

Effectiveness Of Teaching The Low Achievers In English Through Structural Functional Method And Bilingual Method At Rural Secondary Level Schools In The Birbhum District Of West Bengal: A Study Of Correlation

Dr. Amal Kumar Chakrabarty

Assistant Professor in English, B. Ed. Department, Katwa College, W.B

E-Mail: chakrabartyamal@yahoo.in

ABSTRACT

In Second Language Teaching in classroom situation low achievers are challenging segment of learners. The ESL teacher has to devise experimental strategy to grow the four fundamental language skills among the learners in a heterogeneous classroom situation. Usually in the Indian situation the teacher tends to practice the Bilingual method which is also known as the Traditional Method to develop competencies among the learners. But the learners specifically the low achievers need to be taught with techniques that are primarily and methodically learners-centred. They can hardly be made equally competent through this method that makes use of grammar rules and translation device in teaching English in the classroom situations. On the contrary, if teaching situation is manipulated through structural functional method, second language learning happens to be a joyous experience to the low achievers to such an extent that they feel motivated to be merged in the L2 learning process. The present study is an attempt to explore the comparative effectiveness of teaching the low achievers through the bilingual method and teaching them with structural functional method in the second language classroom situation.

Key Words: bilingual Method, structural functional method, secondary learners

1. Introduction

Facing the second language learning situation is a hectic assignment on the part of the second language teacher. In the traditional ESL classroom situation the second language teacher is prone to promote the process of second language acquisition by mere application of the verbal skills with the help of text books without any conscious knowledge of the fact that the low achievers can least be benefitted by this teaching method. In the domain of target language learning, the second language teacher is inclined to generate *productive skills* (speaking and writing) and *receptive skills* (listening and reading) among the learners by means of grammar rules and strategy of translation from the second language text to the mother tongue and vice versa. The persistent research question is whether this long practiced *bilingual Method* is really helpful in making the low achievers proficient in the second language in nature and practice or the much talked about *structural functional method* is more efficacious than the former in enhancing the skill development of the *low achievers* in English.

2. Objectives of the Study

The low achievers' terminal behaviour in terms of second language acquisition remains a persistent question to the researcher. Keeping in view, the investigator undertakes an experimental project to know--

- 1) Whether the application of *structural functional method* enhances the requisite degree of learning behaviour in terms of second language acquisition among the *low achievers* belonging to the secondary level under West Bengal Board of Secondary Education in the district of Birbhum in West Bengal.
- 2) Whether second language leaning with the *structural functional method* in classroom situation enhances the performances of the *low achievers* belonging to the rural background in comparison to the *bilingual Method* of teaching the same category of learners or vice versa.
- 3) Whether *structural functional method* increases the retention level of the rural *low achievers* than the *bilingual Method* with regard to second language skill development or vice versa.

3. Review of Related literature

The functional account of language by Halliday (1973) complements Hyme's view of communicative competence and specifies seven basic functions performed by language, which form an important part in moulding structural and functional teaching strategies.

- i. **Instrumental Function:** Using language to get things
- ii. **Regulatory function:** Using language to control the behaviour of others
- iii. **Interactional Function:** Using language to interact with others
- iv. **Personal Function:** Using language to express personal feelings and meanings
- v. **Heuristic function:** Using language to learn and discover
- vi. **Imaginative function:** using language to imagine things
- vii. **Representational function:** Using language to represent and communicate information

Yalden's (1983) modified versions of Communicative types are summarised below:

Type	Reference
❖ Structures plus functions	Wilkins (1976)
❖ Functional spiral around a structural core	Brumfit(1980)
❖ Structural functional instrumental	Allen(1980)
❖ Interactional	Widdowson(1979)
❖ Task-based	Prabhu(1983)

The Bilingual method proposed by C.J. Dodson (1967) tried to incorporate different aspects of the direct method and the grammar translation method to evolve an effective second language teaching method. According to Dodson (1967) "... in some countries, where a major world language is being taught as a second language to young children by direct method ...if this type of teaching were successful...the vernacular would disappear within a few generation. It is only possible to teach a second language by direct-method techniques at the expense of the first language and it is sheer hypocrisy to claim that the final aim of such teaching philosophies is bilingualism." Mackey (1965) while commenting on the bilingual education call it as a kind of 'language alteration' in which a message/ lesson/ class is presented first in the native language and then again in the second language. Students know the meaning and flow of an L2 message from their recall of the parallel meaning and flow of an L1 message.

4. Statement of the Problem

The problem under the present study is entitled as:

Effectiveness of Teaching the Low Achievers in English through Structural Functional Method and Bilingual Method at Rural Secondary Level Schools in the Birbhum District of West Bengal: A Study of Correlation

5. Terms Definitions

Structural Functional Method: *Structural functional method* is a theoretical combination of the structural dimension and functional connotation of the language. Structural-Functional is a linguistic or structure-based approach to language teaching. The starting point is a linguistic syllabus, which contains the key items of phonology, morphology and syntax. These might have been derived in part from a contrastive analysis of the differences between the native language and the target language. The language was taught by systematic attention to pronunciation and by intensive oral drilling of its basic structures. There is an appropriate balance between structural pattern and the functional implication of the usages. Here attempts are made to make the learners learn the structures from functional point of views.

