

DIRECT METHOD : AN EFFECTIVE METHOD TO TEACH SPOKEN ENGLISH AT SECONDARY LEVEL

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INTRODUCTION

English is one of the compulsory languages in today's era. English has become one of the main languages to be taught in Indian schools. English is considered as the primary requirement to communicate in global affairs. As English has acquired the place of international language, it is necessary for us to know minimum English and to communicate in English. For that reason spoken English is very much needed and the secondary level is the best stage in learning speaking in English. West Bengal Govt. is also focusing on applying Functional Communicative Approach for last few years. Keeping in view the status of spoken English at secondary level, this study has been undertaken. The main objective of this study was to determine the role of direct method in teaching Spoken English at the secondary level.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Richards and Rodgers (2001:11) say that language teaching is hence a complex issue, encompassing socio-cultural linguistic, psycho-linguistics, as well as curricula and instructional dimensions. Concerning the foreign language teaching, there are some experts pointing out that second or foreign language teaching is any activity on the part of one person intended to facilitate the learning by another person of a language which is not his/her native one. Krashen and Terrel (1983) reported that language proficiency tests can be classified as tests of linguistic competence or communicative competence; that is, the ability to control pronunciation, morphology and syntax; communication and the ability to use language for specific purposes or some particular purpose. Children need to be exposed to a variety of uses English around them, both spoken and written. In order to help students acquire English, the teachers should speak English from the beginning of each English lesson (Slatery and Wills, 2001). Children function well within a structured environment and enjoy repetition of certain routines and activities. Having basic routines in the classroom can help to manage the children (Shin, 2007).

PROCEDURE

In order to test the relative effectiveness of independent variables, i.e. an instructional paradigm (direct teaching), the choice of the most suitable design for this experiment was the basic step. A number of factors affect the internal and external validity of experimental designs. Relevant to internal validity, there are eight different factors, including history, maturation, testing, instrumentation, statistical regression, differential selection, experimental mortality, and selection maturation interaction. If these factors are not controlled in the design, they may produce adverse effects, which confound the effects of the independent variables as shown by the final test scores. Whereas factors affecting internal validity operate on the scores derived from the dependent variables and therefore make the experiment poor as an experiment, factors affecting external validity operate upon the experimental treatments. Campbell and Stanley (1963) postulated four factors that jeopardize external

validity. “The Solomon Four-Design pre-test/post-test equivalent group design” was considered to be the most useful design for this study.

POPULATION

The aim of this study was to investigate the effectiveness of direct method in teaching Spoken English at secondary level. So the students of Class IX were selected for the study.

Delimitation

The study was delimited to: Bengali medium students of the 9th class under W.B.B.S.E.

Sample

Two sections (A and B) of the 9th class of Barisha Ucchha Balika Vidyamandir . Both the sections were of homogeneous in nature. Each section comprised of 60 students. Section –A was given the treatment of Traditional Method of teaching English and Section –B was given treatment of Direct Method of teaching English. Both the section were given the treatment for one month.

Research Tools

In order to equate the control and experimental groups, a teacher-made pre-test was administered before the allocation of students to the experimental and the control groups. Validity of the test was ensured. Immediately after the treatment was over, a teacher-made post-test was administered to subjects of both the experimental and the control groups. The purpose of this test was to measure the achievement of the students constituting the sample. The researcher constructed both tests after a thorough review of the techniques of test construction and related units of English.

Both the pre-test and post-test were almost parallel with the same difficulty level. Two chapters were taught before the start of the experiment; also given was a weight age of 25 percent for both tests. Each test was composed of multiple choice items, matching items pertaining to a combination of learning domains. These test items were taken from the selected five units of the 9th class English textbook. During the experiment, these five units were taught to both the experimental and control groups and were intended to measure the learning outcomes.

The Solomon Four-Design pre-test/post-test equivalent group design was used for the treatment to test the reliability of the post-test scores obtained by the students who formed the sample of the study. The coefficient of reliability was determined using the T-Test, estimating reliability from the comparable halves of the post-test and found the coefficient of correlation to be 0.75.

Data Collection

During the experiment, two different treatment patterns were applied. The control groups were provided with a traditional routine situation in the classroom, while the experimental groups were provided with the direct teaching method. The experiment continued for one month and soon after the treatment was over, a post-test was administered to measure the achievement of the sample subjects.

Analysis of Data

Speaking skill is assessed on the basis of following dimension : Monologue and Dialogue. Further both are divided into the task completion, compressibility, fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary and language control. Raw scores obtained from the pre-test and post-test were presented in tabular form for the purpose of interpretation. For the manipulation of data, the means, standard deviations, and the differences of means were computed for each group. Significance of difference between the mean scores of both the experimental and control groups on the variable of pre-test and post-test scores was tested at 0.05 levels by applying T-Test. To examine the treatment affects for high and low levels of achievement of the two groups, the Solomon Four-Group design (2x2 analysis of variance) was applied. For this purpose, the students of the two groups were divided into two halves; i.e. high achievers (above the mean score) and low achievers (below the mean score). This division was made on the basis of pre-test scores.

Challenges about assessment of spoken English

The use of oral assessment motivates students to practice and improve their English speaking skills (Huang,[2012](#); Huxham et al.[2012](#); Lee,[2007](#)). In spite of all these benefits the experts in India are facing the problem of finding experts in assessing spoken skills in English (Ahmad,[2011](#)). This situation is mainly due to three reasons: insufficient training, lack of public trust on oral assessment and issues of test validity. The teachers are not properly trained to conduct oral assessments in our country. The teachers are either reluctant to test oral ability or lack confidence in the validity of their assessments (Knight,[1992](#)). The lack of public trust on oral examination makes the situation more complex (Bashir,[2011](#)). Validity has been identified as the most important quality of tests, which concerns the extent to which meaningful inferences can be drawn from test scores (Best & Kahn,[2005](#)). Like other tests spoken skills tests need to ensure seven test qualities namely: reliability, validity, authenticity, inter-activeness, impact, practicality, and absence of bias (Akiyama,[2003](#); Bilal et al.,[2013](#); Lee,[2007](#)).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section is confined to the analysis and interpretation of data obtained from the pre-test and post-test. Significance of difference between the mean scores of the experimental and control groups on the pre-test and post-test was found by applying t-test, analysis of variance, and the Solomon Four-Group design (analysis of variance).

CONCLUSION

In the light of statistical analysis and the findings of this study, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. On a whole, the direct teaching method is more effective as a teaching-learning technique for Spoken English as compared to the traditional teaching method. Students in the direct teaching method outscored students working in the traditional learning situation.
2. Low achievers in direct teaching showed significant superiority over low achievers learning Spoken English by the traditional method. Thus, direct teaching was found to be a more effective method for teaching Spoken English to the low achievers, as compared to the traditional method of teaching.
3. Direct teaching method somehow gives emphasis upon rote learning and as use of mother tongue is banned in the classroom, students are forced to use English language only. In this way they become most familiar in practicing and speaking English only which is never possible in traditional method.

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