



Role of Singing in Strengthening Pronunciation

Ms. P. KavithaPriya

Assistant Professor, Department of English, ThassimBeevi Abdul Kader College for Women,
Kilakarai, Ramanathapuram, Tamil Nadu
Corresponding Author: Ms. P. KavithaPriya

Received 13 December, 2018; Accepted 31 December, 2018 © The author(s) 2018. Published with open access at www.questjournals.org

Abstract: Learning is universal. It starts to everyone at the very beginning of their birth. Every human being must learn something for their survival. It is essential for everyone, they would learn through experience. Learning is continuous; it is a perpetual activity that takes place from 'womb' to 'tomb'. Learning is multiple and integrative. For purposes of research, psychologists often try to distinguish different kinds of learning such as verbal learning, perceptual learning, motor learning, conceptual learning, problem-solving and emotional learning; but these distinctions, though useful, are artificial (Nagarajan 311).

In the kindergarten level onwards the learning invokes the child's behaviour like singing rhymes, alphabets and numberings. According to Thompson and Wyatt say, "It is necessary that the Indian people should not only understand English when spoken or written, but also that they should be able to speak and write it" (Sundaram 18).

Every language is by means of Communication. It helps the people to express their thoughts and feelings. There are many important information is conveyed through speech. Communication is meant to be a two-way process; it includes both a speaker and listeners. When a speaker and a listener know the same language, then information can be passed between each another. A person has something in mind to communicate with other, it is possible if he knows the language and the receiver must understand it clearly and give the feedback.

The language plays an important role in the speaker's mental, emotional, and social-cultural development. It strengthens the understanding of one's own language and culture and helps to differentiate with others. It is primarily spoken, not written. It is evolutionary, not static. It is a distinguished characteristic of man, compared to the animals and other species. "Professor Lloyd James assures us that many animals have all the necessary speech organs, at least in embryo and that haven't shown any aptitude to use them in the same way that primitive man did, they would probably had developed in a similar direction" (Wood 4). The complete development of one's mind and personality forms a development of speech; it happens only for human beings not any other creatures. Language becomes the means of developing creative thinking. It creates various opportunities for a better living.

When a student learns a language, there are four skills are involved in communication. Students learn through their native tongue, first they listen, then to speak, then to read, and finally to write. These are called the four "language skills". These skills are not independent rather it is inter-connected. For example while delivering a lecture, a speaker speaks about one's concept, a listener listens and unconsciously the students would take notes through writing and the speaker asks the student to read what they have written. A good conversation involves active listening. This four language skills have to be mastered through constant practice.

Listening and Reading skills are called passive or receptive skills whereas Speaking and Writing skills are called active or productive skills. These four skills are like a four wheels of language. These skills are important in every man's lives.

These four skills such as LSRW skills are the basic characteristics to learn any language fluently. This project is focuses on both the Listening and Speaking skills, through practicing pronunciation with correct accent and stress. Listening is the fundamental skill of the four skills and it is a major skill of learning in the teaching and learning process. Students must listen properly and understand it clearly. This process makes rough draft in their mind of what speaker thinks and expresses. Listening means to pay attention to what somebody says. It is the basic learning process. It enhances one's own concentration and memory power. It is the speaker's duty to try to win and hold interest of the listener, as well as to understand what is said. This skill involves the phonemic components such as the use of vowel, consonant, stress, accent, pitch, pause, juncture, intonation, and the

rhythm of language. The students must listen carefully, so that they can retain the information for a long time. Good listening leads to good communication. The researcher tries to find out this through listening to the music. It improves one's IQ level. "A 2009 study by Joseph M. Piro and Camilo Ortiz published in the *psychology of Music journal* found that children who were exposed to music training performed better on vocabulary and reading comprehension tests than those who were not" (study.com, 2010). Listening to music improves attention, memory and strengthens the mental ability. Music stimulates the brain to function in an efficient way.

Speaking is the vital skill of any language which is the major tool of communication. Speech comes first and the letters will be introduced next only after pupils know come across the correct pronunciation of the new learning items. The fluency of language can be done by a proper oral practice. These skills encourage students to use a language they know and allow them to speak. The Speaking skills would get successful when the speaker speaks in a correct way of sounds and pronunciation. The origin of all natural languages is in speech. Speaking achieves a quickest communication. The speech habits reflect the changes in a language more than a writing does and this is as though living and evolving, it is the most dynamic element of society. The speaker must be capable of clarity of delivering words accurately. "Oral work is the basis of good learning of the language. In fact, this strengthens the foundation of language learning. A students of language who is good in oral work, is automatically good in reading and writing of the language" (Sundaram 371).

