

The Effectiveness of Communication Strategies to Develop the Communicative Competency of ESL Learners

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Abstract—This empirical research study emphasizes the significance of communication strategies that assist rural learners' language learning progress. It examines the opinion of learners about the learning methodology, classroom instruction, and communicative competency. The findings of a questionnaire survey of second-year rural students revealed that classroom teaching and activity-based education positively influence communicative proficiency. The reliability of the data is confirmed through Cronbach's Alpha. The alpha value is .803. The outcomes of the data also revealed that the teacher's competency is one of the major components that promote communicative competency. It creates variations in the communicative competency of learners. The ANOVA findings revealed that rural learners' communicative competency varied depending on the type of college. According to the research, effective classroom teaching using the TBLT method can improve learners' communicative competency.

Index Terms—communicative competency, learning strategies, activity-based learning, English speaking skills

I. INTRODUCTION

Oral competency is one of the essential communication skills that require a lot of practice to produce effective oral communication in a social context. In India, the majority of second language learners find it difficult to communicate and participate in conversations, leading to limited language learning. Even if the English language is not frequently used on daily basis to practice among learners or with native speakers, these factors contribute significantly to low oral communication skills. Low language proficiency is caused by numerous factors such as a lack of grammatical knowledge, hesitation, and pragmatic language skills, which together restrict learners' exposure to the second language, limiting their proficiency level. Exam-oriented teaching and learning methodologies are used in the majority of educational institutions. Traditional classroom training leads to significantly poor language abilities, particularly in oral communication. This process of learning causes a communication gap among students. Eventually, a lack of communication ability makes it difficult to cope with real-world challenges. Effective communication skills are required to maintain interpersonal relationships. It should be fundamental to focus on strategies for improving their communication skills. Educational professionals subsequently allocated ample curriculum and materials to increase prospectuses, such as puzzles, thought-provoking tasks, and structured texts. After all, second language learners who failed to achieve oral proficiency in language skills have been offered situations and facilities. At this point, the teachers' coordination is needed which stimulates rural learners' comprehension and perception to intensify the learning approach and encourage the participation enthusiastically in knowledge and learning contexts.

A. Research problem

The lack of exposure to the target language is a central factor for rural learners. When there is no exposure, challenges such as traditional teaching techniques and rational approaches, exam-oriented teaching methods, rote-learning, insufficient teaching aids, and technology-based are noted in varying degrees. Various factors have been used to make the students passive. Rural learners' language proficiency is inefficient due to time constraints and lack of curriculum input. Low literacy attainment, passive participation, and lack of interaction in the second language are the outcomes.

B. Research Questions

1. What are the major causes that lead to rural learners' communicative competence?
2. Do English teachers are competence to teach rural learners?
3. What are teaching aids and technical support followed by teachers?
4. What are the major affecting factors of rural learners' communicative competence?
5. Does TBLT teaching activities provide rural learners with communicative competence?

C. Objectives

1. This study is to find out the rural learners' communicative competence
2. This study is to find the effectiveness of classroom teaching and activity-based learning to promote communicative competence.
3. It also analysis how far teachers' competency contributes to the communicative competency of the rural learners.

The findings of the survey revealed that classroom teaching and task-based language teaching significantly predict learners' communicative competency. It suggests that practicing communication daily enables learners to inhibit and increase their confidence in communicating with others from various socio-linguistic contexts. It shows that practising communication on daily basis makes the learners free from hesitation and increases their level of confidence to mingle with socio-linguistic contexts. One of the most important components in ensuring the conversational flow of current content is the teaching approach, which increases learners' confidence in their oral communication skills. As a result, it is a great honor for second language teachers to guide students along the right and the most suitable road to success.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In second language circumstances, oral competency has been widely investigated. The majority of the students are unable to contribute their speaking ability. Learners are particularly, hindered when it comes to practicing oral language skills. After assessing the learners' oral communication skills, they will be directed through certain effective communication strategies that will help them overcome the challenges.

