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CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF TEACHING ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE IN INDIAN CONTEXT

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ABSTRACT

English language cannot be learned like other subjects viz; Mathematics, History, Science etc. It requires English learning environment. In India, English teacher emphasises on grammar rather than the language itself. It is just like getting knowledge of swimming without knowing actual swimming. In such situation, students feel just like a fish out of water. Learning grammar should be a secondary part while teaching English language itself should be primary. It does not mean that student should avoid English grammar. It means, maximum emphasis should be on language learning rather than learning rules and regulations of grammar. Grammar learning should be a secondary part. Maximum stress should be given on activity based language learning. Learner's psychology plays pivotal role in language learning. Motivation to learn a language with the help of authentic material can help student to overcome language learning barriers. Due to technological upgradation, English language teacher's role has been changed drastically. Now, he has to function as a mentor, who can guide students and can help them to reach at proper destination in less time.

This paper deals with various techniques, methods, researches on language learning process, language learning tools which can motivate English language teachers to teach non-native language learner in effective manner.

Key words-Teaching English in India, grammar, Communication Skills, Learner's Psychology.

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Introduction

Globalisation has changed the scenario of Indian industries. Many Multinational Companies have set up their business in India. Such MNCs require manpower who are well-versed in English language. English language has become a bridge to join Indian people with other nations. Hence there is no alternative for English language.

Secondly, in India, there is not a single language which can connect all the states. In India, there are twenty-two official languages. In such a

situation, not a single language can be used as a vehicle to run the country.

Thirdly, all the scientific knowledge is in English language. By the time we translate science and technology reference books in our regional languages, the books will become outdated. We will require almost double efforts to translate the books in our regional languages. In the world of science and technology, every day scientist innovates new ideas. Such ideas cannot be translated and transferred to the students in their regional languages. So, in

India, we don't have any option rather than learning English language.

Hence, we have to improve our techniques of language learning which can help students to learn the language in minimum time. English language teacher can do that by using various modern methods and techniques of language learning.

Discussion

Current English Language Teaching Methods in Indian Schools and colleges: In India, English has been taught like any other subject. Teacher has been teaching English by using traditional methods like Grammar Translation Method, Direct Method, Bilingual Method etc. They also use traditional tools like chalk and talk. Now, time has been changed and technology has brought new teaching aids which can be used for better teaching-learning process.

Different traditional methods and approaches of English language teaching

1. Grammar Translation Method

This method is also known as Classical Method. This method was used to teach Latin and Greek. This method was famous during 16th Century. This is rote learning method. It is based on using mother tongue to teach foreign language. It emphasises on learning grammar. Learning grammar without learning a language seems to be ridiculous. In fact, in language learning hierarchy language learning should come first and then grammar. We learn grammar to avoid errors in the language. Without knowing the actual language, how is it possible to rectify the errors.

This type of language teaching is adopted in rural India. It kills the creativity and interest of the students. Every language has its own mechanism. Every language has its own sentence structures. So we cannot teach English in an effective way by using this method.

2. Bilingual Method

This method was developed by C.J. Dodson in the 1960s and 1970s. He advocated the use of mother tongue i.e. L1 in learning the L2 i.e. target language. This method makes use of the traditional three P's: Presentation, Practice, Production. These are three main pillars of language learning. Strong emphasis has been given on oral language. It is also known as a sandwich-technique of language

learning. It does not help fluency and naturalness in language expression.

3. Direct Method

It is the natural method of language learning. In this method all teaching-learning process is done in the target language. Minimum emphasis has been given on target language and maximum focus is on speaking and listening the target language. In his method, the teacher relies on audio-visual aids, demonstration, activities etc. Grammar is taught inductively. All the classroom activities are carried out in target language. This method is useful because students get maximum exposure of the target language. Teacher explains new words by using pictures or body language. In the beginning, students find it difficult to learn the language, but they can gradually gain knowledge of the language.

4. The structural approach.

It is also known as 'aural-oral approach' as it stresses teaching language by giving opportunities to the students to listen and speak the language. It helps students to learn certain structures of English language. However, the main disadvantage of this method is that through this method textbook prescribed in course cannot be taught. It seems to be monotonous to learn structure. This approach is based on rote learning which cannot give fluency to students.

New approaches of Language Learning

1. Suggestopedia

This teaching method is based on the idea how the human brain works and how we learn most effectively. It is a sort of play way method of language learning. It is based on student psychology. In this method, language teacher should create situations in which learners are most suggestible. The teacher should be skilled in acting, singing and psychotherapeutic techniques.

2. Total Physical Response (TPR)

TPR is developed by James Asher. It is based on the idea that human brain is like a computer programming. They are biologically programmed to learn language. In this method, a teacher uses body language, models and sometimes command to teach the second language. It is activity based language learning. It believes in learning second language

through actions rather than theory. In this theory maximum focus is on communication and not grammar.

3. Communicative language teaching (CLT)

The communicative language teaching aims at developing procedures for the teaching of the four skills that acknowledge the interdependence of language and communication. It aims at having students become competent in communication. (*Yemen Times*). In this method language teacher's role is just like a facilitator or mentor. His prime responsibility is to provide student to make plenty of error free sentences.

4. The Silent Way.

Language is a means to transfer thoughts, ideas, emotions or feeling to other person. So language must be practised in meaningful contexts. In this method, the focus is on encouraging students to correct their own language errors with the help of language teacher. Here the role of the teacher is just like a technician or engineer who helps students to overcome language barriers.

