

Effect of Activity Based Learning on Foreign Language Skills of Primary Students

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ABSTRACT

English language is regarded to be highly significant in all spheres of life. Effective teaching English language not just aim at providing information to the students but also ensuring that they become competent in language skills. It enhances students' skills by increasing engagement, contextualizing language through embodied learning, improving speaking fluency via practice and raising cognitive and social skill development. This study investigates the effect of activity based learning on the development of language skills of primary students. This is an experimental research and objectives of the study were to (1): examine the level of language skills among primary students, to (2): assess the effect of activity based learning on language skills among primary students. A simple random sampling technique is used to select a sample of 36 students of grade 5. Participants were equally divided into experimental and control group. The participants of experimental group were taught using activity based method and control group with traditional method. The treatment was continuous for twelve weeks. A valid and reliable test was taken for the collection of data. The independent sample t test was applied to compare the mean score of both groups. The results showed improvement in the performance of the students taught through the activity based method as compared to the traditional method. It is concluded that Activity Based Learning enhanced the language skills of primary students.

Keywords: EFSL, student centered teaching, communication skills, primary students

INTRODUCTION

Language is the main source through which individuals express their thoughts, feelings and ideas. It is the way we share ideas, communicate with others and pass information (Fedorenko et al., 2024). The significance of English language in the global arena is due to the fact that it is a common language and communication is simplified when it comes to business, diplomacy, science and technology (Kurniawan, 2024). Corporate operations, mass media as well as educational systems are also major areas where English language is widely spoken and this has enhanced its usage all over the world (Aimen & Khadim, 2024).

In Pakistan, the learners of the English language contribute significantly to the economy of the country by creating employment and revenue to support their families (Manan, 2024). Teachers should also be familiar with the long-term objectives of the English Language Teaching. The language skills include speaking, writing, listening and reading. Engrossed listening is an essential aspect of communications whether in personal or business relationships, an ability to listen attentively may improve relationships and foster understanding (Paramole et al., 2024). An important part of communication is listening. Whether in a personal or professional environment, the skill of listening actively can strengthen a bond and encourage understanding.

The reading is a rather essential part of the language skills as all the new and fresh knowledge is introduced with the help of the reading (Ali et al., 2022). Reading is among those elementary things that we begin to study at a very tender age yet its significance does not really diminish (Webber et al., 2024). It is so much more than being able to sound out words on a page it is being able to actually comprehend and relate to the information being presented. Confidence also comes with good reading skills. When students find it easy to comprehend whatever they are learning, they will tend to contribute more in classes, finish their assignments much quicker and even enjoy the learning session rather than get overwhelmed (Fensie et al., 2024).

Speaking has traditionally been the hardest language acquisition skill for students. Digital storytelling (DST) has increasingly been recognized as an effective method for improving speaking skills in English language learners (Tamimi et al., 2024). Teachers and students are beginning to use digital storytelling in the classroom to help pupils become more proficient speakers (Tymoshchuk, 2025). The students engaging with social media facilities exhibit a higher learning outcome. The advancement and development of technology have brought about certain changes in the lives of students. Social media provides a platform for the instant exchange of ideas, information and other emotions (Khan et al., 2024).

Another language skill which is considered to be most important among all language skills is writing. Its means is to convert the thoughts into a language. It should be more attractive that can impress the reader (Fitria, 2024). Social media was first only utilized as a communication tool but as a variety of learning needs and media arose, EFL students started using social media as a learning tool, particularly for English language acquisition (Barrot, 2023). It is anticipated that this tendency would last indefinitely. EFL learners can enhance their speaking, listening, reading, and writing abilities in addition to their English language proficiency (Ali, 2022). Students learning English as a second language (EFL) can use social media platforms' features to strengthen their writing skills and maintain their motivation levels while studying.

Active learning process needs an active teaching methodology (Ullah et al., 2025). In this regard researchers try to find active methods which assist to make the learning process more effective (Ginting, 2021). In present time teachers are using grammar translation method for teaching the English. These old methods are not so useful to produce the competent language users (Vireak & Bunrosy, 2024). Despite its importance, significant challenges persist in teaching and learning English in Pakistan, especially in rural and public schools. Many schools lack qualified English teachers and students often rely on rote learning rather than actual communication skills (Sultana & Imran, 2024).

Problem Statement

This research aims to examine the effect of activity based learning on foreign language skills of primary students.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study were to:

- To examine the level of English language skills among primary students.
- To assess the effect of activity based learning on English language skills among primary students.

