

# **The Efficacy of Simulations in the ESL Context for the First Generation Tertiary Learners: An Experimental Study**

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## **Introduction**

This paper chiefly focusses on the inadequacy of the traditional syllabus in infusing the language skills. The research paper is also an attempt to give an alternative Simulation Based Syllabus which is likely to fulfil the goals of the teaching/learning process. The prescribed syllabus in colleges invariably is provided with five short stories, five poems (anthology of prose, poetry and fiction) and five prose essays. However, these do not help adequately in the acquisition of English language and the requisite grammatical competencies. Therefore, the researcher decided to introduce a few activities to cater to the needs of the first generation rural learners. The introduction of simulations in classrooms presents a threat-free ambience which brings fairly good results in the acquisition of the Second Language and helps overcome the learners' inhibitions. This paper primarily concentrates on the effectiveness of using simulations in the ESL context and to prove that this innovative technique fetches prolific results.

## **The advantages of using simulations to reinforce the holistic learning in Classroom**

When an individual is driven to do something because of a desire for self-fulfillment or to achieve feelings of self-worth, he/she is said to be intrinsically motivated

(Rubdy 2002).

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As the quote says, when the experimental groups were given intra-classroom activities in order to impart language skills, they felt exceedingly enthused and tried to establish their excellence in the attainment of the language proficiency. Before designing simulations, the researcher has borne a few ideas which would actually expedite the learning process.

- **The simulations must be meaningful and expressive**
- **The simulations must make the learners focussed**
- **The simulations must kindle the learners' interest**
- **The simulations must inspire the First Generation Learners**
- **The simulations must explain the effectiveness of learning the language**

## **The employment of Simulations to impart English Language**

I forget what I was taught. I only remember what I have learned.

(Patrick white)

The place of grammar in SLA (Second Language Acquisition) is the bare essential for the acquirement of the target language. Learners in general may not realize the importance of grammar in relation to learning of the native language as the mastery of the first language is acquired from the ambience where the learner resides in. However, with regard to SLA the reverse is true. In grammar, Tense plays a pivotal role in the acquisition of grammatical competencies and to pass on messages unmistakably. The second language learners without the much exposure to the tense, they cannot converse in the target language flawlessly. The researcher has designed two simulations to teach Simple Present, Present Continuous tenses and composed two rhymes to expose to the Present Perfect and Present Perfect Continuous Tenses.

### **1. Simple Present Tense**

Simple present tense is used to express habitual or routine actions.

Level	:	First generation learners at the tertiary level
Time required	:	45 minutes
Skills to be reinforced:		Simple present tense
Warm-up activity	:	Researcher has given the basic inputs about simple

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present and ensured if learners grasped its structure.

( I / We /You/ they + Verb infinitive

He / She / It + Verb infinitive + S)

Activity : a sheet which consisted of seven phrases like **every day, once in two days, once a week, once a month, rarely and often** was given to learners. After filling up the details, they were asked to mill around and exchange their papers with their peer learners and later on they would come forward to put forth their friends' routine. After grasping the structure of the simple present tense, they were asked to speak in front of the class which helped them cast aside their inhibitions. This activity also provided learners a chance to speak in front of their peers.

E.g. Karthick gets up at 5 o'clock, he brushes his teeth at 5 30, he goes to get milk sachet at about 6...

After this activity, every learner was asked to present his routine. E.g. I get up at 5 o'clock, I brush at 5 30, I go to get milk sachet at about 6and so on.

**Name:**

Everyday	Once in two days	Once a week	Once a	Once a	Rarely	Often
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			month	year		
1. get up at -----	1. Check my mail	1. Take	1. Pay my	1.	1. Speak	1. Speak
2. brush	2. Spend time in	mutton	telephone	Celebrate	to my	to my
3. Get milk sachet	facebook	2. Meet my	bills	my	eldest	parents
4. bathe-----	3. Take project	elder brother	2. Pay my	birthday	brother	2. Talk to
5. go to college	class	3. Wish to	hostel bill	2. Go to	2. Study	my sister
6. have breakfast	4. Buy vegetables	play with my	3. Get	my	3. do	over
7. lunch		friends	things from	hometown	exercise	phone
8. go for tuition			ration shop		4. have	3. go to
9. supper					sound	Sangeetha
10. go to bed					sleep	hotel
						4. come to
						college
						5. play

This activity was intended to give an iota of knowledge and exposure to the simple present tense. They felt happy to have learnt a few lexical items and the structure of the tense. For the learners this activity proved helpful to put across their routines.

## 2. Present Continuous Tense

Present Progressive tense is used to express and explain actions which are happening around.

Level : First generation learners at the tertiary level

Time required : 45 minutes

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Skills to be reinforced: Present Progressive Tense and making learners speak with confidence.

Warm-up activity : Researcher has given the basic inputs about present progressive and its structure and checked if learners have understood the concept.

( I + am + V + ing – I am going

We /You/ they + are + Verb + ing – We are playing hockey now.

He / She / It + is + Verb + ing – He is singing a song now.)

Activity : Learners were taken to a playground. The particular class required a bat and a ball. Learners were clearly instructed after the warm up session that the learning the structure of the present progressive is more important than playing cricket. All the sentences were spoken during the match were only in progressive form. Two learners were asked to jot down some of the following sentences that the umpire uttered.

‘The game is starting now. The batsman is getting ready to play. The batsman is watching carefully to hit the ball. The bowler is running faster to bowl. The batsman is trying to hit the ball. He is coming closer to the ball. He is heading out of the crease. He is hitting the ball harder. A fielder is running to pick the ball up. He is bending, taking the ball and throwing the ball to the wicket keeper. The batsman is not running fast. A new bowler is bowling the second over. The batsman is facing the ball boldly. Oh! He is missing the ball now. The wicketkeeper is catching the ball. The fielders are clapping their hands. They are encouraging the bowler. He is walking

back to bowl the next ball. The second batsman is coming in. He is scoring his first run. The match is going like this. The first innings is coming to an end with 20 runs for 4 wickets. The second innings is starting. The ball is going toward the boundary line. Team B is chasing 20 runs. Team B is winning in the match.'

