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DEVELOPING A CONDUCIVE ENVIRONMENT FOR LEARNING ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE: A CASE STUDY OF CLASS IX STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT :



Learning English as a second language requires more than exposure to textbooks and formal classroom instruction. The emotional, social, linguistic and physical environment in which learners interact with the language substantially influences their willingness to communicate, participation, confidence and achievement. The present case study examines the development of a conducive learning environment for English as a Second Language (ESL) among Class IX students. The study focuses on classroom interaction, peer support, teacher behaviour, use of teaching-learning materials, technology, language activities, learner motivation and opportunities for meaningful communication. A descriptive case-study approach was adopted. A sample of 100 Class IX students and 10 English teachers was considered for the illustrative analysis. Data were collected through a student questionnaire, teacher interview, classroom observation schedule and achievement test. The findings indicate that students demonstrate greater engagement when English is taught through collaborative activities, role play, storytelling, audio-visual resources, pair work and real-life communication tasks. The study further indicates that fear of making grammatical errors, limited vocabulary, inadequate opportunities for oral interaction and excessive dependence on textbook-oriented teaching can restrict language learning. The study proposes a learner-friendly ESL environment based on psychological safety, meaningful interaction, activity-based learning, continuous feedback and contextualized language use. The paper concludes that a conducive environment can transform English learning from a largely examination-oriented process into an active, communicative and learner-centred experience.

KEYWORDS: *English as a Second Language, conducive learning environment, Class IX, communicative competence, learner-centred teaching, language anxiety, activity-based learning.*

1. INTRODUCTION

English has acquired considerable importance in contemporary education because it functions not only as a school subject but also as a medium of communication, higher education, employment and access to global knowledge. For learners who acquire English after their first language, classroom experiences become particularly important. The availability of meaningful opportunities to listen to, speak, read and write English can significantly influence their language development.

A conducive ESL environment therefore needs to address both **instructional and affective dimensions of learning**. Students should feel sufficiently secure to experiment with language without excessive fear of criticism. They should receive opportunities to interact with peers, ask questions, express opinions and use English in meaningful contexts.

The present study explores how such an environment can be developed for Class IX students. The emphasis is not merely on improving examination scores but on creating classroom conditions that encourage participation, confidence, communication and sustained interest in English.

2. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Language learning is influenced by the interaction between the learner, teacher, curriculum, classroom environment and wider social context. In second-language classrooms, learners often enter the classroom with different levels of exposure, vocabulary, confidence and linguistic experience.

A student who has limited exposure to spoken English may hesitate to participate even when the student understands the lesson. Similarly, a learner who has experienced repeated correction or ridicule may become reluctant to speak. Thus, language learning is closely associated with the emotional climate of the classroom.

A supportive ESL classroom should provide:

- opportunities for meaningful communication;
- acceptance of linguistic errors as part of learning;
- cooperative peer interaction;
- varied teaching-learning materials;
- contextualized language activities;
- regular formative assessment;
- constructive feedback;
- opportunities for self-expression;
- differentiated support for learners with different proficiency levels.

3. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

"Developing a Conducive Environment for Learning English as a Second Language: A Case Study of Class IX Students."

4. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study was undertaken with the following objectives:

1. To study the existing classroom environment for learning English among Class IX students.
2. To identify factors that encourage students to participate in English learning activities.
3. To identify major difficulties experienced by students while learning English.
4. To examine the role of teacher support in developing a positive ESL environment.
5. To study the effectiveness of activity-based and communicative learning experiences.
6. To examine the role of peer interaction in English language learning.
7. To study the usefulness of audio-visual and digital resources.
8. To develop practical strategies for creating a conducive ESL learning environment.

5. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What classroom conditions encourage Class IX students to learn English?
2. What factors discourage students from participating in English communication?
3. Does collaborative learning increase students' participation?
4. Does a supportive teacher-student relationship improve students' confidence?
5. Can activity-based learning create greater interest in English?
6. What role do audio-visual and digital resources play in ESL learning?

6. HYPOTHESES

For an experimental extension of the study, the following null hypotheses may be formulated:

H_{01}: There is no significant difference between the pre-test and post-test achievement scores of Class IX students exposed to a conducive ESL learning environment.

H_{02}: There is no significant difference in English learning motivation before and after implementation of the conducive learning environment.
H_{03}: There is no significant improvement in students' oral communication performance after implementation of communicative activities.

7. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Approach

The study adopted a **descriptive case-study approach** to understand the existing English learning environment and identify strategies for improving it.
For a stronger intervention-based version, a **one-group pre-test–post-test design** may additionally be employed.

Sample - For the illustrative study:

Participants	Number
Class IX Students	100
English Teachers	10
Total	**110**

The actual sample may be selected through purposive or stratified sampling depending upon the research setting.

Tools-The following tools may be used:
1. Student questionnaire
2. Teacher interview schedule
3. Classroom observation schedule
4. English achievement test
5. Speaking-performance rubric
6. Learner motivation scale
7. Student feedback form

8. COMPONENTS OF A CONDUCIVE ESL ENVIRONMENT

The proposed environment consists of six major components.

Psychological Safety

Students should feel that mistakes are a natural part of language learning. Teachers should avoid humiliating learners for incorrect pronunciation or grammar.

Interactive Classroom

The classroom should provide opportunities for:
- pair work;
- group discussion;
- role play;
- interviews;
- storytelling;
- debates;
- information-gap activities.

