

Modern Approaches to English Language Teaching and Learning

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Abstract – Increasing global economies, a heightened need for matching the international standards and changing demographics in the world have increased attention to our country's lack of language capability in terms of transacting in foreign languages, especially the English language. Every call to action to prepare our students for the 21st Century includes offering them the opportunity to learn English so as to increase their knowledge of other cultures. The hall mark of success in the 21st century world certainly amounts to two key factors: one is digital literacy and the other knowledge of English language.

Keywords; Ample, Conflict, Perspective, Proactive, Ambience, Exposure, Interdisipline, Domino, Ensure

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INTRODUCTION

It is a crucial call on our part to offer our students ample of opportunities to develop these two fundamental skills. English education not only guarantees success academic and professional fronts, it also provides international exposure to the students. Knowledge of English language facilitates students with an invigorating perspective of the whole world. Despite having conflicting perspectives built on use of various languages, there are similarities, too, to be found across language platforms of the 21st century. Knowledge of English, in this way, guarantees understanding of many a nations, their cultures and people. It is in this sense that students of English language stand better chances of becoming skilled learners of the 21st century.

English language learning provides opportunities to connect and understand developed, developing and underdeveloped communities across the globe and is thus vital to success in global environment of academics and professions, science and research in the 21st century.

Teaching and learning of English language in the context of India is based upon achieving the following objectives keeping in mind the educational and professional needs of Indian students:

1. Communicative competence:

In a traditionally teacher centric country like India, students usually remain at the receiving end as far as direct classroom teaching is concerned. However English language learning through newer methodologies ensures greater communicative competence on the part of students as they are more engaged within proactive learning ambience that incites greater participation from their side. Communicative competence through English language is crucial to their academic and professional success.

2. Cultural Exchanges:

Teaching and learning of English language and literature exposes students to intra and inter cultural exchanges. On one hand, it allows Indian students of diverse linguistic backgrounds to interact through the link language less than one roof; on the other hand knowledge of English language ensures their exposure to cross cultural interaction with learning communities outside India.

3. Interdisciplinary connections:

Knowledge of English enables Indian students to access a wide range of learning resources of other disciplines across the world. It is the lack of proper grounding in English language results in limited access to the rest of the world; whereas proficiency in English ensures interdisciplinary academic connectivity widening promising horizons for Indian

students to avail of distinct branches of knowledge all over the world.

4. Comparative study:

For Indian students, knowledge of English language means exposure and access to a promising domain comparative study of the best of the East and the best of the West and even the best of the Rest. Since knowledge resources pertaining to distinct branches of studies are available mostly in English language, Indian students who have proficiency in English stand brighter chances of getting benefitted by way of comparative study of what best they can offer to the rest of the world and what best can come to them through their knowledge of English.

5. Cyber Communities:

Knowledge of English also ensures participatory benefit to Indian students to the digital world of cyber communities. Extensive continuous learning, sharing of resources and human bonding with people across the world is possible through entry into cyber communities. This is the linguistic dividend which could be capitalized by Indian students through their knowledge of English language.

In the 21st century world which demands productivity and performance, communicative competence through proficiency in English language is crucial to the successful academic and professional lives of Indian students. For this purpose, right from early schooling, adequate grounding in English language is utmost necessary. Teaching and learning of English language needs to be reinforced on the basis of communicative competence and proficiency during schooling is almost mandatory. Any efforts towards teaching and learning of English language at under graduate level will yield desired results only if due care is taken at the school level education.

COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING (CLT):

Identification of the communicative aspects in general and increasing need for better communicative skills in English has created widespread demand of learning and teaching of English across the world. The 21st century also has witnessed significant surge and spurt in number of people who want to achieve command over English for various purposes ranging from education to professional goals. People of the modern world receive English voluntarily through human activities like studying abroad, travelling, cross country exchange programmes, formal, informal and instructional literatures, multimedia and the cyber world of the ICT. The worldwide demand for proficiency in English had necessitated qualitative output from teachers and students of English. It also demands quality in terms of methodology, resources and assessment and evaluation. The students aspire

to master English to a required level of accuracy and fluency. There is also a distinct professional demand for good communicative skills in English to ensure success. Accuracy and fluency are prerequisites for success and advancement within the academic world. Such a situation calls for a methodology that caters to the communicative goals of students of English.

If it is for a good teacher to decide which role to assume and perform considering the actual classroom situation at a given point of time including students learning needs on the basis of Multiple Intelligences that they belong to. On the basis of the above observations, teaching and learning of English language and literature in India can be discussed and deliberated upon.

