# A Mixed Approach Stand Effective in Developing Interest in Teaching - Learning Writing Skills among the High School Level Learners of Rural Areas: A Study

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**Abstract:**

This paper is an attempt to identify the effectiveness and suitability of the mixed teaching-learning approach in developing language proficiency among learners from rural backgrounds. The survey was held to examine the views of the learners towards the application of a mixed teaching-learning approach that includes group learning and the use of online platforms in teaching English as a second language. The present study is held through a survey from which the data in the form of responses was gathered from the learners of rural areas of the Rayalaseema region of Andhra Pradesh, India. The survey data was analyzed through SPSS for statistical analysis. The interpretations of the analysis were drawn and presented through tables and figures. The paper focuses on the consent of the target learners towards the implementation of the mixed approach and the same is structured through a proper understanding of the approach, the methodology adopted, the survey held, and analysis of the data for the conclusion of the interpretations drawn after the analysis.

**Keywords:** Mixed teaching-learning approach – group learning – cooperative learning -Technology in ELT – ICT - TPACK

## I. Introduction

Several teaching-learning methods, techniques, and approaches have been carried out in ELT to attain proficiency in the English language and communication skills of learners. Though scholars and teachers have been attempting to make learners competent enough to learn English as a medium of expression to share their ideas, there is a pedagogical transformation required in teaching English. A mixed approach to teaching English provides an in-depth and comprehensive ability among learners over any topic or subject (Johnson et al. 2017). It is expected to have a wide range of opportunities to learn things better. It is believed that accuracy in language is attained through constant involvement in various activities that make the learners comfortably understand the language aspects such as grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation (Spratt et al. 2011). Rishi (2014) argued that accuracy is related to the capability of a learner that makes him produce a grammatical sentence. However, the approach that constantly provides chances for the learners to be involved in learning is expected to attain accuracy in language. Thus, an application of mixed teaching-learning techniques in developing language competencies among the students from rural backgrounds is identified and the researcher intended to study the attitudes of the targeted learners towards the approach.

## II. Mixed Approach

A mixed approach is an approach that combines more than one technique or approach in teaching to improve targeted abilities among the learners. The primary purpose of a mixed approach is to achieve perfection by involving the learners constantly which causes them to develop self-reliance in the subject taught, Basheer and Ratna (2023). The present study is an attempt to identify the attitudes of students from rural areas toward the implementation of a mixed teaching-learning approach in developing communication skills, especially writing skills in English. The mixed approach in this study points out the two different teaching-learning techniques that are expected to be

introduced in the process of ELT group learning and the use of online platforms or ICT. Inclusion of ICT tools into teaching writing skills among the rural learners help them in many ways by making their learning interesting, dynamic, and productive. Since the learners of today's technical world totally addicted to the use of ICT tools such as smartphones, laptops, and tablets. The use of these ICT tools into teaching writing make fruitful changes in learning.

## II.I Group learning

Group learning is a combination of cooperative learning and task-based learning that promotes involvement and cooperation towards a particular task given. According to Johnson and Johnson (2012), cooperative learning is a technique in which learners are involved by setting them some common goals, to achieve them learners understand and do their best. Cooperative learning improves thinking in which learners help each other (Huang et al. 2012). Riley and Anderson (2006) defined cooperative learning as a pedagogy that provides learners with a platform on which they can share their ideas and learn from others. Accomplishment of the group goals is the primary characteristic of cooperative learning, (Yi and LuXi, 2012). Task-based learning focuses on the formulation of learning as learner-centered. Task-based language learning is a fitting teaching-learning technique in the acquisition of a second language, (Ellis & Rod 2003). Pre-task, while-task, and post-task are the three important stages of Task-based language learning, (Jane, 1996). Numan (2004) argued that TBLL provides a chance for learners to guide their peers and to be guided by their peers as well. TBLL carries many advantages such as it offers opportunities to showcase the skills, it allows learners to think out of the box to solve the given task, and it improves soft skills among the learners, it also develops the interest to work in a team.

## II.II Use of Technology in ELT

Technology in today's world has become an essential part of human life. There is a technical shift identified in teaching-learning pedagogies. Many of the teachers have already employed technology in ELT. Readily available information, the possibility of autonomy, and instant feedback are the three important advantages of employing technology in teaching-learning English writing skills, (Ghahri et al. 2015). Singhal (1997) pointed out that the method of including technology in teaching-learning provides instant interactions among the learners through technical devices. Learning through digital medium improves writing ability to sentence level, linguistic accuracy, grammatical correction, and also instantaneous feedback (Chang & Swales 1999; Truscott, 2007; Chandler, 2003; Ellis, 1990; Sheen et al., 2009).

