

PROJECT REPORT

ON

**“HOLISTIC APPROACHES IN TEACHING
OF ENGLISH AT GRADUATE LEVEL-A
PRACTICAL STUDY AT RURAL DEGREE
COLLEGE”**

MINOR RESEARCH PROJECT

SUBMITTED

TO

**The Regional Head
University Grants Commission
South Western Regional Office,
BANGALORE**

(Financial Assistance Ref. No. MRP (H)-75/12-13/KAKA022/UGC-SWRO)

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MINOR RESEARCH PROJECT
FINAL REPORT (1.6. 2013 TO 31. 3.2014)

I hereby present the Final Report of the Minor Research Project entitled “**HOLISTIC APPROACHES IN TEACHING OF ENGLISH AT GRADUATE LEVEL-A PRACTICAL STUDY AT RURAL DEGREE COLLEGE**” sanctioned to me under vide letter no. **MRP (H)-75/12-13/KAKAO22/UGC-SWRO Date: 29.03.2013.**

English is a colonial legacy to the Indians as well as many of the non-European countries of the world. The turn of the century is marked by two dominant factors-Information technology and globalization. Both have shown profound implication for English language teaching and learning. With the world moving towards globalization, competent information handling has become significant for survival in a competent world. The implications of holistic approaches in English language teaching and learning are in two ways.

Firstly, it has led to the shifting of language teaching and learning out of the traditional classroom. Secondly, it has necessitated the child centered learning in the class and reduced the duties of a teacher to a facilitator.

English is basically a language, it can be learnt like any other languages but the task of learning and teaching English in our country is considered as a herculean task. The reasons are obvious. In our country English is taught only in the schools and colleges, it is confined only to the curriculum, oriented only to towards passing the exam. No teacher bothers to inculcate the skills naturally among the students. Moreover there is an utter failure in the process of evaluating the language skills of the students down from primary to post graduation. At each level teachers test only the screaming power of the students but not his ability to use language at the social context. In reality a language is caught rather than taught in the classroom. Language learning demands an adequate social environment, proper exposure as well as a true psychological and intellectual preparation.

The teaching of English in India is made more complicated and clumsy by the teaching community, as they insist upon the student the

standardized form of English with all its grammar and British accent on one side and American accent on another. In my view no native speaker speaks English alike. In that case how could we expect the same pronunciation from all the learners? Of course it is essential to protect the dignity of the language but too much adoration curtails the curiosity of the learners. So it can be taught easily by means of innovative methods such as local illustrations, pictures, audio-visual aids, games, play way techniques and with a natural order focusing the interest of the students on all the four basic skills, i.e. listening, speaking, reading, and writing. My project leans more towards simple and attractive methodology of teaching with all adequate resources that suit to the psychological and intellectual ability of the learners.

I usually teach English utilizing both the skills of the students and of me and generating the situations or borrowing the sources from internet. It is true that computers cannot substitute a teacher in the classroom but they can be used as secondary resource or as supportive device to make our teaching attractive and effective. I advocate the following points in the process of teaching English in a holistic way.

The teachers of English have special role to play in this context. The outdated teacher centered methods are being fast replaced by the learner centered methods. Therefore, there is an imperative need for strengthening the teaching of English by taking stock of its present status and future needs. Some have of the opinion that the use of computers, PPT, Digital Boards and other advanced technological gadgets innovatively could be an effective tool and enable the teacher to carry out his tasks fruitfully. But in reality, the computer is mere a tool and has no wisdom or mind of its own. It has no inherent ability to either learn or to teach. This fact can never be forgotten. It can never replace the teacher in the classroom. Teacher has to modify his way of teaching language at the class. He should be more and more democratic in imparting the language skills. His duty is not only imparting language ability and competency among the students but also its implication in the real life situation. Thus he needs to update his classroom

activities according to the need of his students and their ability of perception.

Education today is mass based and is made to be accessible to anyone. Many learners today are first generation learners. These learners are from rural or non-urban areas prefer to study in Vernacular. Besides teachers at the primary and secondary level in these areas often do not have exposure to English that is any better than their students. The teachers themselves teach English with almost no background in the language. So there is a need of changing demography, but these children also do not come from an English rich environment. They get the real exposure to English only in the language classroom from the textbook. A subject like Physics, Chemistry can be learnt from a text book but one cannot learn a language only through a text book, we also not teaching English the way it ought to be taught at the primary level. When a teacher is not proficient in English, they will teach from the text book the same way they teach any other subject but when they do that, language does not come alive. One can learn a language only through an interactive process and many teachers need to learn that process and there is an urgent need to update their skills before they impart it to the students.

