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IMPROVING WRITING SKILLS FOR PROFESSIONAL COURSE STUDENTS

Dr. D. INDIRA PRIYADARSHINI

Associate Professor of English
Vidya Jyoti Institute of Technology



ABSTRACT

This paper reports a study of the language requirements of the Professional students. In particular, the study seeks to examine the significant differences if any in the performance of the students in vocabulary, grammar, cohesion and organization components in English due to variation in Parents Educational qualifications. Findings of the study also shed light on the specific set of competencies for teachers of English at Engineering colleges in the state of Andhra Pradesh and informs the strategies for the development of writing skills components of the students.

Key Words: Grammatical components, strategies, English Language Teaching, Communication Skills

Introduction

English has emerged as the most important global language. It is a wrong view to hold that it is a language of the British alone. English has evolved be a language of science and technology. Majority of all important books for higher studies are written in English. The Indians must not keep their eyes closed in this adventurous period of globalization.

The study of English dialect in this period of globalization is fundamental. English language is the most essential dialect of correspondence between various nations. In India, individuals of various states have their own particular dialect. English Language has come up as a connecting link among different states of India.

U.N. has perceived five dialects as its official dialects and of them English takes the primary position due to its background, worldwide approval of simple access to the general population. In the event that we backpedal to historical facts, we see that half of the globe was under the British government. Those nations coming specifically under British rule had by need or under compulsion to learn English and the rest either being impacted by the English culture or to keep pace with present day incline had yet to settle on learning it.

English has developed as the most imperative global language. It is a wrong view to hold that it is a dialect of the British alone. English has developed be a dialect of science and innovation. Majority of all important books for higher examinations are composed in English. The Indians must not keep their eyes shut in this courageous time of globalization

The main objective of the present study is to '**develop writing skills in the context of teaching English as a second language for professional course students**'. Professionals at JNTU asserted that 'knowledge of the traditional 'grammar form' and 'communicative function' are both necessary ingredients for success in the scientific-technical field'.

The survey was conducted with the following objectives in view:

- To find out the language needs of the Engineering students.
- To develop Diagnostic Tests to identify their skills in different writing components.
- To identify a specific set of competencies for teachers of English at Engineering colleges in the state, based on the needs survey.
- To find out the significant differences if any, in the performance of the students in vocabulary, grammar, cohesion and organization components in English due to variations in their place of study during SSC.

The study was conducted in three phases. In phase I Pre-test was conducted, Phase II Post-test was conducted and Phase III questionnaire was used to elicit data from the teachers who were teaching professional students. Findings of the study helped to shed light on an important facet of developing writing skills in the context of teaching English as a second language for professional course students.

Review: Vivian Zamel (1983) looked at the composing processes of six advanced ESL students. Among the six, there were both skilled and unskilled writers. Zamel found that the least skilled writer in her study, like native-English speaking counterparts, 'paused so often and between such short chunks of discourse that the overall relationships between ideas seemed to suffer'. She concludes that some composing problems transcend language factors and hence, are shared by both native and non-native English speakers.

Methodology: This section introduces data about the profile of the respondents involved in the research, community of the respondents and the influence of these on the performance of the students in vocabulary, grammar, cohesion and organization components of English.

Sample: The place chosen for research is Joginpally B.R. Engineering College located at Yenkapally, Moinabad. For my research purpose I have taken a sample consisting of 180 students who got registered 60 each in EEE, CSE, IT branches.

Variables: The variable taken into consideration is place of study during SSC.

The research tool used: The following tools were used to facilitate the research.

Phase I –Pre-test

A Pre-test was conducted to one hundred and eighty students at the beginning of the study who belonged to EEE, CSE, IT branches at B.Tech Iyr level at Joginpally B.R. Engineering College. It consisted of twenty items in the form of Part-A and Part-B separately. Part A consisted of ten questions through which the researcher tried to gain information about the learners and their awareness of writing English. Part B consisted of 50 questions based on grammar components.

Phase II: Post Test

A post test was conducted to the same set of students after a years teaching at the end of the year to test whether there was any improvement in the performance of the students in the grammar components. Comparison was made between the pre-test and the pre-test.

Phase III: Teachers Questionnaire: This tool was used to get an insight into teacher's views regarding writing skills.

Interpretation: Frequency distribution of the student's performance in the Pre-test for total score.

The mean and standard deviation scores of students are 25.02 and 5.02 respectively. Out of the 147 students selected for the study, 53 students have got their tests scores very close to the mean of the sample. There are 26 students who have scored less than the mean scores of the distribution; whereas 68 students have scored more than the mean score of the distribution of the total sample. This indicates that there is difference in the student's performance.

