

**DEVELOPMENT AND IMPELEMENTATION OF A PACKAGE
FOR ENHANCING LISTENING, SPEAKING, READING AND
WRITING (LSRW) SKILLS IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE
AMONG SECONDARY CBSE STUDENTS**

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INTRODUCTION

Language is considered a tool to transmit thoughts. The ability to transmit or share boundless thoughts is unique to humans and has helped in rise of human species. Fitch (2010), states that despite intensive searching, it appears that no communication system of equivalent power exists elsewhere in the animal kingdom. Though communication is not the sole function of language, yet it serves as the best tool for communication. Communicative competency in a language is guided by the competency in the Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing (LSRW) skills of the language. To have required competency in a language, mastery in LSRW skills is a prerequisite. In an era of globalization, good communication skills in English are considered important in getting employable. As the need to enhance students language competency is felt at all levels, it is more so felt at secondary level. By the time a student reaches at secondary level he/she becomes more of an autonomous learner, where adequate competence in language plays a vital role. It has been mentioned in the Report of the Secondary Education Commission (1952-53) that the methodology adopted should stress on LSRW skills of the language so as to develop the competency in the language.

Therefore, the need of a suitable package facilitating Input-rich communicational environment to help the students enhance the basic language skills in English language was felt by the investigator. Consequently the investigator attempted to develop a package emphasizing on LSRW skills, to be supplemented as input in teaching – learning of English language at secondary level.

SIGNIFICANCE OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE

English is considered a global language and It is a working language of international organizations and conferences, science publication, international banking, economic affairs and trade; Advertising for global brands; Audio-Visual cultural products, International Tourism; Tertiary education; international law; As a relay language in interpretation and translation; Technology transfer; Internet Communication. Murali (2009) makes a mention that number of people who use English as a means of communication exceeds much more than the number of people who speak it as their mother tongue. This makes English a global language. In this global world individuals keep travelling across borders for work. Working knowledge of English clears a big hurdle in this process as it is widely spoken by people world over.

POSITION OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN INDIAN EDUCATION SYSTEM

From time to time the education commissions and committees in India have made various provisions regarding inclusion of English language in Indian education system. The Secondary Education Commission (1952-53) recommended compulsory teaching of English in the secondary school curriculum. The Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE, 1956) included English in the three language formula and the Education Commission (1964-66) in its modified version of the formula. The National Policy of Education (1986) and its revised versions (1990 and 1992) have emphasised the need for an effective instruction in the language. Inclusion of English language in the curriculum has been there in all education boards existing in India.

It has been opined by The Education Commission (1964-66) has identified English as a 'library language' and has added that Special emphasis needs to be laid on the study of English and other international languages. Also the National Knowledge Commission Report (2007) of the government of India has recommended that, "In the current scenario, an understanding and command over English language is the most determinant of access to higher education, employment possibility and a social opportunity; the time has come for us to teach our people-ordinary people English language." The fact that English language is today the language of instruction in almost all of the country's prestigious universities and private schools cannot be denied. The findings of the Seventh All India School Education Survey (NCERT 2007) on the status of teaching of English in schools indicate that there is a rapid shift from vernacular to English language as medium of instruction in education. English today is almost a compulsory second language in schools.

HINDRANCE IN ACQUIRING ENGLISH LANGUAGE COMPETENCY

Though English has been there in our education system for more than a century now and occupies an important place in school curriculum; students still struggle to attain required competency in it. Nair (2012) reported that even though English is introduced from class I in CBSE schools, students do not have the expected competency at secondary level. Shermila (1999) puts forward her views that in general, students are not found to be competent in English because of lack of skill-oriented teaching. English language teachers lack not only the teaching skills, but even the basic English language proficiency. Lack of competent English language environment in the school also acts as a barrier to enhance students' language skills. English is being taught as a subject in schools rather than as a language. With

the conservative situations where the teachers are required to finish the syllabus, the teachers are left with no time to emphasise skill building. Environment and family background also plays vital role in developing competency in English language. As language is best acquired through meaningful interaction and use in varied situations, activity based teaching emphasizing on four skills (LSRW) can help in enhancing language competency.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The purpose of reviewing the related literature is to know about the researches conducted in the related area of the study and to see what implications these have for the study. The objectives and findings of the studies reviewed, which were closely related to the present study were taken into consideration. The investigator reviewed the studies under following categories:

