



Impact of Practical Applications on Undergraduate English Language Instruction

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ABSTRACT

This article aims to share insights into the challenges faced by learners in acquiring English language skills at various stages of their academic journey, spanning from the early school years to the Undergraduate level. Drawing on two decades of teaching experience, particularly with students from rural areas in Andhra Pradesh, the author highlights difficulties encountered and proposes potential solutions. The article emphasizes the importance of incorporating practical applications in English language instruction at the Undergraduate level to debunk the misconception that learning English is insurmountable, even for those raised in challenging environments. The goal is to convey that English proficiency can be achieved comfortably, fostering a more inclusive and accessible approach to language education.

INTRODUCTION

The significance of the English language in today's global landscape cannot be overstated. As the predominant international language, English serves as a crucial tool for communication across borders and cultures. It functions as a window through which we gain access to the diverse perspectives of the world. In the contemporary context, proficiency in English has become almost indispensable for literate individuals worldwide.

The importance of the English language extends beyond mere communication; it is a key element in expressing thoughts and ideas effectively. While non-verbal cues and gestures play a role, the ability to articulate thoughts verbally in English has become essential in various situations. Despite this awareness, many individuals encounter challenges in pronunciation, accents, and understanding English spoken in different regions. The influence of our native languages often poses hurdles, making it imperative to address these linguistic barriers.

English has evolved from being merely a language found in libraries to becoming a language of opportunities. In the present highly competitive global environment, proficiency in English is closely tied to employability. Standardization of pronunciation and achieving a high level of proficiency are essential components for individuals seeking success in their professional endeavors. The ability to communicate effectively in English is a sought-after skill that can significantly enhance one's chances in the job market.

To navigate the intricacies of the English language, individuals must strive for more than just basic language skills. A nuanced understanding of pronunciation, intonation, and accents is vital, considering the linguistic variations prevalent worldwide. The challenge lies not only in learning English as a foreign language but also in adapting to the diverse linguistic nuances encountered in different regions.

Moreover, the demand for English proficiency extends beyond traditional educational settings. In workplaces and professional environments, effective communication in English is a prerequisite for collaboration and success. As the world becomes increasingly interconnected, the ability to convey ideas accurately and comprehensively in English enhances one's capacity to participate in the global dialogue.

METHODOLOGY

This article seeks to provide insights into the obstacles faced by learners in the process of acquiring English language skills across different stages of their academic journey, ranging from early school years to the Undergraduate level. Based on a teaching experience spanning two decades, particularly with students from rural areas in Andhra Pradesh, the author identifies challenges and suggests potential solutions. The emphasis of the article is on the significance of integrating practical applications in English language instruction at the Undergraduate level. This approach aims to dispel the misconception that learning English is an insurmountable task, even for individuals coming from challenging backgrounds. The ultimate goal is to convey that proficiency

in English can be attained comfortably, promoting a more inclusive and accessible approach to language education.

RESEARCH RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Factors and Problems of Teaching English

The challenge of teaching English is particularly pronounced among students who have completed their primary education in their native language. Despite excelling in their core subjects, many of these students exhibit significant difficulties with the English language. This persistent struggle with English has become a longstanding concern, warranting an examination of the factors and obstacles that contribute to this phenomenon, particularly in rural settings.

One primary factor contributing to the struggle with English is the socio-cultural and financial background of the students' families. In many cases, parents in rural areas may themselves be illiterate, which hampers their ability to actively engage in their children's daily educational activities. While these parents harbor aspirations for their children's future success, their lack of literacy prevents them from providing essential supervision and guidance. This absence of parental involvement at crucial stages of education creates a void that can significantly impact the academic performance of the students.

Furthermore, the daily struggles of illiterate parents, who often toil tirelessly for their livelihood, leave them with limited time and resources to comprehend their children's educational pursuits. The pressing demands of daily life take precedence, leaving little room for parents to consult with teachers about the progress of their children in their studies. The inability of illiterate parents to grasp the intricacies of their children's educational journey poses a formidable challenge, hindering effective communication between home and school.

The economic constraints faced by these families exacerbate the situation. In many instances, children are compelled to contribute to family income by engaging in wage labor, especially during specific seasons. This economic necessity forces students to divert their attention and time away from their education, impacting their academic pursuits adversely. The dichotomy between the need for immediate financial support and the long-term investment in education places an additional burden on these students, making it challenging for them to prioritize their studies. A significant proportion of students in our nation hail from rural backgrounds, and it is not uncommon for them to grapple with inherent challenges, particularly when it comes to embracing English as a language of proficiency. This resistance to English can be attributed to its status as a second or even third language, never quite attaining the familiarity and ease of expression associated with one's mother tongue. The inclination to communicate effortlessly in the native language often prevails over the effort required to navigate the complexities of an unfamiliar linguistic terrain.

