

Speaking Skills: Teaching of English Using Computers to Rural Students of IX Standard

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Abstract

There are a growing demand and pressure on students to have a fair knowledge and command of English at present owing to the vast expansion of the knowledge era. It will not suffice if the students know about constructing sentences based on simple patterns. Command of expression is what is needed students are at a bay when they face interviews Inadequate possession of speaking skill of the students at the Higher secondary result in difficulty in attaining better speaking skill Teachers, have to find a way to enhance the performance of the students in learning Grammar. Ample opportunity should be given for promoting intellectual skills, critical thinking, reasoning and problem-solving ability. A suitable environment is to be created to develop the required skills to have a command over speaking skill.

Keywords: command of English expression enhance teaching-learning strategies effectiveness of CAI

Objectives of the Study

To study the effectiveness of SPEAKING STRATEGY in teaching English.

To trace out the degree of Achievement in English of the students of standard IX.

Scope of the Study

The scope of the study is concerned with the following area

1. Preparation of CAI module
2. Preparation of Achievement test in English Grammar.
3. Performing an experiment to find the effectiveness of CAI module upon teaching English for students of IX standard.

Background of the Study

A curriculum for teaching speaking skill should attempt to get learner involvement in learning the lesson. Talley and Hui-Ling (2014) suggest that English speaking curriculum should take cognizance of international and local cultures which should coexist mutually.

"A curriculum should provide a lot of classroom activities.

Tuan and Mai (2015) indicate the factors that affect students' speaking skill such as motivation, confidence, anxiety, time, planning, amount of support, standard performance, listening ability and feedback during speaking activities. For students to have an effective conversation, they must develop listening skills to understand what is spoken of. The Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approaches require learner's participation by sharing ideas, speaking freely,

Hypotheses

1. There is a significant difference in the mean scores for Achievement in English in the pre-test between Control group and the Experimental group.
2. There is a significant difference in the mean scores in Achievement in English between the pre-test and Post-test for the Control group.
3. There is a significant difference in the mean scores Achievement in English between the pre-test and Post-test for the Experimental group
4. There is a no significant difference in the mean scores in Achievement in English between the Post-test performance of the Control group and Experimental group.
5. Gap closures in experimental groups will be greater than that of the Control group.

Statement of the Problem

It is imperative that the teaching of English should be improved. As there is the paucity of available in English, in India, there is a genuine need to produce self-instructional materials. Retention of already learnt concepts, facts and ideas through reinforcement is an important aspect of effective teaching and learning. How far the self-instructional materials are useful as a reinforcement strategy is also to be studied. Hence a study is carried out in this area.

Experimental Design

Considering the major objectives of the study and preconditions of experimental research designs, the investigator has adopted the quasi-experimental design for the present study.

Variables Considered in the Present Study

The variables are the conditions or characteristics that the experimenter manipulates, controls or observes. The investigator has identified three major types of variables in the present study. They are Independent variables which have to be manipulated, Dependent variables which were to be seen as change due to manipulation of independent variables and Intervening variables which were to be controlled or to be matched.

Independent or Treatment Variables

The independent variables are those manipulated or treated by the experimenter to ascertain their relationship or effect on observed phenomena. In the present investigation, independent or treatment variables considered are conventional method of teaching and self-instructional methods viz., Computer Assisted Method

Dependent Variables

The dependent variables are the conditions that appear, disappear or change as the experimenter introduce, remove or change independent variables. The dependent variables of the present study are an achievement in English (knowledge, understanding and application) obtained by the students of the control and experimental groups.

Definitions of Major Terms in the Study

Speaking Strategy This is the prevailing classroom teaching method in most of the Indian Schools which is dominated by the teacher and less participation from the students. In this method, the teacher makes use of the prepared lesson plans, prescribed textbooks, teaching skills and available teaching aids to make the learning effective. This method of learning is called CTM in the present study.

