HOMOPHONIC ERROR ANALYSIS: A STUDY OF ERRORS COMMITTED BY SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN SECOND LANGUAGE

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INTRODUCTION

India is country with diverse cultures, languages and communities and where several hundred mother tongues are used. English is one and only common language that is used and accepted by people from different background to exchange their ideas and thoughts. Today English is one of the important languages in Indian education system. English is an international language as well. For communication with other countries knowledge, English language is important. Without knowledge of English language we are not able to establish any kind of relationship with other nations because English is the only language through which we communicate with other nations. The government of India along with the state Governments has been introduce the English language from the grass root level for generating the awareness of the importance of English language in the national as well as international level. **Bruner and Kennedy (1966)** have described language as an 'Invitation to form a concept'. Language plays the principal directive factor in instigating, controlling and organizing behaviour. **Olson (1970)** studied language's pervasive effects upon memory. It facilitates recall through the use of labelling or rehearsal because of its effects on attention and through syntactic as well as semantic factors. **Ausbel and Sullivan (1970)** pointed out that the emergence of complex logical operations would be incomprehensible in the absence of language. They view that language is a necessary prerequisite for the original development of culture.

The National Curriculum Frame Work (2005) states – "Language also provides a bank of memories and symbols inherited from ones follow speakers and created in one's own life time.

At the secondary level language occupies a pivotal place in curriculum. Language is essentially a skill and the four basic skills of English language are Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing. These skills help an individual to comprehend and produce the language for effective communication. Sometimes, student consider English as hardest subject to learn and there are several factors behind this like lack of vocabulary power, fear and fobia of speaking English , students only receives knowledge from the teacher and they are not trying to explore the knowledge by themselves, no proper knowledge of rules and regulations of English language as it is the second language for Indian natives etc.

Homophone is one of the most confusing things in English language. Homophones are two or more words that are pronounced in a same way but differ in spelling as well as meaning. Example: Root and Route are homophonic words and the meanings of both words

are "origin" or "source" and "the way" respectively. Both these words are pronounced in the same way /ru:t/. Homophones mainly occur in English as there are several ways to spell the same sound. Example: The sound of /n/ can be spelled with the letter "N" like Night /nait/ and the letter combination KN like Knight /nait/, resulting in the homophones Night and Knight. The meaning of both the words Night and Knight is the time of darkness and a soldier in the past that had a high social rank respectively. Similarly the vowel diphthong /ei/ can be pronounced with the word Rain /rein/ as well as Reign /rein/ which resulted into homophones Rain and Reign. Both the words have different spelling as well as different meaning.

Homophone plays an important role in writing and correct use of it is necessary for conveying correct written information. If homophonic words written incorrectly, it may screwed up meaning, and may completely ruin the beauty of writing. Therefore, the knowledge of homophones is very essential for the second language learner. The Knowledge of homophones increases the vocabulary power of the students as well as the students gain confidence to write as well as speak in English. In present scenario it has been observed that students don't pronounce homophonic words correctly and create problem in writing in terms of spelling error as well as understanding the meaning of those words. One of the long standing issues in research on visual word recognition concerns the role of phonology.

RATIONALE

English is a second language or foreign language to the Indian students. So for understanding English language, learning is the important factor because this language is not acquired unintentionally. In Indian context, students face lots of problem in speaking, reading and writing English language because of inhibition of mother tongue. Fatima (2011) identified that the learners' sociolinguistic background plays a pivot role in determining their language quality and leaning efficiency. Mukaromah (2012) found that students sometimes commit spelling errors because of the interference of language 1 as well as incorrect pronunciation of words. It is seen that sometime students perceive English as the toughest subject and develop fear to speak or write. Therefore, besides mother tongue or regional language students need to be encouraged to listening, speaking, reading and writing in English language so that they become competent in English language and they are not afraid to speak or write in English. For acquiring the English language ability each and every factor is important like understanding the rules and regulations of grammar, phonetics, sounds, writing skills, meaning of words etc. are important.

