

PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS OF PEER APPRAISAL METHOD IN AUGMENTING ORAL PRESENTATION SKILLS IN ESL: A STUDY WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO UNCONSCIOUS INCOMPETENT LEARNERS

Abstract

In this experimental study, the researchers explore 'peer appraisal method', besides experimenting its effectiveness among the unconscious incompetent learners in the context of teaching, learning and developing the oral linguistic skills. The study explores the concept of peer appraisal as a step ahead to the existing methodologies such as peer assessment or peer evaluation. This work addresses an easy-to-handle methodology for augmenting the oral presentation skills of the unconscious incompetent learners in the milieu of ESL using peer appraisal as a tool.

Keywords: Peer review, ELT, Competency, Peer appraisal, Pre-test and Post-test

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I. INTRODUCTION

Researches on Second Language Acquisition record that learners acquire linguistic abilities in a much comfortable manner among their peer groups than in the presence of a teacher. In this kind of learning, the goal is to build a warm and supportive community among the learners to enable them to move in stages from dependence (on the teacher) to full autonomy. A less dominant role of the teacher in the classroom together with a participatory view of the learners in it supports for their initiatives and for the effort they make to arrive at meaning. (Del, Hymes 1971). In Skinner's terms, therefore, the learning of a habit could occur through intuition or through reinforcement. Moreover, the learners sit in circle and perform the tasks whereas the teacher stands outside the circle and takes the role of a counselor. Further, learners are expected to self-correct, leaving the teacher the task of remedial and follow-up work.

II. BACKGROUND OF THE POPULATION

It had been identified that a majority of the students were from rural background. Out of the population of 1500 subjects, 1014 subjects were from rural background. The number of students from urban background was 351. The number of students from semi-urban background was found to be the least and it was 135 in number.

III. EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND OF THE SUBJECTS

It had been observed that majority of the students had their schooling under matriculation board. The number of students who had schooling under matriculation board was 791. The number of subjects who had their schooling under Tamil medium state board was 563. The least count observed was the number of subjects who had schooling under Tamilnadu state board – English medium. It was 146 in number.

Phase I

Analyzing motivational level and state of the mind: In order to determine the motivational level as well as the language exposure environment of the students, an analysis was conducted using questionnaire as a tool.

From this responses incorporated from the questionnaire, it was determined that the chosen samples were not exposed to the situations either to listen to the speeches or conversations in English language.

Phase II

1. Determination of competency levels (pre-training)

2. Analysis of competency level in written task: There were two experiments conducted to assess the competency levels of the subjects in written proficiency in English language. 'Experiment 1' had been conducted allowing the students to think over the given choices of topics and time had been given for preparation whereas 'experiment 2' was conducted

in impromptu method. In the first experiment which had been conducted allowing the subjects to 'breath over', contemplate and have speculation on the given task, they had scored better.

Experiments	Number of sample (n)	Mean	SD	't 'Value
Experiment 1	500	3.01	15.75	0.72
Experiment 2	500	2.54	15.64	1.40

Table 1: Analysis of competency level in writing (pre-training)

- 3. Analysis of competency level in reading task:** Once the proficiency of the subjects had been tested on written task, they were tested with reading task and the competency levels were assessed and recorded. The following table compares the scales clearly.

Experiment	Number of sample (n)	Mean	SD	't 'Value
Experiment 3	500	2.46	17.27	1.37

Table 2: Analysis of reading competency level (pre-training)

- 4. Analysis of oral proficiency:** Oral proficiency of the subjects were assessed and analysed in the third phase. There were two experiments conducted in the assessment of oral proficiency skills and 'experiment 4 'had been conducted by allowing the subjects to have a reasonable degree of time for preparation whereas 'experiment 5 'was conducted in impromptu manner.

Experiments	Number of sample (n)	Mean	SD	't 'Value
Experiment 4	500	2.39	16.61	1.52
Experiment 5	500	1.99	16.47	2.07

Table 3: Analysis of competency level in oral task (pre-training)

- 5. Analysis of the listening skills of the subjects:** In the fourth phase of the experiment, the listening skills of the sample of 500 subjects were determined. In the determination of listening competency, the mean produced by the subjects was 1.03 and the standard deviation was 19.91. In addition to that the 't 'value was found to be 2.80. The readings of the experiment have been recorded in the tabular column.

