



## TEACHER'S ACTIVITY AND ITS UPSHOT ON THE STUDENTS' ACTIVITY UNDER ACTIVITY BASED METHOD OF LEARNING ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS OF WEST BENGAL

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### ABSTRACT

The present paper tries to find the activities of the teachers of Bengali medium primary schools of West Bengal in learning English (L<sub>2</sub>) through Activity Based Method. The authors set two objectives to find out the quality of teacher's activity and to understand its impact on students' activity in those schools. Two observations schedules were developed by the researchers to observe and note the activities of the teachers and students during teaching-learning. Finally the state-of-the-art of teacher's activity and its influence on students' activity were revealed and understood. The important revelations are: (a) Teacher's discussion and free sharing of opinion are imperceptible. (b) A large number of teachers do not use gesture in listening, speaking and reading activities of learning English. (c) Most of the teachers do not guide students in the use of worksheets. (d) Most of teachers try to teach grammar in traditional technique. (e) Students' activity suffers due to teacher's inadequate guidance (f) Most of the backward learners' apathy and indifference cumulate presumably due to misdirected pedagogy and inertia.

**KEYWORDS:** Teachers' activity, Students' activity, English language teaching-learning, English (L<sub>2</sub>).

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The teaching of English at primary level in West Bengal had a long and tragic history from 1983-2003, which affected the English language education of West Bengal schools. The effect of such history damaged the backbone of English language education of primary level as well as higher education of West Bengal as a necessary consequence. So the present generation of teachers fails to uphold before their students the rich heritage of teaching English in this land. Different methods were tried on the students of primary, upper primary and above with traditional curriculum of English but the end products were almost nil (Majumder, 1993, p. 919-920; Chattopadhyaya, 2014, p. 131-134).

In that situation the 'expert committee' of School education department of Government of West Bengal had reviewed and revised the entire curriculum, textbook, syllabus, equipment of the classroom and teaching-learning method of primary and upper primary sections of West Bengal schools in 2011. The approach of primary school education shifted its focus from the conventional approach of teaching learning to child centric, activity based approach to teaching-learning. The approach has wider acceptability and it encourages both teachers and learners in second language teaching learning.

In Activity Based Method children should be active. Learning is collaborative and communicative. Teacher plays the role of a facilitator. Teacher's activity is the assigned work of teachers in the



related environment which helps students to be responsible — interpersonally, personally in the local and global community. Students will act according to teachers' instructions. Students' activity is a practical or reasoning task engaged in one by one or more pupil to enhance and enrich learning. Activities are the display of behavior and discipline, training of body and mind. So, success of learners' activity depends on success of teacher's activity. The teacher supports, guides, cooperates, stimulates and facilitates in activities where learners discover, investigate, explore, analyze, research and interpret the texts. Teacher should encourage creativity in the learning process (Sumanjari, 2012). But under-qualified role of teachers in teaching English has been reported by Fareh (2010) and NCERT (2012). Studies of Jalan and Panda (2010) and Banerjee (2016) showed that students' activity requires improvement. So, problems are found in teacher's activity and students' activity. It is not surprising if this state of affairs regarding teacher's activity in teaching English and its upshot on the students' activity continue unabated in the primary schools of West Bengal, which starved of education in English for a long in the past. So it is incumbent upon the researchers to unveil the state of the art of the problems of activity in West Bengal schools on the basis of which only the remedy is possible.

## 2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Harfield et al. (2007) studied on the activity based teaching and found that instructional techniques of the teacher's and students' behavior need to maintain a good relationship for the positive outcomes of the students. Fareh (2010) studied the challenges of teaching learning of English in the Arab World and found that improper training of the teachers, teacher centered activities, importance on rote learning rather than emphasis on skills etc. dominate the teaching learning in school. NCERT (2012) mentioned that in the classrooms primary schools teachers used to teach grammar in traditional technique. Khajloo (2013) in his study identified some problems of English language teaching. These are; small class hours, lack of internal and external motivation for children, lack of teachers' proficiency and lack of practice among students in the target language. Khamari, Guru et al. (2014) studied on the problems of teaching English at primary level and found that hand writing of the students is not emphasized by the teachers in English language learning at primary level. Johnson (2017) made a cross-sectional study on the relationship between teacher's practice and students' performance. From the findings it was seen that teacher's practice and students' growth have significant correlation if teacher and schools characteristics be controlled. Vasudevan (2017) identified that slow learners need encouragement, tutoring, reading readiness, more time and relaxation in learning.