The fear complex surrounding English becomes particularly pronounced among students from rural backgrounds, where the language is often perceived

as daunting and less accessible. Despite acknowledging its indispensability, these students tend to avoid investing substantial effort in mastering English during their early education years. This avoidance, coupled with the prevailing mindset that deems English as secondary to their primary language, sets the stage for a challenging linguistic journey.

As these students progress to the Undergraduate (UG) level, a realization of the critical importance of English dawns upon them. However, the delayed recognition of its significance poses a formidable obstacle, as the gap in language proficiency widens over time. The delayed focus on English language acquisition becomes a hindrance to these students, impacting their academic and professional prospects.

An intriguing observation sheds light on the performance disparities in English among students based on their parents' socio-economic background. Students whose parents are employed and belong to a higher middle class exhibit better English proficiency compared to their counterparts from lower-middle-class families with illiterate parents. This discrepancy can be attributed to the ability of parents in the former group to spare time for occasional consultations with teachers and provide guidance to their children when needed. This unfortunate divide between classes further underscores the challenges associated with English language learning in rural areas.

Consequently, a prevailing perception in rural settings solidifies the notion that English is inherently difficult to study and comprehend, despite its reputation as one of the easiest languages in the world to learn. This perception is not a reflection of the language's inherent complexity but rather a consequence of the socio-economic and cultural factors influencing students' early experiences and attitudes toward English education. Addressing this issue requires a comprehensive approach that considers not only language instruction but also the broader socio-economic context, aiming to bridge the gap and ensure equitable opportunities for all students, regardless of their background. Nevertheless, it has been consistently demonstrated that students from the second group exhibit a notable interest and proficiency in English Language Learning. This commendable outcome is attributed to both the students themselves and their teachers, who successfully fostered curiosity among these learners despite their financial constraints and less-than-ideal upbringing. This suggests that mere poverty should not be seen as an insurmountable barrier hindering students from achieving proficiency in the English language.

A second significant challenge arises from the pervasive influence of the mother tongue. Many students predominantly pursue their education in their regional languages, lacking an English learning environment in both their educational institutions and immediate surroundings. This deficiency results in underdeveloped skills in listening, speaking, reading, and writing in English. The consequence is a persistent stagnation in the learner's English proficiency, leading to a growing disparity between the learner and the expected class standard. This creates a detrimental phobia towards English from an early

school level, impeding the learner's progress and depriving them of valuable opportunities.

The methodology employed in English Language Teaching further compounds the issue, often relying on a bilingual or translation approach. Due to the students' limited English language proficiency, teachers frequently resort to translating content into the learners' mother tongue. While this method may impart a solid understanding of the subject matter, it hinders the development of communication skills in English—a crucial aspect in today's context. In this scenario, the teacher assumes the role of a translator more than that of an authentic English language instructor. Consequently, the line between a teacher of a regional language and an English teacher becomes blurred, diminishing the effectiveness of English language instruction. As an illustrative instance, in the state of Andhra Pradesh, particularly at the Upper Primary and Secondary levels—crucial stages for learners to acquire languages beyond their mother tongue—English instruction was assigned to any subject teacher, except those specializing in Telugu and Hindi. Notably, these English teachers at these levels were often untrained and lacked awareness of the contemporary trends and techniques in English Language Teaching (ELT). The predicament is further exacerbated in many private English medium schools in rural areas, where the scenario is often even more dire.

In these instances, English teachers frequently comprise individuals who pursued their schooling in English medium but faced academic setbacks, such as failure in Intermediate education and beyond. While it is not a universal trend, it is prevalent in a considerable number of institutions. Regrettably, these educators tend to transform the learning of English into a nightmarish experience for students, advocating rote memorization methods. Consequently, this approach deprives students of the essential communication skills in English, perpetuating a cycle where English becomes a daunting specter for learners over an extended period in Andhra Pradesh.

Compounding this issue is another factor that exacerbates the problem, which is the lack of sufficient training and awareness among English teachers. Many of these educators are unfamiliar with contemporary ELT methodologies and lack exposure to evolving language teaching techniques. This knowledge gap further perpetuates outdated teaching practices, hindering the development of effective language skills among students.