The researcher finds out that through music, the students can improve their speaking skill. The characteristics of music are rhythm, pitch and melody. Students must listen to songs or their own subject related songs, which help them to memorise the words from the song. Through this practise students learn how to pronounce the word like the native speaker of English.

The origin of language is started by imitating sounds. The imitating sounds are called Onomatopoeia. Onomatopoeia is a word or a group of words that imitates the natural sounds. For example; cuckoo, boom, hiss, buzz, click, bang, snap, whisper, fizz, tap, beep, etc. "This holds that the earliest speech was produced by man's attempting to imitate some characteristic sound of the creature or the object to which he was referring" (Wood 5). A child looks an animal named dog. The dog barks at the child like a "bow-wow", immediately the child learns the sound that makes by the dog. Later on whenever, the child sees the dog, the child imitates the sound make by the dog "bow-wow". The language is made through this imitating method. Every child naturally imitates what it hears and listens. When this imitation becomes successful, the child moves to associative with its social, political background. It starts to recognise the sound of all rhythmical movement of breeze of wind, rain, sea chant and so on.

The child moves to the next stage called "Gesture theory". "The gesture theory is advanced by Wilhelm Wundt and later re-stated by Sir Richard Paget in his book *Human Speech*, which we may call the 'gesture' theory" (Wood 7).

This dissertation shows, students can enrich their pronunciation through singing. Language and Music are correlated. Music is unique in each person's life. Both the music and language can attain by a natural ability. For singers music is their life and passion to them. The music ability will be related to the teaching of pronunciation. "Music is creative play with sound and that depending on how one listens, the same stimuli can be perceived as language or music" (Brandt 3). Music enables learners to be free from pressure and stress.

Vocal cords are one of the important parts that help to pronounce the sounds and to sing a song. It is a tool for the proper pronunciation channel. Basically, Singers have good vocal cords by training and through their practice by singing. They have a good pronunciation where as other people will have some imbalance in their stress and accent in pronunciation. The vocal cords must be trained properly. According to Drawin (1871), "Musical sounds afforded one of the bases for the development of language" (Finch 31).

After the birth of a child, a mother sings a lullaby. At the very first stage the practice starts from music. Infants recognize the melody of a song but not recognise words, they recognise sounds first. Music can soothe and stimulus infants. In the kindergarten level a teacher teaches the rhymes through singing. The students enjoy singing rhymes. The singing helps students to memorise easily and it can be registered as permanent in their mind. The singing also improves their rhythm, accent, stress and intonation.

A teacher teaches the speech of sounds to a student for a better pronunciation. This paper focuses on a phonetics and the breath of vocal cords. The speeches of sounds are the basis tool for a proper communication. This teaching explains primary level to higher level. This paper is being carried out by choosing group of students from "Seethalakshmi Ramaswami College", in Trichy. Initially, researcher tests the pronunciation skill of students, by giving some words and asks them to pronounce it correctly. Then the researcher teaches all the sounds and dictates the correct phonetic transcription to the English Department students. At last the researcher get a finding report by conducting post-test in phonetic transcription and records their voice in order to check their pronunciation level. The speech of sounds must enrich the student's pronunciation level. The researcher checks the Music Department through their singing performances and their English

pronunciation level. The singing groups have better vocal cords than English Department students. Thus, the researcher proves that the practice of singing strengthen a better pronunciation.

Key Words: *Listening, Speaking, Phonetic, Bow-wow and Gesture theory.*

Role of Singing in Strengthening Pronunciation

Language is the instrument which plays effective role in communication. It serves as an instrument of social control. It helps students for retention, recall as well as recognition of information. It gives permanence to concepts and ideas. The teacher finds difficult while teaching pronunciation to the students. Teaching the art of pronunciation is the fundamental for listening and speaking skills. According to Quirk, "Indeed, a pronunciation within this range has great prestige throughout the words, and for English taught as a foreign language it is more usually the ideal than any other pronunciation" (Verghese 66). If student's pronunciation is good that means everyone's attention will be turned towards them.

