

Developing a Reading Material to Improve the Writing Skills of the Polytechnic College Students

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ABSTRACT

The researcher would develop a reading material to improve the writing skills of the Polytechnic students. The reading material would contain humorous anecdotes as they would motivate and inspire the students to learn English. At the end of each anecdote the teacher would provide communicative activities such as citation, simulation, replication, comparison and reflection. While providing these activities the students would be asked to present their views in writing. The researcher would conduct a pre-test before using the reading material in the class room in different components of writing skills. After teaching the material for a period of forty five days, the researcher would conduct a post test in different components of writing skills again. Grammar, vocabulary, mechanics, style and organization are the different components of writing skills for which proficiency tests would be constructed. The performance of the students in the writing skills would be measured and rated with the help of the proficiency descriptions given in Arthur Hughes' book entitled Testing for Language Teachers.

Keywords: Writing Skills, Reading Material, Communicative Activities,

INTRODUCTION OF THE PROPOSED STUDY

The students who join Polytechnic colleges lack communication skills. Especially, they could not write good English. It may be due to their studies through the mother tongue medium, or it may be due to their rural, poor background. Hence a technique has to be evolved to set right the problem and to make them write fluent and flawless English. Many linguists have tried different methods to teach the backward students to write good English. Hence, the researcher also tried to teach written English using a Reading material accompanied with different communicative activities such as citation, simulation, replication, comparison and reflection. The students would be provided with humorous anecdotes. Then they will be asked to simulate and write a passage of their own. They can also write a passage based on replication. They can compare the anecdote with their own experience and write a passage. Later, some other small prose passage or poem related to the anecdote would be given and the students would be asked to reflect or think and provide their opinions.

The sample for this study would be selected from the students studying in the Polytechnic Colleges in Sivagangai District, Tamilnadu The performance of the students in both the tests would be assessed classifying them into different groups based on (BC, MBC, SC, &OC) gender (male and female) locality (rural or urban), parent's income, student's medium of instruction at the secondary school level etc. After comparing pre-test and post-test scores, it is predicted that the reading material (containing humorous anecdotes and communicative activities) would have improved the writing skills of the students belonging to different categories.

REVIEW OF RECENT RESEARCHES

Siham Bouzar and Fodil Cherif (2021) in their article describe how to develop writing skills using literature.

Ahmed Adel Fatah (2020) in his article entitled “Developing EFL Writing Skills through Communicative Language Teaching for Specific Education Students” stresses the importance of communicative approach in developing writing skills.

Berrin genc-Ersoy (2022) discusses how to develop the writing skills of elementary school students through educational games. Chaves varon (2020) analyses how development occurs in writing. Ellen P Empson and Borong (2022) stress the importance of Meta cognitive strategy in developing writing skills. John Jairo Jara Milo (2025) has done research on AI powered writing skills. Melor Mdyunus (2020) talks about the effectiveness of the write stuff module. Md. Rahul Amin (2023) and Shadiyeva Shakhnoza Dotsent (2025) stress on task based learning Z.Tukhtasinova (2023) mentions the challenges and difficulties in acquiring writing skills. The researcher wanted to make use of humorous anecdotes to improve the writing skills of the students in an innovative way. This is entirely a different approach in developing writing skills.

Identification of Research Gap

Writing causes Students to think through topics or defend a position. Through this process, students gain an understanding of logical thinking and the best way to present their ideas. They learn the difference between facts and opinions and they learn how to support their ideas with facts. Many people have undertaken researches on improving the writing skills. Only a very few people have attempted to find a suitable technique to make the students write flawless English using humorous anecdotes which is an innovative technique to teach writing skills. As the researcher has added communicative activities such as citation, simulation, replication, comparison and reflection in teaching writing skills, this technique is a novel one.

Objectives of the Proposed Study

The following are the objectives of the study:

1. To develop a reading material to improve the communicative competence of the Polytechnic College Students.
2. To find out whether there is any significant difference between the pre-test and post-test mean scores of the students as a whole in different components of writing skills in English.
3. To find out whether there is any significant difference between the pre-test and post-test mean scores of the students in different components of writing skills in English of the Polytechnic College Students based on the community they belong to.
4. To find out whether there is any significant difference between the pre-test and post-test mean scores of the students in different components of writing skills in English of the Polytechnic College Students based on the medium of instruction they received at the school level.
5. To find out whether there is any significant difference between the pre-test and post-test mean scores of the students in different components of writing skills in English of the Polytechnic College Students based on the income of their parents.
6. To find out whether there is any significant difference between the pre-test and post-test mean scores of the students in different components of writing skills in English of the Polytechnic College Students based on the occupation of their parents.

Major Research Questions / Hypotheses

1. There exists significant difference between the pre-test and post-test mean scores of the Polytechnic College students as a whole in different components of writing skills in English.
2. There exists significant difference between the pre-test and post-test mean scores in different components of writing skills of the Polytechnic College students irrespective of the community they belong to.

3. There exists significant difference between the pre-test and post-test mean scores in different components of writing skills of the Polytechnic College students irrespective of the medium of instruction they received at school level.
4. There exists significant difference between the pre-test and post-test mean scores in different components of writing skills of the Polytechnic College students irrespective of the income of their parents.
5. There exists significant difference between the pre-test and post-test mean scores in different components of writing skills of the Polytechnic College students irrespective of the occupation of their parents.

