Enhancing English Language Learning among Slow Learners at the Undergraduate Level: A Study on the Effectiveness of Multimedia-Based Remedial Teaching in Indian Colleges

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Abstract: *The persistent decline in English language proficiency among Indian undergraduate students has raised serious concerns about the effectiveness of current teaching practices. One major issue is the confusion between teaching literature and teaching language skills, resulting in poor student outcomes, especially among slow learners. This study investigates the impact of multimedia-assisted remedial instruction on the retention, comprehension, and performance of slow learners in English at the college level. A pre-test and post-test design was employed, involving students from various colleges in Bangalore. The learners were exposed to a specially designed audio-visual teaching module, and the results demonstrated significant improvement across all measured parameters — statistical data retention (50%), terminological understanding (39.5%), and comprehension of meanings and spellings (34.1%). The findings strongly support the integration of innovative, learner-centric approaches such as multimedia instruction to address the diverse needs of English language learners. The study concludes that a well-structured, motivational, and technology-enhanced learning environment can substantially bridge the performance gap for slow learners and make English learning more accessible and effective.*

Introduction

A significant factor contributing to the decline in English teaching standards is the teachers' inability to differentiate between the instruction of literature and the development of language skills. The study of a language should not be regarded as an ultimate goal in itself; rather, it functions as a medium for cultivating effective expression and comprehension, which are best achieved through mastery of the language's stylistic features. According to A. K. Sharma: "English language teaching in India, you will agree with me, has suffered a lot so much that our students who pass intermediate or degree examinations with English either as a compulsory or as an elective subject can neither speak nor write correct English, may be because the emphasis in our schools and colleges has always been on the conceptual content and the stylistic content has been neglected so far."

Even more than seven decades after India's independence, English continues to occupy a position of importance in the country. No single indigenous language has been able to replace English as

the chief medium of communication or as the principal official language. Despite the influence of nationalistic sentiments and emotional resistance, English gradually reasserted its role in Indian society. In the present context, it is imperative to reflect on *what to teach* and *how to teach* a foreign language, keeping in mind the objectives, social requirements, and professional needs of future specialists. English is regarded as the global medium for the exchange of knowledge, information, and experience. Thus, business professionals, traders, engineers, scientists, and scholars across the world must acquire proficiency in this language. For students in particular—irrespective of their field of study—the learning of a foreign language, especially English, is indispensable. Therefore, the teaching of English must be guided by clear, practical, and achievable aims. Academic outcomes repeatedly reveal the vital role that proficiency in English plays, often directly influencing student performance and overall results.

The way English is taught in our colleges today is to a great extent responsible for the failure. The aims of English education and teaching are certainly very lofty and there are inadequate means to realize them. The policy makers have forgotten that English is not the mother-tongue of Indians. We must accept that the standard of its teaching has fallen vastly and that is why it is essential to know the problems of teaching English in India at undergraduate level in the colleges.

Phrasal verbs – Phrasal verbs (also known as multiple-word verbs) in English can cause difficulties for many learners because of their syntactic pattern and because they often have several meanings. There are also a number of phrasal verb differences between American and British English.

First-Language Literacy

Adult learners who have received fewer than eight years of formal education in their first language are often referred to as *adult ESL (English as a Second Language) literacy learners*. In most cases, their schooling in their native language was disrupted or left incomplete. Such learners typically require greater levels of support, distinct teaching methods, alternative strategies, and curricula that suit their unique needs, which differ significantly from those of mainstream adult ESL students. For instance, these learners may not possess essential study skills or the ability to transfer prior language knowledge to English. They may also exhibit reluctance toward reading or writing, delay participation in classroom tasks, avoid seeking assistance, and often assume a passive or novice role when collaborating with peers. A general lack of self-confidence is also common among them. Additionally, in some cultures, formal schooling is associated with social status, refinement, or prestige. Consequently, learners who have had limited prior education may feel a sense of shame or inadequacy in comparison to their classmates in ESL settings.

There is also ongoing debate regarding appropriate approaches to teaching such learners. Advocates of *meaning-focused learning* emphasize the importance of using spoken language as the primary means to convey meaning and develop communication skills. In contrast, proponents of *correction-focused learning* argue that attention to grammar, accuracy, and the development of correct language habits should take precedence. In addition, new strategies have been explored to enhance content-based ESL learning. One such method involves the use of dystopian literature, where students are encouraged to draw allegorical parallels between fictional themes and pressing issues in contemporary society. This approach fosters deeper engagement with content while simultaneously advancing language acquisition skills

Computers have made an entry into education in the past decades and have brought significant benefits to teachers and students alike. The use of Computers is a tool one can use to improve his/her learning skills. Computers help learners to be more responsible for their own learning abilities.

