
AIMS OF TEACHING ENGLISH AND THE ROLE OF NEWSPAPERS IN A LANGUAGE CLASS ROOM

DR. GYAN SINGH GAUTAM, G.RAVI KUMAR

Abstract: In this era of globalization and information and Technology, English has a special and predominant role in the communicative sphere of the world. This language is present taught everywhere in the world. This language enjoys most prestigious reputation in the world. It has a special identity in the field of education. We know it very well that teaching of any subject is a social and cultural activity. It is not so easy to teach any subject as it appears. While teaching, a teacher has to keep in mind the aims and objectives of his subject. In other words we can say that teaching of any subject becomes much effective when the teacher is fully conscious of the aims and objectives of teaching of that subject. A good teacher thinks that this teaching should be effective. All of us knows it very well that the basic principle of teaching is “know what you do and only do what you know”. Teaching requires certain directions. After all, success of teaching depends on the aims and objectives of teaching. “In teaching of English” P.Gurrey writes, “it is highly desirable to know exactly what one is hoping to achieve. If this can be clearly seen, then the best way of getting to work usually becomes evident. We ought, therefore, to consider carefully what we are trying to do when we are teaching English”. This study was primarily designed to find out in a rudimentary form how teachers would look at newspapers as an aid to teaching English at the secondary level. It was hypothesized that the success or failure of newspapers as a teaching material would be dependent on the teachers and their views and attitudes to a great extent, which in turn would be determined by their understanding of what the teaching goals are and what the role of textbooks is.

Keywords: Unconventional, exposure, rudimentary, contextualized, repetitive, reinforce.

Introduction: In this era of globalization and information and Technology, English has a special and predominant role in the communicative sphere of the world. This language is present taught everywhere in the world. This language enjoys most prestigious reputation in the world. It has a special identity in the field of education. We know it very well that teaching of any subject is a social and cultural activity. It is not so easy to teach any subject as it appears. While teaching, a teacher has to keep in mind the aims and objectives of his subject. In other words we can say that teaching of any subject becomes much effective when the teacher is fully conscious of the aims and objectives of teaching of that subject. A good teacher thinks that this teaching should be effective. All of us knows it very well that the basic principle of teaching is “know what you do and only do what you know”. Teaching requires certain directions. After all, success of teaching depends on the aims and objectives of teaching. “In teaching of English” P.Gurrey writes, “it is highly desirable to know exactly what one is hoping to achieve. If this can be clearly seen, then the best way of getting to work usually becomes evident. We

ought, therefore, to consider carefully what we are trying to do when we are teaching English”.

Indian people consider English as a second language. It is studied as a compulsory second language. It is not there medium of instruction for a majority of the students. It is an instrument, a means for acquiring knowledge. The aim of teaching English in India is to help students to acquire practical command of English. In other words, it means that students would be able to understand speak English, read and write English. These are the basic aims of teaching English. The teacher should keep in mind the aims of teaching English. The teacher should always emphasize on the aims of teaching of English. It will help to teach effectively. These aims are as:

1. To enable to listen English with proper understanding
2. To enable to speak English correctly. It means that producing sounds with the proper stress and intonation.
3. To enable the students to read English and comprehend and interpret the text.
4. To enable the students to write English correctly and meaningfully, i.e. for example writing letters,

applications, description and accounts of day to day events.

5. To enable to acquire knowledge of the elements of English.
6. To enable to develop interest in English
7. To increase students ability to use planning, drafting and editing to improve their work.
8. To enable students to express themselves creatively and imaginatively.
9. to enable students to speak clearly and audibly in ways which take account of their listeners.
10. To enable students to become enthusiastic and reflective readers through contact with challenging and text level knowledge.

The role of Newspapers while teaching English:

Ask any New ESL/EFL teacher (or, for that matter, a seasoned teacher) what comes to mind as an authentic reading activity for their learners and almost certainly one of the first things they will say is "using a newspaper". Newspapers are playing a crucial role in teaching English. The language teacher has to know how to use the newspapers according to the situation in the language class. Let us examine the role of English newspaper in the class

The newspaper as a solution: Newspapers are proposed in this study as one of the possible solutions to most of the problems with the existing textbooks and other prescribed instructional materials. Newspapers may be used either to add to the supplementary readers or to replace them completely.

Exposure through newspapers: If exposure is the essence of language learning and teaching, the use of newspapers as materials in the classrooms in India seems to be quite appropriate mainly in terms of quantity. An issue of a daily, worth a 600 page book, can be had for Rs.2/- or even less if bought after a day. Obviously no textbook can match the newspapers in terms of cost effectiveness.

