

DEVELOPING A REMEDIAL COURSE IN ENGLISH TO ENHANCE COMMUNICATION SKILLS OF THE SLOW LEARNERS AT TERTIARY LEVEL

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Abstract

The use of English in multiple domains at the global level has made an enormous impact on the teaching and learning of this language in India. Despite a positive enthusiasm, there still prevails a strong apprehension among the rural and semi-urban milieu towards learning to communicate in English. More so is the case with slow learners because of their communal affiliations or identities. The present paper aims at preparing a remedial course to cater to the language requirements of the tertiary level language slow learners.

The less realized matter of fact is that the University Grants Commission of India sanctions an appreciable fund especially for conducting Remedial Courses of different capacities. Therefore, this paper mainly aims at preparing and standardizing a Remedial Course in English to enhance the communicative competence, particularly of the tertiary level slow English Language Learners. It is generally observed that the slow students, who learn English as Second Language, do not perform up to the expected level in English, this study concentrates on identifying their problems pertaining to language learning and practising their language competence without any inhibitions.

Introduction

At present it has become an issue of great concern for all educators that even after around fifteen years of exposure to the English language, there still exists the problem of under-achieved English language skills among the slow learners. It is true that efforts are taken to enhance their communicative ability. Nevertheless, there still exists some impairment in the process of their learning the English Language. In fact, the need to gain a communicative competence in English remains an unfulfilled dream for these students, leaving them forever trying and failing. This is the point of departure for the current paper tries to unearth the roots of their difficulty in learning English and using it. This has led to task of developing a remedial course to enable the slow learners to face their communicative problems and thereby to ensure a better learning of the English language that is not only worthwhile but also rewarding.

As such, the crux of this paper is that Remedial Teaching, in its strict modes, can play a pivotal role in improving the effectiveness of Language Learning process of slow learners. Slow learners most them belonging to the

scheduled communities. It is this kind of remedial teaching that can achieve a transformation at their language competency level. The researcher is strong at this point because Remedial Teaching is something that encourages the students to reflect within themselves, without much interference from the teachers, and it allows the students to naturally overcome the inhibitions in English and to actively participate in doing the language tasks. Remedial Teaching also helps the students to approach the subject matter in all fullness, with natural and intrinsic motivation. It permits students' liberty in getting familiarized with the learning through Remedial Teaching methods, in their own ways. The underlying philosophy is that learners' familiarity with the context and content chosen for the classroom activities enable them to participate in the learning process which, in turn, allows the learning possible.

In order to discuss the problems faced by these slow learners in learning English at the Tertiary level and to justify the Remedial Teaching as a feasible means to achieve an appreciable amount of communicative competence among them, the researcher has taken up as his subjects for the study, the Slow ESL learners of the Bharathiar University

College at Valparai of Tamil Nadu in South India. This college, situated in a tribal belt, has ninety five percent of students belong either to Scheduled Caste or Tribe communities and ninety eight percent of students' first generation. This facilitated the researcher to take up his field work successfully.

As such, the main aim of the present paper is to design a Syllabus for the Remedial Course to be implemented among these slow learners and to prove its feasibility in improving their language skills. The main focus of this Remedial course is to enhance the communicative competence of these learners in terms of clarity, correctness and effectiveness. In the process of designing one such course, the foremost step is to identify the common grammatical errors committed, particularly by these learners, while communicating in English. The Remedial course designed includes techniques to improve all the four language skills viz. listening, speaking, reading and writing, aiming at achieving an overall communicative competence in English.

By implementing the syllabus prepared for the Remedial Course among the subjects, this study aims to achieve a notable difference in their communication skills. The study will also ensure a convincingly evident improvement in their communication skills by receiving a highly positive feedback on the activities. To achieve the objectives mentioned above, the researcher has been prepared a remedial course. Remedial course contains five units in below manner.

Unit one explores the history and status of English language teaching in India. In addition to this, the objectives, hypothesis, the operative definition of communicative competence and the methodology are also clearly stated. Besides, this chapter also elaborates on the communal hierarchies prevailing in India, especially in Tamil Nadu, to substantiate the selection of the Slow language learners for this study.

Unit two analyzes the difficulties existing in the regular Part – II English syllabus, thereby justifying the need for a Remedial Course. Following this, it discusses the precepts of a Remedial course in English as a Second Language, components and duration of a remedial course, and the methodologies to be involved in it. Underscoring the need for a remedial course for the slow students, this chapter also delineates the guidelines followed in designing this course.

Unit three presents the drawbacks and difficulties in the communication skills of the tertiary level slow English language learners. It traces the reasons behind these difficulties and suggests as to how to improve the communicative competence and performance of these slow students.

Unit four presents a detailed report of the quantitative analysis of the different experiments administered among the slow students. The pre-test conducted to assess the language level of the slow students are evaluated and parameters decided, based on which the research determines the modules of the lesson to be administered. A post-test is administered at the end of these classes and the responses are evaluated. The findings show that there was a positive difference between the pre-test and the post-test in their communicative ability, in terms of their attitude towards learning the English language. The researcher underscores that this is due to the implementation of the remedial course.

Unit five sums up the findings based on the interpretations of the pre-test and post-test. It is justified with evidences that the administration of the Remedial Course proves to be successful, especially when it is adopted for imparting language skills to the slow Language Learners at the tertiary level.

Conclusion

As a matter of fact, the present paper is a pioneering attempt in its own way for, it is the first of its kind to develop a Remedial Course in communicative competence in English exclusively for the slow learners at the Tertiary Level. Based on the study conducted among these learners, the research paper only justifies this fact that this specially designed Remedial course definitely helps the Slow Language Learners at the Tertiary Level to improve their communicative competence in English.

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