

Enhancing English Language Proficiency among Students of Aligarh Muslim University Schools: The Significance of Need Analysis in Teaching and Learning

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Abstract

This study focuses on how need analysis supports the improvement of English language proficiency among school students studying in a multilingual educational setting. This investigation analyses students enrolled in Aligarh Muslim University (AMU) schools and uses a practical, classroom-based, observation-and-interaction approach. The data were collected from Urdu-speaking students attending AMU-affiliated schools. Urdu-speaking learners often struggle with English proficiency, particularly in communication and pronunciation. The present study identifies major linguistic difficulties and examines how needs analysis can help plan effective teaching methods. Based on classroom observations, the paper suggests practical teaching strategies, including phonetic practice, vocabulary development using the mother tongue, and interactive communication-based tasks such as storytelling and group discussion. In this paper, diagrams are also used to clearly show patterns in students' challenges and their improvement across different grades. The findings clearly indicate that teaching according to students' needs improves their participation and confidence, and also plays a significant role in enhancing overall language ability. The study concludes that needs analysis should be incorporated into teaching to improve teaching methods in line with students' needs. It allows students to learn more effectively in practical, meaningful ways in actual classroom settings.

Keywords: Language proficiency, classroom observation, interaction-based approach, needs analysis, communication and pronunciation.

1. Introduction

Nowadays, English is used as a global language (a global lingua franca) and is widely used in academic studies, social communication, and professional activities across many countries. In the Indian education context, English is not just studied as a subject but also serves as a medium of instruction in many schools and colleges. Despite its importance, many students in India still struggle to use it effectively in real-world contexts. This type of situation highlights the difference between academic English and its use in everyday situations.

In multilingual classroom contexts, the issue becomes more complicated because learners are highly influenced by their mother tongue. In general, students from an Urdu-speaking background often

experience challenges due to differences in the sounds and structures of Urdu and English. Due to these differences, students generally mispronounce words, use limited vocabulary, and struggle with effective communication. The learners' mother tongue often influences the effective use of English in real-life and classroom situations.

Old teaching methods that primarily focus on grammar rules and memorisation are not sufficient to address these issues effectively. These approaches ignore educational backgrounds, students' individual learning needs, and the learning environment. As a result, students do not actively participate in learning activities and are unable to communicate in English in real-world contexts. It highlights the importance of shifting from traditional to student-focused teaching methods.

In this context, needs analysis has become a very useful method in improving language teaching practices. It mainly focuses on recognising students' needs, problems, and expectations to develop effective classroom strategies. This approach also encourages a shift from traditional teacher-centred teaching to a more learner-centred learning method. This teaching method makes teaching more effective by focusing primarily on students' actual needs and learning requirements in the classroom.

The present study is based on learners from AMU-affiliated schools, with particular focus on those in Classes V-VII. Through classroom observation and interaction, the study identifies major pronunciation and communication difficulties and recommends practical strategies to enhance language proficiency. The results clearly show the real difficulties students encounter in classroom English instruction. The suggested approaches enable teachers to improve students' speaking ability and overall confidence in learning English. It also highlights the importance of applying practical, learner-focused teaching methods in classroom settings.

Overall, this section of the present study highlights that English language proficiency develops progressively across class levels, but requires consistent guidance through structured, need-based, and learner-centred teaching approaches. The study suggests that using teaching approaches tailored to students' needs and classroom settings is important for achieving effective language learning outcomes.

Review of Related Literature

In English language teaching, needs analysis is widely recognised as an important and major concept for effective teaching. This approach plays a key role in understanding students' specific requirements and in developing effective teaching methods tailored to learners' needs. According to Hutchinson and Waters (1987), language teaching should focus on learners' actual needs, rather than following a rigid syllabus. According to them, needs are divided into three types: necessities, lacks, and wants, which together form an organised and clear framework for learner-focused teaching. This method allows teachers to clearly understand what students need, what they are missing, and what their learning expectations are. As a result, students can improve their learning when their needs are identified and properly met.

Richards (2001) suggests that curriculum design should be based on learners' needs, educational context and their backgrounds. He emphasises that understanding learners' problems and expectations is essential for effective teaching, as it enables teachers to design more meaningful and relevant learning materials. Recent studies also suggest that needs analysis makes the curriculum more relevant to students' real-life purposes and improves overall learning performance. As a result, teaching becomes more meaningful, organised, and focused on students' actual learning needs. This method enables teachers to design lessons that are easy to understand, more effective, clear and helpful for students.