## II.III ICT tools in ELT

Several studies reported that integration of ICT tools in ELT resulted in lucrative changes among the learners in their learning written as well as spoken language abilities. A research study explained that the inclusion of ICT tools stimulated learners in engaging themselves in learning, Dinc (2019). ICT in ELT not only benefits learners but also teacher as well, Dinc (2017). Technology integration further compacted to TPACK which stands for Technology, Pedagogy, and Content Knowledge, Thompson and Mishra Hossein and Hulus (2019). It is understood that ICT in ELT can stand as an approach powered with functioning, organizing, organizing, and elaborating the subject material in ELT methodology.

## III. Research Methodology

The survey method was followed in this study, and the data was collected in the form of survey responses to the survey questionnaires; the responses were collected from the selected population of high school-level students from rural areas. The data collected in the form of survey responses was analyzed and conclusions were drawn through descriptive statistics, the SPSS (Statistical Program for Social Sciences) application was utilized for this purpose.

### III.I Objectives of the Study

The primary aim of the study is to understand the acceptability of the mixed approach among learners from rural backgrounds through which language is improved effectively. The specific objectives of the study are mentioned below.

- To collect the perceptions of learners towards the suitability of the mixed approach in developing language proficiency
- To identify the ease of employing mixed teaching-learning approach in ELT

### III.II Survey Statements

The short survey that carried a few statements in connection to the identification of students' perceptions towards the mixed teaching-learning approach in ELT and writing skills other than the demographical information was prepared over the Google Forms platform; the statements were directed to discover the opinions of the learners towards the practice of group learning teaching methods in developing English as a language for communication in professional environments. The survey statements were asked in a five-point Likert Scale format that lasts the consent from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree. The survey link (https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1I8SNpamvghLuMrE0X3R5cFIO-Jf3EZ13jusHOEdaNRQ/edit?pli=1) was shared among the target students over WhatsApp. The below picture provides the screenshot of the survey prepared on the Google Forms platform.
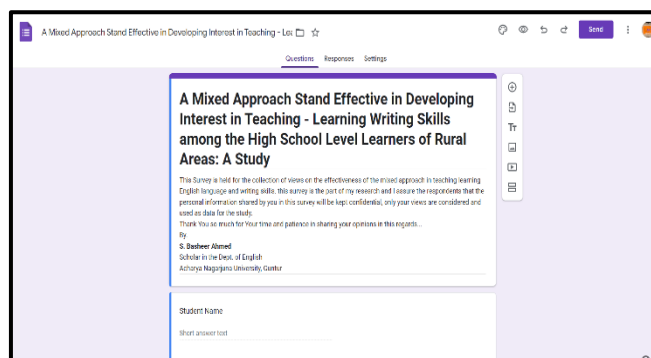


Figure 1 Screenshot of the home page of the Google form prepared to conduct the survey

### III.III Survey Questionnaire

The student survey questionnaire was prepared including five direct statements which were aimed at the identification of guanine responses towards the implementation of group learning techniques and the use of technology in teaching-learning writing skills of learners from rural areas. The questionnaire also consists of some demographical statements such as name, nativity, School, and class that are not taken for the analysis but used only to have confidence over the given information.

### IV. Data Analysis

Statement 1 *I believe learning could be comfortable if group learning techniques and technology are used in teaching writing skills.* This statement was given to identify the perceptions of the respondents towards the group learning strategy and technology in teaching writing skills and how comfortable they feel working along with their peers and interacting over technical platforms. The responses of the learners are presented in Table 1 and Figure 2 below.

