

# A study on communicative English in Teaching-learning process at the primary level

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## ARTICLE DETAILS

### Article History

Published Online: 15 May 2020

### Keywords

Communicative English, Teaching Learning And Primary.

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## ABSTRACT

The main objective of the study research was to know the interests of students towards English and to ascertain the status of teaching learning in English at government primary school by survey method. With the help of tools like questionnaire, interview and classroom observation information were gathered from 35 students and four teachers. Quantitative and qualitative method of analysis results were found out. 78% of students like English as a subject but 90% of students were afraid of speaking because of fear of being wrong, shyness and source of humor.

## 1. Introduction

English is being introduced at every level of education ladder in many countries around the world. Now it is compulsory in primary education over the past three decades or more. There has been a huge expansion across the world in school programmes for teaching of English to young learners. English as second language has four language skills like listening, speaking, reading and writing. To learn this foreign language, first of all one has to master listening skill. According to Stabb (1992) listening is an active and meaningful process of constructing meaning. In order to improve this skill, good instructions and lots of practice with active mental involvement are essential. Speaking is a productive skill which comes after receptive skill i.e. listening. Speaking is the most important skill among the four skills (Carter and Nuan 2001: Celce-Murcia 2001). Speaking skill includes pronunciation of sounds, morphology and lexis, (words and their parts), grammar and syntax (structure), semantics, discourse (conversation and utterances), pragmatics (usage and its rule), fluency (ease of speech, confidence, coherence and speed) besides topicality (themes and ideas). Hedge (2000) has stated speaking skill is a complex process in which learner has to develop vocabulary, grammar and communicative skills.

## 2. Review of Related Literature

Ur (1996) highlights in his study that using a language is more important than just knowing about it. Scrivener, 2005 states four conditions like exposure, opportunities to use the language, motivation and instruction are essential for oral language learning. Willis, 1997 point out learners need possibilities to express what they think or feel and to experiment in a supportive atmosphere using language they have heard or seen without feeling threatened. Ahmed M.M. Nakhalah (2016) stated in his research study that difficulties faced by the students were fear of mistake, shyness, anxiety and lack of confidence. Zhengdong Gan (2012) found factors that impeded spoken communication in English i.e. insufficient opportunities to speak English in disquisition and tutorials, lack of focus on language upswing in the curriculum and input poor environment. Doan Linh Chi (2011) in his study

foregrounds practice is an important part of language learning. Students should be encouraged to practice as much as possible. Some students do not know how to practice perfectly otherwise they feel disappointed not getting any fruit in their studies. Rababah (2005) pointed out a few factors like teaching strategies, curriculum cause difficulties in speaking English language. Qutbi Alam, Ayesha Bashir Uddin (2013)'s research on the improvement of oral Communication Skills had found that opportunity for practice oral language, providing conducive learning environment and using new strategies were helpful in oral communication of English language. Code switching, peer and self error correction, short pauses and speech fillers are inevitable for developing speaking skills of foreign language.

## 3. Objectives of the Study

1. To ascertain the interest of primary school students towards English language.
2. To know the status of teaching learning process in English at government primary school.

## 4. Methodology

Survey method was used for this study. By random sampling technique Cuttack district of Odisha was opted for the study. Thirty five students studying in class 5th, class 6th and class 7th and four teachers of four govt. schools were taken as sample of the study. Self prepared questionnaire based on students' interest towards learning English language and measures adopted by teachers in teaching English was used for data collection. Besides questionnaire, classroom observation and interview tools were adopted for research. In a cordial atmosphere, information was collected from both students and teachers on teaching and learning English language. Classroom observations and interview about different curricular activities of the students as well as the contributions of their English teachers in the school were noted.

## 5. Findings and Discussion

- 1) Students studying at government schools of Cuttack district were children of slum dwellers and BPL category family. So parents were from poor socio

economic background and their earning depends on the daily wages.

- 2) It was found that 78% students like English as a subject but fear to talk in English. It was found that the students basically come from the poor socio-economic condition where they don't get much attention for their better performance in education. The native atmosphere hasn't encouraged them to create interest towards English language. This is the reason for which most of them answered that it was difficult to understand English though they like hearing it. The study therefore shows that although the students are interested to learn, they don't get a better study atmosphere to learn things properly.
- 3) Though the mother tongue of the students is Odia, the English teachers use both English and Odia while taking classes. The teachers say that the use of bilingualism helps the students to understand the subject matter better. Though the language is difficult for most of the students, they want to keep the knowledge of English limited to the English period and English text books.
- 4) Ninety percent students hesitate to talk in English because they find it difficult to frame the sentences correctly. They feel shy and difficult while talking even with friends. Even if they try to talk in English, they will become a source of humor for their friends.
- 5) The English teachers rectify their mistakes and clarify all their doubts in the class, English remains hidden as a subject. Somewhere, the process of teaching needs to be improvised, where the practical knowledge is to be kept open. For Example, if they are telling a story they should show them some pictures related to the topic, so that the student could analyze the topic told easier. Whenever they will read the story in future, they can call back their memory, they can remember the same immediately. Teachers can also show them some story which has video linked, which otherwise helps the students to gain knowledge and pay attention to it. Though now-a-days everything is available on the web, that smart way of teaching will create a great interest to the students to gain a deeper knowledge about the topic. After watching the video,

they will desperately create interest which will take them deeper into the lessons. It is found in most of the Government schools, the teachers don't pay attention towards the students as they are in a hurry to complete the syllabus. They don't give importance towards the future requirement of the students.

- 6) Motivation is an important factor which helps the students to grow. While in speaking, if a student is motivated, he/she is allowed to speak in the class, then he/she will be able to successfully start to communicate in English. The level of confidence is to be built up so as to ignore fear.
- 7) In government schools' libraries lack audio-visual aids and shorts story books for teaching English.
- 8) From classroom observation it was found that teachers 'effort to develop skill of listening and speaking were less emphasized. Reading and writing skill were given more importance. Some of the teachers felt that listening and speaking skills were covered by reading and writing.

## 6. Conclusion

Role of teacher is vital for learning English as a second language. Besides the socio economic background of the students teachers should flourish interest among learners by adopting different teaching methods on the concerned subject so that the subject will be understandable, living and enjoyable. Teaching speaking is a important part of second language learning that will bring success in the present school life as well as in the later phase of life. Teaching English should not be concentrated on books' question answer rather it should be beyond the textbook, then only skills of language listening, speaking, reading and writing can be accomplished. All the four skills of language should be developed according to the child's mental development. Modern technologies should be used during teaching to promote discussion, organizing role play, simulation, brain storming, storytelling, reporting and story completion etc . Government should keep eye on availability on all sorts of facilities are in government schools. Environment of the school should be well equipped for teaching this second language. Teachers should be well trained from time to time how to motivate students for speaking.

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