I strongly feel that we need to look at English language teaching in India as one continuous process from kinder garter to the tertiary level. It has to be an evolutionary process that considers the types of texts and the types of pedagogical practices that we must take use of. At the same moment in the process of teaching and learning, the teacher at the tertiary level needs to be transformed to a facilitator, and use a holistic approach to teaching of English by making use of the student's previous knowledge in the classroom situation. A language cannot be acquired through a 'bits and pieces' approach. India is the most successful language learning society in the world by far and holds valuable lessons for language acquisition pedagogies. India has demonstrated that being proficient in multiple languages is not a unique talent but a universal possibility.

In my previous Minor Research Project entitled “Challenges of Rural students in Acquisition of Global Skills: A Case study Belgaum District” I consulted number of students and English teachers from various rural degree colleges and studied the real problems of teaching and learning English at a graduate level, besides fifteen years of my teaching experience in the rural degree college helped me to know the reality from the first hand experience of teaching English as a second language in the class. I realize that under graduation is a very significant stage in the life of students to step up for higher education or to seek employment. At this juncture, I realize that it is the primary duty of a teacher at graduate level to make his student employable, self-reliance and qualify to live in the competent world. So I have conducted many classes for the students of degree in my college as well as other colleges of my district to gain firsthand knowledge of pedagogy in teaching of English as a Second language or a foreign language.

Origin of the research problem

Teaching and learning of English is rather a herculean task in India. There are many approaches, methods and pedagogies already in practice at our educational institutions. But no such absolute approaches and methodologies available to meet out the needs of the students at rural area.

The Department of higher education is kind enough to spend a lot of money for all sorts of training programmes in soft skills and personality development both for in-service teachers and students at graduate level through the initiative programmes like Vikasana and Sahayoga in collaboration with global training institutions. Yet there has not been able to achieve desirable result in teaching and learning of English as a second language. Of course they could achieve expected result in urban areas but failed to regain momentum at the rural colleges.

Out of my fifteen years of teaching experience; I am able to understand the real problems of the students in acquisition of language skills on the one hand and the ups and downs of pedagogies in practice at most of the colleges in India. Hence I found there is an urgent need to modify the teaching methodologies and approaches in the changing

scenario. In this regard I made an honest effort to give a certain shape and structures to those approaches out of my practical experience in the classroom situations.

The objective of this study is to provide firsthand experience of the implications of certain approaches in a practical situation at the classroom and enabling those approaches to be understood by an average teacher of English in the best possible manner. To exploit the experiences of the students in learning English at the class room situation.

Objectives of the study

1. To exploit the experiences of the students in learning English at the class room situation.
2. To enable them to learn English in the real life situations.
3. To make learning of English an interesting task by creating a native ambience in the classroom.
4. To enable both the students and teachers to learn English with pleasure providing the actual experiences in the classroom.
5. To explore the knowledge and creativity of the students making them involve in the tasks given at the classroom.
6. To enable the students to learn language creatively with their own ability.
7. To enable the students to acquire the knowledge of grammar, vocabulary, sounds and structures of English.
8. To expose the students to the nature of English such as its rhythm, intonation, pitch, voice modulations.
9. To teach the students English vowels and consonants

Methodology

The present study is based on the firsthand experience of teaching and learning English through some practical sessions at the classroom situations in the college.

Holistic Approaches to teach English in the Classroom

1 **Democratic environment:** A teacher should provide democratic environment in the classroom. He should encourage each and every student

to come out of their hesitation and fear. He should inspire them to come over the dais and present their skills at their best. The students should feel free in the classroom and try to converse each other in targeted language. Allow them to commit mistakes. They better learn the things out of their mistakes. A teacher should not be a dictator and he should be liberal guide.

2. Native Ambience: Our students of language rarely get an opportunity to speak in English out of the classroom. They do not have proper exposure to the language in the society. So they fail to learn various social etiquettes and the actual usage of English in a social context. So the teacher should provide such kind of native ambience in the classroom. Teacher should acts like a head of the family and encourages everyone to speak in broken English.

3. Use of proper accent and body language: English teacher should use the accent properly according to the situation and he should give the various tasks to the students to learn proper accent for instance, asking them to role play and to say the dialogues from the day to today life situations such as principal-students, passenger - conductor, doctor-patient etc. they better learn the body language from the situations.

4. Use of Audio-visual devices: If possible English teacher should prepare lesson plans in advance and take possible audio-visual aids to the classroom in supporting to the lesson as to create interest and curiosity among the students in the classroom. They best remember the vocabulary when they are taught with pictures.

