Chapter Five

Summing-Up
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Learners should be given phonetic training to establish good speech habits.

Celce-Murcia 2

5.1 Introduction

This research discloses the learning surface and filters the impediments that learners encounter en route to excellence in performance. The basic contribution of this study is that it has unearthed and neatly laid down the notable domains where the problems of pronunciation exist among the students of Kanniyakumari district, Tamil Nadu. Most significantly, the research lays a firm foundation for future research on problems of pronunciation in India.

The role and function of learning pronunciation is significant as it plays an instrumental part in the progress and development of speaking English. In addition, teachers should also be responsible in changing the approach of teaching for the betterment of learners. Teachers should influence the learners in understanding the importance of pronunciation and shape the learners around them to speak with the right accent. The fundamental aim of this study is to examine and to compare the features of pronunciation of students of CBSE and SB English medium schools of the ninth and the tenth classes. In particular, the study focuses on identifying the areas where learners face difficulties and problems in pronunciation. In doing so, the study attempts to bring to the forefront the issues which lie beneath the carpet.

5.2 Summary of the Chapters

The acquisition difficulties that learners face in pronunciation are highlighted in the study with specific insights. The summary of the five chapters of the thesis is
presented below which will help one to have a glance at the whole thesis through the following lines.

Chapter One, *Introduction*, serves as an introduction to the whole thesis, providing the background to the research and discussing the statement of the problem, the rationale of the study, the objectives and also the hypotheses of the study. In addition to this, it also throws light on the review of literature available in the area.

English in India finds a prominent place in the minds of many. But the quality of English being taught is indeed to be tested. The global language of communication is being taught and learned, but still learners fail to use the language for the purpose of communication. One of the reasons for this failure is unintelligible pronunciation. It is with this background, the study moves forward to look into problems related to the acquisition of phonology in English by CBSE and SB English medium school students of Kanniyakumari district. The primary aim of the study is to trace out the deviant structures in the pronunciation of CBSE and SB students and to find out the root cause of the problems. Several studies done in India and abroad, related to the phonological acquisition of English, are reviewed. The reviews emphasize that training in phonetics will enhance the learners in communicating intelligibly with accurate pronunciation.

Chapter Two, *The Role of Phonology in Language Learning*, is a fairly rich chapter in theoretical terms. It introduces the historical and theoretical sides of First and Second Language Acquisition. Also, it elaborates all the core elements related to the study.

The study of phonetics gained momentum in the later part of the eighteenth century and in the beginnings of the nineteenth century. The English language has numerous varieties of which, the language of the educated speakers of the London
region has acquired prestige. This dialect has attained the status of a standard language, and its accent is referred to as RP that which is globally accepted as the standard pronunciation of English. It is against this standard accent that the present problems of CBSE and SB students of Kanniyakumari district are addressed, to know the role of phonology in learning a language. The methods and the approaches that play a significant role in the teaching and learning of pronunciation, and other theories related to FLA and SLA are described in this chapter. This will guide anyone who is interested to know the importance of phonetics and phonology in language learning.

Chapter Three, *Methodology*, discusses the research methods and approaches employed in the study. It also outlines the profile variables of the research, namely, age, gender, family income and the language used at home by the students.

The study is a quantitative study that adopted survey method. Through simple random sampling eight schools, four schools each from CSBE and SB from Kanniyakumari district, were identified for the study. The primary data for this study was collected from original sources where the learners were given a passage to read, which was recorded for analysis. The acquisition of phonology and the associated factors that influence acquisition were considered as independent variables and the phonological variables were considered as the dependent variables. Eight hypotheses were framed and tested using tools like: chi-square statistic ($\chi^2$), one sample t-test, independent sample t-test, Pearson Correlation and ANOVA in the relevant areas.

Chapter Four, *Data Analysis and Interpretation*, identifies the specific areas of problems faced by both CBSE and SB students, by analyzing the data collected and interpreting the same. From the analysis done, it is found that it is the CBSE students who are better in the overall performance than the SB students, in the production of monophthongs and consonants. In diphthongs, both CBSE and SB students produced
more wrong responses. Besides this, it also highlights the factors that influence the acquisition of phonology, like association between age and production accuracy, association between family income and production accuracy, association between performance and self-evaluation of reading skill, association between performance and self-evaluation of speaking skill, association between performance and self-evaluation of pronunciation and association between teaching methods and performance. Other phonological processes found in the speech of students like epenthesis, metathesis, syncope and apocope are also briefed. All these factors directly or indirectly affect the learners in one way or the other.

Chapter Five, *Summing Up*, summarizes the previous chapters and also organizes the findings and comes up with suggestions and scope for further research. It also lays down the limitations of the study.

The study brings to light the problems on the phonology of segmental features that the students of CBSE and SB students face in the district. Learners face many problems in articulation including anxiety problems while reading. This is because pronunciation is not given much importance in schools. Most of the errors remain very active as the errors are not identified and corrected at the appropriate time. It is easier to correct or remedy the errors if the cause behind it is known. The crucial part here is to be played by every English teacher in whose hands the future of each child is.

### 5.3 Results and Findings of Hypotheses Testing

The research has a broad objective to identify and compare if students of both CBSE and SB English medium schools have acquired the sounds of speech accurately and to find out which students are better in their production. In order to achieve the objective, hypotheses were set and the same were tested using statistical tools. The
statistical outputs were analysed against the hypotheses. The findings and the results that emerged after testing the hypotheses are depicted below.

5.3.1 Overall Production Accuracy of Segmental Variables

In order to find out the overall production accuracy of the segmental variables, namely, monophthongs, diphthongs and consonants, it was hypothesized that the mean of the production of segmental variables of CBSE and SB students are the same. The results and the findings of the segmental variables are:

**Result:** The results show that CBSE students are significantly different from SB students in the production of monophthongs, diphthongs and consonants.

**Finding:** CBSE students were able to produce more correct responses in monophthongs, diphthongs and consonants compared to SB students. In diphthongs, though CBSE students were better in the production, both CBSE and SB students were not able to produce correct responses.

5.3.2 Production Accuracy of Monophthongs

The three types of monophthongs namely, front vowels, back vowels and central vowels were analysed and the results and the findings are shown below.

**Production Accuracy of Front Vowels**

The four front vowels /ɪ/, /iː/, /e/ and /æ/ were tested using seventeen words where the sounds occur in different positions.