According to Krashen's (1982) Input Hypothesis, learners develop language skills when they receive input slightly above their current level of understanding. However, Swain (1985) highlights that producing language through speaking plays a significant role in performance, particularly in improving fluency and accuracy. She explains that practising the language actively in real-life contexts regularly enhances their language skills. Recent studies also highlight that regular classroom speaking activities and interactive sessions help students to build confidence and develop communication abilities. This clearly explains that both input and output methods are very important for effective language development.

Nation (2001) explains that vocabulary plays a significant role in language learning because it supports the development of all language skills. Due to limited vocabulary, students face challenges expressing their ideas and also struggle to understand meanings. Similarly, Harmer (2007) also emphasises the importance of communicative teaching methods that promote interaction and active participation. These strategies play an important role in improving learners' language skills. In multilingual language settings, Kachru (1983) indicates that the mother tongue strongly influences second-language learning, especially in learners' speaking and pronunciation abilities. Recent studies also highlight that learners in multilingual contexts often need more practical, activity-based teaching approaches, particularly to improve communication skills. This clearly shows that both vocabulary and communication skills are essential to learning a language.

In the past few years, English language teaching has paid more attention to learner-centred and needs-based approaches. These studies suggest that integrating need analysis into curriculum design makes teaching materials more relevant, flexible, and effective. Moreover, recent studies also highlight the use of technology, interactive teaching methods, and mixed-method approaches to better understand learners' needs and improve language learning. These developments indicate a shift toward modern, learner-focused teaching methods. It also enables teachers to develop lessons that align with students' needs and improve their academic performance.

Furthermore, recent classroom studies indicate that many learners struggle with speaking, lack confidence, and require more practical, interesting learning opportunities. These results clearly suggest that teachers should design learning activities and the curriculum to meet students' actual needs rather than rely solely on traditional learning methods. Although there has been increasing emphasis on needs analysis and student-centred teaching approaches, there is still a lack of studies focusing specifically on students of Aligarh Muslim University schools. This gap highlights the importance of the present study, which focuses on learners' needs and also suggests developing effective teaching methods to enhance English language proficiency in this specific academic setting.

Objectives of the Study

The present study is based on a set of objectives developed to understand learners' needs, their learning difficulties and the importance of need-based teaching methods. These objectives provide clear guidance for the study and help examine major aspects of language learning and teaching methods. Some important objectives are given below:

- The first objective of this study is to examine the English language needs of AMU-affiliated school students. It aims to understand learners' challenges, expectations, and areas for improvement in English learning. This is also very helpful in identifying learners' actual needs for more effective teaching.

- The second objective focuses on identifying the difficulties faced by students, especially in communication and pronunciation skills. It focuses on identifying major problem areas that affect learners' overall language proficiency. It also helps examine the reasons behind students' difficulties with spoken English.
- The next objective of the present study is to analyse how need analysis contributes to the students' English language proficiency. The objective is to understand how teaching that is learner-centred can effectively improve educational outcomes. It also highlights how needs analysis contributes to practical and learner-focused teaching.
- This objective aims to recommend practical strategies for enhancing students' language abilities. It focuses on identifying practical methods to improve pronunciation, communication, and overall language proficiency. This objective also focuses on finding methods to make classroom teaching more interactive, meaningful, and useful.
- The last objective of this study is to examine the usefulness of student-centred and need-based teaching strategies in a multilingual learning context. The objective is to analyse how learner-centred methods can improve teaching more effectively and better align with students' requirements. This objective also helps in learner-focused teaching practices that can support learning in multilingual classrooms.

Research Questions

The study addresses research questions examining learners' needs, the importance of need-based teaching methods, and the challenges they face in English learning. These questions provide clear direction for the study and help examine major language-learning problems and teaching methods. The main research questions are given below:

- What are the major English learning needs of students studying in AMU-affiliated schools?
- What kind of major challenges do learners encounter in pronunciation and communication in English language learning?
- How can needs analysis support the development of English language ability among students?
- What type of effective teaching methods can help to enhance students' pronunciation, communication, and overall English performance?
- How useful are need-based teaching and learner-centred teaching methods in multilingual classroom contexts?