- (i) General perceptions regarding English language
- (ii) Studies conducted for enhancing Communicative Competence
- (iii) Studies conducted in the area of LSRW skills
- (iv) Studies conducted in the area of listening skill
- (v) Studies conducted in the area of speaking skill
- (vi) Studies conducted in the area of reading skill
- (vii) Studies conducted in the area of writing skill

The literatures reviewed by the investigator have following implications:

- English assumes the status of a major subject in the school curriculum.
- Students at all levels have a perception that a positive correlation exists between their proficiency in English and academic success and high paying jobs.
- Innovative teaching practices focusing on the language skills prove effective in enhancing LSRW skills in learners.
- Teachers need to be trained according to the needs of English language teaching to develop language competency in learners.
- A strategy focusing on listening skills in English language is essential and helps in developing students listening skill in English language.
- Suitable strategy focusing speaking skill if planned and implemented in English classrooms certainly helps students in enhancing speaking skill in English language of students.

- A well-developed teaching material focusing on reading skill motivates students and develops their interest towards reading in English language, which in turn enhances their reading skill. This improves in students the skill to interpret the texts while reading.
- Exposure to various reading texts improves students reading skill.
- A strategy which can encourage students to write helps them to develop their writing skill in English language.
- There is a direct relation between the learners' academic achievement and their participation and interest in language skill activities.
- A well-developed strategy focusing on all four skills of English language is required to develop student's language skills in English. This if implemented in an appropriate manner it surely helps in enhancing communicative competence.
- The studies reviewed indicate that exposure to language learning opportunities through any mean helps learners to enhance their English language competency.

The investigator reviewed various studies done in India and across the globe related to the present study. There were no studies found by the investigator wherein an attempt has been made to enhance English language competency through all four language skills (LSRW) taught along with the syllabus. In addition, the investigator also did not come across any such studies conducted on CBSE secondary students. Hence, the present study was an attempt in this direction to enhance LSRW skills in English language among secondary CBSE students.

RATIONALE

Language learning is an important component of education and all round development of a student. The CBSE in Secondary School Curriculum 2014-15 asserts that a global 21st century citizen should possess effective communication skills in order to better interpersonal relationships through skills of listening attentively to and communicating effectively with others, and sharing various perspectives and information assertively with others. Thus the foremost goal of language teaching should be developing communicative competence wherein students are facilitated to develop this body of knowledge by providing with authentic practice that prepares students for real-life communication situations. The students should be helped to develop the ability to produce grammatically correct and logically connected sentences that are appropriate to specific contexts using comprehensible pronunciation. It has been aptly put up by Hinkle (2006) that pragmatic objectives of language learning place an increased value on integrated and dynamic multiskill instructional

models with a focus on meaningful communication and the development of learners' communicative competence.

English language taught at primary and upper primary classes basically focuses on acquaintance with language and structure building. By the time learners reach secondary classes they have a sound foundation of the language and the basic skills of the language. Therefore, at secondary level where the learners are equipped with knowledge of English language, their communicative competency needs to be stressed upon. This is required as the learners at this stage are prepared to contribute to the socio economic development of the community, equipped with the required skills. Moreover, at secondary level, the learners are also prepared for entrance to higher education; where again intelligible use of language is expected. Thus learning a language for these purposes at secondary level becomes mandatory for the learners. Ganguly (1992) stresses that it is an accepted fact that English would continue to play an important functional role in the field of higher education and knowledge sharing. The same has been advocated in the Scheme of Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) that it is essential that school leavers acquire a higher level of knowledge and skills than what they are provided in the eight years of elementary education, particularly when the average earning of a secondary school certificate holder is significantly higher than that of a person who has studied only up to class VIII. This fact cannot be denied that communicative competence has a greater role to play when we talk of skills. It therefore becomes mandatory that serious attempts be made to ensure that all learners leaving school have required competency in English language. Dyvadatham (2012) in the same line added that the chief objective at secondary level is to improve students' skills in listening, speaking, reading and writing. The same has been realised by CBSE and as a result various innovative practices related to English language teaching and evaluation, stressing on LSRW skills is being undertaken by it for past couple of years. However, they seem meager in case of integrated development of LSRW skills of English language.

