

JIGNASA STUDENT STUDY PROJECT
ASSESSING THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY OF RURAL STUDENTS FOR BETTER
EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES - A STUDY

- As a part of the study project, we have decided to research the English Language Proficiency of Rural Students for better employment opportunities. The target group selected for research was undergraduates studying in MJP(boys) Junior College, Kasturba (girls) Junior College, Social Welfare (girls) Junior College, Vageshwari Degree College, Vyshnavi (women) Degree College and Government Degree College, Luxettipet.

- **Reasons for Selecting the Target Group:-**

English language in the majority of Indian Schools and Colleges begins in the first class and ends in the final year at the Degree College level. The syllabus graded that a student could attain proficiency in the English Language in Degrees, i.e. from Elementary proficiency to proficiency level (ILR level – 4) where he could speak the language fluently on all levels and as normally pertinent to professional needs. A student is expected to exhibit a high degree of fluency and precision in vocabulary.

The primary concern of our study was to assess the levels of language proficiency achieved by undergraduate students coming from a rural background who had their schooling in public and Private funded institutions. Therefore, the target group we wished to focus on was students in Government and Private Degree colleges in Luxettipet town.



▪ METHODOLOGY:

A questionnaire with twenty-one questions was framed and a survey was conducted in 5 Government Junior and Degree Colleges in Luxettipet town. Enough care was taken while framing the questions to collect appropriate data that could help us to assess the proficiency levels of undergraduates hailing from rural background. The essentially qualitative which assesses the quality of English language teaching and learning in colleges. However, a few questions in the questionnaire are quantitative in nature and the data can be measured in numerical form in terms of percentage care was taken to leave some scope for open-ended questions.

▪ LIMITATIONS OF RESEARCH:

The following are a few limitations of the research.

1. Due to the time constraint the questionnaire was confined to only 20 questions. The size of the data may question the validity of outcomes on the quality of English teaching and learning and the proficiency levels of students.
2. The sample size was confined to only 100 students from five colleges. Limitations of time and resources have confined the survey to analyze the data received from fewer number of students interpretations made on this small data may raise doubts about the efficiency of the research.

These limitations however cannot invalidate the research. What matters most is the quality but not the quantity. This is a minor research project intended to test the English language proficiency levels of a small target group. Given the size of the project and the size of the target group, the survey done and the interpretations made on the data do successfully evaluate the standards of teaching and learning English and the English language proficiency



levels of students. The suggestions made by the students about the measures to be taken in increasing the quality of teaching and learning bear significance.

DATA INTERPRETATION:

The survey was conducted on the questionnaire and the data so connected was evaluated. The following are the outcomes of the data.

Awareness of the students about the importance of the English Language.

91% of students are of the opinion that the importance of the English language has increased manifold in the wake of globalization. 70% of the students confirmed that a lack of English language proficiency will impede their employment opportunities.

Use of audio/video aids, encouraging environment to sharpen language skills.

Language is not a subject. It is a skill to be sharpened by practicing regularly. The pedagogy of teaching English as a second language has been insisting on utilizing audio/video aids to practice the four skills – LSRW. The pedagogy stresses the need to establish language labs at the primary level. The syllabus should be designed in such a way that a sufficient number of periods be allowed for practical sessions in the lab.

When the students were asked whether they had a language lab in school or in college at the intermediate level 80%of students said that they had no language lab at school or college. However, 30% of them stated that the teachers have used audio/video aids to teach English.

While about 30%of the students confirmed that audio/video aids were installed but were under repair.

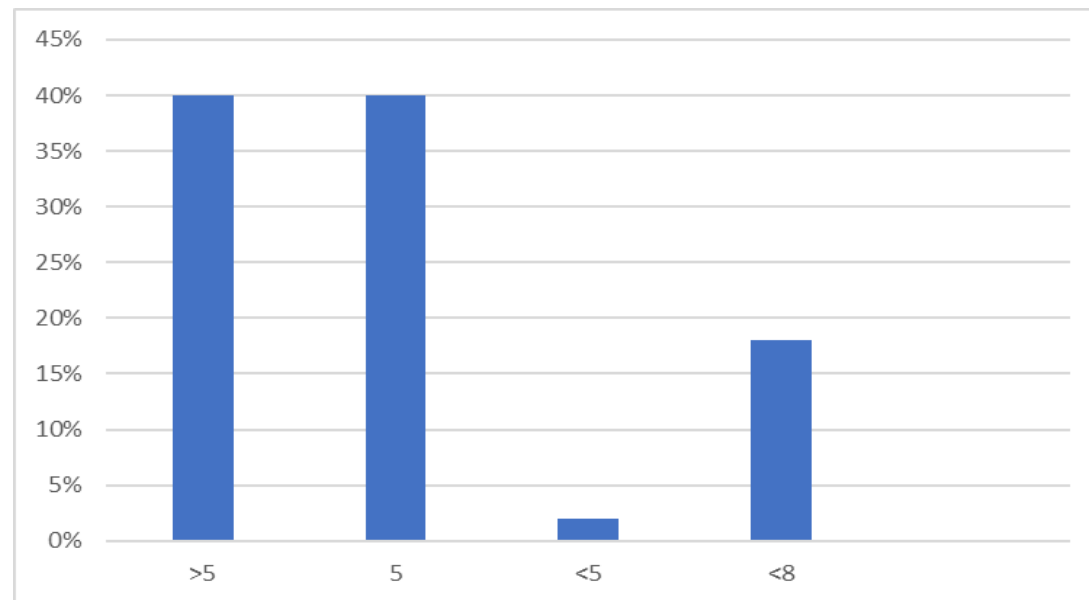


Teaching and Learning methods :