Methodology

Research Design

The present study follows a mixed-methods approach to analyse learners' needs, English learning challenges, and the role of need-based teaching methods in effectively improving English language proficiency. The study uses both qualitative and descriptive elements to provide a wider and clearer understanding of the research problem in a practical way. This method allows for understanding the research problem from multiple perspectives and in a more organised and balanced manner.

Participants

The present study examines students enrolled in AMU-affiliated schools, particularly those in Classes V to VII, in the selected school settings. The participants were selected to explore students' needs, pronunciation difficulties, and their overall experience in English learning. The participants were selected

to help explore the research problem within a practical educational setting. It also ensured that the study findings reflected real classroom situations and students' learning experience in a practical way.

Data Collection Techniques

The researcher collected data for this study through classroom observation, individual and group discussions, survey-based and interaction in practical classroom environments. These techniques helped gather practical information about learners' challenges, expectations, and classroom experiences in an organised pattern. The use of multiple methods enhances the depth and reliability of the collected information for the study.

Data Analysis

The collected data were examined through descriptive analysis to recognise patterns linked to students' needs and language difficulties in a clear and systematic way. In this study, the researcher used graphical representations to present patterns and comparisons among different classes. The visual representation of data makes the findings easier to understand, compare and interpret.

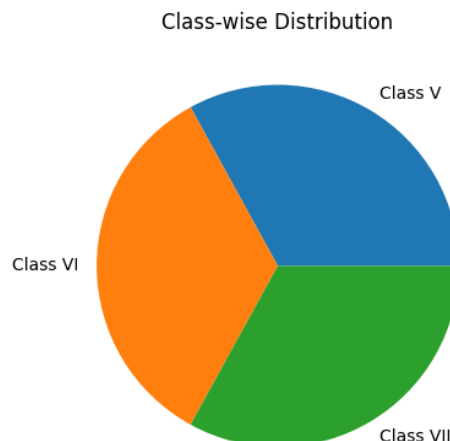
Findings and Analysis

This section discusses the findings and analysis based on the information collected in the present study. The information collected from students in Classes V to VII is presented in a clear, organised manner. The analysis examines variations among classes in pronunciation, vocabulary, and communication to identify proficiency patterns. For better understanding and clarity, the findings are presented through visual representation, followed by detailed class-wise analysis and interpretation in a systematic manner. It makes it easier to recognise important patterns and variations in students' achievement across different classes.

Class-wise Distribution of Participants

The study includes students from Classes V, VI, and VII, and the findings are examined class-wise to examine patterns of English language development across different grades. This distribution provides a basis for comparing students' performance, growth, and challenges in pronunciation, vocabulary, and communication. Through this class-based approach, we can easily understand the gradual improvement in learners' language development.

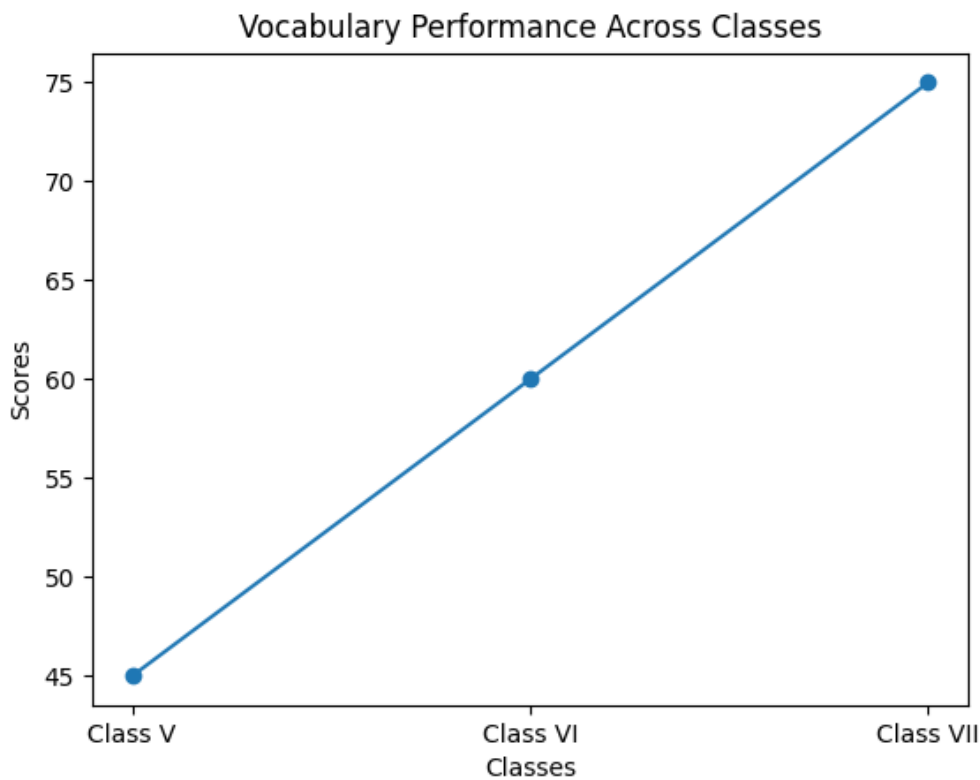
The pie chart below presents the distribution of students across Classes V, VI, and VII in a clear visual. This distribution makes it easier to explain the composition of the sample used for class-wise analysis. It also helps further class-wise examination and interpretation of the data.



