ABSTRACT

The main objective of this study was to identify the root cause of the poor performance of the children of upper primary level in the Government schools of Jammu and Kashmir State in English language and the challenges faced by them in learning the language. The research work was carried out in three phases: pre-survey, survey and the experimental study. As a first step the English textbooks prescribed for upper primary level learners of Government schools were evaluated. Then a survey was conducted and two questionnaires were administered among English teachers and the upper primary level learners. The analysis of the data was done and the overall findings were summarized. The findings of the pre-survey and survey showed that the textbooks prescribed for them were too complex as they had literary content and the methodologies adopted by the teachers proved to be ineffective. As a result of these factors the performance of the learners was poor in the exams. In order to make the teaching and the learning of language more effective and to improve the proficiency of language of children, the researcher developed innovative modules. The content chosen for these modules was culture-specific and the tasks devised encouraged participatory learning. The aim of experimenting these modules was to investigate the impact of task-based language teaching (TBLT) using culture-specific contents to the upper primary level learners of Government schools of Jammu and Kashmir State. The experiment was conducted in 40 Government schools. Initially a pre-test was given to the control group and to the experimental group. The test scores were analysed and compared. It was found that both the groups were equally poor in English language. Further the experimental group was taught language through the innovative modules using task-based approach. After teaching the modules to the experimental group a post-test was given to them. It was observed that there was a significant improvement in the performance of the experimental group of learners in the pre-test and the post-test. The experiment proved that the innovative culture-specific modules taught by adopting task-based approach and culture-specific contents have been helpful in developing the English language proficiency of upper primary (8th Standard) learners of Government schools. Although this study was conducted within a limited duration the results clearly show that the content related to the culture of children and the tasks given for practice have motivated them to learn the language and therefore have been effective in developing their competence in English language.