



PEER TUTORING: AN EFFECTIVE STRATEGY TO ENHANCE ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

Amita Chaudhary¹ and Prof. P.K. Joshi²

¹Research Scholar ,

²Professor, Dept. of Education,
HNB Garhwal Central University, Srinagar,
Uttarakhand.



ABSTRACT:

Today every child wishes that the study should be like amusement not a saddle on him. He wants to learn the subject matter in play way manner. He enjoys inventive methods of teaching more as compared to traditional method. He prefers to read the content with the help of smart board or screen, in place of books. In the classroom he likes to thrash out his problems with his friends and peers since he is hesitate in involving discussions with the teacher. Having discussion with the friends is acknowledged as peer group learning or peer tutoring.

Peer tutoring is a reciprocally beneficial method. It can be used to teach every subject effectively. It becomes more attention-grabbing when a module is prepared for peer tutoring method, in advance to teach the content. Peer tutoring is also supportive strategy in learning English language. It is a collaborative approach in which student can learn the content of the subject by the co-operation of their peers. In this process, students alternate the role of the tutor and tutee. Peer tutoring motivates the students for their team work and increases their achievement. Present paper deals with the importance of peer tutoring to enhance the English language proficiency of secondary school students.

KEYWORDS: Peer Tutoring, English Language Proficiency, Secondary School Students.

INTRODUCTION

School education system today is just in a competition with itself. School administration is becoming increasingly autocratic. Teachers are just running to complete the syllabus and parents are simply concern on the high achievement of marks by their child. Nobody is bothered about the private stakeholder; that is the child. Nobody is concerned about what he wants and how he wants to study.

The facts remain that the children seek teaching learning process to be more interesting. Earlier too many great educationalists drew our attention towards the learner centered education. Socrates introduced question answer method, which is still considered to be one of the best methods to evoke curiosity in a child and engage him in learning. Maria Montessori emphasized on the sense training of a child, since the senses are the gateways of knowledge and if they are trained, learning would be easier. The torch bearer of Pragmatism John Dewey advocated upon learning by activity and experiment and his prized pupil Kilpatrick introduced the Project method. All these methods were learner centered and were believed to engage a child actively in a teaching-learning situation.

Concern regarding academic burden on students and unsatisfactory quality of learning has been voiced time to time and again in our country for the past two decades. The question has been discussed extensively by several committees and groups. The Ishwarbhai Patel Review Committee (1977), National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) Working Group (1984) and National Policy on Education (NPE) Review Committees (1990) made several recommendations to reduce the

academic burden on students. The curriculum development agencies are generally in concurrence with the recommendations of the committee and assure the public that these would be kept in view at the time of the forthcoming revision of curricula. But the problem, instead of being mitigated, becomes more acute when a new curriculum is introduced. This has happened in the case of new curriculum introduced in the wake of implementation of NPE (1986).

With a view to have a fresh look on the problems of education, particularly with regard to the problem of academic burden on students, the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India, set up a National Advisory Committee in March 1992 under the chairmanship of **Prof. Yash Pal, former Chairman of the UGC** to suggest ways and means to reduce academic burden on school students, with the following terms of reference:

To advise on the ways and means to reduce the load on school students at all levels particularly the young students, while improving quality of learning including capability for life-long self-learning and skill formulation.

This committee is also known as YASHPAL COMMITTEE. It has pointed out the root problems of the contemporary education system and formulation of curriculum and presented various recommendations. In one of its recommendation it promoted to the cooperative learning, which is following-

Different organizations and departments organize competitions at district; state and national level for students in various fields viz. school subjects, exhibitions, essay writing, elocution, etc. Perhaps the spirit behind these activities is to recognize and reward the talent in varied fields. But, unfortunately this tends to produce somewhat unhealthy singling out of people for their brief moment of glory. Competitions where individual achievement is rewarded need to be discouraged since they deprive children of joyful learning. However, **group activities and group achievements must be encouraged and rewarded to give a boost to cooperative learning in schools.**

The importance of language is also highlighted by the Yashpal committee in the following words-

Language textbooks should adequately reflect the spoken idiom. An attempt should be made in future textbooks to give adequate representation to children's life experiences, imaginary stories and poems, and stories reflecting the lives of ordinary people in different parts of the country. Pedantic language and excessive didacticism ought to be avoided.