Learners are coping with oral communication skills that are linked in various ways, like grammatical errors, accuracy, fluency, rhythm, stress, and intonation (Albino, 2017). It follows communication disruption and leads to ambiguities in the flow of speech. The traditional framework classroom provides less interaction because teachers play the central role, and learners remain seated to listen and repeat (Ishtiaq et al., 2017). It channels partial knowledge among learners. It disrupts the classroom's creative thinking and interactional process. This work suggested a learner-centered classroom to entertain with some effective strategies instead of maintaining a traditional way of teaching. Teachers needed to guide and encourage the learners, which would stop hindrances or other lack of communication skills. The appropriate opportunities and prospects will lead them to produce while undertaking communication skills (Nakatani, 2010). Strategies are linking the concepts to stand on their stature in the communication, which also breaks communication disruptions. There are many possibilities when alternative approaches connect with language classrooms. It provides the flow of consistency to maintain the target language competency. Strategies play a vital role in self-evaluation and self-monitor while performing, and it helps to sum up with clear visions. The behavior of learners will access some effective strategies that lead to enhancing the conversational flow (Nakatani, 2010). He follows two divisions in the strategic approach. Achievement and compensatory strategies help to retain the necessary deeds to perform, and reduction strategies help to avoid communication breaks and elongate the nature of fluency. Additionally, achievement or compensatory and reduction or avoidance strategies are the advanced assisting aspects for second language learners to acquire self- molding with the guidance of strategies. Following the system of effective strategies strengthens the second language skills in the interactive mode to be efficient in oral communication skills. Proficiency with appropriate words and omitting unwanted things while speaking makes more competence.

A study has been conducted among engineering ESL learners that incorporate short stories into classroom teaching to improve communicative competency (Thiyagarajan, 2014). This experimental study proved that it is effective to develop oral communication skills. English Proficiency in Conversation (EPiC), is a web-based programme to develop the speaking skills of intermediate learners via an experimental study (Rodrigues & Vethamani, 2015). The results showed that the learners who received EPiC training are better in communication skills than the students who learned without the EPiC program. A study in the Iranian context assessed the effectiveness of cooperative learning to develop speaking skills (Ehsan et al., 2019). The results proved that it improved intrinsic motivation and speaking skills. The Technology integrated Task-Based Language Teaching will remarkably improve speaking skills and the TBLT method of teaching will reduce the speaking Anxiety among college learners (Shiny et.al, 2021). The absence of teaching materials and curriculum input, non-qualified rural learners, and repetition of concerned methods in the teaching methods can be solved by implementing the TBLT method of teaching.

A. Methods and Participation of the Study

This current study used the survey method to learn about teaching methods and classroom environments, and also teachers' levels of competency and teaching approaches, in the context of rural learners. The researcher observed that ineffective curriculum and a lack of opportunities followed by the learners' passive mode, which is explicit in poor exposure in the ESL learners.

B. Research Methodology

The researcher used the survey method to collect the data. The data was collected from the second-year English Major students who are pursuing their degrees in aided and self-financing/private colleges in Ranipet District, Tamil Nadu. The tool used for the survey is a questionnaire designed by the researcher (Appendices). It has three sections.

They are Classroom Teaching, Activities, and Communicative Competency. Out of 120 samples, 100 samples were used for the analysis. The rest of the samples were removed due to outlier responses, and incorrect and incomplete data.

C. Hypothesis

H1: classroom teaching is positively correlated with communicative competency.

H2: activity-based learning positively correlated with communicative competency.

H3: Classroom teaching and activity-based learning positively predict communicative competency.

H4: there is a difference in the level of communicative competency based on the subject competency of the teacher.

H5: there is a difference in the level of communicative competency based on the type of college.

III. DATA ANALYSIS

The reliability of the data is confirmed through Cronbach Alpha. It is .803.

H1: classroom teaching is positively correlated with communicative competency.

This Hypothesis is tested through a correlation analysis.

