



A STUDY OF THE ERRORS IN USING WORD CLASS IN WRITTEN ENGLISH BY STUDENTS OF PROFESSIONAL COURSES IN RELATION TO CERTAIN PSYCHO-SOCIAL VARIABLES
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RESEARCH PAPER IN EDUCATION**ABSTRACT**

The effective way for better communication either in spoken form or written form lies in the proper use of Word Class. Students learn parts of speech / word class from the beginning of their studies in English. This study attempts to bring to the light the knowledge of students of professional courses. The basic knowledge of word class helps a person either to communicate orally or in written form the idea that he wants to convey in a clear way. All the words that we use in our day to day life come under the different categories called word classes (or parts of speech) according to the part they play in a sentence. The main word classes in English are: 1. Noun 2. Adverb 3. Conjunction 4. Verb 5. Pronoun 6. Determiner 7. Adjective 8. Preposition 9. Exclamation. It is very essential to all the students from the very early stages of schooling to know and learn the key English language words, aspects, vocabulary etc. As a result they will have basic knowledge of the language. The exposure to different aspects of English language is to be continued in higher classes so as to enable them to use English language for better communication. In this fast changing global scenario it is of immense value to have good knowledge of Word Class.

INTRODUCTION

“When linguists began to look closely at English grammatical structure in the 1940s and 1950s, they encountered so many problems of identification and definition that the term Parts of Speech soon fell out of favor, Word Class being introduced instead. Word classes are equivalent to Parts of Speech, but defined according to strict linguistic criteria.” (David Crystal, The Cambridge Encyclopedia of the English Language, 2nd ed. Cambridge University, Press, 2003)

Definition of word class. A set of words that display the same formal properties, especially their inflections and distribution similar to the more traditional term part of speech.

The two major families of Word Classes are 1. **Lexical** (open) classes {nouns, verbs, adjective, adverbs} and 2. **Function** (Closed) classes {determiners, particles, prepositions, and others}. The distinction between Lexical and Grammatical meaning determines the first division in the classification – Form –class words and Structure-class words. In general, the form classes provide the primary lexical content; the structure classes explain the grammatical or structural relationship. We can think of the form-class words as the bricks of the language and the structure words as the mortar that holds them together.

Words are fundamental units in every sentence. Consider the words in the following sentence:

My brother drives a big car: We can tell almost instinctively that brother and car are the same type of word, and also that brother and drives are different types of words. By this we mean that brother and car belong to the same word class. Similarly, when we recognize that brother and drives are different types, we mean that they belong to different word classes.

We recognize seven MAJOR word classes:

CRITERIA FOR WORD CLASSES

We use a combination of three criteria for determining the word class of a word:

1. The meaning of the word
2. The form or 'shape' of the word
3. The position or 'environment' of the word in a sentence.

ROLE OF 'WORD CLASSES' (PARTS OF SPEECH) IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Traditional grammar of English following an approach which can be traced back to Latin, agreed that there were eight parts of speech in English – Noun, Pronoun, Verb, Adjective, Adverb, Preposition, Conjunction, and

Interjection. Some books paid separate attention to the participle, some additionally mentioned the article but 'Parts of Speech' was an essential first step in learning about English Grammar (David 2003).

Why is it necessary to talk about 'Word Class' at all? The main reason is to be able to make general and economical statements, about the way the words of the language behave. It is only a matter of common sense to generalize when linguists began to look closely at English Grammatical structure in the 1940s and 1950s. They encountered so many problems of identification and defining that the term "parts of speech". It soon fell out of favour and 'Word Class' being introduced instead. 'Word Classes' are equivalent to "parts of speech" but defined according to strictly linguistic criteria (David, 2003).

NEED FOR THE STUDY

National policy on Education adopted by the Govt. of India in the year 1968 stressed that "Special emphasis need to be laid on the study of English and other international languages. World knowledge is growing at a tremendous pace especially in science and technology. India must not only keep up this growth, but also make her own significant contributes to it. For this purpose study of English deserves to be specially strengthened. Though the students at U.G level have touch with grammar at the +2 lever for two years as well as the school for five years at least. There is a need for them to pay special attention on English structures, composition and usage if they have to learn spoken and written English without language mistakes. The main objective of stressing grammar at this stage is to use the language than to provide information about the language.

The studies of Joshi (1974), Vamdatt (1988) and Achary (1990) showed that the students at college level or at high school do commit mistakes in using grammatically correct language. This shows that there is a need to assess the English Language proficiency lever of professional college students, to identify the grammatical errors in respect to the 'Word Class' is an essential first step in learning English Language. More over English Language learning at this stage has a prominent role in the academic as well as professional point of view.