Moreover, the curriculum itself may not be aligned with modern language teaching standards. Outdated and inadequate English language teaching materials contribute to an environment where students struggle to engage with the language in a meaningful way. This misalignment between teaching practices, teacher competence, and curriculum standards collectively reinforces the perception of English as an intimidating subject, impeding the development of students' proficiency and communication abilities. Yet another contributing factor exacerbating this issue is the limited language exposure experienced by students. Language acquisition is profoundly influenced by the extent of exposure, with increased exposure contributing to enhanced comfort and proficiency. Unfortunately, many teachers opt to instruct English using

their regional languages for the sake of convenience. In the rush to cover the prescribed syllabus, teachers often neglect to allocate dedicated time for listening practice within the classroom. Consequently, students find themselves confined solely to the syllabus, hindering their holistic language development. Effective language learning necessitates active engagement and practice, not mere mechanical repetition. To facilitate this, teachers must refine their own language skills by immersing themselves in standard spoken English. A commitment to constant practice and the intentional cultivation of strong English language skills is imperative for all English teachers. Unfortunately, the prevailing situation resulted in English being taught ineffectively, deviating from the specified rules and regulations regarding syntax, grammar, phonetics, and other linguistic elements. This deviation can be attributed to the dearth of specialized and trained English teachers equipped to guide students in a comprehensive manner and alleviate their apprehensions surrounding the English language.

The emergence of unskilled English teachers may be traced back to the government's new policy aimed at fortifying English language instruction by employing specialized teachers attuned to global language requirements. However, the implementation of this policy was delayed, and as a consequence, English teaching suffered from a lack of expertise. Recognizing this belatedly, the Government of Andhra Pradesh took remedial action by introducing a designated position called English Assistant. This position is now on par with other Language Pundits and School Assistant posts in High Schools, with the specific mandate of exclusively teaching English language up to the tenth standard.

While this initiative reflects a positive step towards addressing the deficiency in English language instruction, the delay in its implementation has already contributed to a generation of learners who may have struggled due to inadequate language exposure and ineffective teaching methods. Moving forward, a sustained commitment to the specialized training of English teachers, coupled with an emphasis on immersive language practices, will be crucial to overcoming the challenges associated with language learning in Andhra Pradesh. By fostering a supportive environment that prioritizes language exposure, practice, and skilled teaching, it is possible to reshape the narrative around English language education and empower students to develop proficiency with confidence. Moreover, a significant linguistic distinction compounds the challenge of learning English, particularly in the Indian context. Most Indian languages adhere to a phonetic structure, where words are pronounced as they are written, without variations in stress or tone. Take Telugu, for instance, which is spoken with equal stress on each letter, devoid of rising or falling tones. Due to the pervasive influence of their mother tongue, learners at primary and secondary levels often mispronounce certain English words, such as "subtle," "debris," "giraffe," "island," and "condemn," by incorrectly stressing every letter. Similarly, misspelling of English words like "tsunami," "depot," "lieutenant," "knock," and "psychology" as "sunami," "depo," "leftnant," "nock," and "sychology" is a common occurrence. This linguistic

divergence might be a primary contributor to their struggle in understanding the pronunciation of Standard English and foreign accents.

Another potential impediment lies in the structure of the final English examination papers. Historically, these exams have not been designed to empower students with command over the English language; instead, they inadvertently encourage a complacent approach. Examinations have predominantly been content-focused, requiring students to memorize and reproduce information verbatim without engaging with the textbooks or creating their own notes. Consequently, a rote learning methodology prevails, where memory prowess supersedes intellectual understanding and language skills during exams. The content memorized is often regurgitated during examinations, only to be forgotten shortly thereafter. However, there is a discernible shift in the current generation of learners, reflecting a nascent interest in the communicative aspects of language.

Crucially, it falls upon language teachers at the school level to illuminate students about the pivotal role of English in shaping their future careers and to help them overcome the deep-seated apprehension towards the language that has developed over the years. Failure to address this at the school level exacerbates the challenges faced by language teachers at the Undergraduate (UG) level. A proactive approach is essential to reshape students' perceptions of English, fostering an environment that nurtures language skills as a vital tool for future success rather than a formidable obstacle. English language learning encompasses four fundamental skills: Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing (LSRW). The objective of English language instruction should prioritize the development of these four skills in students. The initial step in effective teaching is recognizing the relative importance of each skill for second language learners.

The comprehensive approach to English language learning involves honing the ability to listen to and comprehend spoken English. This skill facilitates effective communication and comprehension in real-life situations. Reading proficiency is equally vital, enabling learners to understand written content and glean information from various sources. Additionally, fostering effective writing skills empowers students to express their thoughts coherently and communicate ideas effectively in the written form.

Recognizing the significance of these language skills is pivotal in guiding the teaching process. By emphasizing the interplay between listening, speaking, reading, and writing, educators can create a well-rounded language learning experience that equips students with the tools needed for effective communication and comprehension in the English language.

