

A Study on the UG Students' Fluency in English in Pulivendula and Surrounding Regions, Kadapa District, Andhra Pradesh

Rev.Fr.T.Amala Arockia Raj,S,J. ¹, Rev. Fr.A. Antony Paul, S.J. ²,
B. Ramija. ³, S.Venkata Subbamma ^{4*}

¹Principal, Loyola Degree College (YSRR) Pulivendula, YSR-Kadapa

^{2,4}Dept of English, Loyola Degree College, Pulivendula. YSR-Kadapa

³Dept of Commerce, Loyola Degree College, Pulivendula. YSR-Kadapa, A.P

*corresponding author: ramanashobac@gmail.com

Abstract:

Fluency in English plays a vital role in student life. In the present global world, students should develop fluency to face the competition in job markets. English is a language of opportunities and it is connecting language in the world. In the present scenario English language connects people from various cultures, traditions, states and countries. Many countries have given global status to it by considering it as official language. Most of the students with excellent subject knowledge fail to secure a good position in life because of their inability to speak English. In small towns especially where the students are from rural upbringings face these problems. It is through good speaking skills students can present their ideas and opinions in a better way. Along with devoted efforts one should acquire fluency in English in order to reach their expected goals. As it is the common corporate language for many multinational corporations. Hence the English learning skills are emphasized globally.

The problem of English fluency becomes bigger and noticeable when students enter in the UG level. The present survey is an attempt to know the problems faced by the UG level students in speaking English. For this three UG colleges have been selected in Pulivendula region where students from more than 300 surrounding villages are studying. Among three colleges, a government degree college, an Aided degree college and a private degree college have been selected and a questionnaire is prepared to identify the factors that lead to poor efficiency in speaking English and also have given some suggestions and recommendations to overcome the problems in speaking skills.

Key Words: Fluency in English, Problems and UG level students

Aims and Objectives:

To analyze the current difficulties of the UG student's low fluency in English

To know the reasons for the difficulties

To examine the strategies of students to develop fluency in English

To know the teacher's strategies in overcoming students' problems while teaching

Methodology of the study:

Both quantitative and qualitative methods were adopted. These methodologies would be employed in accordance with the need of the study. Nearly 100 students at UG level were sampled to know the reasons for less fluency in English. Questions were mainly framed based on two areas: difficulties and reasons for low fluency.

Data Analysis:

The data is collected through questionnaires, surveys, observations, oral narrations and so on. Nearly 100 students have sampled randomly to know the reasons for low fluency in English. Based on the overall students' strength, 60 students from Loyola Degree college. 20 from Government Degree and 20 students from Chaitanya Degree college of Pulivendula have been selected.

Introduction

Efficiency of a language mainly depends on listening, speaking, reading and writing skills. Most of the students at their UG level are very good at listening, reading and writing English but are very poor in speaking. We know the fact that in this competitive era one should focus on fluency in English in order to achieve goals in life. Mainly Students who are coming from villages and small towns face problems in fluency. Though they come out with good scores and ranks, they are unable to express themselves in English. Some students even after completing their schooling in English medium also, are not confident enough to speak English.

Almost 70% of countries have given global status to the English language because it is used as a medium of communication in every sector. Good speaking skills in English creates better job opportunities throughout the world. English language plays a major role in computer and information technology, Science & technology and in social media. If students can speak English fluently then the path of getting success becomes easy for them. Learning grammar and knowing the meanings of words are not enough to speak English. Through imitation and constant practice one can develop fluency in English.

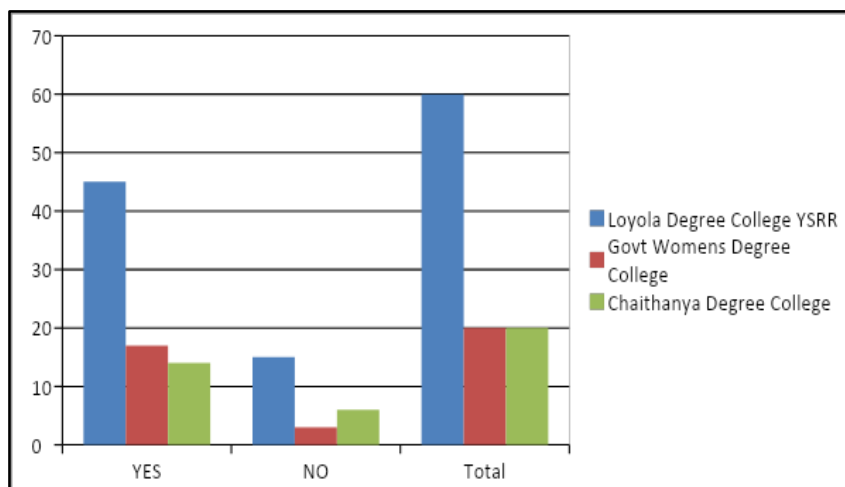
To express their opinions, ideas and to clarify doubts on particular topic, students need to have a command over the language. It comes through continuous exposure to language. When compared to the students from metropolitan cities and students from rural background, the former has wider exposure to English than the later. Family background, Medium, shyness, stage fright etc. are the main obstacles for their inability to speak English. To know the difficulties and reasons we selected students from 3 different colleges in Pulivendula.

