#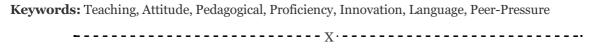 Pedagogical Innovation and English language Proficiency: A comparative analysis of activity-based learning in urban and rural schools in Karnataka

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Abstract: Introduction: English in India represents the historical period of Indian colonization and our lingering influence from the British rule. Aim of the study: The primary objective of the research is to Pedagogical Innovation and English Language Proficiency: A Comparative Analysis of Activity-Based Learning in Urban and Rural Schools in Karnataka. Material and method: This study examines the relationship between English language proficiency and various factors, including rural perspectives on the English language, the impact of religious beliefs, the culture of rural schools, the methods of instruction, and the motivations underlying peer pressure, which are collectively referred to as rural cultural factors. Conclusion: Upon examining the study, it becomes evident that all the issues indicated by the respondents are intricately linked to the rural setting.

Keywords: Teaching, Attitude, Pedagogical, Proficiency, Innovation, Language, Peer-Pressure

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INTRODUCTION

English in India represents the historical period of Indian colonization and our lingering influence from the British rule. The widespread influence of the English language has resulted in the proliferation of English medium schools worldwide. The multinational market forces, which are indifferent to the specific needs and desires of the local population, compel governments to develop educational curricula that introduce English at an early stage in order to cater to their need for a market for their products and inexpensive labour for their industries. The NCF 2005 prioritized the utilization of the child's native language for the purpose of education during primary education. The experts have consistently recommended a comparatively delayed initiation of English. The discontent with this proposal is apparent in the increasing proliferation of school districts that use English as a medium of instruction and the early adoption of the language by public schools. English language integration is currently a matter of official policy. This contradicts UNESCO's language policy for primary education and the ongoing academic discussion on the benefits of using the native language using it as a means of early education.

English is widely regarded as the primary language for international communication in India. English has been steadily expanding in the Indian sociocultural context for over two centuries due to a variety of historical factors. It is the co-official language. In India, the language policy mandates that schools adhere

to the three-language formula, which involves teaching children their regional or state language as the first language, Hindi as the second language, and English as the third language. English is regarded as a foreign or second language in the country. Hindi is not officially recognized as the language of India, yet it is widely used in that capacity in office settings by bureaucrats. Additionally, it is not widely used as a most pupils' medium of teaching, nor is it commonly used for business communication in society. Nevertheless, it is employed in the exchange of ideas, thoughts, and agreements with other nations across the globe. Language arts classes include English as both a second language in schools across different States and Union Territories. While the expansion and presence of the imperial colonies have reached their inevitable conclusion, the language of the empire has not suffered a similar fate. The diversity of languages, ethnic groups, and cultural differences likely found a shared platform in the English language. Due to the lack of an effective and all-encompassing language management policy, English emerged as a readily available solution for facilitating expression and communication among diverse ethnic communities with different languages.

School Education in Karnataka

Every state in the nation has its own department of education that oversees its educational system, including the selection of textbooks and the implementation of assessment methods. The state oversees the operation of several public schools, as well as privately owned institutions. The government owns and operates all the infrastructure for schools, and it supplies the personnel using its own resources. These educational institutions are often referred to as public schools. The fees at such institutions are quite low. Additionally, there are privately held schools that own their own physical facilities, infrastructure, and are financially supported by their respective sponsors. The fee collection is substantial, and it covers the payment of the teachers' wages. These schools are mostly situated in metropolitan regions. The last category comprises of schools that receive grant-in-aid from the government, despite being established on private property and buildings by a private entity. The grant-in-aid aims to alleviate the financial burden and enhance the affordability of education for underprivileged families, enabling them to enrol their children in schools.

