



ENHANCING THE SPEAKING SKILL OF THE RURAL SCHOOL LEARNERS THROUGH COGNITION SKILL BASED ACTIVITIES – AN EXPERIMENTAL STUDY

Dr. SathyaT.,
Head of Department of Languages,
IFIM College,
Bangalore.
Email – sathyathangavel.89@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

In the challenging competitive world, rural school learners are struggling a lot to compete with the urban school learners. The methodology of teaching in rural schools remains restricted to blackboard and books when compared to the methodology of teaching in urban schools, where they are implementing international standard of teaching. Because of inhibitions, anxiety, lack of practice and inferiority complex, rural learners hesitate to speak in English and they have fear of committing mistakes though they know the importance of communication skill in digital and competitive era. Cognitive skills are otherwise called as cognitive functions or cognitive capacities and these brain based skills are tremendously needed in acquiring the second language rather than learning. As per the scientific evidence “Language Proficiency correlates with the Cognition Skills”, inducing cognition skills undoubtedly act as a platform for the rural students to enhance the communication skills. The methodology of the study is designing cognition skill based activities. This paper discusses on how the cognition skill based activities helps the rural learners to participate in the language acquisition process with interest and curiosity. The entry test and the exit test are conducted to find out the level of learners before and after the implementation of cognition skill based activities. The collected data will be analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively. Hence this paper focuses on enhancing the speaking skill of the rural learners of secondary level by inducing their cognition skills through cognition skill based activities.

Keywords: Cognition skills, Speaking skill, rural learners, Language Acquisition Process, Cognition skill based activities.

DOI Number: 10.14704/nq.2022.20.8.NQ44934

NeuroQuantology 2022; 20(8): 9131-9135

9131

INTRODUCTION

Language is a verbal medium for expressing and sharing ideas, feelings and

experiences. It is based on systematic use of signs, sounds, gestures or marks articulated by throat and mouth to convey meanings to a



group or community. Language is not a natural phenomenon; it is a creation of man's need. Hence, society depends on language as it depends on air, water and the earth around it for its own existence. English language is enthroned as the queen of languages. It has been spoken in many countries both as a foreign or second language. Though English is a foreign language, it has got such a prestigious position in India. In this present era, the sole purpose of English language is sending and receiving information around the world. It is used to make the communication easier and effective.

WHAT IS COGNITION?

Cognition is described as mental processes which is associated with the acquiring information, storing data, manipulating thoughts and retrieving information. Cognitive skills considered as essential skills and abilities for the process of thinking which is developed from early childhood through to old age. Cognitive skills, also called cognitive functions, cognitive abilities or cognitive capacities, are brain-based skills which are needed in acquisition of knowledge, manipulation of information and reasoning. They have more to do with the mechanisms of how people learn, remember, solve problems and pay attention, rather than with actual knowledge. Cognitive skills or functions encompass the domains of perception, attention, memory, learning, decision making, and language abilities. [1]

LANGUAGE LEARNING VS COGNITION SKILL

Cognition Skills plays a vital role in teaching and acquiring language skills to the learners. Speaking is a crucial part of learning English as a second language. Speaking activities integrated with cognitive strategies and activities. Cognitive skill based activities pave a platform for the ESL learners to acquire language skills rather than learning.

In the book entitled "The Reasons We Speak: Cognition and Discourse in the Second Language Classroom (2002), Miguel Mantero
eISSN1303-5150

explained the role of cognition in a literature-based foreign language classroom. By implementing a sociocultural approach, cognition is understood as the basic building block for all human learning and language development.

In the newspaper, "The Hindu", an article dated on July 10, 2021 discussed that cognitive skills are mental capabilities that are vital for students to learn effectively. They complement each other to function effectively and determine the success of learning outcomes. As most learning challenges are caused by inadequate cognitive skills, it is necessary to question how we are enabling our future leaders to grow and what tools we can provide for their growth.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the study area s follows;

- To enhance the speaking skill of the rural learners.
- To find out the effectiveness of cognitive skill based activities in developing the speaking skill of the rural learners.
- To enhance the writing skill of the rural learners.
- To find out the effectiveness of cognitive skill based activities in developing the writing skill of the rural learners.

SAMPLE SIZE OF THE STUDY

The sample of the study has been chosen randomly. This study consisted of fifty five learners of Ninth standard from Government Higher Secondary School, Sivagiri, Erode District, Tamilnadu. The sample included both boys and girls.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study has following limitations:

- The researcher has selected only fifty five learners of ninth standard 'A' Section alone from the Government Higher Secondary School, Sivagiri, Erode District, Tamilnadu.
- Only 8 activities were conducted to assess the speaking skill and writing skill of the learners



HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY

H₀₁: There is no significant difference between the performance of the rural learners in the entry test and the exit test with respect to their speaking skill.

H₀₂: There is no significant difference between the performance of the rural learners in the entry test and the exit test with respect to their writing skill.

whether Cognition Based Activities act as an effective tool to enhance the productive skills of the rural rurallearners or not. It is also to test the reliability and validity of implementing them in the rural classroom.To design the activities for developing speaking and writing skills of rural students, the Multimedia Learning Materials such as video, images, audios, adds, text etc. were collected. Pre-test was conducted to test their performance level with reference to their communication skills. Activities were implemented as a pathway to achieve the higher level performance in post-test.

