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Emerging Trends in English Language Teaching

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Abstract:

Teacher education refers to the policies and procedures designed to equip prospective teachers with knowledge, attitudes, behaviours and skills they require to perform their tasks effectively in the classroom, school and wider community. The term ‘teacher training’ seems to be losing ground to ‘teacher education’. In the era of globalization, when the world is changing so fast, the teaching field is also not unaffected. The approach of second language teaching that is ELT (English language teaching) has undergone sea change. The “drill and practice” method is now considered to be rudimentary. Now, there are electronically sophisticated machines which have entered teaching-learning setting. Machine-assisted learning or e-learning is indeed an innovation in ELT. Even students find this new way of learning second language to be amazing. Using language games is an efficient way in learning second language. Some language games like word building, solving crossword puzzles etc. have been popular for quite a long time. Now, certain new language games which are based on computer –aided technology have been developed and are available online as well as in form of software. Use of technology does not mean that role of teacher is sidelined. Learners still need mentor in form of teacher. It is just that the way of teaching second language has changed. The traditional chalk-board method is gradually replaced by innovative techno-friendly method in teaching-learning atmosphere. Use of language games based on computer aided technology is one of the most important emerging trends in ELT. So, teacher education should include workshops related to operating language games based on computer technology and organization of smart classes. This paper thus, emphasizes upon importance of language games and smart classes in ELT and how they can be integrated with classroom education so as to meet the challenges of globalised era.

Keywords: Teacher Education, English Language Teaching, Language games.

Introduction:

Teacher education is foundation of good education for students. For giving good education to child, the role of teacher is important. A teacher should not only be a knowledgeable person but he should be trained enough to teach students. Teaching is an art to educate the students which can be enhanced by training. It implies there has to be training programme for teachers so as to make them competent enough to impart education. Curriculum of teacher education involves foundational knowledge in education- related aspects of philosophy of education, history of

education, educational psychology and sociology of education. It also includes skills in assessing student learning, supporting English learners and using technology to improve teaching and learning.

LSRW in English Language Teaching:

During initial stages of training, English Language teachers are made aware about basic principles of language teaching, of which one of them is that learner should be able to acquire four basic skills which can be denoted by LSRW (Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing) which are needed for proper communication. The teacher should be trained enough to teach students about these skills.

These four basic skills are related to each other by two parameters:

- Mode of communication i.e. oral/written.
- Direction of communication i.e. receiving or producing the message.

L (Listening):-

Listening to the sounds of the language enables one to recognize them, to distinguish between them and also recognize the use of stress and right intonation in sentences.

Listening is the skill of putting together all the foreign sounds, analyzing them and making sense of them as words and phrases. Listening helps one to get the idea of what's going on, but more importantly it teaches pronunciation skills. All language production depends on what is heard. So listening is very important.

Training in listening is necessary to enable one to comprehend the speech of people of different backgrounds and regions.

S (Speaking):-

After listening, one tries to repeat what is heard, speaking is the production skill during the course of learning a language. It is not just producing free-hand sentences and word order. Pronunciation and accent work in the sounds of the target language have to be practiced to make effective communication.

Speaking skills are essential to make one aware of rule of speaking in English and its contribution to their success. Developing speaking skills enables one to express oneself fluently and appropriately in social as well as professional contexts. Speaking skills can be developed through working on the following:

- Oral practice
- Describing objects/situations/people
- Individual/group activities
- Extempore, debate, group discussion, public speaking etc.

R (Reading):-

Reading implies to see the spoken language depicted symbolically in print. Reading is the comprehension skill. It seems a very simple task. In any target language, the essence of this skill is in training one to spot patterns.

Reading a lot brings one in tune with the way sentences are built in a language and exercises given with a text are the most useful as one can work on them for becoming fluent. Reading skill can be enhanced using the prescribed text for detailed study, reading and answering questions using unseen passage etc.

Reading skills can be developed by working on the following:-

- Reading and understanding of textual materials.

- Understanding the gist of an argument.
- Identifying the topic sentence.
- Inferring lexical and contextual meaning.
- Recognizing unity, coherence and emphasis on sentences and paragraphs.

W (Writing):-

Writing refers to reproduce the symbols (which have been heard, spoken and seen) on paper. So writing is the production skill. It also includes one's sound recognition ability. For example, making notes based on what is being heard, spelling them correctly and writing something legible in the target language.

Writing skills also include equipping one with the different forms of writing such as essays, stories, letters, reports etc. for general or specific purposes.

