

## Competency Development of Pre-service Teachers in Odisha in preparing English Vocabulary Games

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### Abstract

*The importance of English language is increasing by the day. It is accepted as a global language, link language, language of opportunity, trade and commerce, science and technology, information and news, etc. In our country, too, the importance of English language is widely felt everywhere — educational institutions, government formalities and documentation, judicial activities, etc. Realising its importance, the number of English-medium schools is also increasing across the country. But students' performance in English language in government elementary schools, especially, in rural areas is not satisfactory. This is evident from several education surveys and reports (ASER, U-DISE, etc). It is seen that even students of Class VIII government schools in rural pockets fail to read textbooks of Class II or III. For this, besides other interventions and initiatives, the empowerment of teachers is needed. The present study is an attempt to develop the competency of pre-service teachers (enrolled in two-year diploma course in elementary education). It focuses on preparing English vocabulary games for enriching the vocabulary stock in elementary school students in a joyful environment. This paper consists of few vocabulary games with its playing principles and rules. The games were developed by teacher-trainees of Pre-service Teacher Training Programme — Diploma in Elementary Education (D.El.Ed). It is believed the games can be played in classroom situation to enhance the students' word power, develop a positive attitude towards learning English language, do away with fear of the students, as well as, teachers for learning and teaching the language.*

**Keywords:** English language, vocabulary games, competency and pre-service teachers

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## BACKDROP

All of us know the need and importance of English. English is considered as a library language, international language, link language, language of science and technology, information and news, language of trade and commerce, language of opportunity, etc. It is a widely used language in the fields of science and technology, recording and documents, office communication, diplomacy, media, trade and commerce, and education.

Surveys reveal that every fourth person on the Earth can be reached with English. It is a widely used language in international conferences and organisations. Even in many States of our country like Odisha, English is used in most official and non-official communications.

With the increasing need and importance of English language, the number of private schools (mainly English-medium schools) has been increasing in our country. The enrolment rate of children in private schools is also increasing [Annual Status Education Reports (ASER)]. On the other hand, the performance of students in English, especially, in government elementary schools in rural India, is not satisfactory.

According to ASER 2014, only 59 per cent Class V students in government schools could read Class II textbooks in 2006. But in 2014, it slipped to 39 per cent. It means most students in Class V are

unable to acquire basic reading skills both in English and their mother tongue. The report adds that 25 per cent students enrolled in Class VIII were found incapable of reading textbooks meant for Class II. It reveals that 25 per cent children in Class V could not read a simple sentence in English. In the year 2010, only 76.05 per cent children in Class V could read English textbooks meant for Classes I and II in Odisha. In 2014, only 59.85 per cent children of Class III to V could read Class I textbook. The figure was 61.39 per cent in 2010.

The report says, except Tamil Nadu, there has been no significant improvement in the reading skills of learners at the elementary stage in the last five years in all States. Keeping this in view, a workshop was organised to enrich the stock of vocabulary of the students in elementary schools in tribal pockets of Odisha. The present paper is based on the findings of the workshop. Besides, an attempt was made to answer the following research questions through this study.

- Do pre-service teachers have an idea regarding vocabulary games that would help enrich the vocabulary stock of the learners?
- Can they prepare vocabulary games for students of elementary schools to enrich their word power?

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To identify the previous ideas of pre-service teachers regarding vocabulary games

- To develop competency among pre-service teachers and prepare need-based vocabulary games to enrich the vocabulary stock of children at the elementary stage
- To assess the performance of pre-service teachers in preparing vocabulary games after work-based activity

### DESIGN OF THE STUDY

The District Institute of Education and Training (DIET) is considered as a research and resource centre for ensuring quality elementary education in the district. It empowers both pre-service and in-service teachers through training programmes, workshops, orientations, seminars, etc. Like other DIETs of the State, DIET-Koraput in Jeypore is a popular educational institution in Odisha, which organises programmes and activities for the capacity building of pupil-teachers throughout the year.

The present study was conducted on a Work Based Activity (WBA) organised under the guidance of the researcher. The sample of the study consisted of second-year pre-service teachers of Diploma in Elementary Education (D.El.Ed) programme of DIET-Koraput. The duration of the WBA was three hours.

A pupil-teacher raised a question regarding reading skills and vocabulary deficiency among pupils in elementary schools of Koraput, a tribal dominated district in Odisha. Quoting the statistics of ASER-2014

and Unified District Information System for Education (U-DISE) data, the pupil-teachers presented the achievement levels of students in English in elementary schools of Koraput. There was a discussion regarding the low performance of the pupils at the elementary stage, especially in English. During the discussion, the pupil-teachers said students of Class VIII (in most of their practising schools) were not able to read Class III textbooks. Their vocabulary was also poor. There was a discussion on the importance of vocabulary games and enriching the vocabulary stock of the students at the elementary stage of schooling itself. The pupil-teachers suggested techniques and activities from their experiences to enrich the vocabulary stock of the children. To encourage them, two games were played under the guidance of the researcher. All pupil-teachers participated in the games and opined that vocabulary games could enhance the word power of the children. The researcher advised them to prepare more vocabulary games suitable for students at the elementary stage. The pre-service teachers were also encouraged to collect more games by consulting their teachers, seniors, referring to study material, websites, etc.

### DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS

To ascertain the knowledge of pre-service teachers regarding vocabulary games, the researcher

discussed it individually with them. Initially, almost all pupil-teachers could not understand the concept of vocabulary games. For better understanding, the researcher presented several games, focusing on the basic rules to be followed by the participants. The groups were instructed to prepare new games, which would be useful for elementary school students. One week was given to the pupil-teachers to prepare the same. Then, a presentation was made in the presence of all pupil-teachers, the researcher and faculty members of DIET-Koraput. The leader of each group presented the games developed and collected by the respective groups. Around 50 vocabulary games were developed. Some games were rejected by the faculty members. At last, 35 games were selected. Some of the selected games are as follows.

**Associated words**

Words related to a situation:

Garden \_\_\_\_\_ gardener \_\_\_\_\_  
Plants \_\_\_\_\_ seedlings \_\_\_\_\_, etc.

**Semantic mapping**

This game is simple and can be adopted to meet a variety of objectives. You can use the following procedures.

1. Chose a word or a topic.
2. Write it on a chart paper.
3. Ask the students the information they would like to include.

4. Encourage them to think and write as many related words as possible.
5. Write the words under appropriate headings.
6. Have a class discussion, using the map as a guide.

The following semantic map for telephones have been taken from *Effective Strategies for Teaching Reading* by Hayes (1991).

Parts	Things it does
Cord	Rings
Wires	Give busy signal
Dial	Records messages
Mouthpiece telephones	Dials automatically
Receiver	Re-dials last number
Push buttons	
Answering machine	

Kids	Uses	Workers
Pay phone	Talk to others	Telephone operator
Cordless	Listen to others	Secretary
Car phone	Get phone numbers	Installer
Dial (rotary)	Long distance calls	Repair man
Push bottom	Pole man	Cellular

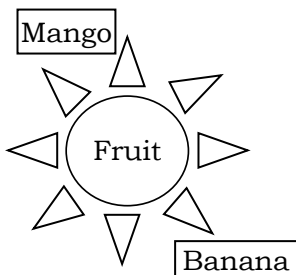
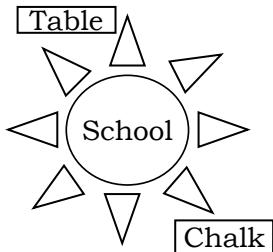
**Simple and compound game**

- Choose a base word
- Ask the students to produce as many words as they can, which contain in the base word, e.g., if the word chosen is 'self', then the

words can be formed like 'selfless', 'yourself', 'self-made', 'self-pity', etc.

### Word formation through Sun diagram

This simple game can be played as a warm-up activity. It not only enriches the word power of the learners but also ensures clarity on a concept, object or idea (e.g., fruits, flowers, animals, parts of the body, school, family, village, etc). According to the level of the students, the teacher will write a word in the circle of a 'Sun diagram'. Relating the word, concept, idea or object, the students will write the word in their notebooks. At last, the teacher will count the number of students and groups, and declare the name of the student or group, who has written the maximum number of words. This game can be given as homework or can be used in multi-grade class.



### Recall, recognise and reward

This game involves arranging jumbled letters into words, and recognising their antonyms and synonyms. While playing this game, the students of the class will be divided into three groups (say A, B and C). Then, the teacher will write a jumbled word on the blackboard (the word should be preferably from the prescribed textbook, if the learners are from primary classes). According to the teacher's instruction, one group will arrange the letters to form a word. The second group will say or write the opposite of the word and the third its synonym. Look at the table for examples.

Jumbled words	Arranged words	Opposite words	Similar words
LLASM	Small	Big	Tiny
GNORTS	Strong	Weak	Firm
BTIEAULUF	Beautiful	Ugly	Elegant
AOCSRE	Coarse	Smooth	Rough

### Dictionary game

This game is played to develop the skill and habit of using a dictionary in students at the primary level. After teaching or discussing a particular prose, poem or story, the teacher will give individual sheets having several words in the box from the text taught. The learners are instructed to arrange the words alphabetically and write down their meanings (with the help of friends and also refer to the dictionary).

Read the words in the box and arrange them as per the dictionary.

Read the words	Arrange as per dictionary
Carry	
Back	
Said	
Donkey	
Earned	
Loads	
Living	
Sell	
Seashore	
Collected	
Salt	
Bridge	
Became	
Stand	
Cross	
Use	
Upset	
Lighter	
City	
Slip	
Sack	
Me	
Built	
Money	
Up	
Onto	

## CONCLUSION

In most cases, neither the teachers nor students — mainly in rural and tribal pockets — are interested to teach or learn English. Most of them are scared to learn the language as they feel that English is a foreign language, and hence, difficult. Even parents think that it is not easy to score well in English. This is the reality regarding the perception of teachers, learners and parents towards the language. This fear psychosis needs to be changed. It is possible for English teachers to encourage the learners, who like the mother tongue or regional language. To remove this fear, a joyful learning environment must be created in English classes. Playing vocabulary games will not only develop confidence in the learners but also foster a close relationship between the teachers teaching English and the learners (generally, students fear the English teacher in rural areas). Besides, the students will enjoy the class and be motivated to learn English like any other language.

## REFERENCES

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[www.eslkitstuff.com](http://www.eslkitstuff.com)