**Result:** CBSE students are significantly different from SB students in the production of front vowels as the average production accuracy score for SB students is significantly lower than the CBSE students.

**Finding:** CBSE students were able to produce more correct responses in front vowels compared to SB students.
**Production Accuracy of Central Vowels**

The three central vowels /a/, /ʌ/ and /ɔ:/ were tested using fourteen words in different positions.

**Result:** The average production accuracy score for SB students is significantly lower than the CBSE students. Hence, CBSE students are significantly different from SB students in the articulation of central vowels.

**Finding:** CBSE students were able to produce more correct responses of central vowels compared to SB students.

**Production Accuracy of Back Vowels**

The five back vowels /aː/, /ɒ/, /ɔ:/, /u/ and /uː/ were tested using twenty-one words in different positions.

**Result:** CBSE students are significantly different from SB students in the production of back vowels as the average production accuracy score for SB students is significantly lower than the CBSE students.

**Finding:** CBSE students have less wrong responses in the production of back vowels compared to SB students, but both CBSE and SB students produced wrong responses.

5.3.3 Production Accuracy of Diphthongs

The two groups of diphthongs, closing diphthongs and centring diphthongs, with eight sounds were analysed and the results and the findings are shown below.

**Production Accuracy of Closing Diphthongs**

The five sounds of the closing diphthongs /eɪ/, /aɪ/, /ɔɪ/, /eʊ/ and /aʊ/ were tested using twenty-five words, in different positions.
Result: The average production accuracy score for SB students is significantly lower than the CBSE students but both the groups had wrong responses. Hence, CBSE students are significantly different from SB students in the production of closing diphthongs.

Finding: CBSE students have not as much of wrong responses compared to SB students, but both the groups produced wrong responses while articulating the closing diphthongs.

Production Accuracy of Centring Diphthongs

The three centring diphthongs /ɪə/, /ɛə/ and /ʊə/ were tested using thirteen words in different positions.

Result: CBSE students are significantly different from SB students in the production of centring diphthongs, since the average production accuracy score for SB students is significantly lower than the CBSE students.

Finding: CBSE students have less wrong responses in the production of centring diphthongs compared to SB students, but both the groups produced wrong responses.

5.3.4 Production Accuracy of Consonants

The seven groups of consonants namely, plosives, fricatives, affricates, nasals, frictionless continuant, lateral and semivowels with twenty-four phonological variations were analysed to understand the production accuracy of the students.

Production Accuracy of Bilabial Plosives

The bilabial plosives /p, b/ were tested using nine words, in different positions.
Result: It is known that the average production accuracy score for SB students is significantly lower than the CBSE students, and hence CBSE students are significantly different from SB students in the production of bilabial plosives.

Finding: CBSE students were able to produce maximum correct responses in bilabial plosives compared to SB students.

Production Accuracy of Alveolar Plosives

The two alveolar plosives /t/ and /d/ were analysed using twelve words in different positions.

Result: CBSE students are significantly different from SB students in the production of alveolar plosives, as the average production accuracy score for SB students is significantly lesser than the CBSE students.

Finding: CBSE students were able to produce more correct responses of alveolar plosives compared to SB students.

Production Accuracy of Velar Plosives

The production accuracy of velar plosives /k/ and /g/ was studied for differences in different positions using eleven words.

Result: CBSE students are significantly different from SB students in the production of velar plosives as the average production accuracy score for SB students is significantly lower than the CBSE students.

Finding: CBSE students were able to produce more correct responses of velar plosives compared to SB students.
Production Accuracy of Affricates

The production accuracy of affricates /tʃ/ and /dʒ/ was investigated for differences using eleven words in different positions.

**Result:** CBSE students are significantly different from SB students in the production of affricates, as the average production accuracy score for SB students is significantly lower than the CBSE students.

**Finding:** CBSE students were able to produce greater correct responses in affricates compared to SB students.

Production Accuracy of Labio-Dental Fricatives

The two labio-dental fricatives /f/ and /v/ were tested for production accuracy using eleven words in different positions.

**Result:** CBSE students are significantly different from SB students in the production of labio-dental fricatives, as the average production accuracy score for SB students is significantly lower than the CBSE students.

**Finding:** CBSE students were able to produce more correct responses of labio-dental fricatives compared to SB students.

Production Accuracy of Dental Fricatives

The two dental fricatives /θ/ and /ð/ were tested for production accuracy using eight words in different positions.

**Result:** CBSE students are significantly different from SB students in the production of dental fricatives, as the average production accuracy score for SB students is significantly lower than the CBSE students.
Finding: CBSE students were marginally different in the production of dental fricatives compared to SB students, but both the groups produced wrong responses.

Production Accuracy of Alveolar Fricatives

The production accuracy of alveolar fricatives /s, z/, by CBSE and SB students, was investigated for differences using ten words in different positions.

Result: CBSE students are significantly different from SB students in the articulation of alveolar fricatives. The examination of the mean of the two groups brings in the fact that the average production accuracy score for SB students is significantly not as much as the CBSE students.

Finding: CBSE students were able to produce more correct responses of alveolar fricatives compared to SB students.

Production Accuracy of Palato-Alveolar Fricatives

The production accuracy of palato-alveolar fricatives /ʃ, ʒ/ was investigated for differences using ten words in different positions.

Result: CBSE students are significantly different from SB students in the production of palato-alveolar fricatives, as the average production accuracy score for SB students is significantly lower than the CBSE students.

Finding: CBSE students were able to produce more correct responses of palato-alveolar fricatives compared to SB students.

Production Accuracy of Voiceless Glottal Fricative

The production accuracy of the glottal fricative /h/, by CBSE and SB students, was found using three words, where the sound occurs in different positions.
Result: CBSE students are significantly different from SB students in the production of glottal fricative, as the average production accuracy score for SB students is significantly lower than the CBSE students.

Finding: CBSE students were able to produce more correct responses of the glottal fricative compared to SB students.

**Production Accuracy of Bilabial Nasal**

The production accuracy of bilabial nasal /m/ was tested using six words, where the sound occurs in different positions.

Result: CBSE students are significantly different from SB students in the production of bilabial nasal, as the average production accuracy score for SB students is significantly lower than the CBSE students.

Finding: CBSE students were able to produce more correct responses of the bilabial nasal compared to SB students.

