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## FOSTERING THE PROCESS OF LANGUAGE LEARNING IN ESL : AN ANALYTICAL STUDY

**Dr. Villuri Uma Maheswara Rao**

Lecturer in English, APMS Government Jr. College, Anakapalle, Andhra Pradesh, India

### Abstract:

Fostering the process of language learning in ESL learners who are expected to use the language in English for Specific Purposes context has become the challenge of the day. While teaching English language as four different skills and three elements, it has become a traditional tedious process. The integrated-skills approach, which combines all the skills and elements has emerged as a new trending teaching English for Specific Purposes where language is considered as a whole unit to be taught and learned. This study sought to compare the relative effects of teaching language skills using a segregated approach and an integrated approach for fostering learning English for Specific Purposes for students of Engineering. 120 students were chosen as subjects and they were divided into two study groups. A pre-test was conducted to measure students' initial language proficiency. The two groups which were observed as Controlled & experimental groups were kept under the experimentation process for a period of 8 weeks. The segregated approach group which is designated as the controlled group received instruction in the conventional method that is, the language skills and elements of language are taught as independent entities. The integrated approach group which is called the experimental group received instruction in a whole language approach, where students learned about topics that included real-life situations and engaged in conversations that involves the use of all language

Skills and elements. After the experiment, all the subjects were given a post-test to ascertain the knowledge the students have acquired. Statistical analysis of their learning tests showed that training in an integrated approach was effective. It was also discovered that the group that received whole language input as an integrated approach had significantly demonstrated more progress than the group that received a segregated approach.

**Keywords:** English For A Specific Purpose (ESP), Integrated Or Whole Language Approach, Segregated Approach

### 1. Introduction

Effective and efficient communication is a crucial component of competing in today's learning environment, which is always evolving. Teaching English as a second language is difficult, but a language instructor can make it highly motivating by incorporating the four language skills into the teaching and by adding diverse activities. Teaching English as a second language has historically been carried out through various methods. These methods have replaced the conventional method, but neither of these methods has taken up a permanent position to teach language. The major goal of adopting any method or strategy is to help the students improve their level of proficiency in English.

In order to create a real-life classroom setting and teach in a real communicative situation, there were many opinions raised that emphasized the idea of language as a whole. In this context, students have the chance to understand the reason and meaning behind the information when the curriculum is integrated. In addition, students deepen their comprehension of the subject (Watkins & Kritsonis, 2011). According to Mustafa (2011), an integrated language teaching approach equips kids for lifelong learning. Students can create connections between what they learn in the classroom and what they encounter in their daily life. No skill can be taught in isolation, and language cannot be taught in isolation either, which is a truth in the integration of these skills because if a learner decides to study a language alone, he/she will



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probably wind up learning a conventional form of it and struggle to communicate when they try to use it in real sense.

An integrated teaching approach also has several advantages. As a result of integrated learning, students gain a passion for studying, more self-assurance, and the dedication to develop their capacity for critical thought (Vars, 2001). Erlandson and McVittie (2001) surveyed students regarding their perceptions of the integrated learning approach and found that they were able to establish links between their academic knowledge and real-world experiences. Their method of thinking changed, and they started relating what they learned in class to personal experiences.

Traditionally, ESL/EFL classes have prioritized one or two of the four language skills over the rest. This process is known as a segregated-skill strategy (Oxford, 2001), and this segregation is represented in traditional language teaching programs that offer classes that are more concentrated on segregated language skills. However, a push toward an integrated approach that supports the teaching of all four language skills within the general framework has emerged because the segregated language skill approach was proven to be incompatible with the natural way of learning a language. The four language skills are rarely employed separately in everyday situations; they are hardly used separately. Separating language usage in the classroom from language use in daily life results from skill isolation teaching. One skill will frequently strengthen another; for instance, we learn to talk in part by imitating what we hear, and we learn to write by evaluating what we can read (Brown, 2001).

