DEVELOPMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE COMMUNICATION SKILLS IN B.ED STUDENT

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Abstract

This paper attempts to study the interactive effect of socio economic status and the instructional programme on English Language Communication Skills of B.Ed. students. For this purpose, an intervention programme based on English language communication skills of about 40 hours was developed for B.Ed. students. Socio economic status inventory of Patel 1997 was used to measure SES of B.Ed. students. A structured evaluation rubric was used to measure English language communication skills of student-teachers. The participants of the study included 70 B.Ed. students in the experimental and control groups each. The experimental group received the intervention programme whereas the control group did not receive any such programme. The data were analysed using ANCOVA. It was found that the instructional programme was effective in enhancing English language communication skills in B.Ed. students. The effect size of the intervention programme on the English language communication skills in B.Ed. students was found to be 8.85which is high in magnitude.

Key Words: communication skills, English language, Socio-Economic status (SES)

Introduction:

Socioeconomic status (SES) is measured as a combination of education, income and occupation, standard of living, privileges enjoyed by the family, size of the family and their cultural and social activities. It is commonly conceptualized as the social standing or class of

an individual or group. The concept of SES considers other influences such as the chance for social or economic advancement, influence on policy, availability of resources, and prestige in the society. It has been observed that students' language performance is related to their socioeconomic status. Socio-economic status is usually determined by means of a composite measure which takes account of family income, level of education of the family and occupation of the parents of the learners, accessibility of the resources. Some researchers have examined the relation between learners' language performance and SES and other found no relation.

Background of the Study

Language learning and Socio-Economic Status – According to Thomas, (2013) low SES effects language development in three different ways. The first is prenatal influences-low SES is associated with increased likelihood of premature birth and impaired fetal growth, higher levels of stress, higher infection rates, and poor nutrition during pregnancy. These factors may affect early brain development. - Wild, K. et al (2013) .The second influence is parental care- low SES can impact factors such as discipline, parent–child verbal communication and parental sensitivity to the needs of the child. The third influence is-environmental cognitive Stimulation- items available to the children directly affect their language development. The availability of books, computers, trips, and parental communication, to name a few, are all important.

Ghaemi and Yazdanpanah. (2014) studied the relationship between socio-economic status and academic achievement in the EFL classroom among Iranian university students indicated that there are negative relationships between socio-economic status and academic achievement among university junior students.

Chandrakanthi & Ananthasayanam. (2010) indicate that the socio-economic and environmental factors do affect language skills of the engineering students. Socio-economic factors are closely related to language abilities as economic independence leads to equality of family members, and therefore provides better environment. Opportunities for additional learning and verbal interactions among family members motivate the children to develop their language skills.

Thompson (2008) says that age of acquisition, motivation, language family, literacy, and socioeconomic status of the learners is a few of the many factors that need to be considered when studying how individuals acquire a new language.

Carr and Pauwels (2006) also link socio-economic status, mobility and language-learning motivation, in their presentation of results from their pupil and teacher interview study in Australia.

Akram & Ghani (2003) in their study of the relationship of socioeconomic status with language learning motivation revealed that there is statistically significant relationship between learners' socioeconomic status and their motivation to learn English. The relation between SES and language learning motivation has identified strong evidence of language learning differences. It has been found that students from lower socioeconomic groups acquire language at a slower rate than students who belong to high socioeconomic groups.

Wright's (1999) findings show the micro factors / 'inside-school', factors (for example teachers, textbooks and recorded audio material, the language assistant) to be better predictors of pupil attitudes towards language-learning than any 'macro'/'outside-school' ones (among other things, socio-economic status). She concludes by highlighting an important point relating to socio-economic status. Whether or not a pupil had visited the target-language country was also seen to have a significant influence on language-learning attitudes, and she then makes a connection between opportunity to travel abroad and socioeconomic status (as the percentage of pupils who had travelled abroad was higher among the grammar school respondents than the secondary school respondents). This therefore indicates a connection between language-learning attitudes and socioeconomic status. Gayton (2010) reports on a preliminary investigation into a possible connection between a pupil's socio-economic status and their language-learning motivation and she supports Wright's (1999) conclusion that the gap between is closed by the notion of 'mobility': mobility helps to motivate pupils in their foreign language study, and mobility is facilitated by having a higher socio-economic status.

Verma and Tiku (1990) conducted a research on the effect of SES and general intelligence found that SES and intelligence in combined form do not have any differential effect. The relation between SES and language learning motivation has identified strong evidence of language learning differences. It has been found that students from lower socio-economic groups acquire language at a slower rate than students who belong to high socio-economic groups.

Review of relevant literature reveals that a number of factors contribute to individual language acquisition. However, the performance of the learners when they enter college differs from one another. This may be due to the difference in the development of language skills which would have been caused by the socio-economic status and family background.

Since most of the earlier studies conducted in this area were at primary and secondary school level and engineering students. The present study was conducted to find effect of SES and the instructional programme developed by the researcher on English language communication skills of prospective teachers.

