



**UTILIZATION OF AUDIO VISUAL AIDS  
IN TEACHING ENGLISH AT PRIMARY LEVEL:  
*A Study in Government Primary Schools in Visakhapatnam District,  
Andhra Pradesh***

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**Back drop and Introduction:**

Teaching is Communication. In a good communication there are three important aspects-The person giving the information, the message/information that is to be passed and the receiver. For effective communication the message must be decoded rightly. If, not the message becomes distorted. To avoid distortion the sender of the information/message must make him/her explicit and present the information as best as possible. Oral reports require research writing and speaking skills as well as effective use of audio visual aids improvisation. It is therefore, important that **teachers of English** use **teaching aids** (or) improvise to make learning easy enjoyable and permanent. An effective learning situation will require the use of teaching aids. **Froebel Frederick (1782-1852)** formulated the theory of play and activity as being the young child's most powerful learning tool in all areas. Most advanced countries, societies and even many classy private schools here in India have incorporated this method (play activity) in their educational curricula and are deriving a lot of benefits by doing so. The good foundation the children exposed to accord them the giants stride those countries are making in all spheres' of life. While the aids are very adequate for the younger learners, it is not as relevant to advance learners because their ability to create construct, comprehend, make deduction and make value judgment are required.

**Rationale:**

Unfortunately in India, English language remains a major problem in the government schools as indicated by government primary/secondary schools final (annual) examination results. High returns occur in English Language and educational output in general when appropriate instructional materials are provided and well utilized. On the other hand, teaching and learning become defective in the absence of appropriate instructional materials. Instructional materials are those materials used in the classrooms (or) workshops for instruction (or) demonstration purposes by Students and Teachers (Ibeneme 2000). Froese (1972) saw them as actual equipment used as a **hands-on** process by learners in order to develop the degree of skills sought by the course requirements. In English language such instructional materials include word cards, pictures, objectives, puzzles and so on. These materials can be grouped into three sections.



- a. **Audio:** dealing with what is heard, music, drums, radio, tape recorder, projectors, DVD and sound effect that can be heard.
- b. **Visuals:** things that can be seen; comprising of posters, charts, chalk boards, flannel graph, flash cards, puzzles, objects-(real), projectors cartoons, television, computer CD, internet and so on.
- c. **Multi-Sensory:** where pupils learn through the five senses-see, hear, smell, taste and touch. This can take the form of role play, demonstration, models, simulation experiments, excursion, and visits and so on.

Speakers and listeners who have the same language background can understand one another because their common culture provides the common meaning whereas without the common culture such kinds of words are often misunderstood. If the new language is to be properly understood, they have to be rooted in the learners' personal experiences (Saunders 1979). Research revealed that, Human beings remember **10 percent** of what they heard, **50 percent** of what is heard and seen and over **80 percent** of what is heard, seen and done (Richard 1981). Dale (1957) also used the old Chinese proverb to express the same view:

I hear and forget  
I see and remember  
I do and I understand

#### **Present Scenario:**

English teaching in India (in Andhra Pradesh) was first taught in class VI for Telugu medium students in government schools. There were various changes and now English is taught from standard I, and indeed in primary/ elementary level.

In teaching English to young learners at tender age, it is essential to consider how children learn? There are recognized stages of cognitive development that every child passes through, and teaching materials should take account of this. There is also very great need of the motivation to learn English for both the pupils and the teachers. The majority of primary school teachers have an insufficient command of English to be able to teach it effectively. Teachers with insufficient subject knowledge have very little if any confidence. Without subject knowledge then subject application cannot take place, and it is unfair to place expectations on primary school teachers of child-centered learning (or) participatory practices. Where should they start if they do not understand the materials and their own knowledge of the language is so shaky? Lack of subject knowledge is one of the main causes of the present problems in Teaching English in primary schools.

#### **Piaget and stages of Cognitive Development:**

The Child develops cognitively through active involvement with the environment, and each new step in development builds on and becomes integrated with previous steps. Because three of the four stages in development normally occur during primary



school years it is important for language teachers working with children to keep the characteristics of each cognitive stage in mind (Piaget 1963). They are as follows:

1. **The stage of sensory-motor intelligence (0-2 years):** During this stage behavior is primarily **motor**. The child does not yet internally represent events and **think** conceptually through **cognitive** development is seen as schemata's are constructed.
2. **The stage of pre-operational thought (2-7 years):** this stage is characterized by the development of language and other forms of representation and rapid conceptual development. Reasoning during this stage is pre-logical (or) semi logical and children tend to be very **egocentric**. Children often focus on a single feature of a situation at a time-for example, they may be able to sort by size (or) colour but not by both Characteristics at once.
3. **The stage of concrete operations (7-11 years):** during these years the child develops the ability to apply logical thought to concrete problems. Hands-on, concrete experiences help children to understand new concepts and ideas. Using language to exchange information becomes much more important than in earlier stages, as children become more social and less egocentric.
4. **The stage of formal operations (11-15 years):** during this stage the child's cognitive structures reach their highest level of development. The child becomes able to apply logical reasoning to all classes of problems, including abstract problems not coming out of direct experiences (or) without concrete referents.