Review of Literature

Rao Ramachandra K. Nijalingappa and Pillai Swaminathan (1988): In their independent study conducted at the Technical Teacher's Training Institute, Madras, the researchers examined various aspects of English language competency among polytechnic students. The focus of the study was to analyze the general level of proficiency attained by students in specific areas of English usage. The findings highlighted the overall competency levels and provided insights into the challenges and strengths evident in students' performance, thereby offering a foundation for future interventions in technical education.

Miss Rupa Sinha (1999): Sinha undertook a study titled *"The Effects of Language of Performance: A Study of Factors Affecting the Learning Transfer Process in the Study of English in*

Standards VI and VII." This research explored the difficulties faced by teachers in teaching English at the middle school level. In addition, it examined parental attitudes toward the teaching of English. The study revealed that students demonstrated improved performance when engaged in smaller group activities. Furthermore, the research emphasized the effectiveness of incorporating audio-visual aids in classroom teaching, underscoring their role in making the learning process more engaging and impactful.

Mundhe Rajeshree (2003): At the doctoral level, Mundhe carried out a study at Pune University entitled *"Developing a Self-Study Package in Computer Education for Slow Learners."* The research evaluated the effectiveness of specially designed self-study materials developed by the researcher for use in computer education programs targeted at slow learners. The findings confirmed that these self-study packages significantly enhanced the learning outcomes of the students. However, the study also revealed that the use of a video program for WordStar did not contribute any significant improvement. It was therefore concluded that while customized self-study packages were beneficial, not all forms of media (such as video programs) guaranteed effective results for slow learners.

Gore Prashant (2008): At the M.Phil. level, Gore conducted a study titled *"A Study of Teaching-Learning Problems in the Topic of Degree in Standard VIII English."* Using a survey method, the researcher investigated the difficulties encountered by both students and teachers in English medium schools in Pune city. The study revealed persistent challenges in teaching as well as learning the topic of "Degree" in English grammar. These findings emphasized the need for improved pedagogical approaches and remedial measures to address the learning barriers faced by middle school students.

Anil Shrirang (2004): At the M.Phil. level, Shrirang carried out a study titled *"A Study of the Effects of Reading Selected English Newspaper Columns in Enriching Vocabulary and Developing Comprehension."* Employing an experimental research method, the study examined how exposure to selected English newspaper columns contributed to vocabulary building and the development of reading comprehension among learners. The findings indicated that students greatly benefited from engaging in real-life contextual readings. Moreover, children displayed enthusiasm in dramatizing real-life experiences, such as life during the Ganesh Festival and activities at the vegetable market. Similar to Sinha's study, this research also identified that students showed improved outcomes when involved in small group activities.

Methodology

Every child is unique and possesses individual potential that distinguishes them from others. Although children learn at different paces, each one has the capacity for improvement given the right guidance and support. The innate energy and capability to learn resides within them. What many students require is the reinforcement of confidence and an encouraging environment that enables them to overcome their challenges. In the context of English language learning, providing this support becomes crucial, as it empowers learners who struggle in traditional classroom environments to develop their language competence.

Research in education suggests that students begin to learn effectively only when they are academically and developmentally ready. Some studies highlight the importance of intrinsic motivation, differentiated curriculum, and creative teaching strategies that personalize lessons to meet the needs of learners. Importantly, educators agree that not all students who learn slowly have learning disabilities. Many such learners function effectively outside the classroom, display normal intelligence, and have no medical concerns. Their difficulties are often confined to specific academic domains, such as English language proficiency, which calls for specialized instructional strategies.

Significance

In today's competitive world, the ability to acquire and apply English language skills is indispensable for both personal and professional growth. This study addresses the pressing need to assist slow learners of English while simultaneously benefiting advanced learners, ensuring that no student is left behind. The findings of this research are particularly valuable for stakeholders—including students, teachers, and administrators—who are tasked with confronting educational challenges in a globalized and rapidly changing environment.

Background

Even experienced teachers and administrators encounter challenges when dealing with students who do not meet expected academic standards in their annual performance evaluations. Often, there is limited clarity on the specific reasons why some learners struggle with English learning. This background underscores the necessity of a structured study designed to foster dialogue and investigation into the diagnoses of these difficulties. By understanding the unique problems faced by slow learners, educators can devise more effective interventions to align students' performance with the objectives of English language education.