**Production Accuracy of Alveolar Nasal**

The production accuracy of alveolar nasal /n/, by CBSE and SB students, was investigated for differences using six words, where the sound occurs in different positions.

Result: CBSE students are significantly different from SB students in the production of alveolar nasal, as the average production accuracy score for SB students is significantly lower than the CBSE students.

Finding: CBSE students were able to produce more correct responses of alveolar nasal compared to SB students.
Production Accuracy of Velar Nasal

The production accuracy of velar nasal /ŋ/ was tested using three words in the medial and final positions.

Result: CBSE students are significantly different from SB students in the production of velar nasal as the average production accuracy score for SB students is significantly lower than the CBSE students.

Finding: CBSE students were able to produce more correct responses of velar nasal, and SB students produced more wrong responses of velar nasal.

Production Accuracy of Lateral

The lateral sound with one phonological variation /l/ was analysed using six words in different positions.

Result: CBSE students are significantly different from SB students in the production of lateral consonant, as the average production accuracy score for SB students is significantly lower than the CBSE students.

Finding: CBSE students were able to produce more correct responses, and SB students produced more wrong responses of lateral sound.

Production Accuracy of Frictionless Continuant

The frictionless continuant /r/, with one phonological variation, was analysed in different positions using six words.

Result: CBSE students are significantly different from SB students in the production of frictionless continuant, as the average production accuracy score for CBSE students is significantly lower than the SB students. But the students of both CBSE and SB had wrong responses on frictionless continuant.
Finding: SB students had less wrong responses in the production of frictionless continuant compared to CBSE students, but both the groups produced wrong responses.

Production Accuracy of Unrounded Palatal Semi-Vowel

The production accuracy of unrounded palatal semi-vowel /j/, by CBSE and SB students, was examined using four words.

Result: CBSE students are significantly different from SB students in the production of unrounded palatal semi-vowel, as the average production accuracy score for SB students is significantly lower than the CBSE students. But both CBSE and SB students had wrong responses in the production of unrounded palatal semi-vowel.

Finding: CBSE students had less wrong responses in unrounded palatal semi-vowel production compared to SB students, but both the groups produced wrong responses.

Production Accuracy of Rounded Labio-Velar Semi-Vowel

The production accuracy of rounded labio-velar semi-vowel /w/, was tested using four words.

Result: CBSE students are significantly different from SB students in the production of rounded labio-velar semi-vowel, as the average production accuracy score for SB students is significantly lower than the CBSE students. However, the students of both CBSE and SB had wrong responses on rounded labio-velar semi-vowel.
Finding: It is found that CBSE students have less wrong responses in the production of rounded labio-velar semi-vowel compared to SB students, but both the groups produced wrong responses.

5.3.5 Other Factors Influencing Acquisition of Phonology

Apart from the problems in the production of sounds, certain other factors were taken into account and analysed using inferential statistical tools, and the results are shown below.

**Association between Age and Production Accuracy**

It was hypothesized that there is no significant difference between the different age groups among the CBSE and the SB students in the production accuracy of sounds.

**Result:** There is significant difference between age groups in the production accuracy of phonology. The results indicate that there is a significant mean difference for the variable monophthongs between the age group of 13 years and 15 years, for the variable diphthongs between the age group of 13 years and 16 years and for the variable consonants between the age group of 13 years and 15 years.

Finding: Age as a factor has a role to play in the process of acquisition.

**Association between Family Income and Production Accuracy**

It was hypothesized that there is no significant difference between the income of the parents of students of the CBSE and SB and the production accuracy of sounds.

**Result:** There is a significant difference between family income and the production accuracy of sounds. The results show that there are significant mean differences for the variable monophthongs between the parental income
group of less than ₹1 lakh and parental income group of above ₹5 lakh, for variable diphthongs between the parental income group of less than ₹1 lakh and parental income group of above ₹5 lakh, and for variable consonants between the parental income group of less than ₹1 lakh and parental income group of above ₹5 lakh.

**Finding:** The income of the parents has an important role in the production accuracy of sounds which indicates that better economic facilities will help students in the process of language acquisition.

5.3.6 Self-Evaluation of Language Skills

It was hypothesized that that there is no statistically significant directional relationship between self-evaluations of students and the performance of the three phonological variables and the results are shown below.

**Association between Performance and Self-Evaluation of Reading Skill, Speaking Skill and Pronunciation**

**Result:** The three performance variables monophthongs, diphthongs and consonants are significantly correlated. The strongest positive correlation is between self-evaluation of reading skill and consonants, speaking skill and consonants, and pronunciation and consonants, while the relations between the other performance variables are ignored.

**Finding:** The students who have high self-evaluation on reading skill, speaking skill and pronunciation, performed better only in the production of consonants.

5.3.7 Association between the Influence of Teaching Methods and Performance

As teaching and learning go hand-in-hand, the relation between the methods of teaching and the performance of learners were studied, and the following results are derived.
Usage of Mother Tongue in English Language Classroom

It was hypothesized that there is no statistically significant association, between the CBSE and SB students in the usage of mother tongue in the English classroom and the results are shown below.

Result: There is statistically significant difference between students who are exposed to mother tongue and who are not exposed to mother tongue in the English language classroom.

Finding: SB students are exposed to mother tongue in English language classroom most of the times than the CBSE students, and this is one of the reasons for the poor performance of the SB learners.

Methodology of Teaching Experienced in English Language Classroom

It was hypothesized that there is no statistically significant association, between CBSE and SB students, in the methods of teaching experienced in the English language classroom.

Result: Majority of the students experience examination oriented teaching methods most of the time as less focus is on product oriented and process oriented teaching.

Finding: Priority is given to test performance and not to the skill part of the language, and hence learners are neither aware of their errors in pronunciation nor aware of the sounds in the language.

Spelling-Pronunciation

It was hypothesized that the means of the CBSE and SB students who have spelling-pronunciation are the same.
Result: The influence of spelling on pronunciation in SB students is significantly higher than the CBSE students. Hence, CBSE students are significantly different from SB students in spelling-pronunciation.

Finding: CBSE students had less influence on spelling-pronunciation when compared to SB students.

Analysis of the Phonological Processes Employed in Production

It was hypothesized that the means of the CBSE and SB students in using the phonological processes like, epenthesis, metathesis, apocope, and syncope are the same.