Though CBSE students follow a well-developed curriculum in English, they still lack the required competency in English. This has also been opined by Joseph (2003) that it is surprising that after learning English in English Medium School for more than eight years a student is still found possessing inadequate knowledge of the actual conversational aspects of English. He further added that teaching English should be done in such a way that the English classroom provides adequate atmosphere for learning English as the medium of

communicative functions. Position Paper on Teaching of English also suggests a comprehensible input-rich curriculum that lays the foundation for spontaneous language growth. It also stresses on meaningful language exposure. While teaching English language, the investigator observed that the interesting and indigenous inputs in the form of language activities not only motivates students to learn English language but also create their interest towards the subject and thus would prove to be of a great help in enhancing student's communicative competence.

As the investigator intended to improve student's competency in English language through developing the LSRW skills, the investigator strongly felt that the transacting of teaching learning should be based on a multi-skill, activity based, learner centered approach wherein the teacher acts only as a facilitator and motivates the students to use English for the purposes of communication. With an aim of developing the communication skills in English, the investigator decided to use learner-centered activities to enhance these skills in students at secondary level. Therefore the investigator felt a need to develop a package which could emphasize on all four language skills and enhance them.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Development and Implementation of a Package for Enhancing Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing (LSRW) Skills in English Language among Secondary CBSE Students

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The present study was conducted with the following objectives.

1. To develop a package for enhancing LSRW skills in English among secondary CBSE students
2. To implement the developed package among secondary CBSE students for enhancing their LSRW skills in English
3. To study the effectiveness of the developed package in terms of improvement in LSRW skills in English among secondary CBSE students
4. To study the reaction of secondary CBSE students towards the developed package for enhancing LSRW skills

HYPOTHESIS

Following null hypotheses were formulated to achieve the said objectives of the present study to be tested at 0.05 level of significance.

H₀1 There will be no significant difference between the mean achievement score of listening skill of experimental and control group secondary students.

H₀2 There will be no significant difference between the mean achievement score of speaking skill of experimental and control group secondary students.

H₀3 There will be no significant difference between the mean achievement score of reading skill of experimental and control group secondary students.

H₀4 There will be no significant difference between the mean achievement score of writing skill of experimental and control group secondary students.

H₀5 There will be no significant difference between the mean achievement score of English communication skill of experimental and control group secondary students.

EXPLANATION OF THE TERM USED

Package for Enhancing LSRW Skills: The package meant a set of learner centered activities, emphasizing on LSRW skills in English language, to be carried out while transacting the units from the Literature Reader. The package included the following components.

- (i) Visual aids such as pictures, cartoons, newspaper clippings etc.
- (ii) Audio of passages and speeches stressing on proper pronunciation, and intonation patterns.
- (iii) Audio- Visual Materials.
- (iv) Language activities stressing on LSRW skills.

OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS USED

Listening Skill: Listening skill is the score obtained by the students in a listening skill test prepared by the investigator.

Speaking Skill: Speaking skill is the score obtained by the students in a speaking skill test prepared by the investigator.

Reading Skill: Reading skill is the score obtained by the students in a reading skill test prepared by the investigator.

Writing Skill: Writing skill is the score obtained by the students in a writing skill test prepared by the investigator.

