

ISSN INTERNATIONAL
STANDARD
SERIAL
NUMBER
ISSN-2321-7065

IJELLH

International Journal of English Language, Literature in Humanities

Indexed, Peer Reviewed (Refereed), UGC Approved Journal



**A Two Day International Conference on
Emerging Trends in English Language Teaching
(ICETELT 2019)**



Organised by

The Department of English, School of Science and Humanities

Kongu Engineering College (Autonomous)

Perundurai

Volume 7, Issue 8, August 2019

www.ijellh.com

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New Strategies For Learning And Teaching English In Government Schools Of India

Abstract

English is the most widely used and a chief vehicle of International communication. Learning and teaching English language in Government schools of India faces many challenges due to the fact that majority of students are from rural areas, tribal background and uneducated families. In India learning English is made necessary because it has been adopted as official language . The methods of teaching English language in Government Schools are out of date. This paper seeks to explore the problems of current methods and offers a solution to achieve the aims of learning English – listening and understanding properly, correct pronunciation, speak fluently and able to express clearly. The paper also focuses to point out some of the recent trends and the activities to students to make them more involved in learning English.

Key Words: Problems with current methodologies, Activity based learning, New Teaching Methodology in Government schools.

Introduction

“Language is a set of human habits, the purpose of which is to

give expression to human thoughts and feelings, especially to impart them to others” (Jespersen)

Language is a tool to communicate with each other to express our thoughts, opinions, feelings and emotion from birth to death. Language is not to be taught but to be acquired like a child learns a language. English language is the medium of great deal of world's knowledge in the field of Science and technology, literature and so on. English language is entirely different from Indian languages because of its structure pattern. Native speakers though they do not know grammar, they know the proper structure to use it. For example, *I bought blue shirt*. Native speakers know that adjective is followed by noun but whereas second language learners in India could not use it unless they know the rules. So the difficulty arises in both teaching and learning language with rules.

English in India

English plays an important role in our educational system. British has introduced English medium in our educational system in order to produce cheap Government servants in India. Lord Macaulay called “a class of people, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in Morals and in intellect”. The objective of learning English in current aspect has changed for globalised trading and marketing. English is used as official language in parliament, court, banks and in various government sectors. The University Education Commission (1948) stated “English should be a subject in schools and colleges to keep in touch with the ever-growing knowledge from the world”

Problems With Current Methodology In Government Schools Of India

Majority of Government school students in India are from rural background, uneducated families and economically backward class. This make them showing lack of

interest in learning English. Government schools have only one hour as an English period a day, within that stipulated period the teacher has to teach grammar rules, poetry, prose and vocabulary. Students tend to feel that English as a subject to be learned rather than as a subject to be passed. Instead of analyzing poem and prose piece students buy bazaar guides, memorize the content and reproduce it in the examination.

The foremost problem is students are over dependent on teacher because of spoon feeding. No opportunity is given to students to think and establish their own ideas. Teacher teaches the text and gives the students summary, question and answers, meaning to difficult words. This makes them passive learners because they merely absorb what teacher says but there is no situation for them to express it. As a result students get bored and feel hatred of learning English. Teachers instead of giving interesting topics like cartoons for comprehensive work, they give more boring topics such as Science is boon or bane, Role of English in globalised world, Film review, Book review makes students to seek help from Internet than writing of their own.

Student's lack of participation in learning also causes a problem of learning. Government school students feel hesitated to speak English in public, because of their inferiority complex. The main issue for the problem is number of children enrolled in English medium Schools have been doubled comparatively to Government schools.

Though Government school students are trained in new methodology and they are not acquainted with new methods. Inadequate use of visual aids (CD's, LCD and Smart board) make them lack of learning in English. Some students learn fast whereas some do not. Along with the new ideologies faculty follow the old one for the purpose of examinations. Faulty method of teaching such as giving students a paragraph, asking them to write the meaning and making them learn fifty words a day does not give out proper result.

In general, students are not given exposure to speak English. When they approach higher education Government school students suffer a lot due to lack of English knowledge. They hardly know the meanings for few English words. Faulty examination system for evaluating English knowledge leads problem for students. It analyze only the sentence structure based on rules rather than their creative skills. Government schools are overcrowded with large number of students, so that teacher could not pay special attention to particular student.

Aim and Objectives of Teaching English for Young Learners

The main aim of teaching English is to listen and understand properly, reading with correct pronunciation, stress and pitch, speaking fluently by expressing clear meaning. The objectives for lower grade students are able to frame simple sentence with proper structure, express clear meaning, good pronunciation, making the habit of listening, reading and conversing through activity centered learning. Students are given freedom to express their thoughts before the class as well as outside the class which indirectly develops grammatical rules in the mind of learners. The secondary Education commission (1952-53) states “the best curriculum and the perfect syllabus remain dead unless right method of teaching is followed in the teaching process. So activity centered approach should be followed in teaching all subject including English”. English should be taught by involving students actively and it must induce creative thinking among students.

