Developing Multimedia Package of Local Folktales and Its Impact on Functional English of Rural Children

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Introduction

Functional language is a language that is needed in different day-to-day situations like greeting, introducing oneself, asking for or giving advice, explaining rules, apologising, or agreeing and disagreeing. Hence, functional English equips students with the necessary knowledge, skills and understanding to use and apply English in everyday life. Gaining these skills ensures that students can get the most out of their future work and education. The multimedia packages are basically a combination of text, video, sound and graphics with animations. This study investigated the importance of functional English required at all levels for error-free writing of English due to correct grammar aspects from the beginning.

Objectives

The study aimed to enhance the functional English of Class VIII students by using the multimedia package of local folktales. Specifically it purported to

1. collect the folktales of the locale and convert them into written script;
2. construct a pre-test to assess the entry-level knowledge of functional English of Class VIII students;
3. prepare a multimedia package of local folktales;
4. implement the multimedia package for the experimental group;

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5. construct a post-test to evaluate the final level knowledge of functional English of Class VIII students; and
6. evaluate the impact of the multimedia package of Class VIII students in learning different aspects of functional English in terms of variables like gender, educational level, occupation of fathers and mothers, birth order of the pupils, age, qualification of the siblings of the students.

Method

The research used the quasi-experimental design of pre- and post-tests. The intervention program used for the study covered the multimedia package of local folktales of Pannimadi and Vadavalli villages situated in the outskirts of Coimbatore city, Tamil Nadu. The package consisted of twenty-six folktales which were selected from the local people, books and the library, for functional English learning.

Two rural schools, Government Higher Secondary School, Pannimadai, and Marudhamalai Subramaniya Swami Devasthanam High School, Vadavalli were selected for the study. The convenience sampling technique was used for selecting the sample. Twenty-six pupils (girls and boys) from Government Higher Secondary School, Pannimadai were treated as an experimental group, and 25 pupils (girls and boys) Marudhamalai Subramaniya Swami Devasthanam High School, Vadavalli were treated as a control group.

Ten aspects of functional English (i.e., articles, preposition, prefix-suffix, clipped words, sentence pattern, concord, tenses and voices, question tags, modals and auxiliaries) were selected for the study.

An achievement test was used as a tool in the study. A multimedia package to impart functional English through stories, skits, dialogues, storyboards, pictures, and videos for the selected twenty-six stories to the experimental group was prepared. A pre-test was conducted for both the control and the experimental groups to find out the previous knowledge of the students.

The control group pupils were taught with the lecture method. The multimedia package was implemented in the experimental group for two months. After that, a post-test was conducted for both control and experimental group pupils. From the pretest and post-test scores obtained by the pupils, the relative merits of influencing variables, and the significance of the impact of the

Multimedia package for functional English were evaluated. The personal data obtained from the pupils were analysed by descriptive analysis. Differential Analysis was carried out for finding out the efficacy of the multimedia package.

Results

The results of the study revealed that the folktales were effective in helping students to improve in terms of functional English. Learning and practicing functional English through a multimedia package of local folktales proved to be quite effective. It was found that the home maker mothers of Class VIII students exhibited significant influence on the achievement levels of the students in terms of performance of different aspects of functional English learning through multimedia package of local folktales as compared to mothers pursuing self-business and labour jobs. Similarly, the fathers working as *cooli* exhibited better influence on the performance of Class VIII students in terms of different aspects of functional English as compared to the fathers having their own business.

The findings also highlighted that the higher secondary level qualified siblings influenced significantly the achievement levels of Class VIII students performance in functional English. The students belonging to the families with an annual income above two lakhs showed better achievement levels in performance of different aspects of functional English.

Policy Implications

The implication of the study is that the functional English must be practised beyond the time table hours while playing in the open areas and literary clubs. Multimedia packages for specific purposes can be prepared for improving functional English learning. Teachers must understand and accept the need for developing the functional English usage competencies of their students. Along with the syllabus framing committee the teachers can first prepare a need-based analysis of their students and accordingly plan a frame-work for the classroom activities with maximum flexibility. Nodal agencies like SCERT, DIET, and BRCs can take up the task of designing functional English learning through multimedia packages and can provide hands-on training to pre and in-service programmes to both teachers and student teachers.