

EFFECTIVENESS OF COOPERATIVE LEARNING METHOD IN TEACHING TAMIL

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Abstract

In India, the 'three-language-formula' was implemented for decades ago in order to bring the national integration, intra-state, inter-state and international communication effectively. According to 'three-language-formula', the language teaching has categories as follows: The first language to be studied must be the mother tongue or the regional language. The second language will be some other modern Indian languages or English for Hindi speaking States, and Hindi or English for non-Hindi speaking States. The third language will be English or a modern Indian language, which is not studied as the second language for both Hindi speaking and non-Hindi speaking States. Hence, it is clear that the first language that is, the mother tongue or the regional language should be given importance than that of other two categories. This paper exhibits the innovative method of teaching Tamil language and its impact on students. The investigator adopted experimental method to study the effectiveness of cooperative learning. The t-test was performed to find the mean differences between the group and inference were made on its basis.

Keywords: *three-language-formula, emotional, cognitive, social development, Union Territory*

Introduction

Language learning is crucial to not only meaningful learning in all the subject areas but also to the learners' emotional, cognitive and social development. New entrants with poor language background remain poor learners and poor performance in all areas unless specially helped in language skills. Failure to teach language skills properly and adequately in the early years will lead to difficulty in learning subsequently through the various stages like upper primary, secondary and higher secondary stages. In the words of Dr. Abdul Kalam, Education is one that fosters capacities such as spirit of enquiry, creativity, entrepreneurial and moral leadership, which are central to nation building in a democracy. Tamil is a Classical Dravidian language predominantly spoken by Tamil people of India. It has official status in the Indian state of Tamil Nadu and the Indian Union Territory of Puducherry. Tamil is also an official and national language of Sri Lanka and one of the official languages of Singapore. Tamil is one of the longest surviving classical languages in the world. Tamil-Brahmi inscriptions from 500 BC have been found on Adichanallur and 2,200-year-old Tamil-Brahmi inscriptions have been found on Samanamalai. It has been described as the only language of contemporary India which is recognizably continuous with a classical past. The variety and quality of classical Tamil literature has led to it being described as one of the great classical traditions and literatures of the world. Tamil literature has existed for over 2000 years. The earliest period of Tamil

literature, Sangam literature, is dated from 300 BC - AD 300. It has the oldest extant literature amongst other Dravidian languages. The earliest epigraphic records found on rock edicts and hero stones date from around the 3rd century BC. Tamil language inscriptions written in Brahmi script have been discovered in Sri Lanka, and on trade goods in Thailand and Egypt.

Tamil is the language in which the Thirukkural, Silappathikaaram, Kamba Ramayanam were written has observed, "Tamil is a language amazingly rich, efflorescent full of luxuriant growth of all kinds, and yet precise and strictly keeping within the framework of grammar which Tholkaappiyar laid down two thousand seven hundred years ago" by Devaneyya pavanar.

Language is the manifestations of man's attempt to verbalize his sensations, feelings and thoughts. It includes all forms of human interaction in which a person is influenced by another language. Self-realization of an individual is achieved gradually as receptive language skills provide children with information and as they develop expressive use of language that extends beyond social or utilitarian exchange to various models of creative expression on human relationship are enhanced as knowledge of one's own culture is acquired in large measure through language. All the language skills are interrelated. Listening, speaking, reading and writing are the basic language skills. The automatic process of listening can perhaps best be compared with some of the other functions of human beings. Both reading and listening require the learner to have readiness for accomplishment.

Speech distinguishes man from animals. Writing is one of the most important skills in learning a Language. It is evident that the mind of an individual plays round what has been taught in listening, speaking and reading. So the perfection of the four language skills are necessary for the correct use of language which in turn makes a person competent in social interaction as well as in one's own thought process.

Challenges faced by Tamil Teachers

The main problem for teaching Tamil is shortage of innovative methods in the schools. Teaching is done mainly by the teachers with the compulsion of finish off the subject for the examination, therefore they are in horrible situation and not able to create interest and positive attitude among the students. In higher secondary class, they don't have time to implement the different learning strategies for the benefit of their students. Normally Tamil subject is given less important by the higher secondary students. Students are looking for high scores in other subjects. Methods of teaching normally in Tamil are done by one way communication, where lecture is delivered and it is understood that student understands the topic. No attempt is generally made to get the feedback from the students on his comprehension.