Class-wise Analysis of Vocabulary Performance

The findings indicate that students' vocabulary performance in Classes V to VII gradually increases systematically. Students in Class V demonstrated basic vocabulary skills and relied mainly on mother-tongue equivalence, whereas Class VI students showed moderate improvement in recognising and using words. On the other hand, students enrolled in Class VII showed stronger vocabulary skills, suggesting gradual progression in language development across grade levels. It also highlights the importance of class-based, appropriate vocabulary support to strengthen language growth across classes.

The following chart shows a class-wise comparison of students' vocabulary performance across Classes V-VII in the study. It makes it easier to understand differences in vocabulary growth across different classes.



Interpretation

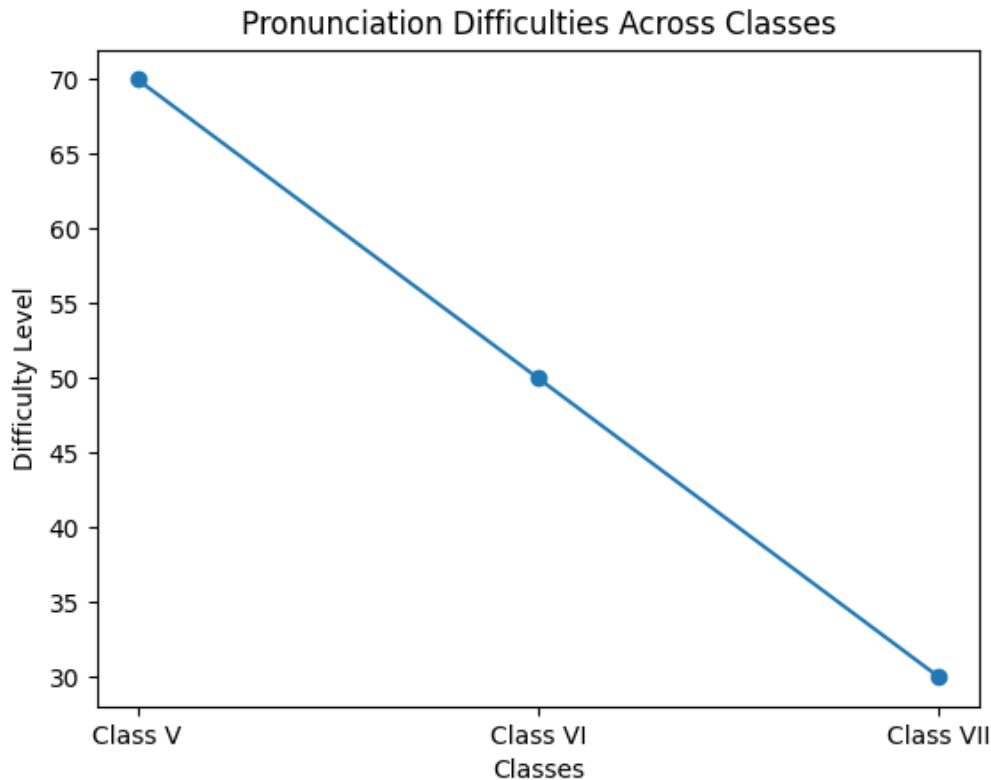
The findings indicate that vocabulary knowledge develops gradually across grade levels, with students in higher grades performing better than those in lower grades. Nevertheless, students at all levels still need structured, level-based vocabulary support to improve word usage and overall language development. These findings also highlight that vocabulary instruction should be designed to support learners' growth and learning needs at each level.