An integrated-skills approach to language teaching has a number of advantages. It integrates language skills, which makes learning at all levels more purposeful and meaningful. It aids in more effective communication and coherent instruction. It adds variation to the curriculum. Educators enhance lessons in the classroom by including cooperative language skills (Murphy, 1991). Students learn how to use the language by integrating their abilities and they can quickly apply what they have learned to other subjects (River, 1981). Exercise in all four areas encourages language learning and has a good impact on students' L2 knowledge (Peregoy & Boyle, 1997). Learning a language becomes more like what we actually do in real life when language skills are integrated into language teaching (Sanchez, 2000).

River (1981) explains the benefits of skills integration as follows:

When various skills are integrated into free-flowing activities, in which one provides material for the other, students learn to operate confidently within the language, easily transferring knowledge acquired in one area for active use in another. It is most important that the teacher not compartmentalize the learning (p. 167).

The additional advantage of the integrated language teaching approach is it reduces the learner's behavioral issues (Weaver, 1990, 1994; Doake, 1994). As Weaver (1990) puts it:

There are often fewer behavioral issues in whole language classrooms since students are more actively engaged in learning and have the chance to exercise self-discipline as opposed to just agreeing with instructor control. Whole language teachers create learning communities characterized by mutual respect and trust, where many decisions are made cooperatively and students have many opportunities to make individual decisions and take ownership of their own learning, as opposed to controlling children through their demands. Learning flourishes and behavioral issues decrease in these settings. (p. 25)

Another benefit of an integrative language teaching method is that it enhances students' self-esteem (Freeman and Freeman, 1994; Weaver, 1994). The development of students' creativity and critical thinking, both of which are essential for improving listening comprehension, is a final benefit of the integrated language approach. According to Weaver (1990), "children in whole language classrooms are thinkers and doers rather than only passive consumers of knowledge. Instead of just accepting information and ideas, they learn to digest it, assess it, and think critically and creatively" (pp. 26-27).



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## 2. Research Question and Purpose of the study

This study aimed to compare and contrast the impact of an integrated approach with a segregated approach on the students' learning of a new language with different levels of language abilities. In particular, the study addressed the following research question:

1. What impact does the integrated skill approach have on the students with high and low language acquisition levels when compared to the segregated approach?

## 3. Review of Literature

It is necessary to promote English language learning among adults as communication plays important role in professional fields to manage tasks. Considering the fact, fostering the English language is promoted in professional fields and tertiary educational institutions to improve capabilities of communication in the English language. ESP programs are used to improve English communication among adults. In the proposed thesis, language acquisition and language-related theories have been described. Teaching English with an integrated skill approach is a technique is implemented to build and advance the knowledge of students on what they already know and can continue to know more. The process of teaching includes listening, reading, learning and practicing in real-life scenarios. In this way they can adapt to the learning process easier. This sector will discuss language acquisition and language learning theories' approach to the whole language, the history of English language teaching methods, task and skill integration, task activities, and cognitive complexity. The importance of an integrated teaching process in classrooms for different categories of students will help them acquire the skills. Students can easily adapt and enjoy the process of learning by creating an appropriate atmosphere. Using the technique appropriate to the age group of students is another important thread. Assigned teachers also have to go through the whole teaching process and advance themselves in the modern and integrated methods of teaching.

The integrated skill-based foreign language learning teaching needed some special procedure to enhance speaking, listening, writing and reading skills. These processes become a new trend in the skill-based foreign language teaching technique. Whenever a person tries to communicate with others, that person tries to communicate with the help of these four skills. Teachers nowadays emphasize this technique much more to educate their students in foreign language prospects. At the time of communicating through oral communication, that particular person receives the message through the process of listening and they respond through speaking. In the case of written language, anyone receives the message by reading and responding through writing. Shortly, to be dependent on the line of communication an individual speaks, listens, writes and reads. These all skills of language are the means of communication, when a person reads and listens, it is a language input. At the time of applying writing and speaking that person generalizes the output of language depending on the input of language. At the end of the era 1970s, the four language skills were taught in isolation. The reason for this is practicable to the predomination of the consecutive teaching methods of language that include the "**structuralism approach, method of grammar translation, the method of audio-lingual, the direct method, approach in a natural way, and physical response**" (Rao, 2019, p 240). During the authorization grammar translation method stayed till the 20th century, after that different learning activities were included in analyzing the grammatical rules of the English language. After focusing on the rules of grammar they did the translation of the English language into the student's or learners' native language. In that case, learners were not ready to conduct the language as a means of communication in their day-to-day life. In context as a part of the **structuralism approach** where language has been seen as a complicated system of conjugative parts.

