

The PLRRPAR Framework: A Structured Approach to Enhancing English Language Learning

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ABSTRACT:

This study explores the Prelearn, Learn, Relate, Reflect, Practice, Apply, and Reinforce (PLRRPAR) framework, a structured methodology addressing challenges in English language teaching. The theoretical foundations of PLRRPAR draw from constructivism, experiential learning, sociocultural theory, task-based learning, and communicative language teaching. The framework's seven phases are detailed, providing a practical guide for holistic language learning. The study emphasizes the framework's learner-centred and experiential approach which include pre-learning preparation, active learning engagement, social interaction, self-reflection, extensive practice, and real-world application. Despite its promise, the research acknowledges limitations concerning cultural adaptability, individualized learning needs, structured progression, theoretical foundation, assessment methods, instructor familiarity, technological integration, and long-term effectiveness assessment. These constraints underscore the necessity for ongoing refinement and future investigation. The PLRRPAR framework, with its strengths and limitations, presents a valuable avenue for enhancing language acquisition in diverse educational settings.

Keywords: Framework, Language skills, Language Acquisition, Communicative, Real-world Language, Real-life context, Learner-centred

Introduction

In the present scenario of English language teaching and learning, numerous challenges exist in acquiring the language efficiently. These challenges arise from the diverse learning styles of learners and the overwhelming abundance of learning resources. Additionally, a significant gap often exists between the language learned in the classroom and its use in the real world, highlighting the need for a comprehensive and structured approach. Hence, the PLRRPAR framework, which has seven sequential phases, is proposed to offer a systematic structure for a holistic language learning experience in a wider real-world environment. This paper foregrounds the theoretical underpinnings and practical implications connecting them to well-known teaching-learning theories like constructivism,

communicative language teaching and experiential learning. Exploring each phase, the study offers practical insights for teachers and learners. While the framework demonstrates benefits, it also presents challenges to address for the effective implementation. Understanding both strengths and weaknesses, this study enriches the discourse on effective English teaching, paving the way for tailored language education and innovation in diverse learning environments.

Background to the Research Study

At Loyola College in Chennai, the Department of English offers a four-semester General English Programme that caters to advanced, intermediate, and basic proficiency levels. Recognizing the need to elevate the proficiency of basic-level students,

the authors conceived the PLRRPAR framework, tailored instructional strategies, and designed the course materials with an emphasis on enhancing language skills and real-world application.

Objectives of the Study

1. Introduce the Prelearn, Learn, Relate, Reflect, Practice, Apply, and Reinforce (PLRRPAR) framework for English teaching, emphasizing its structured approach.
2. Explore its theoretical foundations, including constructivism and sociocultural theory.
3. Break down PLRRPAR into key components for better understanding.
4. Analyze how each phase aligns with language learning theories.
5. Illustrate practical implications, emphasizing its potential to boost language acquisition and proficiency, and motivate learners.

Methodology of the Study:

The study employed a multi-pronged methodology involving a literature review, theoretical exploration, framework development, practical implementation through a pilot study, data collection and analysis. After reviewing existing frameworks and establishing the theoretical foundations drawing from constructivism, experiential learning, and sociocultural theory, the authors developed the seven-phase PLRRPAR framework. A pilot study was conducted at Loyola College, Chennai, implementing the framework with 210 basic-level English learners over three semesters with continuous assessments and end semester examinations. Textbooks and instructional strategies were tailored based on the framework's principles. During the pilot period, data was collected on students' language acquisition progress,

communication skills, real-world application, and feedback. Finally, this data was analyzed to evaluate the framework's viability and effectiveness, which showed notable improvements in language proficiency, confidence, and academic performance among the participants.

Literature Review:

Numerous frameworks exist to enhance English language learning, catering to the diverse needs of English learner students and guiding language proficiency standards formulation and assessment. The "Framework for Supporting English Learner Students' Language Development," in collaboration with the Ontario School District, emphasizes student interaction and language use, featuring Clear Intended Learning, Crafting Integrated Language and Learning Outcomes, Standards-Based Scaffolding and Differentiation, and Formative Assessment Practices (Blackburn, 2018).

