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TRANSFORMING PEDAGOGY TO FRIUTFUL OUTCOMES: A CALL FOR CHANGE

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ABSTRACT

English is now the dominant voice in politics, banking, the press, the news agencies, advertising, broadcasting, the recording industry, motion pictures, travel, science and technology, knowledge management, and communications. No other language has achieved such a widespread profile – or is likely to, in the foreseeable future. The conditions under which English is taught and learnt and the reasons for lacking standard of English in Indian academics have always been a matter of concern for all language learners and teachers. The present paper enlists the major problems and perspectives in the field of teaching English in contemporary India and the new pedagogy which need to be applied according to today's requirement. It is also highlighted that some of the crucial factors demand great attention in order to bring about a great change in the current linguistic scenario in the country.

KEYWORDS : Pedagogy, education, teacher, learner, English, classroom.



INTRODUCTION :

English is included in school curriculum as a second language or as a foreign language for practical utility. But there are certain problems related to the conditions under which English is taught in our country, which need to be tackled tactfully and seriously. Conditions under which English is taught and learnt remain a source of dissatisfaction to all. This paper explores what teachers need to know if they wish to appreciate and encourage the contribution

of their students' existing experience in the learning of English. Second-language teaching must promote in the learner the complex and unconscious knowledge that allows the automatic use of everyday language.

In a lecture, Kumaravadivelu made this interesting comment:

“One's cultural growth should be rooted in one's own cultural traditions but must also be enriched by an ability and willingness to learn not only about other cultures but also from other cultures. Learning about other cultures merely leads us to cultural literacy. It is learning from other cultures that will lead us to cultural liberty.”

As Michael points out “a language is not a subject which can be taught. It is a subject which

must be learnt.” Pupils are taught English for about six periods a week for six years. But it has been estimated that they hardly attain a vocabulary of 1500 words by the time they join a higher education institute. It means that they have been able to learn English words at the rate of one word per period. Long periods of exposure to English enable the students to have a certain degree of familiarity with sentence patterns, words and phrases in the language that strengthens their ability in writing skill though not in skill of speaking.

Pedagogy is the theoretical study of education. Although there is not a consistent way to apply the distinction between education and pedagogy, it is a truism that “education and pedagogy are not exclusive, but inclusive. That is, pedagogy is the science of education and it is a combination of skills required for effective teaching. The paper concentrates on the concept of pedagogy. Along the same vein, the paper holds that the selection of learning experiences and their implementation (pedagogy) require teachers to think about the learners from both pedagogic and educative perspectives.

Pedagogy as the science of education and instruction as the planned course of learning are intermingled. The pedagogy is an inevitable side of instruction. When teachers teach something, they teach not only the content and skills represented in the instructional plan, but also various associations and attitudes. The selection of learning experiences and their implementation (pedagogy) require teachers to think about learners in a way that demonstrates individual interests, aptitudes, and needs. Henceforth, teachers, in their profession, are both educationist and pedagogic per se. When teachers make an attempt to bring about and sustain rational activity in order to achieve the cultivation of mind, they will be education-oriented, while when they begin to teach the skills and strategies to achieve a social goal, they become pedagogic.

Need for New Shove

The following are some of the crucial factors which demand great attention in order to bring about a new shove in the current linguistic scenario in the country:

Dearth of Trained Teachers

India has a long history of paucity of trained teachers of English. The colleges of education have always failed to keep pace with the quantitative requirement of teachers of English in the country. India does not have sufficient English-proficient teachers to deliver the programmes now being embarked upon. This moves our attention to the qualitative requirement of the teachers, but also raises the issues pertaining to the teacher-training programmes in India. The study suggests the existing syllabi of pre-service teacher-training courses should be refurbished to equip the prospective facilitators of English to deal with the diverse Indian ELT scenario.

Many teachers who teach English in schools lack the technique of foreign language teaching. They remain largely ignorant of the changes taking place in English teaching and learning across the globe. In the current scenario teachers are being appointed on the basis of their qualification and after their recruitment in the institutions they evince very little interest and opportunity to attend in-service programmes. Though certain seminars, conferences and workshops are conducted by academic and professional bodies, they do little to help the teachers in changing their age old method of teaching overnight. Teacher educators have an important role in helping early-career teachers to shape their pedagogy in such a way that the maximum number of learners can be inspired.

Ineffective Textbooks

The textbooks, which are prescribed for the students are not suitable and attention gainers.