Class-wise Examination of Pronunciation Challenges

The findings indicate that students in Class V experienced greater pronunciation difficulties, particularly in articulation and sound production. Class VI students showed moderate improvement in pronunciation, whereas Class VII students performed comparatively better, though some pronunciation difficulties persisted in certain areas. This pattern suggests that students' pronunciation skills gradually improved as

they moved through higher classes. It also shows the importance of pronunciation training tailored to students' grade level to improve articulation and speaking accuracy.

The figure below shows the level of pronunciation difficulty among students across the study's classes. It shows variations in articulation and sound production among students.



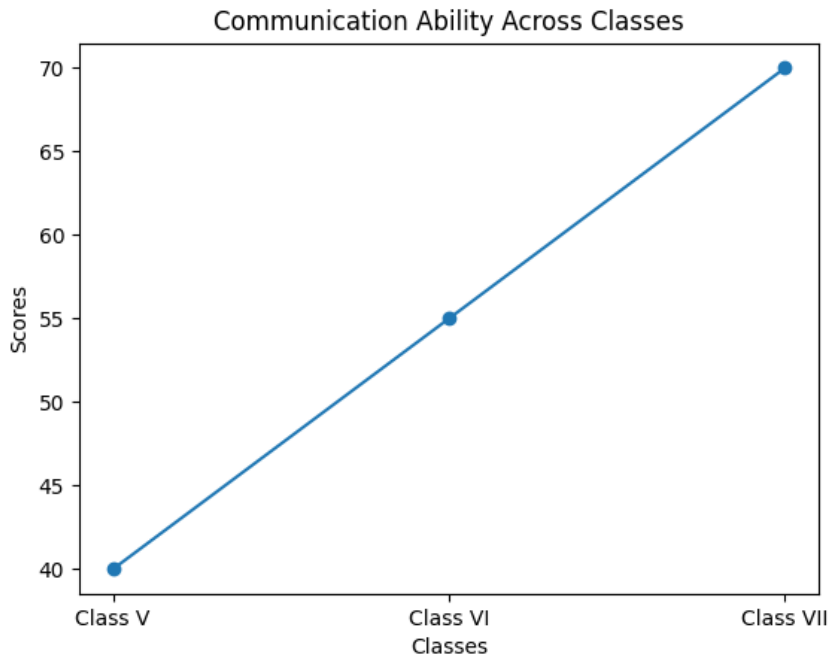
Interpretation

The findings clearly reveal that pronunciation ability develops gradually as students move to higher grades, but targeted phonetics support at all levels is necessary to enhance articulation, sound production and speaking accuracy. It also supports teachers in designing phonetic instruction based on students' growth and language development stages.

Class-wise Examination of Communication Challenges

The class-wise analysis shows clear, noticeable variations in students' communication ability across the three grade levels. Students enrolled in Class V displayed greater hesitation and limited participation during group discussions and classroom communication activities. On the other hand, Class VI students showed moderate participation, whereas Class VII students performed better in communication and demonstrated greater confidence during classroom activities. The findings suggest steady improvement in communication skills as students' progress through higher grades. It also points out the need for class-specific communicative activities to strengthen speaking and interaction skills more effectively.

The figure given below displays the class-wise differences in students' communication ability from Classes V to VII in the study. It helps identify differences in confidence, participation, and ability to express ideas among learners.



Interpretation

The findings clearly indicate steady development in communication ability and confidence from lower to higher grades, reflecting growth in students' speaking and interaction skills. So, we can say that regular communication practice and classroom activities can gradually enhance students' confidence and communication ability.

Overall Analysis of Class-wise Results

Comprehensive, the analysis suggests a clear, gradual development from Class V to Class VII in vocabulary performance, communication ability, and pronunciation. The findings of the present study also show that learners in higher grades perform better in language proficiency, while students in lower grades encounter greater difficulties and require stronger instructional guidance. The analysis highlights the importance of need-based, class-appropriate teaching methods to identify students' needs at different grade levels and to improve English language proficiency. It also suggests the importance of regular learner-centred teaching methods to enhance English language learning across classes in a more effective and systematic way.