Afraid of making mistakes while speaking English

According to the survey, the maximum number of students responded that fear of mistakes is one of the reasons for not speaking English. Grammar mistakes and framing sentences are the problems particularly faced by the students who are studying UG in small towns. These students have limited

opportunities to expose themselves to English. Because of poor fluency in English students are afraid of communicating with their teachers and friends and they remain calm during the classes.

Name of the College	YES	NO	Total
Loyola Degree College YSRR	45	15	60
Govt Women’s Degree College	17	3	20
Chaithanya Degree College	14	6	20
Total	76	24	100



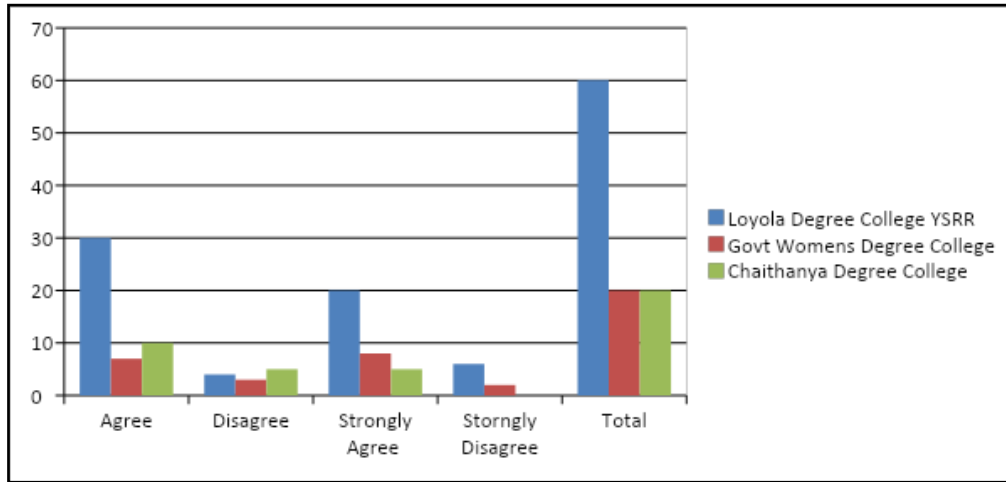
Afraid of making mistakes while speaking English

The given chart shows the response of Students through the options YES or NO. Response of Loyola Degree College Students: 75% YES and 25% NO; Government women’s College Students: 85% YES and 15% NO; Chaithanya Degree College Students said 70% YES and 30% NO.

Usage of mother tongue while teaching

Many students from the English medium pointed out that teachers should minimize the usage of mother tongue in classrooms. Classroom environment plays a major role in the development of students' fluency. When the teacher over uses the mother tongue to teach the subject, students may understand the subject easily but can't use English as a tool of communication to reach expected goals in life. If --- students tend to listen more and more to their mother tongue in the classroom they don't get any practice and lose their grip over English.

Name of the College	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Disagree	Total
Loyola Degree College YSRR	30	4	20	6	60
Govt Women’s Degree College	7	3	8	2	20
Chaithanya Degree College	10	5	5	0	20
Total	47	12	33	8	100



Usage of mother tongue while teaching

The given chart shows the response of students through the options Agree, Disagree, Strongly Agree & Strongly Disagree. Response of Loyola Degree College students: 50% agreed, 10% disagreed, 30% strongly agreed and 10% strongly disagreed; Government women’s degree college students: 35% agreed, 15% disagreed, 40% strongly agreed & 10% strongly disagreed; Chaithanya Degree College students: 50% agreed, 25% disagreed, 25% strongly agreed and none strongly disagreed.