PROPOSED METHODOLOGY FOR THE RESEARCH WORK

In experimental studies, random sampling is a technique where each member of a population has an equal and independent chance of being selected for the sample. This method is used to create an unbiased, representative sample which helps researchers to generalize findings from the sample to the larger population. In this process, a number will be assigned to each individual and a random number will be generated to select the sample. In this study 'Simple Random Sampling' technique has been used where each member will have an equal chance of selection.

Fifteen humorous anecdotes have been selected for this reading material. These humorous anecdotes have been incorporated with some of the communicative activities such as citation, simulation, replication, role-play, improvisation and comparison and contrast. Citation is a process in which the teacher provides a model sentence and the students have to write sentences of their own using the same sentence pattern. Simulation is nothing but imitation of a situation or process. It is an imitative representation of a process or system that could exist in the real world. Replication is an activity in which students rewrite the text or obtain opinions of other students regarding the subject matter. Polytechnic College students were also trained in correct use of stress and intonation. The reading material was subjected to the group try-outs. On the basis of the analysis of the try-out, required correction, modification and refinements were carried out. In order to ascertain the content validity, the views of the language experts were obtained. The reliability of the reading material was confirmed as the students secured same scores in different tests conducted at different time intervals. The performance of the students in the writing skills was measured and rated with the help of the proficiency descriptions given in Arthur Hughes' book entitled Teaching for Language Teachers.

Evaluation procedure in this study is based on the scale devised by John Anderson. Five categories of writing skills are evaluated using five point scale. In the case of grammar one point will be allotted for the writing with severe errors of grammar. Two points will be allotted for the writing with very frequent errors of grammar. Three points will be allotted for the writing with frequent errors of grammar. For occasional errors of grammar in the writing four points will be given. For few errors of grammar in the writing five points will be given. Similarly, in the case of vocabulary, points will be awarded in the ascending order for the following types: extreme vocabulary limitation, misuse of vocabulary items, frequent errors in the use of vocabulary, use of inappropriate words and use of circumlocution. In the case of mechanics points will be awarded in the ascending order for the following types: severe spelling errors, very frequent spelling errors, frequent spelling errors, less spelling errors and no spelling error. In the case of fluency points will be awarded in the ascending order for the following types: misused structures, inappropriate structures, little sense of ease of communication, patchy structures and good communication. In the case of form, points will be awarded in the ascending order for the following types: Severe lack of organization, lack of connection between ideas, little attempt at connectivity, some lack of organization and well organized material.

To assess the effectiveness of the reading material to improve the communicative competence of the Polytechnic College students, a test paper was constructed for pre and post tests. Ten written questions were framed to test the performance of the Polytechnic College students in writing skills. The study is limited to two polytechnic colleges only viz. Annamalai Polytechnic College, Chettinadu and Government Polytechnic College, Karaikudi due to constraints of time. One hundred students were taught the selected humorous anecdotes using the communicative activities for a period of three months. The present study was based on the

experimental method. The researcher had used the pre-test –post-test single group design in the experiment. Regarding statistical techniques, the researcher used ‘t’ test to find out the significant difference between the means of the pre-test and post –test scores of the Polytechnic College students. The researcher had classified the Polytechnic College students into different categories and assessed whether they improved their writing skills.

INNOVATION/PATH-BREAKING ASPECTS OF THE PROPOSED RESEARCH

Humorous Anecdotes can be a powerful and motivating source for writing in English both as a model and as subject matter. Humorous anecdotes as a model occurs when student’s writing becomes closely similar to the original work or clearly imitates its content, theme, organization, and style. However, when student’s writing exhibits original thinking like interpretation or analysis, or when it emerges from, or is creatively stimulated by, the reading of an anecdote. Moreover Humorous anecdote houses an immense variety of themes. Therefore, the students are motivated to study, reflect and present their feelings in the written form aptly.

Mother tongue is learnt by a student in a natural way. But learning a foreign language is an artificial process. The student is continually surrounded by the mother tongue. It has the strongest social compulsion to learn the mother tongue. But the learner of a foreign language encounters the language only at intervals. His native language habits are in continual conflict with those needed for the new language. Secondly, learning a foreign language requires a lot of practice. Constant and sustained practice is the key to language learning. Therefore it becomes a painful process. The teacher has to create artificial situations in the classroom to overcome these problems.

In-service training may be conducted for the teachers and they can be oriented with the aspects of using humorous anecdotes along with the communicative activities which would facilitate the learners in turn to acquire oral and written communication skills.

CONCLUSION

The findings of the study convey the fact that using humorous anecdotes with communicative activities had improved the communicative competence of the Polytechnic College students. Moreover, the results also indicate that the Teaching learning process had become more interesting than the traditional classroom as the students became active.

The use of humorous anecdotes along with the communicative activities such as citation, simulation, replication, role-play and improvisation found to be more beneficial than the traditional ways of Teaching English to improve the communicative competence of the learners. Hence, all colleges and Schools should try to implement the use of humorous anecdotes so as to enable the learners to reach their optimum level of learning. The reading material would be taught to the students with the appropriate communicative activities. At the end, a post test would be conducted and the collected data would be analyzed in order to state the findings.

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