



RESEARCH ARTICLE

A Study on the Design and Effectiveness of a Spoken English Program for Gujarati Medium Secondary School Students (Aged 14–15)

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Abstract

To accomplish the objectives of this project, an English language program will be designed, developed, and evaluated for Gujarati children aged 14 to 15 years old who do not attend school in an English medium. Utilizing a pre-experimental one-group pre-test post-test methodology, the curriculum was evaluated in three different educational institutions of varying sizes. A spoken English exam that was specifically designed to gather information was used to evaluate the individual's vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, comprehension and fluency. The intervention resulted in a significant improvement in the students' spoken English ability, with significant disparities seen between the students based on gender. There was not real difference found in Spoken English proficiency between the students from urban and rural areas. According to the findings of the study, children in secondary schools who speak other regional languages may benefit from participating in planned spoken English therapy. It is the goal of these treatments to enhance the student's ability to communicate verbally.

Keywords: Spoken English Program, Secondary School Students, Gujarati Medium, English Speaking, Language Learning, Educational Intervention.

Introduction

English has been able to successfully overcome several linguistic and cultural barriers, establishing itself as the de jure lingua franca of the modern world. It is essential to economics, academics, research, technology, and diplomacy, among other fields. Within the context of multilingual nations such as India, the acquisition of English is frequently regarded as a means of gaining access to improved educational and employment prospects. Because of this, students who wish to compete in today's increasingly

interconnected world need to have a strong command of the English language, particularly when it comes to speaking.

Beginning in the early years of primary school, pupils in India begin their studies of the English language. Reading and writing are given a higher priority than speaking and listening in a significant number of schools that do not adhere to the English language, particularly those that are located in rural and semi-urban regions. Because of this disparity, students have difficulty articulating their thoughts in a way that is both compelling and convincing when they are confronted with real-life scenarios. Students who come from regional language backgrounds, such as those who attend schools where Gujarati is the primary language of instruction, are among the most affected since they have fewer opportunities to speak English both inside and outside of the classroom where they are enrolled.

Instructors frequently confront significant obstacles while attempting to develop their students' oral communication abilities when they are working with students in various educational environments. Some of these obstacles include having an excessive number of students in a single class, not having sufficient teachers who have expertise in communicative language education, utilizing materials that are either out of date or poorly designed, and having restricted access to multimedia resources that can assist in

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the process of communication and language acquisition. In addition, students are not commonly encouraged to actively participate in speaking events because of the old methods of memorization or the fear of being embarrassed in front of their classmates.

The state of Gujarat is a good example of this more widespread problem on a national scale, even though it is a center of educational and economic advancement. The inability of many children in secondary school to communicate effectively in spoken English has a negative impact not just on their academic achievement but also on their self-esteem, confidence, and opportunities for future employment. Taking into consideration the urgency of the problem, the purpose of this research project is to design and implement a comprehensive spoken English curriculum for students attending secondary schools that are taught in Gujarati. The curriculum will primarily target children who are between the ages of 14 and 15 years old.

The suggested curriculum goes beyond the traditional teaching of grammar by including a communicative approach that emphasizes interactive projects and the use of language in realistic situations. In spoken English, it tries to improve several essential areas, including vocabulary, grammar, comprehension skills, pronunciation, and fluency, to name a few. The objective of the curriculum is to assist students in becoming more fluent in English while simultaneously enhancing their self-esteem and motivating them to utilize the language in everyday situations.

Review of Literature

Learning strategies that are both creative and learner-centered have been the subject of a significant amount of study as a method of assisting non-native English language learners in obtaining proficient spoken English. An assessment of the relevant literature demonstrates that academics are increasingly concluding that traditional, lecture-based methods of language training are insufficient when it comes to establishing communicative competence in individuals who are exposed to real-world situations. The employment of approaches that are creative, interactive, and technologically assisted has been shown to significantly improve students' language learning, particularly in environments where English is not the original language. This is especially true in situations where English is not the native language.

Bhatt (2018) investigated whether or not drama-based activities are effective in improving the speaking abilities of English as a second language (ESL) students in secondary school. The results of his research indicate that the utilization of theatrical strategies in the classroom, including role-playing, skits, and storytelling, may be able to improve students' fluency, accuracy, and vocabulary retention. Because of the theatrical setting, students were able to practice speaking English in natural circumstances in a

setting that was both safe and engaging. This made studying an exciting and beneficial experience for the students.

