

A Study on Effectiveness of Spoken English Classes on improving English Language Proficiency among Migrant Secondary School Students in Goa

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Abstract

In a country like India, language barriers exist not only in the pedagogy of English but in most languages. A country with 24 different official state languages and hundreds of dialects, the tongue of the people changes at every 20-30 kms. The existence of language differences, therefore, is not surprising. This hinders the process of education. People migrate in search of jobs, and their children have to be enrolled in schools which don't provide education in their mother tongue. Though this study is limited only to the state of Goa, the problem studied has international relevance. The project lays an emphasis on teaching migrant students to speak in English. The aim of the study is to develop language proficiency among migrant students of secondary schools in Goa. A sample of 30 migrant students ranging from class 5th to 7th were selected for the study. Classes were conducted after school twice a week as a part of this study. A pre-test was first conducted to understand the English language proficiency of the migrant students based on their performance level. Various intervention strategies and activities were conducted to develop language proficiency of the migrant students. After the completion of lesson activities, a post test was conducted where in similar task to the pre-test was given to see the difference and effect of the activities and intervention strategies. The results show decrease in the average count of mistakes committed per 10 sentences spoken or written. There was an increase in confidence level of children and also a positive approach towards participation in class activity. Hence, the effectiveness of intervention strategies could be noted.

Keywords: - English Language Proficiency, Intervention Strategies, Communication Skills

Introduction

In a country like India, such language problems exist not only in the pedagogy of English but in most languages, as the position of a National language stands empty. A country with 24 different official state languages and hundreds of dialects, the tongue of the people changes at every 20-30 kms. The existence of language differences, therefore, is not surprising. This hinders the process of education.

People migrate in search of jobs, and their children have to be enrolled in schools which don't provide education in their mother tongue. In such conditions, language barrier plays a significant role in hindering the progress of the child. Various differences in dialects of a local language distinguish people based on their geographical locations leading to differences created between them. Commonly seen differences are between the dialect of the urban people in contrast to that of rural people. Such language differences affect the morale of the

student. In practicing the use of translation method while teaching English, a teacher uses the commonly used dialect of the local language which might not be understood by the students who are not of that locality. Such instances of language barriers need to be considered and comprehended while teaching English.

In such cases the migrant students face problems in developing language proficiency which is of utmost importance in today's world. As English progresses to be a widely spoken language throughout the globe, the necessity of its knowledge and efficiency increases day by day, especially in areas that are under-developed. Hence it is needed to develop out of the curriculum practices to help these students develop language proficiency and communicate effectively.

The real test is in countering these barriers. The two important pillars in overcoming these barriers are the teachers and the students. Discussing the role of the teacher: It is necessary to have an open and inclusive outlook while teaching in an inclusive classroom. The teacher should try and adapt to the language requirements of the students, or a language expert must be appointed to guide the student in their education.

The pupils find it difficult to speak, as at home they learn to speak their local language (Hindi, Konkani or Marathi) also the transition from native language to English from class 5th is challenge for the pupils. This is the reason why there is a need to have English classes to enhance their communication skills. The project aims in dealing with the fear which they have towards speaking English language. This in turn develops their self confidence level which increase to a great extent. Therefore, students must be motivated and encouraged to speak and complete the activity given to them. Hence in this way pupils must complete the given activity by using the fore fold skills of communication: listening, speaking, reading and writing.

The teacher should make efforts to know the basics of the student's native language, which can help foster a good bond between the student and teacher, and at the same time promote a positive morale and environment to the learner. As for the students, it is necessary to foster an inclusive attitude in their mind so that the cultural as well as language differences are overlooked, making the class a successful inclusive class. Extra efforts should be taken by starting community night schools, wherein time can be spent in teaching them to adapt to the new language of learning, and provide emphasis in learning English effectively. Language

barriers can be tackled with community cooperation, support from schools and willingness of the students.

The main purpose of conducting spoken English classes is to help student to understand, read and speak the language. This helps to build the students ability to speak correctly and confidently. The project stresses on the development of the four – fold skills of communication.

Aim: - The aim of this study is to

“Study on Effectiveness of Spoken English Classes on Improving English Language Proficiency Among Migrant Secondary School Students in Goa”

Objectives: -

- To test effectiveness of spoken English classes on language proficiency of migrant students
- To test effectiveness of the intervention activities on language usage of migrant students.
- To develop the four-fold skills of communication i.e. listening, reading and writing skills.

Hypothesis: -

- The spoken English classes will have a positive impact on the language proficiency of the migrant secondary school students of Goa.

Operational Definition: -

Independent Variable

Spoken English Classes: - In this study the term Spoken English Classes refer to a set of intervention strategies/ Activities/ Games conducted for the Experimental group to test its effectiveness on the language proficiency development.

Dependant Variable

Language Proficiency: - In this study the term Language Proficiency refers to the ability of the sample to use the English Language Effectively in their day to day communication.

Sampling: -

The sample for this study was selected using Purposive Sampling Technique. 30 migrant students who have migrated to the state of goa from other states of India were selected from within Std 5th to Std 7th for the study.

Experimental Design: -

This study is done using quasi – experimental research design. A single group study was conducted using Pre-test as a basis for studying the effectiveness of the intervention strategies under the Spoken English classes conducted.

Methodology: -

The study is done using Pre- Test and Post-test method to get results.

