THE EFFECTIVENESS OF ENGLISH REMEDIAL PROGRAM: A CASE STUDY

Dr. Punam Bansal* & Ms.Deepika**

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to identify the sixth class students who have poor academic performance in English and analyse their problems and subsequently assess the effectiveness of remedial instruction program in English on academic performance of such students in Government Model School of Chandigarh(India).The sample comprised of eleven students out of a class of forty-two students who were diagnosed as poor performers in English on the basis of achievement scores in unit tests and observations made by interns and school English teachers of the practicing school.These students were given six weeks intensive remedial instruction program in English for six weeks.Data were collected on the basis of pre- and post remediation program academic performance in English tests (two tests 1. vocabulary and comprehension; 2. grammar and composition). Paired t- tests were conducted to analyze these tests' results. The results of the paired t- testsindicate significant differences between thepre- and post remediationtests. Qualitative data about the problems faced by struggling students and effectiveness of remediation program were also gathered through Classroom observations, student reflectionsand informal interviews with school teachers.

Keywords : *Effectiveness, English, Remedial Programme*

INTRODUCTION

The place of English language has been elevated to its highest in the global India. It is considered as key to 'quality education' and 'window to world and opportunities'.Therefore parents' aspirations for their school going wards to be proficient in English language are quite high but our schools are not able to provide learning teaching situations to attain desirable level of English competence and there is dearth of competent teachers.A typical Indian class room has larger size with students at varied levels of achievement in English. Many students are performing quite low as against the expected level for the class. The lower performing students require individualized remedial instruction according to their specific needs to catch up to a desired level. Basically, remedial instruction is a type of clinical teaching. It is a "spiral process ofassessment-instruction-re-assessment" (Tseng, 2008). Remedial classes act as a safety valve for struggling students allowing them to work at more appropriate level rather than failing because they are not at same level as the rest of class.English remedial instruction has been found effective and beneficial to low English

*Associate Professor, Govt. College of Education, Chandigarh
**B.Ed. Student, Govt. College of Education, Chandigarh

achievers as students made a significant progress in grammar and vocabulary learning and they self-perceived improvement in their overall English competence (Huang ,2010; Chao and Tseng 2013). Khan and Akter (2011) found that students commit more Word and Sentence level mistakes thereby making it imperative to use innovative means of teaching to improve current state of student writing in English at their primary and secondary level. This study was undertaken to identify the problems of low performing students and assess the effectiveness of English remedial instruction program on the academic performance of such students.To realise the objectives, the research questions proposed are: 1) What are the problems faced by sixth class students who have poor academic performance in English?

2) How does remedialinstruction program in English affect the academic performance of sixth class students? 3) What are students' perspectives towards effectiveness of remedial instruction program in English?

METHODOLOGY

Participants

The participants in this study were 11 (7 girls, 4 boys) students of class VI of Government Model Senior Secondary School, Sector 33, Chandigarh. They were identified as poor performers in English on the basis of achievement scores in unit tests and observations made by interns and school English teachers of the practicing school

Instruments

a)Two Pre- tests and post tests: 1. Vocabulary and comprehension; 2. grammar and composition.b)Semi structured interview schedule with open ended questions

Procedure of data collection and analysis

Researchers (teacher educator and intern) identified students who faced problems in speaking and writing English during the first week of internship program. Interaction with school teachers and close analysis of the second unit test also helped in identifying students who were performing low in English. Eleven students who were placed in grades varying from E2 to C2were selected to attend remedial instruction program which lasted for 6 weeks. First, English proficiency level of students was checked in the two pre-tests 1. Vocabulary and comprehension; 2.grammar and composition(of twenty marks each)..After remedial instruction, the same tests were conducted as post tests to investigate effectiveness of remedial instruction program. Data thus collected were analyzed with the help of paired t-tests. Qualitative data about the problems faced by struggling students and effectiveness of remediation program in this case study were also gathered through Classroom observations and discussions,

student reflections and informal interviews with school teachers.