Similarly, Krishna Praveen (2019) investigated how select elementary schools in Vellore utilized resources for language learning that contained multimedia. The findings that he obtained shed insight into the efficacy of mixing digital content with children's theatre in terms of establishing a better connection between students and the language. According to the findings of the study, the utilization of multimedia resources such as audiovisual clips, interactive games, and digital storytelling led to an increase in spoken English comprehension and output. This outcome was observed independently of the gender of the learners or their level of experience.

A primary objective of Ignatius Maria's (2017) research was the development of tailored instructional materials to assist students from low-income families who were enrolled in university-level English classes. The results of his research indicate that students who have a poor level of oral competence can gain a significant amount from receiving training that is specifically tailored to their unique requirements and difficulties. This gives support for the assumption that contextualized and inclusive materials are crucial for any language intervention to be effective, particularly in places such as India which are socioeconomically diverse and have several languages. One example of such a region is India.

In the course of her research on explicit grammar instruction, Wu (2007) conducted an investigation into the impact that organized grammatical training has on the correctness of spoken language among candidates for teaching positions. Her findings indicate that when students were provided with both oral practice and systematic grammar education, it resulted in an improvement in their ability to speak with correct grammar. The present project, which attempts to teach communicative languages by including grammar in a bigger framework, is a good fit for this technique since it incorporates grammar into the entire framework.

Kumar (2016) demonstrated how teacher-led classroom interventions and interactive group discussions may significantly increase the speaking fluency and self-confidence of senior secondary school students. This is an addition to the enormous successes that he has already achieved. Additionally, Beena Anil (2016) stated that technology-driven activities are excellent for improving English speaking abilities and that students of all ability levels may enjoy engaging, self-paced learning with these resources. She also stated that students might benefit from these materials.

Objectives of the Study

- To assess how well a specially created Spoken English program works overall at improving the speaking

- abilities of 14–15-year-old non-English medium pupils.
- To investigate variations by gender in the enhancement of spoken English skills after the program's implementation.
- To compare the effectiveness of spoken English program of rural and urban area students of 14 and 15 years of age.

Methodology

Research Design

The effectiveness of the Spoken English Program, which is an intervention for students whose native language is not English, was examined in this study using a pre-experimental one-group pre-test post-test technique. The program was designed to help students understand and communicate in English. This strategy is particularly useful in situations when the major focus of exploratory research is on the impacts of an intervention in a naturalistic context, without the presence of a control group.

A single group of participants is subjected to double-blind monitoring in this research design. The pre-test is conducted before the intervention is implemented, and the post-test is conducted after the intervention has been completed. Because of the disparity in outcomes between the two evaluations, we believe that it is due to the impacts of the intervention, which in this instance is the Spoken English Program. It is a practical and acceptable method in educational contexts when random assignment and control groups may not be practicable. Even though this design does not take into consideration all potential risks to internal validity, such as maturity or external influences, it is nevertheless a practical and reasonable approach.

The objectives of the study, which included the enhancement of oral communication skills through the implementation of a rigorous, activity-based training program, served as the basis for the selection of the methodology. The researcher could evaluate the immediate impact of the intervention, track the development of the participants throughout the study, and gather comparison data from several other experiments. This design was good for a program that would be copied and tested in multiple classes because of its simplicity and adaptability, which made it suited for use in a broad variety of educational settings. This design was great for reproducing and testing the program in different classrooms.

To determine the efficacy of the program, participants were given a self made spoken English test based on CEFR level A₁-B₁, both before and following the intervention. In addition, the design made it simple to do subgroup analysis according to gender and area, which enabled the researcher to investigate secondary objectives and other characteristics that affect the outcomes of learning.

Population and Sample

The demographic of interest for this study included all students between the ages of 14 and 15 who were enrolled in schools in the state of Gujarat that were connected with the Gujarat Secondary Education Board (GSEB) and did not use English as their language of instruction. Because children in this age range are often in the ninth grade, which is a pivotal year for both their academic achievement and their language abilities, this demographic was selected by hand. It is becoming increasingly important for individuals to be able to speak English fluently as they progress in their academic and professional lives.

Because the purpose of this research was to discover ways in which its results may be applied in the classroom, the participants were selected using a method known as purposive sampling. Because it enabled the researcher to pick schools and students who were most likely to benefit from and contribute significantly to the study, this non-probability sampling strategy was found to be suitable. The existence of school authorities, the availability of pupils in the age range that was wanted, and the provision of teaching in a language other than English were some of the factors that were utilized in the selection process.