Discussion

The findings of the present study highlight a consistent and noticeable improvement in English proficiency among students in AMU-affiliated schools from Classes V to VII. The findings show that vocabulary, pronunciation, and communication skills develop gradually across grades, as students in higher grades perform comparatively better in all aspects. The pattern indicates that language proficiency is influenced by regular practice, good exposure and active classroom interaction over time. This also suggests that continued practice, English exposure and classroom activities play a significant role in developing language skills.

The findings strongly align with the nation's vocabulary development model, which emphasises that vocabulary plays a crucial role in language development across all aspects. The observed development

shows that vocabulary improves gradually as students get more exposure and regular usage of the English language. However, students still need organised, grade-based vocabulary support, suggesting that vocabulary learning requires planned instruction and guidance, as it is not achieved automatically without support. This kind of guidance can help learners improve their confidence and accuracy while using vocabulary in communication and a real classroom environment.

The findings on pronunciation problems align with Kachru's view that mother tongue interference affects pronunciation in multilingual classroom settings. The greater pronunciation challenges observed among students of lower classes are due to their dependency on their mother tongue. While students in higher grades show better pronunciation skills, certain pronunciation issues persist, highlighting the need for continued, targeted phonetic instruction at all levels. The findings also reveal that teachers should concentrate regularly on students' phonetic training and articulation exercises.

Similarly, the results agree with Harmer's view that communicative teaching approaches play a key role in effective language development. The study reveals that students gain confidence and increased participation, suggesting that activity-based, interactive classroom activities also enhance their communication skills. However, the limited participation of lower-class students indicates the need for structured communication activities to build their confidence and speaking ability.

Furthermore, the study's findings strongly align with the concept of need analysis as explained by Hutchinson, Waters, and Richards. The class-wise variations observed in the study clearly indicate that students at different levels have distinct learning needs that must be addressed through appropriate teaching approaches. This study suggests that learner-centred and need-based teaching methods play an important role in language learning and classroom activities.

Additionally, the results align with recent studies (2021–2025) that demonstrate the effectiveness of need-based and learner-centred teaching practices in multilingual classroom contexts. Past studies also show that learner-centred teaching leads to better learning outcomes and greater student participation. These types of approaches improve students' comprehension and increase student participation in classroom activities.

Conclusion

The present study examined how need analysis enhances English language proficiency among students enrolled in Aligarh Muslim University schools, particularly those in Classes V-VII, in a multilingual learning environment. The study's findings suggest clear and systematic development in learners' language proficiency across classes, particularly in major language skills such as vocabulary, pronunciation, and communication. Students in higher grades showed better language performance, whereas lower-grade students experienced greater challenges with pronunciation and communication. This pattern clearly indicates the steady development of language abilities as students progress from lower to higher classes. The results also suggest that vocabulary knowledge improves gradually through ongoing exposure and active participation in classroom activities. It also highlights that well-structured, need-based vocabulary instruction plays a crucial role in vocabulary development, as vocabulary development is not automatic; it requires systematic instruction. Similarly, although pronunciation skills improve gradually across grade levels, certain difficulties persist due to mother tongue interference, underscoring the importance of ongoing phonetic support. Communication skills also develop gradually across classes, with higher-class students showing better confidence and participation, while lower-class students still need guidance to

improve their expression. It also shows that teaching approaches should be planned more effectively and practically, based on students' levels and learning needs.

The present study makes an important contribution by highlighting that students at different class levels have distinct and changing learning needs over time. It emphasises the central role of need analysis in developing teaching strategies tailored to the classroom context and learner needs. The results demonstrate that learner-focused teaching approaches support better language development and active classroom participation. Such strategies support the development of a more engaging and productive learning environment in the classroom.

Furthermore, the present investigation suggests that adopting interactive, practical teaching strategies, like discussions, storytelling, and activity-based learning, also develops students' speaking skills and confidence. These strategies help to develop a more engaging and positive learning environment in the classroom. This also helps foster better communication and interaction among students in the classroom. In conclusion, English language proficiency improves gradually across classes, but this depends on continuous, need-based, and organised teaching methods. Teaching methods should adapt to students' needs and the classroom context to achieve meaningful and effective learning outcomes. This study offers valuable suggestions for developing responsive, learner-centred English teaching practices in a multilingual classroom environment. It highlights that effective teaching requires a clear understanding of students' needs and classroom diversity in practice.

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