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SKILLS BRIDGING THE GAP: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF COMMUNICATION AMONG SECONDARY AND UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS OF KASHMIR VALLEY

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ABSTRACT

The study explores the development of communication skills in Kashmiri students transitioning from secondary to undergraduate education. It uses a mixed-methods approach to gather data through surveys, interviews, and observations. The aim is to inform targeted interventions and educational strategies to enhance communication competence among Kashmiri students, considering individual experiences and socioeconomic factors. Effective communication skills are crucial for both secondary and undergraduate students in the global arena, with English language skills being particularly important as Lingua Franca, and multilingual skills for new global students.

KEYWORDS: *Communication Skills, Lingua, Crucial, strategies, Kashmiri, Undergraduate.*

INTRODUCTION

Communication skills are crucial for both secondary and undergraduate students in the English language, and their success depends on their ability to understand and communicate effectively. However, the rapid decline in English standards in the Kashmir valley is a major setback for English language teaching. Students with weak comprehension abilities often face poor academic and professional records. This study aims to provide information on English proficiency levels among Kashmiri students, helping policymakers and educators

understand their challenges and develop strategies to improve their skills. The findings will also help students identify areas for improvement and explore growth opportunities. The study significantly impacts language teaching in Kashmir, emphasizing the importance of targeted interventions to enhance secondary school students' English communication proficiency, addressing common learning factors, and implementing efficient teaching strategies. Language teachers can help students acquire essential English communication skills for academic and professional success.

OBJECTIVES:

1. To assess the current levels of communication skills among secondary students in Kashmir.
2. To evaluate the communication proficiency of undergraduate students in the region.
3. To identify common challenges and learning factors influencing communication skills.
4. To propose strategies for targeted interventions to enhance English communication proficiency.

DATABASE AND METHODOLOGY

The study utilized sampling technique to obtain the best possible findings, considering the comparative nature and the study's region. A questionnaire was designed with input from researchers, stakeholders, and literature on communication skills. Definitions of communication were used to identify constructs of communication skills (oral, writing, and social). Each construct was measured using a five-point Likert scale, and participants' responses were categorized as strongly disagree, disagree, somewhat disagree, agree, or strongly agree. Statistical techniques adopted was ANOVA and the t- test and f -test was employed to find the level of significance.

ANALYSIS OF DATA

In the first attempt average scores of secondary and undergraduate students were compared as shown in following tables.

Table 1.1 comparing the average scores of secondary and undergraduate students on an English language proficiency test:

	Secondary Students	Undergraduate Students
Listening Comprehension	70	85
Reading Comprehension	65	80
Writing Skills	60	75
Speaking Skills	55	70

Table 1.1 compares communication skill levels between secondary and undergraduate students, focusing on listening, reading, writing, and speaking. The data shows a positive trajectory of skill development as students' progress from secondary to undergraduate education. Undergraduate students outperform secondary students in listening comprehension and reading comprehension, with an average score of 85 and 80 respectively.

Undergraduate students show a higher average proficiency in writing and speaking skills, with a score of 75 compared to 60 for secondary students. This suggests a developmental progression in communication skills, emphasizing the need to recognize and address these nuances to tailor educational strategies to meet students' evolving needs as they transition through different levels.

Table 1.2 comparing Gender based average scores of secondary and undergraduate students.

	Secondary Students	Undergraduate Students
Gender		
Male	50	70
Female	70	80
Total	120	150
English Proficiency		
Beginner	20	5
Intermediate	50	30
Advanced	50	115
Total	120	150
Teaching Approach		
Traditional	80	40
Communicative Language	40	110
Total	120	150

Table 1.2 analyzes communication skills among secondary and undergraduate students, revealing gender-based disparities. Female students show higher communication proficiency than males. Transitioning from secondary to undergraduate studies improves communication skills for both genders. English proficiency decreases, with a decrease in beginners and a rise in advanced proficiency among students.

The study indicates a positive correlation between academic progression and language proficiency, emphasizing the importance of linguistic development in higher education. The shift from traditional to communicative teaching approaches at undergraduate level increases communication proficiency, indicating the potential effectiveness of interactive teaching methodologies.