Table 1: Frequency distribution of Pre-test score for Total Sample:

S. No	CI	MP	F	CF	C Percent
1	10-15	12.5	6	6	4.08
2	15-20	17.5	20	26	17.69
3	20-25	22.5	53	79	53.74
4	25-30	27.5	51	130	88.44

5	30-35	32.5	15	145	98.64
6	35-40	37.5	2	147	100.00

Table 2: Frequency Distribution of Post-test for Total Sample:

S. No	CI	MP	F	CF	C Percent
1	20-25	22.5	11	11	7.48
2	25-30	27.5	21	32	21.77
3	30-35	32.5	38	70	47.62
4	35-40	37.5	53	123	83.67
5	40-45	42.5	24	147	100.00

The mean and standard deviation scores of students are 34.95 and 5.85 respectively. Out of the 147 students selected for the study, 38 students have got their tests scores very close to the mean of the sample. There are 32 students who have scored less than the mean scores of the distribution; whereas 77 students have scored more than the mean score of the distribution of the total sample. This indicates that there is difference in the student's performance.

Table 1: Influence of Parents Education on vocabulary, Grammar, Cohesion, Organization and Total

Table 1 presents the mean and standard deviation scores of students in vocabulary, grammar, cohesion and organization in English, based on their parents educational qualifications and the calculated f-values Pre- and Post-tests

Components	Type of test	Highly Educated			Average Educated			Un Educated			F Ratio
		N	M	SD	N	M	SD	N	M	SD	
Vocabulary	Pre-test	102	6.04	2.07	41	5.98	1.87	4	4.50	1.12	1.125@
	Post-test	102	8.11	2.20	41	7.85	2.45	4	5.75	1.48	2.133@
Grammar	Pre-test	102	7.01	1.83	41	7.12	1.40	4	4.50	0.87	4.328*
	Post-test	102	9.32	1.90	41	9.31	1.46	4	7.00	1.73	3.289*
Cohesion	Pre-test	102	2.81	2.81	41	2.73	1.06	4	1.50	1.12	2.261@
	Post-test	102	3.82	3.82	41	4.29	1.02	4	1.50	1.50	6.262**
Organization	Pre-test	102	9.61	9.61	41	8.71	2.04	4	8.00	2.12	3.229*
	Post-test	102	14.08	14.08	41	13.49	1.82	4	10.50	2.06	6.229**
Total	Pre-test	102	25.47	5.29	41	24.54	3.74.	4	18.50	4.03	4.134*
	Post-test	102	35.33	5.97	41	35.00	4.97	4	24.75	4.15	6.801**

Results

From the table it is revealed that the obtained f-values for grammar (4.328) and organization (3.229) in Pre-test are higher than the table value at 0.01 levels. Where as in Post-test the obtained f-values for grammar (3.289), cohesion (6.262) and organization (6.229) are higher than the table value at 0.01 levels. It indicates that parents educational qualification have significantly influenced the performance of the students

in grammar and organization in Pre-test and performance of the students in grammar, cohesion and organization in Post-test.

Further it is observed that there is a tremendous improvement in the performance of the students in Post-test (35.33), (35.00) and (24.75) in the Pre-test that f values (25.47), (2454) and (18.50) the obtained mean values show that students with average educated parents performance is almost equal to the students with highly educated parents (25,47) in Pre-test and (35.33) in post-test.

It denotes that highly educated parents lay more stress on science and mathematics subjects as they aim to join their children in Professional courses like medicine and engineering. Thus the students with these parents are forced to give limited study time to the English language.

Contrary to this, obtained f-values for vocabulary (1.125) and cohesion (2.261) in Pre-test and f-value in vocabulary (2.133) in Post-test are not significant at 0.05 levels. It means that the performance of the students is similar in these components, irrespective of their parent's educational qualifications. Hence, the formulated hypothesis, 'there exists significant difference in the vocabulary, grammar, cohesion and organization performance of the students is accepted with respect to grammar and organization in Pre-test and grammar, cohesion and organization in post-test. There was an overall tremendous improvement of about (2.667) in Post-test in comparison to the Pre-test.

It is assumed that after a year teaching the student have shown significant improvement in Post-test. From the above, it can be summed up that educational qualifications of the parents has significant influence in their children's performance in grammar and organization in Pre-test and grammar, cohesion and organization in Post-test; where as it has not shown any influence in the performance of the students in vocabulary and cohesion in Pre-test; vocabulary in Post-test.

Conclusion

The problem selected for this study was to identify the methods and materials required for training in writing skills for professional students at advanced levels. It was considered essential for counseling the lecturers and plan a suitable schedule for skill development in general and writing in particular.

There was development after one or two sessions of teaching. Drilling of correct sentences to the professional students in their tasks is helpful in developing their writing. Mere writing practice is inadequate and the data has proved that there are interfering factors such as listening ability, general interest in expressing technical details in lay terminology. Ambition for their career was also a decisive factor.

The findings in the present study suggest that more efforts need to be made by the teachers to develop the writing skills of the students. In conclusion it would seem imperative that appropriate measures be taken to improve the linguistic competence. The measures, among others, could be in the form of greater emphasis on vocabulary, grammar, cohesion and organization as well as remedial language strategies.

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