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Need for Practical in Teaching of English

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Abstract:

Articulation is a distinct feature of humans. Animals express through gestures or grunting sounds but, humans, on the highest echelon among species, express through vocal expression. They have meaningful sounds to express their emotions, intellect and sentiments. Language is an insignia of humans. In today's perspective, the language that is pervasive on the globe is-- English. It is true that some nations of Europe and Asia prefer their vernacular, but English is easily understood everywhere. The reason for education and especially for English Education will be discussed with the progression of the paper; the most substantial argument is about the practical application of English Language as it is stress-based, different from Hindi in its script and pronunciation.

In the absence of a practical approach to teaching of English, misconceived notions prevail to further deteriorate the quality of spoken skills in the language. This paper draws the attention of the readers towards the fact that there are practical possibilities in the pedagogy of English in undergraduate curriculum, by inducing practice session with powerful potency of grades system, which should be sternly and strenuously enforced to improve the quality of language and enhance the spoken abilities and confidence of the youngsters in a span of fifteen years of learning of English language.

Despite an immense investment of time and indulgence, the students are not fully accomplished in the acquisition of English Language at par with their native speakers. This is the ripe time to assess, analyse and evaluate the pedagogical hindrance in practical possibilities for teaching of English in our country.

Keywords: practical, teaching of English, acquisition, language, students.

Introduction:

One question will always glare at pedagogy: Why do the students fail to write and speak English after an indulgence with it for fifteen years in their curriculum, and how much has

literature enabled them to understand life? These were two fundamental propositions of the engineers of curriculum for students till their undergraduate education. The root cause of the problem lies in applying the methods of education. A severe dearth of practical and practical application in spoken exercise creates a handicap in the students because they can improve their spoken skill only by listening and speaking i.e, induction of practicals and practical methodology in imparting the education of English language.

Cambridge University defines practicality as something related to experience, actual situation rather than ideas or imagination. Collins dictionary also defines practical as something that involves real situations rather than theory. The theoretical knowledge of the English language has posed significant hazards in the spoken acquisition of language as the students are given no opportunity to hone their skills in the soft skills of Language. The students have ideas and thoughts of rare excellence, but their execution is minimal because they are poorly equipped in the medium of articulation. There are no well-furnished language labs to facilitate spoken exercises in English ,even if they exist, the very purpose of making them functional up to the acme is a tedious task hardly practised by the disinterest of the attendants and lethargy of the students as the practice involves no evaluation in the form of practicals like other practical subjects of science and maths. Spoken exercise is a practical phenomenon and cannot be put in theory, unleashing a mockery on pedagogy. Practical work can alone be practically availed and accomplished.

English as a compulsory or core subject was introduced in the curriculum of humanities and also of technical courses to apprise the students of the basics of written English so that they can handle this global language with efficacy and efficiency. Unfortunately, an eerie enigma envelops and engulfs the exercise of education of English in elementary classes and also in higher classes. It is bizarre and sardonic that after employing energy for fifteen years in education, the students can neither speak nor write English language fluently and rhetorically. Consciousness and conscience are suppressed by the compulsion of compliance to conventional modes of imparting education.

Jyrhama in, this regard, also asserts that “good teachers and good learners seem to be greatly influenced by practical practices...enhance understanding...professional and personal growth of students”(52)

This paper will draw the attention, mainly, of the readers towards, the need and urgency of our students in learning soft skills at par with native speakers with the introduction of practical and weekly spoken tests to enhance their soft skills in English to enable them to perform smartly on a global platform without language handicap.

Observation and analysis:**Pedagogy and its ethics:**

Teaching is an innovative, experimental, empirical, gruelling and drilling exercise. It indeed requires immense patience and potential on the part of the preacher, it expects inquisitiveness, eagerness, retention capability and, above all an impulsive interest in a learner. The preacher is supposed to be invested not only with knowledge and practical skill but also successfully arouse the student's interest in that requires discipline.