From three different Gujarati schools, a total of 104 pupils were identified as belonging to the group. By dividing the sample into three distinct phases, or trials, the experiment was carried out an additional three times, and the results were made more reliable. The following is how the distribution of the sample appeared:

Trial 1

32 students participated in the trial, which was held at Shree Model School(Gorakhmadhi). This was the Spoken English Program's first implementation.

Trial 2

To confirm and reproduce the first findings, 36 students participated in this study at Shree Saraswati High School. (Gorakhmadhi)

Trial 3

36 pupils participated in this third layer of validation and consistency, which was carried out at Shree Aklavy School. (Thareli)

Every group was handled as if it were a separate experimental unit during the whole experiment. A pre-test was administered to each student to evaluate their initial level of skill in spoken English. Following that, the students participated in the Spoken English Program for one month, during which they were given thirty hours of organized training. Following the 42 sessions, a post-test was administered to the participants to assess their level of speaking ability.

The selection of all the three schools and the students was done to facilitate concentrated learning within a classroom setting that was both practical and manageable. The research was also conducted in three schools to ensure that the findings were not limited to a single environment. This broadened the scope of the program's applicability and generalize ability beyond the state of Gujarat and other locations where English is not the medium of teaching.

Research Tool

A self made proficiency test based on CEFR level A₁-B₁ was prepared by the researcher for students between the ages of 14 and 15 who were attending schools where Gujarati was the medium of instruction. This was done to evaluate the effectiveness of the Spoken English Program. The instrument was rigorously developed to measure spoken English competence in all of its features and to guarantee that it would be congruent with the components of the intervention program.

It was designed to cover the fundamentals of spoken English, and it consisted of twenty (20) questions. What was included in this were:

Pronunciation

The capacity to express English intonation, stress patterns, and sounds appropriately.

Vocabulary

The variety and context-appropriateness of words used.

Grammar

Correctness of syntactic structures, verb use, and sentence construction.

Fluency

The capacity to communicate ideas in a clear, coherent, and fluid manner.

Oral communication skills

All-around communication proficiency, encompassing engagement, clarity, and involvement.

Comprehension

The process of understanding written or spoken language - the ability to grasp the meaning of words, sentences and passages to make sense of the information conveyed.

We designed every question on the test to have students respond orally. In the proficiency test 20 questions Part - A 10 questions and Part-B 10 pictures description. In the program the activities included basic conversation openers, exercises in description, dialogues based on specific situations, and questions to encourage storytelling. Students were able to practice speaking more naturally and authentically as a result of these activities, which were based on real-life themes and situations.

To ensure consistency and equity in scoring, the pre-and post-tests were audio recorded with all student responses.

To evaluate these recordings, the researcher employed a 5-point analytical framework. The scoring scale was defined as follows:

Excellent

Pronunciation and grammatical faults are minor; expressive, accurate, and fluid.

Best

Speech is generally fluent and accurate, with only occasional minor errors in pronunciation or grammar that have negligible impact on meanings.

Good

Spoken clearly and coherently, with sporadic mistakes that don't impair understanding.

Average

Pronunciation and grammar mistakes are evident; basic communication is preserved.

Below average

Accuracy and fluency are poor; communication collapses frequently.

Through the utilization of the rubric, we were able to analyze the essential components of spoken language in a manner that was consistent and objective throughout all of the trials.

A pilot version of the examination was evaluated by language instruction specialists and classroom English teachers, who provided feedback on how the examination may be improved in terms of its organization, content, and language proficiency. As part of the final draft, their recommendations were incorporated to improve the validity and practicability of the examination.

The instrument was more than simply a measuring stick for progress; it also acted as a diagnostic device for determining the areas in which particular pupils were having difficulty. Because of this, the researcher was able to improve teaching strategies during the intervention and provide help that was more specifically tailored to the needs of the students.

Implementation and Data Collection

Trial 1, Trial 2, and Trial 3 were the three steps of the Spoken English Program that were methodically designed and carried out in three secondary schools in the Gir Somnath region of Gujarat that did not use English as their medium of instruction respectively. Every single research was conducted by a defined intervention framework, which mostly included pre-testing, intervention, and post-testing activities. A preliminary examination was administered to the students of the chosen schools to evaluate their proficiency in several aspects of the English language, such as pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, and fluency. Because we needed to know the baseline to evaluate

the effectiveness of the intervention, the results of the pre-test provided us with that information. The next step was to design a thirty-hour intervention program that ran for one and half month and featured a combination of communicative language exercises and grammar education. The program lasted for thirty hours.