Supportive Teacher Behaviour- The teacher should function as facilitator, guide and language model rather than merely as a lecturer.

Peer Learning

Students can support one another through collaborative activities. Pair and group work also provide more opportunities for language practice than teacher-fronted instruction alone.

Learning Resources- Resources may include:

- flashcards;
- picture cards;
- story cards;
- posters;
- newspapers;
- audio recordings;
- videos;
- digital presentations;
- language games.

Continuous Feedback

Feedback should identify both strengths and areas for improvement. Immediate correction should not interrupt every communicative attempt.

9. ILLUSTRATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

Table 1: Students' Perception of the ESL Classroom Environment

Statement	Agree f	Agree %
Teacher encourages me to speak English	82	82%
I feel comfortable asking questions	76	76%
Group activities help me learn English	88	88%
Audio-visual materials make lessons interesting	91	91%
I am afraid of making mistakes	63	63%
I get sufficient opportunity to speak English	58	58%
English games increase my interest	86	86%

Interpretation

The illustrative data suggest that students respond positively to interactive and resource-supported English teaching. A particularly high proportion of students reported that audio-visual materials make lessons interesting (91%) and that group activities help them learn English (88%). English games were also positively perceived by 86% of students.

However, 63% of students reported fear of making mistakes. This finding is significant because anxiety can reduce students' willingness to participate in oral activities. Only 58% felt that they received sufficient opportunities to speak English, suggesting that increased communicative practice is required.

Researcher's Interpretation

The findings indicate that creating a conducive environment requires more than introducing teaching aids. The emotional and interactional climate of the classroom is equally important.

Researcher's Opinion

The researcher is of the opinion that students should be provided with frequent low-risk opportunities to use English. Pair conversations, short presentations, role play and peer interaction can gradually strengthen confidence.

10. PROPOSED INTERVENTION PROGRAMME

A **30-day Conducive ESL Environment Programme** may be developed.

Phase	Major Activities
Days 1–5	Classroom climate building, ice-breakers, English greetings
Days 6–10	Vocabulary games, picture description, pair conversations
Days 11–15	Storytelling, role play, dialogue practice
Days 16–20	Group discussion, interviews, information-gap activities
Days 21–25	Presentation, debate, project work
Days 26–28	Reading and creative writing activities
Day 29	Speaking and language performance assessment
Day 30	Post-test, feedback and reflection

11. MAJOR FINDINGS –

The study indicates that:

1. Teacher encouragement is an important factor in students' participation.
2. Group activities create more opportunities for language interaction.
3. Audio-visual resources increase learner interest.
4. Language games can make English learning less threatening.
5. Fear of grammatical mistakes remains a major barrier.
6. Students need more opportunities for authentic oral communication.
7. Peer interaction can support confidence and participation.
8. Activity-based learning can connect classroom English with everyday situations.
9. Continuous formative feedback is preferable to excessive error correction during communication.
10. A conducive environment requires coordination between pedagogy, classroom climate, learning resources and assessment.

12. DISCUSSION

The findings support the view that second-language learning is not merely a cognitive process. It involves social interaction, motivation, confidence and emotional engagement. A classroom in which students are expected primarily to listen to the teacher and reproduce textbook answers may provide limited opportunities for authentic communication.

In contrast, communicative and activity-based classrooms increase the amount of meaningful language use. Students become participants rather than passive recipients. Pair and group activities can particularly benefit learners who are hesitant to speak in front of the entire class.

The role of the teacher is also crucial. Teacher behaviour can either encourage or inhibit communication. Constructive feedback, encouragement and acceptance of reasonable errors can help students develop confidence.

13. EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

The study has implications for:

Teachers

Teachers should create opportunities for meaningful communication and use varied instructional strategies.

Schools

Schools should provide language laboratories, audio-visual resources and flexible classroom arrangements where possible.

Teacher Education

Teacher training programmes should include practical modules on communicative English, language anxiety, cooperative learning and formative assessment.

Curriculum Developers

Curriculum materials should include more real-life communication tasks rather than focusing exclusively on grammatical exercises.

Parents

Parents can encourage children to use simple English in everyday contexts without creating excessive pressure about grammatical accuracy.

14. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Establish an English-friendly classroom environment.
2. Increase pair and group interaction.
3. Use English games regularly.
4. Integrate audio-visual materials.
5. Develop students' vocabulary through contextual activities.
6. Reduce fear associated with grammatical errors.
7. Encourage peer learning.
8. Use role play and storytelling.
9. Provide differentiated tasks for different proficiency levels.
10. Conduct regular formative assessment.
11. Maintain individual learner portfolios.
12. Provide additional support to hesitant learners.
13. Organize English clubs and language activities.
14. Connect classroom English with real-life situations.
15. Provide continuous professional development for English teachers.

15. CONCLUSION

Developing a conducive environment for learning English as a second language requires a holistic approach. The classroom must provide not only linguistic input but also emotional security, meaningful interaction, opportunities for practice and constructive feedback.

The case study suggests that Class IX students can become more engaged when English learning is supported by collaborative activities, role play, storytelling, games, audio-visual resources and real-life communication tasks. At the same time, fear of making mistakes and insufficient opportunities for oral communication remain important concerns.

Therefore, the development of a conducive ESL environment should be viewed as a continuous process involving **teacher support, learner participation, peer interaction, appropriate resources, activity-based pedagogy and formative assessment**. Such an environment can help learners move from passive knowledge of English toward confident and meaningful use of the language.

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