5. Use of advance technology: Now a day the technology is at our arms length. A man without knowledge of computer and internet is called illiterate. English teacher in particular should have knowledge of information technology to browse material from different sources. He should prepare Power Point Presentations and share them with the students to provide strange experience through pictures and sceneries if possible.

6. Natural order of teaching: Teachers usually teach English exposing the students to the writing skills. Then they try to teach them reading, they

least bother about listening and speaking. But the natural order of learning language is LSRW as we learn our mother tongue. First they should expose to listening and speaking then writing and reading.

7. Enhancement of vocabulary: The words are like currency, they can be exchanged to give and take. If we have a lot of vocabulary we can speak fluently and effectively. So the primary criteria of a teacher is to encourage his students to learn vocabulary with the help of dictionary and thesaurus

8. Modified evaluation system in English: Instead of testing only the screaming power of the students, the teacher should bring modified evaluation system as to test their spoken and listening ability by means of interviews and vi-voce etc.

9. Arranging group discussion, ice-breaking sessions, seminars and speech competition a teacher should encourage the students to enhance English language skill.

10. There should be zeal and interest among the students to undergo new experience when they are learning English language. They should come out of fear of making mistakes.

11. The age old method of teaching English through grammar and rules should be banished from the classroom.

12. Teacher should allow the students to make mistakes in the classroom as to facilitate them to learn without fear leaving behind them the myth of grammar.

13. Encourage the students to read literature to learn more and more vocabulary.

14. Teacher should encourage in the class to organize language clubs and other language activities and to establish language lab in the colleges.

More over the students are exposed to the practical experience rather than to the theoretic exposure. Language should be caught rather than taught.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS:

The following are the some of the major findings drawn from the study teaching practice of English in the classroom with the help of different innovative and holistic approaches which enumerates the major challenges of the students of rural degree college in learning English.

- It has been found from the study and practice that the attitude of the learners and their interest in language affects their learning.
- It is a surprise to find that for majority of the students the learning of English is not at all difficult if child-centered method is adopted in the class and encourage them to learn. They need to be given proper channel to come out of their hesitation.
- It is learnt that the lack of listening skill affects learning of English language. The habit of listening has not been cultivated properly among the students from the beginning. If the teacher provides lot of exercises in the class and encourages the students to listen, definitely they cultivate the habit of listening and adjust with foreign tongue.
- The study proved that the lack of class-room interaction affects learning English seriously. If there is no interaction students fail to form habits.
- The major problem among the rural students is that the lack of vocabulary which hampers the teaching and learning of a foreign language like English which should be properly cultivated through teaching learning experience in the classroom situation.
- The study proved that the students are able to speak effectively and they become more creative when they interact and use their mother tongue than in English. They feel difficult to adjust with English which is unknown, strange and unfamiliar which needs an extra-ordinary effort to inculcate among the rural students creating native and familiar environment the classroom situation.
- The study also found out that the teaching of English is over burdened with content rather than imparting the skills in curriculum and also the uninteresting text books and evaluative methods definitely hinders the learning of English language. So there needs to be upgrade curriculum

based on the need of the students keeping in mind the age and difficulty level of the students, particularly rural degree students.

➤ The study also showed that the lack of oral practice in the class definitely creates inability to speak English properly because the fundamental skill of language is the speech, which can be trained in the classrooms.

➤ The study also helped to understand the needs of the students in learning English at the classroom situation.

➤ Though we are living in the democratic country and everyone has an equal right to speak. It seems this freedom has not been enjoyed by the majority of the students in the class-room situation. It is mainly because of the colonial and neo-colonial attitude of their teachers which definitely affects the creative learning. So the reminded me that teachers have to modify their behavior at the changing scenario and create the liberal environment for creative learning.

➤ Though there are number of books, magazines, newspapers available in the library, the students are not so inclined to read reference books apart from their text books. There is a lack of encouragement for self learning which should be changed. The students should be encouraged to read good number of books, magazines, journals, reference books etc, to enable to extend the horizon of their knowledge and to develop competency.

➤ The study revealed that the majority of the students are not ready to come out of their cocoon. They read only for the sake of examination. They are interested only in the prescribed syllabus and neglect utterly the counter part of their learning. This attitude needs to be changed by the teachers with their timely guidance.

➤ Most of the rural degree colleges have the good number of students. Most of the class-rooms are overcrowded. They cannot impart skills successfully in such overcrowded class-rooms. It is very difficult to teach language like English to the crowd of hundreds and more than hundreds of students which badly hampers the effective teaching. Thus the arrangement should be made to provide more language teachers in such colleges and the ideal class-rooms should be arranged with the maximum strength of 30 to 40 students in each class. Then, there will be definitely good learning and

effective teaching is possible. The heads of the institutions and policy makers and the teachers have to think it and take it more seriously as one of the essential problems in the process of teaching and learning.