Writing skills can be developed by working on the following:-

- Writing sentences.
- Use of appropriate vocabulary.
- Writing simple and short composition.
- Paragraph, essay and precis writing.
- Description or narration.
- Note making.
- Formal and informal letter writing.
- Editing a passage.

By practicing the above skills, one may improve LSRW skills to the desirable extent. English is becoming more and more important today. It is widely spoken all around the world. In order to master the subject knowledge and skill one must have English language competence. Communication skills are a salient feature in the making of a global profession. In today's globalized era good LSRW skills are the keys to success. These skills promote better understanding and are vital in one's personal as well as professional life. Thus LSRW training/practice is essential.

Innovative Methods of ELT (English Language Teaching):

Certain methods and approaches of ELT like Bilingual Method, Grammar-Translation Method and Structural Oral Approach have been popular for quite a long time. However, the approach of second language teaching is changing now. The "drill and practice" method is now considered to be rudimentary. Now, some innovative methods like language games are also really useful in making students learn second language better. Moreover, there are electronically sophisticated machines which have entered teaching-learning setting. Machine –assisted learning or e-learning is indeed an innovation in ELT. These innovative learning environments are ahead of mainstream education and can serve as meaningful examples for renewal of learning environments in educational institutions. The concept of smart classes is also fast emerging as an effective way of ELT. Even students find these new methods of learning second language to be amazing.

Smart Classes:

The smart classes have provided path breaking solutions and have turned classrooms into fascinating places. These classes use all interactive modules like videos and presentations. Smart board is an interactive whiteboard that uses touch detection for user input in same way as normal PC input devices. Smart classes also involve use of English learning program which include dictionary, worksheet generator etc. All these programs aim to develop LSRW skills of students at different levels.

Language Games:

A language game can be defined as an organized activity that usually has a particular task or objectives, a set of rules, competition between players and communication between players by spoken or written language.

The term language game refers to a language play phenomenon. The characteristics of language games can be listed as: fun, rules, goals, outcome and feedback, problem solving, interaction and story etc.

Language games are games played by students with the teacher's guidance. These language games help students to reinforce the language already learnt. Language games are very much helpful in improving students' fluency in listening, speaking, reading and writing.

Objectives of Language Games: -

Games are a great way to learn all sorts of things about languages. Games are strong learning tools for foreign language students.

The main objectives of language games are following:

- To develop vocabulary skills.
- To distinguish different word sounds.
- To recognize letter shapes and sounds.
- To enhance understanding of the community around.
- To learn to follow oral directions.
- To learn to categorize familiar objects.
- To provoke a reaction - amusement, challenge, interest, surprise, competition.
- To help students to sustain the effort of learning.
- To provide practice in all language skills.
- To provide a welcome break from the usual routine of the language class.
- To encourage students to interact and communicate.
- To create a meaningful context for language use.

Following are some criteria for using language games as media for teaching of English to children —

- (i) A language game must be more than just fun.
- (ii) A game should involve 'friendly competition'.
- (iii) A game should keep all students involved and interested.
- (iv) A game should encourage the students to focus on the uses or language rather than on language itself.
- (v) A game should give students a chance to learn, practice or review specific language material.
- (vi) A game should not be complicated, rather it should be easy to play and understand.

Types of Language Games:

There are four major types of language games:

1. Listening games. 2. Speaking games. 3. Reading games. 4. Writing games.

1. Listening Games:

These type of games are useful for the training of listening capabilities. Through listening language games, the teacher improves listening fluency of the students.

a)The teacher says two sentences -

They must leave.

They must live.

The students have to reply whether the two sentences are same or different and what is the point of difference.

b)The teacher shows an object or draws a picture on the blackboard and says a sentence. If the sentence is relevant, student should respond by raising their hands or they should keep quiet.

These games enhance listening comprehension of the students.

2. Speaking Games:

Speaking games are very useful in enhancing speaking comprehension of the students. These games are also helpful in teaching new words, grammar, spelling in teacher training.

a)**Spelling Game:** In this game, the teacher first divides the class into two groups. He says a word, e.g. 'book' and asks the one group to tell a word beginning with alphabet 'K' (as in antakshari). If one group says 'kite', the next group is expected to tell a word starting with the alphabet 'E'. The group that gives a correct response scores a point and one that gives a wrong response loses one point.

b)**Busy Bee:** The teacher says a word, supposes 'come' and asks the class to tell words beginning with 'C'. This game ends when a group fails to tell a word beginning with 'C'.

c)**The Ladder:** In this game the teacher says the name of an institution, suppose 'hospital' and asks the class to tell words connected with the hospital like doctor, nurse, bed, medicines etc. The group that tells a word not relevant to the 'hospital' loses a point.

d)**Riddles:** Riddles are also listening and speaking games.