In Karnataka, A course in English is part of the required curriculum for non-English medium schools starting from class III. The instruction and acquisition of the English language in both urban and rural schools were distinguished by the wide range of schools, mediums, classrooms, and textbooks used to facilitate the successful completion of academic assessments, thereby enabling students to advance to higher grade levels. It is essential at this level to comprehend the methodology of teaching and learning English in government schools throughout Karnataka. An examination of the textbook patterns for language acquisition, encompassing all facets, has revealed the wholly unsuitable books' characteristics and the lack of a systematic method for English Language Learning (ELL). Additionally, the proficiency of the teachers in comprehending and instructing the class texts is lacking. The purpose of English education at the school level is to facilitate the learner's progression towards becoming a proficient and articulate English speaker. By the conclusion of the course, learners will possess the ability to use English with precision, fluency, and proficiency in speaking.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Myriam, Andrianjary & Jean, Andrianarimanana (2023) English is considered a global language for communication and progress, and its use is widespread around the globe. As a nation progresses, it becomes increasingly important. Public Malagasy schools start covering this material in sixth grade, while private schools take it up a notch. The adoption of this language is influenced by the challenging and relatively limited technological and didactic resources found in rural situations, which are less developed compared to metropolitan regions. Rural education must confront the difficulty of a lack of language immersion. The target audience, which includes pupils residing in remote areas, high school English teachers in both public and private institutions, students' parents, and educational administrators and counselors, has been subjected to a variety of written surveys and oral interviews. The XLSTAT statistical program was used to get findings that confirm the need of taking into account the circumstances surrounding English education and acquisition in rural regions, as well as the effects of the language environment. Implementing this necessitates the use of models, novel techniques, and methodologies.

Yazhou, Li & Ahmod, Ujjal & Kajal, Zahirul (2023) The objective of this study is in order to determine what stands in the way of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) being applied in secondary schools situated in rural areas of China and Bangladesh. The study takes place in four rural schools in Shanghai, China, Banskhali, Bangladesh, and Chittagong, Bangladesh, and uses a subjective technique. We interviewed eight secondary school English teachers to have a better idea of the challenges associated with using CLT in various schools. The results underscore many challenges, such as a dearth of competent educators, overly large student-to-teacher ratios, and a scarcity of up-to-date instructional resources, among other factors. The findings of this research might have significant consequences for language policymakers and practitioners who are looking for strategies to improve methods used to teach conversational language skills in rural China and Bangladesh.

Muttahidah, & Zen, Evynurul (2023) Working as an ESL teacher in a remote area educational setting presents significant challenges. Due to the lack of audio-visual aids in many rural schools, instructors mostly rely on grammar-focused instruction and L1 translation, which impacts their teaching methods. Project-Based Learning (PjBL) may serve as an alternate method to address these issues and provide students with the necessary skills for the 21st century. Several studies examining There have been successful implementations of project-based learning (PjBL) in EFL classrooms. The purpose of this research is to take a close look at how Project-based Learning (PjBL) is currently implemented in EFL classrooms, in order to better understand its advantages. This work elucidated the idea, techniques, and evaluation of PjBL via the use of library research, which included gathering relevant books and articles. Furthermore, it provided an analysis of the advantages and disadvantages of implementing Project-based Learning (PjBL) in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) setting. Moreover, this study introduced many innovative methods in Project-based Learning (PjBL) that may be used to enhance the language proficiency of rural schoolchildren taking English as a second language (ESL). This is study aims to provide English instructors, particularly those working in rural schools, with a comprehensive grasp of the idea and implementation of Learning via projects, or PjBL, places an emphasis on skill development relevant to the modern world.

Pham, Cuong (2021) English language teaching in rural areas has received less attention, despite the many obstacles faced by instructors, learners, and other stakeholders. This study examines current studies on the

limitations faced by language teaching and learning in rural regions, both globally and locally. The aim is to provide strategies for enhancing on the quality of instruction, especially as it pertains to Vietnam. The results reveal many constraints in the provision of language instruction, including inadequate facilities and money, shortages of staff responsible for instruction, and the execution of the English curriculum. Furthermore, the study shows that these environments have a major influence on students' motivation and the connections they form with language acquisition. These challenges arise from disparities in educational policies, financial assistance, and efforts to address the disparities present in various learning environments. These observations have significant consequences in the interest of parents, educators, school administrators, and policymakers when developing strategies to address these concerns and the intricate challenges that arise from contextual factors.