Objectives

The present research sets out clear objectives focused on measuring the effectiveness of multiple media teaching methods in improving retention and understanding among college students. Specifically, the objectives are:

- To compare the levels of retention and comprehension of statistical and numerical information in college students before and after the implementation of multiple media teaching.

- To compare the levels of understanding related to concepts of size, shape, measurement, and spelling proficiency in college students before and after the use of multiple media teaching.

- To evaluate the overall improvement in retention and comprehension of information among students following the adoption of multiple media instructional methods.

Hypothesis

The following hypotheses were formulated for the study:

- The retention and comprehension of statistical and numerical information among students will significantly increase after exposure to multiple media teaching.

- Multiple media teaching will lead to improved understanding of size, shape, measurement, and spelling-related concepts.

- The overall retention and comprehension of information among students will show a significant rise after the adoption of multiple media teaching strategies.

Tools

To achieve the objectives of the study, the following tools and resources were employed:

- A personal data sheet for collecting background information about participants.

- A specially designed audio-visual module, created to teach English language concepts effectively by combining multimedia elements.

- A structured questionnaire, developed by the researcher, aimed at assessing students' retention and comprehension levels before and after exposure to multimedia teaching.

Procedure

An exhaustive list of English language slow learners was prepared from selected colleges in Bangalore. Their internal examination scores were collected to establish a baseline for academic performance. With the assistance of faculty mentors, students were contacted, and their participation was sought with the assurance of confidentiality.

The study was conducted in two phases. In the first phase, participants answered a set of pre-test questions designed to assess their understanding of English content. After a fortnight, the same group of students was brought together in an auditorium, where the target lesson was delivered using the specially designed audio-visual teaching module. Two days later, the same set of questions was re-administered as a post-test to measure retention and comprehension. The responses were then compared with the initial results, thereby providing insights into the effectiveness of multiple media teaching strategies in enhancing English learning among slow learners.

Result Analysis

The result of the research showed enormous rise in the learning, understanding and retaining capacity of the slow learners.

	Result before the module; A	Result after the module; B	Difference in the results'-AB
Retention of statistical and numerical data	26%	76%	50%
Retention of terminological, and nomenclature data	55.5%	95%	39.5%
Retention of meanings, spellings and concepts related data	27.5%	61.6%	34.1%
Overall performance	37.7%	75.3%	37.6%

The result shows a considerable improvement in the learning, retaining and understanding capacity of the slow learner

Remarkable result in the area of statistical data was seen with a rise of 50% in the learning, retaining and understanding capacity of the slow learner.

Retention of terminological and nomenclature data had a noticeable change of 39.5%.

Retention of meanings, spellings and concepts related data was raised by 34.1%.

The overall development in the performance was 37.6%. This ensures the improvement in the learning ability of slow learners with the introduction of new and innovative teaching techniques in colleges while teaching English.

