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Research Paper

Information Gap Strategy In Enhancing Communicative Competencies Among B.Ed. Trainees

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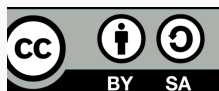
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Abstract

This study aimed at finding out the effectiveness of Information Gap Strategy in enhancing communicative competencies among B.Ed. trainees. The English and its effective usage are in the hands of the prospective teachers and they are the disseminating agent to take the English language development in to the optimum height. It is better to equip the prospective teachers to flourish English among all the stakeholders related to English Language. Hence, an attempt has been made to enhance the oral communicative competencies of the B.Ed. trainees by introducing information gap strategy. The Experimental design adapted for the study is one group pre-test and post-test. All the 32 trainees who opted General English were taken to constitute the sample for the present study through the Purposive sampling technique. The t-test was established. The statistical analysis clearly revealed that there is a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test communicative competency scores. The B.Ed. trainees could be able to perform competency-based activities in appropriate to the context in a great way. Thus the information gap strategy proved to be effective in enhancing communicative competencies among the B.Ed. trainees.

Keywords: Information Strategy, Spoken Competencies, Written competencies, Language teaching, Communication competencies, B.Ed Trainees.



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1 INTRODUCTION

Communication skills are important for many professions but are crucial for teachers. Teachers communicate with students, parents, colleagues and administrators every day. Whether communicated face-to-face, on the phone, in print, electronically or through the public address system, the message must be

constructed carefully and delivered clearly to be properly received.

According to Chen (2005) and Park et al. (2006), communicative competence means learners ability to efficiently express what they mean in the target language and successfully achieve communications in real life situations. Communicative competence is the use of language in social communications without grammatical analysis. Meaning was more important than the structure of language and that the primary goal of language learning should be the development of communicative skills. Hyun (2003) describes communicative competence as the knowledge that users of a language have internalized to enable them to understand and produce messages in the language.

2 NEED FOR THE STUDY

It is observed that at the end of any course, the students failed to write telegrams, facing the interview and respond to advertisements. There have been many methods and approaches introduced in the teaching of English in School Education. But, the students are not effective communicators in English. It is in the hands of proficient teacher to enhance language competencies of the students. Hence, the researcher has chosen the pre-service teachers as sample for the present study. If teachers' communicative competencies are good, it will make impact in the young minds automatically.

Teacher preparation programme aims to develop the best teachers for the future generation. But the effective teachers should be moulded only when they possess effective communicative skills and language fluency. Thus, it is need of the hour to develop language proficiency among student teachers and the present study is an attempt in this direction.

3 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The result of this present study itself is the great significance for the research in English education. The information gap strategy proved its intended results. Not much studies have been undertaken with the regard to find the effect of the Information gap activities as tools for better communication. This served as the backdrop of the researcher to investigate into the efficacy of information gap strategy in B.Ed. classrooms.

4 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The problem of the current study is, **"Information Gap Strategy in Enhancing Communicative Competencies among B.Ed. Trainees"**.

5 OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

5.1 Information Gap Strategy

An information gap strategy is a technique in language teaching where students are missing information necessary to complete a task or solve a problem, and must communicate with their classmates to fill in the gaps. It is often used in communicative language teaching and task-based language learning.

5.2 Communicative Competence

In the present study, 'communicative competence' is the ability of the B.Ed. trainees to employ the lexical, morphological, and syntactic and discourse features of language meaningfully in a social context. In other words, it is the ability of the individual to understand and use language effectively to communicate in authentic school and social environments through oral and written forms.

5.3 B.Ed. Trainees

'B.Ed. Trainees' referred in the study represents the Student-teachers who are undergoing Degree Course – Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) in a College of Education after their Graduation and who are subjected as an agent to enhance the communicative competencies.

6 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To identify the information gap activities to enhance communicative competencies in English among B.Ed. trainees.
2. To implement the information gap activities identified for the B.Ed. trainees.
3. To develop and validate a tool for measuring Communicative competencies of the B.Ed. trainees.
4. To find the effectiveness of the information gap strategy for enhancing Communicative competencies among B.Ed. trainees.