The teacher's knowledge of phonology should not be confined to English phonology alone; it should extend to that of the student's mother tongue too. If he is capable of listing the phonemes of English and comparing them with those of listing the phonemes of English and comparing them with those of his student's first language (or mother tongue), then he will be able to do a lot of remedial work by trying to undo old habits.

(Verghese 67)

There are two methods which play a vital role in acquiring language. The Alphabetic Method is the Traditional Method. The letters are taught by names in the alphabetical order. After that words are built by putting the letters together. For example, the word 'chair' is taught by asking the children to spell and letter. This method is basically helpful for learning in spelling of words. On the other hand, this method fails in teaching a proper pronunciation; for example, the word 'honour' the 'h' that is silent may be pronounced by the child. The children are learnt in this method may lack in communication. Next method is Phonetic method.

It is derived from the Greek word "phone" means sound or voice. Phonetics is the study of sounds (voice). It is concerned with the actual properties of speech sounds (phones) as well as those of non-speech sounds, and their production, audition and perception, as opposed to phonology, which operates at the level of sound systems and abstract sound units (such as phonemes and distinctive features). (Keener 1)

The 44 English phonetic sounds are represented by the 26 letters of the alphabet individually and in combination. Phonics instruction involves teaching the relationship between sounds and the letters used to represent them. There are hundreds of spelling alternatives that can be used to represent the 44 English sounds. Only the most common sound / letter relationships need to be taught explicitly. The 44 English sounds can be divided into two major categories – consonants and vowels. A consonant sound is one in which the air flow is cut off, either partially or completely, when the sound is produced. In contrast, a vowel sound is one in which the air flow is unobstructed when the sound is made. The vowel sounds are the music, or movement, of people language.

Vowels sounds are formed by the motion of air through the mouth, throat or nose. During the production of a chest pulse, the air stream from the lungs has a free and unrestricted passage at a particular part of the syllable.

The word Vowel comes from the Latin word 'vocalis', meaning 'uttering voice' or 'speaking'. According to O'Connor, "Vowels are made by voiced air passing through different mouth shapes, the differences in the shape of the mouth are caused by differential positions of the tongue and the lips". (Keener 57)

Vowels form the nucleus of syllables. They differ according to the position of the tongue and lips: high, mid, or low tongue; front or back of the tongue; rounded or unrounded lips. The vowels in English may be tense or lax. The vowels are slightly longer in duration than lax vowels. Vowels may also be stressed or unstressed. The vowels can be practiced with an open mouth and the tongue should not touch the teeth, top of the mouth. Vowels have less obstruction, are usually voiced, and are generally louder and longer-lasting than consonants. The technical use of these terms is much like the common usage; /p/, /b/, /t/, /d/, /k/, /g/, /f/, /v/, /s/, /z/, /r/, /l/, etc., are consonants; /a/, /e/, /o/, /u/, etc., are vowels. Semi vowels (such as /y/ and /w/) have some of the properties of both; they are voiced like vowels, but they are short and less syllabic like consonants.

The word consonant comes from Latin meaning "sounding with" or "sounding together". The idea being that consonants don't sound on their own, but only occur with a nearby vowels sounds. Consonants letters in the English alphabet are B, C, D, F, G, H, J, K, L, M, N, P, Q, R, S, T, V, W, X, Z, AND SOMETIMES Y- the letter Y stands for the consonant /j/ in 'yoke' but for the vowel /I/ in 'myth'. (Kerren 6)

The teacher should teach in an experimental way. The teacher asks every student to have two fingers on their Adam's apple and the teacher asked to say /sssszzzzssss.../. The students can able to feel a vibration under their fingers, during the /zzzz/ part only. That 'buzz' is voicing. Speech sounds can also be understood in terms

of their acoustic properties, i.e. properties of the sound waves. Sound waves are simply a wave of which distinguishes one sound from another. The process of articulation is done with the help of pulmonic egressive airstream mechanism, meaning that the source of the air to be used in speech is in the lungs and that the direction of the air flow is outward.