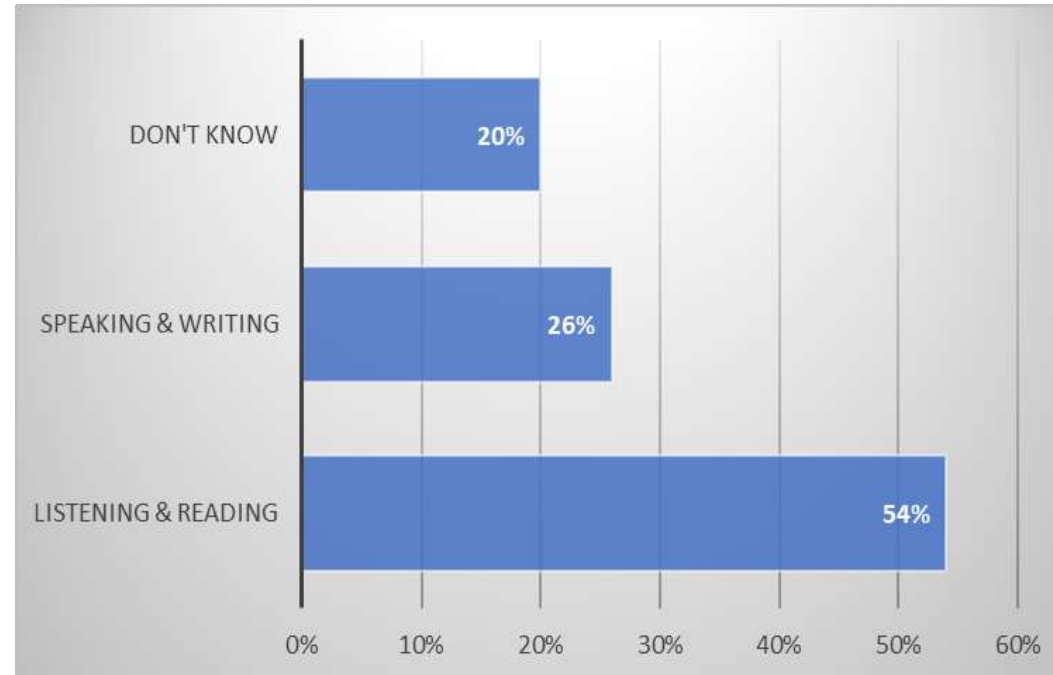
When asked whether teaching and learning methods are orthodox in nature and still encourage rote learning 38% of the students said they encourage rote learning while 40% of the students negated the point.

LSRW skills of students:

When questioned whether the existing pattern of examination effectively tests the LSRW skills of students, strangely, 64% of the students confirmed that the examination pattern is effective. Subjective questions to assess their LSRW skills on a scale of 1- 10 points yielded the following result.



When asked about the skill they are good at comparatively, 54% of the students said they are good at listening and reading, 26% felt that they are good at speaking and writing, while 20% stated that they don't know exactly.