Research Hypothesis

Against each objective following null hypothesis is:

Null Hypothesis:

- (H01): There is no significant difference in the level of language skills among primary students in the control and experimental group.
- (H02): Activity based learning has no significant effect on the language skills among primary students.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Language is a system of communication that uses a collection of sounds, symbols, and rules to express ideas, feelings, and meaning (Alejandro, 2024). Language is a complex system made up of interrelated layers, each of which has a unique but related role in communication. Language is the powerful mode of communication. It is also necessary for successful communication. Its correct use plays an important role in the process of human development. Verbal and non-verbal communication are essential components of human interaction, each playing a distinct role (Laghadze, 2024). Verbal communication includes the use of words to express messages, while non-verbal communication contains a range of signals, including gestures, facial expression, and body language, which can enhance verbal messages (Djalolovna, 2025).

Language acquisition is the study of the methods by which people pick up language. Generally speaking, language acquisition indicates native language acquisition, which studies how children learn their first language (Kidd & Garcia, 2022). Language acquisition is the process through which individuals develop the ability to understand, produce and use language effectively in social contexts. For young children, this process begins almost immediately after birth and is largely driven by social interaction and exposure to language-rich environments (Nawaz et al., 2024).

First language acquisition which takes place in early childhood is the process by which a student spontaneously picks up their mother tongue or first language (Omar, 2024). Prominent research in this field includes Noam Chomsky's Universal Grammar (UG) theory, which posits that humans are born with an inherent ability to acquire language, equipped with a set of grammatical principles shared by all languages (Pradana, 2025).

Second Language Acquisition (SLA) which entails acquiring a new language later in life involves the process by which individuals learn a language other than their first. Unlike first language acquisition, Second Language Acquisition often occurs later in life and is influenced by factors such as age, motivation, exposure and learning environment (Pauzan, 2024). The balance between input (listening and reading) and output (speaking and writing). These topics highlight the dynamic interplay between cognitive and environmental factors in Second Language Acquisition (Khudaverdiyeva, 2025).

Language skills are essential for primary students as they form the foundation for academic success and effective communication. During this critical period of development, children acquire and refine their abilities to listen, speak, read, and write (Jundi & Nabila, 2023). Listening is often the first language skill developed by primary students, as it forms the basis for understanding and communication. Numerous studies have highlighted the significance of active listening in interpersonal communication (Fantini, 2024). Speaking skills allow primary students to express their thoughts, emotions, and ideas effectively. These skills develop through activities such as classroom discussions, role-playing, and peer interactions (Khasanova, 2025). Studies suggest that fostering a supportive and interactive environment encourages children to practice and improve their oral communication (Ilkhomovna & Muhiddinovna, 2025).

Reading is a critical skill for primary students as it supports their ability to decode written text and comprehend information (Paige et al., 2024). Early reading programs often emphasize phonemic awareness, sight word recognition, and fluency (Purnomo & Royanto, 2025). High-frequency words and phrase lists ought to be supplied, introduce new words in context by using stories, articles or dialogues, use books that are suitable for the kids' level of language proficiency, introduce a range of genres, including fiction, non-fiction and poetry to grab readers' attention are the strategies to develop reading skills (Goldberg & Shirtz, 2025).

Writing allows primary students to articulate their thoughts and ideas in written form (Yokubjonova, 2024). At this stage, children develop their skills in spelling, grammar, and sentence construction. Process-oriented approaches, such as brainstorming, drafting, and editing, help students improve their writing abilities. The employment of comics was another significant tactic used to enhance writing abilities. They helped kids make connections with other topics, such as the social sciences (Khayrullayeva, 2025).

Integrated language learning approaches that combine listening, speaking, reading, and writing are especially beneficial for primary students (Xujanova, 2024). For example, listening to a story (listening) and discussing it (speaking) before writing a response (writing) reinforces language skills in a cohesive manner. The communication gap between the teacher and students in the linguistics class is a big hurdle in the conventional way of teaching however an intro to linguistics chatbot facilitates the teaching learning process (Ullah et al., 2023).

Despite the importance of language skills, primary students often face challenges such as limited exposure to rich linguistic environments, diverse learning needs and inadequate resources in schools (Singh, 2024). Socioeconomic factors and linguistic diversity can also impact language development (Ehtsham et al., 2023). Teachers play a crucial role in addressing these challenges by creating inclusive and supportive learning environments (Debasu & Yitayew, 2024).