9133

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

This study is a small-scale experiment and set of observations undertaken to decide

Section 1

Cognition Skills : Skill Concentrated : Speaking
 : Attention, Remembering, Problem Solving and Decision Making
 Activity : 4 Cognition Skill Based Activities
 Aids used : Videos, Pictures, Movie Scenes, Newspaper Articles, Caricatures
 Level : Secondary (Ninth Standard Students)
 Time : One Hour / Activity (Total – 4 Hours)
 Process : After implementing each activity, the students are asked to speak for five minutes on their own.
 Effect : They are interested in activities and come forward to speak.

Section 2

Cognition Skills : Skill Concentrated : Writing
 : Analysing, Evaluating, Processing and Reasoning
 Activity : 4 Cognition Skill Based Activities
 Aids used : Videos, Pictures, Short Reels and Fun oriented language games
 Level : Secondary (Ninth Standard Students)
 Time : One Hour / Activity (Total – 4 Hours)
 Process : After implementing each activity, the students are asked to write for ten minutes on their own.
 Effect : They enjoyed the activities and showed interest in writing.

DATA ANALYSIS

H₀₁: There is no significant difference between the performance of the rural learners in the entry test and the exit test with respect to their speaking skill.

Group	Level	N	Mean	S.D	Mean Difference	Calculated 't' value	Df	Significance
Rural Learners	Entry	55	2.65	0.34	-3.99	-45.34	25	.000*
	Exit	55	6.64	0.69				

Performance of the Rural Learners in the Entry and the Exit Test with respect to their Speaking Skill



*Significant at 0.05 level.

The above table indicates that the calculated 't' value is -45.34. The associated p value is .000 and it is significant at 0.05 level. The mean value is increased from 2.65 out of 9 to 6.64 and the mean difference value is -3.99. The higher mean value in the exit test shows that the performance level of the rural learners with regard to their speaking skill is higher in the exit test when compared to the entry test. Thus it could be inferred that the Cognition Skill Based Activities help them in improving the speaking skill.

Hence, the alternative hypothesis (H_1) is proved and the null hypothesis (H_{01}) is rejected.

H₀₂: There is no significant difference between the performance of the rural learners in the entry test and the exit test with respect to their writing skill.

Group	Level	N	Mean	S.D	Mean Difference	Calculated 't' value	Df	Significance
Rural Learners	Entry	55	2.96	0.69	0.68	3.32	50	.002*
	Exit	55	3.64	0.71				

Performance of the Rural Learners in the Entry and the Exit Test with respect to their Writing Skill

*Not Significant at 0.05 level.

Table 4.14 shows that the calculated 't' value is 3.320. The associated p value is .002 and it is not significant at 0.05 level. The mean value is increased from 2.96 out of 9 to 3.64 and the mean difference value is 0.68. There is only a slight improvement in the performance level of the rural learners with regard to their writing skill.

Hence, the alternative hypothesis (H_2) is rejected and the null hypothesis (H_{02}) is proved.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The findings of the study are as follows:

- When the cognition skills of the learners were induced, the process of acquiring language skills became learner friendly.
- Their speaking skill is improved when compared to their writing skill.
- The Cognition Based Activities based on videos, music, short reels, newspaper, etc lent a hand for the researcher to increase the curiosity of the learners.
- The role of Cognition Based Activities in the process of enhancing their speaking skill had a qualitative impact on the learners.

SCOPE FOR FURTHER STUDY

Though the study is conducted in an innovative way to develop a suitable learning mode for the rural school learners, the field of the study has more scopes in various perspectives.

- A comparative study can be conducted between the effectiveness of Cognition Skill Based Activities to urban school learners and rural school learners.
- A study can be taken up to improve other language skills such as listening, reading and writing of rural school learners.

SUMMATION

Cognition play a vital role in learning the language. It had a qualitative impact on the rural learners to acquire language skills especially speaking skill. Though there are there various methods to improve the language skills of the learners, Cognition Skills of the learners act as an effective catalyst to improve their speaking skills. Through Cognition Skill Based Activities, they can acquire the language skills rather than learning the language skills. No skills can be taught in isolation, the activities develop the creative thinking along with other skills such as creative decision making, problem solving,



analyzing and reasoning ability, vocabulary, etc. Activity is a just a game to the learners, so it lends a hand to acquire the skills rather learning.

REFERENCE

Kiely, Kim (2014). "Cognitive function". In Michalos, Kim M. (ed.). *Encyclopedia of Quality of Life and Well-Being Research*. Springer. pp. 974–978. doi:10.1007/978-94-007-0753-5_426. ISBN 978-94-007-0752-8. <https://www.cambridgecognition.com/blog/entry/what-is-cognition>

Mantero, Miguel. *The reasons we speak: cognition and discourse in the second language classroom*. United Kingdom, Bergin & Garvey, 2002.

Hughes, Arthur. *Testing for Language Teachers*. New Delhi: Cambridge University Press. India Pvt. Ltd, 2010. Print.

Birdsong, David. *Second Language Acquisition and the Critical Period Hypothesis*. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers, 1999. Print.

Dhanavel, P. "The Crux of Teaching English with Technology." *The Journal of English Language Teaching (India)* 44.4 (2006): 29-33. Print.

