

The Process of Learning English Language in the Global Context—A Study

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Abstract: *Language, when used for communication, is a tool. We must remember that handling of any tool requires a certain skill. The inborn ability to use a language that all human beings possess, has to be developed and sharpened through practice. When we say that someone is a good user of language, we mean that he is able to use language effectively for all his communicative needs, in all kind of situations that he possesses all communication skills or language skills. These skills are: listening, speaking, reading, and writing (LSRW). Of all these four skills, the essential skill for the second language learners is the listening and reading skill.*

To develop competence in receiving and sending information we need to acquire language skills such as a listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The ability to read and comprehend effectively is an essential skill. It can be acquired and developed with intelligent, consistent and continuous effort like any other skill. We use language as a means for communication in terms of receiving and sending information.

Keywords: *Language skill, contemporary, communication, four skills.*

1. INTRODUCTION

English language is taught in secondary schools to meet the need of students, to make them excel not only in English language alone but also in other subjects, to equip them with what it takes to express themselves coherently, and to make them relevant in the society where the need for English language proficiency is on the increase. It is obvious that the linguistic society where today's youth operates is different from the linguistic society where the youth of previous generation operates. There is a global society, on daily basis; they have a lot of things to do with many people outside their local society, and this requires that their mastery of oral aspects of English. Therefore, the teaching and learning of English language should go beyond what they need within the shore of their nation. There are many international opportunities that keep beckoning to our youth today; hence they should be prepared for such in all its ramifications.

The language is a means through which a child contemplates the past, grasps the present and approaches the future. It goes without saying that the language plays an important role in the mental, emotional and social development of a person. Though English is a foreign language, it occupies a unique position in our country. Whether we are at home, in the state or out of it, in the country or away from it, English is important and it continues to hold a unique position in our daily lives.

The story of English in India goes back to Macaulay's famous Minutes of 1835 that was the time when the foreign plant of 'English' was sown in Indian soil. He wanted to create a class of persons, in Indian blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinion, in morals and in intellect. He said that English stood pre-eminent among the languages of the West. But English soon became the official language of India and it enjoyed a very prominent and privileged position in Indian Educational system and life till the attainment of independence. It was taught as the compulsory subject both at the school and college levels.

A reaction against the supremacy of English was noticed only after 1857, when India was swept by a violent anti-British feeling. This was the national awakening in the country, striving for independence. The first reaction of the people in independent India was to dethrone English from its exalted position that it had enjoyed during the British rule. Thus it received a hostile treatment not only at the hands of

our political leaders but also some eminent scholars. The father of the nation Mahatma Gandhi was very critical of educating the Indians in English language. At present the place of English in second language or third language. It is introduced right from III class and it is continued as a compulsory subject up to degree or university level.

Since language learners face the monumental task of acquiring not only new vocabulary, syntactic patterns, and phonology, but also discourse competence, sociolinguistic competence, strategic competence, and interactional competence. They need opportunities to investigate the systematicity of language at all linguistic levels, especially at the highest level. Without knowledge of and experience with the discourse and sociocultural patterns of the target language, second language learners are likely to rely on the strategies and expectations acquired as part of their first language development, which may be inappropriate for the second language setting and may lead to communication difficulties and misunderstandings.

One problem for second language learners is limited experience with a variety of interactive practices in the target language. Therefore, one of the goals of second language teaching is to expose learners to different discourse patterns in different texts and interactions. One way that teachers can include the study of discourse in the second language classroom is to allow the students themselves to study language, that is, to make them discourse analysts. By exploring natural language use in authentic environments, learners gain a greater appreciation and understanding of the discourse patterns associated with a given genre or speech event as well as the sociolinguistic factors that contribute to linguistic variation across settings and contexts. For example, students can study speech acts in a service encounter, turn-taking patterns in a conversation between friends, opening and closings of answering machine messages, or other aspects of speech events. Suggests a wide variety of activities that can easily be adapted to suit a range of second language learning contexts.