The 'here and now' in newspapers: Newspapers are printed daily. Things happening around the learners and the teachers. are printed in the papers. So they can be understood more easily than the textbooks. If necessary, translations of the same matter can be had in the regional medium newspapers or even from the electronic media to a considerable extent, because the subject matter for the most part will be the same in all the media and other public forums. The learners can perceive the language in action outside their classroom as well, and the parents and other elders may also give a helping hand to the students in

their lessons because unlike the textbooks which require special 'licence' to explain them, the newspapers can be discussed by anyone who reads them. The concept of continuing education can be better integrated and linked with the limited formal education if materials are something available and used outside the school curriculum also.

Newspapers are more interesting: Newspapers are full of topical materials. They deal with politics, commerce, accidents, earthquakes, human interest stories, murders, theft, rape, family quarrels, catastrophes, space adventure, Antarctic missions, mathematics, science, child prodigies and everything else that happens in contemporary human society. If a bit of that world can be brought into the classroom the learners will be quite willing to go to school. For centuries they have been "creeping like snail unwillingly to school," largely due to irrelevant learning materials in the classroom.

Newspapers communicate: In a second language situation, like ours in India, newspapers are the easiest means of 'exposure' to 'communicative English', because they have a function for all people viz. bringing news and views, etc. They are primarily meant for conveying meaning and message. So the learners of English can really see how the second language works in context. Newspapers printed in English in India would be good for teaching. ESL and those from abroad could be used for EFL purposes in India.

Newspapers are reading-centered: EFL and ESL teaching have to be largely reading-centered. Instances of language manifested in other skills are not easily available in these contexts. "Reading is the biggest single means by which Indians as a rule can learn English. D.Y.Morgan says:

"Unlike listening, reading allows the student to receive the language at the pace which suits him, to stop when necessary and sometimes to go over a piece of the language again. The efficient reader of a relatively easy text may read it very much faster than it would be spoken and expose himself to much more lexis and grammar in a given time than listening could provide.

(We must not overlook the value of sheer exposure..)" Extensive reading may be started with newspapers which contain many communicative and highly contextualized materials for all higher levels of learners. If the learner does not understand one news story, he can just drop it and go for another one.

Such a freedom of choice is not possible with books, especially textbooks. We cannot throw away books as easily as an item or a day's issue of a newspaper.

Photographs and pictures: Newspapers often give photographic illustrations which are quite picturesque and beautiful unlike the school textbooks which are rarely artistic or realistic. These pictures aid comprehension and increase the intelligibility of texts especially to the low achiever in language.

Newspapers in different languages: A second language learner often needs the help of the first language for economy in learning. There is nothing wrong in making the maximum use of one's first language often learnt through many a traumatic experience and so quite efficiently. An English newspaper in India can be made more intelligible using a corresponding regional medium one. It would be better than the verbal, bit by bit, on the spot translation supplied by the language teacher in many of the Indian classrooms. Because translation by nature is a poor piece of language produced under constraints whereas newspapers of a day in different languages are not translations. They have all the vigour of original language.

Newspapers are interestingly repetitive: Newspapers have repetitive pieces of language, for example, the "consumer advertisements". They are interesting and meaningful because they are written with a lot of care in order to reach the reader and influence him. Whereas the textbooks have an ensured readership and does not have to take any pains to be appealing to the reader/user.

Reinforcements are necessary in language learning but it should be meaningful and interesting not parrot-like as it is bound to be in the textbooks for various reasons. Newspapers do repeat things but not in the same fashion. Interrogatives, imperatives and statements occur together and naturally.

Drills and newspapers: In most of the traditional language textbooks there are drills on selected but disconnected language items. This is intended to give special attention to the 'form' alone in order to reinforce it. But according to Krashen, this mechanical drill fails as an optimal intake for acquisition. Because focus on form will switch off the mind. Reinforcements happening over long periods like when reading extensively for information etc will help 'acquisition' better than those given instantly through the textbooks.

- Use English language newspapers produced for the local community if you are teaching in a country where English is not an official language. Many large cities will have a newspaper in English. The topics within these papers are likely to have more of an impact on the learners than topics.
- Allow learners to select an article that interests them, work on it and report back to other learners.
- Be clear on aims. Is it reading or speaking you wanted to practice? Or both?
- Get learners to read outside class as much as possible.
- Make your tasks as authentic as the material. Tasks like "underline all the verbs in the past" are of limited value and should be used sparingly. Think about what people do when they read newspapers in their own language.
- Help learners to become better learners. Reading is a great way of acquiring language. If you can get your learners to regularly dip into English newspapers then their reading skills, writing skills and vocabulary will improve. Talk about reading and comprehension of English texts with your learners as well, and share strategies that they use when reading. How often do they use a dictionary for example? At the end of a course, do they feel they are reading faster or better?

Conclusion: This study was primarily designed to find out in a rudimentary form how teachers would look at newspapers as an aid to teaching English at the secondary level. It was hypothesized that the success or failure of newspapers as a teaching material would be dependent on the teachers and their views and attitudes to a great extent, which in turn would be determined by their understanding of what the teaching goals are and what the role of textbooks is.