The proficiency in the skill of listening

As commonly acknowledged, Listening stands as the initial and fundamental among the four essential language skills. A proficient listener often transforms into an effective communicator. When engaged in the act of listening, it becomes imperative to direct attention to various linguistic elements such as language structure, pronunciation, vocabulary usage, tone, and stress.

The spectrum of listening encompasses diverse types, including active listening, attentive listening, appreciative listening, biased listening, casual listening, comprehension listening, critical listening, content listening, and more. Enhancing listening skills requires exposure to standard English speakers. Students are guided to listen to spoken English directly from their teachers or through pre-recorded audio/video sources. Debates and discussions aired on prominent channels like BBC, NDTV, and CNN-IBN can be recorded and presented to students, offering real-world language contexts. Additionally, an abundance of materials on English learning websites proves invaluable for classroom use.

Listening is not merely a mechanical act of physically recording data; it is a nuanced and intricate process of interpretation. It involves the ability to discern and comprehend language nuances, making it an essential skill for effective communication. By emphasizing active listening and providing exposure to diverse linguistic contexts, educators can foster a holistic approach to language learning that goes beyond the mere acquisition of information to the interpretation and understanding of spoken English in various real-world scenarios.

Elevating our listening skills involves embracing several key principles

1. Listening is far from a passive endeavor. Rather, it demands our active engagement and undivided attention. It necessitates a deliberate effort to attune our focus to the speaker and the nuances of their communication.
2. A pivotal aspect of adept listening is the ability to discern unspoken elements—fears, concerns, moods, and aspirations—that lie beneath the surface of verbal expression. Proficient listeners go beyond the spoken words, delving into the subtleties that provide a deeper understanding of the speaker's thoughts and emotions.
3. Exceptional listening is intertwined with wisdom. It requires more than the mere act of hearing; it demands a discerning mind that can extract meaning and comprehend the nuances embedded within the spoken words. Wisdom in listening involves empathy, understanding, and an appreciation for the intricacies of human communication.
4. Respecting and validating the perspectives of others is a cornerstone of effective listening. Approaching conversations with an open mind and a willingness to acknowledge diverse viewpoints fosters an environment conducive to meaningful dialogue. This level of respect contributes to the establishment of trust and rapport between communicators.
5. An essential aspect of good listening involves resisting the impulse to formulate responses while the other person is still speaking. Instead, it calls for a patient and attentive reception of the speaker's words without prematurely diverting mental energy to crafting our reply. By withholding judgment and refraining from preemptive responses, we create space for genuine understanding to unfold.
6. Objectivity and critical thinking play integral roles in honing one's listening skills. Evaluating information with a discerning and unbiased

mindset allows for a more comprehensive understanding of the message being conveyed. Objectively assessing the content, context, and implications of the communication enables us to engage in thoughtful and meaningful exchanges.

Speaking is a skill that falls under the category of productive skills, and its acquisition demands dedicated practice, especially in conducive classroom environments. It involves a scientific process wherein various organs of the body come into play. English, being an assertive language, involves the forceful expulsion of air during speech.

Several fundamental elements significantly impact our spoken English. Like any other language, English sounds are fundamentally categorized into two types: Vowels and Consonants. Vowels are sounds produced without any friction in the mouth, while consonants are articulated with some degree of friction. As previously outlined, the 26 letters in the English alphabet represent a total of 44 sounds. Among them, the five letters 'a,' 'e,' 'i,' 'o,' and 'u' encompass 20 sounds, while the remaining 21 letters represent 24 sounds. This distinction creates a scenario where spelling and pronunciation may not always align, leading to what is commonly known as the spelling-pronunciation mismatch.

The articulation of vowels and consonants varies, and this diversity in pronunciation contributes to the complexity of spoken English. The manner in which sounds are articulated and the subsequent processing of communication form two interconnected aspects. Both these facets carry significant weight in the overall comprehension and effective expression of the language.

To master spoken English, learners must navigate the intricacies of vowel and consonant articulation. The interplay between these articulations and the cognitive processing of language underscores the nuanced nature of effective communication. Recognizing the importance of both aspects is crucial for language learners, as it allows them to develop a comprehensive understanding of the mechanics of spoken English. Consequently, educators and learners alike should prioritize a balanced approach that encompasses both the physical articulation of sounds and the cognitive processing involved in effective communication. Through dedicated practice and a nuanced understanding of these fundamental elements, learners can navigate the intricacies of spoken English with increased proficiency and confidence. The crucial elements governing speech sounds in any language are the place and manner of articulation for consonants, along with the tongue level and lip structure for vowels. For English language learners, delving into these aspects provides a valuable understanding that enhances their proficiency in using the language. Pronouncing English carries an inherent beauty, with music discernible particularly when employing the correct accentuation and intonation patterns.