Eclipsed enormity of Education:

Education is not visible in India in its brightest hue and the students are not electrified by enervating energy as education is used as a tool more for employment and money-making than enlightenment. Since time immemorial, spanning over decades and centuries, Indians observed caste-system whereby education and enlightenment was the sacred religious duty of one particular caste; all other caste believed in employment accorded to their caste and indulged in that particular pursuit of family business e.g. pot-making, shoe making, manual scavenging etc.

Education ignites enlightenment only in the minds of a privileged class with a self-styled status to read, preach and preserve the scriptures. This privileged class practised brahminical hegemony and reserved an exclusive right to education, learning and propagation of a caste structure. They concentrated light of knowledge on their caste, but only to scorch themselves ; harbouring arrogance about their caste, considering it the highest on the hierarchy , the Brahmins deprived other castes the right to primary education and consequent enlightenment.

Interestingly, the scriptures too focused more on spiritual training, and rigorous practices of the disciplined and regimented life devoid of materialistic pleasure like a monk. The scriptures are also stuffed with various chanting of mantras to please gods, which are not appealing but rather distasteful to modern minds.

Technological backwardness:

Technological education and innovation took a back seat as the education, in all its efforts, expressed its concern for the astral body and shunned the creative spirit of exposition and exploration. Here, again with the absence of labs and other practical facilities, the practical knowledge of science is overlapped by theoretical cramming of formulas and equations, which can easily slip out of the mind of a student in the absence of a practical application, moreover,

onerous onus of cramming of facts also bores the students making education, not a delightful exercise.

Trajectory of Education in India:

Vedic and foreign rule period:

Knowledge is like light; if it spreads itself, it does away with the evil of darkness. Lack of education culminated in lack of sympathy, affinity among all sections of society and dearth of technology enslaved the future and compromised religious allegiance too by conversion of untouchables of Hindu clan into Buddhists, Muslims or Christians. Education undoubtedly plays a pivotal role in shaping up not only identities but also the present and future of a nation. The Muslim invaders introduced the Urdu Language, a good language full of mannerisms and decorum, but its official compulsion accrued only a burden on the natives. The officious nature of the language and emperors too undermined not only the spirit of the natives but also diluted their confidence and faith in their religion.

The Madrasa system was introduced that allowed religious teaching of the holy Quran and other scriptures to all communities irrespective of caste structure. Madarsa education propagated a new system of religious belief, entirely favourable to acceptance of the general mass, oblivious of spiritual strength due to numerous deities of Hinduism. The spiritual energy of doctrines and preaching in Urdu in madrasas motivated people to embrace an education system that enhanced spirituality, community spirit, and togetherness but was highly deficient in science and technology.

This new system introduced many good inculcations in the people's lives, but technological advancement remained static and least noticeable in the activities of people. The British invasion also brought significant change in the educational fabric of the nation. The British were tradesmen and captured the Indian subcontinent. The British lacked in workforce, so they utilised the needs of natives affected by intermittent famines, crop failure due to monsoon failure and other natural or artificial calamities and recruited them in the army and various offices for their benefit.

The main problem was the language and clerical work of government papers. To pursue such a task, they introduced the Macaulay system of Education. The system chose students just through their cramming abilities and trained them to be cheap clerks to serve the British government by compulsory training of a few disciplines. The holistic development of character and confidence was not the agenda of such education as this system believed in commodifying education, diluting its role for enlightenment. The need to get a fixed salary per month,

compulsively maintains this kind of superfluous, mundane and materialistic trend of education. A deluge of promising young people filled the portal of such education.

This education system divided the masses into two main groups: illiterate (without knowledge of the master's language, English) and literate (English speaking) and two subgroups: clerks (natives) and officers (British). This practice of babudom created an uncharacteristic divide in society by a concurrence of British education to raise a third-class superior to natives but inferior to the British rules; everybody wanted to learn the British pattern of education to join, this third class of babu for social, legal and financial escalation.

Teaching of English on British pattern and its advantages:

Education in any way, is not evil but good. This education of British pattern with the ideas of scholars like Ruskin, J. S. Mill, Carl Marx etc. ignited the spark of humanism, socialism and abolition of capitalistic enterprises.