The above studies analyzed teaching in different perspectives and found problems of teachers and their teaching. No study is available on the problems related to activity based method of teaching learning English. So a study might be necessary particularly at Primary level to unearth the nature of difficulties occurring in a classroom pursuing activity method in teaching learning English (L<sub>2</sub>).

## 3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY WITH REFERENCE TO THE ACTIVITY BASED METHOD

- i) To find the state- of –the-art of *Teacher's Activity* in teaching English (L<sub>2</sub>) in the primary schools of West Bengal.
- ii) To find the upshot of *Teacher's Activity* on *Students' Activity* in teaching English in the primary schools of West Bengal.

## 4. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

On the basis of related studies and ongoing situations of teaching learning English language (L<sub>2</sub>) in West Bengal following questions might be set to probe answer through research:

- i) What is the state of the art of the *Teacher's Activity* in the primary schools of West Bengal?
- ii) To what extent does the *Teacher's Activity* influence *Students' Activity* in the primary schools of West Bengal?

## 5. METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

The study comprises of observation and reporting of a few techniques belonging to the Activity Based Method of teaching learning English as second language. For it two observation schedules i.e. one regarding teacher's activity and the other regarding students' activity have been developed and used by the researchers to observe the state of the activities of teachers and its upshot on the students activity in the classroom of West Bengal. Backward students were made to sit on the mixed ability group of the students. Special arrangement was made to observe the activities of backward students of the classroom. Gathered data have been analyzed qualitatively.

### DELIMITATIONS

- i) The study was done on government aided (Bengali medium) schools under administrative control of West Bengal Board of Primary Education only.
- ii) Teacher's activity and students' activity include following processes:

**Table 1 Activities of Teachers and Students in the classroom of West Bengal**

Sl.no. of the activities	Activity expected from the teacher	Activity expected from the students
1	The teacher shares his/her opinion with groups and helps to initiate discussion.	While performing activity students discuss in groups and feel free to share opinions.
2	The teacher guides the discussion of the students.	Discussion of the students is relevant to the topic given in the English class.
3	The teacher encourages creativity in the learning process.	Students use newly learnt words and phrases while learning through activity.
4	The teacher helps students in peer correction while engaged in activity.	Students do peer correction while engaged in activity.
5	The teacher uses gesture while reading/ discussing a topic of English.	Students use gesture while performing listening-speaking and reading activity.
6	The teacher helps to do the work through worksheets.	Students perform activity using worksheets.
7	Teacher teaches grammar through the technique of communicative approach.	Students do not try to focus separately on grammar.
8	The teacher encourages and allows more time to the backward learners in groups.	Backward learners do activity with encouragement taking required time.

[Ref: WBBPE (2014); Anandalakshmy(2007)]

### DEFINITION OF IMPORTANT TERM

**Backward learners-** Learners who are socially, economically and physically backward are termed as backward learners. They are identified with help of the class teacher. Backward learners are more in numbers in rural classrooms than the urban classrooms.

### Tools (Observation Schedule)

To realize the objectives of research the researchers have developed and used two tools i.e.

- i) Observation Schedule of the Teacher's Activity in Activity Based Method (**TAABM**) & ii) Observation Schedule of the Students' Activity in Activity Based Method (**SAABM**). The tools have been designed in **eight (08)** activities (noted in the delimitations in table 1) of the teachers and students in the classroom of English Language teaching learning under Activity Based Method in West Bengal.

### Population of the study

Teachers and Students of Bengali medium primary schools of WBBPE are the population for the present study.

### Sample

30 schools were selected from the districts: Hooghly, Burdwan(undivided), Birbhum, North 24 Parganas, Bankura, Malda, Murshidabad using stage sampling method. Students of class IV of those schools were selected en bloc for SAABM and the teachers teaching those classes selected for TAABM.