It is the method adopted by a subject teacher under normal classroom teaching-learning circumstances most of the time. Here the teacher imparts knowledge to the pupils with the help of the textbook, block board and other teaching aids and with the help of the teaching skills or a set of teacher behaviours. The lecture is the main feature of this method. In the conventional method of teaching, the teacher dominates in the class and pupil participation is limited. A similar process is adopted in the present study. The selected content unit on 'English' was divided into small units (which are explained in the earlier part of this chapter) and planned to teach in five days (One 45 minutes session per day). All the selected students in the present study are taught the unit 'English' by Conventional Method of Teaching and this group of students who undergo teaching-learning experiences is called the Conventional Teaching Method Group.

Control Group

The group of students who are taught the topic of current electrostatics and electricity by the Conventional Method of Teaching and do not receive any reinforcement through self-instructional methods is called Control Group in the study.

The group of students who receive the reinforcement through after the Conventional Method of Teaching form the experimental group in the present study.

Experimental Group

Speaking strategy is also a self-instructional method employed in the present study which refers to a learning situation in which the students interact with and are guided by a computer through a course of study aimed at achieving certain instructional goals. Speaking strategy software packages are developed in English. A group of selected students are taught or go reinforcement through Speaking strategy on 'English'. This experimental group is termed as SPEAKING STRATEGY group in the present study.

Reinforcement Strategy

It is a technique used for reviewing, relearning and retaining the already learnt concepts, facts skills and ideas through the Conventional Teaching Method. In the present study, the Speaking strategy is used as a reinforcement strategy in reviewing and relearning the subject content in 'English'.

Learning

Learning refers to a relatively permanent change in behaviour as a result of experience. In this study, it means, development of cognitive skills (knowledge, understand and application) in the selected content areas on English which are to be assessed in terms of achievement and retention.

Achievement

Achievement is the significant difference in the mean scores in English between the Pre-test and the Post-test

Criterion-referenced Test (CRT)

It is formed of hundred objective type questions from 'English' designed to obtain the evidence to whether the desired capability in a student has been developed or not.

Tools Used in the Study

The investigator has developed or adopted the following tools to generate the data for the present study.

- Speaking strategy
- Criterion-Referenced Test (CRT)

Pilot Study

A pilot study was carried out, by taking thirty students of grade XII. It was meant for validation of the items constructed in the draft CRT, the Computer Assisted Materials and the Speaking strategy packages. Based on the pilot study, the CRT, Computer Assisted Materials and SPEAKING STRATEGY software packages were modified by deleting certain items and recasting and rewording of certain words and sentences in the item as well as in the instructional materials. The investigator also adopted the following procedure in the validation of CRT.

Method of Experimental Study

Three study phases have been employed in conducting this study. The data collection was spread over for a period of two months from June to July 2007

Fifteen teaching sessions (45 minutes each) were required for this entire study in each session of the school. Students from Govt. H.S.School were involved in the study.

Phase-1 Identification and Development of Self-Instructional Packages and Tools

In this phase, the investigator has developed the Computer Assisted Modules, Computer Assisted Instructional software, Lesson Plans and Criterion-Referenced Tests, Pilot study for the validation of self-instructional packages and for validation of CRT and a Pre-study to establish validity and reliability of the tools were also conducted at this stage.

Phase-2 Experimental Phase-1

In the second phase of the study, the investigator conducted the pre-test on the sample selected from grade XII. The investigator taught the unit 'English' to all the students by the Conventional Method of Teaching. The topic was covered within fifty days by taking one contact session of 45 minutes per day. One period (teaching session of 45 minutes) each was taken to teach each subunit on English.

After completing these units, on the seventh day, a pre-test (Test-2) is administered by using the CRT, to assess the achievement of cognitive skills in 'English'.

Phase-3 Experimental Phase-2

Students were divided into two groups by random selection to form the control and experimental groups. The experimental group was called as Speaking strategy group. The students of Speaking strategy group were given reinforcement through Computer Assisted materials for a duration of ten teaching periods. On completion of each module, a break of 20 minutes is was given to the students. The students of Speaking strategy group were sent to the Computer Lab, and an introductory talk was given to them regarding the operation of a computer keyboard and the study of packages on English. Fortunately, all the students of the SPEAKING STRATEGY group had previous experience in using the computer keyboard. Special care is also taken to avoid the meeting of the students of the experimental and control groups during these intervals. The students of the control group were sent out of the class and were not given any type of reinforcement on the content on English.