Cooperative Learning

Co-operative learning is one of the recommended teaching-learning techniques in which students achieve learning goals by helping each other in a small social setting. It is a successful

teaching strategy in which small teams, each with students of different levels of ability, use a variety of learning activities to improve their understanding of a subject. Cooperative learning instructional approaches provide opportunities for a learner to interact with other learners in the class, and thus the approaches maximize the learner's intrinsic interest in learning. The Indian classrooms are highly heterogeneous in nature. In the classroom, the students have different abilities. Some can master the subject quickly and some take more time to attain mastery. But the teacher tailors his instruction to the whole group without taking note of the heterogeneity of the group. All models of cooperative learning utilize the basic elements of positive interdependence, individual accountability, collaborative/social skills, and group processing. The teacher's role in cooperative learning changes from being in front of the learners doing most of the talking (and most of the work) to becoming a facilitator who guides the learner learning both in academic as well as the social realms. Cooperative learning may best be defined as small heterogeneously mixed working groups of learners learning collaborative/social skills while working towards a common academic goal or task. Cooperative learning is a strategy that develops healthy interaction skills, promotes success of the individual student and group members, and forms personal and professional relationships (Johnson & Johnson, 1999). Five elements are essential for increasing the likelihood of success of a cooperation learning endeavour: They are Positive interdependence, Face-to-face promotive interaction, individual accountability, Social skills and Group processing. The different activities to promote cooperative learning are Jigsaw method, Group Investigation, Think-Pair-Share and Literature Circles.

Need for the Study

Cooperative learning, which is hailed as the “most important and most successful teaching method reform in the last decade” (Ellis and Fouts, 1997) and as one of the teaching methods that the new curriculum reform. No lesson can be effectively learned unless there is active pupil participation in it. In order to teach a heterogeneous group, teachers need to use a variety of different instructional strategies. Students learn Tamil Poems and Grammar by connecting real life situations that they already know. Teachers of Tamil need to be able to understand what students know and how they can present new material, with their prior knowledge of Tamil. Hence, there is an imperative need to adopt learner centered approaches in the classroom. In order to create interest and to provide better understanding of the essentials of Tamil teaching the method like cooperative learning should be employed in the regular class room. Today students are not aware of the importance of Tamil subject considered in the Competitive examinations and Public Service Commission Examinations. Hence the learning methods like cooperative learning should be practiced regularly.

Objectives

1. To find out the level of achievement of students who learnt through Traditional method of teaching and Cooperative learning method.
2. To find out the effectiveness of Cooperative learning method on the academic achievement of XI standard students in Tamil.
3. To find out whether there is any significant difference in the academic achievement in Tamil exists between boys and girls.

Hypotheses

On basis of the objectives the following hypotheses are framed by the investigator.

1. There is no significant difference between the control group and experimental group with regards to their post test score.
2. There is no significant difference between the male students of control group and experimental group with regards to their post test score.
3. There is no significant difference between the female students of control group and experimental group with regards to their post test score.
4. There is no significant difference between the male students and female students of experimental group with regards to their post test score.

Delimitations

The present study is delimited in the following measures.

1. Among the different methods of teaching, the Conventional Teaching Method and Cooperative learning are used for the study.
2. The sample covers only XI Standard Students.
3. Only limited portions in XI standard Tamil syllabus prescribed by the State board is chosen for the teaching.
4. The sample consists of 60 students, who are selected on the basis of their Study Group Viz., Mathematics Group.

Research Methodology

Since the investigator has to investigate the cause and effect of relationship between the dependent and independent variable, the investigator adopted experimental study. After viewing all the experimental designs concerning with the time factor, the investigator has decided to go with post test only randomized experimental design. The jigsaw cooperative method was adopted by the investigator for the present study. In Jigsaw, students are assigned to five or six member teams to work on academic material that has been broken down into sections. Students are allotted randomly to control and experimental groups using lottery method. An intelligence test was conducted before treatment for both groups.