Nowadays the time of teaching language in isolation without its use is over. For an effective language teacher, the context plays a major role in teaching the new language in real life situations. In this way, language learners would be able to comprehend and use the language effectively and recognize the function of the utterances they may hear or see in their future linguistics material. With the emergence of popular idea of functionalism in the study of language, the study of how language as it is used, and to find out what the specific purposes that language serves for us, and how the members of a language community achieve and react to these purposes through speaking, reading, writing and listening is a must both for language teachers and the language learners as well. For this reason, Simpson says: "It is clear that the use of language ... is part of a communication channel that includes non-linguistic behavior. To this end, language teachers changed their attitudes towards teaching language as communication led to the emergence of such a change. It is out of question that language learners should consider form along with function to accomplish accuracy and fluency in the target language. As "Knowing a language does not mean to understand, speak, read and write sentences, it means to know how sentences are used to communicate effect." Since the purpose is to accept language a tool for communication, the students have to be trained accordingly.

In 1920s and 1930s Dr. Machael West had been in India and worked as the principal of a Training College and Director of Education in Dacca. He made a thorough study of the then prevailing methods of teaching English in India and came to a conclusion that the knowledge of English required in India is of passive type. He found that the most popular and accepted method of the year- the direct method had certain serious drawbacks in it. In order to do away with these draw backs, he laid down a method which popularly known as the New Method or Dr. West Method of Teaching English.

He first examined and analyzed the utility and aims of teaching English to Indian children. They are

1. English being an international language promotes internationalism and a feeling of brotherhood among different people of the world. It provides an easy channel for communication with the people all over the world and thus broadens the outlook.
2. In the field of science no Indian language is as rich as English.
3. English enriches the mind of the Indian people. They can get good reading material through English from all over the world.

Keeping these points in view, Dr. West laid more emphasis on reading aloud and silent reading. He was also against teaching formal grammar. To him grammar is not a code of rules. Ability to read is

more important than ability to write for Indian children who have fewer opportunities to speak that language. Our reading is preparatory to silent reading. In oral reading the teacher should lay more emphasis on drilling correct pronunciation. The technique sentence drill also should be employed. Dr. West designed strictly controlled and interesting reading material which is presented with the help of limited vocabulary. According to him, the reading vocabulary is different from speaking vocabulary. He was of opinion that a minimum of 1158 words are adequate for expressing one's ideas in day-to-day conversation. The main emphasis in this method is on reading vocabulary which contains from the words or structural words and content words.

Dr. C.J.Dodson of university college of Wales proposed this Bilingual method to strike a balance between the grammar translation method and direct method. He believed that "if a major language of the world is being taught as a second language by direct method the vernaculars would disappear within a few generations" and it would be a sheer hypocrisy to teach a second language by direct method at the expense of the first language. In this method two languages one that is to be learnt (second language or foreign language/ English) and mother tongue are used. The mother tongue is used to achieve the target language.

He conducted experiments on the efficacy of using mother tongue by the teacher while teaching English and giving a lot of drill in sentence patterns. Inspired by the encouraging results of the experiments, Prof. H.N.L.Sastry of the department of the methods, CIEFL, Hyderabad conducted similar experimentation in a school in Hyderabad and found it more useful. He suggested this Bilingual method for teaching English.

2. CONCLUSION

In the field of language learning and acquisition, any type of learners faces many obstacles as they attempt to learn the target English language. These obstacles can lead to frustration and anxiety, which in the long run will hamper the learning process. The problem arises on the lexical and semantic levels since there does not seem to be one-to-one correspondence between the lexicon of one language and that of another. Every language has its own exotic and peculiar lexical dictionary that, in away or another, satisfies some of the lexical needs of the other language. In other words, cultural barriers drastically influence the lexicon of languages. What seems to be a lexical entry of a constant use in a particular language may not be so in another language. To satisfy and to overcome some of the obstacles that arise from this fact, visual scaffolding comes handy as an effective means for helping second language learners become involved in the learning process and kill the state of anxiety and frustration that generates from understanding little or nothing in the learning environment.

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