Consequently methodology for classroom teaching also underwent remarkable changes since it was communication that came to be regarded the main factor leading to the learning of a language. It is the communicative aspect that was thought to be providing better learning opportunities to the students who had not been aptly rewarded by the traditional approaches. Following are some of the core principles that constitute the nature and functions of the CLT methodology:

- Real communication is the focus of language learning.
- Encourage students to experiment on the basis of what they already know.
- Maximize students' participation in the classroom activities.
- Greater tolerance is to be observed towards errors made by students.
- Inculcate sense of accuracy and fluency among learners to make them competent communicators in the target language.
- Exercise linkage among four skills: Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing in order to encourage students for collaborative learning.
- Allow students to find out rules of grammar through their practice of and exposure to the actual use of language.

The Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), therefore, accentuates the functionalities of language rather than a restricted focus on grammar and structural practices. The key contribution of the CLT in the field of language teaching is to be found in its emphasis on applicability and usage of forms of language learned by students who are able to use, present and produce language competence under real life situations. The principles and

practices of the CLT methodology reveal the following features as far as teaching and learning of English is concerned:

- (a) Communicative Interaction in the Classrooms
- (b) Focus on Meaning throughout the Process of Learning
- (c) Active Participation from Learners
- (d) Positive Reinforcement of Strengths, Abilities and Inclinations
- (e) Freedom of Choice in Selection of Study Materials
- (f) Flexibility in Modes and Means of Learning
- (g) Learning with a Sense of Enjoyment and Reward
- (h) Learning through Target Language
- (i) Error-tolerant Approach

On the basis of the above observations, it is clear that all the four aspects are interlinked which makes learning an integrated process under the CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning method) that combines all the four basic learning skills in the following manner:

(a) Listening:

Students get adequate practice of this skill by attending direct teaching sessions delivered by professors who would use standard form of the target language. The Students can avail of audio library and listen to the e-books for adequate practice on this fundamental skill for learning.

(b) Speaking:

Like the CLT and the PBL, the CLIL also emphasizes the factor of fluency without bothering about accuracy as it considers fluency to be an empowering factor on the part of the ESL/EFL students whose ability to speak English boosts up their morale which, in turn, helps them learn the language at advance levels.

(c) Reading:

The CLIL offers dual advantage to students as far as reading of learning resources is concerned. It allows bilingual access to reading resources to the students who can avail benefits of printed literatures on and about their subjects in their mother tongue as well as the target language.

(d) Writing:

Through the CLIL methodology, students learn to write at an advance level as far as the content of their subjects is concerned. In so doing, they automatically happen to practice the skill of writing in the target language. There may or may not be any conscious separate practice on writing required to learn the foreign language as formal education invariably covers large amount of writings on the part of students; and in this case, students learn their subjects through a foreign language.

Presentations of standard language models, Practice on the same and Production at the desecration of the learners once they have been through a series of presentations and have practiced them enough to produce something on their own. The three-phase process of the PPP model begins traditionally with the teacher who controls the initial affairs in the classroom and makes presentations in forms of:

- (a) Textual readings
- (b) Audio-visual presentations
- (c) Demonstrations
- (d) Recitations
- (e) Reading Dialogues/Scripts
- (f) Enactment of Situational Conversations
- (f) Visual Presentations using Charts, Graphs and Images

The students are, then, invited by the teacher to respond to such presentations with a view to learning the following areas of language:

- (i) Vocabulary: Lexical Meanings and Contextual Understanding
- (ii) Grammar: Sentence Patterns, Parts of Speech, Structural Comprehension of Language
- (iii) Forms of Language: Usages, Idioms, Phrasal Verbs, Proverbs, Colloquial Expressions, standard and slang expressions.

Finally The teacher, after having made presentations, can invite students to pay attention to the above points which he would explain in details providing additional information, examples and illustrations so that positive reinforcement occurs among the learners. The students have to

relate the use of language with the presentations made for them in the classroom.

CONCLUSION

Willga M. Rivers observes that, "it is a useful exercise of teachers or trainee teachers to set down in some order of priority their long-range objectives in the teaching of English languages,". Speaking English by a villager is not an easy thing. He had taken more pain and trouble to master the alien language. English remained in India, though stipulated only for fifteen years stay after independence despite much opposition. The advent of English to India really had great impacts in the life of Indian citizens. It is because of English that Indians are able to go to other countries. Though we have achieved to speak English somewhat many are still behind the screen. If anyone wants to learn anything, he will have to face trials and tribulations. Once he has the confidence of speaking English he will acquire the language skills and speak English easily.

"Language is the dress of thought" says Dr. Samuel Johnson; and language has been a gift or boon only of the human beings. Human beings use their language for various purposes such as education, employment, entertainment, religious ministry, trade and technology and so on. As Walt Whitman would say, "Language is not an abstract construction of the learned or of dictionary makers but is something arising out of the joys, affections, tastes, of long generations of humanity and has its base, broad and low close to the ground.

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