So far there is no study related to the general proficiency of level of English Language in terms of grammatical corrections of the students studying in different Professional courses in Chittoor District, Andhra Pradesh especially

Tirupati Region. Hence there is a need to identify the errors committed by students of Professional courses.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM: A Study of the Errors in Using Word Class in Written English by the Students of Professional Courses in relation to Certain Psycho-Social Variables.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To estimate the general performance of the students of professional courses in English language with respect to using ‘word classes’.

{The above objective will be studied in relation to ‘gender’, ‘locality’, and the ‘management’ of the colleges to which the sample of the subjects belonged.}

2. To find out whether there is any significant difference in the performance of men and women students in English language with respect to “Word Class”.

3. To find out whether there is any significant difference in the performance of Urban and Rural students in English language with respect to “Word Class”.

4. To find out whether there is any significant difference in the performance of private and government students in English language with respect to “Word Class”.

5. To find out the grammatical aspects with respect to “Word Class” in which the Sample of Subjects are poor and to find out those aspects in which the sample of subjects performed better.

HYPOTHESES

❖ There would be no significant difference between the **men** and **women** students of professional courses in English Language performance with respect to usage of ‘Word Class’.

❖ There would be no significant difference between **urban** and **rural** students of professional courses in English Language performance with respect to usage of ‘Word Class’.

❖ There would be no significant difference between the **government** and **private** students of professional courses in English Language performance with respect to usage of ‘Word Class’.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The major objective of the present study is to estimate the general performance of the students of professional courses in the English language with respect to the usage of Word Class. The tool is prepared so as to know the performance of the students in identifying the word class. As it is an

	Adj	Verb	Adverb	prep	Pron	Conj	Noun	Inter
Mean	13.32	18.06	1.63	6	5.24	6.06	9.3	2.08
SD	5.69	8.02	1.05	4.26	3.90	3.82	6.87	2.01
Percentage	60.47	56.43	54.32	42.84	40.29	41.62	32.07	14.85

5. Performance of Men and Women Students with Mean percentage, ‘t’ values with regard to the different aspects of Word Class.

	Noun		Pronoun		Verb		Adverb		Adjective		Preposition		Conjunction		Interjection	
	M	%	M	%	M	%	M	%	M	%	M	%	M	%	M	%
Men	10.13	34.93	5.59	42.29	18.14	56.68	1.55	51.66	13.10	59.47	6.67	47.63	7.07	44.85	2.15	15.35
Women	8.59	29.62	49.96	38.14	17.99	56.21	1.79	56.99	13.54	61.47	5.32	37.98	6.25	39.06	2.01	14.35
‘t’ value	@ 1.76		@ 1.10		@ 1.15		@ 1.23		@ 0.61		@ 2.54 **		@ 1.90		@ 0.28	

Note : @ - ‘t’ value is not significant ** - ‘t’ value is significant at 0.05 level.

6. Performance of Urban and Rural Students in identifying “Word Class”

	Noun		Pronoun		Verb		Adverb		Adjective		Preposition		Conjunction		Interjection	
	M	%	M	%	M	%	M	%	M	%	M	%	M	%	M	%
Urban	10.3	35.7	6.0	46.5	19.89	62.1	1.7	59.66	15.0	68.4	6.5	46.5	7.4	45	2.5	17.9

objective type tool, the maximum scores for any item is 1 and minimum score for any item is 0. The data collected from the selected Ss was analyzed by using means S.Ds and percentages. Relevant tests of significance were also applied wherever necessary.

1. GENDER DIFFERENCE IN ACHIEVEMENT:

Means and SD’s of Men and Women students along with results of ‘t’ test

Group	No	Mean	SDs	‘t’
Men	120	64.35 (44.63%)	14.25	1-45@
Women	120	60.41 (43.77%)	26.05	

Note: 1 @‘t’ value not significant at 0.05 level.

2. The number of parenthesis indicates the percentage of means.

2. LOCALITY DIFFERENCE IN ACHIEVEMENT:

Means and SD’s of Urban and Rural students along with results of ‘t’ test

Group	No	Mean	SDs	‘t’
Urban	120	69.43 (55.33%)	26.74	5.50 ***
Rural	120	40.09 (50.33%)	8.61	

Note: 1. ***‘t’ value is significant at 0.001 level.

2. The numbers in the parenthesis indicate the mean percentage.

3. MANAGEMENT DIFFERENCES:

Means and SD’s and ‘t’ values of Government and Private College Students with respect to the usage of Word Class

Group	No	Mean	SDs	‘t’
Government	120	49.2 (35.65%)	16.54	11.82 ***
Private	120	75.56 (54.75%)	16.37	

Note: 1. ***‘t’ value is significant at 0.001 level.

2. The numbers in the parenthesis indicate the mean percentage.

4. Performance of different sub-groups of SS in each of the word class arranged in the hierarchical order according to their level of achievement.