Implementation of remedial instruction program

For reading program,prose lessons and poetry selected from prescribed text book for class VI were1.The Quarrel(poem) 2.Where do all the teachers go?(poem)3.The fair Play(prose) 4.Who did Patrick's homework?(prose).Guided reading was practiced to improve comprehension skills and reinforce grammar knowledge and increase fluency ofstudents.Students repeated after teacher modeling. Instructional strategies like questioning, brain storming, summarizing and outlining helped students improve their comprehension. Bilingual method was used for providing back ground information. Forvocabulary, activities like fill in blanks, quiz etc was conducted. Grammar lessons (verbs, adverbs, nouns) included basic grammar rules. For writing grammatically correct sentences students were told to write sentences in their notebooks. Communicative drill practice was undertaken to avoid rote memory.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research Question No.1)What are the problems faced by sixth class students who have poor academic performance in English? This question was answered through researchers' observations of low performing students by checking their home work ,analysing class test and unit test , giving opportunities for reading during internship as well as by interacting with their English teacher in school. Students faced the following problems prior to implementation of English remedial instruction program:

a) Problem in reading and writing simple sentences

b) Difficulty informing logical structure of sentence

c) frequentgrammatical errors

d) more spelling mistakes

e) Use of inappropriate grammatical structures

f) Vocabularylimited

g) Inadequate understanding of the topic

h) incapable of self-expression

i) difficulty in reciting poetry

j) difficulty in speaking English

k) Poor punctuation

l) Poor and untidy handwriting

m) lack of interest in learning English

Research Question 2) How does remedial instruction program in English affect the academic performance of sixth class students? Research question 2 was answered through the results of the vocabulary and comprehension; grammar and composition pre-
/post-tests, Interview with their School English teacher and result of summative test of these students.

Results of the vocabulary and comprehension; grammar and composition pre-/post- tests

Table 1 shows that the mean score of vocabulary and comprehension post-test (8.09) after remedial instruction program is higher than themean score of pre-test (4.27) i.e., before remedial instruction program. The mean score of grammar and composition post-test after remedial instruction program is also higher (9.18) than that of pre -test (5.18) before remedial instruction program.

To examine whether students' scores before and after the remedial instruction program were statisticallysignificant, paired t test was conducted to analyze the test results. The results of the paired t -test (shown in Table 2) indicate significant differences between the vocabulary and comprehension pre-test and post-test (p=0.000) and between the grammar and composition pre-test and post-test (p=0.000).

Table 1.Mean Scores and Standard Deviations of vocabulary and comprehension; grammar and composition Tests before and after the Remedial Instruction(N=11)

	Mean score	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Vocabulary and comprehension (Pre-Test)	4.27	1.618	.487
Vocabulary and comprehension (Post-Test)	8.09	1.972	.594
Grammar and composition (Pre-Test)	5.18	2.600	.784

Grammar and composition (Post-Test)	9.18	1.940	.584

Table2.Paired Samples t-test

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t-value	df	Sign(2- tailed)
Vocabulary and comprehension pre-test/post-test Grammar and composition pre-test/post-test	3.81 1.470	.443		8.609	10	.000 ***
	4.00	2.097	.632	6.325	10	.000 ***

*** p<0.001

Interview with their School English teacher : English teacher also expressed her satisfaction and responded positively about the effectiveness of this remedial program in improving English competence of students who had performed poor in unit tests.

Result of summative test : It was also found that there was a good level of improvement in terms of marks in English of these students at the end of the term in SA1 examination.

Research Question 3) What are students' perspectives towards effectiveness of remedial instruction program in English?

This question was answered through interviews with students .After the completion of the program students wereinterviewed with the help of open-ended questions about the effectiveness of the remedial instruction program.Out of eleven,nine students agreed that their overall basic English skills have improved; eight students agreed that they have understood grammar rules for sentence formation; seven students agreed that their vocabulary has increased to certain extent ;six students found that their reading fluency has increased and all of them were more confident and motivated to put more efforts in learning English after this remedial program.

CONCLUSION

English language has attained a prominent status in world arena as it is most widely used as communication language and opens up plethora of opportunities for all of us. Students' overall competence in English has to be improved as most of the themare struggling to reach at desirable level of proficiency. In such a scenario remedial instruction programs hold potential for improving English proficiency of such students. This case study has examined the potential benefits of remedial instruction program in improving the academic performance in English of poor performing students. The benefits of the program in overcoming fear for English and enhancing self-motivation of

students for learning English have also come to fore in this study.

REFERENCES

Chao,C-T.andTseng,C-J.(2013).The effectiveness of remedial intensive course: A case study of a private university in Northern Taiwan. Procedia - *Social and Behavioral Sciences89,* 16 - 21. Available online at www.sciencedirect.com

Huang, C. (2010). Exploring factors affecting the use of oral communication strategies. *LongHua Technology University Journal.* 30: 85-104.

Khan,H.R. and Md.Akter,Z.(2011) East West University, 2011-01-01. *Students' Mistakes and Errors in English Writing: Implications for Pedagogy.*

Tseng, Y. W. (2008). *Effects of using the learning station model as a phonics remedial program in an elementary school. Master thesis, National Pingtung University of Education, Pintung, Taiwan.*