Similarly, the "English Learner Framework" by Spring Lake Park Schools offers a structured yet adaptable approach across subjects and grade levels (Spring Lake Park Schools, 2018). The "Framework for Raising Expectations and Instructional Rigor for English Language Learners" by the Council of the Great City Schools stresses language development and scaffolded content for English learners (Hodge, 2014).

These frameworks are crucial for guiding English instruction, ensuring learners receive necessary support for language development and academic success. The PLRRPAR framework stands out for its grounding in established theories like constructivism, experiential learning, and sociocultural theory. It addresses teaching gaps by focusing on holistic language development,

integrating prelearning, reflection, and reinforcement alongside real-world application. This fosters metacognitive awareness, social interaction, and lifelong learning skills. Unique in catering to basic-level learners, PLRRPAR is adaptable to diverse learning styles, effectively preparing learners for real-world language use through carefully structured sequential stages.

1. Theoretical Foundations

1.1 Constructivism and Experiential Learning

Learning involves actively engaging with one's environment, drawing from past experiences and social interactions to create meaning. Constructivism posits that learners construct knowledge by integrating new information into their existing mental frameworks (Mcleod, 2023). Experiential learning, integral to constructivism, emphasizes direct interaction with surroundings and reflection on real-life experiences (Kolb, 2015). Dewey emphasizes practical application of knowledge for better understanding (Brau, 2020). Prelearning introduces foundational language elements, akin to Piaget's notion of assimilation. Learning, incorporating Vygotsky's social interaction concept, encourages collaborative learning and scaffolding (Pappas, 2023). The Relate phase fosters meaningful peer interactions, echoing Kolb's idea of interaction and reflection (Kolb, 2015). Practice and Application stress active language use in real-world contexts, aligning with Dewey's emphasis on genuine experiences (Dewey, 1953). It aims to facilitate language acquisition through dynamic and interactive processes, integrating theoretical principles into practical language learning.

1.2 Sociocultural Theory

Vygotsky emphasizes the profound connection between learning, social interactions, and cultural

contexts. Language acquisition thrives in environments rich with genuine social interactions and cultural engagement. Sociocultural theory emphasizes the centrality of language and communication in cognitive growth, asserting that social interactions mold learning and cognitive processes (Mcleod, 2023). Vygotsky further elucidates how learners internalize external interactions, fostering individual development (Kurt, 2020). The PLRRPAR framework aligns closely with sociocultural theory, stressing social interaction and cultural context in language learning. Its Relate phase fosters collaboration and peer interaction, mirroring Vygotsky's social constructivism. The learning phase, akin to Vygotsky's scaffolding, focuses on instructional support (Zhang et al., 2013). The Apply phase embodies sociocultural theory's internalization, integrating language skills for practical use. Thus, PLRRPAR recognizes the pivotal role of social interactions and cultural settings in effective language acquisition.

1.3 Task-Based Learning

Task-Based Learning (TBL) explicates that the language serves as a for real-world communication where meaningful tasks are essential for language learning. This approach also echoes the constructivist notion that learning is enhanced through active engagement and experiential learning. TBL prioritizes language development through interactive activities (Ellis). In this context, Task-Based Learning (TBL) aligns with the PLRRPAR framework especially, the Relate, Practice, and Apply phases. The Relate phase encourages social interaction, the Practice phase involves the use of meaningful and authentic tasks, and the Apply phase reflects TBL's principle of enabling learners to apply language skills in real-life situations. Hence, the PLRRPAR framework, emphasizes the role of

meaningful interaction and real-life context in language learning.

1.4. Communicative Language Teaching

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) propounds that teaching language should enrich communicative competence which enables learners to use language effectively in real-life situations. CLT focuses on the development of communicative competence which includes linguistic accuracy and the ability to convey meaning and interact appropriately (Littlewood, 7) In this context, PLRRPAR aligns closely with Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)'s idea of real-world language use and interaction. The Apply phase of PLRRPAR corresponds to CLT's goal of promoting communicative competence, the Relate phase aligns with CLT's focus on interaction, and the Reflect component of PLRRPAR correlates with CLT's emphasis on learners' self-assessment in the language learning process.