Speaking styles No one style is basic (from which others are derived), because all are stored in memory. Bidialectal speakers store two dialects, and all speakers control a range of speaking styles. Listeners may learn to recognize new varieties of speech—regional dialects, or computer-mangled synthesis—by storing exemplars of them. (Ladefoged 283)

Pennington states that, “a language learner needs to attend to not only the strictly mechanical articulation aspects of pronunciation, but also to the meaningful correlates of those articulation features in the immediate linguistic context of human communication” (Soundararaj 57). It is by mastering English prosodic features of stress, intonation and pause junctures, rather than its segment alone, that communication skills become effective.

According to the view of Daniel Jones, “The degree of force with which a speaker pronounces a sound or syllable is called stress” (Sundaram 25). A Stress is defined by phoneticians in two ways, biologically and functionally. According to the first aspect, stress is the pressure exerted by the air pushed out from the chest wall in order to articulate sounds in word. It may also be understood as the degree of loudness which makes some vowels more prominent than others in a word. Stress is the study of audio clarity. It contributes to the rhythm of speech, pitch contributes to its melody; and both are essential to speech. Pitch is the rate of vibration of vocal folds. The higher the vibration the higher is the pitch, the lower the vibration, the lower the pitch. When pitch fluctuation creates speech melody patterns that mark structures of sentences, the languages are called intonation languages; when such patterns are confined to words, they are called tone language. Static pitch is often called tone and variations of pitch are called intonation.

Tone may be illustrated by the discrete notes of music repeated by learners of music in order to practice the scale of notes, as in sa-re-ga-ma, etc. and intonation may be illustrated by the fluctuation of pitch from low to high tone and vice versa. The stress and intonation goes hand in hand for a correct pronunciation.

Music is another great skill of learning. Singers use their vocal cords as a biggest tool in their singing field. Music is an important element which gains the attention of the students easily. This helps students to acquire four skills easily, without any stress. It helps as positive learning state, energise the learning activities, increase in attention, then can memorised easily, and enhance the creative skills. This is an invaluable tool to develop students. When the teacher used the Audio method, automatically a stimulus creates in the student mind to listen the class and it creates enthusiasm to them. The teacher can help their students distinguish difficult sounds and improve their production. The language teacher must play the audio for teaching the grammar practice, listening comprehension, vocabulary enhancement and even it helps to take note in the writing skills. Through listening and singing to the song, the student can easily understand and it helps for the proper pronunciation.

The voice box also known as the larynx, it is the source for both singing and speaking. Singers create sound by using the abdominal and back muscles, lungs, the oral cavity, and more. The vocal cords are vocal folds are membranes that snap open and closed while singing, speaking, or making noises. As air pressure builds up against them, the folds snap together and a sound is created. When they are snapped gently, a soft sound is heard; when they snap forcefully, a loud sound is created. The quicker the cords open and close, the higher the resulting pitch will be. Every day the vocal cords would open and close 100 times per second during normal speech.

When one starts to sing, he/she begins by breathing. The muscles of the larynx bring the vocal cords together. They stay closed until enough breath (i.e., enough pressure) builds up and a burst of air escapes through the cords. As they run out of breath, the vocal cords are once again drawn together. The vocal cords do not work like a stringed instrument; they don't produce sound by vibrating against each other. Sound is actually produced by the pressure changes created when small jets of air pass through moving vocal cords. The breath control is the steam engine that makes the machinery of singing function.

The vocal cords are important for singing and speaking. The voice box rests in the neck and is made of four basic components: the skeleton, intrinsic muscles which move the vocal cords, among other things, extrinsic muscles which adjust the position of the larynx in the neck, and mucosa. The intrinsic muscles alter the position, shape, and tension of the vocal cords and can bring them close together, spread them apart, or stretch them in length. The tongue, palate, oral cavity, nasal cavity, sinus cavity, chest cavity, pharynx, and other anatomical structures act as resonators for singers; they are mostly responsible for vocal quality. The vocal cords themselves produce only a “buzzing” sound; the resonators are necessary to create music and speech.

The chest and lower body makes a low pitches and open sounds, like ‘ah’. The throat produces a mid-range and easy speaking tone. The mouth makes an upper mid-range and mid-vowels. The qualities of nasal are

closed, front vowels, especially when followed by a nasal consonant such as ‘n’ or ‘m’. The basic steps are same for learning music and practising a phonetic sound. In phonetics, formants are the distinguishing or meaningful resonant frequency components of human speech and of singing. They appear in spectrograms as peaks in the harmonic spectrum of the voice. The larynx is also where pitch and volume are manipulated. The strength of expiration from the lungs contributes to loudness, and is necessary for the vocal folds to produce speech. Learning to make an adjustment in their voice is a complex and slow process to get succeed.