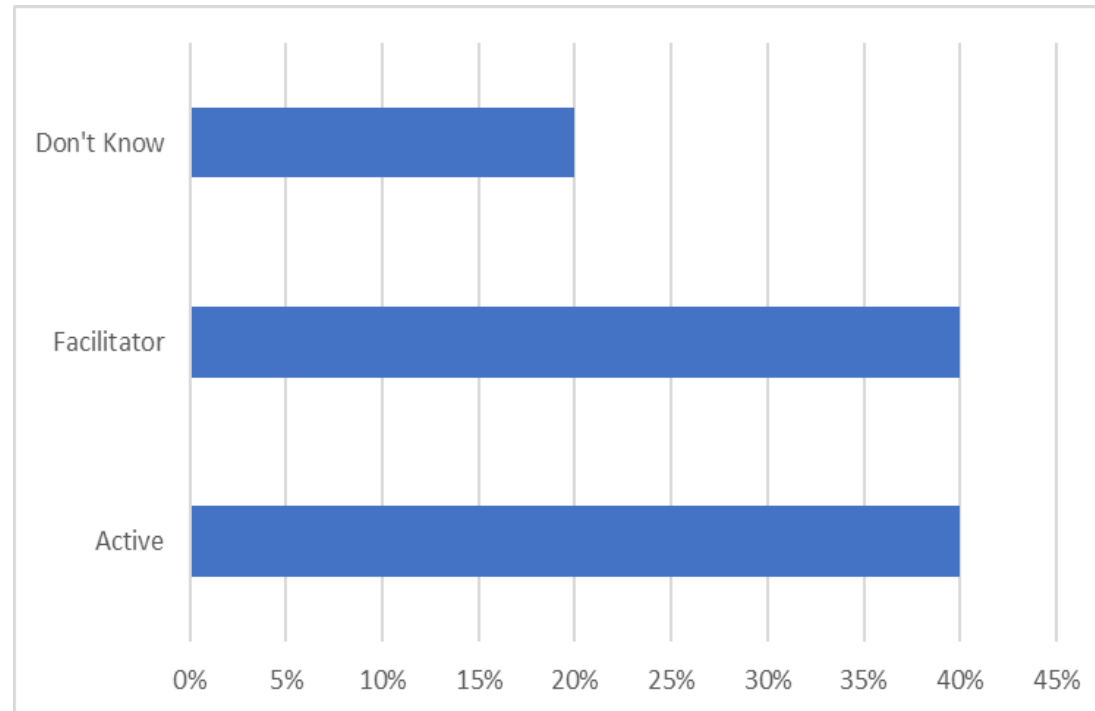


When asked about the skill they want to improve more; 60% of them wished to improve their speaking skill, 17% of them desired to develop their writing skills, 13% wanted to improve their listening skills, and 10% wished to improve their reading skills



ROLE OF THE TEACHER IN CLASSROOM:

Questions were framed to assess the role of a teacher in the classroom. Modern language teaching insists on the reorientation of the role of a teacher. It suggests the teacher act as a facilitator while encouraging the student to play an active role. When students were questioned about the role played by their teachers at school and college, 40% of them said they acted as facilitators while 20% of the students said they don't know.



PARTICIPATION OF STUDENTS IN ROLE PLAYS, DEBATES, ELOCUTION, AND ESSAY WRITING COMPETITIONS:

Active participation of students in the above-said competitions increases their confidence levels and acts as a real platform to improve their language skills. When asked about the encouragement they received from teachers to participate in the activities, 84% of the students states that they received complete support from teachers. More than 13% of them said that their teachers did not encourage them. When questioned about the levels of exposure students received in presenting their views, and ideas in the form of projects or assignments at school/college, 73% of students said that they were engaged in assignments and projects. While 25% said that they did not participate in project work.

DO THE METHODS OF LANGUAGE LEARNING AND TEACHING NEED CHANGES:

The students were asked whether teaching and learning methods of the English language need any changes to meet the requirements, and 80% of the students opined that there is a need for change in the existing methods of teaching and learning.



FINDINGS OF THE SURVEY

The analysis of the survey has yielded the following results:

Students have the awareness of the importance of the English language in the wake of globalization. The evaluation of the questions, however, reveals that their English language proficiency levels are far beyond the expected levels.

The expected ILR level is 4 but the majority of the student's language proficiency levels fall below ILR level – 3. They lack the ability to speak fluently. They don't have sufficient vocabulary to converse effectively on social, practical, and professional topics. Their grammar is faulty and lacks the confidence to speak the language with sufficient structural accuracy.

Re-orientation of the syllabus

The analysis suggests that English is taught like a subject. There is a need for practical orientation where students get enough exposure to LSRW. The need of the hour is setting up of language labs at school and intermediate level. The syllabus should be designed in such a way that a teacher gets enough periods for theory and practicals. The motive behind the practical classes is to impart a kind of training where students are given ample exercises to sharpen their LSRW skills.



Regular Maintenance of Audio/video aids

It is a known fact that Audio/video aids in English language teaching complement regular classroom teaching. The evaluation of the questionnaire suggests the point that government-run institutions possess a few audio/video aids, but lack of maintenance is impeding their usage. The initiative should be taken to maintain the aids in working conditions.

Recruitment of competent teachers having a passion for teaching

Students in the survey expressed the opinion that they are being taught by incompetent and unmotivated teachers. Teaching is a dynamic profession that demands regular updating of knowledge and skills to cope with the changes occurring in the subject of their choice. English language teachers are not an exception to this rule. Recruiting agencies should take the necessary steps to recruit talented teachers having a passion for teaching.

SUGGESTIONS:

1. Watching movies in English.
2. Make them read English News Papers.
3. Have conversations in English.
4. Talk to yourself in the mirror or record yourself.
5. Practice, Practice, Practice.
6. Find ways to add entertainment into studies such as word games etc.,



Government Degree College

Luxettipet

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the following student team conducts a Student Study Project on “Assessing the English Language Proficiency of Rural Students for better employment Opportunities” under the supervision of Sri. P. Rajkumar, Lecturer in English.

Name of the student participants:

Sofia Muskan B.Z.C III year

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Sindhuja M.P.C.III year

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Name of the Supervisor:

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THANK YOU