Variation : Similar to this activity, learners were instructed to write sentences in Present Progressive Form during weekends. Each student was asked to bring more than 5 and less than ten sentences.

They brought sentences like 'I am talking to my father. My father is taking bath now. My sister is brushing her teeth now. My mom is cooking in the kitchen. I am having my breakfast at 9 o'clock in the morning. I am playing with my friends. I am going shopping. My father is talking over phone. We are all taking supper at 8 o'clock. We are all watching 'Neeyaa Naanaa' on Vijay TV.

This simulation mainly focussed on introducing Present Progressive form and giving exposure to learners to frame sentences. This tense is generally used by all the learners frequently. The learners considered this activity to be helpful in expressing the events happening around.

### 3. Present Perfect Tense

Present Perfect tense is used to express events that have just taken place.

Level	:	First generation learners at the tertiary level
Time required	:	45 minutes
Skills to be concentrated	:	Present Perfect Tense and making learners come forward to express their ideas in present perfect tense.
Warm-up activity	:	Researcher has given the requisite inputs about present perfect tense and made sure if learners have comprehended the concept.

( I /We /You/ they + have+ Past Participle or the third form of the Verb.

I /we / you / they have attended the party.

He / She / It + has + Verb (Past Participle)

Learners were given a rhyme which was exclusively composed to teach Present Perfect Tense. Since during warm up session, the researcher taught the structure of Present Perfect Tense, learners were able to identify the uniqueness of the rhyme. Learners were clearly told that time is not supposed to be mentioned in Present Perfect Tense like ‘I have spoken to my grandfather yesterday. I have completed my +2 in 1999.’ After finishing this activity, learners were expected to stand up and say a few sentences in Present Perfect Tense.

One One One

**Our team has won**

Two Two Two

**We have gone to zoo**

Three three three

**They've got it free**

Four four four

**The milk has turned sour**

Five five five

**He has flown a dive**

Six six six

**She has hit a six**

Seven seven seven

**They have gone to heaven**

Eight eight eight

**I have made it right**

Nine nine nine

**I have got mine**

Ten ten ten

**We have had a great fun**

This rhyme helped learners learn the structure of Present Perfect Tense. Learners were able to imbibe the structure covertly. They were even able to utter sentences effortlessly in the correct form. The learners relatively showed much interest in learning the rhyme and there was a surge in the acquisition of the structure to certain extent. They came out with sentences

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like ‘I have passed my English exam. My friend has given me confidence. My mother has prepared good lunch. We have celebrated pongal. She has called me. The bus has just started.’

#### **4. Present perfect continuous**

Present perfect continuous tense is used to express actions that started in the past and is still progressing.

Level	:	First generation learners at the tertiary level
Time required	:	45 minutes
Skills to be concentrated	:	Present Perfect Continuous Tense, to improve reading skills and to make learners write a rhyme in the same manner.
Warm-up activity	:	Researcher has introduced the structure of Present Perfect Continuous tense and ensured that learners grasped the concept.

( I /We /You/ they + have+ been + Verb + ing.

**I /we / have / they have been travelling since last week.**

He / She / It + has + been + Verb + ing.

**It has been raining since yesterday.**

Learners were given a rhyme which was essentially composed to impart Present Perfect Continuous Tense. As learners were taught the structure of Present Perfect Continuous Tense, they were able to make out the distinctiveness of the given rhyme. They were asked to compose rhymes following the same structure. Learners came out with some good sentences

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like ‘They have been making noise in the classroom, My father has been paying fees since my childhood, My teacher has been teaching grammar.’ The interest and the improvement in the acquisition of the structure were moderately evident from their sentences.

Each learner was asked to read what he had written. This activity assisted learners to exhibit their creativity and promote reading ability. All the learners exchanged their sheets with one another and made comments and appreciations.

**It has been raining, It has been raining**

Don’t go out, don’t go out

**It has been ringing, it has been ringing**

Attend the call, attend the call

**She has been singing, she has been singing**

Listen to her, listen to her

**He has been calling, he has been calling**

Speak to him, speak to him

**They have been riding, they have been riding**

Don’t go fast, don’t go fast

**We have been reading, we have been reading**

That’s good, that’s good

**I have been learning, I have been learning**

Reap the reward, I will reap the reward.

This rhyme was intended to expose learners towards the present perfect continuous tense.

Learners were able to absorb the structure through the rhyme. The warm-up activity helped

the researcher discuss present perfect continuous tense and the use of ‘for and since’ along with the structure.

Eg. It rained yesterday. It is raining now also. It’s continuously raining from yesterday.

**It has been raining continuously since yesterday.**

## **Conclusion**

Though English is an exoglossic language in the Indian context, in every interview, English is the expected medium to pose questions and to receive answers. The learners who are excellent in their academics and score high marks in examinations utterly rely on rote learning. This is one of the reasons for the learners’ poor performance in the campus interviews. It is quite apparent that there is a complete dichotomy between the academic world and the industrial world. To bridge the gap between the two, the researcher has tried to impart English language through simulations.

Since simulations are better motivators, they fairly lessen the boredom of linguistic acquisition. However, the avoidance of similar simulations is requisite as it disposes of monotony. Subsequently, the specified tool takes away learners’ fright and prepares them to be employable when they finish their graduation. If teachers design simulations to cater to the requirements of the learners, they can certainly improve the effectiveness of teaching.

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