3. Reading Games:

Reading games are useful for the development of reading comprehension. These games are based on the principle of reading and appropriate understanding.

a)**Read and Do:** In this game the teacher brings a few slips of paper with some funny commands written on them. Individual student is asked to read each command and act it out. The group whose members make a mistake loses a point.

3. Writing Games:

These games are useful in enhancing the writing comprehension of the students and are of great educational value.

a)**Creation:** The teacher writes on the black-board or says a sentence, such as 'Sita sings a song' (each word in the sentence begins with 'S') and asks students to make similar sentences and write them on loose paper sheets. Each correct sentence gives the group one point.

- b) Memory (Kim's) Game:** In this game, the teacher spreads on his table a number of small articles like pins, buttons bangles, paper etc. He covers them with a newspaper. He then allows students to look at them about a minute and asks them to write the names of those articles. The group that writes the maximum number of words with correct spellings scores five points.

Other language games like word building, solving crossword puzzles etc. also have been popular for quite a long time. Now, certain new language games which are based on computer –aided technology have been developed and are available online as well as in form of software. There can be different types of language games like: Word Recognition Game, Audio Word Match, Digital Dialects and Idioms Games and many more.

In some educational institutions there is also facility of language laboratory. There are laboratories for all practical subjects like Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Geography, Home Science etc. In these subjects, students are taught how to conduct the experiments in the laboratories. Language can also be considered to be a practical subject, but with a difference. Here students can be taught how to develop their essential basic linguistic skills like listening, speaking, reading and writing. Language laboratory is a special room where students may do practice in speaking and listening with the help of sound equipment. The sound equipment includes tape recorders, earphones, microphones etc.

Thus the language laboratory is a teaching room equipped with electronic devices for recording and reproducing speech. The students sit in semi-sound-proof booths where they can listen to master tape and record their own responses. The teacher who controls the operation can talk to all or any student he likes and thus helps them in their work. According to A.S. Hayas, “A language laboratory is a classroom containing equipments designed and arranged to make foreign language learning more effective than is usually possible without” (qtd. in A. Sharma 173). Language laboratories are equipped with software based on language games.

Usefulness or Advantages of Language Games:

- 1) Language games are motivating and challenging.
- 2) Learning a language requires a great deal of efforts. Games help students to make and sustain the efforts of learning.
- 3) Games provide language practice in the various skills like listening, speaking, writing and reading.
- 4) Games encourage students to interact and communicate.
- 5) They create a meaningful context for language use.
- 6) Language games bring real world context into the classroom and increase students' use of English in a flexible, meaningful and communicative way.
- 7) Language games usually involve friendly competition and they keep students interested in learning the language.
- 8) Games help the children to learn and memorize new words easily and retain them for a long time.
- 9) Games make learning fun. So the children are willing participants not forcefully sitting passive participates.
- 10) Playing a game has a purpose to it, an outcome, and in order to play students have to say things, they have a reason to communicate rather than just repeat things back mindlessly. Therefore they want to know and learn more.
- 11) Students get to use the language all the time during the games.

- 12) Games involve a lot of repetition, and repetition is the mother of skill, it can be boring, but because of the language games, it is fun.
- 13) The games lend themselves perfectly to quick bursts of revision. Using some of the games, the students can gain a massive amount of vocabulary and grammar in a very little time.
- 14) The language games incorporate the psychological principles of encouragement and motivation. It allows all the students to gain confidence.

Thus in the end it can be concluded that teacher education is an indeed important aspect as it lays foundation to education of children. Unfortunately, teacher educators are not familiar with recent trends in practice teaching like technology of teaching, instruction technology etc. In absence of application of innovative practice, they fail to develop in student teachers appropriate teaching skills and competencies. Thus, teacher educators and prospective teachers should be made aware of innovations in ELT. With some well-planned language games and smart classes, the teacher can capture the interest of the students and recharge their imagination. Through the medium of language games, the teacher should try to develop a healthy competitive spirit among the students. Thus teacher education should include workshops related to operating language games based on computer technology as well as organization of smart classes.

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