It has revealed more than what it had been intended to. The hypothesis that men teachers might welcome the use of newspapers in the class more than women is confirmed by the findings of the questionnaire. All of them have shown their preferences for one or the other of the media. Five out of the eight men have indicated that they have used newspapers in the classroom for teaching English. This is more than the general ratio.

It was expected that teachers with higher qualifications might appreciate the use of newspapers more than the others might. The expectation is strengthened by the findings. However teachers with professional training and long years of experience

rather than the others seem to understand the value of newspaper as additional material for teaching.

As regards the aims of teaching English, everyone seems to have the right idea-the development of skills such as reading, writing, speaking etc. But how these skills are acquired is not fully understood by most of them, or they seem to have the wrong notion that language is learnt through grammar and literature, which can be best taught through deductive exercises

and systematic drills and explanations. Not many have the idea of 'exposure being vital to language learning. As the sole aim of teaching English have used newspapers in the class room for teaching English. It can be assumed from the above fact that those who are clear about the main aim of teaching English will welcome the use of newspapers as a teaching aid.

References:

1. Allwright, Dick. 1982. Communicative curriculum in Language Teaching. Paper prepared for : International conference on Language Sciences and the Teaching of Languages and Literatures. Bari, Italy.
2. Baker, David. 1989. Language Testing : a critical survey and practical guide. London: Edward Arnold.
3. Bloom, Benjamin S, 1971. Handbook on Formative and Summative Evaluation on student Learning USA : Mc Graw – Hill Book Company
4. Breen, Michael, 1989 "The evaluation cycle for language learning tasks" in Johnson, R.K. 1989. The Second Language Curriculum.
5. Cambridge : Cambridge Univ. Press. Bygate, Marten Speaking Oxford, Oxford Univ. Press.
6. Canals, Michael & Swain, Merrill. 1979. Theoretical bases of Communicative approaches to Second Language Teaching and Testing. Applied Linguistics. Vol:1/1
7. Canale, Michael. 1988.
8. 'The measurement of Communicative Competence'. Annual Review of Applied Linguistics Vol:8.
9. Balasubramanian, T.A Textbook of English Phonetics for Indian Students. New Delhi : Macmillan, 1981.
10. Ball, W.J. steps to Fluency in Spoken English (Pupils' Book) London: Longmans and Green and Co., 1968.
11. Bansal, R.K. and J.B Harrison Spoken English for India Madras : Orient Longman, 1983.
12. Central Institute of English and Foreign Languages. Exercises in Spoken English and Foreign Languages. Exercises in Spoken English. Parts I, II and III. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1974.
13. Chakraborty Tarun. Dynamic Memory Perfect Spoken English. New Delhi : Diamond Books, 2008.
14. Gautam G.S. Teaching of English in India. New Delhi : Classical Publishing Co. 2002.
15. Gautam G.S. Teaching of English and Communication. New Delhi: Classical Publishing Co. 2008.
16. Gautam G.S. Teaching of English from Grammar to Language Skills. New Delhi: Classical Publishing Co. 2008.
17. Hornby, A.S. Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English. 3rd Ed. New Delhi : Oxford University Press, 1981.
18. Hornby, A.S. Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English. 5th Ed. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2006.
19. International Phonetic Association. Principles of the International Phonetic Association. Rev. Ed. London : 1949.
20. Jain, R.K. Essentials of Teaching of English. Vinod Pustak Mandir, Agra.
21. Jones, Daniel. An Outline of English Phonetics. 9th Ed. Peter Roach, et al. (Eds.), Cambridge : Longman, 1958.
22. Kingdon, R. The Groundwork of English Intonation London : Longman, 1958.
23. Kingdon, R. The Groundwork of English Stress. London: Longman, 1958.
24. Laver, John. Principle of Phonetics. Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 1994.
25. Munro Mackenzie, M.D. Modern English Pronunciation Practice. London : Longman, 1978.
26. O'Connor, J.D. Better English Pronunciation. 3rd Ed. Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 1980.
27. Roach, Peter, English Phonetics and Phonology. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983.
28. Sachdeva, M.S. Teaching of English Methodology and Contents. Ludhiana : Vinod Publication, 2003.
29. Sethi, J and D.V. Jindal. A Handbook of Pronunciation of English Words. New Delhi : Prentice-Hall of India, 1993.
30. Wells, J.C. Accents of English. 3 Vols. Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 1982.
31. Software Assistance:-
A. Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary Audiographics.

B. Collins Co built. Audio Graphics.
C. Spoken English : Mc Graw. Audiographics.

D. Oxford Commercial Version 2006.
Audiographics.

Dr. Gyan Singh Gautam/Professor & Head, Dept. of English/IEHE, Bhopal (M.P)/
G.Ravi Kumar/Research Scholar/Barkatullah University/ Bhopal