Techniques of Teaching English

Teaching prose develops comprehensive skill, vocabulary power and enhance application skill of the learner. While teaching prose, teacher should give equal chance to every students to read the text in front of the class. So that students can come out of the

barrier of hesitation while reading. Students are given time for silent reading and after that teacher may pick any one of the student and can pose question based on the understanding of student. It makes student to actively involve in class. Teacher are also welcomed to teach with aids from general to specific, comparing and contrasting, which eventually explains the difficult words. Watching short clips related to the topic helps students for better understanding.

Teaching poetry should be more effective. Catchy words with rhyming gives a good theme makes the students to read and derive pleasure out of it. Young learners do not know meaning for many words that have been used in the poem. Teacher can show pictures, sceneries related to the poem that drives students to taste the essence of poem. The task of making students understand is easily done through this method.

Vocabulary can be taught by creating situations such as doing action instead of making students memorize the words. Teacher can frame sentence by doing action (Eg: Show me your hand). It helps student understand to show his/her hand. Teacher can show the objects and make students to frame sentences. When teacher asks, “ where is the pen?” Students would reply that “The pen is on the table”. With that teacher can teach the parts of speech and their uses. Translation method can also be used to teach the association of words along with the native tongue of students, which promotes bilingualism method of teaching tend to be expressive, more original and better communication than children raised within one language.

Activity Based Learning

The main purpose of learning language is to communicate effectively and to write comprehensively. This can be achieved only through activity based learning to cultivate LSRW skills.

1. Debate

Debate among the students of government schools involve them in speaking English whether it is right or wrong. It acts as a platform to motivate students to speak English. The topic must be interesting rather than the subject matter. For young learners it might be interesting to speak about cartoon characters in class. In perspective of it one side can support one character and the other supports other character. As a result, it creates more involvement in students. This helps the teacher to give attention to individual mistakes and making them to rectify it in course of time.

2. Narration

After completing the story narration, teacher can ask students to narrate it again. It makes them revise the story as well as helps the teacher to analyze the level of understanding of students. It makes students to be alert and active. It enhance the speaking skill of learner.

3. Enacting Stories

To actively involve students in learning English, teacher can ask them to enact stories by producing dialogues with actions. It can develop the dialogue delivery of the student with proper pronunciation and stress. It also gives entertainment and enhance creative thinking among students.

4. Discussion Forum

When a teacher completes certain topics, can ask questions based on the topic which can involve students to discussion forum. It involves the students to come out

with their own point of view and also helps them analyze others point of view with his conclusion.

5. Word Games

Many word games are available in Internet. Teacher can motivate the students to play any word games like Crossword puzzles, so that when they join letters, they come with different words while crossing each level. It motivates them to understand vocabularies by its meaning. It indirectly urges the students to learn something new.

6. Teaching Grammar Through Newspaper

Grammar is quite vast and boring topic. Advanced grammar should not be taught for young learners. To come out of it teacher can introduce basic grammar rules. Teacher can draft the examples of grammar from newspaper by boosting them to focus on sentence construction. Then teacher can give activity to find out the parts of speech, Articles by asking them to read newspaper.

7. Watching Video Clips

Students are more interested in visual learning. In current methodology of teaching, students are asked to write letters, essays and film reviews. The reality is students instead on writing of their own they memorize what teacher has given as a model. Instead of doing that, teacher can play a movie related to the topic and ask student to write a review. Television also plays an major role in enhancing language. Many students are interested in watching sports channels, when teacher encourages them to absorb the commentaries passed, they come across many words with

standardized pronunciation that helps them to improve their speaking skills. Teacher can encourage students to watch films with English subtitles so that they learn new words and structure.

8. Conversation

Teacher can urge students to speak in English and think in English. Conversation plays a vital role in acquiring language, when students are made to speak continuously in classroom, they form sentences of their own, when they do not know any word, they could refer dictionary or they can seek help from teacher. It gives best and immediate result to learners.

Conclusion

“ If we teach today’s students as we taught yesterday’s, we rob them of tomorrow”. We rob them of tomorrow because we fail to equip them with the set of skills that they need to survive in today’s workplace and for their lifelong learning and productive citizenship (Dewey, 1859-1952). Teachers of government schools should adopt English as their mode of communication. Main duty for the teacher is to involve the students to participate actively through the above said activities and by using new technologies that are familiar to students and make sense to them. Learning English can be embed “Edutainment” in pedagogy.

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