Activities such as role-playing, storytelling, listening exercises, and small-group discussions were some of the activities that we utilized in these lessons to make them interesting, dynamic, and adapting to the specific needs of each student. Before the intervention began, official contact was made with the principals of the schools that were going to take part in it, and their participation was ensured by the acquisition of a written agreement. Through the implementation of concurrent teacher orientation seminars, the researcher ensured that the program was carried out in a manner that was both honest and uniform throughout all three schools. The instructors were given an introduction to the lesson plans, resources, and instructional strategies that will be utilized in the program through the facilitation of these workshops. The researcher also incorporated the essential instructional materials, which included worksheets, audio recordings, and visual aids, to maintain an immersive learning experience for the intended audience.

Throughout the entirety of the program, the researcher worked to maintain student engagement and ensure that they remained on track by monitoring their participation, carrying out activities, and recording observations. Following the conclusion of the intervention, the same students were given a same post-test that was formatted in a manner that was same to the pre-test. The audio recording of their comments made it feasible to conduct an objective evaluation. After that, these recordings were rated according to a set of predetermined criteria to evaluate how certain components of spoken English have developed. To establish the effectiveness of the Spoken English Program and to investigate differences depending on gender and area, the data that was gathered from the pre-and post-tests was rigorously arranged and prepared for statistical analysis.

Data Analysis

In each of the three trials, the analysis of the data was an essential step in evaluating whether or not the Spoken English Program was effective. After the post-tests, a thorough compilation of all the data and score from the pre-test and the post-test was carried out in Microsoft Excel. This made it possible to more easily organize, categorize, and visualize the raw data. To simplify the process of subgroup analysis, the data was arranged following the school, trial number, gender and area. To gain an understanding of the general distribution of the scores as well as the important patterns that emerged from them, the descriptive statistics that were initially produced were the mean, median, mode, standard deviation, and range. This included a summary of

the student's current and previous levels of performance before and after the intervention.

Using statistical software, paired sample t-tests were carried out to test the hypotheses and determine whether or not the differences that were found were statistically significant. As a result of comparing the means of the same group of students both before and after the intervention, this assessment performed very well with the one-group pre-test and post-test strategy that was utilized in the research. The results of the exam would disclose whether the improvements in spoken English competence were the consequence of the organized curriculum or whether they were just the product of random chance.

In addition to this, the researcher conducted comparison studies across important criteria to evaluate many potential results. We evaluated the post-test results of male and female students using independent sample t-tests to measure gender-based efficacy, for example. Female students scored higher than male students. There was a significant difference in the effectiveness of the program between male and female students, as demonstrated by the fact that female students did better than male students in each of the three trials. Similar to how the rest of the data was split, students who were from rural and urban area also segregated. The findings of the study demonstrated that the area of the students not significantly effect to the performance of students.

To further assist in the comprehension of patterns and trends in student performance, graphical representations such as box plots, line graphs, and bar charts were utilized to depict score gains and group comparisons. This was done to promote better understanding. Not only did these visual aids provide credibility to the findings, but they also made the process of communicating those findings to stakeholders, such as teachers and district administrators, much simpler.

Findings

The effectiveness of the Spoken English Program, which was designed for students who did not speak English as their first language and were between the ages of 14 and 15, was validated by extensive and consistent findings from the evaluation of pre-and post-test data from all three trials. The curriculum seemed to have the greatest visible impact on the students' spoken English ability, which significantly improved as a result of the spoken English Program intervention. Students at all three trials made remarkable progress in a variety of Spoken English components, including vocabulary, pronunciation, fluency, grammatical correctness, and comprehension. The fact that this improvement was constant across all three implementations is evidence that the program is trustworthy and can be reproduced.

In addition, the favourable influence that gender has on

academic achievement was discovered to be a substantial discovery. Within each trial, the post-test scores of female students were shown to be higher than the findings obtained by male students. According to this pattern, it appears that the program's emphasis on group work and conversation may have been more successful with the female participants. It is possible that they would have paid more attention in class, engaged more actively, and been more likely to contribute their ideas to group projects and debates that took place in the classroom. In light of these gender-based differences in engagement and performance, future programs must implement strategies that promote equal participation and motivation among all students, particularly boys, who may require additional support or methods that are differently tailored to achieve comparable levels of improvement.