Hence the Hypothesis is proved.
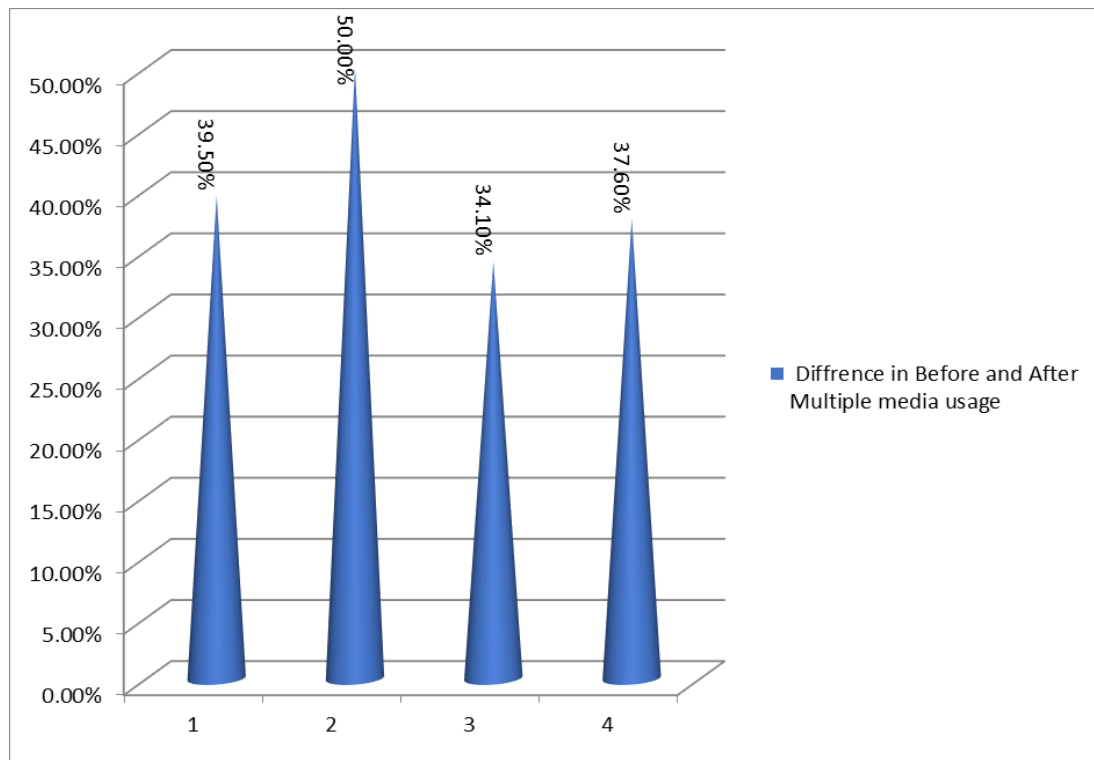
Graphs

Figure 1: A Graph Depicting Media Multitasking: Measuring Differences Before and After

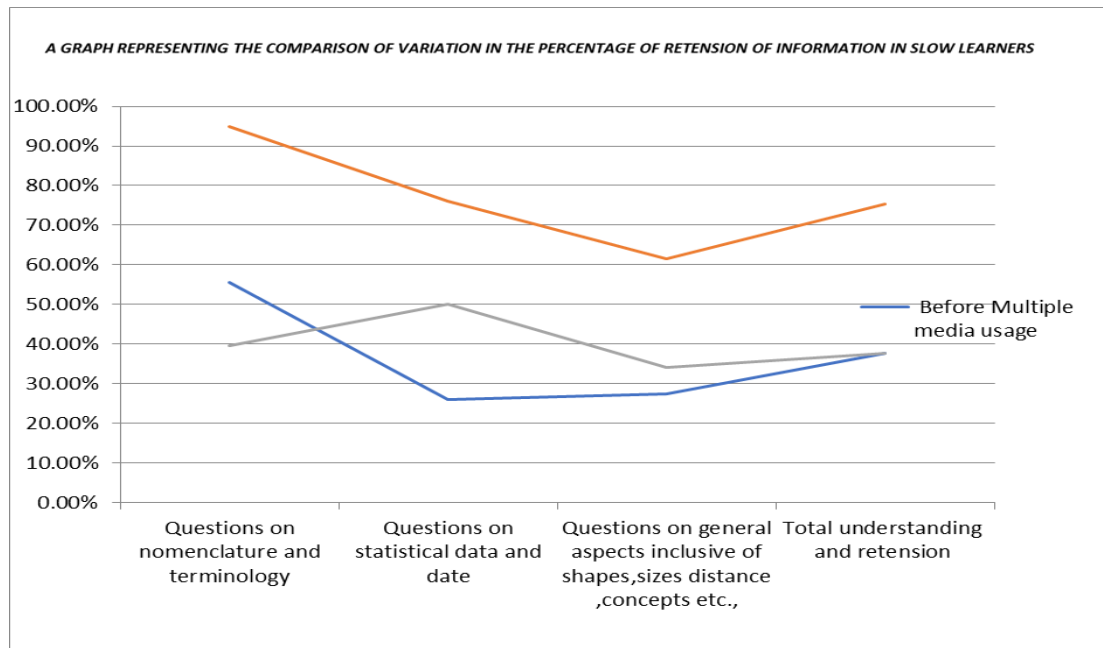Source: The data has been extracted by a survey taken by the author

Figure 2: A Graph Depicting Media Multitasking: Measuring Differences Before and After