Mishra, Binod (2015) In this interconnected world, our very survival depends on our proficiency in English, which is the predominant language of communication. Therefore, being proficient in English has become very necessary. Although English proficiency is not an issue in urban areas, those living people living in remote areas are not fluent in English. Despite this, a significant portion of society that lacks advancements in vocabulary and technological advancements instructors working in rural locations sometimes encounter a lack of necessary technical assistance and conducive environment to properly teach English. The role of creative instructors is crucial in this context. A proficient educator, even with little resources, may demonstrate their value as a catalyst. This research investigates a range of resources and technologies that may be advantageous applied to the field of ESL teaching. Additionally, it will illuminate the benefits and drawbacks of using teaching aids and explore methods by which our pedagogical approaches may be very effective. It should be acknowledged that, regardless of all the noise and confusion, it is ultimately the responsibility of humans to gain complete control over robots. Teaching involves not just introducing modern technologies but also fostering creativity among our pupils. When this desire is transformed into action, it may motivate a skilled instructor to play a crucial part in the whole process. When discussing a teacher in a remote region, we are reminded of the teacher in Oliver Goldsmith's poem "The Village Schoolmaster" who had a vast amount of knowledge despite having a little intellect. The rapid progress of technology and the increasing demands of the globalized world have brought about significant changes today. It is essential that we have specialized instructors for each topic, especially in remote regions. This is due to the heightened degree of competitiveness and the apprehension to endure and maintain oneself in a rapidly evolving environment. Proficiency in the English language has become an essential need for securing a highly desirable profession, thereby highlighting the increased significance of English education. Regarding English instructors, their responsibilities have expanded beyond being strict disciplinarians. They are now required to fulfil the duties of an acting as a guide, an instructor, a mentor, an administrator, and a supervisor.

METHODOLOGY

Research design

This study examines the relationship between English language proficiency and various factors, including rural cultural aspects, which include rural perspectives on English, the impact of religion, rural school culture, teaching methods, and the motivational effects of peer pressure. The researcher uses PMR data

and a customized proficiency exam to determine the level of English language competence.

Research tool

Students participated in semi-structured interview sessions, while instructors completed a questionnaire. These meetings for interviews were conducted in a casual way, taking place beneath a tree on a school property for four consecutive weekends, with the intention of establishing a relaxed and non-intimidating environment. Every student had a one-hour meeting with the researcher.

RESULTS

Analysis of the students and teacher's views

All twenty students unanimously acknowledged English's importance as a worldwide language, both for advancing their education and successfully passing exams for professional courses. They also recognized its importance in obtaining scholarships for travel reasons and in pursuing employment opportunities. All instructors also unanimously agreed on the significance of English.70% of respondents believe that English is crucial at universities due to the prevalence of English-language reference books. Similarly, 65% recognize English as a global language. Additionally, 40% emphasize the relevance of English for professional courses, while 20% highlight its role in obtaining scholarships. Furthermore, 10% cite English as essential for travel reasons, and another 10% see it as necessary for job-seeking. Lastly, 5% associate the significance of English with tests.

- **Views of educators about the significance of English language acquisition**

All ten instructor responders unanimously agree that English has significant importance and should not be undervalued. The majority of teacher respondents, accounting for 80%, strongly believe that English is essential at colleges, particularly due to the prevalence of English reference books. According to 8 instructors, English is recognized as a language of global communication.20% of individuals equate the significance of English with foreign travel, while 10% connect it to tests and another 10% see it as essential for acquiring information. Hence, it is evident that all educators emphasized the significance of the English language.

- **Students attitude towards the learning of English**

Sixty percent of people think it should be required. Fifteen percent say science is more important. Because they do not possess the essential study abilities to flourish in the learning of English, 10% of the population finds it challenging to acquire writing and vocabulary. 10% brought up the issue of tedious class material.

Table 1: Perspectives of students on the acquisition of the English language

Views learning English	Number of students	%
1.Important to learn	12	60%
2.Unimportant to learn	3	15%
3.Dislike learning English	2	10%
4.Difficult to learn	2	10%
5.Boring classes/ exercises	2	10%
6.Learn to pass exams	2	10%

- **The perspective of educators on the English language classroom**

Table 2 indicates unanimous agreement (100%) on the need of studying English. One instructor responder state that it is advantageous. Teacher answers emphasized the indispensability and imperative nature of learning English, highlighting its significance and the necessity to promote its importance.

Table 2: Opinions on the subject of PE

Views on teaching of English	Number	%
Should be emphasized	1	10%
Made compulsory	4	40%
Very Important	5	50%

- **The methods used by students to learn English**

The full roster of twenty students enrolled in an English language program is shown in Table 4.3. Students have no choice but to depend on their English teachers to provide them with challenging homework, class projects, and other English-related activities. In order to improve their English skills and get more information about the language, 20% of people read on their own time.10% of the students participate in tuition courses. Additional methods include independent learning, doing vocabulary drills, engaging in conversations with peers, and tuning into radio broadcasts.