Communication Skill: Communication skill is the sum total of the scores secured in all the four skills.

Effectiveness: Effectiveness is the significant difference between the mean posttest scores of experiment and control group students.

DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

In the present study CBSE secondary students were delimited to standard IX students.

1.13.0 DESIGN OF THE STUDY

The study was experimental in nature where Quasi-Experimental design was used. The following Pretest-Posttest Equivalent-Controlled Group Design was used in this research.

O1 X O2

O3 C O4

Where, O1 and O3 were pretest,

O2 and O4 were posttest

X stands for Experimental Group and

C stands for Control Group

POPULATION OF THE STUDY

The population comprised of all the standard IX secondary students of CBSE (Central Board of Secondary Education) English medium secondary schools in Gujarat state during the year 2015-16. The population comprised of approximately 16000 standard IX students.

SAMPLE OF THE STUDY

One CBSE secondary school of Baroda city was selected as sample. Two sections of standard IX in the school were selected. On the basis of their pretest achievement score in English LSRW, the experimental and control groups were made equivalent. After making the groups equivalent, 33 students each in the control and experimental groups formed the sample for the present study

TOOLS FOR DATA COLLECTION

The following tools were used by the investigator for the purpose of data collection for the present study.

Achievement Test for Pretest and Posttest:

Achievement test of 100 marks was prepared by the investigator for pretesting and posttesting having the weightage of 25 marks for all the four skills. Pretest scores of the experimental and control group were used to make the control and experimental group equivalent. Posttest scores of experimental and control groups were used to compare the enhancement in the LSRW skills of the control and experimental group after the experimentation.

Reaction Scale

In order to get the reaction of students towards the developed package, a Likert type five point reaction scale was constructed considering different dimensions of the developed package.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE PACKAGE

A package for enhancement of LSRW skills containing the activities focusing on each skill was developed by the investigator considering the needed components of the LSRW skills

related to the English course of CBSE Standard IX content. All activities were followed by assessment of 5 marks each for every activity.

While preparing the activities and assessment criteria guidelines given by CBSE as learning outcomes for every skill in its secondary school curriculum 2014-15 was taken into consideration.

DATA COLLECTION

The researcher personally collected the data during the intervention period. Before the implementation of the package, pretest was administered to the students of both the control and the experimental group.

The developed package was implemented by the investigator on the experimental group in English language classroom. It was implemented along with the teaching of English language to standard IX students. The experiment continued for one academic session i.e. one academic year (April 2015 to March 2016). There were fourteen units in the Literature Reader for standard IX, which comprises of prose, poetry and drama. During the same time the control group was taught English using traditional method with the help of their teacher.

After the implementation of the package, posttest was administered to both the groups. At the end of the session, reaction scale was administered to the experimental group.

DATA ANALYSIS

The collected data during the intervention period was analyzed quantitatively. Mean, standard deviation and standard error of mean was calculated on the post test scores of the control group and the experiment group. This was done to see the significant difference between the control group and the experiment group. As the research design was quasi-experimental in nature, non-parametric equivalent of t test, that is U-test was employed on the post test scores of the control group and experiment group.

To analyse the reaction scale, frequency, percentage and intensity index was calculated for each statement.

FINDINGS OF THE PRESENT STUDY

On the basis of the analysis and interpretation of the data gathered in the present study following findings were drawn.

1. The developed package was found to be significantly effective in enhancing the listening skill of secondary CBSE students.
2. The developed package was found to be significantly effective in enhancing the speaking skill of secondary CBSE students.
3. The developed package was found to be significantly effective in enhancing the reading skill of secondary CBSE students.
4. The developed package was found to be significantly effective in enhancing the writing skill of secondary CBSE students.
5. The developed package was found to be significantly effective in enhancing the overall communication (LSRW) skill of secondary CBSE students.
6. The developed package was found to be effective in terms of the overall positive reactions of the secondary CBSE students.
7. Most of the students felt positive regarding the grade appropriateness of the package, its implementation and adequate time allocation for each activity.
8. Most of the students also reacted positively towards the activities in the package asserting that the package helped them to enhance their listening, speaking, reading and writing skills in English. They also felt positively towards the activities in the package stating that the package motivated them to develop communicative competence in English.

EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE PRESENT STUDY

Findings of the present study reflect that CBSE standard IX students taught through the package were significantly better in enhancing LSRW skills in English compared to the students taught through the traditional method. The package was also found effective in terms of the positive reactions of the CBSE standard IX students towards the developed package for enhancing LSRW skills. These findings of the present study have following implications.

Lack of English language competency in students can be attributed to the faulty practices of teaching English in our classrooms. It is believed that just by completing the syllabus of prose, poetry and some grammar prescribed for an academic session, the job of the English teacher is done. However, this approach of teaching English is not yielding any results. Even

though the objectives of teaching English stress on the LSRW skills, the teaching process never focuses on the same. This is resulting in poor English language competency in students. The results of the package indicate that if the focus of English language teaching shifts from syllabus completion to developing LSRW skills in English among students, communication skills in students can be enhanced. Once students' language skills are taken care of in the school, the students will not need to join special courses or coaching institutes for enhancing their English language skills even after studying in an English medium school for many years.

The findings confirm that LSRW skills in English among students can be enhanced if the LSRW components of English language are taught along with the regular teaching of English. Hence, there is a need for the knowledge among the teachers and students that English language should be taught with an aim to develop language competency and that LSRW component of the language needs to be enhanced along with other objectives of language teaching-learning English for better communication skills. There needs to be strict guidelines regarding teaching of English language in our classrooms.

Various excuses are given for lack of English language competency in students, e.g. English is not mother tongue to Indians; it is taught as a second or third language in schools etc. The findings of the study reject these misconceptions. Present study is evidence that communication skills in English language can be enhanced if appropriate methodology to teach these skills is adopted by the teacher. If students are encouraged to participate actively in the teaching-learning of LSRW skills in English, they can definitely be benefitted. Also if the English language curriculum strictly focuses on the skill components of the language and its implementation is done in its true spirit, above stated excuses can be ruled out.

The findings of the present study asserts that if favourable environment is created through grade appropriate inputs for enhancing LSRW skills in English language among secondary level students, it helps the students to enhance LSRW skills along with communication skills in English. This package is fair to similar classes of standard VIII and X. Similar package can be used across the school education to help students enhance the LSRW skills in English during teaching learning of English language. Varied activities focusing the four basic skills of English can be developed and administered for enhancing communication skills in English.

SUGGESTIONS

English language teaching in India has undergone remarkable changes since it was introduced in the Indian education system. Every innovative change in the teaching learning field of English was brought with a hope to improve the English language competency in students. But it is a known fact that a lot still needs to be done to improve English language competency in students. The investigator thus has following suggestions which need to be thought upon if students' English communication skills need to be improved.

Suggestions for Teachers

The role of a teacher in students' learning is immense. The efforts put by a teacher can be seen in the form of learning outcome. The investigator therefore, has following suggestions for teachers which can help to enhance LSRW skills in English among CBSE standard IX students.

- English language teachers should always focus more on enhancing language competency in students then just completion of syllabus.
- Teachers should make students aware of the importance of LSRW skills in achieving language competency. This will help to get students motivated towards learning the language.
- Teachers should design wide range of interesting and relevant LSRW activities in English so that students get enough opportunity to practice these skills in the classroom.
- Teachers should provide consistent practice in LSRW skills in English language throughout the academic session will ensure enhancement in the communication skills of students in English.
- Teachers should encourage and ensure each student's active participation during the execution of the activities.
- Teachers' immediate feedback and class discussion at the end of each activity helps students to learn from their mistakes.
- Teachers of other subjects can also help students to develop language competency through their respective subject specific activities.
- Teachers should provide feedback at the end of each activity emphasizing on the errors which needs to be overcome to develop the language skills.