Mean score SDs and ‘t’ value of the Urban and Rural students with regard to different aspects of Word Class.

n	8	0	5	2		5	9		7	1	2	5				2
Rural	8.34	28.7	4.4	34.1	16.24	50.7	1.4	49.32	61.5	52.5	5.4	5.47	6.13	38.3	1.65	11.2
l	0	4	4			5	8		7	2	7			1		8
't' value	2.37 *		@ 0.03		3.76 ***		2.38 *		5.14 ***		@ 0.98		2.48 *		5.37 ***	

Note : @ - 't' value is not significant

* - 't' value is significant at 0.001 level.

*** - 't' value is significant at 0.001 level.

7. Performance of the Government and Private students in identifying the 'Word Class'.

Mean score SDs and 't' value of the Government and Private students with regard to different aspects of Word Class.

	Noun		Pronoun		Verb		Adverb		Adjective		Preposition		Conjunction		Interjection	
	M	%	M	%	M	%	M	%	M	%	M	%	M	%	M	%
Urban	6.45	4.25	3.59	2.96	15.78	8.46	1.29	0.99	11.15	4.78	4.10	2.92	5.51	2.83	1.71	1.11
Rural	12.26	7.56	6.89	4.02	20.35	6.27	1.98	0.96	15.5	0.96	7.89	4.53	8.23	3.31	2.45	1.44
't' value	2.37 *		@ 0.03		3.76 ***		2.38 *		5.14 ***		@ 0.98		2.48 *		5.37 ***	

Note : @ - 't' value is not significant *** - 't' value is significant at 0.001 level.

On the whole it can be inferred that the overall performance of the Ss in identifying the Word Class is only 62.38 percent. There is no significant difference between the men and women students in identifying the word class. The urban students could perform better compared to the students hailing from rural areas. There is a superior significant difference between the Government and Private College students. It is a matter of fact to know that the performance of the Ss have performed well in the case of Adjectives and Verbs and there is noticeably performance in identifying the Nouns and Interjection.

CONCLUSION

- The overall percentage of the whole group is 45.20 percent with this percentage it could be inferred that the overall performance of the whole group in English language with respect to word class is below average.
- The mean percentage of men and women is below average. Therefore the hypothesis framed that "There would be no significant difference between men and women students in English language performance with respect to usage of "Word Class" is accepted for all the sub aspects of the Word Class with an exception to Preposition.
- The mean percentage of urban and rural students is of average and there is a significant difference in the 't' value. Therefore the hypothesis stating that "There would be no significant difference between urban and Rural students in English language performance with respect to usage "Word Class" is rejected.
- The mean percent of Private college students is above average and that of Government is below average. Therefore the hypothesis stating that "There would be no significant difference between government and Private students in English language performance with respect to usage "Word Class" is rejected.
- The overall performance of the whole group is found to be better in 'Adjectives' and the performance of identifying the 'Nouns' and 'Interjections' is poor.
- The performance level of men and women though do not show any significant difference, their level of achievement in various sub aspects differed. The performance of men and women students was above average in identifying the 'Adjective', 'Verb', and 'Adverb' the performance in 'Preposition', 'Conjunction' is below average in the performance in 'Noun', and 'Interjection' is poor.
- The performance level of the Urban students is better, compared to that of rural students. The level of performance was found to be above average with respect to 'Adjective', 'Verb', and 'Adverb' for both

Urban and Rural students. The performance level in 'Preposition', 'Pronoun' and 'Conjunction' is below average for urban students and poor performance of the rural students. The performance in 'Noun' and Interjection is found to be poor for both Urban and Rural students.

- The private managed college students have performed well and are graded above average for almost all of the aspects of 'Word Class' except for 'Interjection'. The government college students could perform well only in the aspect of 'Adjective' and the remaining aspects of 'Word Class' are below average and poor performance.

EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

- ❖ From the analysis it is evident that the students have a nutshell knowledge of the basic concepts of the 'Word Class'. This can be revealed from their better performance in 'Adjectives' and a very low performance in the fore most aspect of the word class the Noun. The students should be provided with the basic knowledge of the language. As language is the basic means of communication. The students can be asked to communicate in the English language to learn the language.
- ❖ The lecturers can emphasize on the grammatical aspects irrespective of content being taught to the students in the language classes. Allotting some special time for the language to the students in the college hours will be helpful to the students. The students can be encouraged to interact within themselves in English without considering the syntax to be right or wrong by this at least the student will be familiar with the structuring of the sentences and the words to be used.
- ❖ In the schools, related T.V. Programmes, CDs, can be made available to the students which help them to learn the language. Language labs can be organized in the school with the resources available and encourage the students to participate in various activities like word games, puzzles, quizzes etc. So that they develop interest from their childhood and gradually get proficiency in the language.
- ❖ From the early stages of schooling, the students can be made to learn, the key English language words, aspects, vocabulary etc. So that at least they will have the basic knowledge of the language. To continue the same in higher classes, they can be given more exercise on vocabulary. So that they get good access over the structures of English.

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