In the recent trends various innovative teaching techniques have come into existence. Peer tutoring is also one of them.

PEER TUTORING

Peer tutoring is relatively a new strategy of student learning in which learning is attained by the same age group individuals, in a social group. Peer tutoring is a type of co-operative learning, in which a student learns with the cooperation of other students learning. Peer tutoring is an approach which can be used to teach all the subjects. Problems of Mathematics can be solved more easily with the help of this method. Similarly project work in sciences can be completed more efficiently with the help of the peers. English language becomes more pleasurable through this method. A teacher can arrange more activities to teach the topic. It would be more practical that learning is going on by activities along with the peer. He can allocate the content among the students and endow them with tasks. It's really fantastic for the students to learn the things in joyfully in place of a traditional stressful environment. The whole process of learning becomes less time consuming and learning outcomes are relatively permanent.

Carsrud (1984) describes an example of a surrogate teaching method in which doctoral student's supervised undergraduate psychology students in conducting research projects. Goodlad and Hurst (1989) and Topping (1998) note that academic peer tutoring at the college level takes various forms. Surrogate teaching, common at larger universities, involves giving older students, often graduates or advanced undergraduates, some or all of the teaching responsibility for undergraduate courses.

TYPES OF PEER TUTORING -

Peer tutoring is cooperation between two or more students, where one individual as the tutor teaches to the other(s) as tutees. This can occur between students of the same year of study or between students of different years. The main peer tutoring strategies are following-

1. Class-wide peer tutoring
2. Cross -age tutoring
3. PAL (Peer assisted learning)
4. Unidirectional peer tutoring
5. Bi-directional ,or reciprocal peer tutoring

1. Class-wide peer tutoring

Class-wide peer tutoring involves breaking the entire class into dyads. Each child participates in reciprocal peer tutoring by providing prompts, error correction, and help to their partner (Greenwood, Carta, and Hall 1988). Class-wide peer tutoring is unique because all children are given task cards to keep them focused on the objectives of the lesson. The tutor takes the task cards and fills in the skills that are mastered by the student. This method is most effective with children with mild disabilities. The main benefit of this approach is that the entire class is involved in the tutoring activity, so no children are singled out because of disability.

2. Cross-age peer tutoring

Cross-age peer tutoring occurs when an older child is chosen to tutor a younger child. This method works best when the peer tutor is interested in working with children with disabilities. A cross-aged peer tutor is more effective than a same-aged peer tutor when the student is very young (below first or second grade) or the disability is more involved (such as severe cerebral palsy, intellectual disability, or autism) (Houston-Wilson, Lieberman, et al. 1997; Lieberman, Newcomer, McCubbin, and Dalrymple 1997). The cross-aged peer tutor can be chosen according to willingness, physical skills, and availability. The main benefit of this approach is that the tutor gains valuable teaching experience while the student experiences effective individualized instruction and feedback.

3. PAL (Peer Assisted Learning)

Unlike Cross-Age Tutoring, PALS is a structured peer tutoring program. PAL strategy was developed in 1989 by Dr. Lynn Fuchs and Dr. Doug Fuchs (2001) in conjunction with Dr. Deborah Simmons. The strategies were derived from the Fuchs' interest in developing a peer-mediated instructional strategy that incorporated elements of other research-based methods including Class-Wide Peer Tutoring (CWPT), Classroom-Based Measurement (CBM), Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC), and Reciprocal Teaching. Developers used these methods to enable a wider range of students to participate and increase success in school. PAL strategy offers specific programs in math and reading. Reading PALS is available for preschool through 6th grade and for 9th grade through 12th grade, with variations available for some grade levels.