Proficiency in speech entails mastering correct pronunciation, stress, and intonation, as well as employing word and sentence forms in meaningful contexts. The hallmark of spoken English lies in achieving fluency and accuracy. However, students hailing from rural backgrounds often face

considerable challenges in acquiring these speech skills at the Undergraduate (UG) level. Limited or no exposure to English becomes a formidable hurdle, making the process even more daunting.

Motivation also plays a pivotal role in the acquisition of spoken English skills. Students, driven by the examination-oriented education system, may not find a direct correlation between speaking English and academic success. Consequently, there is a reluctance to invest effort in learning spoken English, as it does not contribute to their examination scores. This lack of motivation erects a formidable barrier for UG teachers attempting to cultivate speech skills among their students.

Breaking through this resistance becomes a Herculean task for UG teachers, given the prevailing mindset among students. The challenge lies not only in imparting the technical aspects of speech but also in instilling the motivation to overcome the reluctance to speak English. Encouraging students to perceive spoken expression as a scientific process requires fostering an appreciation for the intrinsic beauty of the language and its nuances.

The proficiency in the skill of reading

In accordance with Sir Francis Bacon's profound assertion, "Reading makes a full man, Conference a ready man, and Writing an exact man," the pivotal role of reading in acquiring knowledge cannot be overstated. Reading, often considered the most researched yet least understood skill, has been the subject of extensive efforts by researchers aiming to unravel its intricacies. Exploring and understanding the nuances involved in the reading process is essential for individuals seeking to enhance their reading capabilities.

1. Several key points warrant contemplation for those endeavoring to read faster and more effectively:
2. Current Average Speed: Reflecting on one's existing reading pace serves as a baseline for improvement. Identifying the current average speed provides insight into the starting point, laying the foundation for progress.
3. Variance Scale in Reading Speed: Recognizing the fluctuation in reading speed based on familiarity with the material is crucial. Different levels of familiarity with the content can significantly impact reading speed, and understanding this variance aids in adapting strategies accordingly.
4. Reading Frequency: Delving into the frequency of reading sessions per day, week, or month in the target language sheds light on the consistency of one's reading habits. Establishing a regular reading routine is instrumental in skill enhancement.
5. Time Allocation: Assessing the average time devoted to each reading session provides valuable information. Understanding the time frame for reading spells contributes to effective time management and aids in optimizing the learning process.
6. Identifying Challenges: Identifying the specific challenges encountered during the reading process is imperative. Whether it's comprehension

hurdles, vocabulary limitations, or other obstacles, addressing these challenges is essential for improvement

7. Reading Strategies: Exploring and understanding the strategies employed during reading sessions is pivotal. Whether it involves skimming, scanning, or in-depth analysis, recognizing and refining one's reading strategies can significantly impact comprehension and speed.

By pondering over these aspects, individuals can embark on a journey of self-improvement in the realm of reading. It serves as a roadmap for enhancing reading speed, comprehension, and overall proficiency. As reading is a multifaceted skill, a nuanced understanding of these elements empowers individuals to navigate the complexities of various materials with greater ease and efficacy. Various theories and conjectures abound when it comes to the intricate skill of reading, a practice undertaken by individuals for diverse purposes. Broadly, these purposes can be categorized into two: reading for pleasure and reading for information. When engaging in the pleasure of reading, individuals often employ strategies that naturally align with their preferences. Even if comprehension temporarily eludes them during the presentation, the enjoyment derived from the process remains undiminished.

Regrettably, the habit of reading, which is an indispensable tool for acquiring proficiency in English, is waning among students. Traditional reading times have been replaced by the allure of the internet, television, mobile phones, and other visual distractions prevalent among the student population. A notable consequence is the diminishing awareness of the joys inherent in the act of reading. Reading, as a skill, demands an investment of time, patience, and perseverance. It serves as a catalyst for the development of concentration, and the knowledge assimilated through this practice tends to endure in memory far longer than information obtained through alternative means.

Reading, in its essence, unfolds the intricacies of language in a natural and comprehensive manner. The knowledge gleaned through reading permeates the subconscious mind, leaving an indelible imprint that surfaces effortlessly during both written and spoken communication. The practice of reading aloud in a classroom setting provides an invaluable avenue for enhancing oral skills. Here, a teacher assumes a pivotal role in cultivating reading habits, particularly at the Undergraduate (UG) level.

