

The Use of TESL Methods at S. S. C. Level and Non-Formal Environment: An Empirical

Evaluation of Selected Institutions of Mahakoshal Region

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Abstract

Teaching of English as a second language is expected to be developed to the extent to integrate and validate spontaneous language- learning activities. It is generally seen that even after learning the language from the elementary to the SSC level, students do not get expected command over the language. To fill the lacuna it is necessary to recognize the hindrances in the teaching-learning activities.

Earlier it was the common belief that formal education is sufficient but with the advancement of time it is being realized that formal education needs to work together with non-formal education. Both of these complement each other for the higher success rate of the students along with maintaining social integrity. Communicative activities are what students require to develop self-confidence and become successful. In non-formal education the teaching learning process is more participative and learners' centered while formal education is held in an institutional frame work and has a determined duration.

The use of various TESL methods and approaches applied for teaching ESL through formal and non-formal ways of education has become a challenge for the policy makers as well as teachers. The present paper, thus, throws light on the suitability of these methods and approaches and examines how far they succeed in formal and non-formal ways of education particularly at SSC level. Moreover, the paper provides recommendations and implications keeping in mind to fill the lacunae present in our schooling system.

The present paper aims to present an overview of TESL at the senior secondary level in order to determine a cognitive calculus of TESL at the SSC level. The article also hopes to

provide recommendation and implications to feed the hunger of the learners. In this way it attempts to assist policy makers to come up with more suitable curricula in order to meet the needs of ESL learners.

Key Words

Compatible, non-formal environment, communicative activities, three language formula, non-instructional interaction, communicative approach, formal and informal ways of education.

English is a global language. It is learned and taught in most of the countries around the world. There is a growing demand for well-trained TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Language) experts who have professional knowledge in English language teaching, curriculum planning, designing online program for English learning, language testing and assessment and more.

It is expected that this research work would be significant because it will reflect the current status of TESL methods, approaches and techniques. This research paper will reflect the attitude of ESL learners of school level and non-formal environment towards English. Also it will reflect the perspectives of teacher towards language teaching. The result of the study will be useful to find out the complications of the second language learning and the lacunae present in our schooling system. The implications of a quantitative and qualitative study of the school and the non-formal TESL methods may be useful for the betterment of effectiveness and excellence in English at the senior secondary school level.

Approaches, Methods and Techniques are meant to make the teaching learning of English as a second language more effective. It would be relevant to understand the three terms in detail. Richards and Rodgers writes:

It was American applied linguist Edwards Antony in 1963 who in an attempt to clarify difference between a philosophy of language teaching at the level of theory and principles and a set of derived procedures for language teaching, identified three levels of conceptualization and organization which he termed approach, methods and techniques. (15)

An approach of teaching indicates an overall plan or procedure to organize teaching learning process. An approach has a broader meaning than a method. Explaining the term Edward Antony has been quoted by Richards and Rodgers:

An approach is a set of correlative assumptions dealing with the nature language teaching and learning. An approach is axiomatic. It describes the nature of the subject matter to be taught.... (15)

A method is based on an approach. There can be many methods within one approach and so the need of right method cannot be ignored in a curriculum. In fact, the ideal system of education cannot be said perfect without perfect methods of teachings. Teaching method is a style of the presentation of contents in classroom. It includes the study of the nature of language skills and procedures for teaching them. So method directly deals with a teacher's way of performance. It helps a teacher in the preparation of lesson plans, materials and text books for teaching language skills. It depends on a lot of factors like the learner's age, their cultural background, the objectives of the lesson and the teaching learning activity.

The senior secondary schools in India come under the authority of two educational agencies-one central board of secondary education and the state education board. The state education board of the states also varies in terms of their curricula, subjects offered and evaluation and assessment patterns.

Approaches and Methods used in School at the Senior Secondary Level

The senior secondary schools under the central board of secondary education have two mediums of instruction. There are those, where the medium of instruction is English and there are others where the medium of instruction is Hindi or any other Indian languages. In the school where the medium of instruction is English, English language and literature is to be taught in English. Teachers explain the English prose and poetry lessons in English and students respond in English and a lot of emphasis is given to the practical use of English in day to day life situation. The method of teaching English as a second language in central board of secondary education and Indian council of secondary education schools where the medium of instruction is English is the direct method of TESL. The method is based on the communicative approach which aims at developing in the learner the communicative competence.