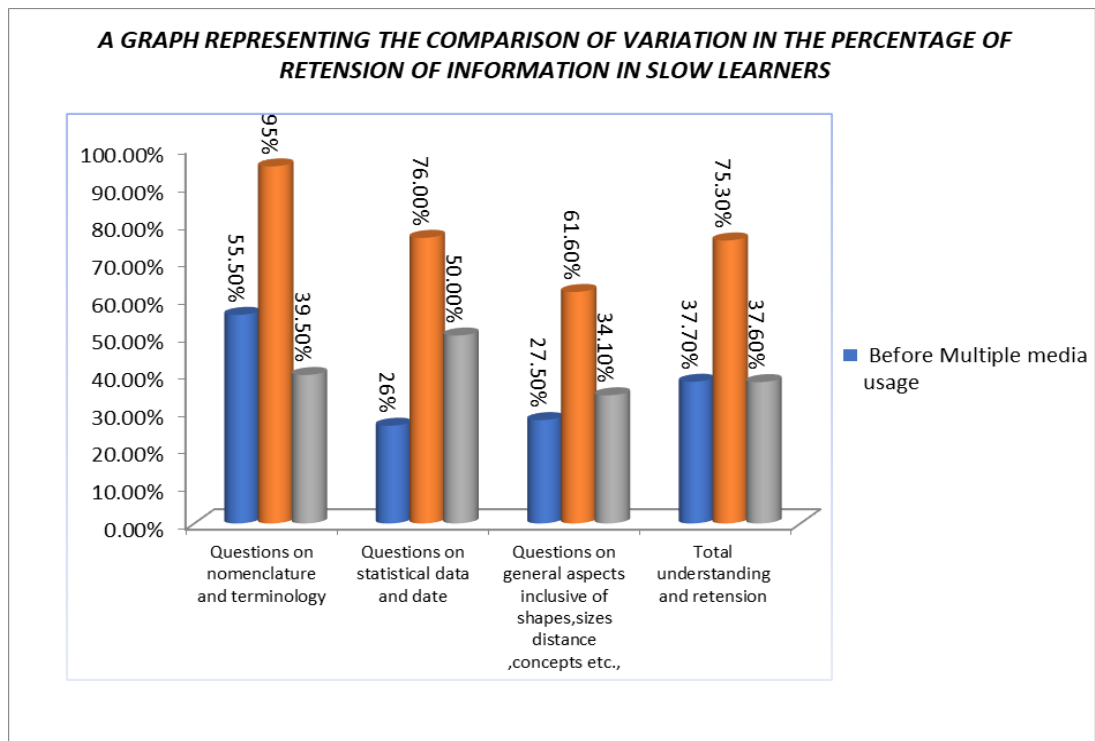Source: The data has been extracted by a survey taken by the author

Figure 3: A Graph Representing the Comparison of Variation in the Percentage of Retention of Information in Slow Learners

Source: The data has been extracted by a survey taken by the author

Suggestions

On the basis of the findings and analysis of the present study, several pedagogical and institutional suggestions can be made for improving English language learning among slow learners at the undergraduate level:

- **Integration of Multimedia-Based Teaching Across Curricula**

Since the study revealed a marked improvement in retention and understanding after exposure to multimedia teaching modules, institutions should incorporate multimedia-based instruction not merely for remedial learners but as a regular practice in the English curriculum.

Audio-visual modules, interactive learning software, digital storytelling, and animated videos can be designed specifically to explain difficult concepts such as phrasal verbs, grammar usage, spelling accuracy, and contextual vocabulary.

- **Personalized and Differentiated Learning Approaches**

Teachers should adopt differentiated instructional strategies to match learners' varied proficiency levels.

Slow learners benefit most from repeated reinforcement, step-by-step explanations, and scaffolded tasks that allow them to build confidence before progressing to more complex exercises.

Grouping students according to learning needs rather than academic grades for remedial sessions can ensure that those requiring greater support receive more targeted guidance.

- **Focus on All Four Core Language Skills**

The objectives of teaching English should extend beyond passing examinations, emphasizing the four primary communicative skills: understanding spoken English, speaking fluently, reading with comprehension, and writing with clarity.

Carefully designed activities—such as role plays, storytelling, peer discussions, guided reading sessions, and structured writing drills—should be used in remedial settings to ensure that learners develop holistic language competence.

- **Combating Socio-Psychological Barriers**

One of the critical findings is that many learners perceive English as either too difficult or irrelevant. This psychological resistance must be overcome by building a learning environment that is motivating, non-threatening, and encouraging.

Teachers should actively instill confidence by praising small achievements, assigning classroom responsibilities, and using peer support to normalize English usage without stigma.

Counseling services and mentoring programs should be integrated with language teaching to address students' self-esteem challenges and fear of failure.

- **Capacity Building for Teachers**

Teachers themselves must be trained to use multimedia tools effectively. Workshops and training sessions should equip them with the technical and pedagogical skills required to design, implement, and adapt multimedia-based lessons in diverse classroom situations.