Motivating students to immerse themselves in literature, carefully selected by the teacher to sustain their interest, is a strategic approach. This not only instills a love for reading but also exposes students to diverse linguistic styles and thematic content. By incorporating carefully chosen literature into the curriculum, educators can foster a reading culture among students, encouraging them to explore the richness of language and literature. This approach is not merely about promoting the act of reading; it is about nurturing an appreciation for the transformative power of words and stories.

The proficiency in the skill of writing

Mastering writing is deemed the most challenging skill, requiring meticulous attention to detail and serving as a mental discipline. Even

individuals proficient in listening and imitation may find themselves struggling when tasked with writing, as writing often receives less emphasis at the school level compared to other language skills. Bridging this gap falls under the responsibility of Undergraduate (UG) level teachers, who must actively engage students in writing assignments to hone their writing skills through consistent practice.

While checking and discussing individual scripts can be a demanding task for teachers, it stands as an indispensable method to enhance a student's writing abilities. There exists no alternative route to improvement, and the effort becomes more manageable when a teacher succeeds in cultivating a student's interest in creative writing. As Samuel Johnson aptly stated, "The mental disease of the present generation is impatience of study." Unfortunately, the contemporary era, marked by the pervasive influence of electronic gadgets, witnesses a reluctance, especially among the younger generation, towards developing crucial skills such as reading and writing. Students exhibit impatience in cultivating writing skills, leading to imperfections in spelling, punctuation, syntax, and grammar. Addressing this challenge necessitates a concerted effort to instill a sense of patience and dedication towards the study of writing. UG level teachers play a pivotal role in shaping the writing abilities of students, not only through prescribed curriculum exercises but also by fostering an appreciation for creative expression. Encouraging students to view writing as a dynamic and creative process, rather than a burdensome task, can significantly contribute to overcoming the prevalent impatience. Furthermore, the adverse impact of electronic gadgets on reading and writing skills underscores the need for a deliberate focus on these foundational aspects of language proficiency. Incorporating innovative teaching methods, leveraging technology for constructive purposes, and emphasizing the intrinsic value of effective writing can contribute to steering the present generation away from the impatience that hinders the development of essential language skills.

The seamless integration of all four language skills is essential, with each skill holding equal significance. It falls upon the teacher to devise a comprehensive teaching strategy that ensures a balanced approach to teaching these skills. The holistic development of listening, speaking, reading, and writing is a fundamental aspect of language education.

Upon entering the university, students are initially primed for oral communication, a pivotal requirement for their interactions with peers. English emerges as the common language facilitating these conversations. Encouraging students to engage in English conversations beyond the formal college hours creates an environment conducive to language acquisition. Although students from rural backgrounds may initially face challenges due to the English medium of instruction, consistent exposure and interaction gradually foster comfort with the language.

Overcoming diffidence is a paramount challenge in acquiring spoken English proficiency. Unlike book learning, spoken English demands continual practice. Public speaking serves as a potent tool in eliminating this hesitancy and instilling confidence among students. To address this, teachers assign oral

tasks, such as impromptu speaking on a chosen topic for 3-4 minutes. Noteworthy enhancements in students' confidence and oral communication skills have been observed through this practice.

Oral communication forms an integral component of the Undergraduate (UG) syllabus, encompassing various speaking activities such as group discussions, interviews, pair work, public speaking, and research paper writing and presentation skills. These activities not only refine language skills but also carry an incentive in the form of academic marks. The university provides a platform, the foyer talk forum, where students voluntarily deliver speeches lasting 10-12 minutes before a larger audience. A dedicated group of teachers conducts special coaching classes, incorporating video sessions featuring speeches by renowned world leaders. This comprehensive approach hones students' gestures, mannerisms, and overall public speaking prowess. The well-equipped Language labs further cater to the diverse needs of learners, solidifying the foundation for language proficiency. The observation reveals a prevalent issue: students proficient in spoken English often make writing errors, indicative of inadequate language training during their earlier schooling. Addressing this gap, the English department organizes remedial classes specifically tailored for students requiring additional support. These sessions focus on refining communication skills, aiming to bridge the gap between spoken and written proficiency.

In the pursuit of enhancing writing skills, students are tasked with composing a paragraph on a given topic, spanning approximately 250 words. The teacher meticulously reviews the scripts, highlighting errors, and returns them to the students. A pivotal aspect of this process involves self-analysis, as students dedicate time to identify and rectify mistakes independently. Subsequently, the teacher engages in individual or group discussions to dissect the scripts, fostering a culture of revision even among those predisposed to neglect this aspect of composition.