7 HYPOTHESES

1. The information gap strategy will significantly enhance the communicative competencies of the B.Ed. trainees.
2. There exists a significant difference between the Communicative Competencies of male and female students in the Pre-test.
3. There exists a significant difference between the Communicative Competencies of male and female students in the Post-test.
4. There exists a significant difference between the Communicative Competencies of Rural and Urban students in the Pre-test.
5. There exists a significant difference between the Communicative Competencies of Rural and Urban students in the Post-test.

8 VARIABLES OF THE STUDY

i. Independent Variable:

The information gap strategy employed by the investigator in the present study.

ii. Dependent Variable:

Communicative Competencies.

iii. Demographic Variable:

1. Gender : a) Male b) Female
2. Locality : a) Rural b) Urban

9 SAMPLE

The sample for the present study was confined only with the B.Ed. Trainees who have opted General English as their Second Optional (language) subject. Since it is a single group design, all the 32 trainees who opted General English were taken to constitute the sample for the present study. Hence the Purposive sampling technique is adopted to constitute homogeneity of the sample.

10 TOOLS USED AND VALIDATION

The main objective of the study is to enhance Communicative Competencies of B.Ed. trainees. To achieve this objective, the tools are developed carefully. The tools were constructed, validated and used for collection of data. The tools are listed below.

1. Pre-test (Communicative Competencies Measuring Test-I)
2. Post-test (Communicative Competencies Measuring Test-II)

11 STATISTICAL TECHNIQUES USED IN THE STUDY

- Measures of Central Tendency (Arithmetic Mean)
- Measures of Variability (Standard Deviation)
- Test of Significance (t-test)

12 HYPOTHESIS TESTING

HYPOTHESIS-1

The table shows the mean and SD value of the total sample students in the Pre-test and Post-test.

Table 1: Mean and SD values of Pre-test and Post-test

Test	N	Mean	SD	Maximum Score	Mid value	Mean difference
Pre-test	32	36.31	4.08	100	50	27.66
Post-test	32	63.97	4.19	100	50	

The following are the conclusion drawn from the above table.

1. There exists a mean difference between the pre-test and post test mean scores of the total sample.
2. It is understood that post test mean score is high. Hence, the results reveal the effectiveness of information gap strategy for enhancing communicative competencies among the B.Ed. trainees.

HYPOTHESIS: 2

The table shows the Mean, Standard Deviation and 't' value of the male and female students in the Pre-test.

Table 2: Mean, SD and 't' value of Male and Female students in Pre-test

Competencies	Male (14)		Female (18)		't' values	Level of Significance
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Spoken Competencies	17.86	2.14	18.00	2.54	0.1685	Not significant
Written Competencies	18.57	1.83	18.22	2.32	0.4627	Not significant
Communicative Competencies	36.29	3.45	36.33	4.60	0.0323	Not significant

Not Significant at 0.01 level (one-tailed test). df=30

1. Since the calculated 't' values (0.1685, 0.4627 and 0.0323) are lower than the table value (2.4572) at 0.01 level, it is inferred that there exists no significant difference between the Male and Female Trainees in the scores of Spoken Competencies, Written Competencies and Communicative Competencies in the Pre-test.
2. The statistical finding reveals that there is no Gender Influence.
3. Hence, the hypothesis framed by the investigator is rejected.

HYPOTHESIS: 3

The table shows the Mean, Standard Deviation and 't' value of the male and female students in the Post-test.

Not Significant at 0.01 level (one-tailed test). df=30

1. Since the calculated 't' values (0.6251, 0.5055 and 0.7974) are lower than the table value (2.4572) at 0.01 level, it is inferred that there exists no significant difference between the Male and Female Trainees in the scores of Spoken Competencies, Written Competencies and Communicative Competencies in the Post-test.
2. The statistical finding reveals that there is no Gender Influence.
3. Hence, the hypothesis framed by the investigator is rejected.