Books mostly do not contain tasks where learners can draw samples from the local, every day experiences. Most of the tasks are designed to find answers from the textbook itself. Students read, only to get through the examination. English books need improvement in the selection and gradation of vocabulary, good printing, suitable subject matter, genuine illustrations, language and style, exercises and glossary, relevance and abridgement of English stories to suit Indian conditions. But majority of the textbooks which contain prose texts, stories and poems are written by native speakers of English. They are linguistically difficult and culturally alien. Textbooks prepared by government agencies appear to be dull and unattractive with no proper illustrations or exercise material. They often contain errors – factual as well as linguistic. Quite often textbooks are prescribed not on the basis of quality or merit but on other considerations given to the management or the head of the institution.

Examination Oriented Teaching Pattern

The examination oriented teaching pattern does not produce any practical impact upon the learners for various reasons. The teachers complete the text in a hurry to give the impression that syllabus has been completed. Then it is left to the students to prepare and face the examination. The comprehension questions are also not designed to help the learners to critically analyze the text. More than making the students comprehend the text and assisting them in preparing the essays of their own, teachers advocate the learners to depend on the sub-standard material prepared by non-professionals. Thus, the students' "cognitive and creative ability are not fully utilized." Learners merely learn by rote, a fact one tends to ignore. The purpose of acquiring the skill by the learners is not attained. Thus, the learners lack the ability to learn other subjects in English.

The present examination system is based on memorization and reproduction. It does not test the competence of learners in English. The examination in English puts a lot of emphasis on rote learning rather than language mastery. At the time of examination more importance is given to written English, ignoring other skills. However, very few attempts have been made to realize the aims of teaching English through proper assessment.

Over Crowded Classrooms

The physical condition of the classrooms poses a serious problem. Accommodating a huge number of students in a small room does not in any way motivate the students to learn. Often, they are huddled up together with very little space to sit and write. Learning in such situations is highly demotivating to the students, and it is equally frustrating to the teachers. Although students manifest mixed ability in a large classroom, the teachers find it difficult to bestow attention on individual learners. In addition, the teachers do not adopt innovative methods like activity method, project method etc. in the schools due to lack of proper facilities in schools and also due to the huge strength of the class. As they mechanically resort to lecture method, the young learners feel deprived of real motivation from teachers.

Lack of Infrastructure and Facilities

Infrastructure of the classrooms is a great concern for learning. Some schools do not have enough furniture to accommodate all learners. Majority of the schools, Primary and Secondary, are all ill-equipped so far as teaching aids are concerned. There is a dearth of even simple visual aids like flash cards, charts, black-board, pictures, single tape recorder, linguaphone, film strips etc. which are minimum aids required is one of the major requirement if one has to learn English worth the name. Non-availability of right type of teaching materials and audio-visual aids make the teaching of English in

India quite ineffective. Also the teachers show least enthusiasm towards preparation of teaching aids in their regular classrooms, and fail to make the language class lively and interactive.

Socio-economic Factors

Quantitative expansion in education and English teaching has resulted in lack of quality. Those who have the necessary resources and the money send their children to the best Convents, best English medium schools and Public Schools in the country and those who do not have the means are forced to be satisfied with what they get in the name of English.

SUGGESTIONS

All the aforesaid aspects prove to be great challenges in the field of English language teaching in the country and one can add many more to the list of difficult circumstances under which English is taught and learnt. This situation emphasizes the need for some change in teaching English.

English has been taught in the educational institutions for quite a long time, yet the students feel handicapped in using it effectively in and outside their classrooms. The reasons are many and manifold but the most obvious and glaring is the use of faulty methods of teaching and learning the language at various levels of education. A shift therefore needs to be made if the language learning/teaching has to yield positive results. The interactive method in English language teaching with its learner-centered focus can help in equipping the students with adequate skills to use language communicative in different situations. In fact, language is a creative process with the learner playing a pivotal role. Communication is an interaction between people who have something to share.

If communication is to be the objective in foreign language teaching, then interaction must be present. If skillfully handled, interactive classroom techniques can promote learner initiative and autonomy, which, in turn, will ensure successful language learning. Since real communication interaction is a collaborative activity, classroom teaching and learning activities must be interactive in nature. The Significance and Implications of Classroom interaction is considered as a productive teaching technique.

Classroom-Interaction

In classroom interaction, both teachers and students can create the learning opportunities, which motivate the students' interest and potential to communicate with others. Classroom interaction in the target language can now be seen as not just offering language practice, nor just learning opportunities, but as actually constructing the language development process itself. Interactive language teaching stresses the importance of providing learners with more activities to interact directly in the target language – to acquire it by using it rather than to learn it by studying it. It requires the teacher to step out of the limelight, to give a full role to the students in carrying out activities to accept all kinds of opinions and to tolerate errors. On the other hand, the students are expected to listen to others (the teacher and other students) to talk with and to negotiate meaning in a shared context. All the skills of language are equally taught and acquired to enable the learner to use language efficiently.