Suggestions for Students

Students' sincere effort is the key to master the LSRW skills in English. The investigator thus proposes the following suggestions for students to enhance LSRW skills in English language.

- Students need to develop love for the subject and should not treat language as a subject of lesser importance.
- They must take each and every language skill activity seriously and must complete them according to the instructions given by the teacher.
- Students must understand that any skill can be mastered with regular practice and the same is applicable with the LSRW skills in English.
- Students must not hesitate to use the language whenever they get an opportunity to do so. As any language which is non-native to us cannot be master if we do not use it.
- It is suggested that the feedback given by the teacher must be worked upon earnestly to ensure that the efforts made to enhance the LSRW skills bear fruit.

Suggestions for Education Boards

Education boards play a crucial role in the success of education system. Among other responsibilities, they are accountable for the syllabi, textbooks, teaching learning materials, examination and evaluation, trainings of in-service teachers etc. The investigator thus puts forward following suggestions for the education boards in India to enhance LSRW skills in English among CBSE standard IX students.

- The curriculum and the textbook in English must emphasise the skill enhancement content.
- Strict and specific guidelines need to be given to the schools on implementation of the activities for enhancing LSRW skills in English.
- Regular monitoring of the teaching learning process needs to be done.
- Special kits or packages as prepared by the investigator can be prepared by the board and duly distributed to the schools with guidelines to implement it.
- In-service English teachers should be provided with training for making them aware of the present need of language teaching, implementation of above mentioned kits, evaluation of language skills etc.
- English teachers should also be provided with training on teaching practices focusing on language enhancement in students through LSRW skills.

Suggestions for Further Research

The investigator has following suggestions for further research which can help to improve English language competency in students.

- The package used by the researcher can be modified according to the needs of the Gujarat board curriculum of English language, to find out whether the package is effective in enhancing the LSRW skills in English among the state board students studying at different levels (elementary, secondary and higher secondary).
- A study can be conducted to develop and implement a similar package to enhance LSRW skills of students at undergraduate courses especially for B.Ed. courses as language competency is vital for student teachers which needs to be cultivated in them.
- Studies can be taken up to enhance English language competency through teaching of other subjects such as social studies, mathematics, science etc. at all levels of education.
- Study can be carried out to find out the influence of proficiency in grammar and vocabulary on LSRW skills of students.
- A research study can be conducted to standardize a generic scale for measuring LSRW skills in English language of secondary students.

CONCLUSION

Human civilization without language is unthinkable. The strides humans have made cannot be thought of in absence of language. Baron (2003) believes that language plays a crucial role in almost all aspects of our daily life, and its possession and high degree of development is perhaps the single most important defining characteristic of our species. Development of language skills helps individuals to have a better command on language and influence their language fluency. For the reason that English is a global language and also deeply rooted in Indian education system, our schools are accountable to equip students with developed English language ability.

Studies in the field of English language teaching learning confirm that our students still struggle with dismal levels of English language. Many studies have found that innovative strategies used in the classroom helps to improve grammar, vocabulary, language skill and language competency at all levels of education. Though various research studies have been

undertaken in the field of English language teaching-learning, a gap still exists in the form of student's inadequate language competency. The results of the present study asserts that skill specific activities in English motivate students towards learning the language and encourage active class participation thus facilitating in enhancing language skills and communication skills in students. The education boards needs to wake up to the need of reforming English language curriculum designing and its strict implementation. The focus in language teaching needs to shift from syllabus completion to skill development. The prevalent faulty practices in transacting language instructions needs to be done away with if we all are serious towards improving the levels of language competency in students. It may be concluded that skill oriented activities in English definitely help the learners to enhance LSRW skills in the language. Wide range of diverse, interesting and relevant activities gives the learners an opportunity to develop their interest towards the language. They themselves start taking initiatives to develop their skills of language and further develop their confidence in using the language in public.