Faculty development programs can also focus on understanding slow learners' psychology, cultivating patience, and developing innovative teaching techniques suitable for remedial instruction.

- **Encouraging Collaborative and Group Learning**

Evidence from this study and previous research suggests that small-group learning promotes engagement among slow learners. Group projects, collaborative exercises, and peer-learning activities foster active participation while reducing hesitation to communicate in English.

Pairing stronger students with weaker ones in "buddy systems" ensures mutual benefit—advanced learners reinforce their knowledge while slow learners gain confidence and support.

- **Institutional Support and Curriculum Design**

Colleges should establish structured remedial programs specifically focusing on slow learners of English, with dedicated time slots, digital infrastructure, and adequate learning materials.

Curriculum planners should integrate multimedia-based modules into undergraduate English courses as supplementary or parallel resources, rather than treating them as occasional add-ons.

- **Continuous Evaluation and Feedback**

Regular diagnostic tests and formative assessments should be conducted to track progress. Feedback should be constructive, pointing out not just errors but also highlighting strengths to reinforce motivation.

Evaluations must move beyond rote memorization and instead assess practical communication skills through real-life tasks and applications.

- **Parental and Stakeholder Involvement**

Although the present study is at undergraduate level, the role of external stakeholders—particularly parents and institutional administrators—remains significant. Creating awareness about the benefits of multimedia teaching and securing stakeholder support will strengthen the remedial framework and ensure sustainability.

- **Promotion of a Positive Attitude Toward English**

Finally, every effort should be made to position English not as a burden, but as a tool of empowerment. Through exposure to contemporary media, global cultural references, and relatable learning contexts, students can be encouraged to perceive English as enjoyable and practically useful.

Conclusion

The analysis of the present study clearly demonstrates that slow learners can significantly benefit from innovative and student-centered teaching approaches. By employing strategies such as multimedia-based instruction, repeated reinforcement of lessons, personalization of learning activities, and sustained motivation, slow learners can be brought at par with their peers. These methods not only strengthen their ability to acquire proficiency in the English language but also reduce the sense of fear and apprehension that is often associated with it. The findings confirm that the right environment, combined with carefully designed interventions, has the potential to foster both confidence and interest among learners who otherwise struggle with English.

At the heart of teaching English lies a set of fundamental aims: enabling students to understand, speak, read, and write in English. These core objectives must remain the guiding principles for any teacher rather than focusing solely on helping students to clear examinations or progress to the next class. Language learning is most meaningful when learners are able to apply their skills in real-life contexts, and this is especially true for slow learners who require clear, functional goals rather than abstract targets.

Moreover, the study highlights the importance of addressing the socio-psychological dimensions of language learning. For many students, English is surrounded by myths—that it is too difficult or perhaps irrelevant to their lives. Such perceptions serve as barriers that deepen their anxiety and hinder progress. Teachers, therefore, must play a vital role in dismantling these negative beliefs by instilling motivation, fostering a sense of achievement, and giving students manageable responsibilities that build self-esteem. Once learners begin to view English as accessible and useful, their resistance diminishes and their willingness to engage increases.

Equally crucial is the teacher's ability to match their teaching to the level of the students. Mastery of the subject by the teacher alone does not guarantee effective learning. It is essential to acknowledge that students, especially slow learners, start from a point where even framing three correct sentences in English can be a challenge. Patience, perseverance, and empathy from the teacher are indispensable in such contexts. Encouragement to express themselves freely, without fear of judgment, gradually nurtures their linguistic abilities. Teachers must remember that these learners are not native speakers, and their journey requires consistent scaffolding and reassurance.

Finally, the study underscores that teaching English as a second language need not be perceived as a burden but rather as an engaging and rewarding experience. When approached in a supportive, creative, and positive manner, teaching English becomes not only effective for learners but enjoyable for educators as well. The process transforms into a collaborative journey where students overcome barriers, develop confidence, and attain communicative competence.

In conclusion, the findings affirm that slow learners, with the aid of innovative teaching methods and empathetic guidance, are capable of remarkable progress in learning English. Teachers, by aligning their methods with students' needs, addressing socio-psychological barriers, and focusing firmly on the functional aims of language teaching, can transform the learning experience from one of fear and failure into one of confidence and success. Thus, English language teaching, when carried out with patience, creativity, and a focus on inclusivity, not only equips learners with essential language skills but also empowers them to meet the broader challenges of academic, social, and professional life.

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