Integration of language skills is much more popular in recent times throughout the world. Integration of language skills includes four types of language skills writing, speaking, reading and listening that emphasize significant communication (Pardede, 2020, p 80 ). The necessity of integration of language skills is that it exalts the learning and application of contents based on reality. This skill can be highly motivating and inspiring for all students from different backgrounds and ages. The easiest way that can be applied to the integration of language skills is by joining the productive and receptive skills that are used crosswise the whole class. In order to accomplish language learning in one's daily life some rules are to be followed, they are based on authentic and interesting topics, taking one step at a time, communicating using simple language and



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building a close association with the environment. It is an important step in this integration of language skills to find someone within the known person who is close enough to communicate with daily. Students pursuing these integrated language skills in learning new languages should make this their new hobby. The best teaching technique that can be included in the integration of language skills is taught by different videos, power projects, and information. Students should concentrate on listening to others, try to learn from them, find their learning gaps, and lastly try to improvise their learning. Concentration, finding gaps, and learning from that is all part of the integration of language skills. There should be good communication between teachers and students.

#### 4. Methodology:

The current study is a quasi-experimental method that aims to determine the effectiveness of an integrated approach in English Language Teaching (ELT) classroom among first-year B.Tech. Engineering students in an engineering college through their regular prescribed curriculum by JNTUK (R20). The textbook used in this study is titled 'InfoTech English', and it is an all-in-one English textbook designed for undergraduate engineering and technology students. It provides students with ample practice in the language skills listening, speaking, reading, and writing, and some of the textbook's lessons were chosen as samples for the research. This study is empirical data-based research that produces an inference that can be verified through observation and experiment.

##### 4.1 Materials

The teaching resources for the segregated approach were gathered from several sources for each of the four language skills. The activities' material catered to the students' real-world interests by including moral tales, newspaper extracts, and poems on racism, real-life examples, and environmental concerns. The assignments focused on real-world activities that the students would probably engage in outside of the L2 classroom, like exchanging knowledge through debate, making presentations, and acting out scenarios in various settings. The integrated approach materials were based on topics from their assigned books and newspapers. Here, we shed light on how the experiment was carried out in the classroom. The work assigned to the subjects comprises language elements from the LSRW. The subjects must collaborate on the assigned project as a language teacher; the researcher must recognize that the subject's concentration on communicating the task's meaning is its most important component. According to research, task-based interaction promotes L2 development by integrating input features, learner internal capacities, and language production (Gass, 2003; Long, 1996; Mackey, in press). These studies have also looked at how task qualities and conditions affect learners.

##### 4.2 Sampling

In order to conduct the study, a sample of 120 students who were enrolled in the B.Tech, Course for the academic year 2019-2020 was purposefully selected. All of the participants had undergone twelve years of English language instruction as a foreign language and were within the age range of 18-20. A pretest was administered to assess their proficiency level in LSRW skills, and based on the results; the participants were divided into two groups: the control group and the experimental group.

##### 4.3 Research Design

The research design employed in the study is quasi-experimental, where the group that was exposed to the usual conditions is referred to as the control group. For this group, topics were assigned in their regular class, taking into account all the four language skills, but were taught in a segregated approach. On the other hand, the group that was exposed to novel ideas or special conditions is referred to as the experimental group, for whom the integrated approach was implemented.