The thinking skills of the majority of children in primary school are at the concrete operations stage, and experience plays a major role in all learning. Piaget points out that children are not simply miniature adults who have less experience and thus less knowledge to work with as they approach problems and new situations. They do not think like adults, because their minds are not like adult minds.

With the above back drop, and introduction, it is apt to make a study on Utilization of Audio Visual Aids in teaching English at primary level in government schools. For this study design, following **objectives were specified:**

- Ø To elucidate the level of audio visual aids utilization in teaching English at primary level in government schools in Visakhapatnam City.
- Ø To explore the root causes of the problems for not using the necessary audio visual aids for teaching English at primary level in government schools.
- Ø To make few recommendations for better teaching of English at primary level.

The objectives were looked upon from the point of view of the educationist in Administration such as the District Education Officer, Greater Visakha Municipal Corporation etc., but the important contributors would be the school headmasters (or)



Head mistresses and other teachers (on availability of interaction time) became an important part of the present study.

#### **Sample and selection methodology:**

As per the lists of schools obtained from the District Education Office (DEO), there are **144 schools** in Visakhapatnam city run under the administration of the government but the management may differ. The schools may be run by Greater Visakha Municipal Corporation (GVMC), may be private aided (or) government aided. The total of such schools was **144**.

The sample was kept at more than 10 percent of the total schools. Out of 144 schools, 96 schools were primary; 11 were upper primary and 37 were high schools. Only primary schools were included in the study **making a total of 96 (universes or population)**.

**Then stratified random sampling** technique was used and every 5<sup>th</sup> school from the list of primary schools (21 schools) was chosen as sample. A stratified sample is obtained by separating the population elements into non overlapping groups, called strata and then selecting a simple random sample from each stratum. **Here the stratum was primary schools.** The Head masters/Head mistresses, teachers for the purpose of the study were chosen randomly.

#### **Duration of the Study:**

This is a very short term study which was done in a span of 10 days. The time period of the study was in February 2012. The study was exclusively undertaken for the National Seminar on Mother Tongue & Literature as Resources in the teaching of English Language.

#### **Tools of Data Collection:**

**Questionnaire:** A questionnaire was designed for the purpose of the study to collect relevant data from the School Head Masters. The questionnaire was designed with the aim of getting some general information about the school and about the utilization of audio visual aids in teaching English at primary level.

The main aspects of the questionnaire are:

- School basic information;
- Number of male and female Teachers;
- Number of students in each class (Boys and girls);
- Infrastructural facilities in the school;
- Attendance and academic performance of students;
- Dropout information;



- Suggestions and opinion of the interviewee on utilization of audio visual aids in teaching English at primary level.
- English Teacher academic qualifications

#### **Method of Data Collection:**

For the purpose of the present study, oral permission was obtained from the District Education Officer and the same is informed to all school Head masters/Head mistresses. On the visit to the school the identity of the researcher and the purpose and objectives of the study were explained to the concerned teachers. The list of the schools was obtained from the Deputy Inspector of schools and the schools were chosen as per sampling method (Stratified random Sampling method). Relevant data was collected on **observation** and through the **information** provided by the concerned teachers and Head of the institution out of the 96 primary schools in the City of Visakhapatnam 21 schools were selected as sample and relevant data was collected from these schools through the above mentioned method.

#### **Data Analysis and Findings:**

- Ø After meticulous observation and by the genuine information drawn from the Head masters/Head mistresses, it is understood that, all the schools have qualified B.Ed teachers to teach English language at primary level. Every sample school has a pucca school building with adequate infrastructural facilities.
- Ø The school attendance of the students is satisfactory and performance is also good.
- Ø There are some visual aids (Charts, models and Sing boards) being used by teachers to teach other subjects as well as English language.
- Ø Audio aids were not in use for teaching not only English but also other subjects.
- Ø It is understood that, the teaching aids (materials) would be provided by the concerned authorities and concerned teacher would utilize these available aids and not her/his own prepared aids to teach English language at primary level.

#### **Root causes of the problems in teaching English at primary level in Government Schools:**

It seems fair to state that the majority of primary school teachers have an insufficient command of English to be able to teach it effectively. Good command of grammar vocabulary is lacking and alongside this the most striking failing is in the **pronunciation**. Many teachers are vehement in their refusal to teach English, and if they are assigned to do so they feel victimized and may not teach all their time-table periods. In the primary standards the teaching of English may be ignored altogether. Teachers with **insufficient subject knowledge have very little if any confidence**.