Occurrence of Epenthesis

The occurrence of epenthesis in the speech of CBSE and SB students was studied and the following result drawn.

Result: CBSE students are significantly different from SB students in inserting a sound to a word, as the occurrence of epenthesis for SB students is significantly higher than the CBSE students.

Finding: SB students insert more additional sounds to words when compared to CBSE students because of the influence of the regional dialect.

Occurrence of Metathesis

The occurrence of metathesis in the speech of CBSE and SB students was studied and the following result drawn.

Result: The occurrence of metathesis for SB students is not at all significantly higher than the CBSE students, and hence CBSE students are not significantly different from SB students in rearranging sounds in a word.

Finding: There is no difference between CBSE students and SB students in occurrence of metathesis in the reading performance.
Occurrence of Apocope

The occurrence of apocope in the speech of CBSE and SB students was studied and the following result drawn.

Result: The occurrence of apocope for SB students is significantly lesser than the CBSE students, and hence CBSE students are significantly different from SB students in pronouncing the sounds in a word by changing its order phonologically.

Finding: CBSE students have higher apocope aberration when compared to SB students. This is because they unstressed the sounds in words and read the passage fast.

Occurrence of Syncope

The occurrence of syncope in the speech of CBSE and SB students was studied and the following result drawn.

Result: CBSE students are significantly different from SB students in using syncope, as the occurrence is less for SB students.

Finding: CBSE students have higher aberration in syncope when compared to SB students.

5.4 Major Problems

Pronunciation is something that the students of all the schools in the study are keen in learning and interested in. They are aware of the fact that it is important in language learning. From the response elicited, it is revealed that the students are ready to work hard to achieve this. But pronunciation is not given much importance in schools. Learners face many problems in articulation mainly because of mother tongue interference, spelling-pronunciation syndrome, epenthesis, metathesis,
apocope, syncope, teachers and other sociological and psychological factors. The problems exist primarily because the learners are not aware of them.

5.4.1 Mother Tongue Interference

Certain sounds in English like /f/, /θ/, /ð/, /z/, /ʃ/, /ʒ/, /w/, /v/, /æ/, /ɨ/, /əɪ/, /ɜ/, /ɨə/ and /ʊə/ escape the learner because they are absent in his/her language. Hence, the learner finds it difficult to learn and pronounce such sounds. In addition to this, both in hearing and in reproducing a foreign language, the learners are likely to replace the target language sounds by the nearest or equivalent sounds of their own languages. As a result, the phonological structures become deviant. The pronunciation of the Tamil learners who read English with a very heavy accent almost sounds like the native language of the speaker with words borrowed from the target language. This is due to interference or the transfer of processes, patterns and structures of one’s first language to the second language (e.g. a Tamil learner substitutes retroflex lateral /ɭ/ for English lateral /l/). As Flege points out in his Perception and Production, “Equivalence classification of similar sounds also may lead to transfer errors in production” (282). For example, shoe /ʃuː/ is pronounced as /suː/ by Tamil learners.

Mother tongue, thus, interferes with the learning of the foreign language because it is the language which is first acquired by the students. It is learned informally unlike the second language, which is formally learned only in school after a particular age. Learners use their mother tongue right from childhood. His/her constant exposure to the spoken form of his/her own language, together with the need to convey increasingly subtle types of information, leads to a rapid acquisition of the
framework of their spoken language. Though this is the fact, for an effective communication, learners should take care that they do not interfere with their native language.

5.4.2 Spelling-Pronunciation Syndrome

This is where the speakers pronounce words as they are spelt. Learners have problems in deducing the pronunciation of words from their written form. The basic reason for this is that they are unaware of the fact that English has forty-four sounds for the twenty-six letters, and a letter is not always pronounced with the same sound. Each letter of the alphabet has a different sound and one letter corresponds to different sounds in different environments. The problems related to this, if not corrected or rectified at the proper time, may persist even in the future. As letters are insignificant in pronouncing words, students must be taught the phonemes of English to have a good understanding of the very English pronunciation.

5.4.3 Various Phonological Processes

The different phonological processes that give rise to unintelligible speech are: epenthesis, metathesis, apocope and syncope. The irrelevant and unwanted sounds that intruded the speech of the learners, and words that were pronounced changing the phonological order of sounds, resulted in a kind of strange and peculiar speech. This occurrence is because of the influence of the features of the local dialects, say either Tamil or mixture of both Tamil and Malayalam, which is spoken in the Kerala border. But on the other hand, elision can take place where there is an unaccented syllable. But sometimes, “the reduced forms in various types of regional and popular speech are often regarded as vulgar,” according to Gimson (250). In a rapid speech, sounds
could be elided, but if it occurs regularly in a speech of a person the proper version of the word will not form a part of his/her idiolect.

5.4.4 Teacher Induced Errors

There are some errors which are caused in a classroom situation by teachers. Selinker calls it ‘idiosyncratic learner errors which are specifically textbook or teacher-induced errors’ (qtd. in Larsen-Freeman and Long 24). The main goal of the teachers is to teach the content. Oral skills are taught, but they are not given due importance. The majority of local English language teachers do not possess adequate language skills. They have poor understanding of pronunciation (Appendix VI). Their oral skills are rather poor. The teachers are not well-equipped to teach pronunciation, and they have little mastery in this area. The students are not at all taught the correct sounds of English alphabet. The teachers themselves are speakers of the local variety. Hence, the structures remain deviant among the students and they exist so as no effort is seen on the part of the instructor. As teachers speak an unaccented non-native variety of English, they are reluctant to focus on pronunciation in the classroom. As a result, learners’ exposure to native-like pronunciation is often limited.

5.4.5 Other Factors

The psychological state and the sociological status cripple the growth of an individual if it worries him/her emotionally. Hence, sociological and psychological factors like background of the family and performance anxiety which indirectly affect an individual were identified a crucial problem.

5.4.5.1 Family Background

The family background of the learners plays an important role in the acquisition of language. Students with integrative motivation were found to have
parents with the same orientation and this was due to the favourable attitude the parents had to the target language community. But learners with poor family background do not seem to have parents with such motivation. Hence, the parents fail to encourage their children. These students belong to different backgrounds and they hail from different localities, say, from the interior and remote parts of the village. There are students from SB schools who are first generation learners and such students have had their basic education in Tamil medium schools. There are also students who cannot go for further studies. Students of illiterate parents neither get encouragement, nor care and guidance, for speaking English, from their parents. Thus, these students are deprived of exposition to language culturally, socio-economically and locationally. This disadvantage in their location denies them some of the opportunities available to the privileged people who live in better conditions. Economic, social and local disadvantages prevent them from cherishing long-term goals. They are mostly present-oriented and are concerned only with immediate pleasure and happiness. They have low self-esteem. All these factors are responsible for their low motivation for upward social mobility.