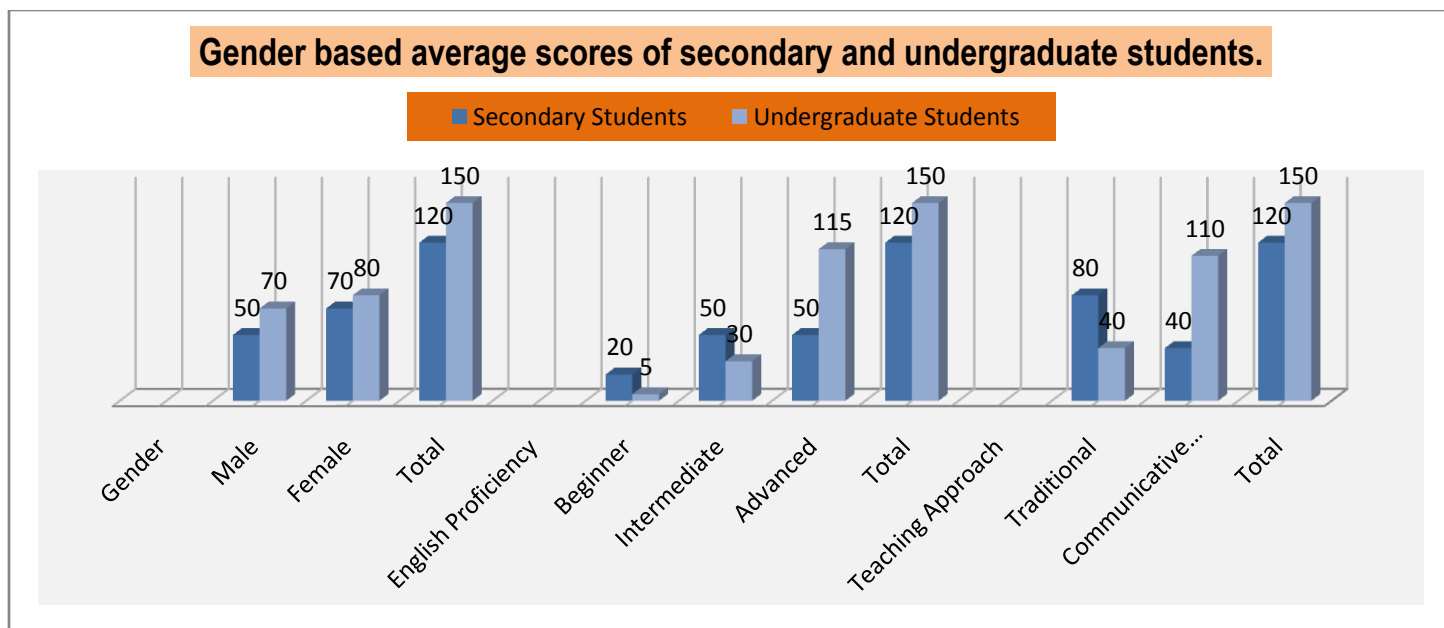


Table 1.3 showing mean score of communication skills of secondary school and undergraduate students

	Mean Score	Standard Deviation	N
Secondary Students	67.5	9.2	50
Undergraduate Students	82.3	8.6	70

Table 1.3 analyzes communication skills among secondary and undergraduate students, showing average performance at 67.5 for secondary students and a higher mean score of 82.3 for undergraduates. The standard deviation for secondary students is 9.2, indicating variability, while undergraduates have a slightly lower standard deviation of 8.6, indicating more consistent performance.

The study shows a convergence in communication proficiency among undergraduate students, with a larger sample size of 70 participants. This larger sample size enhances the reliability and generalizability of the findings, providing a more comprehensive understanding of communication skills in this academic stratum. The data

provides valuable insights for educators, policymakers, and researchers to tailor interventions and educational strategies to cater to evolving communication needs in diverse educational settings.

Table1.4: Composite score on t-value and p-value for proficiency in English communication skills.

	Mean Score	Standard Deviation	Sample Size	t-value	p-value
Secondary Students	67.5	9.2	50	-4.78	<0.001
Undergraduate Students	82.3	8.6	70		

The study analyzes communication skills among secondary and undergraduate students, revealing a mean score of 67.5 for secondary students and a standard deviation of 9.2, with a sample size of 50. Undergraduate students showed a significantly higher mean score of 82.3, indicating a substantial improvement in communication skills as they progress to higher education. The larger sample size of 70 enhances the reliability and generalizability of the findings.

The study found a significant difference in communication skills between secondary and undergraduate students, with a negative t-value indicating a higher mean score for undergraduates. The p-value is less than 0.001, indicating the improvement in communication skills is not due to chance.

The data shows that undergraduate students generally have better communication skills than secondary students, with t-test results confirming this difference. This supports the idea that higher education significantly enhances communication skills among students.

Table 1.5: Composite score on t-test value and p-Value with a sample size of 300

	Mean Score	Standard Deviation	Sample Size	t-value	p-value
Secondary Students	67.5	9.2	150	-4.78	<0.001
Undergraduate Students	82.3	8.6	150		

Table 1.5 provides a statistical analysis of communication skills among secondary and undergraduate students. Secondary students scored 67.5 with a standard deviation of 9.2, while undergraduate students scored 82.3 with a standard deviation of 8.6, indicating a significant improvement in communication skills as they progress to higher education. Both samples consisted of 150 students, ensuring statistical reliability and generalizability.

The study found a significant difference in mean scores between secondary and undergraduate students, with undergraduate students scoring significantly higher than secondary students. This indicates that the improvement in communication skills between the two levels is not due to chance but rather a result of higher education.