Table 3: The methods used by students to learn English

Ways of learning	Number of students	%
Class activities/exercises	20	100
Reading	4	20
Sentence/vocabulary	2	10
Pressured by teachers	2	10
Tuition	2	10
Other ways.eg. radio etc.	2	10
Speaking with friends	1	10
Self-study	1	5

- **Challenges that students face while trying to learn English**

The student responders often attribute difficulties in learning English to the unsupportive school

atmosphere about English language acquisition. They claim that there is a lack of assistance from the government, and 80% of the students believe that the unfavorable attitude of their peers is another contributing factor. 75% of respondents cite the absence in a setting where the language is widely spoken as an extra element. Further considerations contributing to the issue include monotonous instructional techniques (30%) and the perception that English is less significant in comparison to Science and Mathematics (20%). The primary obstacles to English language acquisition include an unsupportive cultural milieu, absence of English-speaking surroundings, and a pessimistic attitude towards English.

Table 4: Challenges that students face while trying to learn English

Problems	Number	%
Non supportive school culture	20	100
Negative attitude	16	80
Lack English environment	15	75
Lack motivation	10	50
Boring teaching methods	6	30
Science & Mathematics more important	5	20

- **Teachers' perceptions of difficulties in both learning and teaching English**

The primary issues reported by the instructors are their pessimistic outlook on life, absence of an English-speaking environment, tedious teaching techniques, and unsupportive school culture, as shown in Table 5. Like student responders, instructors too see the need to diversify instructional approaches and tactics. Employing novel approaches may elicit apprehension among rural pupils, such as the use of dramatic techniques. The rural population deemed it unislamic to perform an English play because to the disparity between Western and Eastern cultural norms. Furthermore, the instructional techniques used, such as language exercises and grammar quizzes, are focused on preparing students for examinations. One educator conveyed that ultimately, people will evaluate you based on the academic performance of your kids. Thus, using the examination approach strategy is a more secure option compared to engaging in games and activities that are enjoyable.

Table 5: Teachers' perceptions of difficulties in both learning and teaching English

Problems	Number	%
Student attitude	10	100
Lack of motivation	5	50
Lack of exposure	1	10
Boring teaching methods	10	100
Non supportive school culture	10	100
Science & Mathematics more important	2	20
Government policy on English	6	60
Rural thinking	1	10
Use of Bahasa Melayu	5	50
Red Tape	2	20
Political reasons	1	10
Difficult to teach	1	10
Low proficiency	1	10
Parental role	1	10

- **Surveys conducted by teachers using a variety of approaches**

Table 6: Surveys conducted by teachers using a variety of approaches

Drills	Exam exercises	Group work	Others (Creative methods etc.)
5 (50%)	5 (50%)	1 (10%)	2 (20%)

In the opinion of both the teachers and the pupils, it is necessary to include a diverse range of innovative activities, such as movies, and reduce the emphasis on examination-focused exercises in order to stimulate the students' interest. The information is shown in Table 6. When questioned about the challenges of remote areas to teach English, two instructors emphasize that it is arduous, demanding, and time-intensive to impart English education in such settings. The teaching of English is sometimes likened to a battlefield, with professors finding it exhausting while pupils see it as dull.

- **Issues often voiced by both students and teachers**

Table 7: Issues often voiced by both students and teachers

Problems	Students number	Student (%)	Teachers number	Teacher (%)
1. Negative attitude of students	16	80	10	100
2. Lack of motivation	10	50	5	50
3. Unsupportive school culture	20	100	10	100
4. Boring teaching methods	6	30	10	100
5. English unimportant	20	100	6	60
6. Science & Mathematics more important	8	40	20	20

According to Table 8, 80% of individuals believe that their classmates' attitude is the main obstacle to learning. The kids exhibit shyness due to their fear of committing grammatical errors, resulting in their

reluctance to engage in verbal communication. The prevalence of teasing among peers sometimes leads individuals to respond by remaining mute and preserving their dignity in order to prevent humiliation and disputes, while also upholding their personal integrity. They often face ridicule while trying to communicate in English, therefore they choose in order to code-switch, or to mix English with their own tongue to foster unity, prevent disagreements, and preserve social cohesion. Even in remote areas, the unfavourable attitudes inherited from their ancestors about the colonial culture have some impact on their willingness to learn English.

CONCLUSION

Upon examining the study, it becomes evident that all the issues indicated by the respondents are intricately linked to the rural setting. The challenges leading to poor English proficiency are mostly attributed to the rural location, along with its associated qualities, habits, and culture. In conclusion, it can be said that the rural cultural environment does have an impact on the English language ability of kids in rural schools. This research highlights the need for a more comprehensive understanding of the factors that hinder rural children from achieving high scores at the English language test. A plan should be developed by the Ministry of Education to targeted instruction of English educators for rural school placements, given the distinct learning environment compared to metropolitan settings.

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