Table 1. GL and technology in teaching writing provide comfort in learning

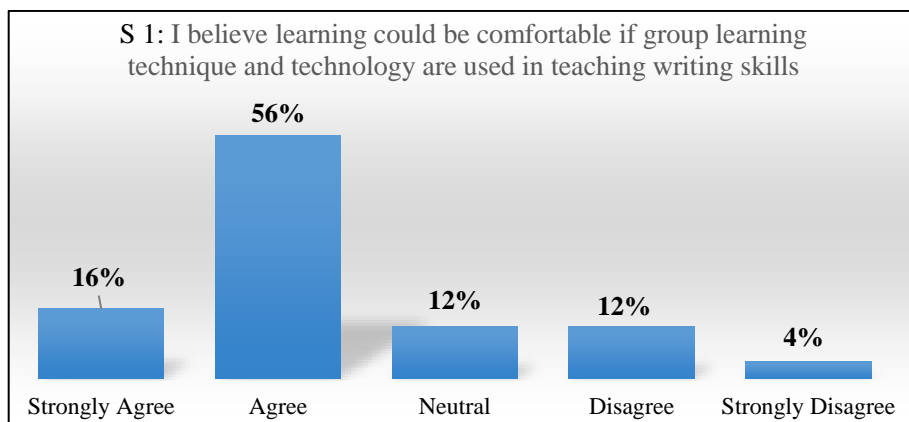| S 1: I believe learning could be comfortable if group learning technique and technology are used in teaching writing skills | Number of Responses (50) | Percentage % |
|---|---|---|
| Strongly Agree | 8 | 16 |
| Agree | 28 | 56 |
| Neutral | 6 | 12 |
| Disagree | 6 | 12 |
| Strongly Disagree | 2 | 4 |



Figure 2. GL and technology in teaching writing provide comfort in learning

Table 1 and Figure 2 show the percentage of acceptance that the respondents have towards the given statement; 16% of them strongly agreed, 56% agreed 12% were neutral to the statement and only 12% and 4% of the respondents disagreed with the statement. It implies that most of the respondents have a very constructive opinion towards employing Group learning (GL) and the use of technology in teaching writing skills. They believed that the mixed approach could provide learners comfort in their learning.

Statement 2 *The mixed approach helps learners to correct language proficiency, especially in connection to writing skills effortlessly and improves language performance,* this statement was made to identify the opinions of the respondents on whether they support the mixed approach as an effective method of improving language proficiency as well as writing skills. The responses of the learners are presented in Table 2 and Figure 3 below.

Table 2. The Mixed approach helps correct language, especially writing skills

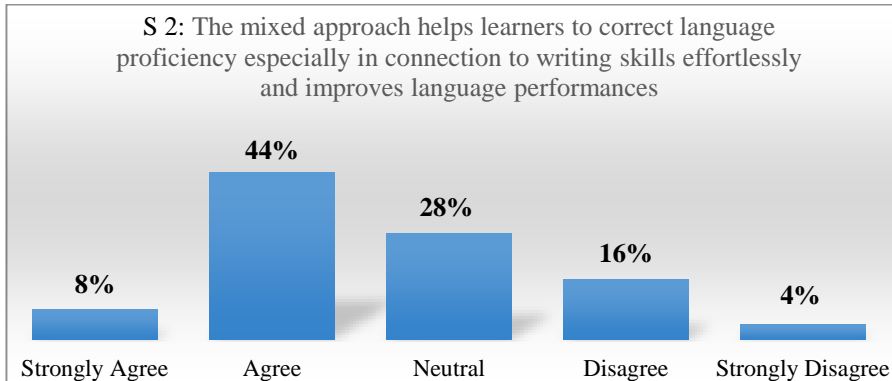| S 2: The mixed approach helps learners to correct language proficiency, especially in connection to writing skills effortlessly and improves language performances | Number of Responses | Percentage % |
|---|---|---|
| Strongly Agree | 4 | 8 |
| Agree | 22 | 44 |
| Neutral | 14 | 28 |
| Disagree | 8 | 16 |
| Strongly Disagree | 2 | 4 |

Figure 3. The mixed approach helps correct language, especially writing skills

Among the respondents 8% strongly agreed, 44 % agreed 28% were neutral to the statement and only 16% and 4% of the respondents disagreed with the statement; it is clear that 54% of the respondents showed a positive opinion and agreed that the mixed approach helps the learners correct themselves in language learning and writing skills.

Statement 3 *I believe that the Mixed approach could help learners share their ideas without any fear and learn things easy manner since they could get their doubts clear from their peers as well as through online platforms.* This statement was given to identify the interpretations of the respondents towards the mixed approach and whether they believe that it helps them share independently. The responses of the learners are presented in Table 3 and Figure 4 below.