### 6. Data Presentation

Activity chart for each of the 30 schools was prepared and they were collated from which the following consolidated table was obtained:

**Table 2 Teachers' Activity (consolidated) in primary schools under Activity Based Method**

Serial number of the Activities	Observation on the activities of the teachers in teaching of English in primary schools( observation by researcher along with trained co-observers)
1	70% teachers are less frequent in sharing of opinions about the topic with their students. They are also less fluent in sharing of opinions. So, the teacher -students' interaction is low. Most of the times they use mother tongue to share opinions with the students.
2	80% teachers fail to guide learners in their discussion. Students discuss in their own style.
3	70% teachers lack the use of reinforcement in creativity. Teachers mainly try to focus on the good students of the classroom who use correct words and phrases.
4	80% teachers do not help students in peer correction activity. They only instruct students to exchange copies. Students are not guided properly what to do in that activity.
5	85% teachers do not use gestures in listening –speaking and reading activities of English. They try to focus on the reading loudly. Pronunciation and gesture have least significance in the classroom.
6	70% teachers do not facilitate students in performing activities through worksheets. Teachers only distribute the worksheets. Facilitation of the teachers for filling up of worksheets has less important in the teachers' activity.
7	80% teachers use traditional technique to teach grammar.They only tried to focus on the good students of the classroom. Teachers try to focus on the rote learning of grammar.
8	80% teachers do not encourage backward learners in performing activity. Teachers do not encourage enough the backward learners in the mixed ability group. They start next activity without waiting for them. Some teachers allow more time to backward learners. Backward learners remain passive in the mixed ability group.

**Table 3 Students' Activity (consolidated) in primary schools under Activity Based Method**

Serial number of activities	Observation on the activities of the students in learning of English in rural-urban and High P/T –Low P/T Ratio schools( observation by researcher along with trained co-observers)
1	Most of the students are fearsome in discussing in groups or pairs about the topic given in the English class. Students are anxious about the use of target language in the given topic. Mother tongue dominates their discussion but the use is less than the rural students.
2	Most of the students are not consistent in their discussion. Sometimes they discuss and sometimes they are engaged in their own work. Discussion has very poor relevance with the given topic in the English class in spite of their sincere efforts.

3	A small number of students' use newly learnt words and phrases while learning through activity. They are interested about the newly learnt words. Rest are indifferent to new words.
4	A large number of students do not perform the activity of peer correction. Some of the students are not prepared to exchange their copies with their peer. But they're flexible to exchange copies with their friends.
5	A small number of students are using gesture in listening –speaking and reading activities of English. Sometimes they try to mimicry the gesture. But they have interest in learning and use of gesture.
6	A large number of students are enthusiastic about the use of worksheets. But small numbers of students are able to connect worksheets with the particular texts. They read the worksheets carefully. Students make spelling mistakes in filling the worksheets. Some students' handwriting is illegible.
7	A large number of students try to learn grammar through the process of memorization and rote learning. They are interested in the learning of grammar. Some of them are prone to use wrong grammar.
8	Backward learners perform activities with the average students of the class. But they lack the basic skills of language learning. They also lack motivation in learning.

## 7. Data Analysis

### 7.1 Analysis of Teachers' Activity under Activity Based Method

With reference to the table 1 we find the state-of-art of the Teachers' Activity in primary schools of West Bengal.

**Table 4 Analysis of the Teachers' Activity in primary Schools of West Bengal**

Serial number of the Activities	Analysis of the Observation of Teachers' Activity under Activity Based Method
1	Most of the teachers are unable to share his/ her opinion with groups.
2	Majority of the teachers are unable to guide the discussion of the students.
3	Most of the teachers do not encourage creativity in the learning process.
4	Majority of the teachers do not monitor students in peer correction while engaged in activity.
5	Most of the teachers are unbecoming in this Activity. They do not use gesture.
6	A large number of Teachers do not guide students in performing activities through worksheets.
7	Most of the teachers are using traditional method/grammar translation method of teaching grammar.
8	A large number of teachers do not encourage backward learners. They even do not allow more time to backward learners.

From the analysis of teachers' activity it is seen that most of the teachers fail to perform according to the guidelines of Activity Based Method.