Purpose Of The Present Research

In the light of this information, the primary purpose of this research is to determine the interactive effect of SES and the instructional programme on English Language Communication Skills of prospective teachers.

Statement Of The Problem

Is there an interactive effect of SES and the instructional programme developed by the researcher on English language communication skills of prospective teachers?

Sub-Problem

The researcher attempted to find an answer to the following questions:

- Is there a significant interaction effect of instructional programme and SES of prospective teachers on English language communication skills as evaluated by the researcher?

- Is there a significant interaction effect of instructional programme and SES of prospective teachers on English language communication skills as evaluated by prospective teachers' self-evaluation?

A Description Of The Site And Participants

The participants included in this study were 70 prospective teachers in the experimental and control group each enrolled in full time Bachelor of Education from colleges affiliated to the University of Mumbai and situated in the Greater Mumbai. Participants varied in terms of their medium of instruction in school, gender, socio-economic status, faculty at graduation and religion. The experimental group comprised of 70 prospective teachers studying in Clara's college of Education in the academic year 2013-14. The control group comprised of 70 prospective teachers studying in Oriental college of Education in the academic year 2013-14.

Materials and Methods

In this research, quantitative research approach was adopted. In the quantitative approach, quasi-experimental design of the pre-test-post-test, non-equivalent groups type was adopted. It is described as follows:

$O_1 X\ O_2 O_3\ C O_4$

Where,

O_1 and O_3 : Pre-test Scores

O_2 and O_4 : Post- test Scores

X   :   Experimental Group

C   :   Control Group

Here, the experimental group received the intervention and the control group did not receive the intervention. Both, the experimental and control groups were administered an oral test comprising of six questions. For this purpose, two parallel tests were constructed, one was used as a pre-test and the other as a post-test.

The experimental group received an English language communication skills instructional programme, the duration for which was approximately forty hours. During and after each activity, an evaluation rubric (both researcher's evaluation and student's self assessment sheets) were filled up and collected back.

English Language Communication Skills Instructional Programme

English language communication skill instructional programme was based on forty interactive activities. It was designed with specific objective to enhance English language communication skills of B.Ed. students. The duration of each activity was minimum 60 minutes and maximum 120 minutes (if need be). It focused on actional competence (as the term used by Marianne celce and Zoltan Donmyei (2015) in an article entitled 'communicative competence: A pedagogically motivated model with content specifications'). Activities in the instructional programme were bifurcated into the following main dimensions: verbal expression, non-verbal expression, active listening and external behaviour. These dimensions were further bifurcated in to sub-dimensions and components of communication skills such as verbal expression, appropriate construction of sentences, selection of words, use of grammar, pronunciation, voice modulation, fluency, audibility, coherence and non-verbal expression including body language, facial expressions, eye contact, active listening; response, paraphrasing, comprehending, external behaviour and confidence.

Instruments of The Study

In the present study, the following tools were used by the researcher for collecting the data:

- Oral-test (Ansari, 2014): Oral test consisted of six questions. The time duration of this test was half an hour. Two parallel tests were constructed: one was used as a pre-test and the other as a post-test.

- Socio-Economic status inventory prepared by Patel, 1997 is a standardized tool. Internal consistency reliability of the tool is found to be 0.96; test-re test reliability is 0.77.

- Evaluation Rubric-as evaluated by the researcher (Ansari, 2014): Evaluation rubric consists of fifteen criteria to evaluate prospective teachers' communication skills with classifications such as Fluent/Debater, Advanced/Conversationalist; Intermediate/Survivor, Beginner/Novice and the scores assigned were 4, 3, 2 and 1.

- Self-Evaluation Sheet for prospective teachers / Student-teachers' self-evaluation (Ansari,2014): The sheet consisted of nine levels of understanding i.e. very advanced, advanced, pre-advanced, upper-intermediate, intermediate, low-intermediate, pre-intermediate, elementary and beginners with each respective criterion. .

Techniques of Data Analysis

The present research used statistical techniques of ANCOVA and Wolf's formula.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

The following table shows the relevant statistics of interactive influence of English language communication skills instructional programme (IP) and SES of prospective teachers on English language communication skills (ELCS) on researcher's evaluation, prospective teachers' self-evaluation.

Interactive Influence Of Ip And Ses On Elcs (Researchers' Evaluation)

The following table shows the relevant statistics of interactive effect of instructional programme and SES on English language communication skills (as evaluated by the researcher).

Table 1: Descriptive data for ELCS (As evaluated by the researcher)

Variable	SES	Sample size			Mean			
					Observed		Adjusted	
English Language Communication Skills		EG	CG	Total	EG	CG	EG	CG
	Lower	17	18	35	46.41	15.61	46.86	14.30
	Middle	35	33	68	48.51	15.24	48.15	15.10
	High	18	19	37	46	14.31	46.35	15.06

The following table shows the ANCOVA summary of interactive influence of instructional programme and SES on English language communication skills (as evaluated by the researcher).