Correlations			
		Classroom_Teaching	Communicative_Competency
Classroom_Teaching	Pearson Correlation	1	.423**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	100	100
Communicative Competency	Pearson Correlation	.423**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	100	100

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Classroom teaching is positively related to communicative competency. Here, the correlation coefficient of classroom teaching, .423 is highly significant at a 1% alpha level ($r=.423$, $p=.001$). Therefore, there is a positive linear relationship between classroom teaching and communicative competency. The efficiency or deficiency in classroom teaching is affecting the communicative competency of the student.

H2: activity-based learning positively correlated with communicative competency.

Hypothesis 2 is tested through a correlation analysis.

Correlations			
		Activities	Communicative Competency
Activities	Pearson Correlation	1	.372**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	100	100
Communicative Competency	Pearson Correlation	.372**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	100	100

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Activity-based teaching is positively related to communicative competency. Here, the correlation coefficient of Activity-based teaching .372 is highly significant at 1% alpha level ($r=.372$, $p=.001$). Therefore, there is a positive linear relationship between Activity-based teaching and communicative competency. The incorporation of activities in classroom teaching is affecting the communicative competency of the student.

H3: Classroom teaching and activity-based learning positively predict communicative competency.

The regression analysis is used to analyze hypothesis 3

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.468 ^a	.219	.203	.322

a. Predictors: (Constant), Activities, Classroom Teaching

As per the model summary classroom teaching and activity-based learning together makes the 21.9% variance in communicative competency.

ANOVA						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	2.815	2	1.408	13.585	.000 ^b
	Residual	10.050	97	.104		
	Total	12.866	99			

a. Dependent Variable: Communicative Competency

b. Predictors: (Constant), Activities, Classroom Teaching

This regression model has a good fit. The ANOVA F value is significant at the 1% alpha level. $F(2, 97) = 13.585, p < .001$. Therefore, classroom teaching and activity-based learning significantly predict communicative competency.

Coefficients ^a								
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	(Constant)	2.127	.211		10.069	.000	1.708	2.546
	Classroom_Teaching	.175	.055	.319	3.158	.002	.065	.285
	Activities	.123	.055	.226	2.233	.028	.014	.232

a. Dependent Variable: Communicative_Competency

The unstandardized coefficient analysis showed that an increase in one unit of communicative competency of the learners causes a 17.5% increase in classroom teaching and a 12.3% increase in activity-based learning. The beta value of each independent variable is statistically significant. The t value of classroom teaching ($t=3.158, p = .002$) and activity-based teaching ($t=2.233, p = .028$) is significant at 5% of alpha level. Therefore, it is concluded that the communicative competence of the learners is significantly predicted by classroom teaching methods and activity-based teaching. $F(2, 97) = 13.585, p < .001$.

H4: There is a difference in the level of communicative competency based on the subject competency of the teacher

This is analyzed through an independent t-test

Independent Samples Test										
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Communicative_Competency	Equal variances assumed	.190	.664	2.124	98	.036	.176	.083	.012	.341
	Equal variances not assumed			2.053	36.678	.047	.176	.086	.002	.350

The mean value of those who opined that their teacher is efficient in teaching English is 3.25 whereas those who opined as their teacher is not efficient in teaching English have a mean value of 3.07. It shows that the efficient teachers' students have more communicative competency than those who are not. The t value of these mean differences was found significant at 5% of an Alpha level. ($t_{98} = 2.124, p < .005$). Therefore, the communicative competency of the learners is statistically different based on their teachers' efficiency to teach English.

H5: there is a difference in the level of communicative competency based on the type of college.

One-way ANOVA is used to test this hypothesis.

The mean value of learners' communicative competency based on their college is as follows: 3.26 for Aided college learners, 3.26 for Self-Financing or Private College learners, and 3.02 for GOVT college learners. The mean value of govt college learners is lesser than that of private and aided colleges.