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#### 4.4 Data Collection Tools and Techniques

Utilizing a pre-test and post-test design, the present study aimed to investigate the efficacy of an integrated approach in enhancing students' language skills. The pre-test consisted of questions related to all four language skills, which were used to collect data. The researcher prepared an achievement test of 50 marks that was employed for pre- and post-testing. The test items were focused on the LSRW skills and were designed in accordance with the teaching and testing objectives, assessment criterion, and guidelines for LSRW skills that are appropriate for B.Tech Graduates' proficiency level. The achievement test comprised various test items for assessing the LSRW skills, with each skill being tested for 60 marks. The investigator utilized specific assessment criteria for each test item to quantitatively measure the students' competency levels. The experimental and control groups were selected based on the results of the pre-test, which assessed the students' proficiency in all four language skills and their overall English language proficiency based on their prior knowledge.

#### Tasks designed for Integrated skill Approach:

Table: 01

| S.NO | LISTENING<br>(20 Mins)                     | SPEAKING<br>(60 Mins) | READING<br>(20 Mins)         | WRITING<br>(30 Mins) | VOCABULARY<br>(30 Mins) | GRAMMAR<br>(30 Mins) |
|------|--|-----------------------|------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|
| 1    | Never Tell a lie<br>(Moral Story)<br>MCQ's | Role Play             | Reading<br>Passage           | Letter<br>Writing    | LS/WR                   | S+V+O<br>structure   |
| 2    | Skill India<br>Program                     | Seminar               | Skill India<br>short passage | Paragraph<br>Writing | LS/WR                   | Word order           |

#### Tasks designed for Segregated Approach:





### Listening ( you Tube Links)

06 Activities....06 classes....50 Min each task

#### Speaking (06 )

( Jam, Role Play, Group Activities, show & Tell)

#### Reading (06)

Inferential,  
Controversial..)

#### Writing (06)

#### Vocabulary (06)

#### Grammar (06)

**Table: 02**

#### Assessment Rubrics

Speaking is assessed by observing the following factors

|         |         |                        |         |
|---------|---------|------------------------|---------|
| Content | Grammar | Organization & Thought | Fluency |
|---------|---------|------------------------|---------|

**Table: 03**

Writing is assessed by observing the following factors

|         |         |            |                      |
|---------|---------|------------|----------------------|
| Content | Grammar | Vocabulary | Coherence & Cohesion |
|---------|---------|------------|----------------------|

**Table: 04**

#### Description of Variables

The study's independent variable was the instructional strategy used, which consisted of two treatments: the integrated and segregated approaches. In the segregated approach, students received explicit training in each of the four language sub-skills through three weekly sessions. The training involved clear description, demonstration, and challenging tasks to teach each sub-skill.

In the integrated approach, students were organized into groups comprising both high and low ability students. During the three-hour weekly session, students engaged in conversations, listening, and writing activities on a topic designed for the experiment. Each group member read about a topic of interest and shared their knowledge with the others. Throughout the process, the instructor acted as a facilitator.



## Intervention and Data Collection Procedures

An intervention study aimed at improving the language skills of the participants. The study was conducted during the 2019-2020 academic year, with the intervention lasting from mid-March to mid-April. Prior to the intervention, the researcher selected the training material for the study. A pre-test was conducted to assess the participants' language skills, and they were then assigned to two treatment conditions: an integrated approach and another treatment.

Both groups received one session of three classes per week, taught by the same instructor. The researcher monitored the implementation of the treatment conditions through analysis of the participants' scores and observation data. A post-test was conducted after the intervention to evaluate the participants' proficiency in reading, writing, listening, and speaking.

## Results and Discussion

The study compared the pre-test and post-test results of participants who received the segregated and integrated teaching strategies, using a 0.05 level of confidence with a t-test to establish statistical significance.

### Segregated Approach

The findings suggest that while training with a segregated approach can be successful, it may not be sufficient for fully developing language skills. The lack of working with all four language skills on a single platform prevented continuous interaction and response among the students. Additionally, the discontinuity of the activity hindered students from staying connected to their expected work, and the segregated approach failed to meet the needs and interests of the participants.