### 7.2 Impact of Teacher's Activity on Students' Activity

With reference to the table 1 and 2 we find the effect of the Teacher's Activity on students' activity in primary schools of West Bengal;

**Table 5 Effect of Teachers' Activity on students' activity in primary Schools of West Bengal**

Serial number of the Activities	Analysis of the guidance of teachers' activity on students' activity	
	Teachers' activity (consolidated)	Students' activity (consolidated)
1	Most of the teachers are unable to share his/ her opinion with groups.	Students' discussion and free sharing of opinion are only microscopic.
2	Some of the teachers are able to guide the discussion of the students.	Most of them talk in irrelevant ways leading to noise.
3	Most of the teachers do not encourage creativity in the learning process.	Majority of the students fail to use newly learnt words in their activity.
4	Some of the teachers help students in peer correction while engaged in activity.	Peer correction activity lies below the optimum level.
5	Almost all of the teachers are weak in this Activity. Most of the teachers do not use gesture.	A large number of students do not use gesture in listening, speaking and reading activities of learning English.
6	Teachers are not guiding students in performing activities through worksheets.	Most of the students are not acquainted with the use of worksheets. Illegible handwriting and spelling mistakes are noticeable points of the works of worksheets.
7	Majority of the teachers are using traditional method/grammar translation method of teaching grammar.	A large number of students try to learn grammar in traditional technique.
8	Most of the teachers do not encourage backward learners and do not allow more time to backward learners.	Most of the backward learners lack optimum skill of language learning, enthusiasm and motivation.

Form the table it is seen that students' activity suffers due to lack of proper guidance of the teachers.

## 8. RESULTS

### 8.1 What is state of the art of the Teacher's Activity in the primary schools of West Bengal?

- Teachers' discussion and free sharing of opinion are imperceptible.
- Most of them are not steering students' discussion.
- Majority of the teachers fail to induce creativity in activity.
- Most of the teachers do not help students in peer correction while engaged in activity.
- A large number of teachers do not use gesture in listening, speaking and reading activities of learning English.
- Most of the teachers are not guiding students in the use of worksheets.
- Most of teachers try to teach grammar in traditional technique.
- Most of the teachers do not encourage and allow more time to backward learners.

### 8.2 What is the effect of Teacher's Activity on Students' Activity in the primary schools of West Bengal?

- Students are deprived of the guidance of the teachers in their discussion.
- Students' discussion is out of track due to teacher's control.
- Due to lack of proper guidance from the teachers their performance in creativity can't gear up.
- Students fail to do correction of peer activity.
- A large number of students do not use gesture in listening, speaking and reading activities of English.



- f. Students are deprived of the guidance of the teachers in use of worksheets.
- g. Students try to focus on the rote learning of grammar.
- h. Most of the backward learners' apathy and indifference cumulate presumably due to misdirected pedagogy and inertia.

### 9. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- Videography on the classroom would be helpful and objective but could not be used due to some practical difficulties of the schools. This difficulty has been compensated as far as possible by seeking the service of some trained associates.

### 10. DISCUSSION

The findings of the study show an overall dissatisfactory teachers' activity in English language learning in the primary schools of West Bengal and this is in conformity of the findings of the Fareh(2010). Teachers have to acquire more proficiency in the target language. The findings of the study is corroborated by Kajloo(2013). Handwriting of the students should be emphasized by the teachers. The finding is in tune with the findings of Khamari, Guru et al. (2014). Most of teachers try to teach grammar in traditional technique. This finding is in consonance with the findings of NCERT (2012). Teachers need to motivate backward learners with basic skill of learning. The findings are in tune with the findings of Vasudevevan (2017). Students' activity is influenced by the teachers' activity. Findings of the study are validated by the findings of Harfield et al. (2007) & Johnson (2017).

The present study has edge over the preceding ones in terms of meticulous observations on the activities of the teacher and activity of the students under Activity Based Method of teaching English which was deserted so long in the arena of schools of West Bengal.

### 11. CONCLUSION

The present study appraised the teacher's activity in English language teaching learning in government aided Bengali medium primary schools of West Bengal. It is seen that state-of-art of teacher's guidance is not up to the mark and hence students' activity suffers. Teachers should have effective orientation in English teaching.

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