After giving reinforcement to the experimental groups through PLM and Speaking strategy, all the students including the control group were called together, and a Post - Test was administered on the same day, with the help of the same CRT.

Variables Controlled during the Experimental Phases

The investigator himself taught the unit 'Electricity' to the whole group of students through Conventional Teaching Method. Thus 'teacher variable' was controlled.

The PIM and Speaking strategy packages were

developed with the help of the same content or lesson plan for teaching 'Electricity' by Conventional Teaching Method. The Speaking strategy was employed as a reinforcement strategy to the students in the experimental groups selected for the study. Thus, the treatment variables were controlled.

The students participated in the pilot study and pre-study were not involved in the sample selected for the main study.

The experimental groups were given reinforcement through PIM and SPEAKING STRATEGY simultaneous Reinforcement was given in a single day by taking one teaching session for each lest experimental groups may interact with that of the control group, regarding the content reinforcement which may affect the data of the present study, if the reinforcement was given five days, covering one module per day. That was the reason behind giving reinforcement to experimental groups covering the five modules in a single day itself. During the reinforce time, a break of 20 minutes each was given on completion of each module. However, special care was taken to avoid the meeting of Speaking strategy group with the Control group, during intervals.

The investigator had directed the English teachers of the participating schools not to teach topic 'Electricity', till the experiment was over.

Modules - Illustrations

Communicative Approach Selected Situations

Section - A

Building Blocks/Core Sentences/Structural

Occasion 1: Ability

1. Can you drive a car?
2. Do you think you can walk ten kilometres?
3. Do you know how to type?
4. Are you good at cricket?
5. He might finish the work on time.

Occasion 2: Advice

1. Please give me your advice.
2. What'd you advise me to join the Navy?
3. Should I buy a cycle?
4. Would you advise me to join the Navy?
5. What do you recommend?

6. Kindly suggest me you recommend?
7. If I were you, I would not accept the offer.
8. I think you should be punctual.
9. You'd better talk less.
10. You should be polite.
11. You ought not to have attended school.
12. You should not get up late.
13. It's up to you to go over Ooty, but I want you to go over there in the winter.
14. Don't commit yourself.
15. Don't go by her advice.

Occasion 3: Apology

1. I'm sorry
2. I admit my fault.
3. I feel bad about my unruly behaviour.
4. Please accept my apologies for my late coming.
5. Please forgive me if I were rude.
6. That's all right.
7. Not at all.
8. No need.
9. Don't worry.
10. It does not matter at all

Occasion 4: Certainty

1. I am sure about it.
2. Are you certain about it?
3. Definitely.
4. Really.
5. Absolutely.
6. There's little doubt.

Occasion 5: Complaints

1. I'm afraid I have got something to tell.
2. I am sorry to bring this up, but there's no other go.
3. I wish you were not offended.

Generative Technique

S.No.	Key sentences	Substitute
1.	It's good to see you again	1 Nice 2 Wonderful 3 Delightful 4 Marvellous

2.	It's exciting to see him again	1 Meet 2 Talk to 3 Be with 4 hear from
3.	It's nice to have a conversation with her	1 them 2 every one 3 all of you 4 him
4.	Is it fine to meet you today?	1 this week 2 during our vacation 3 so soon
5.	Where have you been lately?	1 of late 2 Recently 3 Since last June
6.	I've been busy with extra work	1 tied up 2 involved engaged 3 activities 4 occupied
7.	I've had a lot of work to do	1 Gopal 2 recently 3 since last June
8.	I haven't seen you	1. for quite a while 2 hear from you 3 her.

Analysis and Interpretation

Hypothesis 1

Research Hypothesis (HR)

There will be a significant difference between the experimental group and the control group in the pre-test performance in Achievement in English.