Recognizing the often-overlooked significance of handwriting in writing skills, particularly in the age of technology, the department addresses this facet. Students with suboptimal handwriting are provided with cursive handwriting practice books, and their progress is regularly monitored through personalized attention from teachers. This individualized approach ensures that handwriting, a crucial but neglected component, receives the requisite emphasis.

Embracing the technological era, where students are avid users of electronic and digital devices, the department employs diverse strategies to captivate their interest in language learning. The traditional lecture method is supplemented with audio-visual aids, injecting variety into the learning process. To stimulate vocabulary improvement, engaging vocabulary games are introduced in the classroom using an LCD projector. Additionally, vocabulary and grammar quizzes are conducted, fostering an interactive and dynamic learning environment.

Effect of Practical Approach

In recognition of the growing significance of English for both survival and career advancement, the Andhra Pradesh State Council of Higher Education has implemented a practical approach to teaching English at the undergraduate level. This initiative underscores the emphasis on Listening and Speaking skills, aiming to enhance learners' communication proficiency in English. The meticulously crafted syllabus, titled "A Course in Listening and Speaking I & II" for the first and second year of degree courses, reflects a significant departure in the educational landscape. The revised syllabus, implemented across all universities, assesses students through a combination of written examinations and practical evaluations. The innovative syllabus seeks to revolutionize language education by incorporating practical components, particularly focusing on Listening and Speaking skills. To cultivate these skills, audio and video devices are employed, fostering a dynamic and interactive learning environment. Divided into two parts, Theory and Practical, the syllabus ensures a balanced coverage of essential language elements. Importantly, the Practical component is introduced at the undergraduate level for the first time, marking a significant departure from traditional teaching methods. A pivotal aspect of this transformative approach is the introduction of Language Labs, which serve as dedicated spaces for honing language skills. The primary objective behind this novel system is to empower learners to express themselves freely and confidently. By addressing inhibitions such as language phobia, shyness, and inferiority complexes, the practical system aims to create an environment conducive to effective language acquisition.

Through this paradigm shift, students are not merely tested on theoretical knowledge but are actively engaged in practical assessments that assess their ability to apply language skills in real-life scenarios. The holistic goal is to equip learners with the competence to speak English articulately, with precise pronunciation, appropriate stress, and intonation. By breaking down barriers and fostering a supportive learning atmosphere, the practical system endeavors to instill a sense of confidence and proficiency in English communication among undergraduate students.

The practical course is thoughtfully structured into three distinct components, namely Accuracy, Fluency, and Listening Comprehension. Each facet incorporates a well-balanced blend of listening and speaking activities, fostering a comprehensive approach to language acquisition.

In the initial segment, learners are introduced to Phonemic symbols and their corresponding sounds. Additionally, foundational concepts such as word stress, sentence stress, and intonation are elucidated. This phase places a significant emphasis on the precision with which learners articulate their speech. The cultivation of pronunciation neutralization becomes a focal point, enabling learners to speak with accuracy, stress, and intonation. The ultimate goal is to enhance learners' ability to comprehend others' pronunciation effortlessly as a reciprocal outcome.

The second segment is geared towards evaluating the learner's fluency and accuracy in speech. Here, due attention is devoted to grammar and

vocabulary, pivotal elements that contribute to effective communication. Learners are guided on utilizing English to fulfill basic communicative functions, such as requesting, seeking information, and seeking permission. The emphasis extends beyond mere linguistic competence, incorporating practical application in academic, social, and professional contexts.

The final segment delves into assessing the comprehensive understanding capabilities of the learner. This phase underscores the learner's capacity to assimilate information through attentive listening and reproduce the acquired knowledge. It serves as a litmus test for the learner's proficiency in both listening and comprehension, evaluating their ability to concentrate and articulate an understanding of the content.

By systematically integrating these three components, the practical course aims to holistically develop learners' language skills. It goes beyond the traditional focus on theoretical knowledge and rote memorization, emphasizing the practical application of language in various real-life scenarios. Through this comprehensive approach, learners are not only equipped with accurate pronunciation, fluency, and listening skills but are also empowered to effectively communicate in diverse situations, reflecting the evolving demands of language proficiency in the contemporary world.

The significance of this study is delineated through various dimensions, elucidating its profound impact on the learner

1. Confidence in Fluent and Accurate Speaking:

The study instills a sense of confidence in learners, enabling them to articulate thoughts fluently and accurately without succumbing to fear or inhibitions. By fostering a supportive learning environment, the study encourages learners to express themselves with assurance.

