

A SURVEY ON THE PERCEPTION OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIVIST APPROACH IN THE LEARNING OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND ITS EFFECTIVENESS

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Abstract

Language is a powerful tool for the empowerment of the individual. The present curriculum of English language learning and teaching is grounded on the theoretical foundation of social constructivism. The present study is conducted with an objective to make a survey on the perception of Secondary School Students regarding the implementation of Social Constructivist Approach in English Language learning and its effectiveness.. Data was collected using survey method from 300 Secondary School Students of Ernakulam district following the state syllabus. A questionnaire prepared by the investigators was used for the same. Semi structured interview was used to collect information from English language teachers regarding the enhancement of English Language of Secondary School Students taught through Social Constructivist Approach. The marks obtained in the second term examination in English were considered as their achievement in English language. The study proved that Social Constructivist Approach is followed in the teaching of English Language. The classes are learner centered. Activity and discourse oriented pedagogy is followed. The secondary school English language teachers opined that the students are poor in their grammar and spellings skills. Writing skills are also poorly developed. Language Learning has not borne fruit as was proved by the results in their second term examination. But students are creative though they cannot express their ideas without errors in the target language. So it is the need of the hour that the teachers adopt effective measures to improve the basic skills in English language.

IndexTerms: Social Constructivist Approach, Secondary School Students.

Language is a powerful tool for the empowerment of the individual. This tool becomes more powerful and effective in the hands of a person who has mastery over an international language like English besides his mother tongue. In schools it is introduced as a compulsory subject and is taught from the first standard itself. The present curriculum of English language learning and teaching is grounded on the theoretical foundation of social constructivism. Social constructivism emphasizes the importance of culture and context in understanding what occurs in society and constructing knowledge based on this understanding (Derry, 1999; McMahan, 1997). Vygotsky emphasized the critical importance of culture and the importance of the social context for cognitive development. Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development is probably his best-known concept. It argues that students can, with help from adults or children who are more advanced, master concepts and ideas that they cannot understand on their own. Learning and development is a social,

collaborative activity. School learning should occur in a meaningful context and not be separated from learning and knowledge; children develop in the "real world". Out-of-school experiences should be related to the child's school experience. Learning demands on social interaction, negotiation and shared responsibility as a part of it. Sharing is asking questions, telling pupil what you learn to do before doing it, asking others help and collaborations.

Thus we know that the aim of Social Constructivist Approach is to bring holistic development of the learners. Social Constructivist Approach plays a decisive role in our present scenario of teaching and learning.

Need and Significance

Social Constructivist Approach is the most important and remarkable approach in the modern times of teaching and learning, with the learners as constructors of knowledge. It is more of a theory of learning. Our system of education has undergone radical changes with this learner centered approach. Learners do not passively receive information but actively construct knowledge as they strive to make sense of their worlds. And such flexibility contributes positively to the quality of learning English. The scholastic achievement in English is a prime importance not only to students, parents and teachers but also to the whole society. Hence the investigators decided to take the present problem to unfold the perception of Secondary School Students regarding the implementation and the effectiveness of Social Constructivist Approach in English language learning.

Statement of the Problem

A survey on the perception of secondary school students on the implementation of social constructivist approach in the learning of English language and its effectiveness.

Definition of Key Terms

Social constructivist Approach: In this study signifies the approach of learning based on social constructivist Vygotsky's theory for effective learning.

Secondary School Students: The school section consisting VIII to X standards is referred to as Secondary School Students. In this study the investigators have selected students of eight standard following Kerala State Syllabus.

Objectives of the Study

1. To make a survey on the perception of Secondary School Students regarding the implementation of Social Constructivist Approach in English Language Learning class rooms.
2. To collect information from English Language Teachers regarding the enhancement of English Language of Secondary School Students taught through Social Constructivist Approach.

Methodology

The methodology used was survey method and data was collected from 300 Secondary School Students of Ernakulam district following the state syllabus.

Tools used

- A Questionnaire prepared by the investigators
- Semi structured interview with English language teachers
- Marks obtained in achievement test in English language.

Statistical Techniques

Percentage Analysis.

Analysis and Interpretation of Data

The data was obtained with the help of a Questionnaire regarding how effectively Social Constructivist Approach is followed in English class rooms. The data was analysed using simple statistic - percentage. It was found that 97% of them opined that in every class they have group activities and activities done in pairs. 98% of them opined that they actively participate in role play conducted in classes. 89% of them said that they keenly take part in solving the exercises given in the text and other exercises given by the teacher. 95% of the students enthusiastically take part in preparing discourses as the output given to them at the end of each class. 78% of them are of the opinion that they sincerely help their friends in correcting the errors during the editing process. 80% of them feel that teachers guide them, give necessary directions during the learning process and are in continuous dialogue with them. 65% said that there is dynamic interaction between the teacher, the learner and the task. 55% opined that the teacher and the students encourage them when new ideas are generated. 60% of them opined that the teacher poses challenging questions. 75% said that there is an atmosphere of co-operation and respect. 65% of them are of the opinion that they listen to others with understanding and tolerance. 75% said that new learning is related to their previous knowledge. 65% opined that students express leadership qualities and are ready to take up responsibilities.

Marks obtained in achievement test in English language were also collected. The marks obtained in the second term examination in English were considered as their achievement in English language. The overall results showed that of 300 only 27% have scored above 50% while the majority of the students have scored below 50% marks.

Semi structured interview with English language teachers was used to collect information regarding the enhancement of English Language in Secondary School Students taught through Social Constructivist Approach. The study proved that Social Constructivist Approach is followed in the teaching of English Language. Yet language learning has not borne fruit as was proved by the results in their second term examination. The classes are learner centered. Activity and discourse oriented pedagogy is followed. The secondary school English teachers opined that the students are poor in their grammar and spellings skills. Writing skills are also poorly developed. But students are creative though they cannot express their ideas without errors in the target language. So it is the need of the hour that the teachers adopt effective measures to improve the basic skills in English language.

Findings of the Study

- Social Constructivist Approach is followed in the teaching of English Language. The classes are learner centered. Activity and discourse oriented pedagogy is followed
- The scores of achievement test in English language shows that majority of the students have performed poorly in English language.

➤ Secondary school English teachers opined that the students are poor in their grammar and spellings skills. Writing skills also need improvement.

Educational Implications

The Social Constructivist Approach offers tools and principles for teachers to engage students in enthusiastic participation in class activities and when interacting with teacher, peer group and text and there by entering into active dialogue with texts and their authors, not as outsiders, but as active participants. In many ways this approach is a challenge to the traditional beliefs of learning. Children develop in social or group settings and a constructivist teacher creates a context for learning in which students can become engaged in interesting activities that encourages and facilitates learning. Teachers should find out means to help students enhance their spelling and grammar skills. More activities and exercises should be provided to help students improve their writing skills. Nevertheless, it is to be borne in mind that it is not the quantity of exposure which matters but the kind of exposure that the child gets which facilitates language acquisition.

JETIR **Bibliography**

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