This paper carried out with the English speaking students and singing group in SeethalakshmiRamaswami College, in Trichy. In each group there are 20 students are asked to attend the exam. The paper was based on speaking skills and to develop an accurate pronunciation by using a phonetic sound. During the time of the paper certain methods has bought some change among the students and improved their speaking capacity. At first the paper was based on pronouncing a phonetic sounds, initially they found this very difficult utter the sounds. The major problem while pronouncing the sounds is their modulation of their oral cavity. But by the help of audios and videos and by play-way method, they started too understood. A lot of emphasis should be given on pronunciation.

Before the practice of teaching the students have a diagnostic test. The main objective is to enable the students to analyse the sounds which help in their speech. This paper includes the responses of the students of SeethalakshmiRamaswamiCollege. This paper done in order to find out the pronunciation made by two group of students; students with have music knowledge and the students without music knowledge. A total number of 20 students are selected and tested and the responses are obtained

DIAGNOSTIC TEST

Students	Diagnostic Test marks (out of 20)	Percentage %
English group	8	40%
Music group	15	60%

Table 1: Diagnostic test marks for two groups

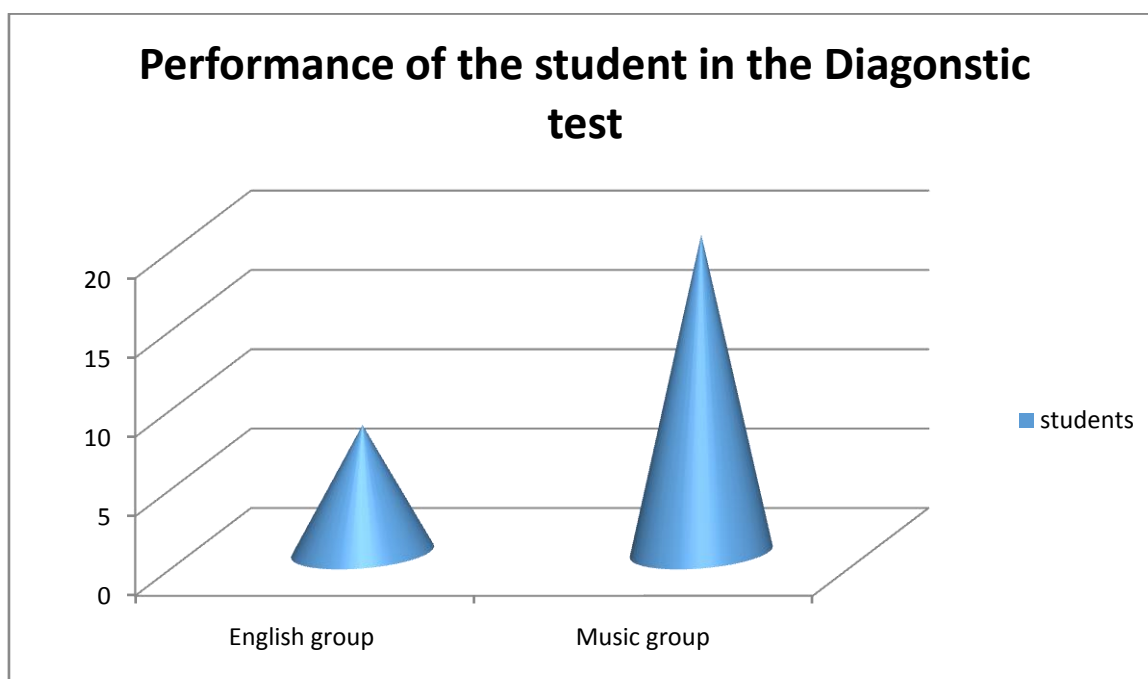


Figure 1: Performance of the student in the Diagnostic test

The responses get from the diagnostic test are very low when compared with singing students the English students are low. Because singing group they work to their vocal cords daily by singing, so their pronunciation is good, but English students are not using their vocal cords effectively. The practice is given to the English students.

Drilling and Tongue-twisters can be helpful to train the student’s pronunciation.

