

THE EFFECT OF CERTAIN COMBINED LEARNING STRATEGIES ON THE ACHIEVEMENT OF SECONDARY SCHOOL CHILDREN IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE

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ABSTRACT

The study aims at the effect of certain strategies and their impact on the learning of English in secondary school children. The author made an attempt to harness the possibilities of combined strategies which relate to cognitive, meta-cognitive and affective areas and to collect empirical evidence regarding the effect on the achievement of students in English language by using these strategies. Different strategies have been taken into account based on performance in school tests.

INTRODUCTION

It is a general belief that there will be significant difference in the achievement of secondary school students in English language when they are exposed to certain combined learning strategies and to prove this is the objective of this study.

Studies have been made for the total sample, and with respect to gender. As early as 1981 there were only descriptive studies of strategies used by effective second language learners and a few research studies on the influence of learning strategies on reading comprehension and problem solving. There was a lack of theory and parallel lack of a comprehensive theory to explain how individuals learn structures and functions associated with second language use.

The notion that special techniques or strategies assist second language acquisition emerged in research literature recently. Studies in integrating learning strategies within cognitive theory appeared only during the 1980's.

It was Rubin (1975) and Stewner (1985) who suggested that good language learners might be doing something special or different that others could learn from. Cognitive psychologists maintain that competent individuals are effective because of special ways of processing information. They have pointed out that these strategies are not the preserve of highly capable individuals but could be learned by others who had not discovered them on their own.

A study on the effect of meditation on mental health of higher secondary school students has been done by Selvaraj Gnanaguru and Soly (2009). The following strategies have been employed in the study a) Cognitive strategy b) Meta cognitive strategy c) Affective strategy.

- a) Cognitive strategy is a technique which an individual selects from his range of knowledge of ways of solving problems on an intellectual basis as being the most appropriate.
- b) Meta cognitive strategy is a technique that involves planning and directing learning at a general level.
- c) Affective strategy is a technique which an individual selects for learning based on feeling or emotional aspects.

OBJECTIVES

- 1) To find the effect of certain combined learning strategies on the achievement of secondary school students in English language a) for the total sample b) at the gender level.
- 2) To examine if there is any variation in the effect of certain combined learning strategies on the achievement of secondary students in English language with respect to gender a) for the total sample b) at the gender level.

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METHODOLOGY

The experimental method was adopted for the study. Previous knowledge was assessed using a test prepared by the investigator.

Verbal group test of Intelligence (Nair, 1976) was administered to estimate the general intelligence of the sample, the experimental group and the control group.

SAMPLE

60 students of the ninth standard from Govt. Higher Secondary School, Areparambu, Kottayam, Kerala were chosen for the study through random sampling in order to equalize the group and exclude the proximity of extraneous variables, i.e. intelligence supposed to have correlation with language proficiency was controlled. 30 students each were allotted to the Experimental and Control groups. Both the groups were taught for 16 hrs. approximately. The experimental group was instructed using certain combined learning strategies and the control group in the traditional method by the author herself.

The teaching material included two prose lessons. Lesson transcripts were prepared based on the same material using the learning strategies approach. The t-value was estimated and tested for significance by analysing the data.

DATA ANALYSIS

Table 1

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE MEAN PRE-TEST SCORES OF THE EXPERIMENTAL AND CONTROL GROUPS FOR THE TOTAL SAMPLE

Group	No. of Pupils	Mean	S.D	C.R	Level of significance
Experimental Group	30	8.26	2.56	1	P<0.05
Control Group	30	7.66	2.78		

The estimated C.R. of the pre-test of the two groups, 1, falls below the level of significance. It indicates that there is little difference between the two groups. Hence, they may be treated as equal in achievement and could be

classified into two equal groups – the Experimental and the Control, for the purpose of research.

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Table 2

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MEAN POST-TEST SCORES OF THE EXPERIMENTAL AND CONTROL GROUPS FOR THE TOTAL SAMPLE

Group	No. of Pupils	A.M	S.D	C.R	Level of significance
Experimental Group	30	15	3.91	3.2	P<0.01
Control Group	30	11	4.98		

The mean score, 15, of the learners of the experimental group is higher than the mean score 11 of the control group in the post-test. On testing the significance of the difference between the means in the post-test, it was found that the difference is significant at 0.01 level. Since the obtained C.R. is 3.2 and it exceeds the value set for significance, it may be legitimately inferred that the practice in combined learning strategies has led to better achievement of the students in English language.

Table 3

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE MEAN POST-TEST SCORES OF THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUP – FOR THE TOTAL SAMPLE BASED ON GENDER

Group	No. of Pupils	A.M	SD Pooled	t-value	Level of significance
Experimental Group Boys	15	13.86	5.83	1.62	P<0.05
Experimental Group Girls	15	10.33			

The obtained t value, 1.62, is less than the value set for significance even at 0.05 level. It indicates that there is little difference between the achievement of the two groups based on gender when taught using the learning strategies.

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