On the other hand, most of the CBSE school students come mainly from families where the educated parents encourage their students to cherish long-term goals. Students themselves show a craving for learning and they opt for higher studies in reputed institutions. Most of the students live closer to their educational institutions which give them an added edge over the SB students. Such students also have access to English newspapers and magazines that they keep improving their knowledge in English. Thus students, whose background is fairly well, have ample opportunities and show better performance.
5.4.5.2 Performance Anxiety

There are students who have generated performance anxiety. It is because of this factor that some kinds of reading errors were produced, as shown in the study. Reading in front of others or in front of a stranger/researcher could be the most anxiety-provoking situation. Oxford and Ehrman state, “Reading which has the advantage of a permanent, written stimulus to which students can return repeatedly, can be anxiety-provoking; this is especially true for individuals who have difficulty reading efficiently in their native language due to a learning disability or lack of appropriate reading strategies” (193).

In a research conducted by Lavine and Oxford, it is pointed out that the general avoidance or forgetting is one of the possible symptoms of anxiety. Ehrman has also “addressed anxiety factors most related to interpersonal interactions and explored how they lead to different sorts of performance anxiety” (Oxford and Ehrman 194). A student feeling nervous and tensed is thus one of the causes of production errors. When the same test-word is used more than once, the learner produces it right on one occasion and wrong on another occasion. Words/sounds may be said to be dropped or retained irregularly depending on the situations due to performance anxiety.

5.5 Remedial Measures

English is nowadays neither taught to communicate with native speakers nor to receive a native-like accent. Thus, the acquisition of native-like accent is no longer the ultimate objective of the majority of learners, and communicating with native speakers is not the primary motivation for learning English. Instead, what the learners
need above all is to communicate successfully with other non-native speakers of English from different L1 backgrounds.

The aim of the learners is to achieve an easily understandable pronunciation in most situations. Many students will not go abroad as they have mentioned in the response elicited. It is along this lines Hewings mentions the case with most people is that, they would wish to retain some traces of their national or first language in their speech when they speak English. He continues to say that “an Italian would prefer to be identified as ‘an Italian who speaks English very well’ rather than simply ‘a non-native speaker of English’ . . .” (14). So the learners must be told that if they want to communicate with their own people, their variety of English is just fine. In this context N. Krishnaswamy highlights: “deviations in Indian pronunciation should be regarded as Indian characteristics rather than as errors” (222). For these purposes, Standardized Indian English should be used which will “help to establish certain minimum standards of mutual intelligibility among the various dialects of English spoken in the world” (Bansal 32). On the other hand, Balasubramanian points out that, the features of GIE do not affect intelligibility within India. But to attain international intelligibility the phonetic features which are difficult must also be attained (131). Several researches have made strong calls for research on teaching for intelligible rather than native-like pronunciation (Saito 843). Students should acquire minimal phonological requirements to be comprehensible in order to achieve the goal of correct pronunciation. All the students and the teachers taken for the study have problems relating to pronunciation. Pronunciation teaching is more often than not neglected in the classrooms. Pronunciation deserves strong attention in an English classroom because the main purpose of a language is to communicate. One can
communicate even without good grammar and good vocabulary, but speaking with good pronunciation really makes a difference.

It is for these purposes remedial measures are stated. They are intended to improve poor skills in a specified field. By the following remedial measures, one can improve or rectify the wrong skills that are being practised.

5.5.1 Language Laboratory

Language laboratory has a significant role to play in the process of learning a language. Students can actively participate and involve in learning stress, intonation and pronunciation by using a language lab. Other aspects of speech like conversation practice can also be learned. The classroom which is otherwise passive is made active through this facility. Teachers assign lessons which the students can practise by themselves. They can listen to the lesson using headsets, record the speech, listen to the recorded voice again, and practise the drills again and again. Nowadays, language labs are available which are connected to the computers where lessons would already be fed into the computers. They are called Computer Assisted Language Laboratory (CALL). There are also labs which are connected to the internet, called Web Assisted Language Laboratory (WALL). It is indeed an expensive affair to install a language lab, but still this must be made an essential part of the language curriculum for the betterment of the career of the learners.

5.5.2 Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL)

The use of mobile phones by learners is helpful in a number of ways. In this era of technology, there is hardly a student without a mobile phone. Mobile phones are handy, easy to carry, and can be used at any time, that is even in a non-classroom situation. Teachers can provide tools and software for learners. Information can be sent from the mobile of the teachers to the mobile of the students at a low cost.
through Short Message Service (SMS). Students can download dictionaries with voice broadcast, listen to it, repeat it and can also record their own voice. The voice recorded could be played again and can be compared with the original voice. Thus, “by enhancing various functions of the system like providing a dictionary for looking up unfamiliar words and their correct phonetic form, the pronunciation as well as speaking skills of the learners can be well improved” through MALL (Miangah and Nezarat 6).

5.5.3 Motivating Students

There are some students who have the desire to bring about a change within them; but they are alienated from their group apart from being mocked and ridiculed while speaking English. Such students should be motivated so that they develop a positive approach towards language learning, overcoming their sociological and psychological barriers. Hence, special opportunities should be made available to help the weaker sections of the society to acquire an adequate competence in English so that they do not remain forever disadvantaged in areas of English-based higher education and in terms of upward social mobility. Steps must be taken to produce and to design methods and materials to help students coming from tribal, rural, and other neglected sections of society who, though gifted and intelligent, feel alienated and handicapped at institutions of higher learning. This is due to the factor that they have not had the opportunity of acquiring English as a second language and hence find themselves incapable of using Standard English. So, this is indeed a great challenge for the educational institutions of Kanniyakumari district. According to Shenk, “Every human being can grow smarter if the environment demands it. Therefore, if we demand more of our own students, they will respond to the demand and develop more” (qtd. in Keegan 7). Hence, teachers should know themselves and let know the
students that deliberate practice is a highly structured activity, the explicit goal which is to improve performance. This sort of deliberate practice requires effort and is not inherently enjoyable. It has been “claimed for several years that one cannot teach a learner what he is not ready to learn” (qtd. in Lightbown 101).

