Learner Centric Approach – A Paradigm Of English Language Teaching

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Abstract— The ever growing need for communication skills in English demands a shift from teacher centric to learner centric approach, for today’s world requires equipping the learner with all the tools needed for effective communication. This involves the choice of refined language materials with which a learner can be comfortable with. Besides, good language skills and fluency in English have become the pre-requisite for employability. Today teaching of English is ‘need fulfilling’ activity. English has become the language of knowledge, language of information. No longer is learning of English examination centric but is knowledge centric and the learners should be exposed to varied language activities so that they have a hand on experience in using language. At this juncture Learner Centric Activities alone can involve all the learners in the learning process. The present paper focuses on some of these activities which yield results in class room and facilitate successful language learning.

Index Terms — Teacher Centric, Learner Centric, Need Fulfilling Activity & Knowledge Centric,

1 INTRODUCTION

English has come from the newspapers to the internet to influence all walks of life. Even with countries such as China, Japan and Korea displaying a strong interest in acquiring English language skills so much that it has now become the regional lingua franca, the language has acquired greater currency. The language’s flexibility has facilitated the process that has led to its growth throughout the world in the field of communication. The importance of communication across the cultures and nations has increased exponentially in the last few years. Economic and technological developments have contributed towards breaking down the barriers of English language communication which enabled people all over the world to share information and exchange ideas in English. Another important contributing factor to the advancement of English communication through cultures and nations is the proliferation of internet and social networks. Globalization brought intense competition among the internationally renowned business firms in its wake. The need for communication has therefore evolved beyond expectations. The growing need calls for an integrated approach towards English communication for the success of an individual or an organization.

English teachers should maintain this growing need while designing English syllabus and adapting English teaching methodology in schools and colleges. There has been an incredible demand in the country for technical courses in the first place. The right attitude towards the second language, i.e. the acquisition of English, is the need for the hour more in terms of technical undergraduates. It should be realized that English is no longer a curriculum subject, but an indispensable tool for learning. Therefore, there is a recognized need for technology students to acquire language and communication skills in order to be effective as global market or industry practitioners. The ability to communicate with others, to organize time and work, mark out a student who is preferred for employment.

With the software industry growing by leaps and bounds, there is a greater need for a qualified technical graduate to acquire effective language and communication skills so that he / she can become directly responsible in the industry. If they do not express their thoughts, the technical skills of professional graduates are superfluous. A technical graduate with innovation and excellent technical skills will not be heard unless he / she can persuade consumers or peers of their professional merit. Good communication skills are not only useful at this juncture, they are the tools for success, more importantly for survival. Good English language skills make it possible for technical students to keep up with the latest developments in their knowledge domain. The marketability of a company depends upon the communicative ability of its personnel especially those working in the HR/Marketing divisions.

II. LITERARY REVIEW

The primary need of the hour is to develop the knowledge and skills of the learners in English. English teaching will strive to provide the learner with sufficient exposure to the learning of skills. The need for better English language skills among the calls for strategies of the technical students to develop language skills related to their career. To develop the language competence of technical students, a language learning approach based on activities that are relevant to their profession in a global context will be helpful. This will help students not only develop their language skills as such, but also raise their cultural awareness so that they can communicate effectively with peer groups or people from other nations. The teaching of today’s classroom is mostly teacher-centered where the learner is just a passive listener, his task being reduced to reading, remembering and reproducing. This method of teaching does not allow the learner to understand the learning need. It makes it impossible for the learner to master language that is one of the most important needs. So the responsibility lies with the English teachers. The English teachers will move from the role of performers in the classrooms to the role of learning facilitators that allow learners to be active participants. Traditional language teaching instruction should be replaced by learner-centered strategies that make it easy and efficient for the learner to use English in various situations outside the classroom. Learning experiences of the learner are enriched in the process through interaction between the teacher and the learner and...
interaction among the learners as these tap out the learners’ creativity. A few approaches which would make the teaching-learning process creative and innovative are discussed below.

III. ANALYSIS AND RESULT

The most difficult part is to improve the learner’s oral language skills because it requires pronouncing correctly, using adequate words and developing good fluency. Use statements that are appropriate to the situation requires cultural knowledge of the language that is also important to sustaining a conversation without any communication barriers. Very often we experience the learner use inappropriate language without any understanding of the circumstances or cultural background of the people with whom they associate. The best thing to do is incorporate students in pairs with more emphasis on fluency to read out aloud. The activity can be carried out with the prescribed text. The next step is to focus on activity based learning.

Activity Based Approaches

The language learning cycle must be included in order to make learning rich and interesting small activities. Learners are generally interested in group activities. Group work involving the use of words and sentences for communication between group members and those aiming at completing other language-related tasks must be conceived. When improving one’s vocabulary and speaking skills, the exercises offer more space to listen to different conversations. If the lessons in textbooks are not focused on practice, teachers should be able to convert the lessons in such a way as to build up abundant activities into lesson teaching. Activity based lessons centre on the activity to teach language. The learners are given some words and simple sentences and are asked to perform a task as a group, conversing with each other. The activities give an informal atmosphere to the class room, helping the learners to be their natural self.

Role Plays

Roll cards containing information about the role are provided to the students, where the student has the flexibility to add more information. This will motivate students to participate in the learning process more actively. Role Plays also provide an opportunity for students to prepare for situations of ‘real life.’ Taking about real life becomes monotonous and the chance to imagine different situations adds interest to the lesson. In addition the activity gives a chance to use language in new context and for new topics. Students may have difficulty in composing their thoughts in English using appropriate grammatical structures and words. It’s here the teachers as facilitators should give prompts where ever necessary which would encourage students to guess and produce utterances appropriately. Teachers may strengthen students’ structures by allowing them to provide a variety of responses rather than the usual collection of responses that a situation or role may require. The focus of the activity should be on producing a text of related sentences suitable for the role rather than on the production and practice of single sentence.

Mind Maps

Teaching can be innovatively done by the use of Mind Maps in the class. The advantages associated with this activity are they can be made quick, easily remembered and reviewed because of their visual quality. Mind Maps can also be effective mnemonics and remembering their shape and structure can provide the cues necessary to remember the information within it. Learning and remembering are made more effective by using the full range of visual and sensory tools. Pictures, music, colour, even touch and smell play part in learning armoury. Any information explained with the help of charts, graphs make a high impact on the mind and the teachers of English should try to picturize the concepts and show them to the learners. Teaching through Mind Maps not only brings in very high impact on the minds of the students about a concept but also helps in improving the innovative thinking of the learners.

Showing Videos

Another activity to enhance the oral skills of the learner is showing a video or documentary for 5-15 minutes. It is then followed by oral activities where the students have to give the summary of it in English or discuss the subject shown in the film.

IV. CONCLUSION

Information and communication technology has made may innovation in the field of teaching and also has brought about drastic change in the paradigm of English Language Teaching and Learning. The teachers as facilitators need to create a supportive environment, where a learner can comfortably experiment with the language.

REFERENCES