ANOVA					
Communicative Competency					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.999	2	.499	4.082	.020
Within Groups	11.867	97	.122		
Total	12.866	99			

The ANOVA F value of these groups was found significant therefore, there is a difference in communicative competency of these learners based on the type of college. $F(2, 97) = 4.082, p < .005$. Therefore a post hoc analysis has been conducted to analyze the difference between these groups.

Multiple Comparisons

Dependent Variable: Communicative_Competency

Tukey HSD

(I) Self finan/prvt - 1, aided -2, GOVT - 3	(J) Self finan/prvt - 1, aided -2, GOVT - 3	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Self - financing/Private	Aided	-.003	.149	1.000	-.36	.35
	GOVT	.241*	.085	.016	.04	.44
Aided	Self - financing/Private	.003	.149	1.000	-.35	.36
	GOVT	.244	.161	.288	-.14	.63
GOVT	Self - financing/Private	-.241*	.085	.016	-.44	-.04
	Aided	-.244	.161	.288	-.63	.14

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

The major difference lies between the groups' govt and self-financing/private (MD = .241, P=.016). Whereas, there is no difference between aided and self-financing (MD = .003, P=.149) and aided and GOVT (MD = .244, P=.161). It shows that the learners of GOVT colleges have less communicative competency than the learners of aided and self-financing or private section.

IV. DISCUSSION

The analysis results proved that classroom teaching is positively correlated with the communicative competency of the students. Therefore, hypothesis 1 is accepted based on correlation analysis ($r=.423$, $p=.001$). This shows that the effective teaching methods adopted in the classroom for enhancing communication have a great impact on the communicative proficiency of the learners. If it is activity-based teaching, this has more impact because, the correlation results of hypothesis 2 are also significant ($r=.372$, $p=.001$). Therefore, classroom teaching and activity-based learning together predict the communicative competency among English learners. Based on the regression analysis results hypothesis 3 is accepted. It shows that teachers should promote task-based teaching in the classrooms. Such classrooms will be the best trial rooms for speaking English in real-world situations. Students consider classrooms the best place to practice and learn English. Converting the language items into suitable tasks will enrich the learning experience of learners through their active participation. Question numbers 9 to 13 gave a list of activities and asked for their opinion about their potential to enhance communicative competence. The mean values of these activities indicated that students believed that the activities like Roleplay (Mean = 3.76), pair Work (Mean = 3.71), group work (Mean = 4.01), storytelling (Mean = 3.98), and games (Mean = 3.46) were beneficial in developing communicative competency. The competency of the teacher to teach English is another important factor that enhances speaking skills. Task-based or activity-based language learning will be successful if it demands the active participation of the learners and they can unravel the language item from the task. This process demands effective planning, organization, and implementation of tasks. If the teacher fails in any of these, it will end up as a practicing grammar item. Therefore, the success of tasks in a classroom and the communicative competency of the learners depend more on the efficiency of the teacher. Hypothesis 4 tests the same. The independent t-test analysis proved that the communicative competency of the learners who opined that their teacher is skillful and efficient at teaching English and vice versa has a significant difference. The students who rate their speaking proficiency as between 6 to 9 out of 10 are 59. Out of this, 53 students rate their teacher as skillful to teach English. Therefore, teachers have a significant role in developing the communicative competency of the learners through classroom teaching. In the rural and semi-urban areas, there is a tendency to have English taught by teachers of other subjects. This is adversely affecting the communicative competency of the learners. Out of 100, 27 students rated their communicative proficiency as between 0 to 3 out of 10, and most often their English classes are engaged by other subject teachers. This is an area that needs attention from the college management. Hypothesis 5 tested the difference in communicative competency based on the type of college. The one-way Anova analysis results proved that there is a significant difference between the students from govt and the self-financing/private (MD = .241, P=.016) sector. The mean value of 72 students who are pursuing their degree in the self-financing or private sector is 3.54 whereas, when it comes to GOVT colleges, it is 3.1. This analysis shows that the GOVT college students need more attention in this area.