Individuals should definitely be motivated to practise, because good and perfect practice improves performance. According to Celce-Murcia:

The goal of teaching pronunciation to such learners is not to make them sound like native speakers of English. With the exception of a few highly gifted and motivated individuals, such a goal is unrealistic. A more modest and realistic goal is to enable learners to surpass the threshold level so that their pronunciation will not detract from their ability to communicate. (8)

The school must provide the learners a happy and fine environment to learn and communicate with ease. To solve these issues, novel and original ideas should be created, and the innovative behaviour of the teachers should not only influence their teaching practices and professional habits, but also their impact on students. The innovative behaviour of the teacher in teaching pronunciation may be supported by interaction and freedom for innovation. Learning tasks can be transformed into creative tasks which will help the learner use the language to express meaning with clear pronunciation. A creative desire and a positive approach should be promoted among the learners that they should feel the need for learning pronunciation.

5.5.4. Enhancing Nature of Input

The nature of input appears crucial in L2 phonological learning. Students will have great difficulty mastering the pronunciation and intonation patterns of their L2 unless they participate in the target linguistic community. Pronunciation in SLA is mostly unsuccessful because there is no sufficient input and there is inadequacy of
various learning mechanisms. In other terms, it is the linguistic environment which plays an important role in language acquisition. The problem lies with the L2 learners who have constant problems in recognizing and producing some non-native phonetic segments accurately that do not occur in their native language. The non-native speaker must be able to discern the differences between the closest native speech and a comparable L2 sound. Learners are being exposed to non-native English speech or have acquired English without much exposure to the native spoken language. Hence, the nature of input must be made better as mentioned by the Naturalistic Method.

Learners should be exposed to the full range of styles, structures and speech acts that one normally associates with the use of language as the primary vehicle of verbal communication in a society, i.e. by native speakers. The courses, materials, and methodologies must be modified and changed to meet the local needs of the students. The educational set-up, its atmosphere, its facilities provided in schools, its roles and responsibilities can be changed for the better. Students must be allowed to watch and listen to native speakers. English films may be shown to them so that they can watch the lip movement and also listen to accentuation and intonation of the natives. Rather than teaching what is rising and falling tone and where to use them, it can be taught through continuous exposure.

5.5.5 Focusing on Learner-Centered Classroom

A learner-centered classroom is one in which teaching is done with the complete focus on learners. To bring this into practice, teachers should be helped to develop self-awareness and understanding of their classrooms. The teacher must help learners acquire the skills of language, where language is taught as a skill and not as a subject. Students must be given the opportunity to listen to, to speak, to read and to write in English. Teachers cannot help learners to become independent and
autonomous, if the focus is on examinations. Teachers must focus on the improvement of the students and must consider the problems faced by students as solvable. In the study undertaken, though teachers consider problems as solvable, the steps taken to improve the students are not very effective. Instruction in a foreign language must begin by training the learners to articulate the foreign sounds correctly with fluency and accuracy. The teacher must first articulate the sounds, rather than explaining how they are pronounced. The teacher must show them how to make use of their organs of speech. The students should first listen to and watch the lip movement of the teacher and later exercise the movements of the organs of speech and also practise to produce sounds in new positions. The students must repeat exactly. The instruction must begin with the elements of phonetics as applied to the native language of the learner and by contrast, to the foreign one. For this, learners must be given enough time to practise it inside the classroom.

5.5.6. Use of Dictionaries

Students should be encouraged to use advanced level monolingual dictionaries, with meanings, definitions, examples, information on pronunciation, phonetic transcription, spelling, frequency and derivations. Dictionaries can help increase autonomy for more advanced learners. While teaching pronunciation, teachers should motivate students to use them. Dictionaries are useful given the confusing nature of English spelling which often misleads as to how words should be pronounced. Teachers should integrate continuous consultation of dictionary in classes and help students overcome initial reservation. Meanings and pronunciation of new words should be elicited from the students. Teaching of pronunciation should not be decontextualized; it could be incorporated with the lessons taught.
5.5.7 Teacher Awareness

A language teacher’s awareness of language should be raised as a tool not just for communication but for making new means. The teacher who is relatively uninformed about phonetics risks transmitting quite serious errors to the pupils, especially in the earlier stages of language learning. It is common even for a teacher to make mistakes of several kinds while teaching. Every teacher of English has to judge the kind of speech/pronunciation that is to be adopted by him or her. Hence, the language teacher should be aware of phonetics and should also advocate the notions and practices emphasized by the Reform Movement.

Teachers need a well-rounded concept of the phonology of the language they are going to teach and the native language of the learners. Emphasis must be placed on the understanding of language as a system of rules and a network of integrated parts. Teachers should have a solid knowledge of both segmental and supra-segmental features of the first and the second language of the learners. They should be linguistic models for their students.

5.5.7.1 Skill Oriented Language Teaching

Language must be taught as a skill oriented subject and not as a content-based subject. To help students master the skills of language the method of teaching where the focus is on the content will not help. English must be taught as a language of communication and not like other subjects such as Mathematics or Science. Skills which are neglected in a classroom should be integrated along with the contents in the proper order: Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing (LSRW) and not the other way round as done: writing, reading and speaking. Spoken skills when assessed should not be done through writing but must be tested orally. Teachers must create
opportunities like including skill learning methods to produce competent students who would outshine others in future.

5.5.7.2 Teachers as Supporters

Teachers must be facilitators to improve the pronunciation of Tamil speakers of English who lack the skill of pronouncing words so that they become accurate. Teachers should require substantial awareness-raising and practical preparation. Before teachers are likely to promote L2 inter-speaker variation in the classroom, they will need to experience a change of attitude towards it and in turn be equipped with the means of changing the attitudes of students. Such a change in attitude among teachers will be best effected by the introduction of a sociolinguistics component dealing with the social and the psychological issues involved in accent variation in courses related to teacher education.

Teachers must train students in a way that they ought to be concerned with pronunciation, as mispronunciation leads to loss of self-confidence. According to Morley, “Speakers with poor intelligibility have long range difficulties in developing into confident and effective oral communicators; some never do” (qtd. in Vani 130). Moreover, positive feedback from the teacher will enhance the confidence of students in using language without any inhibition and fear. A teacher could support the learners by providing more number of practice-sessions to improve their confidence and help students feel comfortable with the English language.