2. Exposure to Standardized Pronunciation and Global Understanding:

Learners are exposed to standardized and neutralized pronunciation, stress, intonation, and accents. This exposure equips them to comprehend the pronunciation of individuals from diverse linguistic backgrounds worldwide. The study bridges linguistic gaps, promoting effective communication on a global scale.

3. Learner-Centered Approach and Active Engagement:

Rooted in a learner-centered methodology, the study encourages active engagement. Learners are prompted to invest attention in the content, fostering a dynamic and participative learning atmosphere. This approach enhances the overall learning experience and promotes sustained interest.

4. Bold Interaction Across Language Barriers:

Motivated by the study, learners boldly engage in conversations with individuals of different mother tongues. This courageous interaction contributes to the development of the learner's personality and elevates levels of self-confidence. The study thus becomes a catalyst for personal growth.

5. **Increased Enthusiasm for English Learning:**
The study sparks enthusiasm among learners to learn English, leading to a gradual improvement in overall class attendance. The positive impact of the modified practical system is reflected in the heightened eagerness of learners to actively participate in language learning.
6. **Enhanced Comprehensive Listening Abilities:**
Learners, through concentrated listening, enhance their comprehensive abilities. They become adept at responding to queries posed by their counterparts, showcasing improved listening skills. This heightened attentiveness contributes to the overall communicative competence of the learner.
7. **Readiness to Confront Foreigners for Career Opportunities:**
Learners shed reluctance in interacting with foreigners, opening avenues to novel career opportunities. The modified practical system prepares learners to navigate cross-cultural exchanges confidently, broadening their horizons in terms of potential professional pursuits.
8. **Competency for Idea Exchange and Professional Development:**
The modified practical system elevates the learner's competency to exchange ideas and developments in their respective fields. By honing communication skills, learners are better equipped to contribute meaningfully to discussions, presentations, and collaborations in academic and professional settings.
9. **Participation in Varied Learning Platforms:**
The study encourages learners to actively participate in diverse forums such as group discussions, debates, elocution competitions, quizzes, seminar presentations, question and answer sessions, and interaction classes. This multifaceted engagement enriches the learning experience and contributes to holistic skill development.

CONCLUSION

The innovative approach to teaching English has been met with widespread appreciation and approval among teachers, students, and parents in Tripura. The shift from a traditional, teacher-centric model to a more student-centric one has invigorated the learning environment, fostering enthusiasm and excitement among students. This transformation is not occurring in isolation; rather, it is closely tied to the language teaching methods employed in schools. The success of language education at the undergraduate (UG) level is contingent on the foundation laid during a student's earlier schooling.

Currently, UG teachers find themselves engaged in remedial English, striving to address deficiencies stemming from inadequate school education. Despite the inherent difficulties and challenges, this role is both demanding and creative. Analogous to a doctor tailoring treatment based on individual ailments, UG language teachers employ various methods, recognizing the need for a personalized approach. Patience, time, and the requisite skills are crucial in guiding each student effectively.

There is an urgent call for the formulation of an integrated language course that spans from primary education to the undergraduate level. Collaboration between School Boards, the Tripura Boards of Secondary and Higher Secondary Education (TBSE), Higher Education (HE) the Ministry of Human Resource Development (HRD) is vital in achieving this goal. Partnerships with institutions like the English and Foreign Languages University can further facilitate the organization of statewide competitions such as spell-bee and essay writing contests, fostering language skills development on a larger scale. This innovative concept has not only encouraged but also empowered students to actively participate in classroom activities, engaging with their peers. The role of the teacher has evolved into that of a facilitator, moving away from the conventional lecture method. This shift has yielded positive results, gradually enhancing students' understanding of the English language. Importantly, the students are adapting quickly to the new system, showcasing a marked improvement in their ability to speak English within a relatively short timeframe. Over the years, there has been a discernible change in learners' attitudes towards the new system, with students willingly embracing the active engagement it demands. The method has emboldened learners to express their thoughts and ideas without hesitation. Notably, this approach to learning English has proven to be well-suited and particularly beneficial for the average rural students of Tripura, fostering a positive and inclusive learning environment.

In essence, the transformative approach to language education is contributing to the holistic development of students, empowering them with the skills and confidence needed to face the world. The collaborative efforts of educational bodies and institutions are crucial in sustaining and expanding the positive impact of this student-centric language teaching model in Tripura.

ADVANCED RESEARCH

1. Summarize the main challenges faced by rural students in acquiring English language skills at different stages of their academic journey.
2. Emphasize the importance of addressing these challenges to create a more inclusive and accessible approach to language education.
3. Highlight the potential benefits of improving English language proficiency for rural students in terms of future opportunities and personal growth.

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