The French revolution triggered the idea of equality and fraternity. Indians too felt the impact of events, upheavals and revolutions across the globe, the impetus for the freedom movement of India increased with chaos in the world. Western education introduced and initiated by the British exposed the chinks in their stance and political ideology towards Indian education helping the freedom fighters to claim their sovereignty and to maintain it with intellect and courage.

After independence, practical education remained negligible and theoretical facts were injected in young minds. Theory without practice made education a tedious task and a distasteful exercise. Education is a beautification of the mind and embellishment of oneself and is always a choice. Since India believed in education to generate employment for centuries, the taste of the common mass for education leading to exposure and enlightenment remained dormant.

Education is never conceived as a tool for innovation of the soul in our country so, habitually, Indians grab a superfluous knowledge of everything just to make every task convenient. Niceties of trade are acceptable but scholarships are rare. Consequently, Indians just try to teach and learn in language for survival, accomplishment is not their choice. Accomplishment and excellence are mandatory for learning a language, a medium to communicate potential can seriously jeopardise the career of young people.

Importance of practical methodology in teaching of English:

Returning to education and teaching of English, it is analysed that teaching of English language in India has been a tough job, a hard nut to crack. English, contrary to Hindi, is a stressed-based language but Indians due to their vernacular languages-- Hindi and Sanskrit perceive it as a spelling-based language. Indian students in their college education are apprised of the fact that English, as in its alphabetical table, is not limited to five vowels and twenty-six alphabets but contains twenty vowels and twenty-four consonants. Phonetics, the science of language elaborates on the expansion of symbols used in transcription which decodes the pronunciation of any word. Transcription was introduced in the undergraduate course a decade back but no substantial improvement is perceived in the spoken skills of students.

The students were asked to transcribe as many as ten words out of fifteen or so generally, the words were so simple that even the slight conjecture or slip from friends could accomplish the goal of the students to get through the exams with scanty attention to learn phonetics or understands the IPA symbols employed in transcription. The lackadaisical approach in teaching and learning of phonetics, essential for pronouncing words and enhancing spoken skills, disorients the purpose of curriculum to improve pronunciation of the students.

Everything is improved by the practice and practice of vocal cords in speaking a language is necessary for the acquisition of any language with perfection and finesse. Practical language labs and practical application of soft skills are required to be enforced vigorously and should rigorously leaving no scope to the students for evasion of the practice session as the evaluation will be based on practicals for, at least, forty marks. Brenda is right to point out that “practical Theories...provide an insight into a student's professional development... mentors are the most significant person, should practically model commitment, efficiency and enthusiasm...(Kettle 1)

The inclusion of practicals as in other subjects like maths will add to more fantastic practice of language by students as compulsory practical evaluation will force them to sharpen their skills in the realm of soft skills. Fear of failure, and compulsory training and examination will gruel the students to avoid shortcuts and to hone their skills in the arena of soft skills. The language practices, moreover, make the subject very much dynamic and fluid, diluting the cramming part, hence, the understanding and acquisition of language will be more enjoyable, energetic, educative and enthusiastic for the students.

Conclusion:

Education is the dividing line between humans and lower species. Education generates awareness and enables a person to make one's life better, concurrent with the cosmos with ever-evolving consciousness. Education is expressed through eloquent language and nowadays, the universally understandable language is undoubtedly English. The need of the hour is to employ and enlighten an ever-growing population of young, energetic minds. Practical English language teaching will boost the student's confidence and strengthen them to perform more assertively and enthusiastically on a global platform. Theory is necessary but without a practical method, it is ineffectual. Practical approach with compulsory practicals along with influential and considerable marks and grades in their evaluation will definitely propel them to employ themselves in mandatory practices for the propagation of soft skills in the teaching of English language. Angelina, to sum up, best defines the purpose of practicals in teaching and learning of English. She states: "the main goal the practical tasks is to engage students in the subject ... to help them get a better grasp of the topics" ... (3)

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