

Role of Print and Electronic Media in Language Learning

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Abstract: There has been little or no doubt at all, that media has made easy, the task of language learning and language teaching. In communicative language teaching, great emphasis is placed on the need for real life objects or texts (like newspapers, railway time tables, application forms and other such realia) so as to infuse authenticity into the communicative situation. Teachers world over agree that visual aids do enhance language learning and in the daily practice of language learning we find an entire range of media - from non-mechanical aids like the black board, flash cards, magazine pictures, right up to sophisticated aids such as LCD, computers etc., helping teachers to teach better and bringing the outside world into the class room, thus making the language classroom meaningful and exciting.

Key words: media, communicative language teaching, realia, flash cards, magazine pictures, LCD, computers

Introduction

Showing visuals focuses attention on meaning and helps to make the language used in the classroom more real and alive. Furthermore, having something to look at keeps the student's attention on the lesson and more than anything else, visuals can be used at any stage in the lesson-to help in presenting new language or introducing a topic, for language practice and for reviewing that has been presented earlier. If visual aids are to enliven a lecture, they must be appropriate, purposeful and timely. Aids that are poorly presented or difficult to read or which fail due to faulty equipment will hinder, rather than aid learning. Today in this technology driven world, teachers have a wide variety of aids to choose from - the new technological innovations, mechanical paraphernalia, and glossy polished audio-visual aids. Though the techno savvy teachers may swear by the new technology - fuelled aids, there is very little evidence to prove that such glossy audio-visual aids are there. Print and Electronic media can be used to learn better English and unfortunately learners are not utilizing them in the proper way to attain language as a mode of communication than as the expression of the society, and society in turn needs language to carry out all its functions. The point must be made that one has to learn how to use language efficiently by utilizing print and electronic media. Language, when used for communication, is a tool, and the handling of any tool requires a certain skill. In a modern society, the individual may require not only a general

proficiency in handling language, but also a narrower kind of specialization, involving a high degree of expertise in the use of particular language skill. We are thus faced with situations which may force upon the individual a need to learn one or more native or foreign language(s) in addition to this first language. To learn English and enhance communicative use of language both print and electronic media can be extremely useful as timely inputs in regular teaching and learning process and in remedial teaching. Some of these learner inputs are effective than teacher made, non mechanical aids. All these aids which are commercially available teacher made through which language can be effectively taught. Though experienced classroom teachers find the use of visual aids very rewarding, on the other side of the spectrum there are teachers who are unable or unwilling to use these aids in the classroom for one or the other of these following reasons: They think that they simply cannot use visual aids. The school/college just does not have the financial framework vital to buy these aids. Teachers are otherwise too busy to prepare aids. The language curriculum is too structured to necessitate the need for the use of visual aids. Some teachers feel that while teaching at advanced level of students they do not need to use visual aids.

Media and Its Influence on Student's Learning Process: Today the world has been depicted as the media (print/electronic) ridden domain. The media has its own wider and deepest reach into the society. It has a great influence on the social, cultural, economical, political, psychological, educational aspects of the each and every individual of the present day society. It is proved to be a powerful transmitter of the day to day developments of the world. It has a multifaceted scenario through which people can reach to the definite conclusion. It leads to the future vision of them and of the world. So certain inputs from these and television are introduced in ELT in the classroom. During language teaching, field media with its many forms ranging from radio to internet, news papers to journals is to be given some pragmatic and structural considerations that can meet ever soaring demands of English language. The major objective of teaching at undergraduate level is to train the students to become competent in the use of English language. This aim can be achieved by adopting LSRW skills. The careful thinking of detailed defined objectives will be more than almost every thing else to improve a teachers work and to make it effective.

Learners Problems: It is a well-known fact but less practiced that media helps the learners to improve their communication skills, but media has not been used effectively in our educational system to teach English. The major problems of education can be listed as follows: Traditional teaching methods, Lack of library and lab facilities, Lack of materials and audio-visuals, Lacking awareness of print and electronic media, Lack of well qualified computer teachers, Unrealistic or outdated syllabus, False objectives, Large and overcrowded classes, Ill-equipped colleges, Inadequate Print & Electronic media and books, Lack of soft skills trained teachers. Tape recorder also helps the learner and teacher to learn English in many ways. It is a very useful instrument for the self-examination, self-criticism and self-education. There are many of T.V. channels: DD, BBC and CNN that telecast episodes, news and discussions on English, these are helpful in learning. Internet serves as paperless library.