4. Unidirectional peer tutoring

Unidirectional peer tutoring means that the trained peer tutor teaches the entire time, and the child with a disability remains the student in the pair. This method is effective when working with children with more severe disabilities such as severe autism, intellectual disability, visual impairment, or cerebral palsy. The benefits of this option are that the tutor and student always know their roles, and the peer tutor carries the responsibility throughout the entire program.

5. Bi-directional, or Reciprocal peer tutoring

Reciprocal peer tutoring is a collaborative approach .It embeds assessment in formalized learning process to facilitate student involvement with course content and improve achievement .In

RPT students are paired and provided essential instructions on how to perform on content, akin to Bloom's taxonomy. During the RPT activity, each student of dyad is independently responsible for synthesizing course content and drill the information based on curriculum. In this process, students alternate between the role of the tutor and tutee. Where one is tutor and another is tutee in first round and their roles are exchanged in the second round. In this dual role as tutor and tutee, students benefit through the preparation and instruction in which tutor engage, as well as from the instruction that tutee receives.

A reciprocal peer tutoring (RPT) program at California State University, Fullerton College has been evaluated extensively. The RPT program requires students in a large introductory psychology course to meet with the student partners periodically throughout the course to quiz each-other and discuss the main ideas for each unit of the course.

Like other peer tutoring approaches discussed, the reciprocal interactions in RPT promote social competence and peer acceptance (Pigott, et al., 1986); Fantuzzo, John W.; Riggio, Ronald E.; Connelly, Sharon; Dimeff, Linda A. (1989) explored the effect of reciprocal peer tutoring on academic achievement and psychological adjustment. Pretest analyses revealed no significant group differences in demographic variables or pretest scores on course examinations and self-report inventories of subjective distress. Further analyses supported past findings on the superiority of the RPT strategy. Fantuzzo, John W.; King, Judith A.; Heller, Lauren R. (1992) examined the relative impact of structured peer tutoring and group reward components of the reciprocal peer-tutoring intervention on the mathematics performance of elementary school students at high risk for academic failure. Findings indicate that students who received both components showed the highest levels of accurate math computations. Reciprocal peer tutoring intervention was specifically developed for urban elementary school's classroom. (Fantuzzo, et al.,1995).

LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

Proficiency is the quality of having great facility and competence. It is a broader term that is used in different contexts and has various meaning, such as-skillfulness, expertise, skill, ability, knack and competence etc. When the word proficiency is used in reference of language, it means the ability of a person or an individual to speak or perform in an acquired language.

Generally language proficiency deals with a person's ability by which one use a language for different purposes. Speaking, listening , reading & writing are included in it .Additionally fluency and language competence are generally considered as being related to it, but it is still controversial subject. Language proficiency or linguistic proficiency deals with; to what extent a student is able to perform in a particular language. According to ACTFL (American council on the teaching of foreign language)"performance" as being the combined effect of all three modes of communication, interpretive, interpersonal and presentational. Proficiency is also considered as the ability to use language in real world situation in a spontaneous interaction and non-rehearsed context.

English language proficiency is about having the knowledge and skill within the form and function of the English language to be able to properly conduct oneself in whatever form (i.e. speech or written) what is either presented or being used by the person in question. Language proficiency is an supplementary factor of one's personality. It is the demand of hour and requirement of the quality education. NCF 2005 has talked about the importance of language in communication. It has thrown light on the centrality of language in curriculum. RPT (Reciprocal peer tutoring) is a helpful strategy in learning English language. It is a collaborative approach in which the student can learn the content of the subject by the co-operation of their peer. Reciprocal peer tutoring motivate students for their team work and achievement.

Patel M.K, (1994) worked on the language proficiency in English of the pupil of standard IX. Finding revealed that the pupils having high academic achievement possessed high proficiency. Carhill, Suarez-Orozco, and Paez (2008) aimed to increase understanding of factors that accounted for academic English language proficiency. In this study, they described the academic English language

proficiency of immigrant youth after, on average, seven years in the United States and modeled factors that contributed to variation.

OBJECTIVES OF THE PRESENT STUDY

To study the effectiveness of Reciprocal Peer Tutoring and Traditional teaching method on English Language Proficiency.

