between	7.084	3.542	.280	.756
	Within	3635.830	12.668		

Table 5 (a). Difference in Weightage to English As a second language given by +2 Students with regard to Type of the School

Type of the School			Mean Difference	C.I. Value	Result at 5% Level
Government	Aided	Private			
22.07	20.69	-	1.38	1.48	S
-	20.69	19.78	0.91	1.56	S
22.07	-	19.78	2.29	1.51	NS

Table 5 (b). Scheffe test for the dimension 'Time' with regard to Type of the School

Type of the School			Mean Difference	C.I. Value	Result at 5% Level
Government	Aided	Private			
25.16	25.06	-	0.10	1.52	S
-	25.06	26.94	1.88	1.61	NS
25.16	-	26.94	1.78	1.56	NS

Table 5 (c). Scheffe test for the dimension 'Involvement' with regard to Type of the School

There is no significant difference in involvement to study ESL with regard to sex. Female students allocated more time, showed more interest and gave more importance to study ESL than male students.

No significant difference is found in allocating 'Time' and 'Involvement' to study ESL with regard to age. For the dimension 'Interest', there is significant difference between 17 & below and above 17 & below 17 years age group students in weightage to ESL. The 17 years of age group students gave more weightage to study ESL than the below 17 years of age groups students. Also below 17 years of age group students gave more weightage to study ESL than above 17 years of the age groups students. For the dimension 'Importance', there is significant difference between 17 & below 17 years age group students in weightage to English as a second language. The below 17

years of age groups students gave more weightage to study ESL than 17 years of age groups students.

There is no significant difference in showing 'Interest', giving 'Importance' and 'Involvement' to study English with regard to the nature of the school. For the dimension 'Time', there is significant difference between the students belonging to boys & girls and boys & co-education schools in weightage to ESL. The students belong to girls schools gave more weightage to study ESL than the students belong to boys schools. Also students belong to boys schools gave more weightage to study ESL than the students belong to co-education schools.

No significant difference exists in showing 'Interest' and giving 'Importance' to study ESL with regard to type of the school. For the dimension 'Time', there is significant difference between the students studying at Government & aided and aided & private schools in weightage to ESL. The students belong to Government schools gave more weightage to study ESL than the students belong to aided schools. Also students belong to aided schools gave more weightage to study ESL than the students belong to private schools. For the dimension 'Involvement', there is significant difference between the students studying at Government and aided schools in weightage to ESL. The students belong to Government schools gave more weightage to study ESL than the students belong to aided schools.

Discussion

It is the foremost responsibility of the government to give quality education to its citizens at an affordable cost. The government should shoulder the responsibility of giving standard education. The syllabi framed by the government board should focus on creativity and not on memorization and reproduction. The government should establish language laboratory and computer lab with internet access at public libraries and schools. It should conduct in-service trainings for the teachers of English on English Language Teaching (ELT), innovative approaches in teaching English, enhancing language competency and proficiency of teachers, etc. It may establish online journals exclusively for the publications of the articles for the school students. It should provide awards for the students who secure top ranks in English in classes X and XII examinations.

The management of the colleges should create a pleasant and conducive environment for the students to learn English. They should monitor whether the students attend the English classes properly. The administrators should make sure that the teachers of English handle the English classes. They should make sure that English classes are not handled by the teachers of other disciplines. They should check whether the teachers of English go to the classes regularly. They may provide English news papers and magazines regularly besides stocking the library with English books. They should try to maintain a good language laboratory with an able teacher in charge of it. Events such as English elocutions, debates, role play etc., may be conducted for the betterment of students. They may conduct aural and oral practices to improve the students writing and speaking ability in English. If they have the hostel facility, they have to provide healthy and conducive atmosphere to the students.

The teachers should create awareness by talking about the inevitable nature of English in the society. There should be an orientation for the students on the significance of learning English. Creativity should be given more importance. Students should not be encouraged to memorize and reproduce. They should be given an incentive to write their own essays. The teacher can award high marks for the students who write their own essays with their own words even if those essays have some mistakes. Mistakes are not to be mistaken in fact mistakes are stepping indications for the students' progress. So the teacher should make the students to create their own sentences, commit mistakes and learn from those mistakes. Practice makes a man perfect. Both writing and speaking practice should be given more importance. The teachers' primary role should be motivating and encouraging the students to learn English. The students should be made confident that they can learn and communicate in English. It is the teachers' responsibility to eradicate the inhibition from the minds of the students. The teacher should make the classes interactive and language classes should not be one-way traffic. English teacher should see to that students do not skip English classes. The teacher can make the students attentive in the classes. The Teacher should make sure that the students learn the English as a second language with

involvement and interest. They should provide a congenial environment for the students to learn the English.

Parents should serve as a motivating factor for their children to learn English. Initially they should realise the dire need of English to succeed in the present era and they have to shape their children accordingly. They should make sure that their children allot ample time at home to learn English. They should create a conducive environment for their children to learn English at home. By providing them English newspapers every day, making them watch English channels etc, parents can stimulate their children to taste the English language. The parents have to be aware that their children do not ignore English subject in any aspect.

Students must realize the significance of the English language in their life. They should be live wires in the English classes. They should be highly interactive and must have the curiosity to learn English. They should learn English with involvement and interest. They should allot time to read English newspapers, magazines, books, witness English movies especially the ones which have subtitles and hear news broadcasts. They should have the mind set to learn English. Besides they should not have any inhibition in their mind because half the battle is won in the mind. They should think, "I can speak and write good English". They should make use of the opportunities and resources available. They should not study the English subject in the examination point of view alone. They have to learn it as a language which would help them tremendously in the long run.

Conclusion

The research was started based on the investigators' curiosity to find out the language problems of the students at the college level. The roots for this problem lie not in the college but somewhere else. The researchers have felt that the students have been lethargic in their approach towards English at the school level. This has eventually caused a lack of language proficiency. The researchers have also felt that the students have not studied enough to improve their language competency which has affected their performance tremendously. It was found that the students at +2 level gave moderate level of importance to ESL. Besides comparing to boys, girl students gave more

weightage to study English subject. Therefore students should be made to concentrate on English with some seriousness so that their communication skill, both speaking and writing, improves which in turn will brighten their future.

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