Approaches and Methods used in Non-Formal Environment

In the non-formal institutions, English language teaching is considered a good business. And perhaps that is why each day, a new method of TESL is advocated to make the

TESL courses more attractive, effective and result oriented. Teachers pay more attention to activity based teaching-learning than the graded teaching materials. Students are made to deliver short speeches on common and current topics in English. Group discussion is organized frequently and many such speaking skill based items like extempore speeches, word games, and pronunciation drills are practiced.

In the Indian scenario, in most non-school institutions dealing with ELT necessary help is taken from the mother tongue to teach ESL to the grown up learners. This method is known as the Bilingual Method. The word bilingual applies to a person who knows two languages, the mother language and the foreign or second language. India is the best example of it.

Another such approach is the Oral and Situational Language Teaching Approach which is popular in non-formal institutions. This approach is tried and used in many non-formal institutions teaching ESL to the benefit of the learners. Learners of L2 are given structured material so that they may be able to put the words without hesitation and almost without thought, into sentence patterns which are correct. Such speech habits are cultivated by imitative drill.

Another such method is the Audio-lingual Method which is used largely in non-formal institutions to teach ESL. This Method is popular in Non-formal institutions because the language learners could actually hear and mimic native speakers on audio tapes. It is often used with earphones in a language laboratory. In this method lessons often begin with a sample dialogue to be recited and memorized. This was followed up with substitution pattern and drills in which the grammatical structure previously introduced was reinforced. Non-formal institutions also continue to experiment with the approaches and methods of TESL and they also try to organize items of different approaches and methods.

Method of Study

The survey method was used to collect the information and compare teaching methodologies of SSC-level and NFE institutions English language courses. The researcher collected the opinions from English language teachers and students.

The teachers were selected randomly from Senior Secondary School level and Non-formal environment. These teachers were teaching English language to Secondary level learners in both the programs.)The questionnaire was used as an instrument to collect data.

The computerized questionnaires were administered to 200 teachers including males and females of senior secondary school-level. Similarly, the questionnaires were also administered to 100 teachers (male-female) of non-formal environment. The researcher analyzed the data after receiving the requisite responses from the respondents of the senior secondary school-level and non-formal environment of Mahakoshal region.

Data Analysis

After receiving the data it was tabulated, analyzed and interpreted in light of objectives of the research questions by using the t-test showed the significance of difference. The questionnaires designed for teachers and learners were analyzed at three-point Likert scale i.e., 1) strongly agrees, 2) undecided, 3) strongly disagree.)

Research Question

The research question is “Which are the teaching methods being used to teach English language at SSC-level and Non-formal environment?” To answer this research question, the mean scores of the teachers’ responses to questionnaire items related to the use of TESL methods were statistically analyzed, compared and interpreted.

Table 1.1

Respondents	N	Mean	SD	SEm	t-value
SSC Level	200	19.57	7.32	0.83	2.14*
Non Formal	100	21.35	7.58		

df=298

*Significant at $p < 0.05$ Table value at 0.05 = 1.960

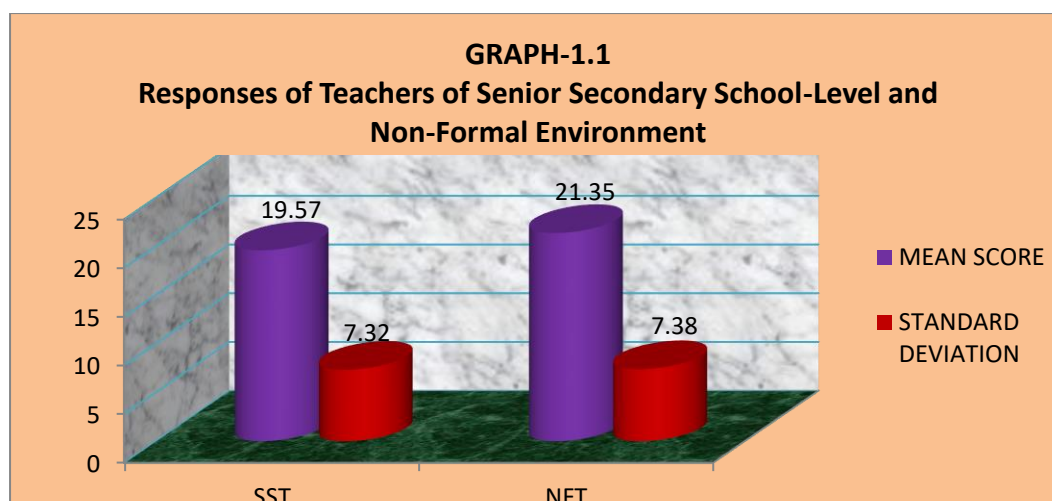
As seen in the above 1.1 table, the mean scores of the two groups are very close and so are the standard deviations and the standard error difference. As can be seen a small difference is observed between the two groups in favor of the teachers of non-formal environment. Because the two groups here are independent from each other, an independent t-test was used in order to see if such a difference between the mean scores of two groups is statistically significant or not. It is evident from the table 3, that the mean scores of SSC-level teachers response is 19.57 while that of Non-formal teachers’ response is 21.35. The obtained