The ultimate objective of all these should be to enable teachers and learners play their roles effectively. As a result, the learners will acquire not only competence in English that is restricted to context and bound to the syllabus, but also competence in speaking English with good pronunciation.
5.5.7.3 Private Streaming of Students

The teacher must continuously work with the student and be keen on diagnosing the exact problems troubling a student. The teacher must be able to know the pattern of the error, the feature in the pattern that is troubling the student and what different feature she/he is substituting so as to solve the problem. The teacher will have to identify not only the incorrect form but also a clear-cut specific deviation of sound.

The teacher could stream the students. But streaming is to be done privately, that is, only the teacher must know each category of students and deal with them. If a student commits an error persistently, the teacher must not try to rectify it immediately in the class. If a student is being continuously corrected in the English class, the student will dislike the teacher and he/she will resent his dependence on the teacher in the same class. Hence, the teacher in such situations must correct the errors privately. The teacher must be conscious of the individual’s frustrating and insecure position and must be able to inspire confidence through his/her understanding and patience. He/she must be sensitive to the emotional reactions of the students to signs of nervousness and anxiety and indications of embarrassment. The teacher must provide opportunities to the students to rectify their errors orally before the errors become habitual. It should also be noted that students should not practise new lessons by themselves outside the classroom because there is a chance of acquiring faulty pronunciation. Practice is to be done only in the classroom. Once the pronunciation becomes automatic, then there is no fear of reading outside the classroom.

5.5.7.4 Strengthening Classroom Testing

To test language in use, the teacher can check phonemic units and contrasts. With the advent and general diffusion of recording equipment, it is also easy to have
the stimulus, the voice of the examiner, recorded on magnetic tape or a disc. The teacher can thus bring into the classroom the voice of some other speaker, giving the test a more realistic atmosphere. If the teacher is not confident that his or her own pronunciation is not up to the standard, a recorded test could be used. Moreover, if the size of the class is too large, it is difficult to pay adequate attention to the pronunciation of each and every student. Hence, video recorders or language labs could be used. For testing, production tests could be conducted which will focus on features that have been taught in class. Preparing an informal classroom test of production involves the preparation of a list of problems, selection of words and phrases that contain the problems, preparation of items, giving the test to individuals or to groups and scoring it. Before the test, the total list of problems in the production is to be prepared, by comparing the phonological analysis of English with that of the native language of the students. The production tests are intended to measure the learner’s command of features presented in class. Exercises can be designed to focus on features for < -ed > and < -s > endings, vowel or consonant contrasts, syllabic consonants, word stress, sentence stress and intonation.

5.5.7.5 Practising Pronunciation Teaching

It is very essential that non-native learners of English should pronounce English sounds with a greater degree of accuracy. While teaching pronunciation, the teacher should compare the two sound systems, phoneme by phoneme, in order to locate and describe the points of difficulty. While comparing each phoneme, first, the teacher should note if the native language has a similar phoneme. If there is a phoneme in the native language of similar phonetic features, then it can be assumed that the students will not have difficulty with the phoneme as a whole. But sometimes, there might be trouble with some variant of the native phoneme that
parallels with the foreign one. For instance, when checking the English phoneme
\(/\emptyset u/\), it is found that Tamil does not have a similar phoneme. The most similar one
phonetically is Tamil \(/o/\ [\emptyset] \) which the Tamil speaker associates with English < o >.
Hence, the Tamil speaker uses his \(/o/\) phoneme for English, and this substitution
causes breakdown in communication. The substitution of \(/sI:/\ for \(/fI:/\ makes the
listener confuse with the words see and she, and that creates another problem. Other
sounds that create problem are \(/J/, /3/, /z/, and so on. Moreover, if the target
language permits closed syllables (syllables that end in a consonant), and the native
language permits only open syllables (those ending in a vowel), the student will have
trouble with closed syllables. Another example is that, if the target language permits
consonant clusters and the native language does not permit the same, the student will
have trouble with all consonant clusters. If a particular consonant does not occur in
the final position in the native language and if it does occur in the target language, this
will constitute a learning problem. These then are problems to be tested and taught
because this would become one of the most difficult pronunciation problems to be
changed for Tamil speakers learning English. Hence, it is the task of the language
teacher to identify the problems and then teach pronunciation to students.

5.5.8 Phonetics in Curriculum

It is very essential to learn the forty-four phonemes of English. It is indeed a
sad state that the students and even the language teachers do not know many of the
sounds of English and also when and where a particular phoneme should be used.
This is because when the curriculum gives importance to the alphabet it forgets the
sounds of the language. Equal emphasis has to be laid on the spoken aspect of the
language in the curriculum that recommends the English language learning.

Lenneberg proposes in his “Critical Period Hypothesis” that older learners of a second language rarely achieve native-like fluency. The learners of the age chosen for the study would find it difficult to change the pronunciation already learned or what is fixed in their brain because what they performed have come out of their habit or practice. Once a process becomes habitual, according to the behaviorist, it is indeed difficult to change the permanent habit permanently. Hence, stress must be laid to integrate phonetics as part of the curriculum right from the Kindergarten classes so that learning the sounds of the language becomes a habit. This is what the Silent Way Approach also emphasizes: that individual sounds should be taught from the very first day of the class.

5.5.9 Practising Remedial Measures Through Application of Theories

5.5.9.1 The Acculturation Model

The learners taken for the study had anxiety or nervousness while reading. According to the Acculturation Model, this is due to culture shock or the fear towards the target language culture. This model, predicts that a learner will acquire the target language more easily when they acculturate. Learners face social and cultural problems while learning English. Hence, a teacher should understand the socio-psychological aspects of second language learning. The social conditions within and outside the school and in the community around are not favourable for the majority of the learners. Only a few students take effort to acquire English beyond the routine of their daily English class. These students show more self-confidence in using English in conversations. The others are in an environment that does not motivate them to speak English. Teachers should find out the social condition in the lives of such
students in the classroom and school, and engage them in special activity that provides opportunities for students, for involvement rather than shying away.