National Policy on Education (1986) emphasise on three language formula where English language is compulsory subject in each and every school irrespective of any board at Secondary level. In India, English language is used as official language. So, knowing this language is very important. It is become evident that besides the rules of grammar, most of the time students are unaware about the spelling as well as the meaning of the words. Bancha (2013) noticed that the main cause of spelling errors of students due to the lack of morphological knowledge, limited knowledge of orthography or spelling. Kumar (2013) stated that students commit spelling errors due to several reasons like learners' inability to discriminate between sounds, wrong pronunciation, grapheme- phoneme mismatch, homophonous similar words and syllables, flawed deviation, incomprehensible spelling errors, incorrect word boundary. It is become evident that besides the rules of grammar, most of the time students are unaware about the spelling as well as the meaning of the words. The words which seem alike, they often confuse among those words and misinterpret. Homophones create ambiguity among the students as both the words have same pronunciation but spelling is different. While listening homophones students sometimes misinterpret between two words and causes errors in writing homophones. Error analysis

helps to identify causes of errors and types of errors. In this study the researcher try to analyse the errors in writing homophones so that we can find out the root cause of errors especially in homophones which creates the most confusion among students most of the time.

OBJECTIVES

1. To diagnose the errors made by secondary level students while writing homophonic sounds.
2. To analyze the errors made by secondary level students while writing homophonic sounds.
3. To find out the causes of error in homophonic sounds.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology of the present study is given below:

POPULATION

The population of the present study comprised of all the students of class IXth of CBSE Board schools Bilaspur City of Chhattisgarh state.

SAMPLE

For the present study five schools from Bilaspur city was selected randomly and all students studying in class IX was taken as sample. So, the total sample of the present study was 216 students (87 girls and 129boys.

Table 1: Sample of the Study

Name of the School	Number of Boys	Number of Girls	Total no. Of students
School 1	26	14	**40**
School 2	33	17	**50**
School 3	25	26	**51**
School 4	13	14	**27**
School 5	32	16	**48**
Grand Total	**129**	**87**	**216**

TOOLS

In the present study the researcher developed and used self made homophonic test and one questionnaire. The Two types of tools were:

a) A Homophonic test for students to test their knowledge about homophones. This test contained items related to identification of homophones, Identification of homophones with suitable meanings, writing alternative homophones, Frame sentence with homophones, rewrite the passage by substitute correct homophones.

b) The Questionnaire was for both students and teachers to find out the root cause of errors in homophones.

DATA ANALYSIS

The collected answer sheets and tests were evaluated. Data are analysed according to the dimension as there are five dimensions in this study like identification of homophones,

Identification of homophones with suitable meanings, writing alternative homophones, Frame sentence with homophones, rewrite the passage by substitute correct homophones. Boys and girls score were analyzed and interpreted through percentage. Students' responses were also analyzed and interpreted item wise to show in which items, students have mostly committed error. As the study was qualitative in nature, the data were analyzed by using content analysis, frequency counting, and percentage analysis.

FINDINGS

Findings Related to Identification of Correct Homophones

Table 2: Identification of Correct Homophones

Students	% of Correct Response	% of Incorrect Response	Average
Boys(129)	84.26	15.74	8.426
Girls(87)	83.1	16.9	8.31
Grand Total	83.68	16.32	8.37

Table 2 shows the percentage of correct and incorrect response given by the students in identification of correct homophones. In this test, students have to select a correct homophone which is suitable with the given sentence. From the above table it is clear that 84.26% of boys and 83.1% of girls make correct response in identifying the correct homophones whereas, 15.74% of boys and 16.9% of girls make incorrect response in identifying homophones. The average correct response was 83.68% and average incorrect response was 16.32%. Maximum students were able to identify correct homophones. Errors committed by the students were due to the lack of comprehending the meaning or due to the lack of lexical knowledge about homophones as well.