Table 2: ANCOVA summary for ELCS (As evaluated by the researcher)

Source	SS	Df	MS	F	P	Significance
Adjusted A	36555.27	1	36555.27	2770.48	<.0001	Significant
Adjusted B	109.99	2	54.99	4.17	0.0175	Not significant
Adjusted AXB	-48.06	2	-24.03	-1.28	<.0001	Significant

As observed from table 2, the F-ratio for the intervention programme is significant. There is a significant effect of the intervention programme on communication skills of prospective teachers. The F-ratio for the moderator variable of prospective teachers' SES is not significant. There is a significant effect of prospective teachers SES on English language communication skills of B.Ed. students. The mean score of prospective teachers who belong to middle class is greater than that of the prospective teachers who belong to other strata of society. There is significant interactive influence of instructional programme and SES of prospective teachers on English language communication skills of B.Ed. students.

This implies that the English language communication skills instructional programme (as evaluated by the researcher) for B.Ed. students was found to be more effective for prospective teachers who belong to moderate socio economic status in enhancing English language communication skills as compared to prospective teachers who belong to other high & low socio-economic status.

Interactive Influence of Ip And Ses On Elcs (Student-Teachers' Self Evaluation)

The following table shows the relevant statistics of interactive influence of instructional programme and SES on English language communication skills (Student-teachers' self-evaluation).

Table 3: Descriptive data for ELCS (prospective -teachers' self-evaluation)

| Variable | SES | Sample size | | | Mean | | | |
| | | | | | Observed | | Adjusted | |
		EG	CG	Total	EG	CG	EG	CG
English Language Communication Skills	Lower	17	18	35	7.29	2.44	7.57	2.45
	Middle	35	33	68	7.25	2.69	7.36	2.44
	High	18	19	37	6.94	2.73	7.23	2.44

The following table shows the ANCOVA summary of interactive influence of instructional programme and SES on English language communication skills (prospective teachers' self-evaluation).

Table 4: ANCOVA summary for ELCS (prospective -teachers' self-evaluation)

Source	SS	Df	MS	F	P	Significance
Adjusted A	760.1	1	760.1	1181.34	<.0001	Significant
Adjusted B	1.02	2	0.51	0.79	0.456	Not significant
Adjusted AxB	0.01	2	0	0.01	0.9901	Not significant

As observed from table 3 & 4, the F-ratio for the intervention programme is significant. There is a significant effect of the intervention programme on communication skills of prospective teachers. The F-ratio for the moderator variable of prospective teachers' SES is not significant. There is no significant interactive influence of instructional programme and SES of prospective teachers on English language communication skills of B.Ed. students.

Statistical analysis proves that there is no significant relationship between the interactive effect of intervention programme and SES on students' English language communication skills, which means that students belonging to high, medium and low socio economic status show almost similar benefit from the instructional programme.

Conclusion

It may be concluded that the mean score of English Language communication skills of students with high moderate and low socio-economic status of the experimental group are significantly greater than those of the control group. Thus the English language communication skills instructional programme was found to be effective in enhancing English language communication skills of students with high, moderate and low socio-economic status. It was observed by the researcher's evaluation that the instructional programme was comparatively more effective for students' belonging to moderate socio-economic status comparative to high and low strata on the other hand it is observed through prospective teacher's self evaluation that prospective teacher's belonging to high, low and moderate socio-economic status show almost similar benefit from the instructional programme.

Discussion

The instructional programme developed by the researcher is comparatively effective in enhancing English language communication skills of the prospective teachers who belong to middle socio-economic status (as evaluated by the researcher) wherein as per the self-evaluation of the prospective teachers, high, middle and low socio economic status shows almost similar performance after intervention (table 3).

This may be because high/low SES prospective teachers did not wish to go abroad for study or job purpose, as reported to the researcher. They intended to learn to communicate in English in day to day academic/institutional affairs. Wherein prospective teachers belonging

to middle SES were observed to be highly motivated to seek job in international and global schools and some of them have also expressed their interest to go abroad for job.

Effect Size of the Intervention Programme

Following table shows the effect size of the intervention programme on English Language Communication Skills of prospective teachers.

Table 5: Effect Size of the IP on ELCS and SS

Dependent Variable	Effect Size	Magnitude
English Language Communication skills (As evaluated by researcher)	8.85	High
English Language Communication skills (Student-Teachers self assessment)	6.15	High
SES	8.68	High

The effect size of the independent variables was computed using Wolf's formula.It can be seen from Table 5 that the effect size of the English language communication skills instructional programme on ELCS (As Evaluated by the Researcher) and ELCS (Student-Teachers' Self-Assessment) is 8.85 and 6.15 respectively. The magnitude of the effect size is greater than 0.8 in case of ELCS (As Evaluated by the Researcher) and ELCS (Student-Teachers' Self-Assessment) and is therefore high in magnitude. However, the magnitude of the effect size of SES on English language communication skills of prospective-teachers is 8.68 and is high.

Recommendations

Such an instructional programme needs to be made a part of the teacher education curriculum. Another research needs to be conducted after modifying the instructional programme so as to make it more suitable to prospective teachers of high, medium and low socio-economic status of their region.

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