HYPOTHESIS

H0:- There is no significant difference in the effect of Reciprocal peer Tutoring and Traditional method of teaching on the English Language Proficiency of secondary school students.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Experimental research method was applied to see the effect of peer tutoring on English language proficiency. An experimental design pretest, posttest, control group design was chosen for this study. The data was collected through pretest and posttest. Pretest was conducted before starting the experiment and posttest was conducted after providing the treatment to the experimental group and to teach the control group with the traditional method. A peer tutoring module was prepared for this purpose, in which the content was developed according to the level and the interest of the secondary school students. A sample of 88 students of class 9th was purposively selected from a school of C.B.S.C board. These 88 students were randomly divided into two groups. Group 'A' of 44 students constituted the experimental group and group 'B' of 44 students, the control group. Group 'A' was chosen for the treatment by the researcher. Experimental group was converted into small peer groups. There were 22 peer groups, consisting two students each. The treatment in the form of peer tutoring module was given to the experimental group. Each pair was facilitated with study material, which consisted colorful pictures, interesting stories, attractive flash cards and artistic cue cards. The participants of experimental group were supposed to learn the content with the help of their peer or fellow. They were asked to play the role of tutor and tutee. In the second round they exchanged their roles. The researcher acted as a supervisor during the whole process of activities. Conversely, control group was taught by the traditional method, like lecture method, explanation method and with the help of books. The entire session of peer tutoring was videotaped to see the activeness of the participants and was also used for the interpretation. The scores obtained on pretest and posttest were evaluated by using 't' test. A perception test was also employed by the researcher to assess student perception on the experiment.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: showing the pre-test score of experimental and control group.

PRE-TEST						
Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Df	t value	Sig.(2-tailed)
Experimental	44	20.43	6.45	86	.344	.732
Control	44	19.97	5.97	86		

Significant at 0.05 level

An independent sample 't test' was conducted to compare the mean of experimental group and control group, before providing them any treatment. The table 1 indicate experimental group (M=20.43, S.D.=6.45) and control group (M=19.97, S.D.=5.97) , $t(85)=.344$, $p=.732$ on pre test. The significant (2 tailed) value is .732. This value is greater than .05. So null hypothesis is accepted at 0.05 level. It shows that there is no significant difference between the mean of experimental group and control group.

Table 2: Showing posttest score of experimental and control group.

POSTTEST						
Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	df	t value	Sig.(2-tailed)
Experimental	44	68.27	5.428	86	24.558	.000
Control	44	33.93	7.522	86		

Significant at 0.05 level

An independent 't test' was conducted to compare the mean of experimental group and control group, after providing the treatment to experimental group. The table 2 indicate experimental (M=68.27, S.D.=5.428) group and control (M=33.93, S.D.=7.52) group $t(85)=25.03$, $p=.000$ on post test. The significant (2 tailed) value is .000. This value is less than .05. So null hypothesis is rejected at 0.05 level. Because of this we can conclude that there is significant difference between the effect of reciprocal peer tutoring method and traditional English teaching methods on student achievement.

CONCLUSION

In the field of education every day ground-breaking teaching techniques and strategies are evolving. Peer tutoring is also the part of this nascence. This new teaching strategy is prolific in all subjects at school level. Students can improve their academic achievement through this method particularly in English. If a child learns English in a group, he or she is sure to get more motivated and enthusiastic about learning. Learning in a group encourage to creativity. In a group there are students with individual differences and this variety brings diversity of thoughts. There is also a big advantage of learning in a group that is peer collaboration. Students learn how to support each-other, monitor and facilitate. In fact peer collaboration helps them to overcome shyness, get rid of complexities and discover leadership qualities in themselves. The main things they liked about RPT, are helpful group members, opportunities to work in groups, feedback from the partners and knowledge allocation.

Basically human beings are social individuals; they need other people to learn. To achieve sovereign learning, we need the collaboration of our peers or friends. In this reference this is truth-
"Two hands are better than one."

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Research Scholar



Prof. P.K. Joshi
Professor, Dept. of Education, HNB Garhwal Central University, Srinagar,
Uttarakhand.