

A Study of Effectiveness of the Program on Development of Historical Language among Lower Secondary Students

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Abstract: Historical literacy is the ability to work effectively with historical texts. It is essential to develop historical literacy among students at school level. The understanding of historical concepts and language is need of the hour as it felicitates the better understanding of historical events. The researcher prepared a training program based on various activities to develop historical language among the students of lower secondary section. The findings shows that with the help of various activities in which students actively take part historical language could be developed among the lower secondary school children.

Keywords: Historical language and concepts, Lower secondary students, Historical literacy.

1. Introduction

According to Charles Fifth “History is the record of the life of societies of man, of the changes which those societies have gone through, of the ideas which have determined the action of those societies, and the material conditions which have helped or hindered their development.”

History is the story of man, his deeds and actions to satisfy his thirst for knowledge and his love for freedom. History uses a specific language while describing the incidences in the past. Historical Language includes the various historical concepts, terms, terminologies, the historical vocabulary, for example, Revolution, war, Civilizations, empires, administration, etc. Acquiring understanding of key historical concepts enables students to move from the specific to the general, perceive with increasing clarity the wider issues behind the detail, make connections across time and place and between past and present. The understanding of historical concepts among the students deepens as their increasing historical knowledge gives them more opportunity for critical analysis and reflection.

A. Historical literacy

Historical literacy is the ability to work effectively with historical texts. Historical texts include all resources and evidence historians and archeologists use to research the past and the resources that historians produce (Nokes, 2010). Historical literacy does not require an encyclopedic knowledge of historical facts from every era or global location (Wineburg, 2004). Historical literacy implies the possession of the skill set

necessary to read, reason, write, and learn with historical evidence. Factual and conceptual knowledge facilitates historical literacy and factual and conceptual knowledge grows when students practice historical literacy.

Historical literacy requires way of understanding how knowledge is constructed within the discipline of history (Reddy & Van Sledright, 2010). Teachers must begin the building of historical literacies by helping students develop a more mature understanding of the nature of historical inquiry. Chris Husbands in the book “What is history teaching?: language, ideas, and meaning in learning about the past” analyses four approaches to learning about the past: through looking at evidence, through the language of the past, through story and through the imagination. He emphasizes the ways in which pupils and historians structure their own interpretations of history

Historical Language enables students to describe historical events using the appropriate words relating to that particular event or people. Also a sound knowledge of Historical Language, is important for teachers to ensure how much knowledge they have regarding certain concepts, events and people as a part of history.

Historians use specific terminologies to communicate historical concepts and ideas in order to identify similarities between different events, situations of the past.

Four aspects of language in the discipline of History as identified by Chris Husband are as follows,

Language of Historical TIME: In the history specific terminology is used to mention about the past era. For example: Era, Century, Decade, Period, Medieval, Modern etc.

The language of the PAST:

- Specialist terminology: Specific terminology is used while describing about different era. These are the unique terms used to provide details about the society and events of the past. For example: sexton- a church bell ringer, patron, journeyman (a worker employed by someone else), swagman-- tribals etc.
- Shifting language: Modification or changes of experience, event or information Language of dynamics or Polarization in the past. For example: republican, orders, classes, innovations etc.

- c) The language of historical description and analysis: It is a way to communicate the past events which are based on evidences with reflection of historian’s interpretations. For example: Revolution, Democracy, Monarchy nationalism, identity, economic depression, inflation
- d) The language of historical processes: It is a process of change or development that happened over time. It involves the impact of events on human action. For example: change, chronology, continuity etc.

Understanding these language issues as part of the process of building a rich and accurate historical vocabulary. The teacher should help the students learn subject-specific language. The school should incorporate as many opportunities as possible into the history program for students to articulate, discuss, test, and apply relevant concepts.

Historical understanding is less about memorizing facts and more about 'making sense' of the past. This is a process involving knowledge acquisition, skills development and the application of key concepts to an investigation set in a particular historical context.

The researcher being teacher educator observed the situation in the school. It has been noticed that the students try to memorize the details in History subject without paying attention to usage of concepts. Even teachers do not focus on the specific language used while writing historical description of the event. The researcher decided to develop a program which will help in improvement of historical language among the students.

2. Objectives of the research

- To investigate the knowledge about historical concepts among the students.
- To develop the Historical language among the students.
- To study effectiveness of program to develop historical language.