Both print and electronic media serve the purpose of learning English in an easy and effective way aids help easy grasping and long-memory. The use of media in language

teaching which appeared in teaching English as a second or foreign language edited by Marianne Celle Murcia. Donna M Brinton presents a rationale for using media in the language classroom in the following statements: Students Interpret The Outside World Through The Use Of Media And Expect To Find The Same In The Classroom As Well And Therefore Use Of Media In The Classroom Is A Strong Motivator In The Language Teaching Process. Language Items Should Be Ideally Presented And Practiced In A Contextualized Situation And Audio Visual Materials Provide Students With Content And Meaning. Media Materials Lend Authenticity To The Classroom Situation. Since There Are Several Learning Perceptions, Media Provides The Teacher With A Way Of Addressing Both Visual And Auditory Learners. The Use Of Media In The Classroom Makes A Student Totally Independent Of The Teacher's Language And Thus Students Enrich Own Language Learning Experience As The Media Exposes Them To Multiple Input Sources.

The audio and visual teaching aids: Teachers have always known that teaching aids can be used effectively to capture and sustain the attention of a class. The range of media available to teachers today can be classified under non technical and technical.

Non-technical media:

- Black boards/white boards/ magnet boards/ flannel boards/ pegs boards/ flash cards
- Index cards, wall charts, posters, maps, scrolls
- Board games
- Mounted pictures / photos/ memory games
- Cartoons/ line drawings
- Objects/ realia
- Pamphlets/ brochures
- Menus
- Equipment operation manuals
- Puppets
- Newspapers/ magazines/ journals/ articles

The above mentioned aids are useful and resourceful they can be used by the teacher without stress or anxiety. They are useful aids where resources are scarce, where funding is limited. They are accessible, available, low priced and user friendly.

Technical media:

- Record player
 - Audio tape player/ recorder
 - CD player / recorder
 - Radio
 - Television
 - Video player/ recorder
 - Telephone
 - Over head projector filmstrip/ film projector
 - Slide projector
 - Computer
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- Language Lab
- Multimedia Lab
- Self access center

These aids are costly and not very user friendly. However, "tech-savvy" students may expect to find them in the language classroom. Language Lab: Language Lab is an essential prerequisite for ELT in the affiliated colleges of Osmania University. Since 2005-2006, APSCHE has suggested that all Universities should adopt Computer Based Testing (CBT) of English Listening and Speaking Skills. The examination in general English under the new pattern in theory will be tested for 75 marks and CBT for 15 marks. 10 marks are reserved for oral or viva. The colleges should have the following:

- Audio cassette player
- Audio CD and MP3 player
- 5 computers minimum
- 512 Mb RAM
- 80 Gb or above Hard DISC
- Multimedia kit
- CD combo drive
- Color monitor - 17' inch screen
- Mouse
- Keypad

These arrangements could be used for Remedial teaching also.

Practices of English Language Teaching: The major approaches of ELT are the behaviorist approach as suggested and enforced by the schools of psychology. Another approach is due to western philosophy and mainly the American experiments in education. This is called as the rationalization approach or mentalistic approach. However, this division is only for the understanding of the methods devised by the experts. Direct method /Situational method/ Method: This is a formal method of teaching and learning. The use of language is confined to descriptions and learning formal grammar. Teachers mostly use Wren and Martin grammar text or the text of Newfield. English is taught by exposé or producing more sentences. The defect is that students can memorize but not produce such sentences themselves. This method was useful in highly disciplined situations under military discipline. But nowadays students have more freedom and hence they do not like any such restriction in learning. This method also calls for planning on the part of the teacher as he has to plan many situations. The present day class rooms with a strength of ninety to one hundred students cannot accommodate such methods. The class room is full of people with mixed abilities and "Individual differences" besides socio cultural backgrounds. The direct method and the Translation method usually degrade to dictation methods. The teachers dictate answers to all the expected questions. Students consider it as a help and memorize them. This practice was observed in some schools during this study in Hyderabad and Rangareddy districts. Other Methods: Methods such as Audio-Lingual method, Reading Method are only experimental in

nature. This is little help from the experts and here they have not been tried in class room situations (3) in the Sample.

Besides these methods, several techniques of teaching English are available, they are:

- Teaching in groups.
- Demonstration in different language.
- Dialogue/conversion in English.
- Discussion.
- Class room Interaction.
- Peer group Interaction.
- Poetry recitation.
- Reading to the class.
- Jam sessions.
- Group Discussions.
- Resume Writing.
- Role Play.
- ePaper
- eNews

Survey was made regarding the use of such techniques and methods; teaching English in bilingual mode is another method that combines some techniques stated above. The details of teachers in bilingual mode are discussed in the ensuring chapters with illustrations. It is preferred here because of the conditions under which English is being taught in the sample selected.

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