t-value is 2.14 which are greater than the table value of significance at 0.05 levels. It means that there is a significant difference in the use of TESL methods at the 0.05 level of significance. This result reveals that teachers of Non-formal environment significantly used TESL methods more frequently than the teachers of senior secondary school-level. Table 1.2 represents items for which the differences of SSC-level teachers and NFE teachers were statistically significant or not.

Table 1.2

ITEMS	COMPARISON OF TEACHERS' RESPONSE						SEm	t- value
	SSC-LEVEL			NF-ENVIRONMENT				
	N	M	SD	N	M	SD		
01	200	2.81	1.314	100	3.44	1.430	0.144	4.365
02	200	3.39	1.278	100	2.70	1.63	0.153	4.53
03	200	3.64	1.150	100	4.07	0.950	0.123	3.487
04	200	3.87	1.053	100	4.28	0.64	0.109	3.793
05	200	2.83	1.341	100	3.40	1.44	0.145	3.92
06	200	3.03	1.189	100	3.46	1.490	0.144	2.979
TOTAL		19.57	7.325		21.35	7.58		

As it can be seen from table 1.2; the difference is significant for most of the items that is, item(02) "The Grammar-Translation method" (t=4.53), item (03) "The Direct Method is used to teach English language" (t=3.487), item(04) "The Audio-Lingual method is used to teach English language" (t=3.793), item(05) "The Communicative Approach is used to teach English Language"(t=3.92), item(06) "The Eclectic Method is used to teach English language" (t=2.979). But there is no significant difference for item (01) "The Activity Method is used to teach English language" (t= 4.365).



Discussion

The comparison of the data of both the groups supports the fact that English is taught in a more effective way in Non-school institutions than in senior secondary schools. The points awarded to the teachers' responses reveal that their TESL methods are less effective. On the other hand the points awarded to the responses of the teachers of the Non-Formal Institutions are rated being effective. In the senior secondary school the prime attention of TESL seems to be focused on the senior secondary board exams whereas the non-school institutions try to provide English speaking skill which is what the learners come for. And perhaps that is why the teaching methods of ESL are less effective in senior secondary schools whereas the same is effective in non-school institutions.

Conclusion

Hence it can be concluded that a balance between formal and non-formal environment is needed to be maintained. The successful conduct of life and socio-economic growth depend on what the students learn in both the environments. Here the role of informal environment can also not be neglected as language learning is a consistent process and can be achieved by making incosat practice of it.

Recommendations and Implications

Keeping in mind the basic findings of the study the lacunae and the complications of the second language-learning present in our schooling system must be addressed. The implications of a qualitative and quantitative study of the SSC-level and the Non-formal environment TESL methods may be useful for the betterment of effectiveness and excellence in English at the SSC-level. These implications and recommendations are as follows:

Introduction of new foreign training scheme for the teachers where the English is treated as first language. This will help our teachers and educators to know about the new methodology and teaching Aids. Every approach introduced to teach a foreign language like English in Indian context has got its merits and demerits.

Therefore, the teacher should be tactful enough to develop his own approach that best suits the students for their effective learning. For this purpose the teacher should try to include in his approach, the merits of various approaches, applied in such a manner that as far as possible no demerits of any particular approach disturbs the effectiveness.

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