Give students time to practise a dialogue in which the target sounds are used many times. Get them to present the dialogue to the class, trying to be as fluent and clear as possible. After practicing all the methods the Achievement test are satisfactory. The test is conducted to know the progress of learning during this paper.

ACHIEVEMENT TEST

Students	Achievement test marks (out of 100)	Percentage%
English group	70	70%
Music group	90	90%

Table 2: Achievement test marks of two groups

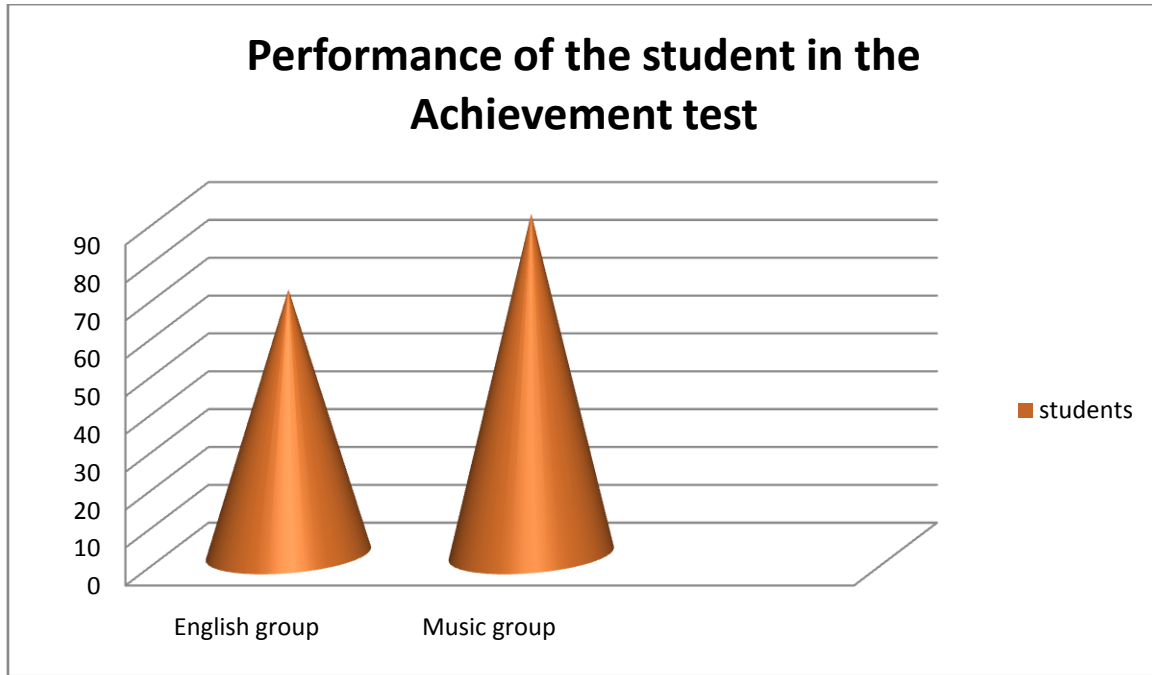


Figure 2: Performance of the student in the Achievement test

The final observation was made by the researcher, that singing-group have performed better than English-group students. Hence it is very well proved that a continuous practice makes learning better both in speech and singing. Totally the performance of the each group is increased by 20% of their pronouncing skills.

I. RESULT

Students	Diagnostic Test %	Achievement Test %
English group	40%	70%
Music group	65%	90%