Activity-Based Learning (ABL) represents a student-centered pedagogical approach that emphasizes experiential engagement through hands-on tasks, collaborative projects, and real-world problem solving to enhance learning outcomes (Mehmood & Kanwal, 2021). Activity-Based Learning (ABL) is an instructional approach that emphasizes learning through hands-on interactive activities. This method shifts the focus from passive reception of knowledge to active participation, fostering deeper engagement and understanding. Activities in English classes gives opportunities to increase the motivation and interest of the students. It also increase the academic success of the students as compared to the lecture method (Gillani et al., 2024). Students learn by doing, which enhances their ability to retain and apply knowledge in real-world contexts (Maftuh et al., 2023).

In primary education, ABL has proven effective in engaging young learners and making lessons more enjoyable (Noreen, 2022). ABL adds a kinesthetic element to the learning process. It is an active learning style in which students carry out physical activities to learn language concepts rather than just listening to a lecture (Sinha, 2021). ABL is a dynamic learning approach centered on engaging students in a diverse activities often involving discussions. It empowers learners to practice skills, think critically and seek information independently. The researcher designed role-playing to allow students to practice using the vocabulary they learned and apply it to the dialog (Praratch & Tutwisoot, 2024).

METHODOLOGY

The aim of this study was to assess the effect of activity based learning on second language skills of primary students. The researcher used a quantitative approach. The total sample consisted of 48 students enrolled in

fifth grade, divided equally into control and experimental groups (24 each). The pre-test and post-test design was implemented to measure learning gains attributable to the activity based method ABL intervention. The control group received the intervention in the form of traditional method, while the experimental group was taught through activity based methods. Traditional method is that method in which students are taught through lectures or discussion method means there is less involvement of students. While in the activity based method students actively participate in the classroom in the form of different activities and learn easily as compared to traditional method.

Research Instrument

The research instruments for this study consisted of pre-test and post-test assessments designed to comprehensively evaluate students' second language proficiency across all four core skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The assessment materials were sourced from the official School-Based Assessment (SBA) papers available on the School Education Department (SED) website, ensuring alignment with national curriculum standards and pedagogical requirements. These standardized tests were specifically selected because they provided a well-structured framework for language assessment, with each skill area clearly delineated and accompanied by detailed rubrics that precisely outlined marking criteria and administration procedures. Lightbown & Spada, (2021) concluded that language skills are basically classified into receptive and productive abilities. Receptive skills, which involve comprehending input, include listening (processing spoken language like instructions or conversations) and reading (decoding written text for meaning and critical interpretation). Productive skills, which involve creating output, encompass speaking (producing spoken language with fluency, accuracy and clear pronunciation) and writing (constructing coherent written text with proper structure, grammar, and vocabulary).

Data Analysis

Table 4 *Language skills Pre-test results*

Group	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>P (2-tailed)</i>
Control	24	23.86	22	4.013	-2.968	.217
Experimental	24	24.32		5.002		

There is no statistically significant difference between the experimental ($M=24.32$, $SD=5.002$) and control ($M=23.86$, $SD=4.013$) groups, according to the results ($t(22) = -2.968$, $p = .087$). The low p-value suggests that this difference is unlikely due to chance, although we reject the null hypothesis, the slight improvement calls for more research to determine the intervention's practical effects.

Table 5 *Language skills Post-test results*

Group	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>P (2-tailed)</i>
Control	24	28.28	22	4.993	-13.431	.000
Experimental	24	42.83		5.786		

The experimental group ($M = 42.83$, $SD = 5.786$) scored significantly higher than the control group ($M = 28.28$, $SD = 4.993$) on the post-test, indicating a highly significant difference in overall performance ($t(22) = -15.148$, $p < .001$). The intervention clearly had a significant and lasting influence on learning outcomes. Since the experimental strategy greatly enhanced overall performance of students in language skills, we can clearly reject the null hypothesis.

DISCUSSION

The present study observed the effect of activity based learning on second language skills among primary students. The findings of the study showed that activity based learning has positive effect in developing the language skills of primary students. The analysis of the data of post-tests showed positive significant effect of activity based method in improving the language skills. Participants who were taught with activity based method performed well after treatment in comparison to those participants who were taught with traditional method.