Experiment	Number of sample (n)	Mean	SD	't 'Value
Experiment 6	500	1.03	19.91	2.80

Table 4: Analysis of listening competency (pre-training)

6. Comparison incorporated from the determination of competency levels: Altogether, six pre-training experiments were conducted and it was vital from the experiments that the chosen samples were very poor in listening skills in English as a Second Language. At the same time, it was quite surprising to learn from 'experiment 1 'that the samples had a higher score in written task compared to any other experiment given in the four phases of determination. Next to written proficiency, the subjects showed a good command over reading and comprehending task. The command of the subjects were found to be less in speaking task compared to writing and reading tasks, however they exhibited a better score in speaking compared to listening.

On the whole, as determined from the outcome of the experiments conducted before training, the line of proficiency of the subjects could be placed in the order of writing, reading, speaking and listening. The chart given below very vividly elucidates the comparison incorporated by determination as well as analysis of the competency levels of the chosen subjects.

Phase III

1. Results of the post-test training by the trainers: The results incorporated regarding the involvement of the subjects in the training offered by the trainers showed a descending line of involvement from the part of the subjects. The analysis and incorporated results showed that the involvement of the subjects had become lesser and lesser or each set of forthcoming levels and did not make any improvement in the context of the existing psychological or motivational state of the students.

Involvement of the subjects	Boys	Girls	Total
First evaluation	183	219	402
Second evaluation	164	197	361
Third evaluation	146	183	329

Table 5: Involvement of subjects (post-training: training by trainers)

2. The performance of the subjects after the training by trainers

Number of sample (n)	Performance of the subjects			
	grade 6	grade 5	grade 4	grade below 4
500	0	12	26	462

Table 6: Score of the subjects (post-training: training by trainers)

It had been identified and analyzed in the study that the chosen subjects with unconscious incompetency level did not show a good degree of positive tide in the context of 'overcoming' from their existing state. It was also found that their commitment was also very poor towards the assigned task. Thus, at the end of the training given by the trainers, the sample of students with unconscious incompetence had not developed much awareness. Further, they also did not show a required level of improvement in their level of performance. To make it clear, there was not much difference between the grade scored by the samples in the pretest analysis and the grade scored by them in the post test analysis conducted after the training by the trainers.

3. The analysis of performance

Component	Number of sample (n)	Mean	SD	't 'Value
Performance analysis in training by trainers	500	2.16	16.01	1.89

Table 7: Performance analysis of oral presentation skills (post-training: training by trainers)

After the investigators and the team of trainers had given training, the sample of students had been subjected to assessment on oral presentation skills. In the assessment conducted, the mean value produced by the subjects had been 2.16 and the standard deviation was 16.01. Moreover, the 't 'value derived in the assessment was 1.89.

It was found that the mean produced by the subjects was less than the mean produced by the same subjects in the pre-training analysis (experiment no: 4). In the pre-training analysis conducted after giving reasonable amount of time for the subjects for preparation, the mean produced by the subjects had been 2.39. At the same time, it has to be noted that the mean produced by the subjects in 'experiment 5 'when they had been asked to perform the task in impromptu manner, the mean was 1.99 which has been 0.17

lesser than the current mean. At the outset, a slight improvement had been experienced in the level of the students in the context of performing oral presentation skills. The chart presented below shows the comparison on the variation in the performance of the subjects.

Phase IV

- 1. Determination of competency levels (post-training):** It had been assumed by the investigators that the chosen subjects were not familiar with peer teaching or learning methodology. Since peer learning is the basis of the peer appraisal method proposed by the investigators, they decided to offer a preparatory session to make the subjects familiar with peer appraisal method.
- 2. Results of training using peer appraisal method:** In the analysis conducted after the preparatory session, it was identified that out of the total sample frame of 500 subjects, only 342 subjects were able to understand the methodology to be practiced in peer appraisal method. So, the remaining 158 subjects had been put under group counselling in order to make know why they were not able to understand the methodology of peer appraisal. Later, it was found in the analysis that they were not able to understand the methodology due to the lack of familiarization towards the English language. Some subjects also had given the reason that they were confused with the methodology as it was new to them.
- 3. The involvement of the subjects in peer appraisal method:** Once the results had been determined after the training was given by the team of trainers, the chosen subjects were encouraged to practice peer appraisal method. Here also, the scale point for evaluation had been fixed on the basis of IELTS assessment system, in order to draw exact variation or approximation from the results concluded regarding the performance of the students as a result of the training offered by the trainers.

