

Teaching English as a second language using charts

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Abstract

In the modern days, there are various tools available to teach a Second Language (L2) like English in a better way. One of the tools is visual aids. Visual aids include film or slide or model. One of the best visual aids that can be used in an L2 classroom is charts. Charts are thick papers of big sizes available in different colors which attract the attention of everyone. This paper presents the study of charts being used in a classroom to make the learners learn an English quickly and in an enjoyable manner. The participants are 60 first year engineering learners from an institution in Srikakulam district, Andhra Pradesh, India. At the end of the study, it is found that the students feel easy and glad to learn new things in English easily with the chart based method.

Keywords: **Visual aids, Charts, Second Language (L2), Creativity, Team**

I. INTRODUCTION

Visual aids are an important media of making learners grasp course contents quickly. There are many types of visual aids available for use in classroom. Learners prefer to learn through interesting and appealing tools and technologies. One of the tools to appeal to the minds of the Second Language (L2) learners is charts. Charts are colored papers of big size which could be used to write and draw images or pictures.

II. BACKGROUND

Though regular classroom experiments are done on using charts in second language classrooms, they are not documented much in the Indian context. Making a student write is much difficult as he or she has to use the language skills. In addition, making a student write creatively is far difficult than making him or her write.

Fukuta and Kawaguchi in [1] have found that feedback in writing influences the learners' fluency much, but accuracy only slightly. Learners focus much on grammar when they are given feedback. A technique called language may have a positive effect on the quality of overall writing of learners. Sajjadllahetal in [2] have point edoutthatthestudents'previouslearningexperiencesconflictwiththegraphbasedexercises in ESL text books.

Swain in [3] has defined language as the process of making meaning in addition to shaping knowledge and experience through the language. It can be done in both oral and written ways. Written language is the use of language by learners to reflect on their usage of it. As an offshoot of this concept, the present study employs charts for enhancing the language skills of the target learners.

III. METHODOLOGY

A. Method

A basic experimental study is made in the classroom context for a period of 10 weeks. At the beginning of the study, the target learners are asked to state which method of teaching they expect for learning English. The learners have expressed that they are in need of a new type of teaching method instead of the text book based teaching.

B. Participants

The participants of the study are 60 learners doing first year of their engineering course in an institution in Erode district, Tamil Nadu, India. They are between the ages 17-21. They are from both mother tongue and L2 medium of education in their school days which implies that the learners are of different levels of language skills.

C. Material and Procedure

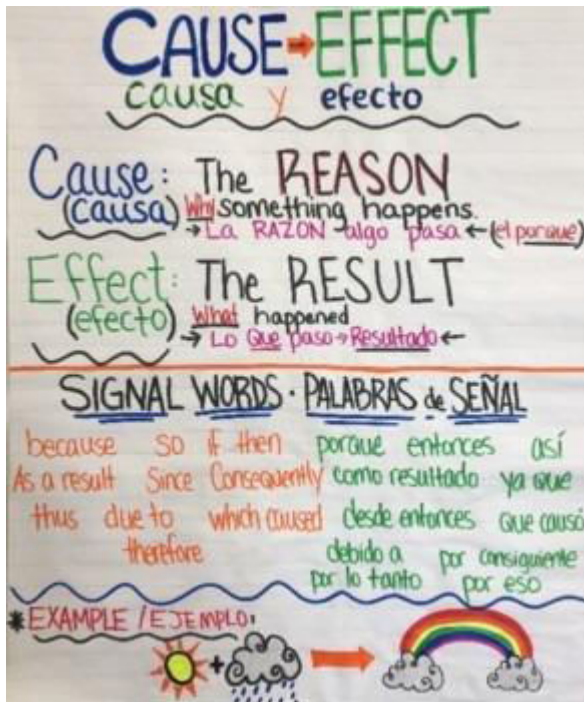
Classroom experimentation is done on the use of charts with 60 learners. The learners are divided into a group of 6 members each. They are asked to name their groups creatively. A team head is also chosen for each team. The learners are also numbered from one to six based on their names.

Every two days once, one student from each team is asked to bring a write up in a small piece of papers with creative designs on it and to paste the same on to the chart which is affixed onto the wall at the back of the classroom. This task is repeated in serial number order for all the learners of each group. Then during the language class, the last 15 minutes are spent for making the other learners, who are outside the target team, to go to the back wall where the charts are affixed and to choose one chart which does not belong to their group. Then they are asked to read the write up affixed by the other team member for that day. This process is continued for 10 weeks having one task per week. The following are the tasks given for the write up. Totally, 10 tasks have been done.

1. News headline creation Ten top headlines from The Hindu news paper have to be chosen and these have to be rewritten in own words without any change in their meaning.
2. Believe it or not A real story, where in the occurrence of things is unbelievable, but has to be believed, is written.
3. My world, my country, my state, my home and me One paragraph on each part of the above topic is to be written on the above topic.
4. Picture description A picture from a news paper has to be chosen, clipped and pasted onto the chart.
5. If I were the Prime Minister of India The things that would happen if one becomes the Prime Minister of India are imagined using one's ability and written.
6. My favorite personality A write up on a famous personality is written.
7. Poem about a friend A poem is drafted about a friend.
8. A story never heard before A story that has never been heard so far is narrated.
9. My dream the dream of an individual is recaptured in the written form.
10. The pricking problem in my locality the most worrying problem none's locality is described.