Pre-test: - The test consisted of one-minute talk for each student of the selected sample to assess the number of mistakes made while using the language for communication. Various topics of standard difficulty level were written on piece of paper and put in a bowl for the children to select from. The topics were like introducing myself, best friend, my mother, my hobbies, Favourite teacher, Favourite game etc. During pre-test it was noticed that most of the student's language and vocabulary usage was very poor. Listening and understanding of language was also poor among the students. Students used on average 30 words from other language for every 10 sentences spoken. The confidence level was observed to be low and lots of stammering was seen. There was a fear in their mind of making mistakes while speaking which led to making more mistakes.

To counter these problems various intervention strategies/ activities were designed focussing on the communication skills and were administered to the group for a period of 3 months two classes of 2 hours per week.

ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED

ACTIVITY 1: Introduce yourself

Skills: Speaking

Objectives: To enhance students speaking skills.

Procedure: Students are given 5 minutes to prepare themselves and they were asked to come to the front and introduce themselves, about their hobbies, likes and dislikes.

Homework: Each student has to introduce their best friend in the next class.

ACTIVITY 2: Newspaper Reading

Skills: Reading, Writing

Objectives: To enhance students reading skills through newspaper, Vocabulary development

Material: English newspaper.

Procedure: Students are given Local English newspapers and each one was told to read an article from the newspaper. They are tested on Pronunciation, Articulation and Pausing. They were also asked to underline difficult words and write them down, find its meaning in dictionary.

Homework: Students were told to read one article from the newspaper at home and find new words, their meanings from dictionary and use them in sentences.

ACTIVITY 3: Picture description

Skills: Writing

Objectives: To enhance students Writing skills.

Materials: Pictures

Procedure: Students are given 5 minutes to look at the pictures and later they had to write a description of the picture seen in 50 words. The students were taught about perspectives in describing a picture. Front to back, left to right focus background etc. the students were taken out of class in the open and asked to describe what they see.

Homework: Another picture is given to the students to take home and they are asked to describe the picture for the next class.

ACTIVITY 4: listen to me with your ears

Skills: Listening

Objectives: To enhance students listening skills and retention.

Materials: A Story, A Song

Procedure: A story is read in the class and students are asked to listen it carefully. After reading it, students were asked questions based on the story. A song was played and fill in the blanks question were given. Students had to listen to song and fill the missing words.

Homework: Students were asked to listen to any English value-based song and find words from it and bring it in the next class.

ACTIVITY 5: Drawing Speaks

Skills: Speaking, Listening

Objectives: To enhance students Speaking and Listening skills.

Materials: Drawing Paper and Crayons

Procedure: Students are told to draw any picture on the paper, they were given 15 minutes than that picture was given to other student and was asked to come and explain that picture.

Homework: The students are told to select a picture of their own choice and interpret that for the next class.

ACTIVITY 6: North East West South

Skills: Writing Speaking

Objectives: To enhance students writing and speaking skills

Material: - chart paper, sketch pen

Procedure: four chart papers were placed in 4 corners of the classroom and each of the communication skill was written on each chart. The students were divided in groups and were placed near each chart. At every 20 seconds a whistle was given where in the student moved from one chart to the other. They had written anything that crossed their mind regarding to the skill that was written on the chart.

Homework: students were told to study the different things put down on each chart.

POST TEST

After the completion of 3 months of spoken English classes with similar activities as mentioned above a post test was conducted on those students to test the results of the intervention along the standard as the pre-test which had been conducted earlier. A significant difference was noted in various aspects. The results are discussed below.

Observations: -

The researcher maintained a research diary to record observations of the students from day 1 of the research. Various changes in attitudes confidence etc were recorded in the diary. The data was analysed qualitatively more than a quantitative analysis. Only the results of the pre-test and post-test were collected in a quantitative manner to observe the difference in marks. Rest all behaviours and nonverbal cues were observed during each class. Interviews of other teachers teaching them school subjects were also conducted to see whether they observed any

changes in the behaviour and communicative abilities of the students. the results are discussed below.

Results and Discussion: -

- The average count of mistakes made per 10 sentences was reduced significantly from 30 mistakes to 12 mistakes over the period of 3 months of intervention activities.
- Significant improvement was also seen in the use of vocabulary and shift from using words from native language to using more and appropriate words from English language itself.
- The confidence level of the migrant students showed an increase as observed by the researcher as well as other teachers from the school.
- Some level of fluency was attained by the students as an effect of the spoken English classes that were conducted.
- Students willingly volunteered to take part in activities that involved speaking in English in front of the class or the school assembly and such activities.
- The difference was also spotted in their school examination marks which also showed an increase in marks.
- The activities developed students listening skills and this was seen through their classroom participation to giving answers to the questions asked by the teacher which earlier they did not give. The students could I now understand what the person in front was speaking and hence could answer effectively.
- There was some improvement also seen in the articulation and pronunciation of words among the language spoken by the migrant students.
- The students also developed habit of reading newspaper and studying newly found words to improve their vocabulary. This was told by one of the student during feedback.

Conclusion: -

Hence it can be said that the hypothesis “The spoken English classes will have a positive impact on the language proficiency of the migrant secondary school students of Goa” is accepted. the intervention activities conducted as part of the study showed positive impact on English language proficiency of the students and helped achieve the objectives set by the researcher. The development in the Four-Fold skills of communication was achieved through

the various activities conducted which focussed on each skill particularly. Through the project mostly focuses on the developing the speaking abilities of the students, there are many other skills which develop simultaneously. Since each of the skills is interdependent, they cannot be developed in isolation. Skills like analysis, problem solving were also developed through these activities. Thus, conducting such spoken English classes for students weak in English where in such activities are conducted is an effective way to develop language proficiency and improve communication skills. These activities can also be carried out for the migrant labourers who do inter-state travels in search of work.

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