Recent Neurophysiological studies of brain and its relevance to foreign language learning

We have already discussed about the suggestopedia which is proven to be an effective method of learning a foreign language in a relaxed situation. In that the language can be recalled and stored in our mind for a long time. This relaxed state of mind can be also called as Alpha-state which refers to a pleasant, relaxed state of mind which gives impetus to foreign language learning. It can be induced by music as well as by

the appropriate words. Jasiukaitis, a famous linguist, has done an experiment on learning a language in a relaxed situation focusing on hypnosis.

The long-term experiments with four groups (Schiffler 1992) have shown that

teaching which systematically rehearses learning data by means of music-induced relaxation, is more effective, provided that the teaching is intensive and takes up to four hours a day. This has also been confirmed during intensive teaching of 14-year-old students (Schiffler 1992, 127ff).

Motivating the Students with Authentic Texts

Authentic texts have been defined as "real-life texts, not written for pedagogic purposes" (Wallace 1992:145). They are specially written taking into consideration the native speakers and contains the real language of the people. It requires authentic and natural language. There are some common sources for getting authentic material like Indian English newspaper, magazine, Indian English literature, songs, even movies etc.

Now a days, internet is a powerful tool to get the authentic material. On Youtube you get some language learning videos which can fill life in the classroom teaching. English teacher should take into account one important point while collecting the material that is he/she should focus on students understanding of the language and not the form. Especially when using literary texts with the emphasis being on what is being said and not necessarily on the literary form or stylistics.

If students find the material interesting, automatically they will empathise with the teacher. In such a situation, students will learn grammar, new vocabulary without much efforts. Teacher can download some real life situation videos from internet and he can explain the cultural difference with the help of authentic material. For instance, *Malgudi Day*, a famous book of R.K. Narayana can be taught to teach English language effectively. The same book is available on internet in audio-visual form. Teacher can display such videos in the classroom.

Continuous Change in government policies and its impact on language learning

Government of India has been changing decision about English language continuously. After every five years, a new government comes with new approach towards the subject. Some educational ministers give importance to English language and give impetus to the language whereas some educational ministers want mother tongue of students as a medium of instruction and making English language as an optional subject.

In Maharashtra, state education minister honourable Vinod Tawde, whose latest move is to better the system to encourage the weak students to quit when the subjects like English and

Mathematics when the subjects seems to be tough. The subjects like Maths and English may shortly be taken off the Class X list of compulsory subjects in state government schools and this may prove to be disaster for students' futures. The educational minister has collected the data of last five years and come to the conclusion that lot of students fail in English and Mathematics, leading students to commit suicide. The subjects, according to him, taking lives of the students. So he wants to replace the subjects by introducing new subjects like fine arts or dance from the next academic year. It is a good decision to introduce new subjects for all round development of the students but not at the cost of subjects like English and Mathematics. Instead of curing the disease, it seems to be hiding the disease. In future, students have to face the global competition and at that time, they will find it more difficult to cope up with the subjects.

Honourable Vinodji Tawde said, "We have done a statewide survey on failure in the Class X exams. I have got the last five years' data of all schools. The survey reveals that maximum number of failures are in Maths and English. Sometimes, failure in these subjects lead students to take their lives. It's a serious issue. We are considering a policy decision on whether these subjects can be made optional for Class X students."

Importance of Language lab for learning English language

The first language lab was found at the University of Grenoble in 1908. It was only tape-based system/audio based system. It was equipped with reel to reel cassettes recorders. Now a days, due to technological upgradation, language laboratory use software that can be installed and accessed on any networked PC.

English labs or any other language labs have the same basic components. The first one is instructor's computer with a suitable software, second one is headsets and microphones for the teacher and the students to record and communicate with each other and last one is a media player for the students to listen to audio and watch videos. Some language softwares (Like Linguaphone L-21 with eyespeak) has the facility of

giving feedback to students by critical analysis of their voice. This system is connected either via LAN (Local Area Network) or via wireless area network.

Language lab can be used to enhance students' listening and reading skills. In traditional class, the emphasis is mainly on reading and writing more than the other skills. The students, being neutral learner, will not have the time to speak and participate equally in each class. That's why the concept of language lab has been invented and developed for involvement of students.

English language learning softwares

Now a days, english language learning softwares are available to teach english in a better way. Rosetta Stone is one of the best softwares available in the market. It helps students learn english through an interactive system of incremental advancement in the language. Learning English through this software occurs through three core components: You learn, practice and play to reinforce what you have learned. The learning method is absorbing English. It starts by teaching words instead of vocabulary lists. There is also speech recognition technology to help with English pronunciation. There are different softwares available in the market like English Live, Exceller, Transparent language etc. These softwares are for the beginners.

Conclusion

Due to English language, the world has become a global village. With the help of English language, one can open the windows of the world and can peep into the latest technology, information of the world. In India, English has been taught only from examination point of view. Some Indian English Teachers are using the same rote learning methods with maximum emphasis on grammar and less emphasis on actual language learning. Ganguli (2011:2) reports that 'there are districts in UP where only 2 to 5 per cent of teachers can actually teach English'. In such a situation, students find English language learning as a monotonous task and they neglect the subject. The teacher can create interest in the subject by using different types of audio-visual aids in the class. He can give life to the lessons even by showing some pictures related to the text from a newspaper. Students like video clips having some

English subtitles ,it can be also a good source of language learning.The teacher should develop all the language skills i.e.LSRW -Listening ,Writing ,Reading and Writing .Only by using latest technology it will be possible .Teachers training programme is a tool to upgrade the knowlege of teachers.It can give them an opportunity to share their ideas,views ,new approaches ,experiences towards English language teaching.

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