The PLRRPAR Framework: Key Components

2.1 Prelearn: Building Background Knowledge

The Prelearn phase in the PLRRPAR framework is foundational, focusing on equipping learners with necessary background knowledge and context, and stimulating their interest in effective learning. Through warm-up activities related to text content, learners familiarize themselves with words, phrases, and ideas relevant to the topic. This phase aims to enhance comprehension and ensure learners are adequately prepared to engage with new language elements, vocabulary, and concepts. It introduces learners to real-life situations depicted in the text and basic language elements such as vocabulary, grammar, sentence structures, and pronunciation. Instructors

facilitate interactions, allowing learners to share thoughts and experiences, bridging prior knowledge with new language components. This activation of prior knowledge fosters meaningful connections, associating language with personal contexts. Learners are exposed to authentic materials, including texts, dialogues, and multimedia resources, promoting immersive learning and nurturing interest and motivation for further language exploration.

2.2 Learn: Active Engagement and Instructional Delivery

The second stage, the Learn phase, concentrates on the learner's active engagement with the text, exploration of the context and meaning, acquisition of words, pronunciation and language structures. The text content is explained to the learners along with important vocabulary used in the text. During this phase, the instructor considers effective methods of instructional delivery to facilitate engaging language acquisition. The learners have dynamic and interactive learning experiences that enhance comprehension, communication skills and overall language proficiency. Through active engagement in the Learning phase, the instructor provides a variety of learner-centred activities and strategies that motivate learners to collaborate and communicate in English. Instructor provides clear explanations, demonstrations and interactive presentations taking into account the diverse learning styles. Instructors may employ an array of multimedia resources, authentic texts and real-life scenarios to expose learners to the sociocultural context in which the text is produced.

2.3 Reflect: Metacognitive Awareness and Self-Assessment

The Reflect phase of the PLRRPAR framework leads to metacognitive awareness and self-

assessment among learners. They contemplate the theme, decipher meanings, and exchange interpretations with peers, promoting deep understanding. This phase facilitates deliberate reflection on language learning progress and self-assessment. Learners discuss contextual meanings of phrases, interpret text, and apply it to real-life scenarios through comprehensive questions. The learners are guided to reflect on the themes of the text by connecting with their real-life experiences both personal and social to deepen their understanding of the text and enrich their language learning. The Reflect phase empowers learners to unlearn and relearn, be responsible for their learning, enable them to be conscious of their understanding of the text and the language, realize the challenges and continuously enrich their language learning. The metacognitive awareness and self-assessment that result in this phase help the learners to set goals, monitor their progress and empower them to become lifelong learners.

2.4 Relate: Vocabulary, Grammar and Language Skills

The fourth phase of the PLRRPAR framework, Relate, accentuates the significance of associating learning various language skills such as vocabulary, grammar, listening, speaking, reading and writing. During this phase, the learners are introduced to the essential grammar items and concepts used predominantly in the text with examples and also the learners relate the text contents with the grammatical contents and other language skills. The unique aspect of this phase is learning grammar and acquiring language skills relating to the text already learned in the previous stages such as Prelaearn, Learn and Reflect. Unequivocally, this phase would help the learners to smoothly transition to the further stages of accelerating and intensifying their language

learning. The knowledge of grammar and language skills acquired in this phase prepares the learners to practice in the next phase of PLRRPAR.

2.5 Practice: Repetition and Accuracy

The Practice phase within the PLRRPAR framework emphasizes the importance of practicing to achieve accuracy in acquiring vocabulary, grammar, and language skills, guided by instructors and peers. Learners, under teacher guidance, engage in various activities such as grammar exercises, sentence construction, paragraph writing, note-taking, listening activities, and role-playing. This phase is designed to provide learners with well-structured language activities for practice, and repetition for enforcement of learning leading to accuracy, understanding of the usage of vocabulary, grammatical items and language skills in real-life situations and thereby gaining confidence to communicate. Repetitive practice enables learners to deepen their grasp of vocabulary, grammar, and language skills acquired previously, facilitating progress toward accuracy. With increased practice, learners grow more comfortable and confident in their language abilities, better prepared to engage in real-life communicative situations. Ultimately, the Practice phase equips learners with essential tools to tackle language challenges, laying a strong foundation for effective communication and language mastery.