Bilingual Method: In this method mother tongue is used to explain the meanings of words, phrases, idioms, sentences structures and grammatical rules. This method carries the merits of Translation-cum-Grammar method, direct method and structural approach.

Low Achievers: The specific type of learners who fail to achieve expected level of proficiency in the domain of learning. They lag behind the average level of learners in terms of acquisition of productive and receptive skills of English. This sort of learners is challenging for the teachers.

6. Hypotheses

With a view to testing the comparative effectiveness of second language teaching with *bilingual method* and *structural functional method* the following null hypotheses are formulated:

- I. There exists no significant correlation between the mean scores of pre-test and post test of the experimental group.
- II. There exists no significant correlation between the mean scores of post -test and retention test of the experimental group.
- III. There exists no significant correlation between the mean scores of pre-test and post test of the control group.
- IV. There exists no significant correlation between the mean scores of post-test and retention test of the control group.

7. Design of the Study

Keeping in mind the objectives of the present research the researcher has devised the necessary design which comprises the following components:

- I. Method of Study
- II. Population of Study
- III. Sample of the Study
- IV. Sources of collection of data
- V. Procedure for investigation and data collection
- VI. Experimentation
- VII. Test Construction
- VIII. Data treatment

7.1 Method of Study

The present study has been designed under experimental method. It attempts at evaluating the comparative effectiveness of the second language teaching with *structural functional method* and *bilingual method* to the low achievers in English at rural secondary level classroom situation under West Bengal Board of Secondary Education in India. For the proper implementation of experimental design one school from the rural backdrop of Dubrajpur block of the Birbhum district has been taken. Class IX has been chosen for the purpose of experimentation of the teaching methods.

7.2 Population of the Study

The school from the rural background is Jashpur High School. Thus the pupils of the rural school constitute the population of the present study

7.3 Sample of the Study

The 9th class of the rural school has been fixed up for experimentation. Two sections of the 9th class of the school comprising 30 students each have been taken up for present study. Thus taken together total 60 students constitute the sample of the present study.

7.4 Sources of Collection of Data

In order to achieve of the present study the following **tools** were employed for collection of data:

- i. Pre-test of the 9th class students of the school

- ii. The post-test of the 9th class pupils of the school
- iii. The retention-test of the 9th class pupils of the school

The following scores will constitute the **data** for the present experiment

- i. The scores of the pre-test of the 9th class students
- ii. The scores of the post-test of the 9th class students
- iii. The scores of retention-test of the pupils of the school

7.5 Procedure for Investigation and Data Collection

As mentioned earlier, two sections of the 9th class of Jashpur High School, are definite backdrop for the present experimental research. A pre-test of the 9th class students of the Jashpur High School is taken. 60 Low achievers of the school are also divided into Experimental and Control group on the basis of the previous achievement test by using the same **pair random sampling technique**. It is to be mentioned at the outset that the number of pupils under each group is 30. The **Randomized Groups, Pre-test Post-test Design** is adopted as the experimental design. In this design:

- One group will receive Experimental treatment (X)
- One group will receive Control treatment (C)
- The Experimental Group will receive a Pre-test (O₁)
- The Control Group will receive a Pre-test (O₂)
- All the groups will receive post-tests (O₃O₄)
- All the groups will receive retention-tests (O₅O₆)

7.6 Experimentation

After careful observation of the teaching learning situation of the Birbhum district, one rural school is selected as the experimental backdrop. The rural school, namely, Jashpur High School belongs to Dubrajpur Block. One English teacher, belonging to the school is selected to teach the Experimental group and the Control group. Texts prescribed by the West Bengal Board of Secondary Education for class IX are selected for teaching both the experimental and control groups. The texts are 1. **All Summer in a Day** by Ray Bradbury, 2. **Tom Loses a Tooth** by Mark Twain. The teachers were provided with necessary orientation regarding the following points on the use of *structural functional method*:

- There is a consistent focus throughout on learning English in order to develop practical and functional skills.
- Realistic and communicative uses of language are given priority.
- Students are engaged in practical tasks that relate to real world uses of English.
- Maximum use is made of pair work and group work activities in which students complete tasks in a collaborate manner.
- There is an appropriate balance between accuracy-focused and fluency-focused activities.
- Assessment procedures reflect and support a communicative and skill-based orientation to teaching and learning.

The Experimental group is taught with the techniques and strategies based on the tenets of *structural functional method* to help them gather concepts on the above mentioned texts. Mostly and basically the teachers followed a **learner-centred approach** to motivate the students to be engaged in the language learning process through acquisition of structural mastery from functional point of view. To develop the language skills individually the teachers consistently and rigorously encouraged the **pair work and group work** techniques so that the learners can gather skills through the process of peer learning. The teachers

were tolerant enough not to over criticize the errors committed by the learners but helping them find out their areas of linguistic deviations and at last providing them necessary clarifications so that concepts formations from functional point of view become possible among the learners.