5.5.9.2 Discourse Theory

This theory provides examples of how teachers can improve their teaching practices by investigating the actual language use both in and out of the classroom. Students can learn the language though exposure to discourse. In the classroom, the teacher should maximize the opportunities for the students to learn English. The interaction pattern should not hinder the desire to learn the language. By this means, the teacher can also study his/her behaviour. He/She should also try to understand if the teaching-learning process is effective. Needed changes should be made in the tasks given in the English class and it should be an integral part of the learning programme. For this a natural route should be followed as to how to hold conversations.

5.5.9.3 The Acquisition Learning Hypothesis

According to Krashen’s acquisition learning hypothesis, language can either be acquired or learnt. What is acquired would stay in mind for so long than what is learnt. But it is difficult to find a real situation to learn the language in a non-native environment. Hence, teachers can create real-life situations which will help the learners to communicate naturally and acquire the sounds of English. Learners should be continuously exposed to the language in the school so that the sounds of English can be acquired easily.

5.5.9.4 The Monitor Hypothesis

According to the monitor hypothesis, learners use their monitor to check if their utterance is right or wrong. There are both over users and under users of this monitor. Students, who always monitor themselves and are very particular about the
accuracy of the language, would slow down their speech when they find there is no
development in their production. On the other hand, under users never monitor their
output as they are contented with their articulation. Language teachers can see to it
that learners use the monitor in a necessary level. The under users should be
motivated to use it so that their level of accuracy is increased. The teacher should
encourage both accuracy and fluency among the students. Right motivation will lead
students to use accurate sounds fluently.

5.5.9.5 Natural Order Hypothesis

This theory states that learners acquire features of a language in a predictable
order. It also suggests that this natural order occurs independently of careful teaching.
Hence, language teachers should see to it that a proper order is followed with regard
to phonology. Sounds which are easier and that exist in their mother tongue should be
taught first, followed by the difficult sounds.

5.6 Limitations of the Research

The respondents chosen were limited to the learners of the ninth and tenth
classes. Further the respondents were limited only to two kinds of schools. In addition
to this, there is an unequal distribution of learners chosen from CBSE and SB schools
regarding the locality. SB students chosen are clustered around rural areas in the
district. On the other hand, CBSE students were evenly chosen from both rural and
urban areas.

Spontaneous speech is not studied and the instrument is designed with the
reading task so that it could be recorded, and analysis done later. Certain sounds in
certain positions could not be studied because they do not occur frequently in normal
speech and in the passage given. It was difficult to access the responses of the learners
who had reading aberrations, learners who used the avoidance strategy to read, and
the learners who remained inaccessible now and then. These are the inadequacies of the study.

**5.7 Scope for Further Research**

- The study may provide a useful framework for further research into the pronunciation problems in other parts of the country. It may also provide useful outline for the need to study the pronunciation problems faced by bilingual/multilingual learners. It would also be interesting to undertake a study on the psychological and sociological aspects of learners – how one feels when subjected to changes in one’s pronunciation.

- More research is called for particularly on the various other aspects of phonetics like supra-segmental features, intonation, stress and rhythm.

- An experimental study could be conducted to find out acquisition difficulties of the learners.

- Problem sounds could be studied in relation to other adjacent sounds.

- The root cause of the problems like mother-tongue interference, spelling-pronunciation, epenthesis, metathesis, apocope and syncope could be microscoped.

- Gender is another area of interest. One could probe this aspect more deeply to identify problems in pronunciation which could possibly vary according to gender.

- A large scale study could be conducted to investigate the problems in pronunciation of learners who vary from state to state and city to city.

- Future research could also explore the problems in pronunciation faced by higher secondary students and undergraduate students and especially students of literature.
• Studies on how teachers perceive the problems and performances of teachers in the language class also promise scope.

5.8 Other Implications of the Research

The results of this dissertation provide an insight into the problems of pronunciation faced by the students of high school level. They have implications for a number of fields of relevance.

5.8.1 Implications for Teachers

The biggest concern is the problems of pronunciation prevalent among teachers. The results suggest that teachers find handling these problems in their English class a tough task. The process of making decision reveals that teachers of English primarily focus on serving the institution where they work, rather than the students or themselves. The review of literature also suggests that teachers should be made aware of the problems. The findings emerging from the study suggest that both CBSE and SB teachers give importance only to content part, and not to the skill part of the language. It is time teachers of English focus on pronunciation in the language class for a better future. For an effective English language class, spoken language with the standard pattern of English should be the cornerstone.

5.8.2 Implications for Institutions

The results of this study strongly point to the fact that institutions have a prominent role in promoting learners with good pronunciation. Institutions must promote best teachers who are not only highly qualified but also have excellent language skills in them, and set their primary focus on serving and empowering the society with the same kind of learners. The classroom/institution should be the “teachers’ home-territory, a place where teachers are experts in their field and masters
of their environment” (Brown and Rodgers 111). They must also work towards institutionalizing the practice of imbibing good teaching qualities among teachers.

5.9 Suggestions

If pronunciation is given due consideration, a creation of English pronunciation forum in schools/districts would be highly beneficial. It would help teachers involve in reflective practices, consequently encouraging their spoken language. Awareness programmes could be incorporated at all levels of education to sensitize the importance of pronunciation to the global language. In addition, teachers must participate in effective language seminars and workshops, and involve in reflective sessions on the practice of their profession. This would make teachers competent and enable them to raise their professional standards. All these would certainly lead to a better generation of English speaking students in Kanniyakumari district.

The world today is increasingly transforming into a truly global one, and apart from technology and changes in culture, the English language is undeniably one of the key factors that links the citizens of the world. No longer is any part of the world sequestered away from the groundswell of information and progress. If the individuals of the district are to evolve into key players or even intelligent observers of this phenomenon, a grasp of the English language as an effective means of communication is imperative. This thesis will help one to understand the disadvantages that students currently face as learners of English, with specific focus on pronunciation. Interwoven with these findings, are suggestions towards improvements that could be made in teaching and learning methods, so that correct pronunciation, among other skills, is passed along with optimum results. It reiterates the suggestion that teachers need to walk an extra mile when it comes to sharpening
their English-teaching skills, and also foster a spirit of keenness in their students for the same. It has been established that there is a gap in certain teaching methods in educational institutions with regards to the teaching of the pronunciation of the English language, and this study provides remedial measures to fill in these gaps. The researcher presents forward this study with the intention that it will be used as a dynamic tool or guide by the teachers of the English language who wish to impart the language in all its modern functionalities and aesthetics.