Findings Related to Identification of Homophones with suitable meanings in terms of puzzle

Table 3: Identification of correct homophones with suitable meanings in terms of puzzle

Students	% of correct response	% of incorrect response	Average Score
Boys (129)	88.32	11.7	12.36
Girls (87)	87.03	13	12.18
Average	87.67	12.3	12.3

Table 3 shows the percentage of correct and incorrect response given by the students in identification of homophones with suitable meanings in terms of puzzle. Among 129 boys and 87 girls, 88.32% of boys and 87.03% of girls make correct response in identifying homophones which is suitable according to the meaning given in the test, whereas 11.07% of boys and 13% of girls make incorrect response in identifying correct homophones with suitable meaning. The average correct response was 87.67% and average incorrect response was 12.3%. It shows that maximum students were able to make correct response or able to identify correct homophones. The responses may be incorrect due to the lack of comprehending the meaning or maybe they are not aware the denotation of those homophone words as they were not habituates to reading books, using dictionary.

Findings Related to Writing Alternative Homophones

Table 4: Identification of correct homophones with suitable meanings in terms of puzzle

Students	% of correct response	% of incorrect response	Average Test Score
Boys(129)	58.14	41.86	5.81
Girls(87)	66.20	33.80	6.62
Average	62.17	37.83	6.22

Table 4 shows the percentage of correct and incorrect response given by the students in writing alternative homophones. Out of 129 boys and 87 girls, 58.14% of boys and 41.86% of girls were able to write correct alternative homophones whereas, 66.20% of boys and 33.80% of girls were not able to write correct alternative homophones. The average correct response was 62.17% and average incorrect response was 37.83%. Maximum students were able to write alternative homophones of the given word. The ratio of the correct response of the girls was higher than the boys. Though many students identify the correct alternative homophone but they committed error in writing spelling because of they don't have the lexical skill and syntactic ability. Wrong pronunciation, lack of morphological knowledge leads to error in writing as they were hesitating to speak in English. Even in the school environment many students using their mother tongue instead of English language.

Findings Related to Frame Sentences with Homophones

Table 5: Frame Sentences with Homophones

Students	% of correct Response	% of incorrect response	Average
Boys(129)	48.84	51.16	4.88
Girls(87)	56.9	43.1	5.69
Average	52.87	47.13	5.29

Table 5 shows the percentage of correct and incorrect response given by the students in framing sentence with homophones. Out of 129 boys and 87 girls, 48.84% of boys and 51.16% of girls make correct response whereas, 56.9% of boys and 43.1% of girls were not able to frame the sentence with homophones. The average correct response of the students was 52.87% and average incorrect response was 47.13%. It shows that number of correct response of the girls was more than boys. Ratio of incorrect response is higher in this item with comparative to other items. Some students find out the alternative homophone of the given word but they were not able to frame the sentence because they don't have the semantic knowledge as well as syntactic knowledge as they afraid of speaking English.

Findings Related to Rewrite the Passage by Substituting Correct Homophones

Table 6: Rewrite the Passage by Substituting Correct Homophones

Students	% of correct response	% of Incorrect response	Total
Boys(129)	53.98	46.02	9.35
Girls(87)	52.04	47.96	5.72
Grand Total	53.01	46.99	7.54

Table 6 shows that among 129 boys and 87 girls, 53.98% of boys and 46.02% of girls make correct response in substituting the homophones given in the test whereas, 52.04% of boys and 47.96% of girls were not able make correct response. The average correct response of the students was 53.01% and average incorrect response was 46.99%. In this dimension the incorrect response of the girls were higher than the boys. The responses were incorrect due to lack of lexical knowledge. As most of the students don't have the habit of reading books and using dictionary; they are not able to find out the incorrect homophone words from the paragraph.

Findings Related to Causes of Error in Homophones by Students

- 86.82% of boys and 90.8% of girls loves to read books. Out of 86.82% of boys, 35.66% of boys loves to read Hindi books, 49.61% and 1.55% of boys love to read English and other language books respectively. Out of 90.8% of girls. 18.39% and 71.26% of girls loves to read Hindi and English books respectively. 1.15% of girls love to read other language books. 13.18% of boys and 9.19% of girls are not fond of reading books.