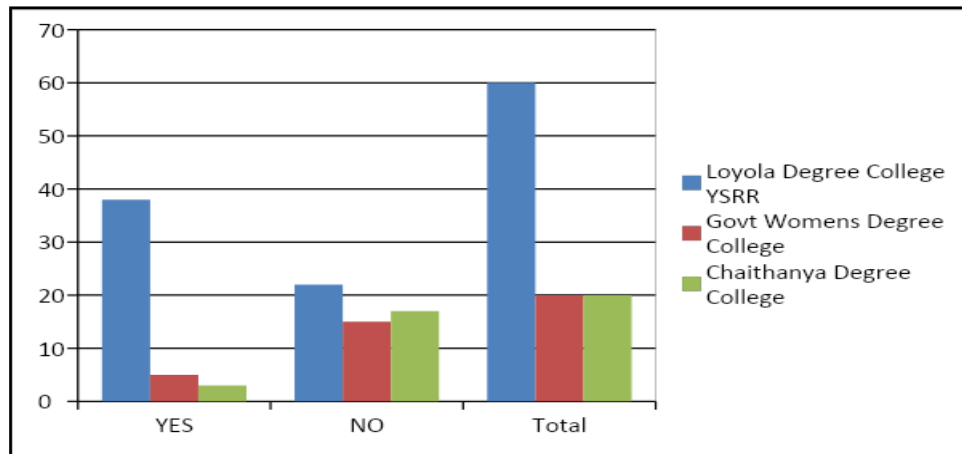
Personal efforts (reading/listening English) to improve fluency

Speaking skills come through speaking but not by learning the language. Students at UG level try to create an environment to develop fluency in English such as participating in debates, group discussions, seminars and reading or listening to English etc. Proper exposure to language is very important to speed up speaking skills. To speak any language, one needs to focus on listening and imitation. A child learns the language through listening and imitation not by reading and writing. Listening and imitation are the two important tasks students need to concentrate to pick up the language just as a two years old child does.

Name of the College	YES	NO	Total
Loyola Degree College YSRR	38	22	60
Govt Women’s Degree College	5	15	20
Chaithanya Degree College	3	17	20
Total	46	54	100

Personal efforts (reading/listening English) to improve fluency

The given chart shows the response of Students through the options YES or NO. Response of Loyola Degree College students: 63% YES and 37% NO; Government women’s College Students said 25% YES and 75% NO; Chaithanya Degree College Students: 15% YES and 85% said NO.

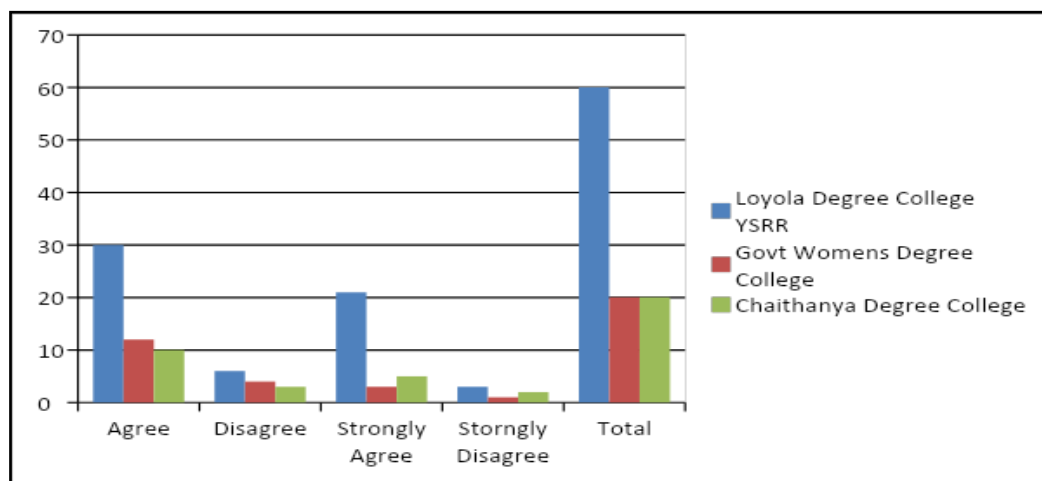


Shyness and lack of confidence are the reasons

Shyness, lack of confidence, lack of support from classmates, nervousness and poor pronunciation are some of the reasons for not speaking in the class and with teachers. The main cause of concern would be if their friends would pass comments, if they make any mistake during their communication. This is very common among the peers and they are not able to take the comments and corrections and eventually curtail their initiative to put across in English.