Language is the main tool through which education is imparted in classrooms. Language as both subject and medium of instruction, together with the pedagogy used, govern the effectiveness and efficiency of classroom interaction, which in return regulates the comprehension and achievement of students. The medium of instruction as well as the textbook are key constraints that hamper learning in our classrooms – and this is especially the case with students from marginalized communities who do

not speak the language of the formal classroom.

Fifty per cent of the world's out-of-school children live in communities where the language of schooling is rarely, if ever, used at home. This underscores the biggest challenge to achieving Education for All (EFA): a legacy of non-productive practices that lead to low levels of learning and high levels of dropout and repetition. Textbooks and teaching are often in a language these students neither speak nor understand. The consequences for many children are predictable and have been described in many researches. Through the analysis of language policies and research literature, it can be said that the classroom pedagogy which excludes children's native language and the monolingual policies in multilingual speakers' classroom has been a focal reason for their failure and poor comprehension.

Many of us can remember a teacher at school who inspired us to learn, who changed our relationship to a subject, and who persuaded us to invest effort in learning it, inside and outside school. In the era of communicative language teaching, there is plenty of published advice for practitioners on how to make classes stimulating, and there is also an emerging line of research that examines the motivational strategies that teachers use in class. But genuine competence in a foreign language only develops through sustained effort over many years, and we need to know what kind of teaching can inspire such a lasting commitment. The present century demands an integrated teacher who can shape the inner potentiality of a learner through an integrated approach of knowledge of the content area and of the philosophy of teaching. Every nation needs an educational philosophy for building up a sound system of education.

Student- text Interaction

Reading experiences enable the students develop a control over the language. It helps them develop confidence in themselves. They read around words that they do not know and make use of the available information to comprehend the familiar words and identify their grammatical function.

Student- community Interaction

Classrooms do not operate in isolation from society. The educational institutions tend not only to reflect but also to transmit the social and cultural values and beliefs of the dominant society in which they exist. Interacting with the community enables anyone to speak the language. The students get many opportunities when they are sent out into the community with a clearly defined project that involves talking with native speakers and finding out the required information.

The social interaction theory of Vygotsky has been reflected in teacher's pedagogic practices that helped the teacher to develop the ways through which she made use of children's language in her classroom interactions. The study was conducted in the city of Bhopal. The data was gathered through questionnaires and classroom observations and transcribed for content analysis. The findings of the study reveal the different approaches and methods used by the teacher to teach English. It further exposes the coexistence of both teacher's and children's native languages that enabled the teaching and learning processes in different contexts. The study also reveals how the teacher's role as a learner informs her pedagogic practices and becomes an instrument for language teaching.

Promoting Interaction through Classroom Activities

A wide range of activities have been proposed for use in the classroom. They are mostly problem- solving activities which include sharing of information, negotiation of meaning and interaction. The activities may include large- group activities, small- group activities and pair work.

The most workable classroom activities are presentations, pair work, discussions, debates and

written exercises. All these activities need to be task-oriented; so that they can help nurture students' problem-solving and creative abilities and can give them experience in functioning in realistic discourse. Well-organized interactions will make learners rack their brain, speak their mind and share their views with others naturally. Thus words slip out or pour out desirably.

Discussion Technique

Discussion technique is a powerful teaching technique. This helps the students understand not only the material but also each other better and enable them to build a more cohesive learning team among themselves. It allows students to clarify gaps in their knowledge. Learning becomes more effective when it is participative for discussions involving students more directly in interaction.

Need of the present study

English is an important tool for the learners for career mobility and social advancement. But the courses offered for majority of learners at the undergraduate level do not lend themselves to immediate usefulness in terms of proficiency or job-related skills development. Therefore, the need of the time is to focus on the development of communication. This paper suggests that Indian education in its current state does not sufficiently address identity and self-awareness in relation to academic disciplines. The absence of this connection in the vast majority of Indian schools is crucial to the development of critical thought among students today.

CONCLUSION

In a language class, many language teachers might have felt that they have spent a considerable amount of time in speaking and encouraging the students to participate rather than listening. Now, it is clearly understood that the students need English by and large to communicate their ideas in everyday situations and express themselves clearly and effectively. So, teachers need to be more conscious of the usefulness of applying different teaching methodologies, techniques, and activities to promote students' "active participation". The lecture mode of teaching will have to give way to interactive activities like group and pair works in order to help students exchange information to obtain comprehensible input while they are engaged in constructing meaningful experiences to achieve success.

A reflective teaching approach would give language teachers hints to overcome the everyday problematic situations which they deal within the classroom. Once teachers are conscious of the way they are carrying their teaching, they will be able to make the necessary turns to bring the ship back to shore. We all need to pool in our efforts to make the Interactive Method work in our situation and make our education more fruitful and rewarding.

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