Students residing in urban and rural areas showed no effect on the post-test mean score of spoken English proficiency test. It means no real difference was found between the students from urban and rural areas in post-test mean score of spoken English proficiency test.

During the implementation process, not only were we successful in accomplishing these key goals, but also informal observations and remarks revealed that students had increased their level of self-assurance and were more actively participating. A significant number of pupils who were first timid about speaking English now feel at ease expressing themselves and communicating with their peers in the language that is being targeted. Additionally, even though it is not feasible to measure this shift in behaviour just via the use of a self-made proficiency test for testing, it does indicate the program's equally essential psychological and motivational implications on language learning.

Suggestions for Further Research

In addition to demonstrating the efficacy of a structured Spoken English Program for Gujarati medium learners at the secondary school level, the present study opens up several avenues for further scholarly exploration. To begin, there is a strong possibility that such intervention programs might be extended to students in upper secondary school and to colleges that provide teacher education, particularly B.Ed. Programs, where students would understand the importance of excellent communication skills. In addition to improving their professional competence, pre-service teachers would be better able to set an example for their students in terms of how to effectively communicate in English.

Secondly, future research could benefit from the development and evaluation of individualized intervention modules that focus on the four cornerstones of spoken English: pronunciation, fluency, grammar, comprehension and vocabulary. By disentangling and addressing these aspects through targeted training, it may be able to

identify specific student needs and develop more advanced methods of language instruction. These programs may be easily adapted to suit the needs of students with varying levels of expertise and used in a variety of classroom settings.

Research comparing the curriculum in other parts of India, or even other countries, would help determine how adaptable and sensitive it is to different cultures and languages. To better understand the impact of learner demographics, regional languages, and local educational methods on the efficacy of spoken English therapies, research of this nature could be beneficial. They might also draw attention to specific challenges or strengths that manifest in different classroom settings.

Future research may also look at the long-term impacts of spoken English programs, tracking students' progress over time, to assess the retention and practical application of acquired speaking skills. It would be wise to study the efficacy of future therapies that combine spoken English programs with technology-enhanced learning tools, such as language tutors powered by artificial intelligence or mobile apps. The present study provides a solid foundation; nevertheless, more, longer, and more diverse investigations are required to provide a more comprehensive framework for the development of spoken English in educational settings where English is not the language of instruction.

Conclusion

Taking into consideration the findings of this research, it is evident that a Spoken English program that is focused on activities has the potential to considerably improve the oral communication abilities of students who come from backgrounds where English is not the first language, particularly those who are attending secondary schools in Gujarati Medium. Pronunciation, vocabulary, fluency, grammar, and general speaking confidence were all improved as a result of the program's systematic design, which blended theoretical grammar training with real-world communicative activities. This resulted in an overall improvement in spoken English.

The robustness, flexibility, and repeatability of the intervention were proved by the fact that the outcomes of all three trials, both of which were carried out in various educational environments, were consistent with one another. Students not only achieved statistically significant increases in their spoken English proficiency, but the program also generated an engaging and pleasant environment that encouraged them to communicate and engage in English. This assisted them in overcoming early language obstacles and hesitations, which was a significant benefit.

In addition, the findings demonstrated that the success of the intervention is contingent on elements that are unique to each student, such as their gender. The importance of

motivation, continual engagement, and supportive learning environments is shown by the fact that female students did better with their academic performance. But area did not affect students performance.

The findings of this study add support to the notion that traditional ways of teaching spoken English, such as relying on grammatical rules and memorization, need to be replaced with approaches that are more dynamic and learner-cantered. It promotes the introduction of spoken English modules into the regular curriculum and asks for a radical transformation in the conventional understanding around the teaching of language competency in schools that employ regional mediums. Additionally, it calls for a major shift in the common thinking. This may assist educational institutions in better arming students, particularly those who come from households that are linguistically challenged, to fulfil the language requirements of higher education, global citizenship, and professional contexts.

In conclusion, this research supplies legislators, curriculum designers, and educators with a model that is not only practical but also extendable, to foster communicative and inclusive English language learning in a variety of educational settings. Furthermore, it fills a significant void in language instruction.

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