V. CONCLUSION

The research emphasizes rural learners' perceptions of oral proficiency and communicative abilities. The findings of the study revealed that classroom teaching methods play an important role in enhancing the oral proficiency of rural learners'. As a result, teachers should provide rural students with various opportunities to learn a second language. The teaching module should be transformed into contextual teaching in real life. Textbooks are essential, but effective instructional techniques result in proper language production among learners'. The goal of CLT or TBLT teaching and learning is to provide real-life classroom experience for communicative competence. The teaching practices should change into pedagogical active techniques to increase the learners' language skills. According to Hymes (1992),

communicative competence is the root of creating potential learning, which gives meaning to the chore. Effective communication is achieved through the proper practice of communicating and comprehending each other while interacting. Teachers should be aware of the importance of rural learners' communicative competence and its advantages as a facilitator. Educational development may be improved by implementing pedagogical strategies among learners and incorporating activity-based learning teaching methods. There should be sessions for teachers and learners to interact, such as pair work, group work, and roleplay exercises like hints development through pictures, to motivate learners to use new vocabulary. This strategy also maintains motivation and self-confidence, which allow students to study without hesitation. It promotes the active participation of the students. There should be a shift in the language learning process, like conducting a test in a speaking mode, which gives gradual appropriateness. It also corrects the rhythm, intonation, and pattern with the usage of audio and visual aids to improve its sound like a native speaker. The main principle of the TBLT method provides activities that lead rural learners to participate in active learning methods unknowingly. Teachers should take charge to enhance teaching activities for the learners' interaction mode. However, above all, the developing learning process improves the rural learners' enthusiasm and builds good rapport in activity-based learning. Therefore, the TBLT method is one of the meaningful methods of communicative competence that supports numerous aspects of education, employment, business, and life skills.

APPENDIX

Type of your College: Govt. Aided Self-Financing/Private					
A. Do your teachers of all subjects have the Efficiency to teach English in the classroom?					
Yes No					
1. Teachers are providing opportunities for learners to speak English in the classroom					
Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree					
2. Do your teachers follow any special techniques to teach English?					
Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree					
Please specify the materials that the teachers used to teach English					
3. My teachers are using Course books alone / 90% to teach English.					
Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree					
4. My teachers are using different Stories/ examples related to the content of the textbook to make us understand the concept.					
Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree					
5. My teachers are using different videos/ audio clips related to the content of the textbook to make us understand the concept.					
Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree					
6. My teachers are using different activities/materials related to the content of the textbook to make us understand the concept.					
Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree					
7. My teachers are using Supplementary Books related to the content of the textbook to make us understand the concept.					
Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree					
8. Do your teachers follow other materials like pictures or things to teach English in the classroom?					
Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree					
Do you think the following activities can enhance your communication skills					
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
9. Roleplay					
10. Pair Work					
11. Group Work					
12. Storytelling					
13. Games					
14. Technology integrated language learning					
15. Do you have your own potential to learn and speak English inside the classroom?	Strongly agree	agree	Neutral	disagree	Strongly disagree
16. I never made a presentation in English till this day	Strongly agree	agree	Neutral	disagree	Strongly disagree
17. I never speak in English to anyone in an informal situation.	Strongly agree	agree	Neutral	disagree	Strongly disagree
18. We can read any English article/magazine inside the classroom to develop communication	Strongly agree	agree	Neutral	disagree	Strongly disagree
19. We have the capacity to speak	Strongly	agree	Neutral	disagree	Strongly

English outside the classroom	agree				disagree
20. We can fluently speak English	Strongly agree	agree	Neutral	disagree	Strongly disagree
21. If I rate my speaking proficiency out of 10, my score will be less than 3	Strongly agree	agree	Neutral	disagree	Strongly disagree
22. If I rate my speaking proficiency out of 10, my score will be in between 3 to 6	Strongly agree	agree	Neutral	disagree	Strongly disagree
23. If I rate my speaking proficiency out of 10, my score will be in between 6 to 9	Strongly agree	agree	Neutral	disagree	Strongly disagree

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