Present status of learning and teaching of English at rural degree colleges and possible solutions.

One cannot ignore the present status of rural degree colleges and system of teaching and learning English in our country. Without this background and proper understanding we cannot neatly design the learning system of English in future which can neither be imagined nor can be rightly developed. The present condition of teaching English in rural degree colleges can be enumerated as follows.

- The teaching of English in India is basically a replica and prototype model of English education system of the 19th century.
- The teaching of English in Degree College is still dominated by the traditional set up of rules, regulations and statutes that offer little scope for quick improvements in its present work-system and the required level of autonomy and flexibility.
- The work culture of colleges is static and rigid mode of functioning that adheres to bureaucratic standard badly impairs teaching and learning of English.
- The colleges have little internal urge to accept a change and dynamic mechanism in an institution to teach English.
- The level and quality of teaching English has low social and educational relevance at time.
- More weight-age is given for the examination rather than preparing the students for employment.
- The growing number of institutions and unrestricted qualitative growth of students, faculty and courses often is not matched with a suitably qualitative mechanism for improvement and knowledge advancement.
- The absence of innovation, creativity and lack of willingness to overcome this rigidity has crippled the learning of English in higher education system.

Suggestions

- English should be taught creatively in the lively atmosphere.
- A child-center education should be encouraged.
- Importance should be given for the enhancement of language skills among the children rather than imparting only knowledge.
- The static and rigid mode of teaching and learning English should be changed and democratic atmosphere should be brought out.
- The present system stresses more on what is delivered. It won't ask rational questions on why? And How? To use language in the context.
- There should be a drastic change in teaching, learning and, evaluation of English as the present world demands.
- The Teachers of English need to be encouraged to reflect their needs and their professional development in the changing scenario.
- The institutions should offer more flexible system of learning and teaching English.
- Proper motivation should be provided to the learners of English at the changing scenario particularly to the rural students.
- The teachers should create interest among the students with timely guidance and encourage them to develop language skills like listening, speaking, reading and writing.
- The teachers of English should create the democratic ambience in the class to develop self confidence and work-culture among the students leaving their age old colonial and neo-colonial attitudes.
- Both the teachers and the students should realize the aims and objectives of teaching and learning of English language.
- Co-operative learning should be practiced instead of lecture method.
- More and more in-service trainings should be provided to the teachers of English on the latest developments.
- Competency in English should be developed among the students encouraging them to read more books, magazines journals and newspapers apart from their text books.

CONCLUSION

The world has become “a small village” with the advancement of science and technology and popularity of English as a vehicle of International Communication. As Jawaharlal Nehru puts English is still ‘a window to the world’ and continues to be the language of opportunity, employment, science and technology.

In this global scenario, India plays a very significant role. Though it has achieved the economic and social stability, the dream of making India as a prosperous country in the world is still awaited, because it is a land of villages. The very economy of India depends on agriculture, which is the professional heritage of Indians. It needs to be stabilized and potentially supported by the young educated rural youth. Though it has been predicted that India is expected to have the largest English Speaking Population in the world by 2010 in the midst of massive illiteracy, the youths of rural India are lagging behind in acquisition of professional skills at global level.

At this juncture, there has been a lot of responsibility shouldered on the teaching community at the graduate level because it is where the students in general, the rural youth in particular realize the importance of their education and English language. They need to know at this stage the real objectives of teaching english, which is to make an individual self efficient, self reliance and self motivated towards the building of stable society, the ideal nation with dedication and hard work.

As Abdual Kalam in his ‘India 2020’ remarks, the benefits of modern science may not have reached all parts of the world but there is a greater awareness of them among the people. People are now demanding more equitable share of the fruits of modern knowledge and skills. In India *too* the benefits of science and technologies breakthrough have not reached all segments of our society. Until this happens we cannot claim that India is truly a developed country.

The age old traditional approaches particularly in teaching of English have needed to be changed. There is a great demand from the rural student's community to make them employable. They need to train in marketing communication which comprises the services such as production, advertising, selling etc. This marketing research depends primarily on the stage of economic development, which is a sure way to progress the nation.

So the young graduates are trained in English keeping in mind the great vision of India. This work is to be done at graduate level. It is essential to realize the challenges of the rural students in acquisition of language skills and life skills to bring them into the main stream and to remove their hesitation, to fill in them the confidence, courage and to prepare them for liberal communications. Thus I feel, this project helps the teaching community to understand the real problems of the rural students in learning English, who are studying at graduation and to redefine their teaching of English accordingly to support their cause of learning.