2.6 Apply: Real-World Language Use

In the Apply phase, there is a gradual progression from a guided language practice to an independent application of the knowledge of vocabulary, grammar and language skills. The learners apply their knowledge of the language acquired and the topics of the text doing various language activities independently. Learners are

exposed to English-speaking environments such as interacting with native speakers, engaging in authentic conversations, reading authentic materials, writing official communications, ordering at a restaurant, participating in social events, conducting interviews and managing various other language-based real-life scenarios. This phase prepares them to be language-ready to engage in real-world language use, thus, bridging the gap between classroom learning and practical application of language. Similar activities of the previous phase, Practice, like role-play, generating new sentences, applying reading techniques, etc., eventually promote functional language proficiency and demonstrate their ability to effectively communicate, negotiate meaning, and comprehend real-world language nuances.

2.7 Reinforce: Lifelong language learning

The Reinforce phase of the PLRRPA framework plays a vital role in instilling a lifelong love for learning in English language learners. It ensures the sustained retention and improvement of language proficiency gained earlier. Reinforcement involves revisiting and creatively applying previously learned vocabulary, grammar, and language skills in real-life situations. Learners engage in regular reviews, recall, and application of knowledge in new contexts, expanding their proficiency and comprehension. Instructors utilize collaborative projects, creative writing, and authentic materials to facilitate real-world application. These activities empower learners to become confident communicators, continuously striving for language mastery. Through self-assessment and exposure to diverse resources and experiences, learners cultivate a resilient commitment to lifelong language learning.

3. Benefits of the PLRRPAR Framework

There are significant advantages in implementing

the PLRRPAR framework in English teaching with its structured approach. Its phases, Prelearn, Learn, Reflect, Relate, Practice, Apply, and Reinforce, provide a systematic language acquisition path. Prelearn sets foundations. Learn engages with activities. Reflect fosters awareness. Relate boosts participation. Practice ensures accuracy. Apply promotes real-life use and Reinforce encourages lifelong learning. This sequential learning progression refines skills, strengthens competence and empowers learners for confident use of English in real-life contexts.

4. Implementation Considerations

It is important that Instructors understand first the rationale and spirit of the PLRRPAR framework. They not only serve as instructors but also as facilitators guiding and journeying along with the learners phase-by-phase. Prelearn establishes language basics, encouraging independent exploration. In Learn, instructors use problem-solving and group activities. Collaboration is essential in Relate, necessitating cultural inclusivity. Reflect encourages goal-setting and self-assessment. The use of technology in Practice and Apply boosts engagement. The framework stresses continuous, informal assessment, focusing on real-life language use. Instructors offer ongoing feedback, emphasizing practical application.

5. Limitations and Future Directions

The PLRRPAR framework, despite efforts to enhance cultural relevance, exhibits potential limitations in adapting to diverse cultural contexts. Its structured progression may not address individual learning needs, potentially leaving some behind or rushing others. Continuous assessment within PLRRPAR may offer limited insights, necessitating formal methods. Successful implementation relies on instructors' familiarity

with learner-centered approaches. Technology integration may face obstacles in tech-restricted environments. Extended studies are needed to assess sustainability and impact.

Conclusion:

The PLRRPAR framework offers a robust, systematic, and inclusive approach to Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL). Founded on constructivist, sociocultural, and experiential learning theories, it provides instructors with a structured yet flexible direction. Through its seven phases, it addresses language acquisition challenges, enhancing motivation, holistic skill development, and language confidence. This dynamic, learner-centered approach empowers learners to acquire and confidently apply language skills in real-world contexts. The study underscores the framework's significance, pilot implementation findings, and its potential for holistic, learner-centered English language teaching.

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