Involvement of the subjects	Boys	Girls	Total
First evaluation	42	67	109
Second evaluation	93	128	221
Third evaluation	137	186	323

Table 8: Involvement of the subjects (post-training: peer appraisal method)

It was quite surprising that the involvement of the subjects had been very poor compared to the first evaluation after the training of the trainers and so group counselling was conducted to know why the subjects had scored less. It was identified in the group counselling that since the subjects had a lot of exposure on teaching and learning methodology, they had known how to behave and response in the training session conducted by trainers. On the other hand, during peer appraisal, the subjects had shown a lenient approach in responding as the appraisal was done by their peers. So, the

involvement of the subjects was very poor compared to the involvement of the students in the training session offered by the trainers as this method was new to the students.

In the second evaluation which had been conducted in the second sixty minutes of the training session, 221 students showed active involvement among whom there were 93 boys and 128 girls. The variation in the sample strength was 279 from the sample frame and 112 higher compared to the first level of evaluation. It had been found that the number of subjects actively involved in the second level was more than the number found in the evaluation of the first round. It was also observed that the percentage of improvement in the level of involvement of the subjects between the first and second levels of evaluation in peer appraisal method was identified to be higher than the percentage of involvement between the evaluation of first and second levels of the training offered by the trainers.

Further, in the third evaluation, 323 subjects had showed active involvement among which there were 137 boys and 186 girls. It had been identified that the involvement of the subjects was greater in the third level and the variation was 177 from the sample frame and 102 from the second level of evaluation. Thus, the analysis and incorporated results show that the involvement of the sample of students had become higher in each levels of evaluation and the sample students indicated an enthusiastic attitude towards active participation in the practising and evaluating tasks. On the whole, it had been observed that there was a greater change in the psychological and motivational state of the students compared to the teacher training method.

4. The performance of the subjects in peer appraisal method

Number of sample (n)	Performance of the subjects (peer appraisal method)			
	grade 6	grade 5	grade 4	grade below 4
500	4	76	101	319

Table 9: Score of the subjects (post-training: peer appraisal method)

After the chosen sample of subjects were given the opportunity to experience and practice peer appraisal method, the subjects were asked to perform the task of oral presentation. The sample of students had been asked to make oral presentations for three minutes each. The scales of assessment which had been adapted in the post-training analysis of the training by the trainers were adapted without any change. In the analysis, it was found that the number of subjects who had scored above 'grade 6' was zero in number. Four subjects had scored 'grade 6' and 76 samples of students had scored 'grade 5'. Further, 101 students scored 'grade 4' in the analysis. The number of subjects who had scored below 'grade 4' was 319.

After getting exposure to peer appraisal method and practising the tasks under the design of the approaches to be adapted by the method, there was a greater increase in the score produced by the subjects chosen for the experimental study. In assessment conducted after the post training analysis by the trainers, no subject had scored 'grade 6' whereas after practising peer appraisal method, 4 students had scored 'grade 6' in oral presentation. In the post test analysis by the trainers, the number of subjects scored 'grade 5' was 12 in number whereas after practising peer appraisal method, it went up to 76. The sample of students who made a score of 'grade 4' had been 26 in the post training analysis by the trainers whereas it was 101 in the analysis after peer appraisal method. Further, 462 sample of students had scored below 'grade 4' in the post training analysis of the trainers whereas it was reduced up to 319 in number after practising peer appraisal method. Thus in all the aspects, the evaluations as well as determined values had proved that a greater difference was indicated by peer appraisal method which could not be gained by other methods.

5. The analysis of performance

Component	Number of sample (n)	Mean	SD	't' Value
Performance analysis after practising peer appraisal method	500	3.04	16.26	0.66

Table 10: Performance analysis of oral presentation skills (post-training: peer appraisal method)

It had been observed in the performance analysis of peer appraisal method that there was a greater improvement compared to the scores recorded in the post training analysis by the trainers. The mean value produced by the subjects in oral presentation skills after practising peer appraisal method had been 3.04 which was 0.88 more than the value arrived at the post training analysis given by the trainers. The standard deviation was found to be 16.26 and the 't' value was 0.66. At the outset, there was a greater improvement in the level of the students in the context of performing oral presentation skills. The chart presented below shows the comparison on the variation in the performance of the subjects.

IV. CONCLUSION

It had been observed and identified in the experimental study that the chosen subject with unconscious incompetency level had indicated positive attitude towards overcoming from their existing state, besides increasing the motivational level. It was also found that their commitment towards the task had been increased compared to the level of existence found in the post training analysis by the trainers. Thus, at the end of the reasonable time given to the sample of students for practising peer appraisal method, the sample of students with unconscious incompetence had cultivated some sort of new awareness towards

involving in the tasks as well as doing them in order to arrive at a particular outcome. At the outset, there was a difference between the score they had produced in the post training analysis by the trainers and the score they produced after peer appraisal method.

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