Table 3. The mixed approach helps share ideas and opinions without fear

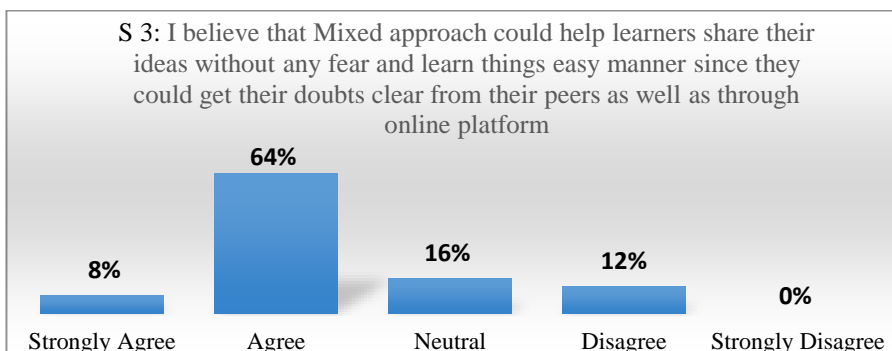| S 3: I believe that Mixed approach could help learners share their ideas without any fear and learn things easy manner since they could get their doubts clear from their peers as well as through online platform | Number of Responses | Percentage % |
|---|---|---|
| Strongly Agree | 4 | 8 |
| Agree | 32 | 64 |
| Neutral | 8 | 16 |
| Disagree | 6 | 12 |
| Strongly Disagree | 0 | 0 |



Figure 4. The mixed approach helps share ideas and opinions without fear

Statement 4 - *The mixed approach prioritizes learner and their learning over learning through teacher teaching which is called in other words learner-centred learning.* This statement was asked to find out the perceptions of the learners towards the mixed approach, and whether it helps in the creation of a learner-centred environment within the classroom as well as outside the classroom. The responses of the learners are highlighted in Table 4 and Figure 5 below.

Among the respondents 8% strongly agreed, 64 % agreed 16% stayed neutral on the statement and only 12% of the respondents have disagreed with the statement; it is also clear that 54% of the respondents showed a constructive observation and believed that the mixed approach benefits them in getting rid of their fears due to individual and independent participation that allows them to convey their ideas independently and confidently with their peers.

Table 4. The mixed approach creates a learner-centred environment

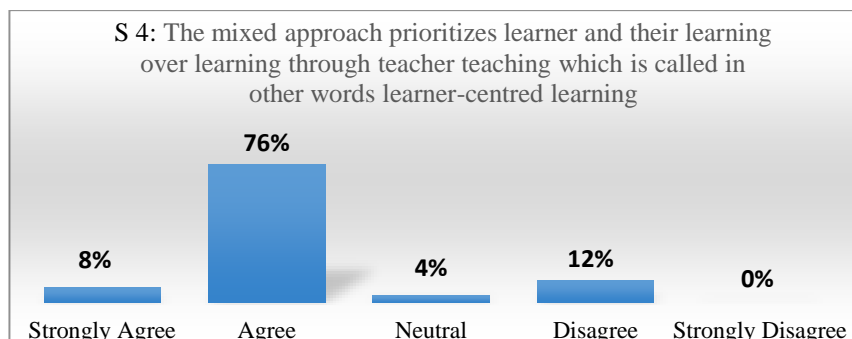| **S 4:** The mixed approach prioritizes learner and their learning over learning through teacher teaching which is called in other words learner-centred learning | Number of Responses | Percentage % |
|---|---|---|
| Strongly Agree | 4 | 8 |
| Agree | 38 | 76 |
| Neutral | 2 | 4 |
| Disagree | 6 | 12 |
| Strongly Disagree | 0 | 0 |



Figure 5. The mixed approach creates a learner-centered environment

Among the respondents 8% strongly agreed, 76 % agreed and 4% were neutral to the given statement and only 12% of respondents disagreed with the statement; it illuminates that 84% of the respondents had a very positive understanding and thought that the mixed approach creates a learner-centred learning environment.

Statement 5 *mixed approach makes learners practice the exhibition of creativity in language usage besides developing their confidence level.* This statement was given to collect the views of the respondents if they consider that the mixed learning approach helps in creating space to show their creativity and also helps them in gaining confidence in the presentation of ideas through English. The responses of the learners are presented in Table 5 and Figure 6 below.