They are in a feeling that classmates may laugh at them due to their poor speaking skills in English. In a class where all the students tend to use the mother tongue, do not put effort in practicing speaking English among themselves and with teachers. some words and phrases never come to their mind to share their views about what exactly they mean. This may be due to lack of constant practice and confidence.

Name of the College	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Disagree	Total
Loyola Degree College YSRR	30	6	21	3	60
Govt Women’s Degree College	12	4	3	1	20
Chaithanya Degree College	10	3	5	2	20
Total	52	13	29	6	100



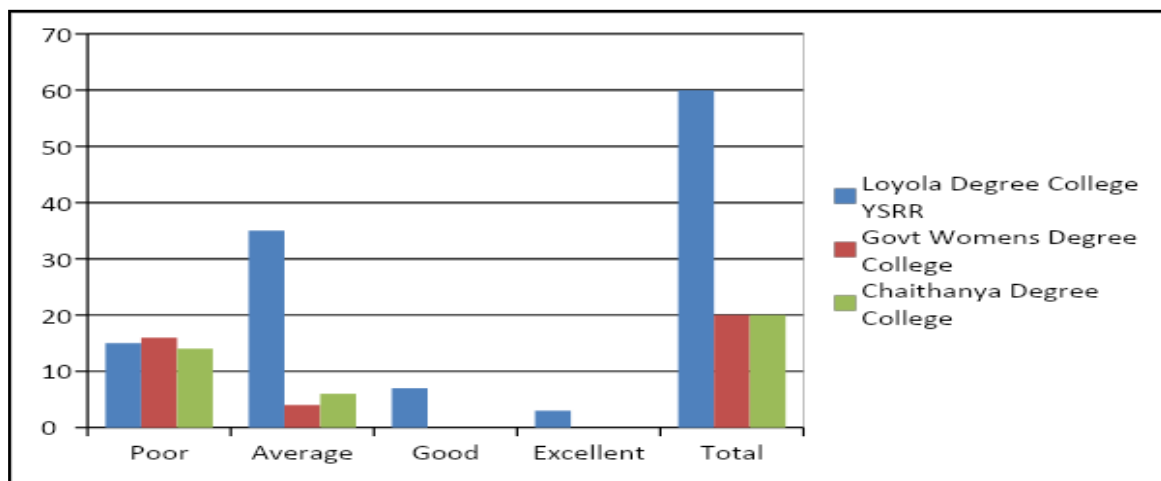
Shyness and lack of confidence are the reasons

The given chart shows the response of Students through the options Agree, Disagree, Strongly Agree & Strongly Disagree. Response of Loyola Degree College students: 50% agreed, 10% disagreed, 30% strongly agreed and strongly disagreed; Response of Government Women’s Degree College Students: 35% agreed, 15% disagreed, 40% strongly agreed & none strongly disagreed from Government women’s degree college; Response of Chaithanya Degree College; 50% agreed, 25% disagreed, 25% strongly agreed and none strongly disagreed.

Poor Pronunciation

Fluency of a language depends on good pronunciation. Many students who pursue degrees in small towns are very poor at pronunciation, this may be due to the influence of their mother tongue and limited scope of English learning in their schooling. In English sounds are 44 and letters are 26, so there is no one-to-one correspondence between spellings and sounds. It leads to a lot of confusion in pronunciation. One of the reasons for poor pronunciation is lack of proper exposure to phonemic sounds from school level. It has become a major problem at UG level.

Name of the College	Fair	Good	Very Good	Excellent	Total
Loyola Degree College YSRR	15	35	7	3	60
Govt Womens Degree College	16	4	0	0	20
Chaithanya Degree College	14	6	0	0	20
Total	45	45	7	3	100