Phases of the Study

The schematic phases of the present investigation are given below:

Stage	Treatments	
	Control Group	Experimental Group
Pre Testing	1.No Pre test 2.General Mental Ability- Intelligence Test	1.No Pre test 2.General Mental Ability- Intelligence Test
Treatment	Teaching Tamil through Conventional Method	Teaching Tamil through Jig saw under Cooperative Learning Method
Post Testing	Measurement of Students Achievement in Tamil	Measurement of Students Achievement in Tamil

After completing the study the investigator calculated the difference between various groups to establish the effectiveness of cooperative learning. The results of the calculations are represented in the below table.

Groups		N	Mean	S.D	t-Value
Male & Female students	Control	30	22.53	3.34	13.04*
	Experimental	30	37.7	5.87	
Male Students	Control Group	17	20.82	3.11	10.98*
	Experimental Group	18	33.89	3.86	
Female Students	Control Group	13	24.77	2.13	18.41*
	Experimental Group	12	43.42	2.91	
Experimental Group	Male Students	18	33.89	3.86	7.26*
	Female Students	12	43.42	2.91	

* Significant at 0.05 level

Major Findings

The major findings of the study are given below:

- After the analysis of post test scores of control group and experimental group, it is cleared that the calculated t-value (13.04) is greater than the table value at 1% level. So the null hypothesis “There is no significant difference between the control group and experimental group with regards to their post test score” is rejected. Therefore there is a significant difference between the control group and experimental group with regards to their post-test score.
- From the post test scores of male students of control group and experimental group, it is inferred that the calculated t-value (10.98) is greater than the table value at 1% level. So the null hypothesis “There is no significant difference between the male students of control group and experimental group with regards to their post test score”

is rejected. Therefore there is a significant difference between the male students of control group and experimental group with regards to their post-test score.

- After the analysis of post test scores of female students of control group and experimental group, it is deduced that the calculated t-value (18.41) is greater than the table value at 1% level. So the null hypothesis “There is no significant difference between the female students of control group and experimental group with regards to their post test score” is rejected. Therefore there is a significant difference between the female students of control group and experimental group with regards to their post-test score.
- From the post test scores of male and female students of experimental group calculated the t-value (7.26) is greater than the table value at 1% level. So the null hypothesis “There is no significant difference between the male students and female students of experimental group with regards to their post test score” is rejected. Therefore there is a significant difference between the male and female students of experimental group with regards to their post test score.

Discussion

The main objective of this study is to measure the effectiveness of cooperative learning method through the difference in learning Prose, Poem and Grammar in Tamil between students who learn through conventional method of teaching and students who learn through Cooperative learning method. The result of present study coincided with the previous related studies done by Dheeraj and Kumari (2013), Sandhya (2010) and Thangarajathi (2006). They all inferred that Cooperative learning is effective than the Conventional method. One of the results of study done by Ponnusamy and Sudarsan (2001) proved that Cooperative learning contributed a lot to improve the academic performance of the students. It is agreed with the findings of present investigation.

The following recommendations are made by the investigator for the better learning of students in Tamil.

1. Training may be given in different methods like cooperative learning method for Tamil teachers. Workshops, Seminars and Conference may be arranged to create awareness about innovative learning method among the teachers.
2. Tamil teachers should be insisted by the head masters to often use the cooperative learning method while teaching Tamil.
3. Cooperative learning method should be implemented in Matriculation schools in order to create interest and curiosity among the students in learning Tamil.
4. Other subject teachers also should implement cooperative learning method for the better result.

Conclusion

Student-centered approaches such as cooperative learning improve achievement and attitudes towards Tamil among students. Therefore, teachers in schools, especially teachers who teach Tamil need to be aware of the benefits and importance of cooperative learning and thus changing the practice of teacher-centered teaching methods to student-centered teaching methods. There are positive changes taking place when teachers change their teaching methods towards a more student-centered approach. Teachers need to master the Tamil content to be delivered and plan how to implement cooperative learning better. Cooperative learning should be employed especially STAD, JIGSAW etc., so that students can be help each other in small groups. Therefore, teachers are encouraged to practice these methods regularly and effectively. The results showed that cooperative learning could have a positive effect on the formation of a more positive attitude towards Tamil among students. In the present study, the investigator found that the cooperative learning method plays a significant role in achievement than the conventional method. There are individual differences also observed.

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