3. Sample

The students of standard VI were selected for the study. The reason of choosing standard VI is that it is the year when students start learning about the basics, acquire new knowledge of history, and hence it is the right age to develop historical language amongst students. The research has selected 35 students. They were of the age group of 10 to 11 years. The students whose parents’ education is less than graduation were selected for the study.

4. Methodology

The researcher has used experimental method to conduct the study. In the present study investigator has selected One Group Pre-test Post-test Design. Design procedure is given below.

- *Administration of Pre-test:* The researcher administered pre-test (O₁), to measure mean score of knowledge of historical language before exposure to the Training Package

- *Treatment:* The researcher exposed subjects to the Training program to develop of historical language (X), for a given period of time.
- *Administration of Post-test:* The researcher administered post-test (O₂), to measure mean score of knowledge of historical language.

5. Tool

Researcher has developed pre- test and post to check knowledge of historical language among the students.

6. Training package

For the present study the researcher prepared ‘Training Program to develop of historical language’. The researcher developed the training program based on the ADDIE model which is the generic process consisting of five phases- Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, and Evaluation.

The objectives of the training package were as follows:

- To acquaint the learners with the various terms and concepts used to describe Historical events,
- To develop Historical language among the students.

The training package had face to face learning activities. The strategies incorporated in the training package were Digital Story Telling, Historical Slogan Writing, Describe the Image, Swap them. The researcher selected second and third period on the timetable of standard VI students every day. Therefore, every alternate day from Monday to Friday, the researcher has engaged class for seventy minutes. Every day after completion of the activity the researcher taken the reflections on the content.

The pre-test was conducted before implementation of training package and post- test was given students after the implementation of the training package.

The content was selected for Maharashtra State Board Textbook of History subject for standard VI. The students always feel that History is a boring subject focus more on rote memorization of the content. The History subject teachers utilize traditional methods for teaching the content. Therefore the researcher selected content from the History subject.

By using various methods of teaching in the class the students were able to learn the content more effectively and efficiently. They were active participants in the classroom activities.

7. Findings

Table 1

Development of communication and language skills			
	%	P Value	significance
Pre Test	68%	P = 0.0003	significant
Post Test	100%		

During the pre-test, only 68% students were having good communication and language skills, while in the post-test there were 100 % students communication and language skills was

developed. 47.0588% increase could be observed in post test scores in comparison to pre test scores. The significance difference is observed in both the scores.

Table 2
Better understanding of concepts

	%	P Value	significance
Pre Test	44%	P < 0.0001	significant
Post Test	96%		

44% students were having understanding of Historical concepts before the implementation of training program which has increased to 96% after implementation of training program. 118.182% increase could be observed in post test scores in comparison to pre test scores. The significance difference is observed in both the scores.

Table 3
Usage of Historical concepts

	%	P Value	significance
Pre Test	8%	P < 0.0001	significant
Post Test	92%		

8% students could use Historical concepts while describing past events during pre test and 92% students could use Historical concepts while describing past events after implementation of training program. In comparison to pre test scores 1050% increase could be observed in post test scores. The significance difference is observed in both the scores.

Table 4
Learning historical terms and concepts is important

	%	P Value	significance
Pre Test	8%	P < 0.0001	significant
Post Test	96%		

During the pre-test 8% students agreed whereas during the post-test, 96% students agreed that learning historical terms and concepts is important. In comparison to pre test scores 1100% increase could be observed in post test scores. The significance difference is observed in both the scores.

Table 5
Understanding the event

	%	P Value	significance
Pre Test	44%	P < 0.0001	significant
Post Test	98%		

During the pre-test, 44% students agreed and 98% students agreed Learning historical terms helps in understanding the event. In comparison to pre test scores 122.727% increase could be observed in post test scores. The significance difference is observed in both the scores.

Table 6
Improvement of writing skills

	%	P Value	significance
Pre Test	32%	P < 0.0001	significant
Post Test	99%		

During the pre-test, 32% students agreed that knowledge of Historical concepts help in improvement of writing skills and after implementation of program during post test 99% students agreed that knowledge of Historical concepts help in improvement of writing skills. In comparison to pre test scores 209.375% increase could be observed in post test scores. The significance difference is observed in both the scores.

The findings shows that the activities were successful enough to bring in a transformation amongst the minds of children regarding history as a subject, terms concepts and vocabularies used in several historical topics. Hence the research was successful in bringing about positive changes by developing the historical language among the lower secondary students.

8. Conclusion

This paper presented a study on effectiveness of the program on development of historical language among lower secondary students.

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