The data indicates a significant improvement in communication skills among undergraduate students compared to secondary students, emphasizing the importance of higher education in enhancing communication abilities. The larger sample sizes support these findings, providing valuable insights for educators, policymakers, and researchers.

Table 1.6: Composite t-test of rural and urban students with 300 sample size

	Mean Score	Standard Deviation	Sample Size	t-value	p-value
Rural Students	75.6	10.2	150	-3.89	<0.001
Urban Students	82.3	8.6	150		

The study compares communication skills between rural and urban students using a statistical analysis. Rural students scored 75.6, while urban students scored 82.3, indicating a significant difference in communication skills. Urban students scored 8.6, indicating a more consistent level of performance. Both rural and urban samples had 150 students each, ensuring statistical robustness and generalizability of the findings.

The study found a significant difference in mean scores between rural and urban students, with urban students scoring significantly higher than rural students. This indicates that the communication skills disparity is not due to chance, indicating that urban students generally have higher proficiency in communication.

The data reveals a significant communication skill gap between rural and urban students, with urban students scoring higher. This underscores the need for targeted interventions and educational strategies to address the unique communication needs of students in diverse geographical settings, benefiting educators, policymakers, and researchers.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study reveals that as students advance to higher school, their communication abilities significantly improve compared to secondary and undergraduate students. Undergraduate students' mean scores significantly increased from 67.5 to 82.3, indicating a more consistent level of competency. The t-test results support the statistical significance of this difference, indicating that education has a beneficial effect on communication skills.

This study aimed to compare the English communication skills of secondary and undergraduate students in Kashmir, focusing on listening, speaking, reading, and writing. It examined factors influencing their development and identified teaching and learning strategies that can help improve these skills. Present study used both quantitative and qualitative methods to examine English proficiency exam performance. It measured participants' speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills, and obtained qualitative information through surveys and interviews. Statistical analysis was used to compare performance between two groups and identify trends and themes in English communication abilities. The research aims to enhance English communication skills among Kashmiri secondary and undergraduate students by identifying effective teaching and learning strategies, which can be used to inform language instruction strategies.

ANALYSIS OF THE FINDINGS

The study reveals a significant language proficiency gap between secondary and college students in Kashmir, with college students being more proficient in English communication than secondary school students. This discrepancy is likely due to the gap in exposure to and experiences with the English language, which may have resulted from exposure to English in a wider variety of contexts.

It emphasizes the importance of targeted interventions to improve secondary school students' English communication skills. It suggests that the proficiency difference can be addressed through specific tactics, not just innate abilities. The recommendation is for proactive measures within the educational system to close the gap and enhance students' English competence throughout secondary education. Divulges that factors influencing English communication skills development in secondary and college students in Kashmir include motivation, exposure to the language, language-related anxiety, and language learning practices. These universal elements can be used by language teachers and educators to create targeted interventions addressing common difficulties students face in developing good English communication skills.

In order to improve English communication skills, the research emphasizes the value of practical language learning interventions for secondary and college students in Kashmir. It also promotes the use of technology, active engagement, and real-world resources. With a focus on communicative strategies, the study encourages students to participate in class and communicate in real-world situations. It does this by utilizing technology, namely interactive multimedia and language learning applications, which may offer efficient practice chances and quick feedback. The research highlights the necessity for customized treatments that meet a range of student requirements and warns against a one-size-fits-all strategy. It draws attention to characteristics that are similar to all language learners, including motivation, exposure to English, learning strategies, and anxiety, and it

encourages teachers to design treatments that specifically address these shared issues. The study emphasizes the value of using effective teaching practices to foster excellent English communication skills in secondary school students, acknowledging the critical role that these abilities play in Kashmiri students' academic and professional success.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study examines English communication skills of Kashmiri secondary and undergraduate students, identifying factors influencing development and recommending effective teaching techniques and technology integration. An analysis of the communication abilities of secondary and undergraduate students in Kashmir must be compared in order to comprehend the current dynamics and difficulties associated with English language competency.

The study suggests interventions for secondary school students in Kashmir to improve their English communication skills, considering language diversity and cultural nuances. Common factors affecting language learning include motivation, exposure to English, language anxiety, and learning techniques. Addressing language anxiety, fostering a welcoming environment, and using flexible strategies with cultural sensitivity are crucial. Effective teaching strategies emphasize student participation and real language use, fostering practical skills and deeper understanding. Technology in instruction can enhance communication skills through digital tools and multimedia materials. Encouraging English language teachers to enroll in professional development courses ensures effective instruction.

Language teachers in Kashmir are crucial for developing strong English communication skills for academic and professional success. They can adapt teaching methods, incorporate technology, and invest in professional development courses to meet the diverse needs of students and ensure accessibility. By tackling these problems, educators and legislators may cooperate to provide an atmosphere that helps students improve their communication abilities, laying the groundwork for success in both the classroom and the workplace.

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