The Control Group, on the other hand, is taught with rigorous application of the *bilingual method* which is basically teacher-centric method. The teacher takes the upper hand to manipulate the second language learning situations in an absolute manner and to rectify the learners' mistakes in a corrective manner. Basically the teacher followed the traditional strategy of teaching by translating the texts into Bengali and followed the principle of grammar translation method. While teaching the target language texts they explained the rules of English grammar in a deductive manner encouraging the learners to memorize the rules with the assumption in mind that they will be able to use the rules for the purpose of constructing English structures.

7.7. Test Construction

After the experimentation of teaching comprising two weeks duration is over, a teacher-made post-test is taken to compare the effectiveness of the experimental method and that of the traditional method. The investigator constructed both the pre-test and post-test after a thorough of the techniques of the principles of test construction relevant sections of selected prose units. In addition, the consent of the class teachers and teaching experts were also weighed in the construction of the tests. Each test comprises 50 multiple choice types items based on the selected prose units of 9th class. While constructing the texts the functions of the language and structures are taken into consideration.

7.8 Reliability of the Test

Spearman-Brown Prophecy formula is used to determine the reliability of the pre-test and post-test. Here the reliability is estimated by comparing the halves of the pre-test and post-tests. In this way the reliability co-efficient is found to be 0.71.

7.9 Analysis of Data

Raw scores obtained from pre-test and post-test and retention test were presented in a tabular form for the purpose of interpretation.

H₀ 1: There exists no significant correlation between the scores of pre-test and post test of the experimental group.

Table-1: Table of correlation between the scores of pre-test and post test of the experimental group

	V1	V2
V1	1.0000000	0.938549
V2	0.938549	1.0000000

Here V1 and V2 imply that the correlation between the scores of pre-test and post test of Experimental group is **0.938549**. The obtained result shows that there exists a high degree of correlation between the scores of pre-test and post test of the Experimental group, which signifies that the achievement level of the pupils through teaching by structural functional method has resulted in the skill development of the ESL learners.

H₀ 2: There exists no significant correlation between the scores of post -test and retention test of the experimental group.

Table-2: Table of correlation between the scores of post-test and retention test of the experimental group.

	V2	V3
V2	1.0000000	0.9389328
V3	0.9389328	1.0000000

Here V2 and V3 imply the correlation between the scores of post test and retention test of Experimental group is **0.9389328**. The obtained result shows that there exists a high degree of correlation between the scores of and post test and retention test of the Experimental group, which signifies that the achievement level of the pupils through teaching by structural functional method has resulted in high level of skill development of the ESL learners.

H₀ 3: There exists no significant correlation between the scores of pre-test and post test of the control group.

Table-3: Table of correlation between the scores of pre-test and post test of the control group

	V1	V2
V1	1.0000000	0.9293538
V2	0.9293538	1.0000000

Here V1 and V2 imply that the correlation between the scores of pre-test and post test of Control group is **0.9293538**. The obtained result shows that there exists a very high degree of correlation between the scores of pre-test and post test of the Control group, which signifies that the achievement level of the pupils through teaching by bilingual method has resulted in the skill development of the ESL learners.

H₀ 4 : There exists no significant correlation between the scores of post -test and retention test of the control group .

Table-4: Table of correlation between the scores of post-test and retention test of the control group

	V2	V3
V2	1.0000000	0.9380327
V3	0.9380327	1.0000000

Here V2 and V3 imply that the correlation between the scores of post test and retention test of Control group is **0.9380327**. The obtained result shows that there exists a high degree of correlation between the scores of and post test and retention test of the Control group, which signifies that the achievement level of the pupils through teaching by bilingual method has resulted in considerable skill development of the ESL learners.

8 . Results & Discussion

After systematic analysis of data the four hypotheses were experimentally verified and necessary results were drawn. The obtained result relating to **H₀1** shows that there exists a high degree of correlation between the scores of pre-test and post test of the Experimental group, which signifies that the achievement level of the pupils through teaching by structural functional method has resulted in the skill development of the ESL learners. The obtained result relating to **H₀2** shows that there also exists a high degree of correlation between the scores of and post test and retention test of the Experimental group, which signifies that the retention level of the pupils through teaching by structural functional method also has resulted in high level of skill development of the ESL learners. The obtained result relating to **H₀3** shows that there exists a very high degree of correlation between the scores of pre-test and post test of the Control group, which signifies that the achievement level of the pupils through teaching by Bilingual method has resulted in the skill development of the ESL learners. Again the obtained result relating to **H₀4** shows that there exists a high degree of correlation between the scores of and post test and retention test of the Control group, which signifies that the retention level of the pupils through teaching by Bilingual method has also resulted in considerable skill development of the ESL learners. From the study it is clear that teaching through bilingual method as well as structural functional method improved the performance of the learners and the two methods were helpful in enhancing the retentive skill of the learners in terms of second language proficiency.

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