Pretest	N	mean	SD	"t" value	Sig.
Control group	30	21.30	4.52	0.65	NS
Experimental group	30	20.47	5.32		
Control group	N	Mean	SD	"t" value	Sig.
Pre test	30	21.30	4.52	1.10	NS
Post-test	30	22.60	4.63		
Experimental Group	N	Mean	SD	"t" value	Sig.
Pre test	30	20.47	5.32	5.63	S
Post-test	30	27.77	4.71		

Post test	N	Mean	SD	"t" value	Sig.
Control group	30	22.60	4.63	4.29	S
Experimental group	30	27.77	4.71		

$df=58$ $t(0.05) = 1.96$ $t(0.01) = 2.58$

The table reveals the following facts.

GAP Closure

Gap closure is the difference between the mean score obtained by the group and the maximum score, called the perfect score. The closing gap score is the percentage up to which the gap towards perfection gets closed for a group. Per cent gap closed is defined by a variable which might be termed percentage of ignorance gap closed and stated as the percentage

Table: Gap Closure for Control Group and Experimental Group

S. No	Group	Gap Closure
1	Control	7.48
2	Experimental	32.00

An inspection of the above table discloses the fact that the mean of the gap closure in the unit test is in the range of for the control group.

Gap closure in the experimental group will be greater than that of the control group. Null Hypothesis (HR)

There will not be a significant difference between experimental and control groups in gap closures (unit wise)

Based on the analysis of the given data null hypothesis is rejected and the research hypothesis is accepted.

Interpretation

This is an experimental study with a pre-test-posttest equivalent group design. Entry behaviour test was conducted to separate control and experimental group to assess the prerequisite knowledge Both the groups are identical, and this indicates the nature of identicalness in tune with the pre-test mean scores of both groups. All the pre-test 't' value for control and experimental reveal no significant difference among control and experimental groups. This establishes their identical nature and no significant achievement

in their pre-requisite knowledge.

The means of pre-test scores and post-test scores of control as well as experimental groups differ significantly (0.01 level) with the post-test mean being greater than the pretest mean. The implication of that is that the level of acquiring the basic skills in English has increased due to the traditional method in the control group and PROGRAMMED LEARNING METHOD in the experimental group.

The post-test scores of the control and experimental group differ significantly. The means score of the experimental group is greater than of the control group.

Problem Restated

To what extent is the Speaking strategy effective in teaching English to the students of standard XII?

The sample consisted of 112 students for the pilot study and 70 for the final study. The sample was constituted by pupil studying in Std XII Control group, and experimental group were formed. The two groups were first matched before the treatment.

Instrumentation

For the purpose of evaluating a pupil's performance in this study, the following tools were developed and validated.

1. Speaking strategy modules
2. Achievement Test in speaking skill

The content and the items of the above tools were subject to validation. Experts established content validity. Item validity was made employing discriminative and difficulty indices. Reliability of the test was established by the rational equivalent method.

Findings

There was no significant difference in the performance of the control group and experiment group in the pre-test. This confirms that the control group and the experimental group were matched.

There was a significant difference in the post-test performance of both the control as well as the Experimental group. This is due to the effectiveness of the reinforcement by way of conducting the tests and exposure to the students the question pattern and awakening of awareness.

There was a significant difference between the performance of the control group and the experimental group in the post-test. This is in evidence of the effectiveness of Computer-assisted instructions.

The gap closure for the experimental group was greater than that of the control group. This further confirms the effectiveness of programmed teaching and learning.

It could be seen that the Speaking strategy was more effective than the traditional method in the teaching of English at the Higher secondary level.

Limitations of the study

The limitations of the study are as follows

1. This study was limited to the pupils studying in standard XII
2. The sample is not random.
3. The experiment was limited to a period of a few months.

Conclusion

Using multimedia in English teaching is the direction of reform and mainstream in English teaching. Compared with traditional English teaching, multimedia-aided English teaching has its supremacy over developing students' skills in English. At present teachers, in rural high schools should give importance to applying multimedia in English teaching and provide students with an audio-visual language learning environment. When employing multimedia, teachers should combine multimedia-aided English teaching with traditional English teaching and offer minimum information

and stimulating material. Besides, teachers should take into account the characters and interests of learners and their learning ability and lay stress their main role in English learning. With all the above factors considered, we can apply multimedia in an appropriate way in English classes. We can get more satisfying results and the teaching efficiency, and teaching quality can be augmented significantly.

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