### Integrated Approach

In contrast, the integrated approach outperformed the segregated approach significantly, indicating that it may be more effective for language skill development. The integrated approach allowed participants to track their progress, engage in intellectually challenging activities, and make the most of their foundational abilities while exercising freedom. Conversely, the segregated approach hindered participants from effectively utilizing their linguistic skills.

The T-Value of the Difference in the Mean Scores for under the Segregated approach and Integrated approach

| Segregated Approach-Controlled Group |           |           | Integrated Approach-Experimental Group |           |           |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|--|-----------|-----------|
|                                      | Pre -test | Post-test |  | Pre -test | Post-test |
| Mean                                 | 24.13     | 25.95     | Mean                                   | 22.69     | 40.95     |
| Standard Error                       | 0.38      | 0.35      | Standard Error                         | 0.61      | 0.35      |
| Median                               | 25.00     | 26.00     | Median                                 | 23.00     | 41.00     |
| Mode                                 | 26.00     | 24.00     | Mode                                   | 27.00     | 42.00     |
| Standard Deviation                   | 2.99      | 2.77      | Standard Deviation                     | 4.78      | 2.70      |
| T-Test Score                         | 25.96     |           | T-Test Score                           | 3.49      |           |



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The table above summarizes the results.

The results of the study suggest that while training with a segregated approach can be successful, it may not be adequate for fully developing language skills. The findings indicate that a lack of fundamental knowledge may hinder participants from taking charge of their training and providing themselves with relevant feedback for improving their language skills. This outcome is attributed to three factors: first, the absence of working with all four language skills on a single platform at regular intervals prevented continuous interaction and response among students. Second, the discontinuity of the activity was a significant drawback in making the participants stay connected to their expected work. Third, the segregated approach did not cater to the needs and interests of the participants.

Conversely, the results also revealed that the integrated approach significantly outperformed the segregated approach. This finding suggests that an integrated approach may be more effective for language skill development, allowing participants to track their progress, engage in intellectually challenging activities, and make the most of their foundational abilities while exercising freedom. In contrast, the segregated approach hindered participants from effectively utilizing their linguistic skills.

It is important to acknowledge the limitations and potential sources of bias in the study, as well as the validity and reliability of the pre-test and post-test scores and statistical analyses performed, to ensure the significance of the findings.

### **Limitations, conclusions, and implications:**

The study was conducted using undergraduate students enrolled in an engineering college, utilizing specific materials for both integrated and segregated treatments. The outcomes suggest that integrated language training may not always lead to language skill development, given the constraints of the study. Consequently, a balanced approach is recommended, combining both segregated and integrated approaches, rather than regarding them as mutually exclusive. In heterogeneous classrooms, instructors are advised to transition from strictly regulated exercises to student-directed activities, consistent with the perspective of many scholars (e.g., Buck, 1995; Oxford, 1993; Peterson, 1991; Richards, 1990; Rost, 1992; Tsui and Fullilove, 1998).

- Increases learners' motivation and self-confidence by presenting something worthwhile to talk about.
- Reduces their level of stress and anxiety by engaging them in real communication of ideas rather than mechanical practice of skills and components.
- Shifts teachers' attention away from coverage of the textbook towards involving students in communication since integration saves time.
- Encourages the simultaneous use of all language skills and fosters authentic communication, rather than artificial practice of individual skills.
- It offers learners the opportunity for reflection, which is often overlooked in communicative language teaching that prioritizes spontaneous language production and discourages reflective learning.
- This approach also redefines the role of teachers by promoting a learner-centered approach in which students actively engage in meaning-making during reading, writing, and conversational activities with their peers.





## Suggestions for further research:

The first suggestion for further research is to replicate the current study with a larger sample size and a longer time frame. The second recommendation involves examining the outcomes of integrating the segregated approach with the integrated approach in enhancing students' language skills. The third suggestion is to evaluate the difficulties related to implementing the integrated approach in the context of English for Specific Purposes (ESP). The fourth and final recommendation is to investigate the obstacles that may arise in the implementation of an integrated approach in the context of ESP.

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