Figs. 1 and 2 clearly depict the chart work done by the students. This short of creative

designs that the learners used to make different pieces of papers for preparing write-up really captures the attention of everyone in the class room and induces them to do something different when their turn comes.



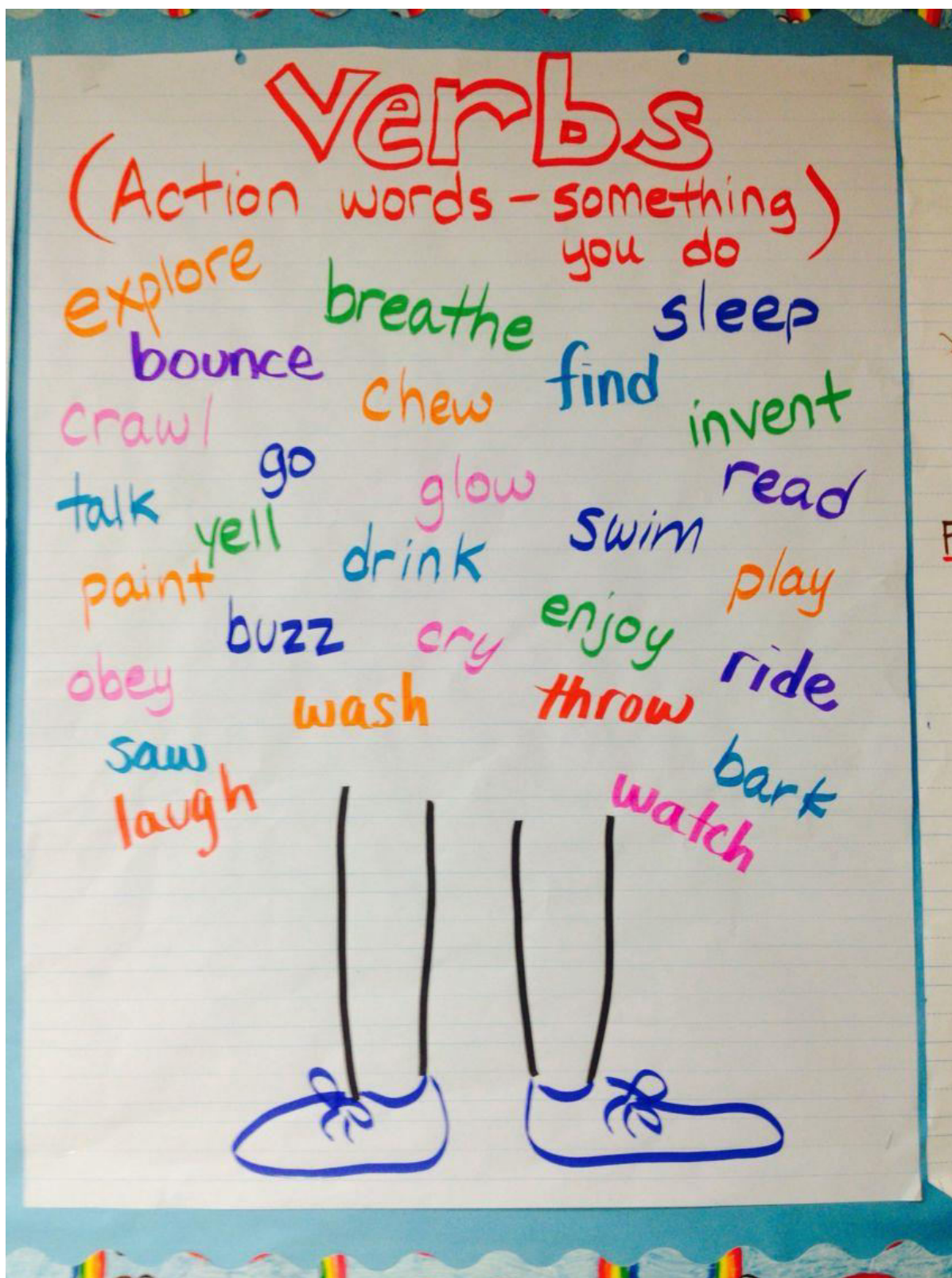


Fig.1 Snapshot of the chart work done by team 3



Fig.2 Snapshot of the chart work done by team 6.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the experiment have been obtained through the oral feedback received from the target learners. The learners have said the following:

1. Awesome to learn like this
2. Never expected that charts will work like this
3. Improved the confidence to write
4. Improved reading ability
5. Creativity is reflected
6. Better exposure to the use of language

It is obvious that new and innovative methods of teaching and learning always yield better results. Even making modifications in the existing teaching methods leads to good outcomes.

V. CONCLUSION

Different visual aids can help learners to learn language in different ways. Charts are found not only to induce the participation interest of the students but also to enhance their

creative writing. The walls of the classroom are indicators that the classrooms are the real locations of experimentation. Any innovation or invention can emerge from the classroom. It is clear that regular chart based tasks also contribute much to the learning of English by the learners.

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