In this context, it is apt to emphasize the need of concrete teacher training (especially to the teachers of English) with Frobel methods with two elements.

### **1. Subject knowledge:**

Ensuring that the future teachers know and understand enough about what they are to teach to be able to **teach it effectively**.

### **2. Subject application:**

Ensuring that the future teachers know and understand enough about how to teach what they are to teach to be able to **do so effectively**.

However, even when subject knowledge is mastered much help is needed with its application if the primary pupils are to learn and understand.

Another, root cause of the problem is that the teachers are **not assisted by their materials**. The materials are not prepared with the level of available teacher expertise in mind. The teachers need help and help is not being provided. Teachers are not even being treated as out-patients and yet the reality of their condition is for treatment intensive care. The only way to arrest the decline in English is to help the teachers as much as possible. It is not a task that can be ignored. Taken step by step with a planned process there is no reason why English should not be well taught in the primary schools and why there should not be a Cohort of competent, confident English teachers. Planning preparing a lesson with necessary materials is the most important stage is real pupil-centered learning is to take place, but no planning and preparation of this kind is taking place with inadequate materials while the majority of teachers do not fully understand their materials. The teachers need text books with many more class room activities and exercises set out.

Another root cause of the problem is the **allocation of teachers**. An important point is the division between teachers:

Ø Those who teach in pre-primary and standard I and II

Ø Those who teach standard III and above.

The pre-primary teacher and the standard I and II teacher is with his (or) her pupil all day long. The teachers of English to standard III and above only enter the class room for the periods allocated to English.

### **Recommendations for better teaching of English at primary level in Government schools:**

The easy option is to blame the teachers, but this ignores the fact that they are the result of the system they are in. Their pre-service training needs to be considered, their on-the-job support needs to be considered, and any continuing professional development needs to be considered.

The present teaching force is shouldering the brunt of the continuing problem



of the teaching and learning of English. They are the teachers in post and are the resources with which we have to work. The only solution is to give these teachers who are currently in post every bit of support and help possible.

It is also observed from the interview with the head masters/headmistress from the study area (selected schools) in Visakhapatnam city that, English has been introduced from class I onwards since 2011-12 academic year in government schools but, the course curriculum and prescribed text books are not yet designed and supplied to the schools. At this juncture, it is the sole responsibility of the authorities to provide the necessary course curriculum on time and also train the teachers with diligence.

Recommendations for the younger learners in primary sections take account of the fact that the pupils are only just beginning to gain literacy and numeracy skills in regional language(mother tongue). They are in the stages of pre-operational thought moving to concrete operations (Jean Piaget's stages of cognitive development).

**Recommendations are:**

- Ø Fluent, short sessions of English using a number and variety of activities, and these should take account of the notional 7 intelligences (abstract thought, understanding, self –awareness, communication, reasoning, learning, emotional) using both sides of the pupil's brain.
- Ø Regular Routines in English to show practical, real application by using English for class room routines such as the register, lining up, writing the date, distributing (or) collecting books etc.
- Ø Inter-cultural in-put to provide motivation and to promote interest in the Indian culture and that of speakers of English-eg: in learning about flags, music, children's songs, rhymes and games, food, gestures, playtime activities etc.
- Ø Examination of language and its influence to show that young pupils already know Several English Words without realizing that they do so.
- Ø Teaching materials that will ensure that:
- Ø Teachers have confidence in the grammatical structure of the English language
- Ø A Text book that introduces structural patterns step by step giving at least 85 percent of the time to practice with constant revision and repetition of content of grammar and vocabulary.
- Ø A text book that provides motivation for the pupils.
- Ø A teachers' book that is comprehensive with guidance on the structural patterns and pronunciation and written in regional language (Telugu)

If English teaching is to succeed in the Government primary schools in the



future there are a number of important key issues which have to be addressed; initial teacher training, in service support, continuity with in the primary schools, continuity from primary to secondary and leadership.

The process of educational change has three dimensions: **materials and pedagogical practices**, and the extent to which an innovation requires a significant shift in the teachers' fundamental **values and beliefs**. So any model of development to adopt in relation to primary English has to be responsive to questions of the teachers' beliefs about the value of language learning and the importance of intercultural activities. In order to develop primary English successfully we need to increase quite radically the number of primary teachers having sufficient expertise and the confidence to tackle the job of teaching English. But, these issues to do with the development of the teachers cannot be considered independently of issues to do with the role of the school as an organization in managing the process of change, mobilizing individuals teachers and providing the on going support they will need.

Along-term programme is needed if **deep change** is to be attained. If on visiting primary schools there is little (or) no evidence of pupil-centered learning, as is contended in this paper, then the teachers need further help to be able to develop towards **pupil-centered learning**.

The recommendations above would help achieve this aim. It is the need of the hour that, the teaching English especially at primary level in government schools needs serious reconsideration. It is also essential to work for practical and realistic solutions.

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