- 34.11% of boys regularly used dictionary and 62.02% of boys often used dictionary. Among these boys, 17.83% and 76.74% of boys used Hindi-English dictionary and English-Hindi dictionary respectively. 2% of boys used other language dictionary. 35.63% of girls regularly used dictionary and 58.62% of girls often used dictionary. Among these girls, 8.05% and 87.36% of girls used Hindi-English dictionary and English-Hindi dictionary respectively. 3.88% of boys and 5.75% of girls never used dictionary.

- 72.1% of boys used Hindi language at home and 1.55% of boys used English language at home. 26.36% of boys used mother tongue at home. 80.46% of girls used Hindi language at home and 19.54% of girls used mother tongue at home. None of the girl used English language at home.

- 56.69% of boys and 15.5% of boys talk in English and Hindi language at school respectively.1.55% of boys and 23.26% of boys used mother tongue and bi-lingual at school respectively. 80.46% of girls and 9.19% of girls talk in English and Hindi language at school respectively.1.15% and 9.19% of girls used mother tongue and bi-lingual at school respectively.

- 87.59% of boys love to watch movies. Out of 87.59% of boys 48.06% and 39.54% of boys love to watch Hollywood and Bollywood movies respectively. 93.1% of girls love to watch movies. Out of 93.1% of girls, 24.14% and 71.26% of girls love to watch Hollywood and Bollywood movies respectively.

- Out of 48.06% of boys who loves to watch Hollywood movies, 14.73% of boys are listening Hindi track and 33.33% of boys are listening English track. 31.78% of boys are using subtitle and 16.28% of boys are not using subtitle. Out of 24.14% of girls, 11.49% and 14.94% of girls are listening Hindi and English track respectively. 21.84% of girls are using subtitle and 4.59% of girls are not using subtitle. 12.40% of boys and 6.89% of girls are not fond of watching movies.

- There are several reasons for the errors in homophones which is occurred by the students can be analyzed from above analysis of data. As many of the students don't read English books, not speak in English regularly neither at school nor at home, not fond of watching Hollywood movies; they are not able to grow interest towards English language. Because of all these reasons, they are not able to comprehend the meaning, lack of lexical ability, semantic ability, incorrect pronunciation etc gradually develops fear among them and leads to error in writing.

Findings Related to Teachers Response towards Error Committed by Students

- The teachers were of the view that the students face problems in English are pronunciation, grammar, sentence formation, lexical ability etc.

- The teachers were of view that the students mostly commit error like grammatical and spelling specially adding and dropping vowels and consonants. These errors were observed by teachers while evaluating students answer sheets.

- The teachers were of view that they provides remedies to improve students speaking and vocabulary power by arranging special speaking classes, conversation, suggesting for reading newspaper, magazines etc.

Conclusion

English is an important language in present era for communication in national and international level. Written communication is important because sometimes face to face interaction is not possible. In written communication message should be clear that there should not be any ambiguity which creates confusion in the readers mind. So, in the field of school education, teachers should take care of written skill of the students besides other skills. From this study, it is found that students mostly committed errors in identifying the alternative homophones and framing the sentence by using homophones. Sometimes homophones create ambiguity among the students as both the words have same pronunciation. They misinterpret while writing homophones. Sometimes students memorize the word without knowing the meaning and they are not able to use that word appropriately while speaking or writing. The findings of Longphol (2013) reveals that influence of Language 1, incorrect pronunciation, orthographic encoding, syntactic ambiguity, lack of vocabulary power etc. are causes of error in writing hompphones. For effective communication, knowledge of vocabulary is an utmost important. And for increasing the lexical ability, they should have the habit of using the dictionary, reading English books or magazines, and trying to talk in English at home and school and with peer groups as well.

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