Table 5. The mixed approach encourages creativity besides developing confidence

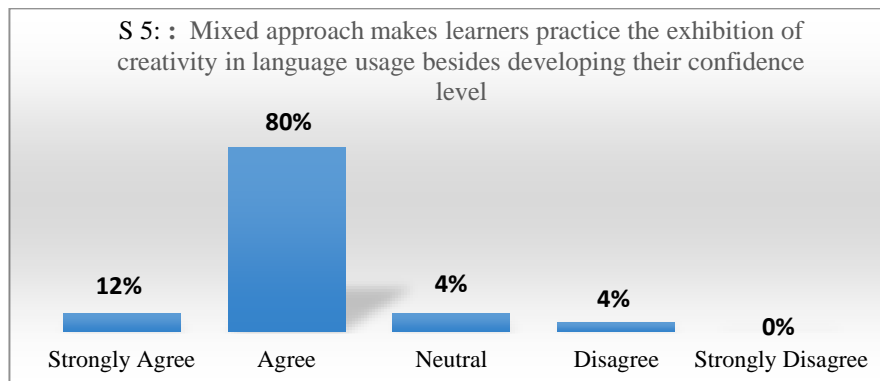| S 5: Mixed approach makes learners practice the exhibition of creativity in language usage besides developing their confidence level | Number of Responses | Percentage % |
|---|---|---|
| Strongly Agree | 6 | 12 |
| Agree | 40 | 80 |
| Neutral | 2 | 4 |
| Disagree | 2 | 4 |
| Strongly Disagree | 0 | 0 |



Figure 6. The mixed approach encourages creativity besides developing confidence

Among the respondents 12% strongly agreed, 80 % agreed, 4% were neutral to the given statement and only 4% of respondents disagreed with the statement; it is clear that 92% of the respondents had a constructive opinion towards the given statement and they agreed that the mixed approach makes the learners show their creativity in the presentation of language proficiency and communication skills besides making them increase their confidence in communication and language-related presentations.

## V. Interpretations drawn from the analysis

The interpretations were drawn from the survey data analysis by using the statistical software Statistical Program for Social Sciences (SPSS), and the survey responses were uploaded in the software to hold a proper statistical examination of the research data. The outcomes of the interpretations are presented below.

Table 6. Overall statistical analysis of the survey data

| Statements | N Valid | Mean | Median | Mode | Std. Deviation | Variance | Minimum | Maximum | Sum |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **S1:** I believe learning could be comfortable if group learning technique and technology are used in teaching writing skills | 50 | 3.68 | 4.00 | 4 | 1.030 | 1.060 | 1 | 5 | 92 |
| **S2:** The mixed approach helps learners to correct language proficiency, especially in connection to writing skills effortlessly and improves language performances | 50 | 3.36 | 4.00 | 4 | .995 | .990 | 1 | 5 | 84 |
| **S3:** I believe that Mixed approach could help learners share their ideas without any fear and learn things easy manner since they could get their doubts clear from their peers as well as through online platform | 50 | 3.68 | 4.00 | 4 | .802 | .643 | 2 | 5 | 92 |
| **S4:** The mixed approach prioritizes learner and their learning over learning through teacher teaching which is called in other words learner-centred learning | 50 | 3.80 | 4.00 | 4 | .764 | 36.583 | 2 | 5 | 95 |
| **S5:** Mixed approach makes learners practice the exhibition of creativity in language usage besides developing their confidence level | 50 | 3.92 | 4.00 | 4 | .572 | .327 | 2 | 5 | 98 |

The mean scores of the given statements have fallen between 3.36 and 3.92 and this range of agreement falls between neutral and agree, all these values are above *neutral,* on the other hand, the median and mode values of all the five statements are noted as to be '4'. Thus, the consent is considered to be positive. It is interpreted from the above observations that a mixed approach is an acceptable approach since it offers liberty, ease, self-reliance, autonomy and flexible involvement to the learners.

## VI. Conclusion

The analysis and interpretations of the data received from the survey responses provide the conclusion that employing the mixed approach, especially for the improvement of proficiency in language and communication skills of the target learners can fetch lucrative results. The responses received from the learners clearly stated that the mixed teaching-learning approach provides comfort, convenience, and a trouble-free learning atmosphere, and also the learners find it an appropriate practice due to its outstanding features such as sit, learn, share and progress. This approach provides a partial contribution of the teacher and full-fledged involvement of the learners. It can be concluded from the research study that the mixed teaching-learning approach helps learners in learning and it is significant in terms of participation, motivation, and presentation of the English language.

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