The analysis of the data of post- test related to language skills showed the performance of the participants after intervention. Study conducted by Gillani et al., (2024) as concluded that activities in English classes provide opportunities to increase the motivation and interest of students. Activity based learning may also increase the academic success of students in comparison to the lecture method. Similarly, another study conducted by Sinha, (2021) concluded that activity based learning adds a kinesthetic element to the learning process. Also called tactile learning, it is an active learning style in which students carry out physical activities to learn language concepts rather than just listening to a lecture. The findings of the study conducted by Praratch & Tutwisoot, (2024) showed that ABL is a dynamic learning approach centered on engaging students in a diverse activities, often involving group work or discussions. It empowers learners to construct knowledge, think critically and seek information independently. The researcher designed role playing to allow students to practice using the vocabulary they learned and apply. Therefore, it is concluded that activity based method has positive effect in developing the language skills among primary students. This performance reveals that activity based method has significantly positive effect in developing the skills. That's why present discusses how activity based learning is better than the traditional approach. As a result, this research may guide other studies at the primary level. Improving primary students' second language is now often achieved by using activity based learning. An activity based approach to learning language skills helps students become engaged in using language and working together, in activities like role-plays, games, storytelling and working on projects as a team.

CONCLUSION

Activity-Based Learning (ABL) has gained significant theoretical backing from constructivist and experiential learning frameworks, making it a highly successful method for fostering second language proficiency in elementary school. Based on the ideas of Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory, which stresses social interaction and scaffolding, and Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory, which emphasizes learning through doing, ABL turns passive language instruction into a dynamic, interesting process. Through intentional exercises, games, and project-based learning, students actively utilize language in relevant circumstances, which boosts their motivation, retention, and communication willingness. In addition to language acquisition, ABL fosters teamwork, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills. ABL is an appealing pedagogical option for modern language instruction since empirical data shows that students in these classrooms routinely perform better than those in traditional settings.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Effective implementation of activity-based learning (ABL) for primary-level second language development requires a structured, multi-level approach. Teachers need sustained training in designing interactive tasks, managing collaborative classrooms, and aligning activities with language objectives. Curriculum support including ABL integrated syllabi, resource kits, and digital tools like language apps or augmented reality is essential for creating immersive experiences. Peer collaboration and policy advocacy ensure ongoing refinement and institutional support, while parental engagement extends learning beyond the classroom. Together, these elements transform ABL from theory into sustainable, equitable practice, fostering active language use and meaningful skill development.

Research Implications

The results of studies on Activity-Based Learning (ABL) for primary school children's acquisition of a second language (L2) have important theoretical implications for accepted language learning models. In the first place, they offer empirical evidence in favour of Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory by showing how social contact and group projects, which are essential elements of ABL, help students grow within their Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). Second, because engaging, low-anxiety activities lower stress and promote intelligible input, ABL is consistent with Krashen's (1982) Affective Filter Hypothesis. Additionally, the effectiveness of ABL calls into question conventional behaviorist methods that prioritize memorization, emphasizing instead the value of experiential and constructivist learning (Kolb, 2015), in which students actively construct knowledge through meaningful interaction. This emphasizes the necessity of theories that incorporate the affective, social and cognitive aspects of learning a second language.

ABL implementation in primary L2 classrooms has revolutionary practical effects. In order to create engaging activities like role-plays, project-based assignments and digital storytelling, teachers must transition from lecturers to facilitators. To develop the ability to design and oversee interactive, student-centered lessons, professional development is necessary. It emphasizes how important it is for curriculum designers to incorporate interactive, communicative activities that correspond with developmental stages and everyday language usage. To expand ABL beyond prestigious schools and guarantee equity in public education systems, policymakers must invest in resources including digital tools, manipulatives and training. In the end, ABL prepares students for global citizenship by fostering not only language proficiency but also vital 21st-century abilities like teamwork, creativity and problem-solving (Thomas, 2023).

LIMITATIONS

There are a number of restrictions on this study on how Activity-Based Learning (ABL) affects primary children's second language proficiency. First, the findings' applicability to larger, more varied populations is constrained by the very small sample size and particular geographic setting (such as a single school or district). Second, the brief intervention period might not have adequately captured the long-term retention of language proficiency or the ongoing effects of ABL across an academic year. A lack of control over uncontrollable factors, such as students' differing exposure levels to the second language outside of the classroom or innate variations in motivation and cognitive capacity, may also limit the study. Lastly, a possible Hawthorne Effect might exist, in which students in the experimental group do better not because of the ABL methodology but just because they are getting new attention and preferential treatment. When analyzing the results, these aspects should be taken into account.

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