Table 3: Mean, SD and 't' value of Male and Female students in Post-test

Competencies	Male (14)		Female (18)		't' values	Level of Significance
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Spoken Competencies	32.29	3.43	31.61	2.68	0.6251	Not significant
Written Competencies	32.36	2.41	31.83	3.24	0.5055	Not significant
Communicative Competencies	64.64	4.11	63.44	4.30	0.7974	Not significant

HYPOTHESIS: 4

The table shows the Mean, Standard Deviation and 't' value of the Rural and Urban students in the Pre-test.

Table 4: Mean, SD and 't' value of Rural and Urban students in Pre-test

Competencies	Rural (17)		Urban (15)		't' values	Level of Significance
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Spoken Competencies	17.82	2.43	18.07	2.31	0.2888	Not significant
Written Competencies	18.59	1.66	18.33	2.29	0.6069	Not significant
Communicative Competencies	36.53	4.00	36.07	4.28	0.3158	Not significant

Not Significant at 0.01 level (one-tailed test). df=30

1. Since the calculated 't' values (0.2888, 0.6069 and 0.3158) are lower than the table value (2.4572) at 0.01 level, it is inferred that there exists no significant difference between the Rural and Urban Trainees in the scores of Spoken Competencies, Written Competencies and Communicative Competencies in the Pre-test.
2. Hence, the hypothesis framed by the investigator is rejected.

HYPOTHESIS: 5

The table shows the Mean, Standard Deviation and 't' value of the Rural and Urban students in the Post-test.

Table 5: Mean, SD and 't' value of Rural and Urban students in Post-test

Competencies	Rural (17)		Urban (15)		't' values	Level of Significance
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Spoken Competencies	32.29	3.43	31.61	2.68	0.2888	Not Significant
Written Competencies	32.36	2.41	31.83	3.24	0.5055	Not Significant
Communicative Competencies	64.64	4.11	63.44	4.30	0.7974	Not Significant

Not Significant at 0.01 level (one-tailed test). df=30

1. Since the calculated 't' values (0.2888, 0.5055 and 0.7974) are lower than the table value (2.4572) at 0.01 level, it is inferred that there exists no significant difference between the Rural and Urban Trainees in scores of Spoken Competencies, Written Competencies and Communicative Competencies in the Post-test.
2. Hence, the hypothesis framed by the investigator is rejected.

13 FINDINGS

- Calculated 't' values (0.1685, 0.4627 and 0.0323) are lower than the table value (2.4572) at 0.01 level, it is inferred that there exists no significant difference between the Male and Female Trainees in the scores of Spoken Competencies, Written Competencies and Communicative Competencies in the Pre-test.

- Calculated 't' values (0.6251, 0.5055 and 0.7974) are lower than the table value (2.4572) at 0.01 level, it is inferred that there exists no significant difference between the Male and Female Trainees in the scores of Spoken Competencies, Written Competencies and Communicative Competencies in the Post-test.
- Calculated 't' values (0.2888, 0.6069 and 0.3158) are lower than the table value (2.4572) at 0.01 level, it is inferred that there exists no significant difference between the Rural and Urban Trainees in the scores of Spoken Competencies, Written Competencies and Communicative Competencies in the Pre-test.

14 DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

1. This study was confined to the B.Ed. trainees who are going to be the ESL Teachers in Tamilnadu.
2. The focus of the present investigation bound to develop the communicative competencies.
3. The experiment was conducted for a period of forty five working days (one hour a day) only.
4. Information gap activities were only used to enhance Communicative Competencies.
5. Progressive test was not conducted to test the consistency and permanency of the strategy in enhancing communicative competencies.

15 CONCLUSION

The main purpose of the study is to implement Information gap strategy and study its effectiveness for enhancing communicative competencies among the B.Ed. trainees. The statistical analysis clearly revealed that there is a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test communicative competency scores. The B.Ed. trainees could be able to perform competency-based activities in appropriate to the context in a great way. Thus, the Information gap activities proved to be effective in enhancing communicative competencies among the B.Ed. trainees.

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