Table 3: Difference between the two groups

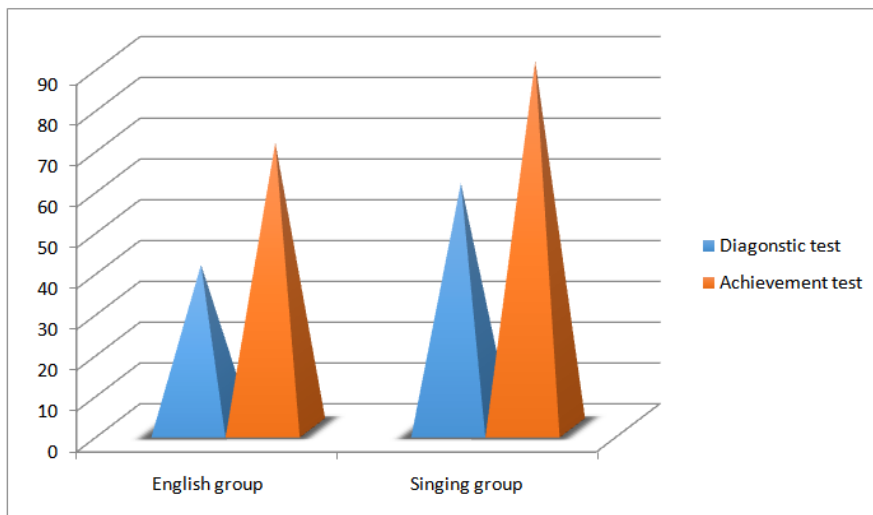


Figure 3: Diagrammatic representation of two groups

It is extremely important that teachers must drill the student's pronunciation of each sound they utter. They must give adequate oral practice inside the classroom. If each student involves in this phonetic method obviously they can shine in both singing and speaking. They can become a great singer and speaker through this method of learning.

Without a sufficient, threshold-level mastery of the English prosodic system, learners' intelligibility and listening comprehension will not advance, no matter how much effort is made drilling individual sounds. The highest priority must be given to rhythm and melody in whatever time is available for teaching pronunciation. The students should have an aware of how sounds are formed, how words are stressed and what intonation patterns exist. The teacher must imitate the student's sounds, so that they can learn their mistake and they try to modulate their sounds.

The student is asked to follow a speaking skills or any learning through singing, so that they can sustain in their mind permanently. The vocal cord plays an important role in speaking and singing. When someone speaks everyone must astonishes in their speech and when someone sings it entangles into the words of their singing in our mind. This is like a two heads of the same coin. It is an important tool that students must learn through music so that they can feel the pleasure of learning. It also increases the concentration power and listening skills. Thus, the students can acquire an increase their knowledge and develop their listening and speaking skills.

WORKS CITED

- [1]. Balasubramanian T. *A Textbook of English Phonetics for Indian Students*, Delhi: Macmillan Publishers India LTD, 2013. Print.
- [2]. Finch Geoffrey. *A New Introduction to Language and Communication*, United States of America: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013. Print.
- [3]. Keener S E. *Encyclopedia of Language, Linguistics and Phonetics*, Delhi: Alfa Publications, 2008. Print.
- [4]. Ladefoged, Peter. *A Course in Phonetics*, USA: Prepress PMG, 2011. Print.
- [5]. Meenakshisundaram A. *Innovations in the Teaching of English*, Dindigul: Kavyamala Publishers, 2013. Print.
- [6]. Music and the Brain: Listening to Music Could Help You Learn. 23 September 2010. Print. 9 March 2017.
- [7]. <<http://study.com/articles/Music-and-the-Brain-Listening-to-Music-Could-Help-You-Learn.html>>
- [8]. Nagarajan, K. *Psychology of Learning and Human Development*, Chennai: Sriram Publishers, 2014. Print.
- [9]. Nanda V K. *Teaching of English*, Bangalore: Anmol Publications PVT.LTD, 2008. Print.
- [10]. Soundararaj Francis. *Basic of Communication in English*, Delhi: Macmillan Publishers India LTD, 2012. Print.
- [11]. Verghese, Paul. *Teaching English as a second language*, New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Private Limited, 1995. Print.
- [12]. Wood T. Frederick. *An Outline History of the English Language*, Delhi: Macmillan Publishers India LTD, 1969. Print.

Annexure

Seethalakshmi Ramaswami Arts and Science College PHONETIC PRE-TEST

TOTAL MARKS: 20 MARKS

I. Transcribe the following words into phonetics: (10 x 1=10)

1. Cycle
2. Spoon
3. Bird
4. Ink
5. Sing
6. Market
7. Park
8. Car
9. Pleasure
10. Zoo

II. Transcribe the following proverbs into phonetics: (5 X 2 = 10)

1. All that glitters is not gold.
2. Look before you leap.
3. Health is wealth.

4. Knowledge is power.
5. Where there is a will, there is a way.

Ms. P. KavithaPriya. "Role of Singing in Strengthening Pronunciation." *Journal of Electronics and Communication Engineering Research*, vol. 04, no. 01, 2018, pp. 16-23.