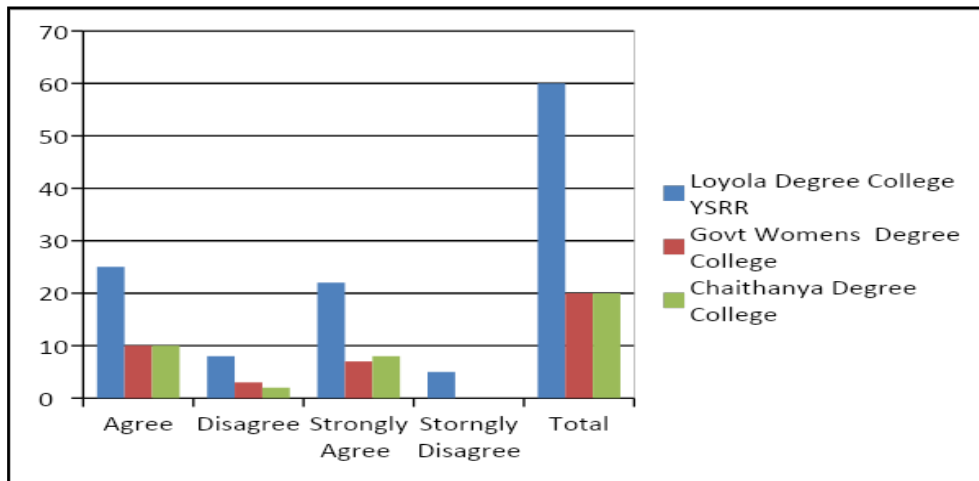
Poor Pronunciation

The given chart shows the response of Students through the options Poor, Average, Good & Excellent. According to the Loyola Degree College Students’ response: 25% poor, 58% average 12% good and 5% excellent; Govt Women’s Degree College Students response: 80% fair, 20% good and none very good and excellent; Chaitanya Degree College students’ response: 70% fair, 30% good and none very good and excellent.

Speaking English inside the college campus has to be insisted

If the head of the institutions make it an obligation and requirement to speak English for both staff and students, then there may be a possibility to enhance the fluency and to reduce the fear of mistakes, shyness of the students.

Name of the College	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Disagree	Total
Loyola Degree College YSRR	25	8	22	5	60
Govt Women’s Degree College	10	3	7	0	20
Chaithanya Degree College	10	2	8	0	20
Total	45	13	37	5	100



Speaking English inside the college campus has to be insisted

The given chart shows the response of Students through the options Agree, Disagree, Strongly Agree & Strongly Disagree. Response of Loyola Degree College students: 41% agreed, 13% disagreed, 36% strongly agreed and 10% strongly disagreed; Response of Govt women’s degree college students: 50% agreed, 15% disagreed, 35% strongly agreed & none strongly disagreed; Response of Chaitanya Degree College students: 50% agreed, 10% disagreed, 40% strongly agreed and none strongly disagreed.

Conclusion:

The current survey reveals that students are enthusiastic to speak English but shyness, lack of confidence, motivation and lack of exposure, poor vocabulary, pronunciation & grammar mistakes are the major difficulties for the low fluency in English. English language plays a foremost role in every sector such as computer & information technology, health, education, Science & technology and in social media etc. If students can improve speaking skills in English, then the path of getting success becomes easy for them. Therefore, it is essential for the government and institutions to take necessary steps to improve fluency levels of the students who are studying in small towns.

Suggestions and Recommendations

Classroom culture plays a major role in overcoming the mistakes, creating a friendly atmosphere to the students can reduce the shyness.

Teachers should not try to clear the mistakes by interrupting them in the middle of their address in front of the students. After the class they have to clear the mistakes personally.

Beginners should concentrate on basic communication skills rather than grammar. They need to strengthen their vocabulary first.

College management should plan speaking hours in the timetable, at least three hours per week. Where the students form groups to discuss their choice of the topic in English.

Students should try to expose themselves to English, such as listening, reading and participating in debates, group discussions and class room seminars.

Students should create the environment to speak English because speaking comes through speaking but not by learning.

Teachers should minimize the usage of their mother tongue while teaching and speaking with students. It is not only the duty of a language teacher but also the subject teachers should try to develop students' fluency in English.

Phonemic sounds should be introduced from high school(VI class) so that they can pick up the pronunciation.

Speaking in English should be initiated and encouraged in colleges like attendance, punctuality and discipline.

Regular motivational talks on the importance of English would also create an awareness and it would also instill interest among students to enhance their communication skills.

Teaching staff need to take an initiative in forming the likeminded groups among students all who yearn to improve their communication skills and need to explore a range of ideas in order to make learning English fun.

A common notice board with daily posters, new words, and common mistakes with regard to English language needs to be installed in a place where students gather more often.

Organize an English Day in the institution where students exhibit skits, songs, speeches etc. A staff member can coordinate and form a Book Club among students to discuss the various reputed English books.

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